

# **Appendix N**

## **Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

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## Consideration of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Lands outside of designated wilderness or wilderness study areas (WSAs) are inventoried and assessed during the RMP process to determine if they possess wilderness characteristics per Section 201 of FLPMA. Also, plan decisions can include a land use allocation requiring that if these lands are found to have wilderness characteristics, these lands will be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics during the life of the plan unless BLM determines that the impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with applicable requirements of law and other resource considerations (see BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Appendix C, (K) Wilderness Characteristics). These characteristics generally include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Management of lands with wilderness characteristics is part of BLM's multiple-use mandate, and is recognized within the spectrum of resource values and uses within the South Coast Planning Area. Lands with wilderness characteristics are defined for this RMP as roadless areas of at least 5,000 acres (by themselves, or when considered with adjoining WSAs/designated wilderness) that have:

- Been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
- Supplementary values including ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Lands inventoried and identified as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics under the alternatives would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics and for the use and enjoyment of the public. In addition, they could augment multiple-use management of adjacent and nearby lands through the protection of watersheds and water yield, wildlife habitat, natural plant communities, and similar natural values.

## Previous Wilderness Inventories

Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directed the Secretary of the Interior and the BLM to review roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands having wilderness characteristics and by 1991 to recommend to the President the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness. In determining these wilderness values, the law directed the Bureau to use

the criteria given by Congress in the Wilderness Act of 1964. In Section 2(c) of the Act, Congress states that wilderness is essentially an area of undeveloped Federal land in a natural condition, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

To accomplish the mandate of Section 603 of FLPMA, the BLM developed a wilderness review process containing three phases: inventory, study, and reporting. The inventory phase of this process, initiated in 1978, involved examining the public lands to determine and locate the existence of areas containing wilderness characteristics that met the criteria established in the Wilderness Act. Areas clearly lacking wilderness characteristics were sorted out from lands that might have those characteristics. This intensive inventory was then followed by a 90-day public review period, after which final WSAs were identified. This inventory process and a general description of all of California's WSAs are given in *Wilderness: Final Intensive Inventory Public Lands Administered by BLM California Outside the California Desert Conservation Area* (1979). The inventory units for the South Coast Planning Area included public lands in the vicinity of Otay Mountain, Hauser Mountain, Beauty Mountain, and Agua Tibia.

The next step in the review process was to integrate wilderness evaluation into the BLM Planning System (43 CFR 1600), which, in 1979, was a Management Framework Plan (MFP) developed for the Escondido-Border Planning Unit in 1976. Issues for discussion were identified through public comment and internal scoping; conflicts were analyzed, and alternatives were developed. The BLM completed an environmental impact statement for *Wilderness Recommendations, Western Counties Wilderness Study Project, Southern California Metropolitan Project Area* in 1987. The BLM also issued the *California Statewide Wilderness Study Report* in 1990. These reports identified five Wilderness Study Areas in the South Coast Planning Area; Agua Tibia, Beauty Mountain, Hauser Mountain, Western Otay Mountain, and Southern Otay Mountain. These WSAs were carried over into the current South Coast Resource Management Plan of 1994. Until Congress decides whether or not to designate an area as wilderness, the WSAs are managed in accordance with the Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (Department of the Interior, December 1979, as amended 1983).

In 1999 the President signed the Otay Mountain Wilderness Act which encompassed the Western and Southern Otay Mountain WSAs, as well as additional public lands not part of the WSAs. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 was signed by the President in March of 2009 and included designation of the Agua Tibia Wilderness and the Beauty Mountain Wilderness. The portion of the Beauty Mountain WSA in San Diego County was not included in the legislation and remains a WSA. The Beauty Mountain and Hauser Mountain WSAs are managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review until Congress designates the areas as wilderness or releases the lands from WSA status.

## **Inventory Process and Criteria for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

Although the wilderness review process from Section 603 of FLPMA has been completed, Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA direct the BLM to prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values, and when appropriate, revise land use plans. This includes an inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics that are outside of the areas designated as Wilderness Study Areas and that are pending before Congress, or units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The BLM shall describe such inventoried lands as "Lands With Wilderness Characteristics," share this information with the public, and integrate this information into its land management decisions. Where the BLM identifies lands with wilderness characteristics, the BLM shall protect those wilderness characteristics unless the BLM determines that impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with applicable requirements of law and other resource management considerations.

Since 1994 the BLM has acquired over 11,000 acres within the South Coast planning area. The largest of these parcels are over 1,000 acres. Several parcels have been acquired within and adjacent to the Otay Mountain Wilderness, Beauty Mountain Wilderness, and Hauser Mountain WSA. The BLM completed an intensive wilderness inventory and study as required by Section 603 of FLPMA in 1987 and described above under Previous Wilderness Inventories. No additional inventories have been conducted since completion of the current South Coast Resource Management Plan in 1994.

This inventory and evaluation covers the areas previously reviewed between 1976 and 1987, but focuses on lands that have never been assessed for wilderness characteristics; acquired outside of, or adjacent to, designated wilderness; and within or adjacent to WSAs. Each parcel is inventoried for wilderness characteristics, and areas containing these characteristics are considered in the planning process regarding appropriate means to manage them.

Lands acquired within the boundary of the Otay Mountain Wilderness are automatically part of the wilderness (Section 6, Wilderness Act). Lands acquired through donation adjacent to designated wilderness may become part of the wilderness if the Secretary of the Interior gives sixty days advance notice to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The BLM will recommend to the Secretary lands that may be added to the Otay Mountain Wilderness under the Proposed Plan and Record of Decision.

Lands acquired within WSAs do not automatically become part of the WSA, but will be evaluated for wilderness characteristics and will be addressed under each alternative. Lands acquired adjacent to WSAs will also be evaluated for wilderness characteristics, along with adjacent parcels that may now create a larger contiguous block of roadless public land.

Land acquisitions, through purchase or donation, and legislation establishing wilderness in the planning area have occurred, or may occur, throughout the planning process. Because of these changes in public land status, some lands may come into public ownership during preparation of the plan that have not been assessed for wilderness characteristics. Subsequent evaluations of lands with wilderness characteristics may occur after title for acquired land has passed to the United States and during plan maintenance.

## Wilderness Characteristic Units

Based on the above criteria, the following parcels were inventoried to determine if they have wilderness characteristics. Each parcel was given a unique identifier as a Wilderness Characteristic Unit (WCU). In one case, three separate sections of acquired lands were combined into one unit along with adjacent public lands to create one larger WCU.

PARCELS INVENTORIED FOR WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS			
Parcel Number	Acres	Wilderness characteristics?	Adjacent Wilderness or WSA
WCU 1	461	Yes	Otay Mountain Wilderness
WCU 2	63	No	Otay Mountain Wilderness
WCU 3	170	Yes	Otay Mountain Wilderness
WCU 4	2,449	No	Otay Mountain Wilderness
WCU 5	594	No	Otay Mountain Wilderness
WCU 6	505	No	None
WCU 7	280	Yes	Hauser Mountain WSA
WCU 8	161	Yes	Hauser Mountain WSA
WCU 9	80	Yes	Hauser Mountain WSA
WCU 10	1,800	Yes	Beauty Mountain WSA
WCU 11	2,440	Yes	Beauty Mountain Wilderness
<b>Total acres</b>	<b>9.003</b>		

**WCU 1 – 461 acres.** This parcel was acquired through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to protect open space and habitat as part of the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The unit surrounds the Otay Mountain State Ecological Reserve, and is nearly surrounded by public lands within the Otay Mountain Wilderness. The objective of the Otay Mountain State Ecological Reserve is to manage these state lands consistent with the Otay Mountain Wilderness, and preserve stands of Tecate Cypress and other sensitive species and habitat. The parcel has no roads or other man-made improvements, and possesses wilderness characteristics. This parcel would be recommended for inclusion in the Otay Mountain Wilderness.

**WCU 2 – 63 acres.** This parcel was acquired through LWCF to protect open space and habitat as part of the MSCP. The acquired parcel is partially within the Otay Mountain Wilderness, and partially outside. The lands north of the Border Pack Trail (100 feet

north) are automatically within the wilderness. The inventory unit is the portion south of the Border Pack Trail and not within the wilderness. In addition, the strip of public land along the US-Mexico border, up to 60 feet north of the international border, was reserved from entry, settlement or other form of appropriation under the public land laws and set apart as a public reservation by Presidential proclamation in 1907, for the purpose of securing the US border. While BLM retains jurisdiction over this strip, the BLM acknowledges this reservation as being under the administration of the Department of Homeland Security for the purposes of patrolling, and construction and maintenance of roads, fences, and other infrastructure needed to accomplish the mission of the DHS. Given the above, the portion of the parcel south of the Otay Mountain Wilderness boundary does not possess wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 3 – 170 acres.** This parcel was acquired through LWCF to protect open space and habitat as part of the MSCP. This unit is nearly surrounded by the Otay Mountain Wilderness and includes a portion of the Cedar Canyon ACEC. The ACEC was designated prior to the designation of the wilderness to protect the only known population of Mexican flannelbush (*Fremontodendron mexicanum*), a species listed as threatened under the ESA. The ACEC also protects stands of Tecate cypress. Other than the existing road into Cedar Canyon, the parcel is roadless and contains wilderness characteristics. This parcel would be recommended for inclusion in the Otay Mountain Wilderness.

**WCU 4 – 2,449 acres.** This unit is a combination of two parcels that were acquired through LWCF to protect open space and habitat as part of the MSCP. The northern portion of the unit was part of the historic Rancho Jamul and includes Sycamore Canyon. The southern portion of the unit was the former Clark Ranch which adjoined Rancho Jamul. Much of the unit is also adjacent to private homes in the community of Dulzura. The unit contains stands of Tecate cypress, coastal sage scrub, and numerous cultural sites related to Native American occupation, the Mexican Rancho period, and early American settlement.

The parcel has been affected by previous grazing, fire, and invasion by exotic grasses and other non-native species. The unit is also crossed by several vehicle routes and trails which are used heavily by the Border Patrol on a daily basis, and by Southern California Edison and adjacent property owners for access to power lines and private property. The area has seen limited OHV and other recreation activities, such as hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and target shooting. The inventory unit possesses ecological, geological, and other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. The unit does not possess characteristics of solitude, or opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, although the Clark Ranch portion of the unit is adjacent to the Otay Mountain Wilderness. Therefore the unit was found not to have wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 5 – 594 acres.** This parcel was acquired through LWCF to protect open space and habitat as part of the MSCP. The unit is bisected by Marron Valley Road. The west portion of the unit, west of the road, is adjacent to the Otay Mountain Wilderness.

The unit was once part of the Otay Mining District and contains several mining related ruins, tailings, adits, and shafts. The unit is primarily steep canyon sides and slopes. The parcel has been affected by previous grazing, fire, and invasion by exotic grasses and other non-native species. The parcel is also crossed by several routes and trails which are used heavily by the Border Patrol on a daily basis. The inventory unit possesses ecological, geological, and other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. The parcel does not possess characteristics of solitude or opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and so was found not to have wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 6 - 505 acres.** This parcel was acquired through LWCF to protect open space and habitat as part of the MSCP. The inventory unit is not adjacent to wilderness or WSAs, but connects the Kuchamaa ACEC to public lands adjacent to, and contiguous with, the Otay Mountain Wilderness. The unit is essentially roadless and along with other public lands, encompasses most of Little Tecate Peak, a culturally significant site for the Kumeyaay. The unit contains features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value, and characteristics of solitude or opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, the unit is not of sufficient size to be considered as having wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 7 – 280 acres.** This parcel was donated to the BLM for protection of open space and habitat values. The inventory unit is adjacent to the Hauser Mountain WSA. The unit contains mature chaparral, oak woodlands, and riparian values. Although the unit is crossed by a route which is used on a daily basis by the Border Patrol, the area retains a sense of remoteness and solitude. The unit contains wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 8 – 161 acres.** This parcel was donated to the BLM for protection of open space and habitat values. The inventory unit is adjacent to the Hauser Mountain WSA. The unit contains mature chaparral, oak woodlands, and riparian values. Although the unit is crossed by a vehicle route which is used on a daily basis by the Border Patrol, the area retains a sense of remoteness and solitude. The unit contains wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 9 – 80 acres.** This parcel was donated to the BLM for protection of open space and habitat values. The inventory unit is adjacent to the Hauser Mountain WSA. The unit contains mature chaparral, oak woodlands, and riparian values. Although the unit is crossed by a major road which is used on a daily basis by the Border Patrol, the area retains a sense of remoteness and solitude. The unit contains wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 10 – 1,800 acres.** This parcel was donated to the BLM for protection of open space and habitat values. This large inventory unit is crossed by portions of three vehicle routes. The southern portion of the unit included former ranch and agricultural lands. The portion of the unit north of Chihuahua Valley Road and west of the Cooper-Cienega Truck trail contains wilderness characteristics.

**WCU 11 – 2,440 acres.** This inventory unit contains one parcel donated to the BLM for protection of open space and habitat values, along with public land adjacent to the Beauty Mountain Wilderness. For the purpose of the inventory and evaluation, the donated parcel has been combined with the surrounding BLM lands which form a large contiguous block of public lands adjacent to the Beauty Mountain Wilderness and WSA. The unit is also adjacent to state lands designated as wilderness (Sheep Canyon Wilderness) within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The inventory unit is crossed by one vehicle route but otherwise is roadless. The unit contains wilderness characteristics.

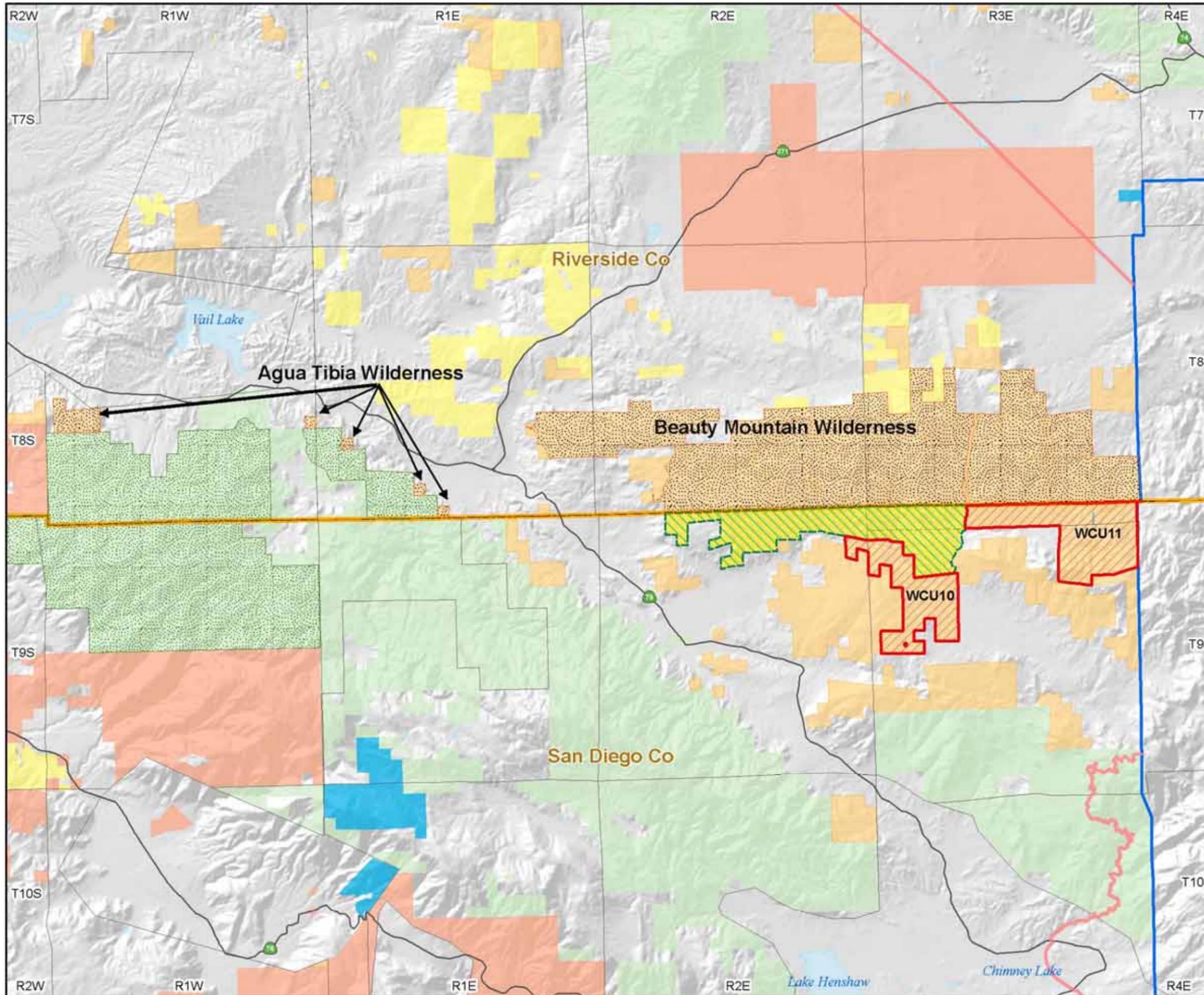
## **Goals and Objectives**

- Parcels that are determined through this inventory to possess wilderness characteristics will be characterized as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and considered in one or more alternatives for management to protect their wilderness characteristics that are present on the parcels.
- On lands with wilderness characteristics, fire and fuels management would be conducted to ensure protection of public safety and property, protection of resource values, and consideration of adjacent Federal and local agency's fire management plans. Managing to protect wilderness characteristics does not in itself constrain fire or fuels management, or suppression actions on these lands.
- Management of lands with wilderness characteristics near the US-Mexico Border would allow for flexibility and coordination with the Department of Homeland Security for operations involving border surveillance, enforcement operations, and tactical infrastructure needs.

# Map N-1

## Lands with Wilderness Characteristic Units

### San Bernardino, Riverside, & Beauty Mountain Management Area



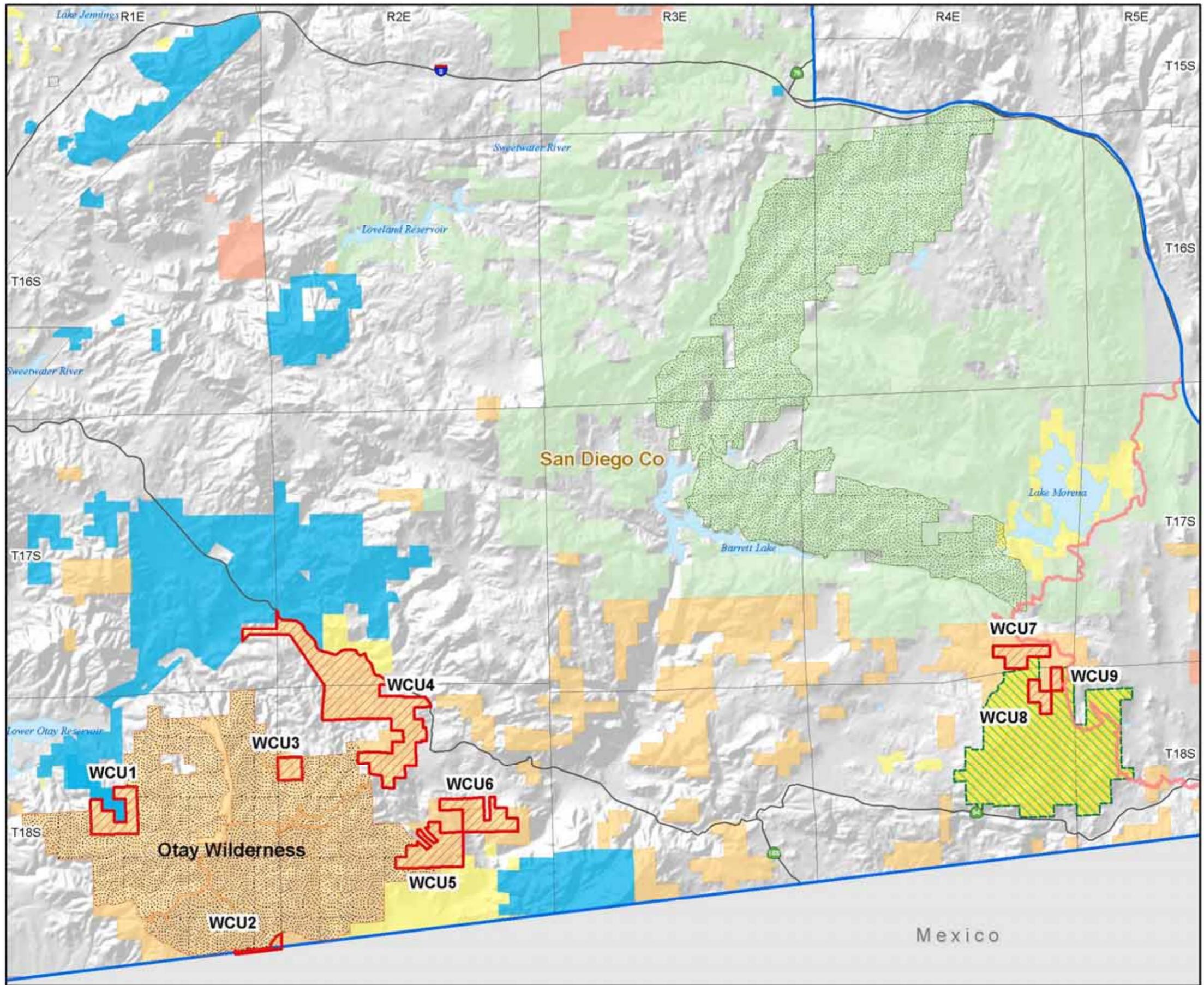
- Wilderness Characteristic Units
  - SCRMP Boundary
  - Wilderness Study Area
  - National Trails
- SCRMP Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
  - US Forest Service
  - State
  - County/State/Regional Private/Other
  - Indian Land or Reservation
  - BLM Wilderness
  - USFS Wilderness
  - County



**SOUTH COAST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREA**  
**Draft Resource Management Plan**  
**Draft Environmental Impact Statement**



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# Map N-2

## Lands with Wilderness Characteristic Units

### San Diego County Management Area

- Wilderness Characteristic Units
  - SCRMP Boundary
  - Wilderness Study Area
  - National Trails
- SCRMP Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
  - US Forest Service
  - State
  - County/State/Regional
  - Private/Other
  - Indian Land or Reservation
  - BLM Wilderness
  - USFS Wilderness
  - County



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