

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: **WIU #CDCA 184-2, Middle Knob**

Summary

Results of Analysis:

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

Conclusion

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

Team Member:

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Marty Dickes, Wilderness Coordinator, BLM Ridgecrest FO

Date: 06-26-13

Approved by:

Carl B. Symons

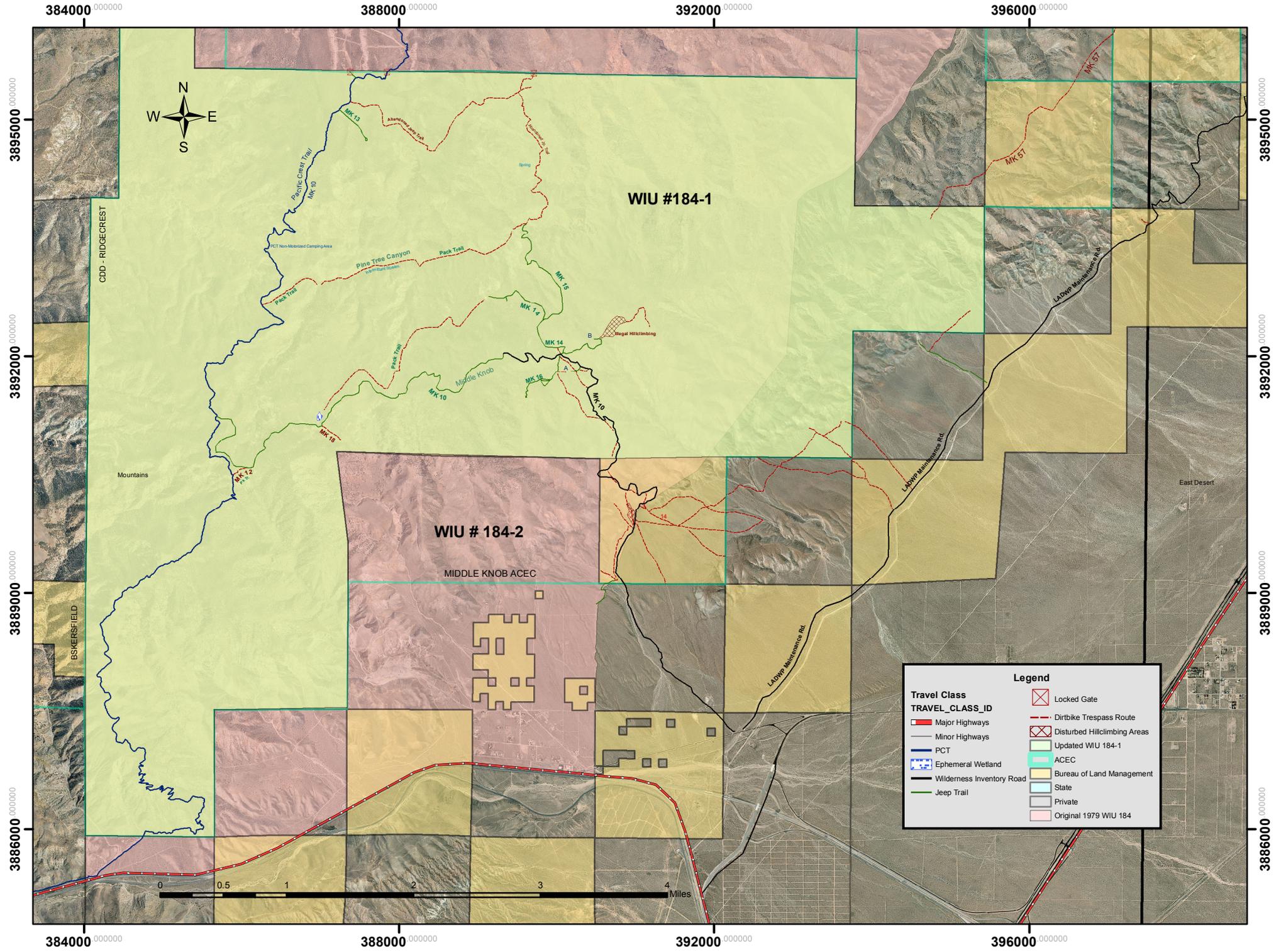
Carl B. Symons, Field Manager

6/27/2013

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 #184-2 MIDDLE KNOB MAP - June 2013



| Travel Class | | Legend | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| TRAVEL_CLASS_ID | | | |
| Major Highways | | Locked Gate | |
| Minor Highways | | Dirtbike Trespass Route | |
| PCT | | Disturbed Hillclimbing Areas | |
| Ephemeral Wetland | | Updated WIU 184-1 | |
| Wilderness Inventory Road | | ACEC | |
| Jeep Trail | | Bureau of Land Management | |
| | | State | |
| | | Private | |
| | | Original 1979 WIU 184 | |

Year 2013 Inventory Unit Number/Name WIU #CDCA 184-2, Middle Knob

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 184 (Middle Knob)

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 184 | Y 12,798 acres out of a much larger unit. | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 2013 Findings within WIU #CDCA 184-2 | N 1260 (approx.) acres incl. 640 contiguous acres | N | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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

The original 1979 WIU #184 extended south from Jawbone Canyon to Highway 58. It was bounded on the west by the boundary of the California Desert Conservation Area and on the east by a series of maintained ranching roads and the Los Angeles Aqueduct Road. In short, the original WIU extended south from Jawbone Canyon to Cross Mountain, Antimony Flat, and Chuckwalla Mountain, across a large block of private property (in excess of 25,000 acres), and on down through what is now the Middle Knob ACEC to Highway 58.

Approximately 65-70 percent of the area was privately-owned, non-public land.

The area was found to contain a great variety of landforms and plant communities, with elevations ranging from 2500 feet at the desert floor to over 6500 feet on the crest of the South Sierra. The following plant communities were found to be represented: creosote bush scrub, canyon riparian, sagebrush scrub, bunch grasses, pinyon-juniper woodland, and a variety of other conifers, including White Fir.

Lower elevation desert portions of the roadless area were found to be substantially impacted by the works of man, including, but not limited to off-road vehicle use. Off-road vehicle use was found to have substantially affected the private/public checkerboard of lands on the northern half of Barren Ridge. The large block of contiguous private lands immediately to the west was found to contain many maintained roads, developed springs, and ranches.

Adjacent natural areas, however, were found to be well-screened from impacted areas “due to the great vegetational density and variety and topographic diversity.” With the impacted areas excluded, the remaining sections of contiguous public lands were all found to “retain their primeval character and influence” and to “form a manageable unit of adequate size in the southern end.”

Within the potential wilderness study area at the southern end, opportunities for solitude were found to be “outstanding in this rugged mountain environment.” “The extremely irregular terrain with rugged mountain peaks and deep canyons” were found to “provide outstanding opportunities for a diversity of primitive and unconfined types of recreation.”

In 2005, the West Mojave (WEMO) Plan Amendment to the CDCA Plan established a new Middle Knob Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in the southern end of the original WIU unit. This ACEC was established to protect significant biological resources, including two special status plant species (Kern buckwheat and flax-like monardella), prime nesting habitat for raptors, including golden eagles and prairie falcons, significant springs and riparian habitat, and a major migration route for the Paiute deer herd along Barren Ridge.

FORM 2

Documentation Of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Unit Number/Name **WIU #CDCA 184-2, Middle Knob**

(1) Sufficient size

N for approximately 620 acres in Sections 28 & 22 (Ts.32S, R.35E.)

Y for 640 acres in Section 14 (Ts.32S, R.35E.) (contiguous to WIU #184-1)

Acreage: Approximately 1260 acres of BLM land as estimated by the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office Wilderness Specialist in 2013.

Boundary revision: The unit contains two isolated parcels of public land within the original inventory unit that are less than 5,000 acres each, and one section of public land that is contiguous with the portion of the original unit (WIU #184-1) found to have wilderness characteristics. The contiguous section of public land is located within the Middle Knob ACEC, but was dropped from WIU #184-1 because of unacceptably high off-road vehicle impacts. See attached map.

Description of Current Conditions

Land ownership: BLM (approximately 1250 acres); private inholdings (0 acres).

Location: Kern County, approximately 7 miles north and northwest of the town of Mojave.

Topography: Variable. Land ranges from relatively flat desert to abrupt, steep mountainsides, bisected by several drainages.

Vegetation features: Mojave creosote scrub with various other wash species such as rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*) and bee plant (*Cleome sparsifolia*) in the drainages.

Major human uses/activities: Access to the Middle Knob saddle via recently improved stretch of MK10. Some target shooting and illegal dumping on private and public lands. Lots of OHV activity, principally dirt bikes on and off the open designated vehicle route system.

(2) Natural condition

No. Not for the size-eligible, contiguous acres in Section 14. This Section had to be excluded from WIU #184-1 because of unacceptably high off-road vehicle impacts. The high route density can be seen on the attached map. The many active trespasses and illegal hill climbs are documented in the photos of Section 14.