

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: **WIU #CDCA 174 & 185 (outstanding Red Mountain units)**

Summary

Results of Analysis:

1. Do these areas meet the size requirements?
YES.
2. Do the areas appear to be natural?
NO for all units.
3. Do the areas offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?
NO
4. Do these areas have supplemental values?
YES

Conclusion

These areas do not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

Team Member:

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Date: 12-18-13

Approved by:

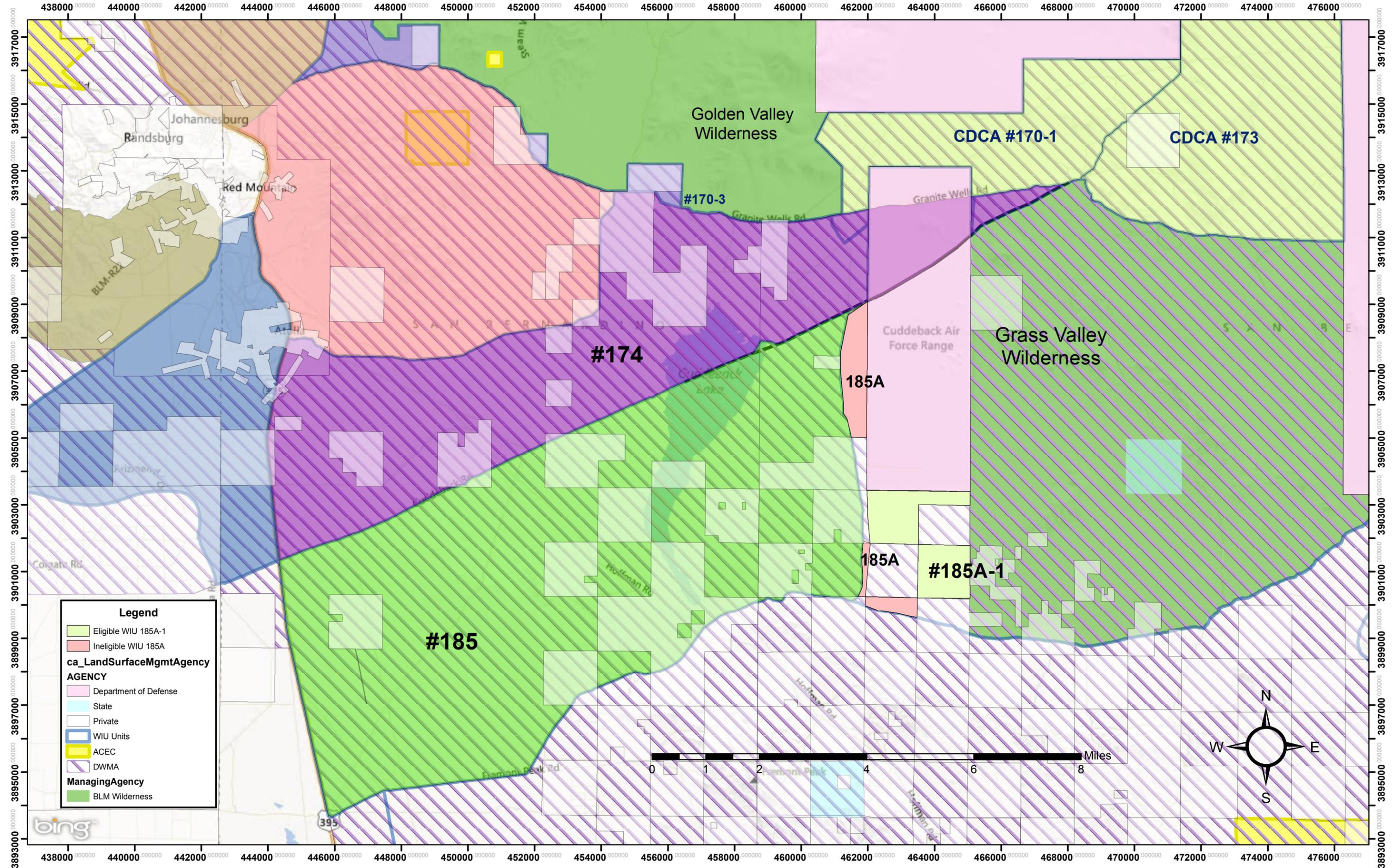


Carl B. Symons, Field Manager

12/19/2013
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 #174 & 185 (Red Mountain) Map



Year **2013** Inventory Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 174 & 185 (Red Mtn.)**

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): WIUs #CDCA 174 & 185

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 174	Y ~20,000 public/ private acres	N	N	N	N
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 174	Y ~15,900 acres	N	N	N	Y
1979 Findings within WIU #CDCA 185	N ~34,000 checkerboard public/ private acres	N	N	N	N
2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 185	Y ~25,300 acres	N	N	N	Y

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

The original **1979 WIU #CDCA 174** was bounded on the south by the Twenty Mule Team Road, on the west by a pipeline parallel to US Highway 395, on the north by a graded dirt road between Atolia and Blackhawk Well (Blackwater Well?), and on the east by a graded dirt road between Blackhawk Well and the Twenty Mule Team Road. Approximately 50% of the area was privately-owned, non-public land. Private land was concentrated in the eastern half of the area with scattered blocks near Atolia.

The unit was described as approximately 2 miles wide and 12 miles long (15,360 acres?). It encompassed the mining town of Atolia, a long strip of broad alluvial plain between Red Mountain and Cuddeback Lake, and the northern end of the Cuddeback Lake depression. Elevations here range from 3400' at Atolia to 2553' on the Cuddeback playa. Vegetation uniformly consist of creosote scrub, except for Almond Cove and Cuddeback Lake where an Alkali sink community dominates.

The area was not found to be in a natural condition. Man had severely altered the landscape. Extensive mining activity and many human habitations dominated the west end of the area, particularly around Atolia. Roads and ways were found to radiate from the town. The area was marked by assessment holes, extensive excavations, and other mining and associated activities. The eastern half of the unit was impacted by an abandoned ranch site and several associated ways and developments (corrals, water tanks, and fences). In addition, impacts from off-road vehicle use were prevalent.

Opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation were very limited due to the flat topography and low vegetation which provided no screening from other activities and recreationists in the area.

The unit was dropped from further wilderness consideration and was not evaluated in the 1990 Wilderness Study Report.

The original **1979 WIU #CDCA 185** was bounded on the north by the Twenty Mule Team Road, on the east by the Cuddeback Lake Gunnery Range Road, on the west by a pipeline parallel to U.S. 395, and on the south by an unspecified feature (the current boundary is now the Ridgecrest/Barstow Field Office boundary). Approximately 45% of the land was publicly owned, with most non-public (private) holdings occurring in a checkerboard pattern with public holdings.

In 1979, the area did not contain 5,000 acres of contiguous public land and was not found to be of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

The unit was dropped from further wilderness consideration and was not evaluated in the 1990 Wilderness Study Report.

FORM 2

Documentation Of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 174 & 185 (outstanding Red Mountain units)**

(1) Sufficient size

Yes for Units 174 & 185.

Acreage: Unit 174 is comprised of approximately 15,900 acres. Unit 185 is comprised of approximately 25,300 acres, of which 15,500 acres form a contiguous block of publicly-owned land in the western half of the unit.

Boundary revision: Boundaries have been adjusted to exclude all private land within the original WIU boundary. Adjustments reflect the current land status, including some changes in private ownership and recent public acquisitions. (See attached map.)

NOTE: The southern boundary of unit 185 was not defined in the original 1979 inventory. It is now the Ridgecrest/Barstow Field Office boundary.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: BLM (15,900 and 15,500 acres of contiguous blocks of public land respectively); private inholdings (0 acres). Public ownership of land within this area is being expanded and consolidated.

Location: San Bernardino County, approximately 5-10 miles east of the communities of Randsburg, Red Mountain, and Johannesburg along U.S. Highway 395.

Topography: Mostly flat terrain, with elevations ranging from 3,400' to 2,553.'

Vegetation features: Creosote scrub desert and Alkaline sink communities.

Major human uses/activities: Commercial filming. Vehicle camping. Off-road vehicle staging and riding.

(2) Natural condition

NO. While conditions have improved within both units; these units are still too heavily impacted by the activities of man to meet wilderness standards for naturalness. Mining impacts, especially around Atolia, have not been mitigated. Abandoned structures, large debris, and trash covers many private parcels. These parcels often attract campers other than private landowners resulting in vandalism, as

well as several large, blown-out camping and target shooting areas. Cuddeback Lake is a defacto open area; currently there are no restrictions on camping or riding on the playa. It is an extremely popular RV camping and staging area for off-road vehicles. Compliance with the designated route system is still poor. Most signs are ignored and vehicles often stray way off course. Much of the area is riddled with vehicle routes, illegal as well as legal.

Some improvements have occurred, as a result of:

- (1) Private land is being acquired and cleaned up by NGO's and by BLM for conservation purposes within the newly designated Desert tortoise DWMA.
- (2) Grazing is no longer occurring in the area. The Pilot Knob Allotment has been retired. The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee has cleaned up Blackwater Well, removing the cabin there, and other range facilities (fences, pipelines and water tanks) that are no longer needed.
- (3) The Cuddeback Gunnery Range has not been used for many years. Edwards Air Force base has been cleaning up the area in preparation for returning it to BLM.
- (4) A designated route system has been implemented. Vehicles are now only allowed to travel on routes that are signed open to vehicles.

(3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude

NO. The flat terrain and low-lying vegetation provide little screening, and hence, poor opportunities for solitude and/or for primitive and unconfined recreation. This is particularly true on major cool-season holiday weekends when off-road vehicle users visit the Cuddeback Lake area in great numbers, riding trails and camping in large aggregate groups of RVs. One can expect to encounter someone on or in a vehicle at these times of the year as often as every 5 minutes, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

(4) Supplemental values

YES. These units are within the Fremont-Kramer Desert tortoise Wildlife Management Area (DWMA). The DWMA has been designated Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat by the Fish & Wildlife Service. As such, it is considered essential to the recovery of this federally-listed species. The DWMA also provides habitat for the Mohave ground squirrel, a state-listed species. More generally, the DWMA is important because it encompasses essential movement corridors which link wildlife habitats in the Western Rand Mountains and Fremont Valley to the Cuddeback Lake area and to both the Golden Valley and Grass Valley Wildernesses. These WIU units contribute to the DWMA's overall functionality.