

6310 – Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Area Unique Identifier: ESDC_14-1, 14-2

Summary: The unit is bound to the north by the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation; west and south by private lands; and to the east is the San Ysidro Mountains Wilderness Study Area. There is a network of routes in the southwest section (314 acres) of the unit leaving 333 roadless acres adjacent to the San Ysidro Mountains Wilderness Study Area and Los Coyotes Indian Reservation. The small unit is mostly Public Lands in the Buck Canyon area. It has a history of human uses including, but not limited to hiking, horseback riding. The unit is steep and rugged with oak woodland and mountain chaparral. Its rugged terrain, broken topography, vegetation and relatively low visitation allow ample opportunity for solitude. The unit offers opportunities for hiking, hunting, horseback riding and general nature study. No formal hiking trails exist, so all hiking is cross-country. The Visual Resources Inventory conducted in September of 2010 shows the area as being a VRM Class.

Results of analysis:

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

Conclusion:

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

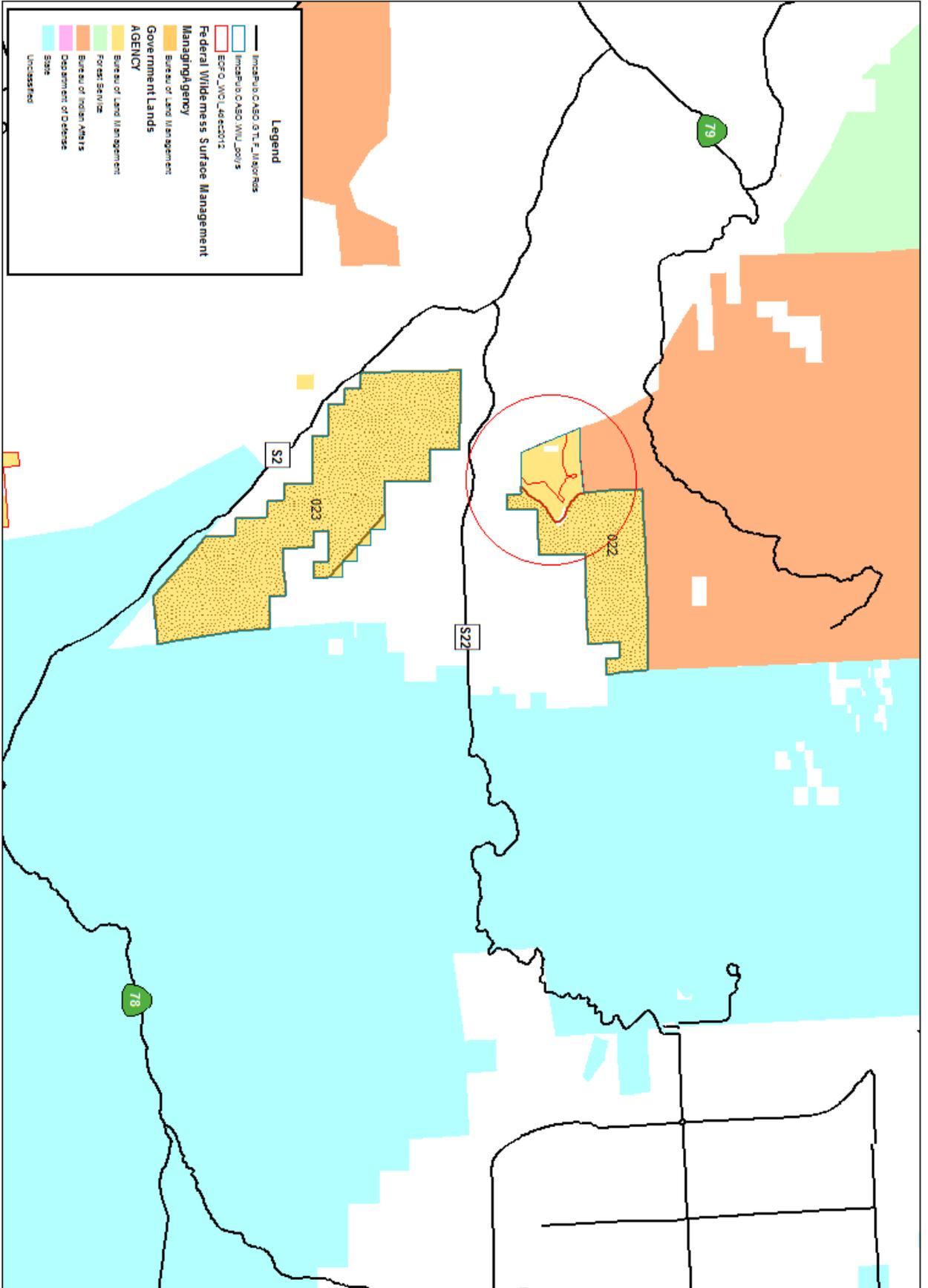
The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members): John Johnson, Environmental Protection Specialist, 12/4/2011 (with input from ECFO Interdisciplinary Team)

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: _____ Title: Field Manager Date: 2/21/2013

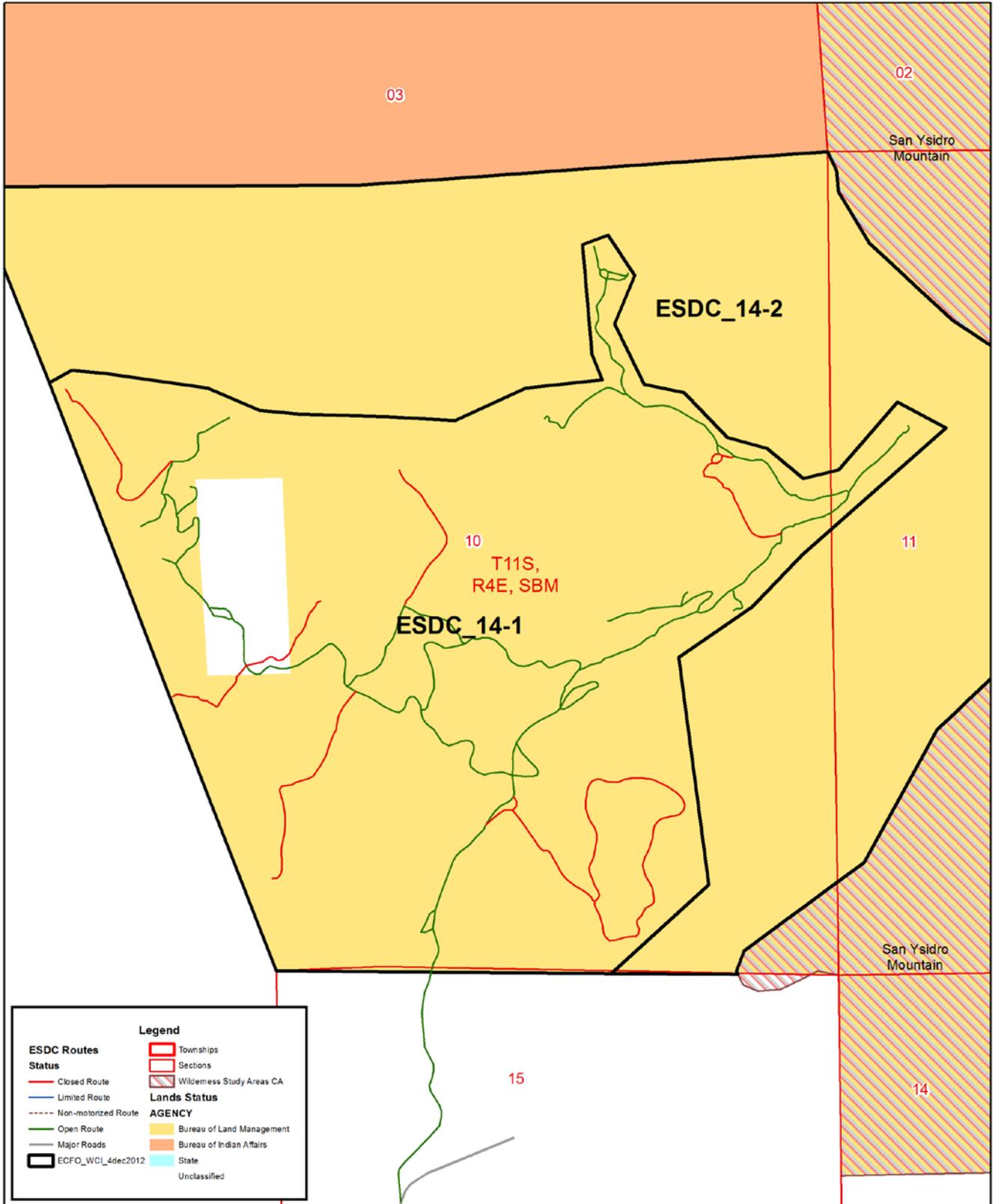
*This form documents information that constitutes and inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR or 1610.5-3.



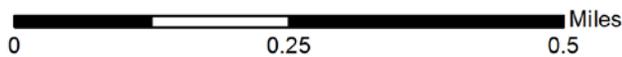
Wilderness Character Inventory ESDC - 14-1, 14-2 - Locator Map

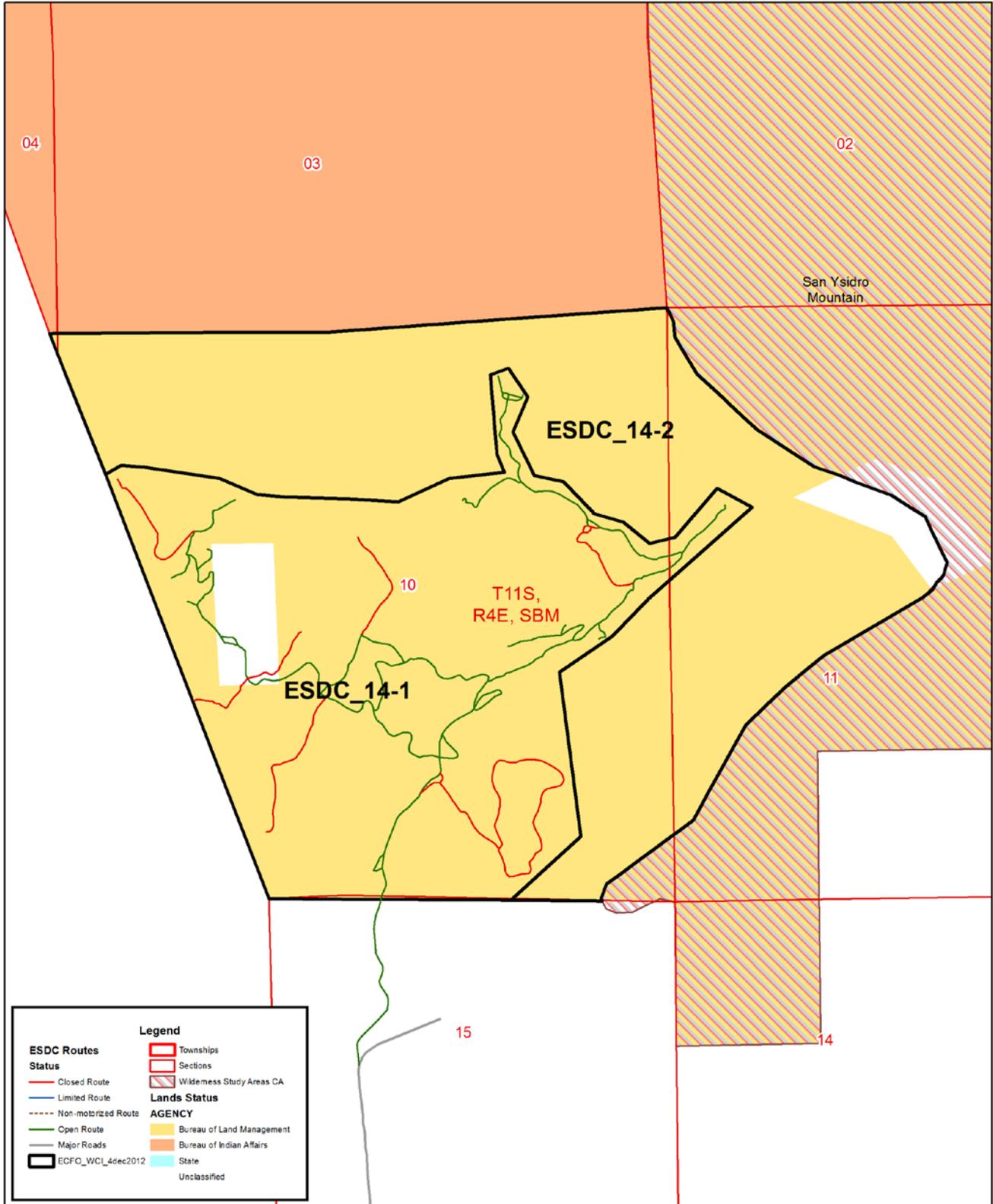


CA – ESDC – 14-1 Map

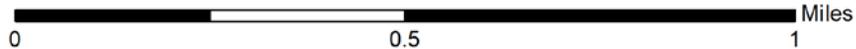
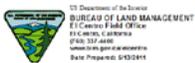


Wilderness Character Inventory - ESDC_14-1





Wilderness Character Inventory - ESDC_14-2



IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Neither roads nor ways intrude into the area. Several rock cairns exist along the ridgeline, but no evidence was found indicating active mining claims. Similar cairns were found in the unit's southeastern streambed. In general the unit is in a natural condition.

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

With the exception of the area identified as a potential wilderness study area (also adjacent to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park's potential wilderness area), the shape and size of the unit (460 acres) limits opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments varied from general references to gemstone deposits and mines in the region to being potential bighorn sheep habitat. More specific comments referred to managing the area for fire protection, hiking access and wildlife protection. Some public comments agreed with BLM findings.

No mines were found within the unit. Questions of potential mineral and gem deposits are study phase considerations and so are comments on managing the unit.

CA-060-021B, Comb's Peak B
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park forms the eastern boundary of the unit. A truck trail to Lost Valley forms the northern boundary. The western and southern boundaries are formed by nonpublic lands.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire unit is composed of public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unit lies predominantly within an intermittent stream channel. The unit is covered with dense chaparral with some live oak riparian communities in the lower areas. There are some open, sparsely vegetated areas resulting from previous wild fires.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

A powerline and firebreak substantially impact the naturalness of the unit. These intrusions are highly visible from any point within the unit.

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

Due to the unit's small size (76 acres) and intrusions, opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation are very limited.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments varied from general references to gemstone deposits and mines in the region to being potential bighorn sheep habitat. More specific comments referred to managing the area for fire protection, hiking access, and wildlife protection. Some public comments agreed with BLM findings.

No mines were found within the unit. Questions of potential mineral and gem deposits are study phase considerations and so are comments on managing the unit.

CA-060-022, San Ysidro Mountain
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The Los Coyotes Indian Reservation and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park comprise the northern and eastern boundaries, respectively. Nonpublic lands form the south and east boundaries.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Two patented mines are encompassed by the unit's 2,721 acres of public land, but the proposed 2,131-acre wilderness study area does not encompass either patented mine.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The top of San Ysidro Mountain comprises the northern portion of the unit. The remaining area has a southern aspect and contains Bergstrom, Buck, and Cherry Canyons. The terrain is steep and is covered with pine at the summit, chaparral on the higher slopes, and desert scrub near the bottom.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

In Bergstrom and Buck Canyons, a system of roads, mines, and buildings exists. Development is so extensive that this portion of the unit has been excluded as a potential wilderness study area. The northeastern part of the unit has been burned in the past and required tree plantings to encourage regeneration of the pine forest at the higher elevations. No other intrusions were seen in the unit.

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

The unit is physically confining to the recreation user. However, when considered in combination with the state's Sheep Canyon potential wilderness area, the unit would be of sufficient size to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation. The unit's limited access, broken topography, and vegetation also contribute to these factors.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments differed. Specific mention was made to the roads, mines, and houses in Buck Canyon. Support was given to the area's hiking potential. Also voiced was that the unit could not meet wilderness criteria if its contiguity with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was ignored. Support was given for wilderness designation even though a tree plantation is within the unit. Comments on future management concentrated on wildlife protection, maximum walking distance to the center of a future wilderness, providing public access to Cherry Canyon Road. Mineral resources are more important and should receive more consideration than wilderness.

Comments on resource allocation and management practices are study phase considerations. Developments in Buck and Bergstrom Canyons support their exclusion from the wilderness study area designation.

CA-060-023, San Felipe Hills
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The entire boundary is composed of nonpublic lands with the exception of 2 miles that are contiguous to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on the east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire unit is composed of public lands. The proposed wilderness study area, which includes nearly the entire inventory unit, contains 5,265 acres, all of which are public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unit consists of a 9-mile long ridge extending southeast to northwest. The steep-sided ridge is predominately covered by dense chaparral, the lower areas by sparse desert scrub.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The naturalness of the unit has been somewhat impaired by the existence of trails; however, they are slowly disappearing. Some interior fencing can be seen within the unit. A powerline crosses along the northeastern boundary of the area and defines the edge of the proposed wilderness study area.

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

The dense vegetation and rugged topography provide excellent screening capabilities, enhancing opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public has expressed the following viewpoints. The unit should not become a wilderness area because valuable minerals and rare earths are believed to be located within the unit. The area should be open for rockhounds to use their vehicles in searching for rocks. Roads, radio towers, ranches and houses outside the unit, but near the boundary, should disqualify the unit from wilderness classification. Others believe that the area is in a natural condition and is contiguous with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and should be classified as wilderness.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier ESDC 14-1, 14-2 Acreage 647

(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 bound to the north by the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation; west and south by private lands; and to the east is the San Ysidro Mountains Wilderness Study Area. There is a network of routes in the southwest section (314 acres) of the unit leaving 333 roadless acres adjacent to the San Ysidro Mountains Wilderness Study Area and Los Coyotes Indian Reservation.

(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 small unit is mostly Public Lands in the Buck Canyon area. It has a history of human uses including, but not limited to hiking, horseback riding. The unit is steep and rugged with oak woodland and mountain chaparral.

(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):

Although the unit is small, it is adjacent to the San Ysidro Mountains Wilderness Study Area and the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation. Its rugged terrain, broken topography, vegetation and relatively low visitation allow ample opportunity 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 unit offers opportunities for hiking, hunting, horseback riding and general nature study. No formal hiking trails exist, so all hiking is cross-country.

(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:

Two special plant species occur in the area in Orcutt’s brodiaea and fairchild’s lily. The presence of the loggerhead shrike also occur’s here.