

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: ESDC 4

Summary

Results of analysis:

The unit is approximately 4,262 acres and adjacent to the south of the Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness. McCain Valley Rd. mainly bisects the unit. There is private property to the east and within the southern portion. Other adjacent lands include the U.S. Forest Service to the west, Tribal lands to the south and State Lands to the southwest and northeast which include the Sombrero Peak Wilderness. The area's north and west of McCain Valley Rd. offer the best chance for solitude with the dense vegetation, rugged topography and limited access. The unit has historic archeological values as sites exist throughout the unit. The Visual Resources Inventory conducted in September of 2010 shows the area as being a VRM Class 2 and Class 3 with adjacent lands being VRM Class 1 in the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness.

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:

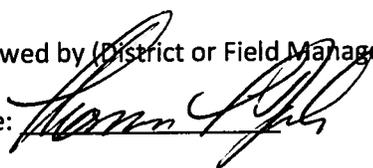
The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

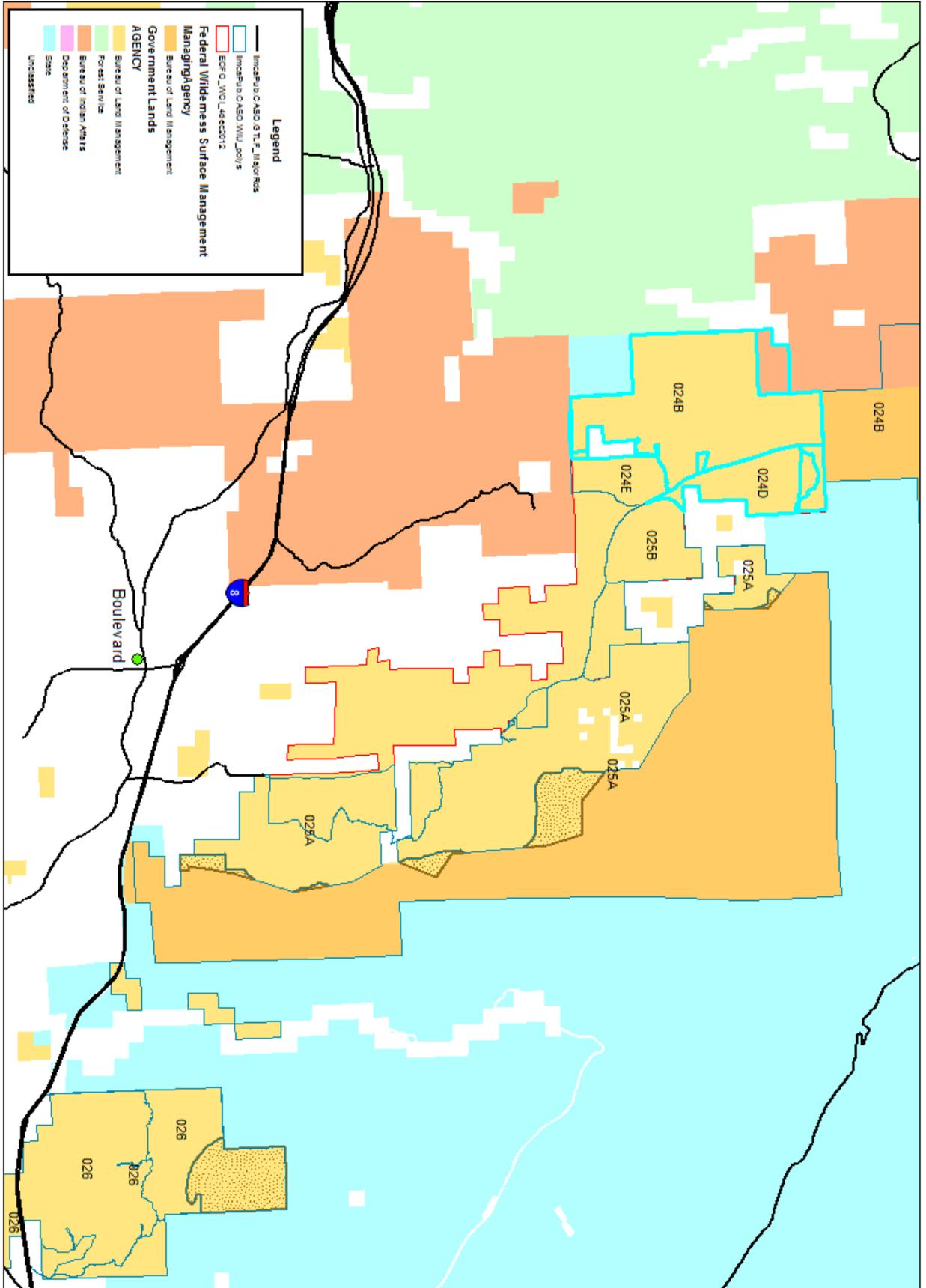
John Johnson, Environmental Protection Specialist, 12/4/2011 (with input from ECFO Interdisciplinary Team)

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

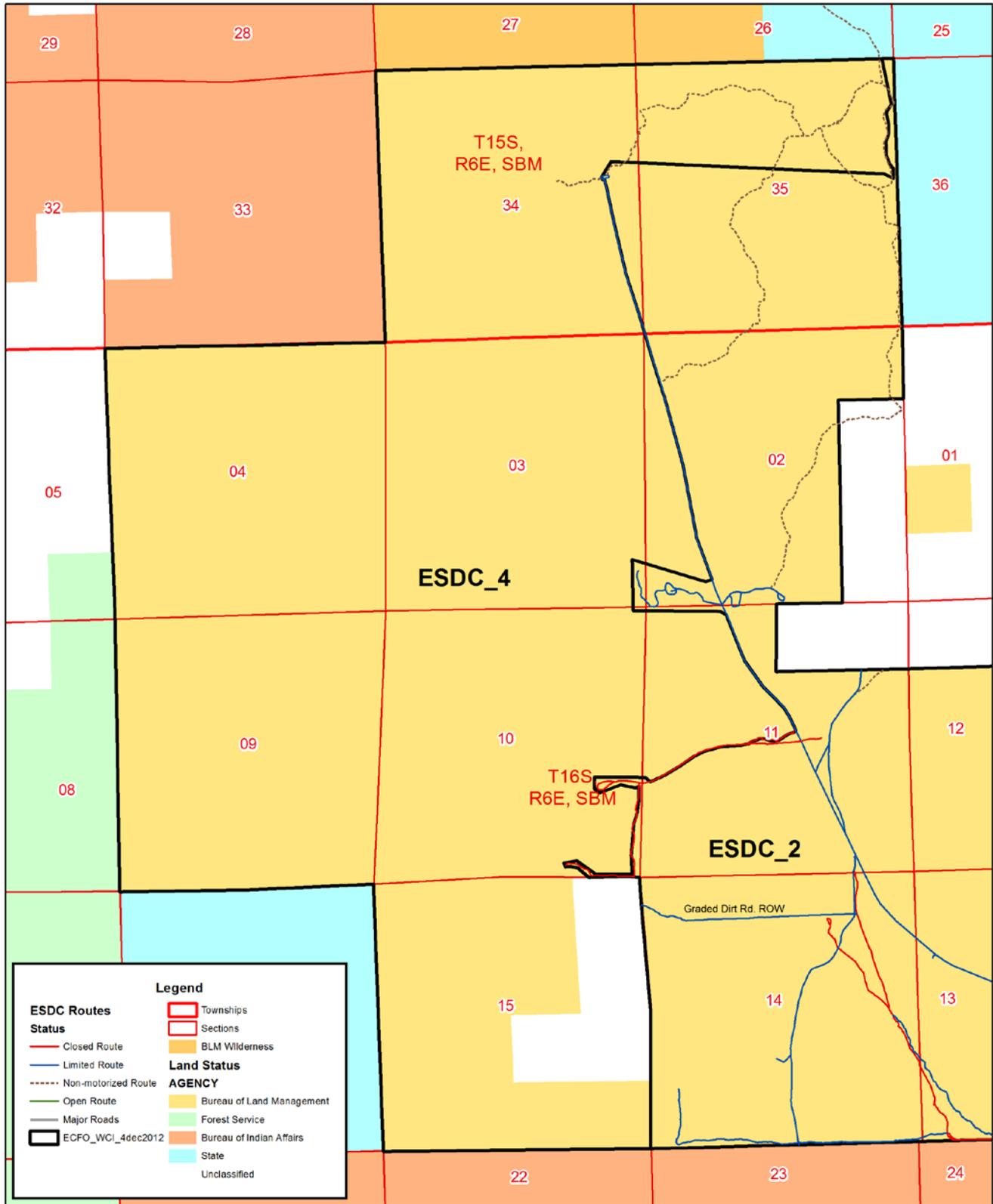
Name:  Title: Acting Field Manager

Date: 2/21/2013

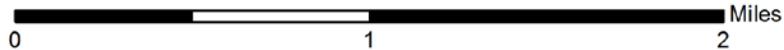
*This form documents information that constitutes and inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR or 1610.5-3



Wilderness Character Inventory ESDC - 4 - Locator Map



Wilderness Character Inventory - ESDC_4



The comments have concurred with BLM's reports, referred to areas outside the unit or are wilderness study phase considerations. No new facts were mentioned.

CA-060-024A, Sawtooth Mountains A
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The unit is bounded on the north and northeast by nonpublic lands. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park borders on the west and the Cleveland National Forest on the south. Unit CA-060-024B borders on the east.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire unit is composed of public land. The proposed wilderness study area, which includes all the intensive inventory unit except a small parcel in the northeast corner, contains a total of 3,892 acres.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The dominating feature in the unit is an east-west ridge that rises above the Vallecito Valley to the north. The sides of the ridge are very steep and are covered with sparse desert scrub near the base to dense chaparral near the ridge top. Active grazing occurs in the lower elevations.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area is in a natural state with almost no evidence of man's actions.

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

The limited access and rugged topography provide outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Based on Forest Service review, a potential exists to include approximately 2,000 acres of the Cleveland National Forest with this intensive inventory unit and Unit CA-060-024B, for a combined total of nearly 30,000 acres of potential wilderness. This would further increase opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public has expressed the following varied viewpoints. The area is permeated with roads. Because the unit borders on Indian reservations and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the criteria for wilderness are not met. They expressed a belief that the protection of bighorn sheep is the reason for considering the unit as a wilderness area, but the bighorn sheep are not affected by man and do not need the protection of a wilderness area. The use of beehives, water troughs, and fences on public lands disqualify an area for wilderness designation. Some questioned the BLM's designation of the route to Inner Pasture as a road. Discrepancies between the Draft Initial Inventory map and the July 1979 map were noted.

Statements on land treatment and management are study phase considerations. The route to Inner Pasture is maintained and regularly used to provide access to private property and an airfield. Corrections are being made to maps as cartographic errors are detected.

CA-060-024B, Sawtooth Mountains B
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The Cuyapaipe Indian Reservation and the Cleveland National Forest comprise the west boundary of the unit. The north and southeast boundaries are comprised of nonpublic lands. The east boundary is Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the Manzanita Indian Reservation forms the south boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The 31,006 acres of public land encompass 38 acres of private ownership. The proposed wilderness study area contains 24,419 acres of BLM-administered land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the unit varies from flat valley bottom to steep rugged mountainsides. The higher elevations support a dense chaparral vegetation; the lower valley areas and lower ridges are covered with sparse desert scrub. Active grazing occurs throughout the lower portion of the unit.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The central portion of this unit, which includes the proposed wilderness study area, is in a natural condition with few impacts of man. Roads extend into the unit, but are not substantially noticeable. Pipelines and numerous trails impact the naturalness of the extreme northern end of the unit. The southern one-third of the area contains White Arrow and Cottonwood Campgrounds associated with the McCain Valley Recreation Area. Intensive off-road vehicle use occurs around these sites, creating numerous trails. An east-west fence and rugged topography effectively eliminate the spread of these off-road vehicle trails into the remaining area of the unit to the north. Two airfields at the eastern end of Canbrake Wash were excluded from the proposed wilderness study area.

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

Within the proposed wilderness study area, some areas of dense vegetation, rugged topography, and limited access provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. In the southern area, intensive off-road vehicle use and numerous associated trails adversely impact opportunities for solitude and limit primitive recreation experiences.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public has expressed the following varied viewpoints. The area is permeated with roads. Because the unit borders on Indian reservations and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the criteria for wilderness are not met. They expressed a belief that the protection of bighorn sheep is the reason for considering the unit as a wilderness area, but the bighorn sheep are not affected by man and do not need the protection of a wilderness area. The use of beehives, water troughs, and fences on public lands disqualify an area for wilderness designation. Some questioned the BLM's designation of the route to Inner Pasture as a road. Discrepancies between the Draft Initial Inventory map and the July 1979 map were noted.

Statements on land treatment and management are study phase considerations. The route to Inner Pasture is maintained and regularly used to provide access to private property and an airfield. Corrections are being made to maps as cartographic errors are detected.

CA-060-024C, Sawtooth Mountains C
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Nonpublic lands and Canebrake Wash Road constitute the northwest boundary of the unit. The remaining boundaries are defined by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

This unit of public land does not encompass any private land. The proposed wilderness study area amounts to 2,509 acres.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unit is a steep, northwest-facing slope overlooking Canebrake Wash. The area is sparsely covered with desert scrub and exposed rock.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

With the exception of a small portion of an airfield which extends a short distance into the northernmost portion of the unit, the area is not impacted by man due to limited access and rugged steep topography.

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

Standing on its own, this unit is too small and confined to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. However, the unit is contiguous to the proposed Sombbrero Peak State Wilderness Area, and when viewed collectively, provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation due to rugged topography and limited access.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public has expressed the following varied viewpoints. The area is permeated with roads. Because the unit borders on Indian reservations and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the criteria for wilderness are not met. They expressed a belief that the protection of bighorn sheep is the reason for considering the unit as a wilderness area, but the bighorn sheep are not affected by man and do not need the protection of a wilderness area. The use of beehives, water troughs, and fences on public lands disqualify an area for wilderness designation. Some questioned the BLM's designation of the route to Inner Pasture as a road. Discrepancies between the Draft Initial Inventory map and the July 1979 map were noted.

Statements on land treatment and management are study phase considerations. The route to Inner Pasture is maintained and regularly used to provide access to private property and an airfield. Corrections are being made to maps as cartographic errors are detected.

CA-060-024D, Sawtooth Mountains D
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The McCain Valley Road borders the unit on the west. A service road on the north, nonpublic lands, and the Canebrake Road join to form the remainder of the boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire unit is composed of public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unit is composed of rolling hills covered with sparse desert scrub vegetation, with scattered areas of chaparral. The area receives intense off-road vehicle use.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Intensive off-road vehicle use in the unit has resulted in the presence of numerous trails and ways which greatly affect the naturalness of the area.

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

The small size (1,000 acres) and the intensive off-road vehicle use which occurs in the area allow little opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public has expressed the following varied viewpoints. The area is permeated with roads. Because the unit borders on Indian reservations and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, the criteria for wilderness are not met. They expressed a belief that the protection of bighorn sheep is the reason for considering the unit as a wilderness area, but the bighorn sheep are not affected by man and do not need the protection of a wilderness area. The use of beehives, water troughs, and fences on public lands disqualify an area for wilderness designation. Some questioned the BLM's designation of the route to Inner Pasture as a road. Discrepancies between the Draft Initial Inventory map and the July 1979 map were noted.

Statements on land treatment and management are study phase considerations. The route to Inner Pasture is maintained and regularly used to provide access to private property and an airfield. Corrections are being made to maps as cartographic errors are detected.

CA-060-24E, Sawtooth Mountains E
(Map 06-R)

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The Manzanita Indian Reservation defines the southern boundary of the unit. Canebrake and McCain Valley Roads form the east boundary. The north boundary is formed by the White Arrow Campground Road. Service roads and nonpublic lands comprise the west boundary.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The entire unit is composed of public lands.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The unit is composed of desert scrub and chaparral-covered rolling hills. The area receives intensive off-road vehicle use.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Intensive off-road vehicle use, resulting in the formation of numerous trails and ways, has significantly reduced the natural values of this unit.

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

The unit's extremely small size (633 acres) and intensive off-road vehicle use limits opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier ESDC 4 Acreage 4,262

(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 approximately 4,262 acres and adjacent to the south of the Sawtooth Mountains Wilderness. McCain Valley Rd. mainly bisects the unit. There is private property to the east and within the southern portion. Other adjacent lands include the U.S. Forest Service to the west, Tribal lands to the south and State Lands to the southwest and northeast which include the Sombrero Peak Wilderness.

(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 is all Public Lands with a history of human uses including, but not limited to hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. The eastern part of this unit consists of rolling hills covered in sparse desert scrub east of McCain Valley Rd. The lands to the north of the end of McCain Valley Rd. and to the west of McCain Valley Rd. contain heavy vegetation cover, oak woodlands and riparian areas throughout its rolling hills with some steep mountainous terrain as seen in photos 12a-f.

(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 area’s north and west of McCain Valley Rd. offer the best chance for solitude with the dense vegetation, rugged topography and limited access.

(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 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 area's north and west of McCain Valley Rd. offer the best chance for solitude with the dense vegetation, rugged topography and limited access.

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

Yes No N/A

Description:

The unit has historic archeological values as sites exist throughout the unit. The Visual Resources Inventory conducted in September of 2010 shows the area as being a VRM Class 2 and Class 3 with adjacent lands being VRM Class 1 in the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness.

*Frame # 11a looking west



**Frame # 12a looking south



**Frame # 12b looking west



**Frame # 12c looking northwest



**Frame # 12d looking north-northwest



**Frame # 12e looking north



**Frame # 12f looking northeast



**Frame # 12g looking east



**Frame # 12h looking south



*Photo taken from McCain Valley Rd. X graded dirt road to private property near WCI_04

**Photos taken from the north end of McCain Valley Rd.