

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: **WIU #CDCA 137, Manly Peak**

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? **Yes**
2. Does the area appear to be natural? **Yes**
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? **Yes**
4. Does the area have supplemental values? **Yes**

Conclusion

The area has wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

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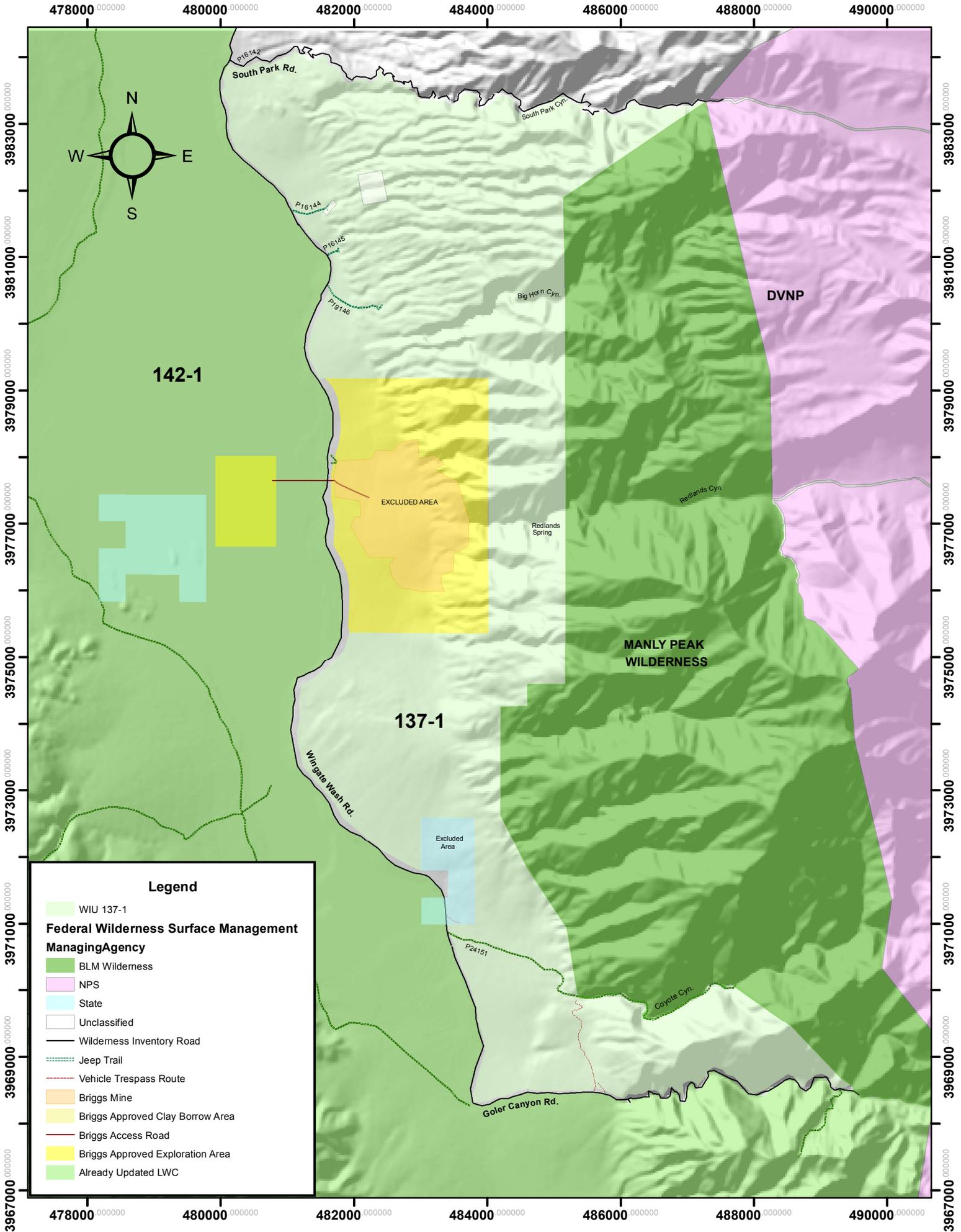
Approved by:

Carl B. Symons
Carl B. Symons, Field Manager

6/3/2013
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.

WIU 137-1 Manly Peak



Year 2013 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #CDCA 137-1, Manly Peak

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 137 (Manly Peak)

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 within WIU #CDCA 137	Y 32,026 acres	Y	Y	Y	Y
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 137	Y 10,551 acres Also Contiguous to Existing Wilderness	Y	Y	Y	Y

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

The original 1979 WIU #137 was bounded on the south by the Goler Wash/Canyon Road, on the west by the Wingate Wash Road, on the north by the South Park Road, and on the east by the boundaries of what was then Death Valley National Monument. The original unit was larger and included all 12,897 acres of what is now the Manly Peak Wilderness. The unit excluded three mining areas: the road and mining activity at Manly Fall (now the Briggs Mine), the road to the mouth of Coyote Canyon, and roads and mining activity in sections 35 & 36 (T.22S, R. 44 E.). The latter two areas were excluded not because of any active mines, but because it was felt that they had been too heavily disturbed by past mining activity to adequately meet the naturalness criteria.

Otherwise, the 1979 analysis found the area to have “few permanent improvements.” Other small mining disturbances associated with patented lands within the area were not excluded, as their impact on naturalness was felt to be negligible. The area was described as comprising “a large block of public land where the imprint of man is substantially unnoticeable.” It was noted that the boundaries of the area were essentially synonymous with the “roadless area boundaries.”

In addition, the area was found to contain outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, because of its dramatic and diverse topography, ranging from bajadas to steep, rugged mountains, with large washes and deep, isolated canyons.

Supplemental values of note included two California State-listed rare and endangered plant species: Panamint Daisy and Knap Brickell Bush.

In 1990, the BLM recommended 0 acres for wilderness within the original 32,026 acre WIU in its Statewide Wilderness Study Report. It was felt that the area’s wilderness values were only marginal, natural conditions having been altered by “decades of mining activity,” and that the area did not possess any unique or distinctive features. In addition, and perhaps most significantly, the area was felt to have “moderate to high potential for locatable minerals.”

In 1994, the California Desert Protection Act greatly expanded Death Valley and made it a National Park. Upper elevations in the Panamints were transferred from BLM to NPS, with the exception of the Manly Peak area which remained in BLM hands. About 30% of the original WIU 137 was designated as wilderness, and became the Manly Peak Wilderness.

FORM 2

Documentation Of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 137-1, Manly Peak**

(1) Sufficient size

Yes

Acreage: 10,551 acres contiguous to the existing BLM Manly Peak Wilderness. BLM land as calculated by a BLM CA State Office GIS Specialist in 2013.

Boundary revision: The unit would exclude all of the permitted Briggs exploration area, including the Briggs Mine itself, State lands in Section 36 (R44E, T23S) and two small private parcels in Sections 34 & 35 (R44E, T22S). See attached map.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: BLM (10,551 acres); private inholdings (0 acres).

Location: Approximately 15 miles northeast of the town of Trona in the western Panamint Mountains. The northern boundary is the South Park Road, the eastern boundary Death Valley National Park and the Manly Peak Wilderness, the southern boundary Goler Wash/Canyon Road, and the western boundary, the Wingate Wash Road.

Topography: Variable, from bajadas to steep, rugged mountains, with large washes and deep, isolated canyons.

Vegetation features: Great variety, beginning with sparse desert shrubs, saltbush and creosote scrub, annual plants on the bajadas, leading to pinyon-juniper woodland at upper elevations.

Major human uses/activities: Hiking and photography.

(2) Natural condition

Yes. The area is roadless, containing less than 3.5 miles of open (designated) jeep trails and less than a mile of closed, rehabbing road associated with historic mining activity. The area is extremely rugged and pristine. Most of it has remained quite isolated and protected from development and from illegal vehicle intrusions by the preponderance of rock, rock jumbles, rock falls, and rock walls, and the overall general severity of the terrain.

The Briggs Mine is the only active mine within the original WIU unit. This mine and its permit area have been excluded from the area now under consideration. Otherwise, there has been no active mining in the area for over 50 years. There is very little if any evidence of mining activity left along the road to the mouth of Coyote Canyon, and only evidence of what would now be considered historic mining activity in sections 35 & 36 (T.22S, R. 44 E.). (This area contains an old mill site on a rock platform.) Private, patented lands off of P16144 were more extensively developed for mining, but these lands too have long been idle and are excluded from the current WIU as they are not in federal ownership. Past mining activity in the area was of the hardrock rather than open pit/cyanide heap leach type. This type of (hardrock) mining is relatively discrete and localized. All of these past mining areas have been extensively cleaned up and now contain mostly embedded features, rock walls, cleared platforms, adits, prospects, some eroding roads and some interesting stock/foot trails, most of it of historic interest.

The topography of the area is dramatic and severe. The Panamints rise steeply out of the valley floor. Huge, undulating and heavily-bisected alluvial fans spill out of narrow, deep, slot canyons, blocked by dry falls. Elevations within the unit can range from 300' to over 1,000' in less than a mile. The front of the range is very irregular with many projecting fingers and intervening ridgelines. As a result, even a discordant development as large as the open pit/cyanide heap leach operation at the Briggs Mine is not visible from most places within the unit. In fact, the visibility of the Briggs Mine increases with distance rather than proximity. The mine is much more visible from the highway clear across the valley floor than it is from most points in the surrounding area or from even most of the access road to the mine itself (the Wingate Wash Road).

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

Yes. It is easy to find oneself miles away from any road or active vehicle route, out of sight and out of reach of most people. One can lose oneself in the complex drainage system of a huge alluvial fan. One can strike out cross-country for an intriguing, isolated canyon, and find seclusion and solitude in a narrow, sinuous, steep-walled canyon. Or one can climb a ridge far above the fray of the valley floor, removing oneself from the rest of the world.

(4) Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation

Yes. The area offers a full range of primitive, non-motorized opportunities, from dispersed cross-country hiking and backpacking, particularly in cool season months, to technical rock climbing and canyoneering, to intensive exploration of historic mine sites along old stock and foot trails constructed for mining purposes. Many locals and visitors to the area are deeply interested in history, particularly in piecing together the mining history of the area. They will travel on foot as well as by vehicle to visit as many historic mines and mine workings identified on the topographic maps and by word of mouth as they can find. You can see photos of some of these fascinating sites and trails in the supplemental values tab of the accompanying notebook.

(5) Supplemental values

Yes.

Wildlife: Large mammals living in the area include: mule deer, coyotes, mountain lion, and lagomorphs such as black-tailed jackrabbit and desert cottontail. Common bird species include mourning dove, western meadowlark, and raven. Ground squirrels, pack rats, and kangaroo rates are present. Snakes and lizards such as the Panamint speckled rattlesnake and the coachwhip, the Great Basin fence lizard, the western whiptail and the western collared lizard are also found here.

Special Status Species include Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Panamint Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria panamintina*), Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's Big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), Prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*), and Nelson's bighorn sheep (*Ovis Canadensis nelson*). Redlands Spring is an extremely important watering place for Nelson's Desert Bighorn Sheep, one of only three springs frequently in use by sheep in the Panamints and the only one at the southern end of the range. The spring is also an important area for bat foraging since riparian areas have a high abundance of insect prey.

Plants: The area contains two California State-listed rare and endangered plant species: Panamint Daisy (*Enceliopsis covillei*) and Knapp Brickell Bush (*Brickellia knappiana*). In addition, Panamint dudleya (*Dudleya saxosa*) is likely to occur here growing on rock walls.

Cultural Resources: Three cultural resource properties have been recorded in the area. All are associated with an historic mining district and are considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Many more of these sites are known to exist but have not yet been evaluated by a BLM archeologist.