

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA 1352-2

Summary

Results of analysis:

The (roughly) 8,000 acres of lands south of the Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness, west of the transmission line and north of the Milpitas Wash Road area includes a flat creosote filled valley leading to rolling hills adjacent to wilderness. There are numerous small, winding canyons and enclosed valleys that create an area able to offer outstanding opportunities for solitude as well as outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area is also habitat for the Desert Tortoise and Big Horn Sheep. The unit is within an area of traditional, religious, and spiritual significance for the Quechan Tribe as well as being in close proximity to the Indian Pass – Running Man and Trail of Dreams traditional cultural areas recognized by the Quechan.

- 1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes No
- 2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes No
- 3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes No
- 4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes No

Check one:

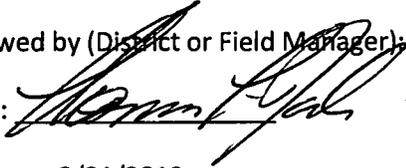
The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

John Johnson, Environmental protection Specialist, 3/28/2012 (with input from ECFO Interdisciplinary Team)

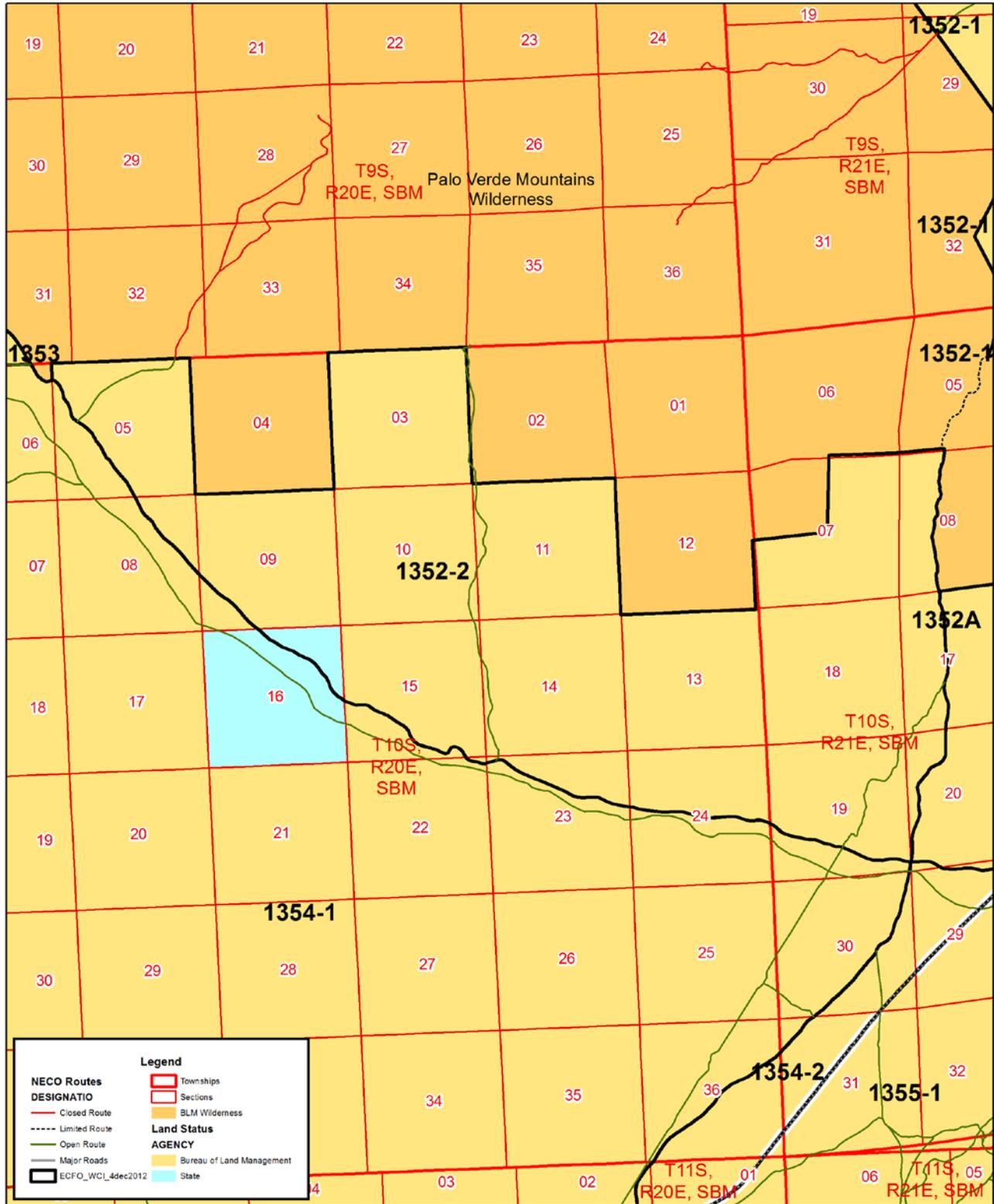
Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name:  Title: Acting Field Manager

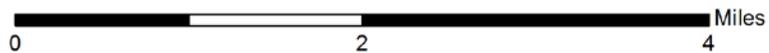
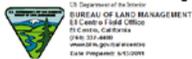
Date: 2/21/2013

*This form documents information that constitutes and inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR or 1610.5-3

CA - 1352-2 Map



Wilderness Character Inventory - CDCA_1352-2



II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 15 percent of the area is in non-public, randomly-placed lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The southern portion of the rolling and sparsely vegetated Mule Mountains make up the western portion of this area. The eastern portion includes a large pebble terrace and flats covered with desert pavement and savannah-like vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Much of this area is marred by man-made features which have altered the natural appearance of the landscape. In the southwestern portion, the Opal Hill Mine is highly visible and includes bulldozer scars, permanent habitations and structures, and roads. Some primitive, yet highly visible, ways cross much of this area, and man's work is substantially noticeable.

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

Due to the Opal Hill Mine, numerous ways, sparse vegetation and open topography, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are restricted.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments generally agreed with the findings. Some interest was expressed in a further study of the northwest portion.

AREA 352

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by the Opal Hill Mine Road; on the west and south by the Coon Hollow - Milpitas Wash Road; and, on the east, by a transmission line right-of-way across the Palo Verde Mesa.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 25 sections of non-public land checkerboarded in the southern and western portions and accounting for approximately 8 percent of the land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area includes rolling hills, and steep, colorful, jagged volcanic mountain peaks. Small, narrow canyons lead into enclosed basins and intimate valleys. Although vegetation is sparse, large stands of Ironwood are found in Milpitas Wash and a small palm oasis is located at Clapp Spring. Large, vast flat areas of desert pavement surround much of the Palo Verde Mountains.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The vast majority of this area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. Rockhound activity is very much in evidence, but the ruggedness and dramatic rock spires far overwhelm the impact of man's alteration. Thus, the area retains its primeval character and influence. The northern portion of this area contains permanent improvements and human habitation in the form of the Opal Hill Mine and numerous primitive ways and inactive mining claims. This portion north of a jeep trail, has been excluded from wilderness consideration. The checkerboard portion at the southern end of the area has been excluded due to the non-contiguous land status, a road, and off-road vehicle impacts. The potential Wilderness Study Area boundary is common with the roadless area boundary on the east and west. The southern boundary is formed by private land. The permanent improvements and areas of human habitation, primitive ways and inactive mining claims have been excluded from the northern portion of the area.

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

Numerous small, winding canyons and enclosed valleys create an area able to accommodate primitive recreation uses, yet still offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the public comments dealt with study phase considerations such as oil, gas and geothermal potential and rockhounding. Several comments substantiated the findings; others identified roads which were validated and included in the narrative and on the map.

AREA 352A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered by the Old Palo Verde Road on the west; on the south, by the Waiter's Camp Road; on the east, by Highway 78; and, on the north, by a maintained road that connects Highway 78 with the Old Palo Verde Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About 50 percent of the area is non-public land in a checkerboard pattern.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area contains the eastern portion of the steep volcanic Palo Verde Mountains. These mountains have numerous narrow vertical canyons which lead into small interior valleys. There is little vegetation.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

This area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

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 limited due to the private ownership pattern which tends to confine and hinder freedom of movement and the ability to disperse.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment supported the area for inclusion in the wilderness inventory.

AREA 353

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded on the north by a combination of the Bradshaw Stage Road and a power line support road; on the east, by the extension of the Milpitas Wash Road to Wiley Well; on the south, by maintained roads; and, on the west, by the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 45 percent of the area is non-public land with distribution in a checkerboard pattern. One portion, located in the northeast section of the roadless area, contains approximately 20 sections of contiguous public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Terrain within the area varies between flat sandy surfaces, rock outcrops, foothills and small mountains. The Little Mule Mountains, the Black Hills and portions of the foothills of the Palo Verde Mountains combine with the broad Milpitas Wash to provide a

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1352-2 Acreage 8,025

(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 area is bounded on the north by the Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness; on the west and south by Milpitas Wash Road; and on the east, by a transmission line right-of-way across the Palo Verde Mesa, this route is also known as the Bythe-Ogilby Road or BLM Route 569.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No _____ 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 boundaries include a portion of 1 section of non-public lands. The (roughly) 8,000 acres of non-wilderness lands south of the Palo Verde Mountains Wilderness, west of the transmission line and north of the Milpitas Wash Road contain 3 NECO designated routes of travel. The area includes a flat creosote filled valley leading to rolling hills adjacent to wilderness.

(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 X No _____ N/A _____

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

Within this unit, there are numerous small, winding canyons and enclosed valleys that create an area able to offer 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 X No N/A

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):

There are numerous small, winding canyons and enclosed valleys that create an area able to offer outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

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

Yes X No N/A

Description:

The unit is within an area of traditional, religious, and spiritual significance for the Quechan Tribe as well as being in close proximity to the Indian Pass – Running Man and Trail of Dreams traditional cultural areas recognized by the Quechan.