

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments indicated potential for geothermal development. Further comment indicated that natural values have not been lost by man's activities.

AREA 359

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the northwest by Highway 78; on the south, by railroad tracks; and, on the northeast, by a maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The area contains one or two sections of non-public lands in random placement.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively flat bajada is sparsely vegetated with creosote and is occasionally dissected by desert washes.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Situated east of Glamis, this area is heavily intruded by man's work and the landscape does not retain its primeval character and influence. Mining operations with tiling dumps and open-pit mines are found throughout the area.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are severely restricted due to the multitude of man's actions, which confine and limit freedom of movement and the ability to find solitude.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments addressing wilderness inventory considerations concurred with the findings. Several comments addressed the geothermal potential, which is a study phase factor.

AREA 360

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This elongated, triangular-shaped roadless area is bounded on the northeast by a combination of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Niland Glamis Road; to the south, by Highway 78; and, to the west, by a combination of the new, bulldozed route of the Coachella Canal and the old Coachella Canal and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately nine sections of non-public land in a checkerboard pattern, accounting for approximately 35 percent of the land. This entire area is also a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is characterized by large dunes as well as small, mesquite-covered dune masses. The southern half is a National Natural Landmark and an area which BLM closed to off-road vehicle activity in order to protect critical habitats for plant species endemic to the Imperial Sand Dunes which have been proposed for listing as threatened and endangered.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The portion of the area which retains its primeval character and influence, and generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, is that part presently recognized as a National Natural Landmark and is closed to motorized vehicle

usage. In addition, this area contains only two sections of private land. The area to the north of this landmark boundary has been excluded from Wilderness consideration because of man's disturbances. It includes Mammoth Wash, which is heavily used by off-road vehicles, resulting in reduced natural vegetative cover. The area around Glamis has also been excluded due to the buildings, roads, and off-road vehicle scars.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

The complexity of the dune system, as well as natural screening of visitors from one another by terrain and thick stands of mesquite vegetation provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Due to the unique natural qualities and the natural condition of the southern portion, freedom of movement is unimpeded.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A majority of the comments speaking to the inventory factors agreed with the present status of the area's boundaries or felt they should be expanded. Other comments said the area had roads that hadn't been included or that the works of man were evident. The area has been re-evaluated and changes have been made where appropriate. Many of the comments received dealt entirely with study phase factors.

AREA 361

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by a maintained road; on the east, by the Coachella Canal and access road; on the south, by Highway 78; and, on the west, by the East Highline Canal and access road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Only one section is non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively flat and heavily vegetated with creosote, and is a portion of East Mesa. This sandy area is part of the Algodones Dune system that extends east into roadless Areas 360 and 362.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The central portion of this area is a U.S. Naval Reservation bombing area; otherwise, the majority of the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The Schoneman Road in the western portion leads to several gravel pits which reduce the natural condition. The entire roadless area is within a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

V. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED TYPE OF RECREATION

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restrictive due to the large military inholding, which prevents freedom of travel.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most comments received recommended the area be included for further study, primarily because it is an integral part of the larger Algodones Dunes area. Those agreeing with deletion of the area did so because of geothermal potential in the area.

AREA 362

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary of this area parallels Highway 78; the western boundary, a combination of the Coachella Canal and access road and the new, bulldozed, Coachella

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1360-1 Acreage 15,980

(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate separately).

In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check “Yes” and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes X No _____

Note: If “No is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “N/A” for the remaining questions below.

Description (describe the boundaries of the area—wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

The unit is bounded on the northeast by the Union Pacific railroad and the Glamis/Niland Road; on the south by the North Algodones Dunes Wilderness; and the west by the Coachella Canal and access road. The unit is a mixture of Military, Private, Public, and State Lands.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes _____ No X N/A _____

Note: If “No is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “N/A” for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

The area is characterized by large dunes as well as small, mesquite-covered dune masses. The unit has been excluded from wilderness consideration because of man’s disturbances which includes the Coachella Canal, housing and heavy off-road vehicle use near the Mammoth Wash area.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remaining is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A X

Description (describe the area’s outstanding opportunities for solitude):

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remaining is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A X

Note: If “No” is checked for both 3 and 4, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “N/A” for question 5.

Description (describe the area’s outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes _____

No _____

N/A X

Description:

(Add description here)