

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA 1369-1

Summary

Results of analysis:

The unit is mostly Public Lands with sever full and partial section of Private Lands. With WECO designated routes of travel throughout the entire unit, it does not contain 5,000 contiguous, roadless 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:

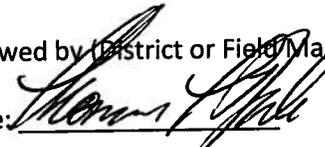
The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

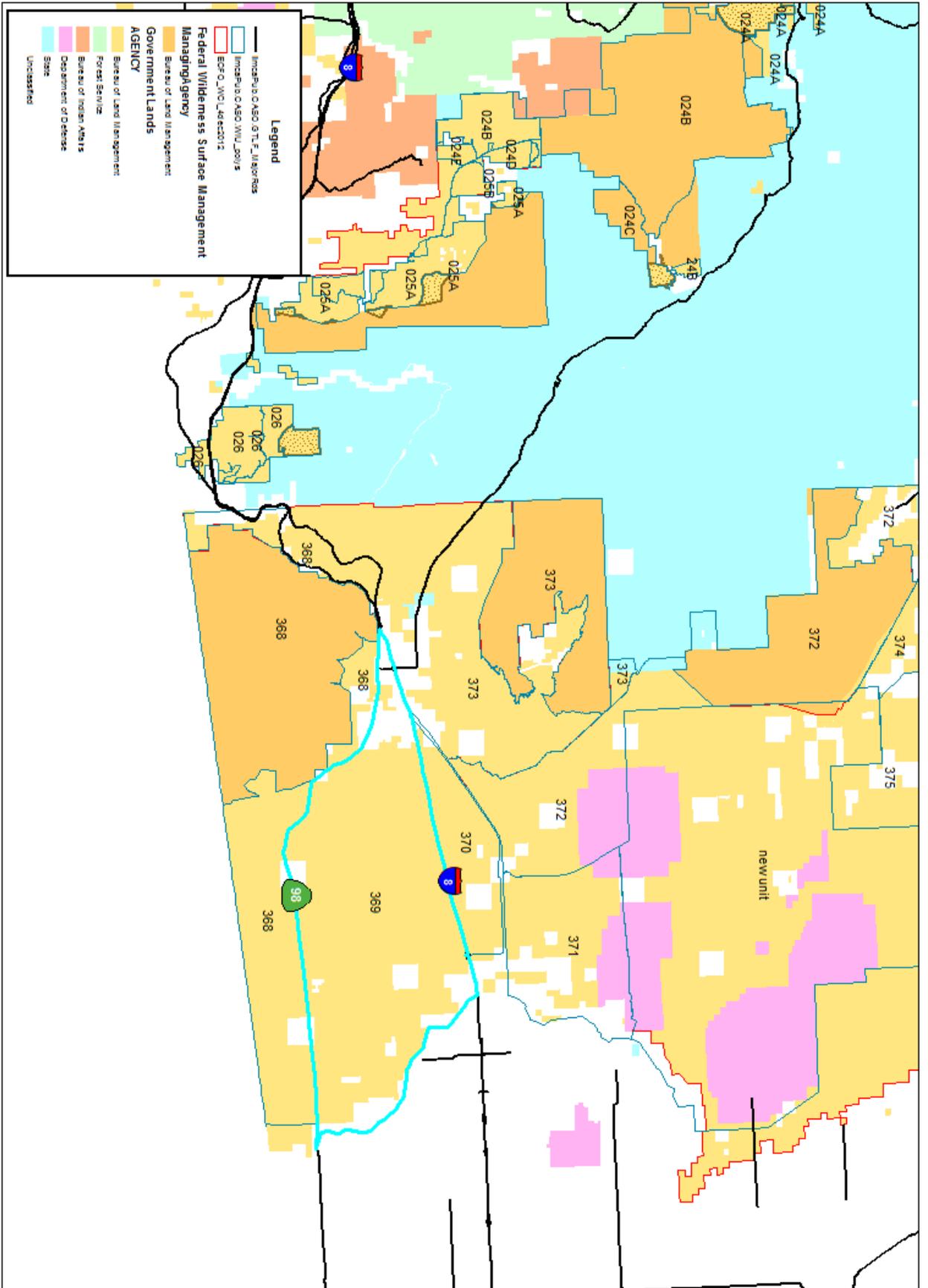
John Johnson, Environmental Protection Specialist, 3/29/2012 (with input from ECFO Interdisciplinary Team)

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 1369-1 - Locator Map



south is the Mexico-California border. A U.S. Border Patrol drag road is also located along a portion of the southern boundary. The eastern boundary is a maintained, graded road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

About six sections of this area are non-public lands; the remainder, public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The western portion of this area consists of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains which rise above the Yuha Basin and have impeded human travel and access for centuries. Landforms in the entire area range from the gently-sloping, enclosed basin of Davies Valley to the steep-walled canyons and the pinnacles and spires of the higher summits. The area also embraces secluded native palm oases and supports Bighorn sheep. The extreme eastern portion of the roadless area consists primarily of flat terrain dissected by Palo Verde Wash. The area includes palo verde and smoke tree in the washes and some crucifixion thorn around dry lakebeds.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Along the eastern border of the In-Ko-Pah, active sand and gravel operations have reduced and sharply altered the natural condition of the landscape. To the east, improved roads to repeater sites and mines similarly affect the natural character of the land. Also the Davies Valley Road, to prospects and mining claims, has been added through the center of the area. These portions, along with dwellings in the northern section, have been excluded from further wilderness consideration. The remainder of the roadless area is affected primarily by the forces of nature. The diverse topography greatly reduces any impact from man's works, which include a few well-used primitive ways and some abandoned mining prospects.

The adjusted boundary generally follows that of the roadless area to the north and south while, to the east, it closely follows the base of the mountains and, to the west it follows Boulder Creek, some ridgetops, and the road to Smugglers Cave and the Elliot Mine.

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 easily and readily available within the In-Ko-Pah Mountains. The rugged and diverse topography and terrain effectively screen visitors from one another. Numerous varieties of vegetation, including native palm groves, and the presence of Bighorn sheep all add to the primitive experience.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment was evenly divided between those who favored wilderness designation based on wilderness and ecological values, and those who felt the natural values had been impaired by the numerous vehicle routes. The area was field-checked again and changes have been made in the form of additions and deletions.

AREA 369

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary parallels Interstate 8; the eastern boundary, a maintained road west of the Westside Main Canal; the southern boundary, Highway 98; and, the western boundary, a combination of Hocker Drive Road and Highway 98.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

The boundaries include approximately eight sections of non-public land scattered throughout and accounting for approximately 10 percent of the land area. The northern half of the area having wilderness values is in Bureau of Reclamation Withdrawal.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This is a diverse area of eroded badlands, buttes, desert smoke tree, washes, and broad expansive benches. Although sparsely vegetated, the landforms have extremely

colorful pastel shades. Small multicolored rocks, petrified wood, sandstone concretions, and fossil-bearing sediments are highly evident. Yuha Basin is historically significant as a site of early man, and some evidence of such remains today in the form of intaglios, a grave, and artifacts. Some scattered creosote is found throughout, while some numerous stands of Ocotillo are found in the western portions.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

The area has been affected by man and no longer retains a substantial natural character. In the western portion, private homes and ranches are found through much of the area along with associated roads and ways. Hocker Drive Road is maintained by Imperial County and an abandoned microwave relay station is located along this road. Along the northern perimeter of Highway 98, several sand and gravel operations are located, which affect the landscape in such a way that man's work is substantially noticeable. The vast majority of the eastern portion of this roadless area, east of the Oyster Shell Beds, has been used by competition motorcycle racing and is a BLM designated roads and trails area. Motorized vehicle trails and scars have substantially altered the environment so that the entire roadless area no longer retains its primeval character and influence.

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

Outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are not available due to the unnatural character of the landscape.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The majority of the inventory-related comments stated that the area was affected primarily by man. Other comments agreed with the findings. Many other comments dealt with study phase factors.

AREA 370

I. PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This long, narrow area is bounded on the north by Highway 580; on the south, by Interstate 8; and, on the east, by a maintained road.

II. LAND OWNERSHIP

Less than three sections are non-public land.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

This is a relatively flat area, sparsely vegetated with creosote and some isolated ocotillo.

IV. NATURAL CONDITION

Numerous ways and related structures at Plaster City make this an area where man and his own works dominate the landscape.

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

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation are nonexistent due to the narrow confining nature as well as the inability of the land to screen visitors from one another.

VI. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received dealt with study phase considerations.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory (Public)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier CDCA 1369-1 Acreage 51,873

(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 _____ No X _____

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 Interstate 8; the eastern boundary is the Westside Main Canal; the western and southern boundaries are Highway 98. The unit is mostly Public Lands with sever full and partial section of Private Lands. With WECO designated routes of travel throughout the entire unit, it does not contain 5,000 contiguous, roadless acres.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A X _____

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):

(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 _____ N/A X _____

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 _____ N/A X _____

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 _____

N/A X

Description:

(Add description here)