

COVER PAGE

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

**CDCA294-2/GOLD ACE HILLS
SEPTEMBER 2015**

BLM

Needles Field Office



Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA294-2/Gold Ace Hills

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,
September 10, 2015

Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name:  Title: _____

Date: 10-15-15

* 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.

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 Unit: CDCA294-1/Gold Ace Hills

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): CDCA294

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): USGS, California 1:100,000: 34114-e1 Needles

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
CDCA294-2	Y	N	N	N	Y

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: **CDCA294-2/Gold Ace Hills**
Acreage: **30,222 acres**

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

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.):

The western boundary is the Stepladder Mountains Wilderness Eastern Boundary, the southern boundary is NS434 Turtle Mountains Road, the eastern boundary is U.S. Highway 95, the northeastern boundary is NS056 Hightower Road, and the northern boundary is NS202, a gasoline right-of way.

(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 this area has been heavily impacted by a rich mining history. Large sections of land have been graded clear. There are also evidence of heavy wartime practicing of tanks within the area also.

(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):

Increased off-highway vehicle traffic and backcountry recreation has greatly decreased the outstanding opportunities for solitude. Little vegetation exists to screen sights and sounds of recreation and utility traffic.

(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 large size of the unit offers ample space for both vehicular recreation and primitive and unconfined recreation. Many of the local population utilize side-by-side recreational vehicle to explore the area not staying on designated routes because of the level of barren areas.

(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 California Desert Protection Act states that the BLM must "protect and preserve historical and cultural values of the California desert associated with ancient Indian cultures, patterns of western exploration and settlement, and sites exemplifying the mining, ranching and railroading history of the Old West". Most recently, the former California/Arizona WWII Troop Camps have been added to areas of protection.

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	NS254	Recreation	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
2	NS427	Recreation	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	

Route Map:

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **CDCA294-2/Gold Ace Hills**

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 above map **CDCA294-2/Gold Ace Hills** 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, the western boundary is the Stepladder Mountains Wilderness Eastern Boundary, the southern boundary is NS434 Turtle Mountains Road, the eastern boundary is U.S. Highway 95, the northeastern boundary is NS056 Hightower Road, and the northern boundary is NS202, a gasoline right-of way.

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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.

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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:

The BLM Needles Field Office (NFO) developed 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.). 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 placement 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?

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

Yes ___ No Unknown or N/A ___

Explain:

Right-of-Ways are associated with all boundaries. Boundary routes support 250-foot electrical high-tension towers. Gasline easements area also in place both the north and south boundaries.

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 ___

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Examples: Paved ___ Bladed Graveled ___ Roadside Berms Cut/Fill Other ___

Describe: **This information can be found in past inventories 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: **BLM maintenance and Utilities continue to maintain the area for ease of access after flooding events.**

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: **Utility company makes semi-annual repairs to the area roads, BLM maintenance team monitors and signs annually as needed.**

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

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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:

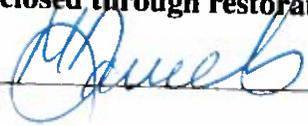
Does the route or route segment⁷ meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)?

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.

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

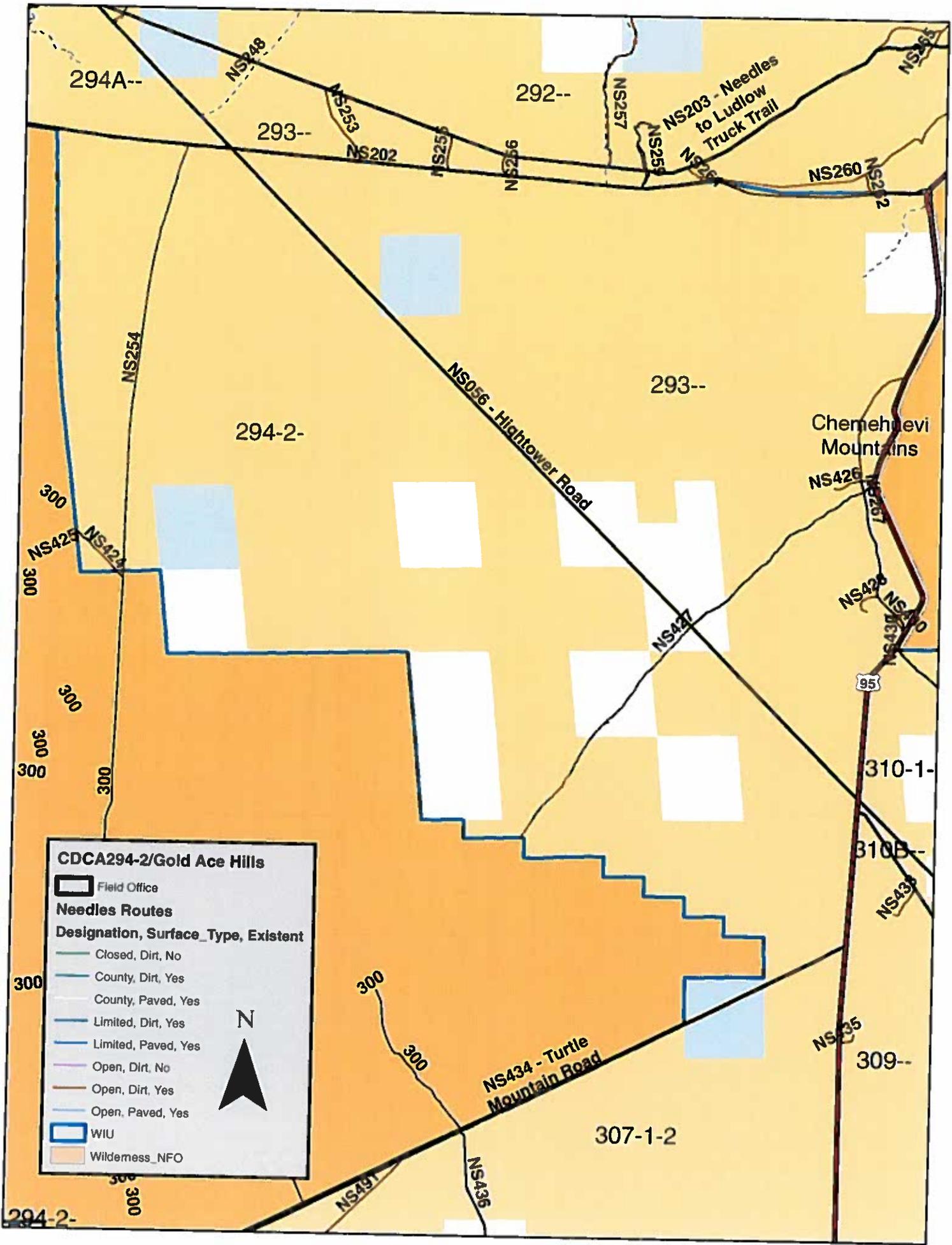
⁶ Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes, e.g., trips/day or week or month or season or year or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases.

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.

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**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY
APPENDIX D – PHOTO LOG**



CDCA294-2/Gold Ace Hills

- Field Office
- 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
- Wilderness_NFO



294A--

NS248

292--

NS203 - Needles to Ludlow Truck Trail

293--

NS202

9256 N

NS257

NS253

NS260

NS254

NS056 - Hightower Road

293--

294-2-

Chemehuevi Mountains

NS426

300

NS425

NS424

300

300

300

300

300

300

300

300

300

300

300

NS427

NS428

NS430

95

310-1-

310B--

NS433

NS435

309--

NS434 - Turtle Mountain Road

307-1-2

NS491

NS436

294-2-

300

300