

COVER PAGE

**MEASURING ATTRIBUTES OF WILDERNESS CHARACTER
WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY**

**CDCA222-3/HORSE THIEF SPRING
AUGUST 2015**

BLM

Needles Field Office



Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA222-3/Horse Thief Spring

Summary

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes No

2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes No N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes No N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes No N/A

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

Ramona Daniels, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Wilderness Coordinator,
August 18, 2015

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name:  Title: FIELD MANAGER

Date: 10-9-15

* 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 parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

Office: Needles Field Office
Unit: CDCA222-3/Horse Thief Spring

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

No (Go to Form 2)

Yes (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.):

a) Inventory Source: California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Inventory 1979

b) Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): CDCA222

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): USGS, California 1:100,000: 35115-E1 Mesquite Lake

d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): California Desert District/Needles Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Inventory Source: Needles Field Office Inventory

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
CDCA222-3	Y	N	N	N	Y

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA222-3
Acreage:

(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).

CDCA222 is 255,058 acres
CDCA222-3 is 19,588 acres

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

Note: If "No" is checked the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

CDCA222-3 is a corridor section of land captured between the northern boundary of the Kingston Range Wilderness and Excelsior Road. This area contains an active mine site, the Horse Thief Spring Homestead Site, Spring Site and is also immediately adjacent to the BLM Horse Thief Campground.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

Note: If "No" is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

The majority of CDCA222-3 was a section of land not identified as a WSA or inclusion within the 1994 wilderness Act due to the amount of impact by man on the landscape. The area was found to be non-suitable due to the high numbers of mining claims and grazing allotment infrastructure. This area has grown in popularity due to its easy hiking access to both Kingston Peak Trailheads the backcountry route to the town of Tecopa, China Ranch, historic "Old Spanish Trail/Kingston Cutoff", and as a southern route to Death Valley. However, this area because it was located on the western side of both Smith Talc Road and Excelsior Mine Road was included inside CDCA222. It

is the Needles Field Offices wish to exclude this section from CDCA222. Within the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) this area would be designated a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and would be managed for activities associated with the Horse Thief Campground and disbursed backcountry discovery.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude):

The majority of this area is area is immediately adjacent to the Talc Smith Mine Road and Excelsior Mine Road.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder 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 "NA" for question 5.

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The opportunities exist however due to the influence of mining operations and campground activities the experiences associated with the opportunities are lacking.

(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 area has both an extensive historical past in mining and a cultural pass associated with Native American settlement and natural resource harvesting.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

APPENDIX C – ROUTE ANALYSIS¹

(Factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road² for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes.)

Route Analysis Table

Route #	Purpose	Row	Construction Mechanically or Improved Mechanically	Is it in regular or continuous use	Maintenance if needed	WIU Road	Photo Points
1	AR0414 CF&WD, Recreation Access to Kingston Peak TH, Ranching	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
2	NN414 CF&WD, Recreation Access to Kingston Peak TH, Ranching	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
3	NN450 Secondary Access route, Ranching, Recreation	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
4	NN448 Primary Access Route-Smith Talc Road, Ranching	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
5	NN419 Secondary Access during bad weather, Ranching	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
6	NN449 Mining Claims, Ranching	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
7	NN446 Mining Claims, Recreation, Ranching	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
8	NN023 Mining Claims, Ranching, Recreation TH	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
9	NN437 Mining Claims, Grazing, Recreation TH	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
10	NN432 Primary Corridor, Excelsior Rd, Recreation, Ranching, Mining	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
11	NN428 Primary Corridor Kingston Wash Rd, Recreation, Ranching and Mining	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	

Office: Needles Field Office
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Route Map:
See Attached.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **CDCA222-3/Horse Thief Spring**

Route or Route Segment³ Name and/or Identifier: **See Table**
(Include Transportation Plan Identifier, if known, and include route number supplied by citizen information, when available.)

I. LOCATION:

Refer to attached map **CDCA222-3/Horse Thief Spring** and BLM corporate data (GIS) located at the California State Office. List photo point references (where applicable) or reference attached photo log:

Describe:

As stated in Form 2, CDCA222-3 is a corridor section of land captured between the northern boundary of the Kingston Range Wilderness and Excelsior Road. This area contains an active mine site, the Horse Thief Spring Homestead Site, Spring Site and is immediately adjacent to the BLM Horse Thief Campground.

This area is heavily used by backcountry touring. It is the major 4x4/old pavement route to Death Valley. SUVs use this route regularly. Recreational use occurs on all spurs, whether it is rockhounding, hiking, hunting (SRPs or individual), photography, etc. It is also heavily used by the U.S. Iron Mining Corporation and by the local grazing Allottee for access to ranching infrastructure.

¹ 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 parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

² Road: An access route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.
a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. —Improved does not necessarily mean formal construction. —Maintained does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

³ If a portion of a route is found to meet the wilderness inventory road criteria (see Part III) and the remainder does not meet these criteria (e.g., a cherrystem road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings under pertinent criteria.

II. ROUTE CONTEXT

- A. Current Purpose⁴ (if any) of Route: (Examples: Rangeland/Livestock Improvements (stock tank, developed spring, reservoir, fence, corral), Inholdings (ranch, farmhouse), Mine Site, Concentrated Use Site (camp site), Recreation, Utilities (transmission line, telephone, pipeline), Administrative (project maintenance, communication site, vegetation treatment)).

Describe:

Within the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO), an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980 and Sikes Act Plan with the California Department of Fish and Game, a series of routes were designed for use for the public. On page 3-64, section 3.8.7. California Back Country Discovery Trails: "The California back Country Discovery Trails...will be a shared-use trail system providing recreational opportunities for all persons, including those who use street-legal and non-street legal (Green Sticker) vehicles, hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. It will also provide a backcountry opportunity for non-traditional trail users such as persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and families with small children." BLM Needles Field Office (NFO) developed this system of California Back Country Discovery Trails for all designated routes within the field office boundaries and named it the Mojave Adventure Route System (MARS). This system of designated routes was developed to minimize resource damage, as well as providing a system of backcountry touring routes, which offer ample recreational experiences: (i.e., camping, hunting, rockhounding, etc.) for all members of the public. The NFO receives funding annually from both federal and state programs to maintain and monitor on a need to basis, the management of these routes also includes the placement of field cameras for the monitoring of use, repairing flood damage, and the installation of route signs and informational kiosks.

B. Right-of-Way (ROW):

1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes _____ No Unknown _____

2. If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW?

The main routes into the area Smith Talc Mining Road allows access to an active mining site for use as a haul road. Smith Talc Mining Road is a county road.

3. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes _____ No Unknown or N/A _____

Explain:

All roads within this unit were installed by heavy equipment in order to reach mining operations related to the removal of Talc. The Kingston Talc deposit is considered one of the largest in the world.

III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA

A. Evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means:

Yes (if either A.1 or A.2 is checked "yes" below) No _____ (if both A.1 and A.2 are checked "no" below)

1. Construction: (Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?) Yes No

Examples: Paved Bladed Graveled Roadside Berms Cut/Fill Other

Describe:

This information can be found in the general history of the area.

⁴ The purpose of a route is not a deciding factor in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. The purpose of a route does provide context for factors on which such a determination may be based, particularly the question of whether maintenance of the route ensures relatively regular and continuous use. The purpose also helps to determine whether maintenance that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure such use would be approved by BLM when the need arises.

2. Improvements: (Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?) Yes No If "yes": by Hand Tools by Machine

Examples: Culverts Hardened Stream Crossings Bridges Drainage Barriers Other

Describe:

The main route through the area is the combination of the Smith Talc Road to the north and Excelsior Road from the south. These routes were designated county road and original improvements to the area were completed by the county of San Bernardino. Today, only the Smith Talc Mine Road remains a County Road and the Excelsior Mine Road has been decommissioned. BLM now repairs major issues along this route.

B. Maintenance: (Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?): Yes (if either B.1 or B.2 is checked "yes" below) No (if both B.1 and B.2 are checked "no" below)

1. Is there Evidence or Documentation of Maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes No If "yes": by Hand Tools by Machine

Explain:

In 2014 and 2015, extensive flooding occurred throughout the area. The BLM NFO maintenance team with assistance from the NFO Barstow Field Office made repairs to Excelsior Mine Road.

2. If the route or route segment is in good⁵ condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM to meet the purpose(s) of the route in the event this route became impassable?

Yes No

Explain:

As part of the MARS, the route would continue to receive maintenance by the NFO on a need to basis.

⁵ Good condition would be a condition that ensures regular and continuous use relative to the purposes of the route. Consider whether the route can be clearly followed in the field over its entire course and whether all or any portion of the route contains any impediments to travel.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: (Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?) Yes No

Describe evidence (e.g., direct, vehicles or vehicle tracks observed, or indirect, evidence of use associated with purpose of the route such as maintenance of facility that route accesses) and other rationale for whether use has occurred and will continue to occur on a *relatively* regular basis (i.e., regular and continuous use relative to the purpose(s) of the route).⁶

Describe: See above information.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Does the route or route segment⁷ meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)?

Yes = Wilderness Inventory Road No = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes

Explanation⁸:

Routes belonging to the Designated Route System will be maintained as needed. Routes not designated through the land plan will not be considered a route and therefore will be considered closed. Routes errors and/or realignments will be addressed through the NEPA Process.

Closed routes will be evaluated for their use. Routes used to maintain Grazing Infrastructure (Taylor Grazing Act), Herd Management Areas and facilities for the California Fish and Wildlife Department (California Desert Protection Act) will be closed with gates, and barricades, all other routes will be closed through restoration and/or barricades.

Evaluator(s):



Date:

10/10/2015

⁶ Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes, e.g., trips/day or week or month or season or year or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases.

⁷ If part of the route meets the wilderness inventory road definition and the remainder does not, describe the segment meeting the definition and any remaining portion not meeting the definition and why.

⁸ Describe and explain rationale for any discrepancies with citizen proposals.

Office: Needles Field Office
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**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY
APPENDIX D – PHOTO LOG**

See Attached.

CDCA222-3/Horsethief Springs

Needles Routes

Designation, Surface_Type, Existent

- Closed, Dirt, No
- County, Dirt, Yes
- County, Paved, Yes
- Limited, Dirt, Yes
- Limited, Paved, Yes
- Open, Dirt, No
- Open, Dirt, Yes
- Open, Paved, Yes

- WIU
- Field Office

