

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: **WIU #CDCA 129**

Summary for **WIU #CDCA 129-1 & 129-2**

Results of Analysis:

1. Do these areas meet the size requirements?

Yes. Both WIU #CDCA 129-1 & 129-2 meet the size requirement at 5,473 BLM acres and 5006.5 BLM acres (with State lands excluded), respectively.

2. Do these areas appear to be natural?

**Yes, for #CDCA 129-1.
No, for #CDCA 129-2.**

3. Do these areas offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes, for #CDCA 129-1 only.

4. Do these areas have supplemental values?

Yes, for #CDCA 129-1.

Conclusion

**WIU #CDCA 129-1 has wilderness characteristics.
WIU #CDCA 129-2 does not have wilderness characteristics.**

Prepared by:

Team Member Marty Dickes, ORP/Wilderness Coordinator, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Date: 2015-09-18

Approved by:

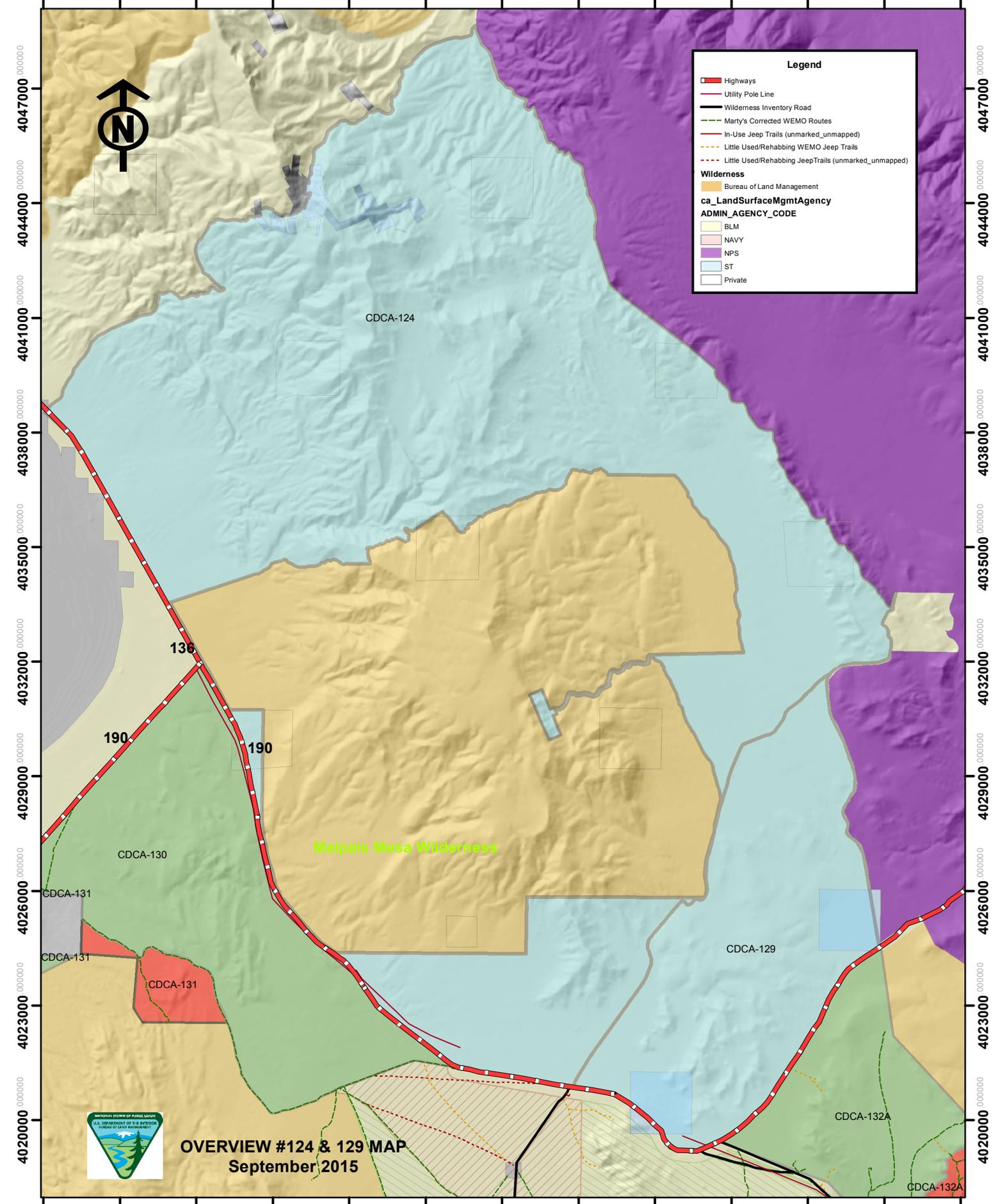


Field Manager

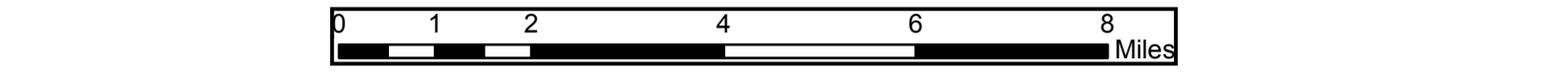
9/24/2015
Date

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.

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OVERVIEW #124 & 129 MAP
 September 2015

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Legend

- Highways
- Wilderness Inventory Road
- Marty Corrected NEMO Routes
- Little_Used_Rehabbing_NEMO_Jeep_Trails
- In-Use Jeep Trails (unmarked_unmapped)
- Little Used/Rehabbing Jeep Trails (unmarked_unmapped)
- Utility Pole Line
- Campsite
- Natural
- Unnatural

Wilderness

- Bureau of Land Management

ca_LandSurfaceMgmtAgency

ADMIN_AGENCY_CODE

- BLM
- NAVY
- NPS
- ST
- Private



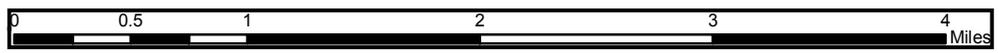
APPENDIX C - DETAIL WIU #129 MAP
September 2015

CDCA-124

CDCA-129-1

CDCA-124

CDCA-129-2



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Year 2015 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #CDCA 129 (Talc City Hills)

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

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s): WIU #CDCA 129 (Talc City Hills)

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

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

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:

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

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 #CDCA 129 (Talc City Hills)	11,779 acres	N	N	N	Not evaluated.
2015 Findings WIU #CDCA 129-1 (North Half)	Y ~6,113 acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2015 Findings WIU #CDCA 129-2 (South Half)	Y ~5,646 acres	N	N	N	Not evaluated.

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

The original WIU #CDCA 129 was comprised of approximately 11,779 acres. The boundaries of the unit were essentially the same as they are today. The unit was bordered on the south by Highway 190, on the west by the Talc City Hills/Santa Rosa Flat Road, on the north by the Santa Rosa Flat Shortcut to Lee Flat, and on the East by the Saline Valley Road.

The 1979 analysis and decision was that the entire unit lacked wilderness character due to extensive mining development and still active mines operating in the southern half of the unit. The southern half of the unit was described as being full of tailings, mine shafts, remnants of structures, debris and old machinery, with numerous claim markers scattered about the area. Activities associated with mining: blasting, dust plumes, movement of people and heavy equipment and large trucks in and out of the area were regular (daily) occurrences. Because of the relatively small size of the unit, these activities were felt to be pervasive enough to overwhelm wilderness character in any other part of the unit and in surrounding areas, including untouched areas to the north.

The original unit was dropped from further consideration and does not appear in the 1990 BLM California Statewide Wilderness Study Reports. In 1994, the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) designated the Malpais Mesa Wilderness along the western boundary of the northern half of the unit and Death Valley National Park wilderness along the eastern boundary of the northern half of the unit.

Today, there are no active mines in the southern half of the unit. However, many vestiges and visible scars of past mining activity persist here. They include large open pit mines, as well as several adits, shafts, and large tailing piles, abandoned structures, debris, and parts of large machinery, as well as an intensively developed network of heavily constructed (bulldozed) roads. For these reasons, the southern half of the unit has been split off from its more natural northern counterpart. The southern half of the unit, now identified as **Unit #129-2, has been found not to have wilderness character**. It lacks naturalness.

In contrast, the northern half of the unit, now identified as **Unit #129-1, has been found to have wilderness character**. This part of the original unit was never developed for mining. It is physically isolated from mining areas to the south by a high, broad, flat ridgeline extending west from Highway 190 to the top of a 5,445T peak to the Santa Rosa Flat Road. It is comprised of more than 5,000 stand-alone acres. And, it is now adjacent if not contiguous to both BLM and Park wilderness.

FORM 2

Documentation Of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Numbers/Names **WIU #CDCA 129-1**

(1) Sufficient size

Yes. **Acreage:**

Approximately 6,113 acres, of which ~5,473 are BLM lands and ~640 acres are State lands, as calculated by GIS Measuring Tool in 2015.

Boundary revision: Boundaries have been redrawn to split the original unit into two units: a natural, northern half (129-1) and an unnatural, southern half (129-2). An east-west line extending west from a benchmark at 4860.8 feet near Highway 190 to a benchmark located immediately off of the Santa Rosa Mine Road at an elevation of 4923.2 feet divides these two subunits.

Boundaries:

#CDCA 129-1: The northern unit is bounded on the west by the Santa Rosa Flat Road, on the north by the Santa Rosa Flat Shortcut to Lee Flat, on the east by the Saline Valley Road, and on the south by an east-west line extending west from a benchmark at 4860.8 feet located along Highway 190 to a benchmark at 4923.2 feet located off of the Santa Rosa Flat Road.

#CDCA 129-2: The northern boundary is the east-west line described above; the eastern and southern boundary is Highway 190; and the western boundary is the Talc City Hills/Santa Rosa Flat Mine Road.

Description of Current Conditions for #CDCA 129-1

Land ownership: BLM (~5,473 acres); State inholdings (~640 acres).

Location: Approximately 4 miles northwest of the community of Darwin, T17&18S, R39&40E, and 24 miles south and east of Lone Pine, CA.

Topography: The area is located at the southern end of the Inyo Mountains and encompasses a wide variety of landforms ranging from large flats to low rolling hills to rougher, more mountainous terrain, broken up by shallow washes and short, steep drainages. The northern edge of the Darwin Plateau also intrudes into the area, resulting in isolated basaltic outcrops, volcanic plugs, and small mesa-type formations.

Vegetation features: Creosote scrub desert with a sparse smattering of Joshua trees.

Major human uses/activities: 4WD touring and hiking. Most visitors pass through this area to reach more distant destinations, such as Cerro Gordo or Saline Valley.

(2) Natural condition

Yes. This part of the original unit was never intensively explored and/or developed for mining. Topo maps for the area identify no mining features other than a few (3) small prospects grouped in one location near the southern boundary of the unit. The area is no longer affected by mining activities to the south or by mining at the Santa Rosa Mine. Mining activities to the south and at the Santa Rosa Mine have long since ceased. Personnel, heavy equipment, and large trucks are no longer regularly passing by the area. These large-scale mining disturbances and developments are not visible from the unit, but are well hidden behind hills and tall, broad, intervening ridge lines.

Unit 129-1 is truly roadless and undeveloped. Only 1 informal campsite exists within a few hundred feet of the Santa Rosa Flat Road. Only two, user-created jeep trails exist, both of them located behind this same campsite. These jeep trails are very lightly used, peter out rather quickly, and over time, may disappear altogether. Otherwise, the area is routeless and featureless and unaffected by the activities of man.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

Yes. The area is small but extensive enough to meet stand alone requirements for wilderness character. Within its undeveloped expanses, a person can easily find solitude within just a ¼ mile of the nearest road, and could find him/herself more than 2 miles away from any road. In addition, the topography is quite variable and in many places, can offer significant screening. Elevations can range from 4900 feet to over 5400 feet (a 1,500 foot gain) in the more mountainous areas. These areas are drained by many small canyons. Within Santa Rosa Flat itself, there are many discrete, elevated landforms (appearing as islands) isolated by long, winding washes. In addition, the unit is completely encircled by lands that are in a natural condition, lands that either are designated wilderness or that also have wilderness character. These lands extend the feeling of space and isolation.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

Yes. There are several broad, connecting ridgelines in the mountainous areas and long washes to follow, and several more interesting, discrete features to explore. The topography is not severe and lends itself easily to cross-country hiking.

(5) Supplemental values

Yes. This area lies along a major natural transportation route and most likely encompasses many prehistoric Native American sites and historic mining trails dating as far back as the 1870s.

Three special status plants could occur in the area: Darwin Rock Cress (*Arabis pulchra* var. *munciensis*), Darwin Mesa Milkvetch (*Astragalus atratus* var. *mensanus*), and Half-Ring Pod, Curved-Pod, or Mojave Milkvetch (*Astragalus mohavensis* var. *hemigyris*).

The area supports a variety of lizards, snakes, and small mammals, both rodents and lagomorphs. These in turn support many predators, including raptors, bobcats, and coyotes. Raptors most likely to inhabit the area include Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), and various owl species. Old prospects, shafts, and adits to the south provide roosts for many sensitive bat species, which may travel north to forage.