

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA 1354-1

Summary

Results of analysis:

Terrain within the unit varies between desert pavement and the broad Milpitas Wash. Vegetation in the area is generally sparse except within Milpitas Wash, where it becomes dense. Vegetation includes creosote, palo verde, smoke tree, cat-claw, and mesquite. With the tall vegetation, large washes and popular bird watching, the area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude as well as outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined recreation. 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)

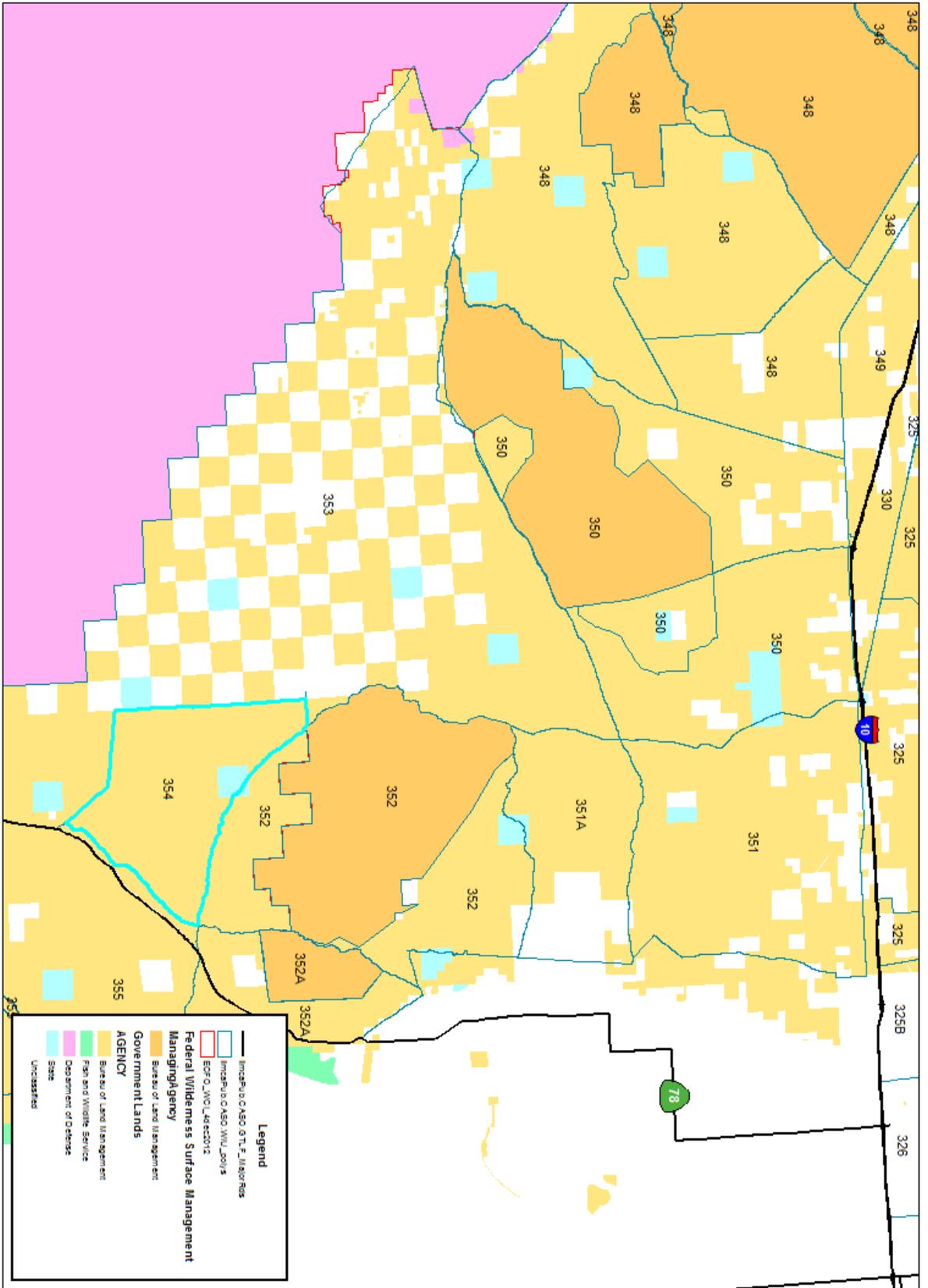
Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: *Mark P. [Signature]* Title: Acting Field Manager

Date: 2/21/2013

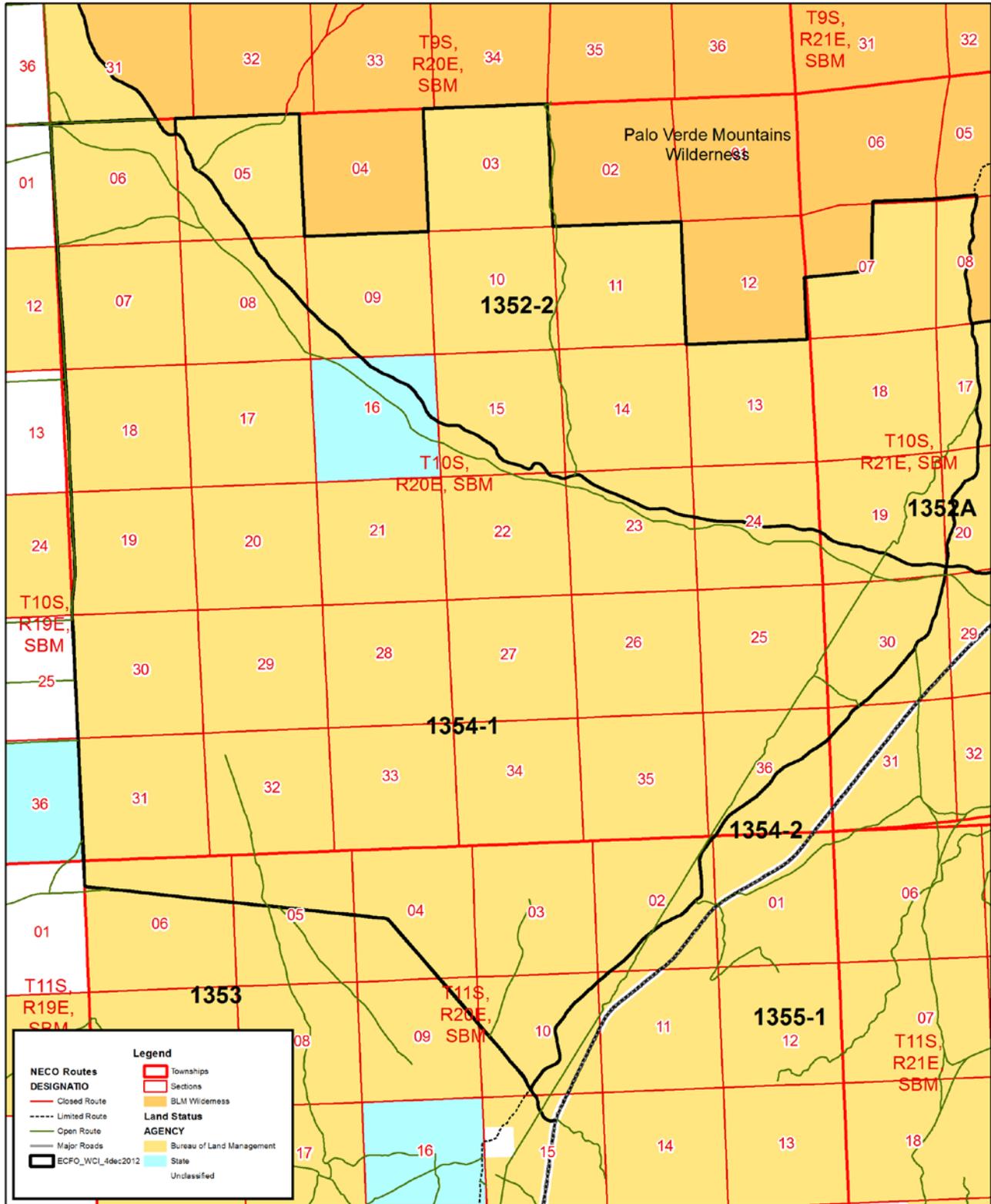
*This form documents information that constitutes and inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR or 1610.5-3

CA – 1354 – 1 Locator Map

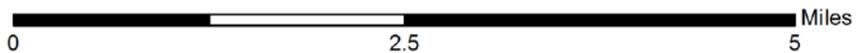


Wilderness Character Inventory 1354-1 - Locator Map





Wilderness Character Inventory - CDCA_1354-1



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

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1354-1 Acreage 18,945

(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 bordered on the north by Milpitas Wash Road; on the south and west by Midway Well Road; and the east by a utility poleline and access road as well as Hwy 78. There are a couple NECO designated routes of travel within the unit.

(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):

Terrain within the unit varies between desert pavement and the broad Milpitas Wash. Vegetation in the area is generally sparse except within Milpitas Wash, where it becomes dense. Vegetation includes creosote, palo verde, smoke tree, cat-claw, and mesquite.

(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 unit has outstanding opportunities for solitude mainly because of the taller vegetation.

(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 unit has outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined recreation. The area is highly used for bird watching.

(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.