

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: WIU #137A-1, 137A-2, and 137A-3

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Does this area meet any of the size requirements?
137A-1: Yes; 137A-2 & 137A-3: No

2. Does this area appear to be natural?
137A-1: Yes; 137A-2 & 137A-3: No

3. Does this area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?
137A-1: Yes for Solitude, No for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation
137A-2 & 137A-3: No

4. Does this area have supplemental values?
Yes

Conclusion

137A-1 has wilderness character; 137A-2 and 137A-3 do not have wilderness character.

Prepared by:

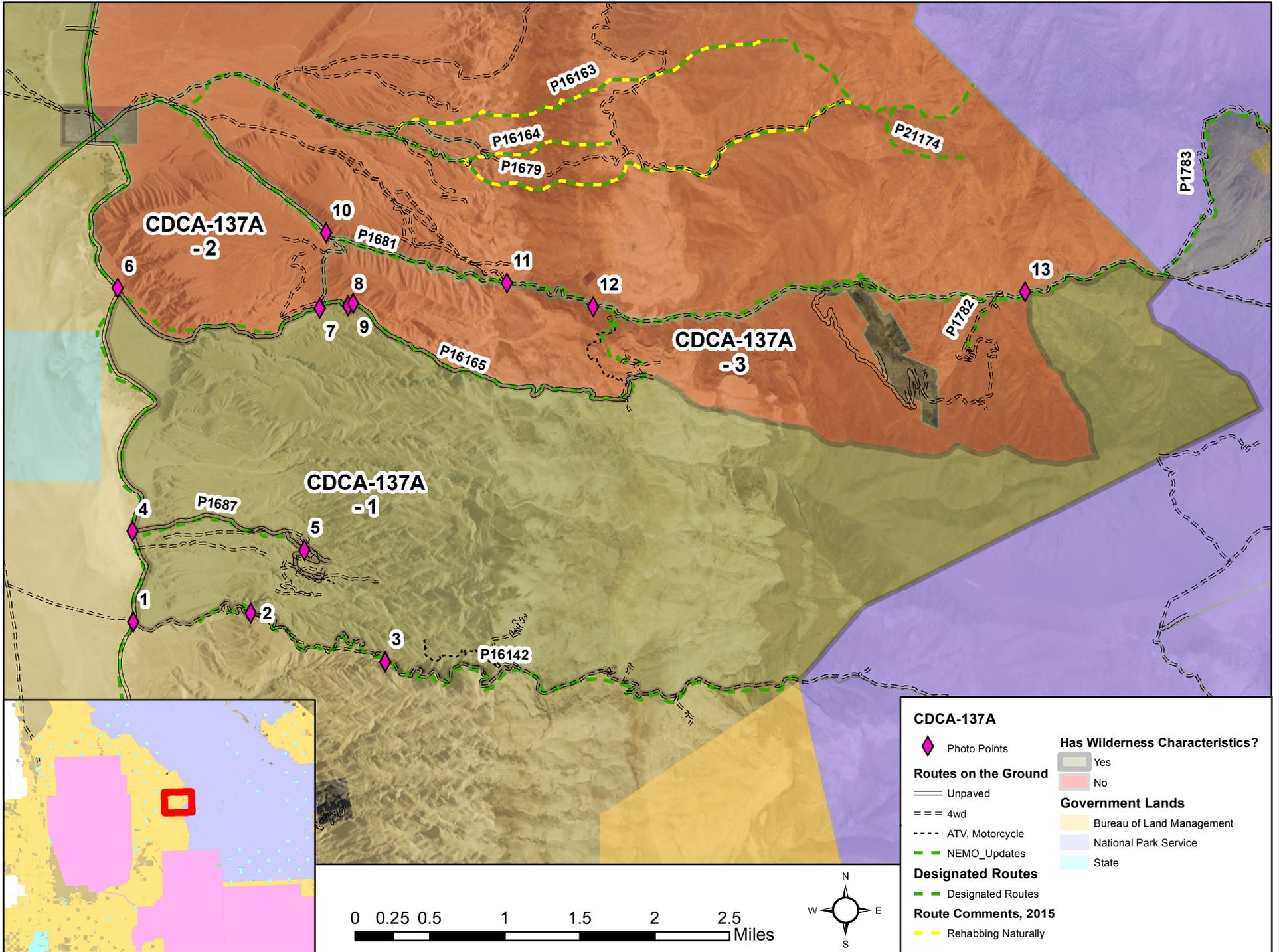
Rurik Fencl, Wilderness Inventory Intern, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Date: 9/29/2015

Approved by:

Crew Woods Arky Fm 9/30/15
Field Manager **Date**

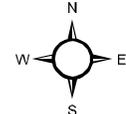
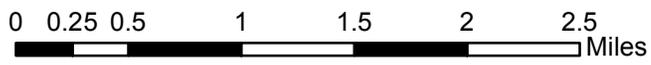
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.



CDCA-137A
-2

CDCA-137A
-3

CDCA-137A
-1



CDCA-137A

- ◆ Photo Points

Routes on the Ground

- Unpaved
- == 4wd
- - - - ATV, Motorcycle
- NEMO_Updates

Designated Routes

- Designated Routes

Route Comments, 2015

- Rehabbing Naturally

Has Wilderness Characteristics?

- Yes
- No

Government Lands

- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- State

Year 2015 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #137A (Middle Park Canyon)

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM Wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area? **Yes**

Inventory source: 1979 CDCA Wilderness Inventory Final Descriptive Narratives, BLM Ridgecrest FO

1990 California Statewide Wilderness Study Report, Part 4, Volume 3

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Numbers: WIU #137A

Map Names/Number(s): USDI BLM CASO Wilderness Final Inventory, March 31, 1979

USDI BLM California Statewide Wilderness Study Report, 1990; CDCA-137A Map 1.

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Ridgecrest Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

Unit #/Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition (Y/N)	Outstanding Solitude? (Y/N)	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation (Y/N)	Supplemental Values (Y/N)
1979 Findings WIU# 137A	14,566 GIS acres calculated using the stated boundaries of the original unit	Y	Y	Y	Y
1990 findings WIU# CDCA-137A	9,563 acres, stated in the 1990 report	N	N	N	Y
2015 Findings within 137A-1	7,377 GIS acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2015 Findings within 137A-2	1,021 GIS acres	N	N	Y	Y
2015 Findings with 137A-3	2,183 GIS acres	N	N	N	Y

Summarize any known primary reasons for prior findings in this table:

Summary of terrain from both prior reports: The terrain in the unit was found to vary from bajadas to steep, rugged mountains with large washes and canyons. The bajadas slope gently westward and are interlaced with washes. East of the bajadas, the terrain becomes the Panamint Mountain Range which rises 7000 feet above the valley.

The variety of the vegetation was found to be extensive. The vegetation communities began with sparse desert shrubs including creosote and annual plants in the washes transitioning to Pinyon-Juniper woodland in the higher elevations. Water flows intermittently in Middle Park and South Park Canyons and in large enough quantities to support riparian communities including willow, cottonwood, and typha.

The unit was found to be mostly subject to natural forces. There were a few areas isolated in the deep canyons that showed the imprint of man and were excluded from the recommended WSA at the time: the roads in Middle Park Canyon, South Park Canyon, around the World Beater Mine, and mining impacts at the Suitcase mine. All patented mining properties were excluded as well. The remainder of the roadless area was found to be in unaltered condition.

Summary of 1979 Report: The original 1979 WIU# 137A was bordered on the south by the road up South Park Canyon (NEMO ID # P16142); on the east by various improved roads connecting South Park, Middle Park, and Pleasant Canyons; on the north by the road to Pleasant Canyon (NEMO # P1681); and on the west by Wingate Wash Road. The inventory states that entire unit was public land excepting patented mining properties. The original inventory included lands that have since been transferred to Death Valley National Park.

At the time of the survey, the unit was found to have outstanding opportunities for solitude or outstanding primitive recreation because of the dramatic terrain that provided secluded canyon areas and broad views from ridgelines.

Public comments on the report were related to roads, mines, and permanent improvements within the unit. Field surveys verified these comments and divided the original unit into 137 (currently the Manly Peak Wilderness) and 137A. Other comments identified the primitive recreation potential and the overall natural condition of the landscape.

Summary of 1990 Report: The 1990 WIU# 137A was bordered on the north by the northern slope of Middle Park Canyon and crossing over to the southern slope of Pleasant Canyon. The eastern boundary was along the ridgeline between Pleasant and Middle Park Canyons, until it intersected a jeep trail that it follows south to South Park Canyon. The southern boundary was the South Park Canyon road. The western boundary was Wingate Wash road.

The area was found to have significant evidence of man's work on the landscape. Mining scars were the most notable imprint, including mill sites and their associated pads and tanks, primitive and well-established vehicle routes. The unit was not found to retain a primarily natural character

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation were found to be minimal due to the area's small size and thin, linear shape. The unit's shape was considered to relegate these opportunities to the canyons.

This unit was recommended for non-wilderness for two reasons:

- 1- The unit was contradictorily described as having met the criteria for wilderness, despite simultaneously describing the unit as not retaining its natural character and not providing outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation or solitude. Additionally, the area's value as wilderness was determined to be less than the value of its mineral potential.
- 2- The unit was determined to be extremely difficult to manage as wilderness due to the four miles of vehicle routes.

The area was found to have supplemental values. The unit lies within the permanent range of the Desert Bighorn Sheep. A BLM sensitive plant, *Brickellia knappiana* was found in lower Pleasant Canyon. The area was also found to contain multiple historic and prehistoric cultural sites.

FORM 2

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

(1) Sufficient Size: Yes for 137A-1; No for 137A-2 and 137A-3

Acreage:

137A-1 is approximately 7,377 acres; 137A-2 is approximately 1,021 acres; 137A-3 is approximately 2,183 acres. 137A-2 and 137A-3 are removed from further analysis because they do not meet the size criteria defined in the Wilderness Act.

Boundary Revision: The unit's boundaries were revised to exclude Wilderness Inventory Road buffers, exclude patented mining claims, as well as reflect the varying condition of the original unit.

Boundaries: See associated maps for a visual representation of the borders
137A-1 is bordered on the west by Wingate Wash road, on the south by the South Park Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P16142), and on the east by the Death Valley National Park Wilderness. The northern border starts by following the Middle Park Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P16165) to the furthest east impact of the Goldbug Mine where the border begins to follow a dry stream up a small canyon in an east-by-southeast direction towards Slim Peak until it meets the ridgeline; the border follows that ridgeline to Slim Peak, and then continues to follow the ridgeline to peak 7450T; at that peak, the border follows a generally north-by-northwest ridgeline down into Pleasant Canyon until it meets the Pleasant Canyon Road (NEMO ID# 1681), which it then follows to the Death Valley National Park Boundary.

137A-2 is bordered on the west by Wingate Wash Road, on the north by Pleasant Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P1681), on the east by a non-designated actively used jeep trail connecting Pleasant Canyon to Middle Park Canyon, and on the south by the Middle Park Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P16165).

137A-3 is bordered on the west by a non-designated actively used jeep trail connecting Pleasant Canyon to Middle Park Canyon, and on the south by the Middle Park Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P16165), on the north by the Pleasant Canyon Road (NEMO ID# 1681). The southern and eastern borders start by following the Middle Park Canyon Road (NEMO ID# P16165) to the furthest east impact of the Goldbug Mine where the border begins to follow a dry stream up a small canyon in an east-by-southeast direction towards Slim Peak until it meets the ridgeline; the border follows that ridgeline to Slim Peak, and then continues to follow the ridgeline to peak 7450T; at that peak, the border follows a generally north-by-northwest ridgeline down into Pleasant Canyon until it meets the Pleasant Canyon Road. This unit excludes a patented mining claim at Radcliffe Mine.

Description of Current Conditions:

Land Ownership:

The BLM owns all lands within the boundaries stated above.

Location:

These units are located in eastern Panamint Valley, just east of the ghost town of Ballarat.

Topography:

137A-1 is comprised of the northern slope of South Park Canyon as well as Middle Park Canyon. These are deep canyons with significant twists, turns, and relief between the various side canyons.

137A-2 is the bajada at the mouth of Pleasant Canyon, which slopes upward to the west. The western border of the unit has steep and rocky alluvium cliffs.

137A-3 is primarily the southern slope of Pleasant Canyon, which has a number of small side canyons and washes that provide screening within the unit.

Vegetation Features: Creosote scrub dominates the whole unit at low to mid elevations. The northeast corner of 137A-1 is the transition zone to a sage brush plant community. The southern canyons are primarily dry within 137A-1. 137A-3 has some riparian sections at the bottom of the canyon.

Major Human Uses / Activities: 137A-3 was created to carve out the major human impacts within the pre-2015 137A unit. The major impacts, primarily the Radcliffe Mine, are now located in unit 137A-3. The original unit as a whole is mostly used for motorized recreation along the historic mining routes that connect with mines now located in Death Valley National Park.

(2) Natural Condition: Yes for 137A-1; No for 137A-2 and 137A-3

137A-1 is predominantly impact by natural forces. There are limited jeep trails within the unit, and no active mining. The canyons flush periodically and are slowly removing any unreclaimed mining impacts from the canyons.

(3) Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and/or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Yes for 137A-1; no for 137A-2 and 137A-3.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. The washes and gullies and the rolling topography generally obscure any views of the only development near the unit: the highway. The hills provide lots of canyons and washes to seek solitude in.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation exist and are supported by the size of the unit as well as the complete lack of development within the unit. The unit is large enough to allow for unconfined primitive recreation within the unit, but the overall size detracts enough from the unconfined aspect of recreation enough that opportunities do not warrant the ‘outstanding’ description.

(4) Are there Supplemental Values? Yes for all three units

There are known prehistoric and historic cultural sites within the unit. The Desert Bighorn Sheep permanent range includes the high elevations of all three units.