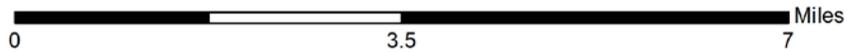


Wilderness Character Inventory - CDCA_1355-2



variety of topographical relief. Although generally sparse, vegetation in the areas of the washes becomes relatively dense. In addition to the creosote and desert shrubs, the washes support a large number of Smoke trees. Palo Verde, cat claw and mesquite can be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The greatest percentage of this large area has been excluded from further consideration because of land ownership status. The remaining small area in the northeast corner was excluded because present use has degraded the naturalness of the site. Off-road vehicle tracks can be seen throughout. Heavy use is evident in the washes and along the borders. Large areas of desert pavement are permanently scarred and denuded of vegetation. In addition, a road penetrates the site, leading to and past a guzzler which is quite visible. The natural condition has been degraded to the point where it no longer meets minimal wilderness criteria.

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

Vegetation and landform would support only a sense of solitude and opportunities for an unconfined type of recreation would be limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several public comments addressed the unique vegetative associations located in the Milpitas Wash. Other comments indicated strong rockhounding interests. As the narrative indicates, none of Area 353 is being considered for further wilderness study.

AREA 354

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bordered on the north by the Milpitas Wash Road; on the south and west, by a maintained road; and, on the east, by a utility pole line and access road and Highway 78.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 50 percent of the area is non-public lands. The remainder does not contain 5000 acres of contiguous public lands and is not of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Only a few comments, and those were in favor of wilderness designation for the checkerboard sections.

AREA 355

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The area is located beside the Colorado River, between Blythe and Yuma. Its western boundary is formed by Highways 78 and S-34; the southern border, by Indian Pass Road; the eastern boundary, by the edge of the California Desert Conservation Area; and, the short northern border, Walters Camp Road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The northern portion of the area, roughly north of Quartz Peak, is checkerboarded with public and non-public land. In the southern area there are three sections of non-public land which account for approximately 5 percent of the total land area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This relatively large area encompasses a large variety of terrain. A great deal of land is flat to low rolling hills, laced with washes of all widths and depths. Scattered rugged low mountains, canyons, and highly eroded surfaces occur throughout the

site. Plant cover varies considerably with location and elevation. The entire spectrum, from sites entirely void of vegetation to areas with relatively dense coverage, is mixed throughout. Vegetation in the washes reaches deep into the site from the heavily vegetated Colorado River area. Creosote, mesquite, smoke trees, catclaw plus a variety of low desert shrubs and grasses abound in many areas.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The boundary of the potential Wilderness Study Area is common with the California Desert Conservation Area boundary on the east north to the checkerboard land pattern. From that point, it extends west following the bottom edge of the private land for approximately five miles and then southwest along a short mining road in the northern portion of Peter Kane Mountain; from here southeast along the Julian Wash Road to Section 6 (T. 13 S., R. 21 E.). The potential Wilderness Study Area excludes the mining activity in Julian Wash. The boundary crosses the Black Mountains east of the repeater site, excluding that site and associated roads and powerlines. It then skirts around the base of the Black Mountains to Indian Pass where it follows the jeep trail in Gavilan Wash back to the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. Also a small area has been excluded just northeast of Indian Pass, for mining scars.

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

This relatively remote area offers a variety of topography and vegetative screening. Rapidly changing landforms, rugged surfaces with deep, twisting washes, valleys and canyons in addition to areas of heavy vegetation provide numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude. Diversity of the site provides numerous challenges to visitors.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments pointed out the extent of the imprint of man's work in the north and southwest portions and the naturalness of the core. Field checks validated these comments and made appropriate changes.

AREA 355A

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The roadless area is located beside the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona. The area is bordered on northwest by the Indian Pass Road; on the northeast, by the Picacho State Recreation Area; on the east, by Picacho Road; on the southeast, by the road from elevation 423, in Section 22 (T. 15 S. R. 22 E.), west and southwest to a utility line in Section 10 (T. 16 S., R. 21 E.); on the southwest, by the utility line road right-of-way; and, on the west by Highway S 34.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately 8 sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 9 percent of the land area. A small area along the northern edge of the potential wilderness study area is in a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The borders of the site encompass a wide variety of topography. In the southern section, the rugged, Cargo Muchacho Mountains dominate the scene. Volcanic rocks, deep canyons, twisting washes, mixed with more typical flat desert areas present an impressive picture. Moving north, the terrain changes into low rolling hills and then back into the jagged and coarse area around Picacho Peak, a local landmark. Plant cover varies considerably throughout the site. In the Cargo Muchacho Mountains and Picacho Peaks area, vegetation is sparse to nonexistent. Washes provide the primary green areas in the southern and central areas. Nearing the Colorado River, plant life increases dramatically; mesquite, catclaw, smoke trees, and a wide variety of low desert shrubs and grasses can be found.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The naturalness of the site has suffered considerably from past activities of man. The Cargo Muchacho Mountains are laced with roads and ways, mining scars, equipment and debris. The signs of man's activities extend far up the site to the base of the Picacho

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1355-2 Acreage 6,546

(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 triangular shaped unit has a northern and western boundary of Vinagre Wash; the southern boundary is Indian Pass Wilderness; and the eastern boundary is BLM Route 599. The 6,546 acres are all Public Lands.

(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 unit encompasses a variety of terrain ranging from flat to low rolling hills, washes of all widths and depths, scattered rugged low mountains, canyons, and highly eroded surfaces. The vegetation varies considerably with location and elevation. The entire spectrum, from sites entirely void of vegetation to areas with relatively dense coverage, is mixed throughout. Vegetation in the washes reaches deep into the unit from the heavily vegetated Colorado River area. Creosote, mesquite, smoke trees, cat-claw plus a variety of low-desert shrubs and grasses abound in many areas.

(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):

The remote area offers a variety of topography and vegetative screening. Rapidly changing landforms, rugged surfaces with deep, twisting washes, valleys and canyons in addition to areas of heavy vegetation provide numerous 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):

The remote area offers a variety of topography and vegetative screening. Rapidly changing landforms, rugged surfaces with deep, twisting washes, valleys and canyons in addition to areas of heavy vegetation provide numerous outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined recreation. The diversity of the unit provides challenges to all visitors.

(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:

Viewsheds within this unit are very important to the tribes. It is part of the Quechan Trail of Dreams and is also a Traditional Cultural Property connected to the Indian Pass area.