

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

Unit Name and Number: WIU #CDCA 132B-2 & 132B-3

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Does this area meet any of the size requirements?  
**Yes; less than 5,000 acres and contiguous to wilderness**
  
2. Does this area appear to be natural?  
**Yes**
  
3. Does this area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?  
**Yes**
  
4. Does this area have supplemental values?  
**Yes**

Conclusion

**WIU 132B-2 and 132B-3 have wilderness characteristics.**

Prepared by:

Rurik Fencl, SCA Restoration Intern, BLM Ridgecrest FO  
Natalie Oberman, SCA Restoration Intern, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Date: 2/3/2015

**Approved by:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Field Manager**

2/26/2015  
**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.*

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

Unit Name and Number: WIU #CDCA 132B-4, 5, 6

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Do these areas meet any of the size requirements?  
**No, Unit 132B-4 does not meet the size requirements and is thus immediately excluded from further consideration**  
  
**Yes, Units 132B-5 & 6 meet the size requirement by being contiguous with wilderness.**
2. Do these areas appear to be natural?  
**No, Units 132B-5 and 132B-6 are too close to developments in Homewood Canyon to appear natural.**
3. Do these areas offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?  
**Units 132B-5 and 132B-6 are too close to developments in Homewood Canyon to offer solitude or unconfined recreation.**
4. Does this area have supplemental values?  
**No**

Conclusion

**WIU 132B-4, 5, and 6 do not have wilderness character. See description at end of Form 1 for detailed description of why.**

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Rurik Fencl, SCA Restoration Intern, BLM Ridgecrest FO  
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Date: 2/26/2015

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**WIU 132B-2,3,4,5,6  
Overview Map**

**LWC\_Finding**



Final WEMO Routes

**Land Surface Ownership**

Bureau of Land Management

Department of Defense

State

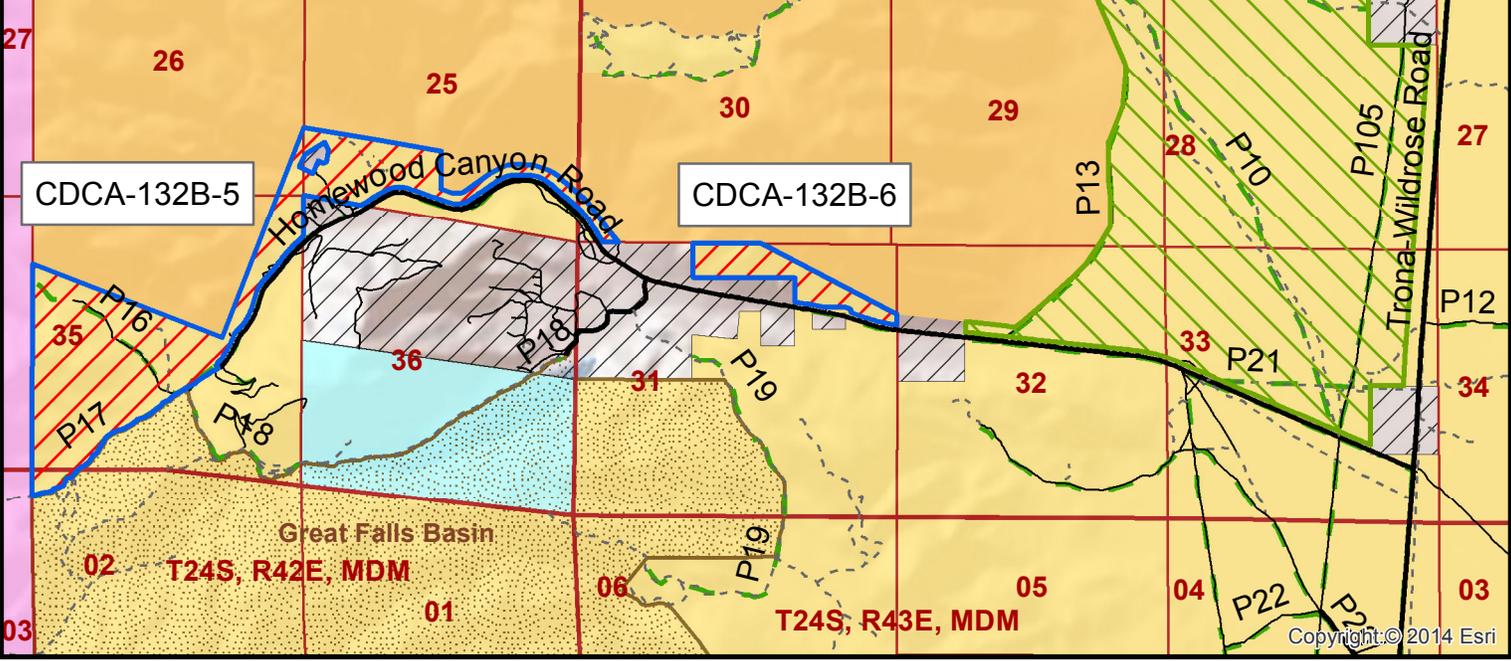
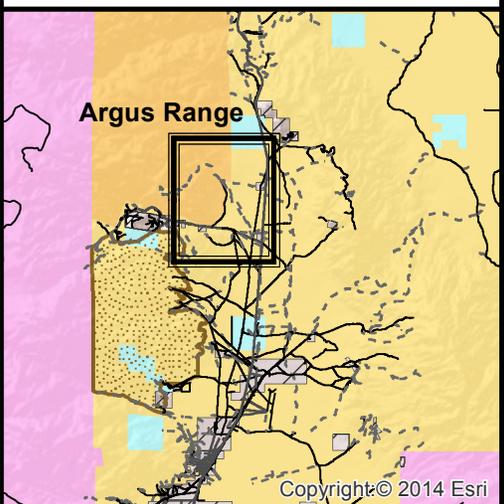
Private

**Federal Wilderness**

Bureau of Land Management

National Park Service

Wilderness Study Area



**Year 2015 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #CDCA 132B (North Argus Range)**

**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)/Numbers:** WIU #CDCA 132B (North Argus Range)

**Map Names/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

<b>Unit #/Name</b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>Natural Condition (Y/N)</b>	<b>Outstanding Solitude? (Y/N)</b>	<b>Outstanding Primitive &amp; Unconfined Recreation (Y/N)</b>	<b>Supplemental Values (Y/N)</b>
1979 Findings WIU# CDCA-132B (North Argus Range)	109,000 GIS acres calculated using the stated boundaries of the original unit	N Except for the most northern mountainous area	Y Particularly in the northern mountainous areas	Y Particularly in the northern mountainous areas	Not Evaluated
2015 findings within WIU# CDCA-132B-2	699 acres, contiguous to wilderness	Y	Y	Y	Y
2015 findings within WIU# CDCA-132B-3	2693 acres, contiguous to wilderness	Y	Y	Y	Y

Unit #/Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition (Y/N)	Outstanding Solitude? (Y/N)	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation (Y/N)	Supplemental Values (Y/N)
2015 findings within WIU# CDCA-132B-4	309 acres, not contiguous to wilderness	N	N	N	Not Evaluated
2015 findings within WIU# CDCA-132B-5	510 acres, contiguous to wilderness	N	N	N	Not Evaluated
2015 findings within WIU# CDCA-132B-6	74 acres, contiguous to wilderness	N	N	N	Not Evaluated

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

The original 1979 WIU# 132B was huge, extending 30 miles from north to south. The northern border was formed by Highway 190, the western boundary was China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, the eastern boundary was the Nadeau Road and various other unmaintained roads, and the southern border was Homewood Canyon Road.

The 1979 analysis and decision were that 0 acres within the unit met the criteria for wilderness. The eastern side of the Argus Mountain chain and associated bajadas within Searles & Panamint valleys were found to be laced with maintained and unmaintained access routes running between canyons, mining operations, dwellings, recreation sites, and primary transportation routes. The naturalness of the vast majority of this area was considered to be nullified by these impacts of man's presence and most of the terrain was determined to provide inadequate screening to offset these impacts. Only the mountainous, less developed areas at the northern end of the unit were found to have retained naturalness. In these areas, it was felt that the complexity of the terrain allowed for sufficient isolation of visitors and localization of impacts. Opportunities for unconfined recreation were felt to be widespread due to the comparatively low number of permanent residents and visitors. Some areas were also identified to have supplemental values with respect to mining history and a seasonal lake.

In 1990, the BLM considered only a very small portion of the original unit, i.e., approximately 28,375 acres located in two northern mountainous areas identified in the 1979 report. These areas were not contiguous and were subdivided into Segment A and Segment B. Segment A was located at the very northern tip of the original unit and extended from Darwin Wash east to the Nadeau Road, excluding the mining area associated with Zinc Hill. Segment B spanned the mountainous region between Revenue and Snow canyons. No wilderness was recommended in these areas or within the larger original unit. The rationale was that (1) the landforms and ecosystem of these areas were present in other areas, and that (2) the area's value as wilderness was overshadowed by its potential for motorized recreation and mining.

In 1994, the California Desert Protection Act designated 65,726 acres of the original inventory unit (approximately 60%) the Argus Range Wilderness.

The January 2015 inventory found 2693 acres identified as WIU#132B-3 and 699 acres identified as WIU # 132B-2 to have wilderness character.

Unit 132B-4 was found not to have wilderness character because it is less than 5000 acres and not contiguous to wilderness.

Units 132B-5 and 132B-6 were found not to have wilderness character because they lack naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation due to their proximity to developments within Homewood Canyon.

## FORM 2

### Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

(1) **Sufficient Size:** Yes, contiguous to wilderness

**Acreage:**

Unit 132B-2 has 699 acres of BLM land contiguous to the Argus Range Wilderness as calculated in a GIS prior to the evaluation of the area.

Unit 132B-3 has 2693 acres of BLM land contiguous to the Argus Range wilderness as calculated in a GIS prior to the evaluation of the area.

**Boundary Revision:** Both of these units were identified from the undesignated area within WIU # 132B. The two units are not contiguous to each other, but are contiguous to the Argus Range Wilderness. **See attached maps.**

**Boundaries:**

The borders of unit 132B-2 are:

The southwest corner of the unit is the intersection of T 23S, R43E sections 08, 09, 17, and 16. The boundary follows the section line east until it meets P105. The boundary follows P105 north to the intersection of P105 and P2, where it follows P2 west until the intersection of P2 and P3. The boundary turns north onto P3 and follows it until it reaches a jeep trail that leaves the designated route heading north. The boundary follows this jeep trail to the ridgeline, and then follows the ridgeline until it meets the Argus Range Wilderness boundary. It follows this boundary south to the southwest corner of the unit.

Unit 132B-3 is defined by Homewood canyon Road to the south, Trona-Wildrose road to the east, Argus Range wilderness to the west, and state land (T 23S, R 43E section 16) to the north.

**Description of Current Conditions:**

**Land Ownership: BLM**

Unit 132B-2 is entirely on BLM land (699 acres).

Unit 132B-3 is entirely on BLM land; there are two small parcels of private land that have been excluded from the unit and the acreage measurement (2693 acres)

**Location:**

132B-2 (Southern Argus Range): This unit is located west of Slate Range Crossing, south of the Slates' ridgeline that meets with the Argus Range, and north of the state land in T23S, R43E from the Mount Diablo Meridian, section 16.

132B-3 (Southern Argus Range): This unit northwest of the intersection of Trona-Wildrose Road and Homewood Canyon Road.

**Topography:**

132B-2: The southern portion of the unit is a rolling bajada with basalt boulder fields. The northern part of the unit is dominated by a valley with basalt boulders and rolling hillsides.

132B-3: The part of the unit north of P7 is primarily basalt boulder fields. The area south of P7 is short, rolling hills trending uphill towards Homewood Canyon; the low points are broad, sandy washes.

**Vegetation Features:** Creosote scrub with barrel cacti; rabbitbrush and goldenbush dominate the washes

**Major Human Uses / Activities:** The units are sparsely used. Some semi-primitive recreation including 4WD touring, dispersed camping, hunting, wildlife watching and photography.

**( 2 ) Natural Condition: Yes**

132B-2: The area is screened from human disturbances by the complex hillsides that form the valley. The cabin site blends in well with the surrounding area because it is made of local stone. The more heavily impacted mining site that has become naturalized is obscured by hillsides from most of the unit.

132B-3: The unit is bisected by a rugged vehicle route that does not significantly detract from the naturalness of the area, and serves to emphasize the rugged nature of the northern half as it winds through boulder fields.

**( 3 ) Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and/or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Yes**

132B-2: The landscape shields the unit from the highway, which is the only real man made feature that would disturb the unit's opportunities for solitude. The vehicle trails are not well traveled, and the visitation rate cannot be that great. There are no restrictions to primitive or unconfined recreation opportunities within the unit.

132B-3: Vehicle access is limited and there are ample opportunities for solitude through most of the area. Argus Range Wilderness to the west and the state lands to the north protect these areas from further impacts. The terrain and vegetation provide screening from the impacted areas to the south and east.

**( 4 ) Are there Supplemental Values? Yes**

There are mining and cabin ruins within the unit. Both units are within the northern most range of the desert tortoise and could be critical to maintaining tortoise habitat as desert temperatures continue to warm.