

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: WIU #CDCA-132

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Does this area meet any of the size requirements?
Yes
2. Does this area appear to be natural?
No
3. Does this area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?
No
4. Does this area have supplemental values?
No

Conclusion

WIU 132 does not have wilderness character.

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Date: 3/24/15

Approved by:



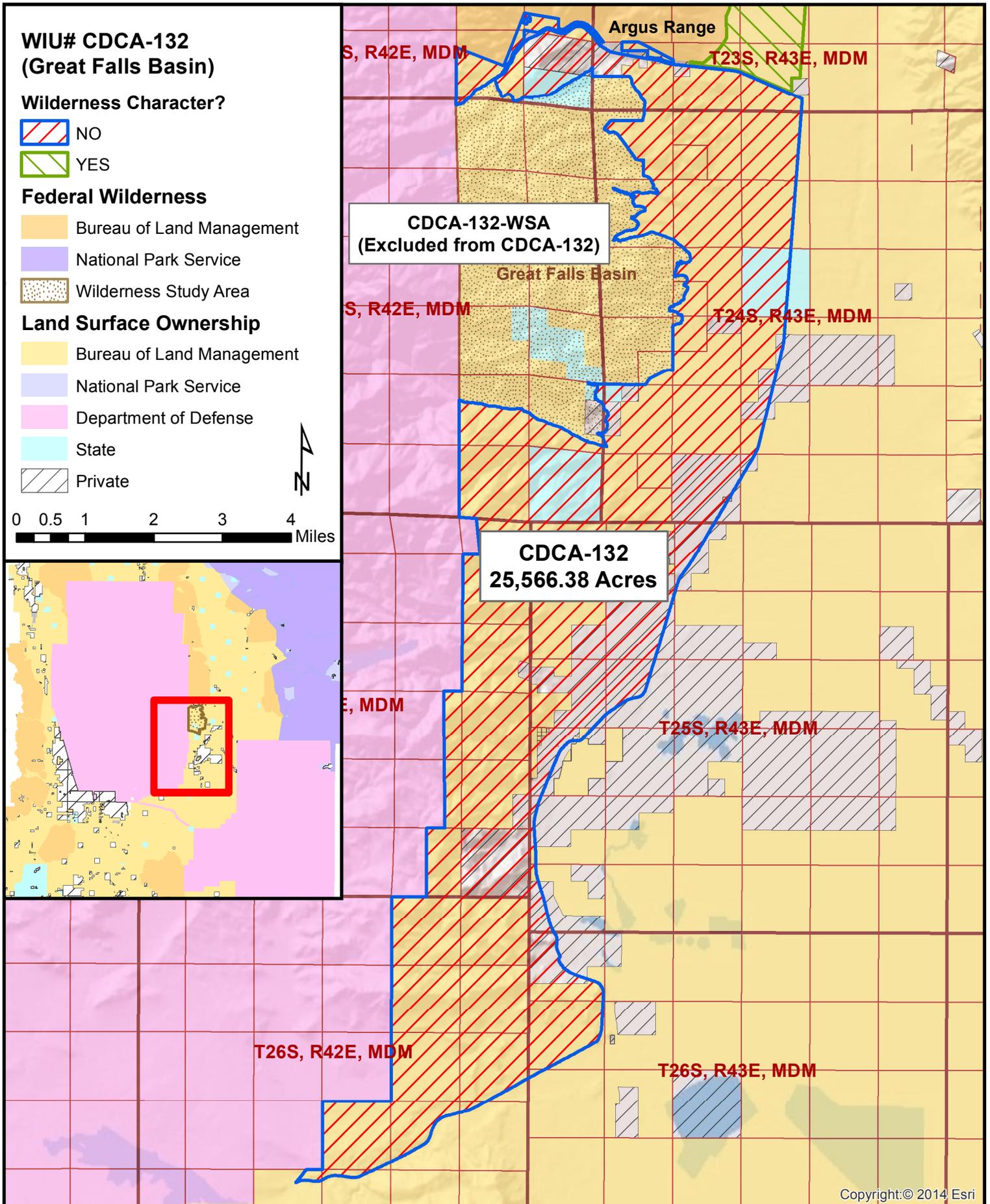
3/27/2015

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-132 (Great Falls Basin)



Year 2015 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #CDCA 132 (Great Falls Basin)

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

1980 Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Appendix Volume B, Appendix III: Wilderness. BLM Ridgecrest FO

Inventory Unit Name(s)/Numbers: WIU #CDCA 132 (Great Falls Basin)

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

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-132 (North Argus Range)	35921 GIS acres calculated using the stated boundaries of the original unit	N Except for the area now part of Great Falls Basin WSA	N Except for the area now part of Great Falls Basin WSA	N Except for the area now part of Great Falls Basin WSA	Not Evaluated
1994 findings within WIU CDCA-132 for 132-WSA (Great Falls Basin, Congressionally legislated WSA)	~ 8,800 acres (CDPA 1994)	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-132	25,556 GIS acres	N	N	N	Not Evaluated

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

The original 1979 WIU# 132 was bordered on the north by Homewood Canyon, on the east and the south by Highway 178 (Trona Road), and on the west by China Lake NAWS. The total size stated in the original narrative was 5,972 acres. The acreage has been updated for this report using the borders given in the original description, and has been found to be approximately 35,921 acres as calculated within a GIS.

The 1979 report did not make a recommendation for whether the area met or did not have wilderness characteristics. The 1979 analysis and decision were that the area outside of the Argus Range of mountains was significantly impacted man and showed significant evidence of man's permanent improvements. This included significant development within Homewood Canyon, a maintained road leading into Rattlesnake Canyon, and the zone south of Rattlesnake canyon all the way to the southern border of the unit that includes chemical plant and its associated towns. This southern zone was also found to be scattered with non-public parcels of land and overall did not have any natural character. The 1979 report made a special note that area now known as the Great Falls Basin Wilderness Study Area had almost no permanent human impacts and was almost entirely inaccessible to off-road impacts due to the topography.

In 1990, the BLM recommended the previously-recommended 6150 acre Great Falls Basin WSA be released for other purposes than principally wilderness. In 1994, Congress chose not to release the WSA for purposes other than wilderness study. The WSA was expanded to 8,800 acres and became a Congressionally legislated WSA instead of a FLPMA BLM-recommended WSA. This part of the original WSA will not be re-inventoried in this report.

The March 2015 inventory found 25,556 acres identified as WIU # CDCA 132 not to have wilderness character.

FORM 2

Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

(1) Sufficient Size: Yes

Acreage:

Unit 132 is approximately 25,556 acres.

Boundary Revision: This unit has had its mapped boundaries updated using a GIS to better measure its acreage. This unit's record in the State Office WIU database has boundaries that were inconsistent with the boundaries described in the original report.

Boundaries:

The northern boundary of this unit is Homewood Canyon Road. The eastern and southern boundaries of this unit are formed by Highway 178 (Also known as Trona-Wildrose Road). The western boundary of the unit is formed by the eastern borders of Great Falls Basin WSA and China Lake Naval Air Weapons Center.

Description of Current Conditions:

Land Ownership:

BLM manages approximately 19,156 acres.

California State manages approximately 1,356 acres.

There are approximately 6,609 acres of private lands in the unit.

Location:

This unit is located in the central Searles Valley area, west of the highway.

Topography:

This unit is primarily the bajada that is east of the Argus mountain range, so the area is generally rolling hills with rocky outcroppings. The unit is generally uphill as one heads north and west.

Vegetation Features: Creosote scrub with barrel cacti; rabbitbrush and goldenbush dominate the washes. Close to the highway there are areas that have dry lake bed plant communities.

Major Human Uses / Activities: The area encompasses the communities of Trona, Argus, and Pioneer Point as well as the mineral plant that supports these communities. The unit is significantly impacted by human development, roads, permanent OHV trails, transmission lines, mining debris, historic and new dumpsites. These impacts decrease towards the northern end of the unit but are still prevalent, but the southern impacts are still visible from the northern end of the unit.

(2) Natural Condition: No

This area does not have natural character. There are be small, isolated pockets of it close to the WSA in the northern end of the unit, but they are not large enough to affect the condition of the unit. The majority of the unit has been significantly impacted by or is in close proximity to developed areas and crisscrossed by OHV trails. The parts that are not significantly impacted by these routes are not blocked or shielded from the view of the heavily developed areas in any significant manner.

(3) Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and/or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: No

The majority of this unit is close to developed lands which precludes any opportunity for solitude. The patchwork of private and public lands precludes any unconfined recreation opportunities.

(4) Are there Supplemental Values? Not evaluated.