

Summary of Analysis\*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA 1362-1

Summary

Results of analysis:

The area consists primarily of the Algodones Dunes System which is one of the largest dune masses in the United States. The unit is made up of steep, sandy slopes with thickets of mesquite and palo verde. The western flank consists of a gradual slope of creosote. The northern and southern portions of the unit have been affected by heavy OHV use, thus degrading the naturalness of the area. Due to the history of OHV activities and imprints of man's work being substantially noticeable, these two areas as well as the eastern and western flanks do not show wilderness characteristics and will not be included. The large central portion of this unit is affected primarily by the forces of nature, generally undisturbed. These boundaries are generally the old WSA boundary for this area and consist of roughly 42,083 acres.

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:

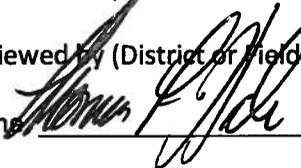
The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

John Johnson, Environmental Protection Specialist, 3/30/2012 (with input from ECFO Interdisciplinary Team)

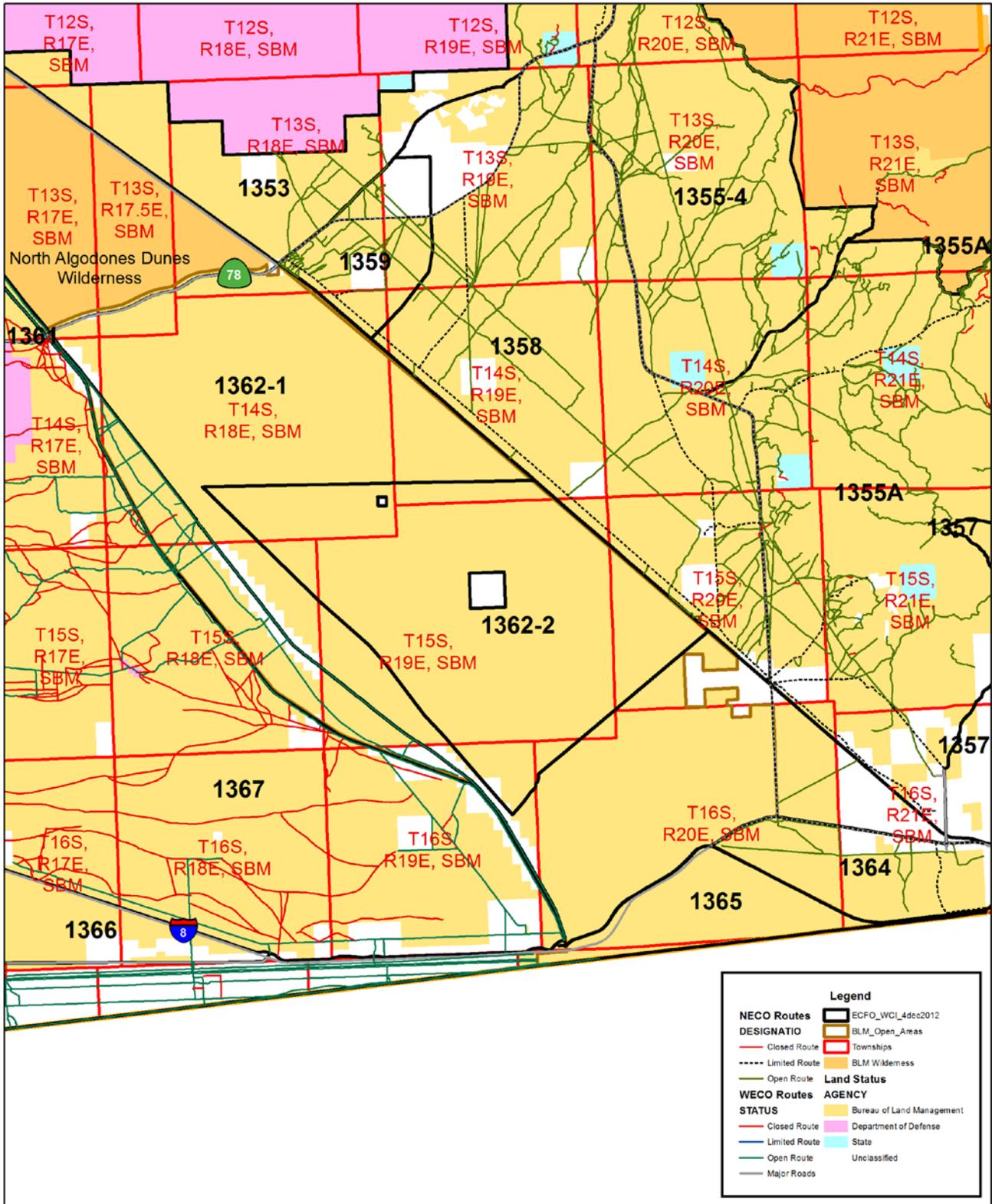
Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name:  Title: Field Manager

Date: 6/3/2015

\*This form documents information that constitutes an 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.





## Wilderness Character Inventory - CDCA\_1362-1



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

Canal Route; the southern, a combination of the All-American Canal and Interstate 8; and, the eastern, a railroad.

## II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately seven sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 3 percent of the area. The area is a Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

## III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area consists primarily of the Algodones Dune System which is one of the largest dune masses in the United States. The northern portion of this roadless area includes steep sandy slopes, while the central portion includes more gently rolling dune masses with thickets of mesquite and palo verde. The steeper western flanks drop rapidly to Creosote Bush Scrub flats. Several plant species found in this area have been proposed for Federal listing as "endangered." In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed "endangered" listing for the Andrews scarab beetle and the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard.

## IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The large central portion of the Algodones Dune system is affected primarily by the forces of nature and is an area where the earth and its community of life are undisturbed by man. The northern portion includes the Gecko Campground and Osborne County Park near Competition Hill. Off-road vehicle activity has severely reduced much of the natural vegetative cover and has compacted the northern sand mass. Similarly, use in the southern portion of the Algodones Dunes by off-road vehicles has reduced natural vegetation. Due to the alteration of the natural landscape by off-road vehicle activity which has resulted in the imprint of man's work being substantially noticeable, these areas, as well as those along the eastern and western borders for the same reasons, have been determined not to contain wilderness values and have been excluded from wilderness consideration.

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

Due to the extremely hilly and varied shape and size of the dune systems, as well as thick stands of mesquite and creosote vegetation, this area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area's topography, accentuated by changing patterns of light, shadow, and color tend to enhance feelings of vastness and solitude. Opportunities for nature study are extremely high due to the unique plant and animal populations which are found within this area.

## VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the comments addressing inventory criteria indicated approval for including the area for further study or expanding the present boundaries. Other comments felt that man's influence on the area was significant. Many other comments spoke to study phase factors. Examples included potential for geothermal development, recreation use, and endangered species protection.

## AREA 364

### I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This area is bounded by Interstate 8 on the north; Highway 186 on the east; and, the All-American Canal and access road on the west and south.

### II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This area is all public land.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This area is relatively small, with some undulations in terrain, including the small outcrop of Pilot Knob. The area is sparsely vegetated and contains some areas of sand dunes.



Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1362-1 Acreage 114,135

(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 northern boundary parallels Highway 78; the western boundary is a combination of the old and New Coachella Canals and access roads; the southern boundary is a combination of Interstate 8 and the All American Canal; and the eastern boundary is the Union Pacific Railroad. The majority of the area is Public Lands with several portions of Private Lands scattered throughout.

**(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 area consists primarily of the Algodones Dunes System which is one of the largest dune masses in the United States. The unit is made up of steep, sandy slopes with thickets of mesquite and palo verde. The western flank consists of a gradual slope of creosote. The northern and southern portions of the unit have been affected by heavy OHV use, thus degrading the naturalness of the area. Due to the history of OHV activities and imprints of man’s work being substantially noticeable, these two areas as well as the eastern and western flanks do not show wilderness characteristics and will not be included. The large central portion of this unit is affected primarily by the forces of nature, generally undisturbed. These boundaries are generally the old WSA boundary for this area and consists of roughly 42,083 acres.

**(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  X  N/A \_\_\_\_\_

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  X  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):

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

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  X  N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description: