Southern California National Forests
Land Management Plan Amendment

Inventoried Roadless Area Analysis for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests of Southern California

April 2012

The Southern California National Forests Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) Analysis (FSH 1909.12-2007-1, Chapter 72) for a Land Management Plan Amendment. The proposed Amendment is a result of the January 3, 2011 Settlement Agreement.
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Angeles National Forest

Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District

Overview
Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 29,872 acre Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies within the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. It is generally located in the northwest part of the District. The city of Santa Clarita is the closest urban area, located 17 miles to the south. The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale are approximately 20 miles to the east. Two non-motorized trails, 16W05 - Fish Canyon and 16W02 - Burnt Peak, traverse north and south along Fish and Burnt Peak Canyons.

The area is generally bounded by National Forest System Roads (NFSR) or County Highways. Numerous NFSRs lead to the unit but are excluded by boundaries drawn around them ("cherry-stems"), including 7N13.1 (Sawtooth Warm Springs), 7N23A (Burnt Peak Spur), 7N19 (Atmore Meadow), and 7N22.1 (Castaic Canyon). The Burnt Peak Electronic Site is at the end of 7N23A near the north/central portion and is also excluded from the IRA.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area is part of the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province, a range of east-west trending mountains. Topography is generally steep to very steep mountains with heavily dissected ridges bisected by numerous north-south trending canyons. Elevations range from 2,200 to 5,700 feet with varying aspects.

The Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area lies within the Castaic Creek Watershed. The area contains only intermittent streams with numerous springs. Fish Canyon is a tributary to and a source of water for Castaic Lake.

The vegetation is typical of the Forest with large expanses of continuous chaparral in the uplands, mixed conifer and hardwood trees in canyons and drainages, and conifer stands at higher elevations on north-facing slopes. There is a uniquely large stand of black oak (Quercus kelloggii) on Liebre Mountain in the northwest portion of the area.

Current uses of the Area: Forestry work, including maintenance of tree plantations, occurs across Liebre and Sawmill Ridge just outside the unit. Approximately five acres of the Crystal Plantation are within the northeast corner of the area. They were last maintained in 2009.

The Fish Canyon and Burnt Peak trails provide primary access to Fish Canyon and the surrounding areas but are only lightly used due to limited access to trailheads. Some hunters use the area, mainly along these two trails.

Scenic viewing from adjacent roads is a popular activity. The eastern portion of the area can be viewed from the Lake Hughes Road which leads from Interstate 5 through the Castaic Lake Recreation Area, to Pine Canyon. Many people also view the area from Sawmill/Liebre Road which runs adjacent to the northern boundary.

Appearance and surroundings (such as characteristics of contiguous areas): Topography, vegetation, and wildlife are similar to those of surrounding areas within the Angeles National Forest, with abrupt topography and towering peaks dominating the views from most angles.
Many developments outside the unit and around the perimeter would not be noticeable from within canyons. Outside sights and sounds from surrounding development would be more prominent, but would not dominate views from unit ridges and peaks.

**Key Attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** The area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals. These include: Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), Least Bell’s vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus), Southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus), unarmored three-spine stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni), Two-striped garter snake (Thamnophis hammondii), California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) and the California spotted owl (Strix occidentalis occidentalis).

The historic Maxwell Mine is located in the south/central portion of the area, just beyond the cherry-stem boundary around NFSR 7N13. The currently operating Gillette Mine is just outside the boundary at the end of 7N22.1. Several prospects and historic adits within the unit are near these mines and attract the occasional explorer.

There is a waterfall in the southwest corner in Redrock Canyon. One mile of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) passes through the far eastern portion of the area. In the spring, the PCT receives a large number of visitors traveling the entire trail from Mexico to Canada.

**Capability**

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The area is primarily natural in its appearance. It has very little human influence in comparison with surrounding areas. The most prominent man-made features are the remnants of dozer lines from previous fires and a network of pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970's along the ridges. A long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely had some effect on naturalness, although a large majority of fires at the Angeles National Forest are human-caused.

The Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the area are: 76% High (22,734 acres) and 24% Moderate (7,138 acres).

The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads that have likely spread into the fringes of the area, especially along Sawmill and Liebre Ridges where there was historic grazing use. In general, most vegetation communities here contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 99 miles of mapped stream courses, all intermittent and all free-flowing except for two minor impoundments in the upper reach of Fish Creek known as “The Potholes”. The origin of these impoundments is unknown. The only named streams are Fish Creek (4.4 miles) and Castaic Creek (1 mile).

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6),
Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

The area contains portions of three sub-watersheds, Upper Castaic Creek (western), Fish Canyon Creek (central) and Elizabeth Lake Canyon (eastern). All three received preliminary rankings of Class 2 Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

Light from the nearby urban community of Santa Clarita degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree, mainly as seen from peaks and higher elevations in the southern portion of the unit. More distant light from the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster can be seen from peaks in the eastern portion of the unit.

No specific air quality standards other than National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the area. The majority of the area is within the South Coast. The easternmost area is within the Mojave Desert Air Basin. Both are in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Forest. Air quality and wildfire are the primary human factors affecting ecosystem health. Nearly all the area is rated as either low (62%) or moderate (37%) departure from the historic fire regime. Less than 200 acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime. The entire area shows some recorded fire history. Major fires burned substantial portions of the area in 1924, 1927, 1943, 1949, 1968, 1974, and 1987.

Undeveloped: There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, communications sites, highways, and water lines, but it does not appear that any development other than Forest System Trails occurs within this unit. Small portions of NFSRs have been included as a result of boundary mapping error.

Ridgelines have historic remnants of dozer lines from past fires and a large network of pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970s. Approximately 8.7 miles of these fuel breaks are planned for maintenance in the next five years.

The small diversions known as “The Potholes” are well screened by topography and vegetation and are not prominent across the area as a whole.

There are approximately: 0.35 miles of Forest system road, 0 miles of non-system classified road, 0.2 miles of unauthorized road, 14.7 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 5.88 miles of unauthorized trails (many of these may be abandoned roads).
Opportunities: Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Fish Canyon. These benefits may include some level of solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others, and from the developments and evidence of humans. That is because this unit is relatively large (29,872 acres) in size, has significant screening from vegetative or natural features, and within the interior is somewhat distant to human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development, especially within the interior canyons.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are available. Fish Canyon is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. In a time and place where it seems that most areas have been developed or affected by man, cross-country exploration through these primitive areas provides challenging, primitive recreational experiences which provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding urban landscape. Although hampered by dense chaparral, cross-country exploring provides interesting challenges, and can test ones self-reliance, and sense of adventure.

Recreational opportunities include hiking and horseback riding on the area’s trails, camping (primitive), nature and scenic viewing from adjacent roads and hunting.

Sawtooth Mountain (5,308 feet) is noted by the Sierra Club’s “Hundred Peaks to Visit,” and provides a primitive recreational experience and a spectacular view of the surrounding country.


Special Features and Values: The area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals.

The arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) and California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) are known to occupy habitat within the area. There are several Protected Activity Centers for spotted owls.

The Liebre Mountain area in the northwest portion of the unit, which has one of the largest stands of California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) in southern California, is designated a Special Interest Area (SIA).

There are known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity including prehistoric habitations sites and resource processing and storage sites. Historic sites include historical mining extraction sites, small encampments, and associated trails.

Culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, may occur in the unit.

The area does not provide any specific value as wildlife corridor beyond the general function of the Angeles National Forest as the largest expanse of open space and habitat in Los Angeles County.
Outstanding landscape features are the visually dominant peaks of Sawtooth and Redrock Mountains, and the major drainage of Fish Canyon. The geologic colors displayed at Redrock Mountain are rare on the Angeles NF.

The northeastern portion of the area contains one of only a few native stands of grey pine (Pinus sabiniana) trees within the Forest. This species is also uncommon on the other three southern California national forests.

**Description of size and shape:** The 29,872 acre Fish Canyon unit meets the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. Fish Canyon is the largest Inventoried Roadless Area within the Angeles National Forest. The shape of the unit is somewhat irregular due to five cherry-stemmed roads around the boundary, but it is large enough that the interior acres still have a high degree of connectivity.

**Summary of boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Activities such as mining, communication sites, etc., would not hinder wilderness manageability as they lie outside the unit boundary. The area’s boundaries could be readily and accurately described and for the most part are located adjacent to roads. Some adjustments to the existing “cherry stem” boundaries along NFSRs 7N13, 7N19, 7N22.1, and 7N23A may enhance manageability and allow dispersed camping uses to continue. Several acres of the Crystal Forestry Plantation in the far eastern portion of the area could be excluded by boundary adjustment to allow for ongoing maintenance. The road that once divided the Fish Canyon unit from the Salt Creek Inventoried Roadless Area in the original RARE II inventory is no longer discernable on the landscape. This creates an opportunity to combine these roadless areas into a single, larger unit.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 349 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 496 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 28,684 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 345 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Fish Canyon. Local Forest Service recreation staff observations indicate the level of use is generally low. Hiking, hunting, and backpacking/camping are available. No significant tourism potential or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area. Mountain bike use of the Fish Canyon and Burnt Peak trails is low, but would be foregone with wilderness designation.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** This area provides suitable habitat for Forest Service sensitive plants and animals including the bald eagle, least Bell’s vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, unarmored threespine stickleback, and the two-striped garter snake. The arroyo toad and California spotted owl are also known to occupy habitat within the area. The area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals. These include: Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), Least Bell’s vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus), Southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus), unarmored three-spine stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni), two-striped garter
snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), and the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*).

**Water availability and use:** Fish Canyon is a tributary to and a major source of water for Castaic Lake. The area has intermittent streams and numerous springs. Overall it is a dry landscape, similar to much of the surrounding Forest.

**Livestock Operations:** There are no active grazing allotments.

**Timber:** There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.

**Minerals:** The historic Maxwell Mine is located in the central portion of the area. Approximately half the area is withdrawn from mineral entry under 1872 Mining Law. This withdrawal was made by Congress in 1928 in recognition of the unique urban watershed function of the Angeles National Forest. There are no active mineral claims, operations, sales, or leases. Oil and gas leases existed as recently as 1995 although it is unknown if they ever produced.

**Cultural resources:** Very little of the Fish Canyon unit has been surveyed for cultural resources, due primarily to access issues. The known prehistoric and historic properties located in similar landscapes in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigation. Culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, may occur in the unit.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** No valid land use authorizations occur within the area. Several are adjacent to, or define the boundaries of the unit.

**Management considerations including fire, insects, diseases, and presence of non-federal lands:** There are no private in holdings within the area. There are no known management concerns for insect or disease outbreaks.

Wildfires in the area receive an aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles National Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character. Approximately 19,274 acres (65%) of the area are mapped as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Of these acres, none are currently mapped as WUI Defense Zone as defined in the Forest Plan.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wilderness in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Approximately 12 to 15 miles to the west/southwest is the Sespe Wilderness, 219,700 acres in size. The newly designated (2009) Magic Mountain Wilderness is located on the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District. This Wilderness area is just beyond the 14 Freeway and roughly 25 air miles to the southeast with an approximate size of 12,282 acres. The San Gabriel Wilderness area (35,700 acres) is 35 air miles to the southeast.

**Present visitor pressure on the other existing wilderness, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Visitation is generally light in the Sespe Wilderness except for a few holiday weekends and popular sites. There is low to moderate use of the San Gabriel Wilderness which is primarily used for daylong visits.
trips. There is very little overnight use. The Magic Mountain Wilderness experiences very low use due to remoteness, distance from popular recreation sites, and lack of recreation trails.

California’s population has been stable or decreasing over the last several years, mainly due to the economic recession of 2007-2009. The nearby communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic were experiencing rapid growth prior to the recession. There is no significant increase in the state, county, or Forest’s transportation network expected. Major transportation infrastructure is mostly already built.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program’s most recent (FY 2006) report for the Angeles National Forest estimated 34,000 wilderness area visits. This is the lowest number of visits of the five general recreation site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness), and indicates that the existing supply of wilderness apparently meet current public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The extent in which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The area currently provides for unconfined outdoor recreational experiences. The steepness of the topography, a general lack of accessibility, and density of vegetation tend to place limits on public use of the area. Therefore, wilderness designation would not appreciably increase the ability of certain biotic species to compete with outside influences by decreasing public use and future development.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) is highly dependent on primitive, undeveloped areas to continue its recovery. Current use and designation appears to provide adequate protection to existing biota. Given the low current and projected levels of public use, all biotic species are expected to continue thriving successfully. The majority of the area is not readily accessible due to its remote location and rough terrain. This area already provides a primitive surrounding, and thus the change in land status would not substantially increase protection.

An area’s ability to provide for preservations of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The Liebre Mountain area ecosystem sustains one of the largest stands of black oak in southern California and is designated a Special Interest Area (SIA), providing protection to this resource. The landforms and ecosystems represented in the Fish Canyon unit are generally common across the Forest and throughout other southern California national forests. Although the area provides many naturally occurring conditions which are conducive to wilderness character, there are no unique landform types or ecosystems in this area.
Angeles National Forest

Red Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 8,030 acre Red Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies within the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. It is generally located within the south central portion of the area. The city of Santa Clarita is the closest urban area, located 10 miles to the south. The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale are approximately 21 miles to the northeast. There are no Forest system trails in this roadless area.

The area is primarily accessed from Los Angeles County Highways along the eastern (San Francisquito Canyon) and western (Lake Elizabeth) boundaries. Access is also from National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 6N24 (Ruby Clearwater) to the north and 5N30 (Dry Gulch) to the south.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s):) The 8,030 acre Red Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is partly within the Elizabeth Lake and San Francisquito watersheds. Chaparral (chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus herbaceous*) dominates the vegetation covering the slopes of the mountain. In the steep narrow canyons with perennial streams there are scattered stands of mixed pines and hardwoods (oaks, willows, alder, and sycamores). A small stand of bigcone Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*) grows on the north face slope of Red Mountain.

There are long meandering canyons with steep vertical walls and intermittent streams. Elevations range from 4,000 feet at the top of Red Mountain to 1,600 feet in the lower drainages in the southern portion. There are intermittent mountain springs on the northeast corner of the roadless area known as Plum Springs.

Current uses of the Area: Camp 14, a Los Angeles County Fire Camp, is located just outside the eastern boundary of this unit and currently serves as a California Department of Corrections facility that houses four crews. A road from San Francisquito Canyon leads through the camp.

A Forest Service special use permitted shooting range named “A Place to Shoot” lies partially within the eastern boundary of the unit along San Francisquito County Road.

There is low public use of the area which consists primarily of cross country hiking and hunting. Hiking use is very low in the area due to the areas rugged topography, dense vegetation, and a lack of trails or trailheads. A minimal amount of mountain biking also occurs.

Scenic viewing from adjacent roads is a popular activity. The eastern portion of the area can be viewed from county highways along the east and west boundaries. Many people also view the area from OHV routes on the north and south.

Appearance and surroundings (such as characteristics of contiguous areas): The area contains long meandering canyons with steep vertical walls and intermittent flowing streams. The areas
slopes primarily consist of chaparral with scattered hardwoods and big-cone Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*) at the north facing higher elevations.

As the highest peak in the unit, Red Mountain can be viewed from most north facing slopes in the area. The primary appearance is of abrupt topography, with steep slopes and towering peaks dominating the views from most angles. The visual quality may be impaired due to remnants of fire lines and dozer lines with fuel breaks on ridge tops.

Many developments outside the IRA and around the perimeter would not be noticeable from within canyons. Sights and sounds of the highways to the east and west and the major utility corridor to the north would be prominent, and may dominate views, from ridges and peaks.

**Key Attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** The proposed addition provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals including, but not limited to: Least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), unarmored three-spine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), Arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), and foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*).

Red Mountain is a high point on the topography and offers outstanding views of Castaic Lake to the south.

**Capability**

The area's potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The area is very natural in its appearance. It has very little human influence in comparison with surrounding areas. There are some remnants of dozer lines from previous fires, and a long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely affected naturalness, although a large majority of fires at the Forest are human caused. Natural ecological processes are affected by maintenance activities within the major utility corridor to the north, primarily through presence of invasive species. Ridgelines have historic remnants of dozer lines from past fires and a large network of pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970s. Some of these fuel breaks, extending from Red Mountain along the main ridges to the east, west, and south are planned for maintenance in the next two years.

The vegetative community consists of chaparral, hardwoods and pockets of pine, vegetation communities that are “primarily affected by the forces of nature.” Chaparral (which primarily consists of chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), and ceanothus (*Ceanothus herbaceus*) is the dominant vegetation type and embodies natural conditions native to the area.

The Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the area are: 87% High (7,016 acres) and 13% Moderate (1,014 acres).
The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads and within the adjacent utility corridors that have likely spread into the area. In general, most vegetation communities within the interior contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 23 miles of mapped stream courses, all of them intermittent and free-flowing. None of them are named. The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

The area contains portions of the Elizabeth Lake Canyon (western), Lower Castaic Creek (southern) and San Francisquito (eastern) sub-watersheds. Elizabeth Lake Canyon and Lower Castaic Creek received a preliminary ranking of Class 2 - Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. San Francisquito received a preliminary ranking of Class 3, watersheds exhibit low geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

Light from the nearby urban communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree, mainly as seen from peaks and higher elevations of the unit.

No specific air quality standards other than National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the area. The area is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is quite healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Angeles National Forest. Air quality and wildfire are the primary human factors affecting ecosystem health. A majority of the area is rated as either low (41%) or moderate (24%) departure from the historic fire regime. Only six acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime and 2,811 acres (35%) are unclassified.


Undeveloped: There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, highways, and Forest system roads. The Elizabeth Lake Canyon Road, and 6N24 (Ruby Clearwater) have small portions within the areas along the western and northeastern boundaries, respectively. These roads are mainly confined to relatively small areas around the perimeter, and appear to be a result of mapping error. The vast majority of the area does not contain human development.
Approximately 15 acres of a concessionaire operated target shooting area, “A Place to Shoot,” are within the southeastern portion of the area. The permit area includes target structures, roads and constructed dirt backdrops.

Helicopters routinely fly over the area, as there is a designated helicopter base just east of the area on private property at Los Angeles County Camp 14.

There are approximately: 0.1 miles of Forest system road, 0.3 miles of non-system classified road (Lake Elizabeth County Highway), 2.2 miles of unauthorized road, 0 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 0.5 miles of unauthorized trails (many of these may be abandoned roads or fire lines).

Opportunities: Opportunities for cross-country exploring, hiking, hunting, as well as backpacking/camping are available. Unlike many roadless areas, this IRA does not have trails which transect the land, making the more remote areas difficult to access. This factor, combined with the dense chaparral, makes cross-country exploration through these primitive areas challenging, and provides recreational experiences for the more adventurous people looking to test ones’ self-reliance.

Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Red Mountain, and may include some level of solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others, and from the developments and evidence of humans. These opportunities may be somewhat limited relative to other wilderness and roadless areas due to the small size (8,030 acres compared to 29,872 acres in nearby Fish Canyon). Vegetative or natural features may provide some screening, but none of the area would be more than three miles from human impacts and development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are available. Red Mountain is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. In a time and place where it seems that most areas have been developed or affected by man, cross-country exploration through these primitive areas provides challenging, primitive recreational experiences which provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding urban landscape.


Special Features and Values: The area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals as mentioned under key attractions above. The view of the surrounding area from Red Mountain is outstanding. There are known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity, including a prehistoric habitation site and resource processing sites. Historic sites include historical mining extraction sites and a survey marker.

A new species of vascular plant, *lepechinia rosii*, was first found on Red Mountain in 1998. The area does not provide any specific value as wildlife corridor beyond the general function of the Angeles National Forest as the largest expanse of open space and habitat in Los Angeles County.

Description of size and shape: The 8,030 acre Red Mountain unit meets the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. It is the second smallest Forest inventoried Roadless
Area not contiguous to an existing wilderness (of those being re-evaluated for wilderness recommendation). The shape of the defined unit is contiguous and regular with no cherry stem boundaries around roads, which facilitates management.

**Summary of boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** The boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads and transmission lines. For major infrastructure such as 500 KV transmission lines, a buffer of up to ¼ mile may be necessary as maintenance often involves low flying helicopters. An even larger buffer may be desirable around Los Angeles County Fire Camp 14 where firefighting helicopters routinely take-off and land. For the highways on the eastern and western boundaries, increasing the setback up to 500 feet would eliminate conflicts with management of the highways and offer greater protection to wilderness values.

Major facilities partially within the area could be carefully mapped and excluded from any wilderness designation by boundary adjustments. Even if this were done, future maintenance and management of power lines, highways, helicopter bases, and target shooting facilities may adversely affect wilderness character. Locations of these features are noted below under authorized uses.

The area is relatively close on all sides to external influences that detract from wilderness character. In particular, the northern boundary is adjacent to a major utility corridor and access road, and the western and eastern boundaries to county highways.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 24 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 7,780 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 225 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Red Mountain. Local Forest Service recreation staff observations indicate the level of use is generally very low. Cross country hiking, hunting, and backpacking/camping are available. No significant tourism potential, or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area. A minimal amount of mountain biking has occurred in the area in the past that would be precluded by wilderness designation.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** A large portion of the east side of the Angeles National Forest, which includes the Salt Creek, Tule, Fish Canyon and Red Mountain Inventoried Roadless Areas have been identified as suitable California condor habitat.

**Water availability and use:** There are intermittent mountain springs on the northeast corner of the roadless area known as Plum Springs. All mapped streams in the area are classed as intermittent. The availability of water is generally limited. No major water developments or diversion exist. Overall, Red Mountain is a dry landscape, typical of the surrounding Forest.

**Livestock Operations:** There are no active grazing allotments.

**Timber:** There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.
**Minerals:** Approximately 40% of the area is withdrawn from mineral entry under 1872 Mining Law. This withdrawal was made by Congress in 1928 in recognition of the unique urban watershed function of the Angeles National Forest. There are no active mineral claims, operations, sales, or leases.

**Cultural resources:** Very little of the Red Mountain unit has been surveyed for cultural resources, due primarily to access issues. The known prehistoric and historic properties located in similar landscapes in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigation. It is unclear if culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, occur in the unit.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** Los Angeles County’s Camp 14 is just outside the eastern boundary, and includes an inmate’s fire camp and a firefighting helicopter base.

Approximately 0.3 miles of Lake Elizabeth County Highway (SCM101616, County of Los Angeles; T6N, R16W, Section 27) are within the proposed boundary.

Approximately 15 acres for the operation and maintenance of a target range (SCM517802B) “A Place to Shoot” is within the proposed boundary (T5N, R15W, Section 6).

**Management considerations including fire, insects, diseases, and presence of non-federal lands:** Wilderness designation would not have significant impacts to private property owners or their access routes along the eastern boundary. There are no known management concerns for insect or disease outbreaks.

Wildfires in the area receive an aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles National Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character. Approximately 6,759 (84%) acres of the area are mapped as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Only two acres are currently mapped as WUI Defense Zone as defined in the Forest Plan. In addition over six miles of historically cleared fuel breaks which may be maintained in the future, approximately 800 acres in the western portion of the area are currently proposed for fuels reduction work.

Management of the various facilities in the utility corridor to the north could conflict with wilderness designation and have potential to degrade the quality of the area’s wilderness characteristics. Access needs include the occasional use of low-flying aircraft and permitted landing zones which could be a conflict even with boundary adjustments to provide buffer space. OHVs could enter the area from roads that border the North and South.

**Need**

The following factors were considered and the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wilderness in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** The 219,700-acre Sespe Wilderness on the Los Padres National Forest is approximately 15 miles to the southwest on the west side of the I-5 freeway. The 12,282 acre Magic Mountain Wilderness is located on the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District. This Wilderness is just beyond the 14 freeway and roughly 25 air miles to the southeast. The Pleasant View Ridge wilderness (recently designated 2009) is roughly 26,757 acres and 30 air miles away.
away. The San Gabriel Wilderness area is 35 air miles to the southeast on the San Gabriel River Ranger District.

Present visitor pressure on the other existing wilderness, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Use is generally light except for a few holiday weekends and at popular sites within the wilderness. There is low to moderate use of the existing wilderness areas, which are primarily used for daylong trips, with little overnight use. In recent years, recreational mining has become more popular in wilderness areas with high value metals such as gold. The Sheep Mountain wilderness has been known for its minerals and is currently under pressure which is contributing to resource damage.

California’s population has been stable or decreasing over the last several years, mainly due to the economic recession of 2007-2009. The nearby community of Santa Clarita was experiencing rapid growth prior to the recession. There is no significant increase in the state, county, or forest’s transportation network expected. Major transportation infrastructure is mostly already built.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring program’s most recent report (FY 2006) for the Angeles NF estimates 34,000 visits to existing wilderness. This is the lowest number of visits of the five general site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness), and indicates that the existing supply of Forest wilderness areas meet public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The extent in which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The surrounding area provides similar unconfined recreation experiences. The surrounding area to the north and west has several roadless areas (Tule, Fish Canyon, Salt Creek) which provide unconfined outdoor recreational experiences. The steepness of the topography, a general lack of accessibility, and density of vegetation in those areas work together to create unconfined outdoor recreational experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Current use and designation appears to provide adequate protection to existing biota. Given the low current and projected levels of public use, all biotic species are expected to continue thriving successfully. The majority of the area is not readily accessible due to its remote location and rough terrain. This area already provides a primitive environment, with physical limitations on increased development and use. Wilderness designation would not substantially increase protection.

An area’s ability to provide for preservations of identifiable landform types and ecosystem: The landforms and ecosystems represented in the Red Mountain unit are generally common across the Angeles and other southern California national forests. Although the area provides many naturally occurring conditions which are conducive to wilderness character, there are no unique landform types or ecosystems in this area.
Angeles National Forest

Salt Creek Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Clarita/Mojave Rivers Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 11,004 acre Salt Creek Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies within the Santa Clarita/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. It is generally located in the western part of the District. The city of Santa Clarita is the closest urban area located 16 miles to the southeast. The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale are approximately 25 miles to the east. The area is approximately four miles east of the portion of the Interstate 5 Freeway known as The Grapevine.

The area is primarily accessed by National Forest System Road (NFSR) 8N04, the Old Ridge Route, which is the western boundary feature of the area. NFSR 7N22, Castaic Canyon, provides access to and forms the boundary of the northeast portion of the area. There are no Forest system trails in the interior of the unit. Cienega Canyon runs in a north/south direction, forms the eastern boundary of the area, and divides the Salt Creek and Fish Creek Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The Salt Creek unit lies within the Castaic Creek Watershed. The area contains only intermittent streams and one spring. Salt Creek itself is a tributary to Castaic Creek, a source of water for Castaic Lake.

The steep narrow canyons with intermittent streams are studded with stands of mixed pines and hardwoods (oaks, willows, alder and sycamores). Elevations range from 1,800 feet at the south to 4,100 feet near the headwaters of Salt Creek to the north.

Chaparral (chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum), Manzanita (Arctostaphylos), scrub oak (Quercus dumosa), ceanothus (Ceanothus her baceus) predominates on the south facing slopes of the mountain range.

The ecosystem can be best described as a dry chaparral community with pockets of oak woodlands. Conifers can be found on north facing slopes with alders, cottonwoods and oaks lining the riparian areas.

Current uses of the area: There are permitted roads, pipelines, and power lines within the area. They are generally located around the edges of the area and are likely present due to mapping error. No other significant management activities or land uses occur.

Recreational use is limited in the interior due to a lack of trails and adjacent trailheads, and consists mainly of hikers and hunters. Most visitors to this area access the north section of the area via an off-highway vehicle (OHV) route (8N01, 8N05 and 7N23) which generally run from east to west.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): Long meandering canyons with steep vertical walls and intermittent streams are typical of the area, and landscapes surrounding it. Chaparral covered hillsides yield to riparian trees near the streams and ephemeral drainages. Much of the northern covered slopes consist of hard chaparral with patches of oaks and pines. The primary appearance is of abrupt topography with steep slopes and towering peaks dominating the views from most angles.
Many developments outside the IRA and around the perimeter would not be noticeable within canyons. Sights and sounds of the major utility corridor and freeway to the west would be prominent and may dominate views from ridges and peaks.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: A key attraction to this area would be the suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals such as the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), which has been known to historically visit the area.

**Capability**

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The area is very natural in its appearance. It has very little human influence in comparison with surrounding areas. There are some remnants of dozer lines from previous fires, and a long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely affected naturalness, although a large majority of fires at the Angeles National Forest are human caused. Natural ecological processes are affected by maintenance activities within the major utility corridors to the west and south, primarily through spread of invasive species.

The Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the area are: 86% High (9,465 acres) and 14% Moderate (1,539 acres).

The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads and within the adjacent utility corridors that have likely spread into the area. There is a one to two acre infestation of yellow star thistle in the northern portion of the area that is being actively contained and eradicated. In general, most vegetation communities within the interior contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 46.7 miles of mapped stream courses, all of them intermittent and free-flowing. The only named streams are Salt Creek (8.2 miles) and Castaic Creek (3.4 miles).

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf).

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

The areas is within the Upper Castaic Creek sub-watershed, which received a preliminary ranking of Class 2 - Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.
Light from the nearby urban communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree, mainly as seen from peaks and higher elevations in the southern portion of the unit.

No specific air quality standards other than National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the area. The area is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is quite healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Angeles National Forest. Air quality and wildfire are the primary human factors affecting ecosystem health. Nearly all the area is rated as either low (73%) or moderate (26.4%) departure from the historic fire regime. About 24 acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime and 45 acres are unclassified.

Nearly the entire area shows some recorded fire history. The northern portion of the area burned in 1927; almost the entire area burned in 1968.

Undeveloped: There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, pipelines, and major Forest system roads. In several places this infrastructure is within the Salt Creek unit boundary but it is mainly confined to relatively small areas around the perimeter and appears to be a result of mapping error. The vast majority of the area does not contain human development. There are approximately: 1.1 miles of Forest system road, 2 miles of non-system classified road, 0.2 miles of unauthorized road, 0 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized and 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized.

Opportunities: Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Salt Creek. These benefits may include some level of solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others, and from the developments and evidence of humans. These opportunities may be less than those available in other wilderness or roadless areas due to the relatively small (11,004 acres) size of the unit and heavy industrial development to the west and south. Vegetative or natural features would offer screening from these impacts in some of the area, especially within the interior canyons.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are available. Salt Creek is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. In a time and place where it seems that most areas have been developed or affected by man, cross-country exploration through these primitive areas provides challenging, primitive recreational experiences which provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding urban landscape. Although hampered by dense chaparral, cross-country exploring provides interesting challenges, and can test ones self-reliance, and sense of adventure.

Unlike traditional roadless areas, this unit does not have trails which transect the land, making the more remote areas difficult to access. These difficulties promote opportunities for solitude, naturalness, and a primitive recreational experience.
Recreational opportunities include hiking and horseback riding on the area’s trails, camping (primitive), nature and scenic viewing from adjacent roads and hunting.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes for the area are: Semi-primitive motorized – 320 acres, Roaded Natural – 564 acres and Semi-primitive Non-motorized – 10,120 acres.

Special features and values: The proposed addition provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive species such as Least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusilus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), and two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis harmmondii*). The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) once occupied the area, and may once again use habitat within the area now that it has successfully been released back into its natural environment.

The Knapp Ranch just northeast of the unit offers educational and environmental field trips for local schools and colleges and provides views of the area. There is hiking, mountain biking, hunting, and occasional backpacking/camping available.

There are known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity including prehistoric habitations sites and resource processing sites. Historic sites include the National Register of Historic Places-listed Old Ridge Route, a historic highway and associated roadside inns and stations that make up the western margin of this unit.

Culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, may occur in the area.

The northwestern portion of the area contains one of only a few native stands of grey pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) trees within the Angeles National Forest. This species is also uncommon on the other three national forests in southern California.

The area does not provide any specific value as wildlife corridor beyond the general function of the Angeles National Forest as the largest expanse of open space and habitat in Los Angeles County.

Description of size and shape: The 11,004 acre Salt Creek unit meets the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. It is the second largest roadless area within the Forest being re-evaluated for wilderness recommendation, but is less than half the acreage of the Fish Canyon unit to the east, and is smaller than any of the existing wilderness areas on the Angeles. The shape of the area is relatively regular and the lands within the unit have a high degree of connectivity. There are only two relatively short cherry-stem boundaries, each less than one mile.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: The boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads, transmission lines, and topographic features. For major infrastructure such as 500 KV transmission lines, a buffer of up to ¼ mile may be necessary as maintenance often involves low flying helicopters.

Major facilities adjacent and partially within the area could be carefully mapped and excluded from any wilderness designation by boundary adjustments. Even if this were done, future maintenance of power lines, pipelines, and roads within and adjacent to the area may adversely affect wilderness character. Locations of these features are noted below under authorized uses.
The road that is assumed to have divided Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area from the Salt Creek unit in the original RARE II is no longer discernable on the landscape. This creates an opportunity to combine roadless areas into a single, larger, wilderness area.

The area is near to external influences that detract from wilderness character primarily along the western boundary, where there is a major utility and transportation corridor containing an interstate freeway, forest roads, pipelines, and 5 high voltage transmission lines.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres):** Backcountry (BC) - 476 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR) - 670 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM) - 9,400 acres, Developed Area Interface (DAI) - 300 acres, and Critical Biological (Castaic) - 158 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Salt Creek. Local Forest Service recreation staff observations indicate the level of use is generally very low. Cross country hiking, hunting, backpacking and camping are available. No significant tourism potential, or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** The federally endangered California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) once occupied the area, and may once again use habitat within the area now that it has successfully been released back into its natural environment.

The southeast region contains 135 acres of Designated Critical Habitat for, and populations of the federally endangered Arroyo Toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*).

**Water availability and use:** Castaic Creek is a tributary to and a major source of water for Castaic Lake. Salt Creek is a tributary of Castaic Creek. All streams in the area are intermittent, and there is only one mapped spring in the far northern portion. Overall, Salt Creek is a dry landscape, typical of the surrounding Forest.

**Livestock operations:** There are no active grazing allotments.

**Timber:** There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.

**Minerals:** The Gillette mine is currently operational and located between the Salt Creek, and Fish Canyon roadless areas. It would not be affected by wilderness designation. Approximately 15% of the area is withdrawn from mineral entry under 1872 Mining Law. There are no active mineral claims, operations, sales, or leases. Topographic maps indicate an oil well just outside the boundary at the end of the northern cherry-stemmed road. It is unknown if this well is active.

**Cultural resources:** Very little of the Salt Creek unit has been surveyed for cultural resources, due primarily to access issues. The known prehistoric and historic properties located in similar landscapes in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigation. Culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, may occur in the area.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** The following authorized land uses exist in the area, and as noted, are primarily along the edges of the boundary in the western and southern portions:
Approximately 1.45 miles of oil and gas pipeline right-of-way containing various facilities: SCM488101, Plains All American Pipeline, Line 2000; SCM402803, Southern California Gas Co., Line 85; SCM402511, Exxon Mobil, Line 70; SCM 488102, Plains All American Pipeline, Fiber Optic Line; LA 090575 (BLM Authorization), Plains All American Pipeline, Line 63. T. 7 N, R. 17 W, Section 31; T. 6 N, R. 17 W, Section 6; SBBM.; Approximately 0.65 miles of non-system, permitted access road, permit SCM 403052, Southern California Edison. T. 6 N, R. 17 W, Section 6; SBBM; Approximately 1.5 miles of electrical transmission line, SCM 403048, Southern California Edison. T. 7 N, R. 17 W, Sections 19, 30, and 31; T. 6 N, R. 17 W, Section 6; SBBM.; Approximately 1.3 miles of non-system, permitted access road, Special Use Permit SCM 403052, to Southern California Edison, 05/28/1965. T. 6 N, R. 17 W, Sections 15, 16, SBBM.; Approximately 0.6 miles of 500 kV electrical transmission lines, Special Use Permits SCM 403023 and SCM 403049, to Southern California Edison, 07/10 and 06/17, 1965. T. 6 N, R. 17 W, Section 15 SBBM.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: There are no private in holdings within the area. There are no known management concerns for insect or disease outbreaks. Wildfires in the area receive an aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles National Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character.

Approximately 4,570 acres (42%) of the area are mapped as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). None of the WUI is currently mapped as WUI Defense Zone as defined in the Angeles Forest Plan. The presence of existing roads to the north, south, and west provide defensible fire retaining lines which would limit the use of mechanical equipment in wilderness.

OHVs could enter the area from roads that border the North and West. This area is remote, making it time consuming and costly for law enforcement to patrol.

Management of the various facilities in the I-5 utility corridor would conflict with wilderness designation and have potential to degrade the quality of the area’s wilderness characteristics. Access needs include the occasional use of low-flying aircraft, and permitted landing zones, which could be a conflict even with boundary adjustments to provide buffer space.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres) is located on the Los Padres National Forest and is approximately seven miles to the west/southwest. The Magic Mountain Wilderness (12,258 acres) is approximately 25 miles to the southeast. The San Gabriel Wilderness area (35,700 acres) is 35 air miles to the southeast.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: The Magic Mountain Wilderness experiences very low use due to remoteness, distance from popular recreation sites, and lack of recreation trails. Visitor use in the Sespe Wilderness has generally been light with occasional peaks in use during holidays. There are also several popular sites within the Sespe Wilderness where visitation use is on a slight upward trend.
California’s population has been stable or decreasing over the last several years, mainly due to the economic recession of 2007-2009. The nearby communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic were experiencing rapid growth prior to the recession. There is no significant increase in the state, county, or forest’s transportation network expected. Major transportation infrastructure is mostly already built.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program’s most recent report (FY 2006) for the Angeles National Forest estimates 34,000 visits to existing wilderness. This is the lowest number of visits of the five general site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness) and indicates that the existing supply of Forest wilderness areas meet public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Other roadless areas within the Forest as well as generally remote and primitive areas of the forest without any special designation offer similar opportunities to those available in the Salt Creek unit. To the east of Salt Creek is the Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area (over twice as large) that provides unconfined outdoor recreational opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The California condor is highly dependent on primitive, undeveloped areas to continue its recovery. Current use and designation appears to have limited impact to existing biota. Given the low current and projected levels of public use, all biotic species are expected to continue thriving successfully.

No development projects are proposed that would affect this area. Existing Forest Plan land use zones, policies for roadless area management, and other legal protections such as Designated Critical Habitat for endangered species offer adequate resource protection without wilderness designation.

The existing condition of the chaparral vegetation does not offer the public easy, unencumbered access due to its age, size, and density.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The landforms and ecosystems represented in the Salt Creek unit are generally common across the Angeles and other southern California national forests. Although the area provides many naturally occurring conditions which are conducive to wilderness character, there are no unique landform types or ecosystems in this area.
Angeles National Forest

Sespe–Frazier Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 4,245 acre Sespe-Frazier Addition, Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies within both the Los Padres National Forest and the Angeles National Forest. This document provides information only for the 4,245 acre portion on lands administered by the Angeles National Forest. This unit lies within the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. It is generally located within the southwestern portion of the area. The city of Santa Clarita is the closest urban area located 13 miles to the southeast. The community of Castaic is seven miles to the southeast. The area is between Lake Piru and Castaic Lake.

The Sespe-Frazier unit is contiguous with the Sespe Wilderness within the Los Padres National Forest. The area is accessed from the north by a National Forest System Road (NFSR) 6N53 (Whitaker Peak), originating at Old Highway 99 just west of Interstate 5. NFSR 6N38 (Canton Devil) accesses the area directly from I-5 on the south. Forest Trail 17W05 is located in southern portion of the area running from the end of Canton Devil Road southwesterly to Lake Piru. This trail is not regularly maintained and receives light use.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): Riparian vegetation occurs along Michael Creek on the northern boundary and through Canton and Sharps Canyons in the interior of the unit. Chaparral covers much of the slopes with interspersed areas of meadowlands and some coniferous species. Travel is hampered by the dense chaparral. Weather differences can be extreme with hot and dry summers while in the winter snow can be found in the upper slopes. Topography is very steep, rough, and dissected by sharp canyons running in all directions. Whitaker Peak is the dominant feature. Elevations range from 1,800 feet in canyon bottoms to 4,148 feet at Whitaker Peak.

Current uses of the Area: Limited recreational uses include hiking, equestrian use, and hunting. Forest Service authorized and private land uses occur nearby but not in this area. Scenic viewing from the adjacent highways is a popular activity. Many visitors also view the area from adjacent National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 6N38 and 6N53.

Appearance and surroundings (such as characteristics of contiguous areas): The areas topography, vegetation, and wildlife are similar to those of surrounding areas on the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests with the abrupt topography and towering peaks dominating the views from most angles. Major developments outside the IRA and around the perimeter would not be noticeable within canyons. Sights and sounds of the surrounding development (including I-5, the community of Castaic, the communications site on Whitaker Peak, and the dams and reservoirs at Lake Piru and Castaic Lake) would be prominent, and may dominate some views from ridges and peaks. Views of the adjacent Sespe Wilderness to the northeast are of a vast, undisturbed landscape. There are small stands of oak/woodland within the area; however, dense and continuous chaparral dominates the landscape.
Key Attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) is a featured species of this area. The Sespe Condor Sanctuary is just four miles to the west and the 219,700 acres of Sespe Wilderness is just two miles to the west. The arroyo toad (Anaxyrus californicus) is also known to occur within the area. The area also supports potentially suitable habitat for least Bell’s vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus) and southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus).

At 4,148 feet, Whitaker Peak is a popular hiking destination with great views of the surrounding country. The nearby Oak Flat campground is easily accessible from major highways and provides access to Sespe-Frazier via Forest Trail 17W16.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Include the degree to which humans and past or present human activity may have affected natural ecological processes and conditions. The area is generally very natural in appearance when compared to the surrounding landscape. Other surrounding lands on the Forest are generally of a more developed nature such as the developed recreation opportunities to the north and the infrastructure around Interstate Highway 5. The most prominent man-made features are the remnants of dozer lines from previous fires and pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970s along the ridges. A long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely had some effect on naturalness, although a large majority of fires at the Forest are human-caused. Historic grazing use may have altered some vegetation types.

Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the area are: 42% High (1,770 acres) and 58% Moderate (2,475 acres).

The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads and within the adjacent utility corridors that have likely spread into the area. In general, most vegetation communities within the interior contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 15 miles of mapped stream courses, all of them intermittent and free-flowing. None of them are named. The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See: http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.
The area contains portions of the Piru Creek/Fish Creek (northern), and Lake Piru (southern). Both have been given preliminary ranking of Class 2 - Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

Light from the nearby urban communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree, mainly as seen from peaks and higher elevations of the unit.

No specific air quality standards other than National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the area. The area is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is quite healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Angeles National Forest. Air quality and wildfire are the primary human factors affecting ecosystem health. A majority of the area is rated as either low or moderate (96%) departure from the historic fire regime. Only 42 acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime, and 210 acres are unclassified. Almost the entire area shows some recorded fire history. Major fires occurred in 1922, 1928, 1996, 2006, and 2007.

**Undeveloped:** There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, communications sites, interstate freeways, and Forest system roads. Approximately 0.5 miles of NFSR 6N53 are within the sub-unit’s 30 acre and 10 acre blocks and 0.3 miles of NFSR 6N38 are within the 3,700 acre sub-unit; all apparently as a result of mapping error. The majority of the area does not contain any human development.

Ridgelines have historic remnants of dozer lines from past fires and pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970s. Approximately 1.2 miles of these fuel breaks, are planned for maintenance in the next five years.

There are approximately: 0.8 miles of Forest system road, 0 miles of non-system classified road, 0 miles of unauthorized road, 1.2 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 0 miles of unauthorized trails.

Opportunities: Opportunities for cross-country exploring, hiking, hunting, as well as backpacking/camping are available. A majority of this unit does not have trails which transect the land, making the more remote areas difficult to access. This factor, combined with the dense chaparral, makes cross-country exploration through these primitive areas challenging, and provides recreational experiences for the more adventurous people looking to test ones’ self reliance.

Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within the area, and may include some level of solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others, and from the developments and evidence of humans. These opportunities may be somewhat limited relative to other wilderness and roadless areas due to the small size (4,245 acres compared to 29,872 acres in nearby Fish Canyon). Although the area is adjacent to the much larger Sespe wilderness, the shared boundary of the largest portion of the area is only 0.15 miles long, and is interrupted by roads and a communications site. Vegetative or natural features may provide some screening, but none of the area would be more than two miles from human impacts and development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are available. Sespe-Frazier is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge,
initiative, and self-reliance. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a
degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and
unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. In a time and place
where it seems that most areas have been developed or affected by man, cross-country
exploration through these primitive areas provides challenging, primitive recreational
experiences which provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding urban landscape.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes for the area are: Roaded Natural – 327
acres and Semi-primitive Non-motorized – 3,918 acres.

**Special Features and Values:** Available opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation
include hiking, equestrian use, and hunting. These lands have been known to produce gas and
oil.

The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) have
been known to frequent the area. The area also supports potentially suitable habitat for least
Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii
extimus*).

There are known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity including prehistoric habitations
sites and resource processing sites. Historic sites include small historical mining prospects,
encampments, and trails. Culturally sensitive plants occur and are gathered today by some Native
American traditional gatherers.

**Description of size and shape:** By itself, the Sespe-Frazier wilderness proposal of 4,245 acres
does not meet the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. However, the area is
contiguous with the Sespe Wilderness on the Los Padres National Forest. In some points, the
contiguity is broken by Forest System roads. The shape is that of five distinct and unconnected
areas; however, each area is contiguous to the larger Sespe Wilderness. The overall shape is
somewhat regular but does include an approximately two mile cherry-stem boundary.

**Summary of boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** The boundaries could
be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads and existing wilderness.
Forest System roads partially within the area could be carefully mapped and excluded from any
wilderness designation by boundary adjustments. The area is relatively close on the eastern side
to external influences that detract from wilderness character.

Adjacent private lands to the northern portion of this proposal (500 acres) may need further
surveys to determine boundaries. (T. 6 N, R. 18 W., Section 13). A boundary setback would
allow greater flexibility in the suppression of wildfires. The private property also appears to have
constructed features that appear to be within the roadless area. A boundary exclusion would
allow greater flexibility in resolving any potential lands trespass.

If designated as wilderness, the existing Sespe Wilderness would expand further to the east. The
30, 10, and 5 acre parcels are between Forest System roads and the existing Sespe wilderness,
and would not offer any substantial addition to wilderness character.
Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry Restricted (BCMUR)- 488 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 3,439 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 318 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Sespe-Frazier area. Local Forest Service recreation staff observations indicate the level of use is generally very low. Cross country hiking, hunting, and backpacking/camping are available. No significant tourism potential, or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area. A minimal amount of mountain biking has occurred in the area in the past. Future opportunities would be precluded by wilderness designation.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: The largest portion of the Sespe Frazier Additions is known to support the California Condor (Gymnogyps californianus), a federally listed species. The species receives full protection under the endangered species act. No management needs other than compliance with this law are needed. Recovery actions occur under the authority of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and coordination with the Forest Service occurs regularly.

Water availability and use: All mapped streams in the area are classed as intermittent. The availability of water is generally limited. No major water developments or diversion exist. Overall, Sespe-Frazier is a dry landscape, typical of the surrounding environment.

Livestock Operations: There are signs of historic livestock grazing in the northern unit (500 acres). There are no active grazing allotments.

Timber: There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.

Minerals: Most of the area has a high potential for oil and gas occurrence. Most of the area has been leased in the past. The area contains a high concentration of active mining claims. There could be as many as 15; the exact number and location are not known as the available data shows claims by the quarter section. No plans or notices for mineral exploration/extraction associated with these claims or saleable mineral areas are currently approved.

Cultural resources: There are known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity including prehistoric habitations sites and resource processing sites. Historic sites include small historical mining prospects, encampments, and trails. Culturally sensitive plants occur and are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no authorized uses of the land that are under permit by the Forest Service. Potential land uses might include: gas and oil mining, grazing (although the use is not currently authorized on the Forest), and trail system use and management.

Management considerations including fire, insects, diseases, and presence of non-federal lands: There are no private in holdings within the area, but there are private lands adjacent to the northern parcel. These lands contain several rural homes and ranch structures. There are no known management concerns for insect or disease outbreaks.
Wildfires in the area would receive aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wilderness in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** The 219,700 acres of Sespe Wilderness is adjacent to the area. The Magic Mountain Wilderness, designated in 2009, is 12,282 acres, and is 23 miles to the southeast.

**Present visitor pressure on the other existing wilderness, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Use is generally light except for a few holiday weekends and at popular sites within the wilderness. There is low to moderate use of the existing wilderness areas, which are primarily used for daylong trips, with little overnight use. In recent years, recreational mining has become more popular in other wilderness areas with high value metals such as gold. This current pressure is contributing to resource damage.

California’s population has been stable or decreasing over the last several years, mainly due to the economic recession of 2007-2009. The nearby community of Santa Clarita was experiencing rapid growth prior to the recession. There is no significant increase in the state, county, or forest’s transportation network expected. Major transportation infrastructure is mostly already built.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring program’s most recent report (FY 2006) for the Angeles National Forest estimates 34,000 visits to existing wilderness. This is by the lowest number of visits of the five general site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness), and indicates that the existing supply of Forest wilderness meet public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The extent in which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Ojai Ranger District (Los Padres National Forest) is designated as semi-primitive motorized or semi-primitive non-motorized. Many of the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences are available in the non-wilderness areas. Other surrounding lands on the Angeles National Forest are generally of a more developed nature, however there are roadless areas within 20 miles which would provide similar opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The California condor is highly dependent on primitive, undeveloped areas to continue its recovery. The mineral potential and high number of mining claims have the potential to impact the environment. Because wilderness designation would not affect existing claims the potential for impacts would persist.
Forest Plan land use designations, policies for roadless area management and other legal protections such as Designated Critical Habitat for endangered species offer resource protection with or without wilderness designation.

The existing condition of the chaparral vegetation does not offer the public easy, unencumbered access due to its age, size, and density.

An area’s ability to provide for preservations of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The landforms and ecosystems represented in the Sespe Frazier unit are generally common across the Angeles and other southern California national forests. Although the area provides many naturally occurring conditions which are conducive to wilderness character, there are no unique landform types or ecosystems in this area.
**Angeles National Forest**

**Tule Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)**
Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District

**Overview**

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 9,855 acre Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies within the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. It is generally located in the north central portion of the area. The city of Santa Clarita is the closest urban area, located 15 miles to the south. The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale are approximately 18 miles to the east.

Primary roads leading to the area include National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 6N24 (Ruby Clearwater) on the south, 7N01 (Tule Ridge) on the east, and 7N05 (Lake Hughes Truck Trail) to the north. The Elizabeth Lake Canyon County Highway runs along the western edge of the area.

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) accesses the northern portion of the area.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The 9,855 acre Tule Inventoried Roadless Area is within the upper reaches of the Elizabeth Lake watershed.

The primary topographic feature is Tule Canyon. The ridgetops in the area are generally oriented from north/east to south/west. Along with dense vegetation you can also find pockets of rough and broken terrain. Elevations range from 2,000 feet in Elizabeth Lake Canyon to 4,400 feet at the central peaks northwest of Tule Canyon.

Chaparral (chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus herbaceus*) is the dominant vegetation type covering the mountain slopes. In the narrow steep-walled canyons with streams there are scattered stands of mixed pines and hardwoods (oaks, willows, alder, Sycamore). A few small stands of bigcone Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*) are on the north slopes.

Current uses of the Area: The majority of visitation is for hunting with limited fishing in the small portions of the perennial stream in Elizabeth Lake Canyon. Hiking and horseback riding occur on the PCT in the northern section of the area. Approximately 1.2 miles of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, authorized by an Act of Congress, passes through the eastern edge of the area. Scenic viewing from the adjacent Elizabeth Lake Canyon County Highway is a popular activity. Many visitors also view the area from adjacent OHV routes 7N01, 7N05, and 6N24. Approximately 50 acres of the Lake Hughes Forestry Plantation is present in the far northern portion of the area. This plantation is actively maintained.

Appearance and surroundings (such as characteristics of contiguous areas): The areas topography, vegetation, and wildlife are similar to those of surrounding areas on the Forest with abrupt topography and towering peaks dominating the views from most angles.

Many developments outside the IRA and around the perimeter would not be noticeable from within canyons. Sights and sounds of the surrounding development, including the small rural community of Lake Hughes to the north, would be more prominent and may dominate some views from ridges and peaks.
There are small stands of oak woodland within the area, however chaparral dominates the landscape. The Tule unit is a contiguous unit with other similar roadless areas units to the west (Fish Canyon) and south (Red Mountain).

**Key Attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** The Pacific Crest Trail traverses through the northern section of the area. Every spring, a large number of visitors travel on this trail from Mexico to Canada. The area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals including, but not limited to: Nevin’s barberry (*Mahonia nevinii*), Brauton’s milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*), Least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusilus*), Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), Arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*), Unarmored threes pined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), and Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis harri mondii*).

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Chaparral (chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*), scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus herbaceus*) is the dominant vegetation type and embodies natural conditions native to the area. The area is primarily natural in its appearance. It has very little human influence in comparison with surrounding areas. The most prominent man-made features are the remnants of dozer lines from previous fires and a network of pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970's along the ridges. A long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely had some effect on naturalness, although a large majority of fires at the Forest are human caused.

The Lake Hughes Forestry Plantation was converted from native chaparral to pine trees in the 1940s and has been actively maintained through tree thinning and understory brush clearing as recently as 2009. While very noticeable from boundary roads in the northern portion of the area, it is small enough that it does not substantially detract from the naturalness of the Tule unit as a whole.

The Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the area are: 87% High (8,551 acres) and 13% Moderate (1,304 acres).

The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads and within the adjacent utility corridor that have likely spread into the area. In general, most vegetation communities within the interior contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 24.1 miles of mapped stream courses classed as intermittent, and 2 miles classed as perennial. All of them are free-flowing, and none are named.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf).
Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

Approximately 98% of the area is within the Elizabeth Lake Canyon sub-watershed. Minor acreages are within the San Francisquito and Elizabeth Lake sub-watersheds. Elizabeth Lake Canyon received a preliminary ranking of Class 2 - Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

Light from the nearby urban communities of Santa Clarita and Castaic, and to a lesser degree the adjacent rural community of Lake Hughes, degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree, mainly as seen from peaks and higher elevations of the unit.

No specific air quality standards other than National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the area. A majority of the area is within the South Coast Air Basin, with the northern portion in the Mojave Desert Air Basin. Both areas are in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is quite healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Forest. Air quality and wildfire are the primary human factors affecting ecosystem health. A majority of the area is rated as either low (34%) or moderate (65%) departure from the historic fire regime. Only 68 acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime, and 152 acres are unclassified.

Approximately 90% of the area shows some recorded fire history. Major fires occurred in 1919, 1921, 1951, 1962, 1980, and 1987.

Undeveloped: There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, highways, Forest system roads, and the rural community of Lake Hughes. Several small portions of boundary roads and nearby unclassified or temporary roads fall within the roadless area along the western and northern boundaries. These roads are mainly confined to relatively small areas around the perimeter, and appear to be a result of mapping error. A majority of the area does not contain human development.

Ridgelines have historic remnants of dozer lines from past fires and a large network of pre-attack fuel breaks established in the 1970s. Approximately 9.7 miles of these fuel breaks are planned for maintenance in the next five years. They extend from the unnamed peak in the center of the area along the main ridges to the northwest and southeast.

Approximately 1.2 miles of the Los Angeles Aqueduct pass through the eastern portion of the area. The pipe is the major water development serving the city of Los Angeles, and was built in 1907. The entire portion in the Tule unit is underground and aerial photography shows no sign of access structures or other associated above-ground infrastructure in the area.

There are approximately: 0.2 miles of Forest system road, 0 miles of non-system classified road, 0.2 miles of unauthorized road, 2.2 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 1.9 miles of unauthorized trails.
Opportunities: Recreational opportunities include hiking and horseback riding on the PCT, camping (primitive), nature and scenic viewing from adjacent roads and hunting. Besides the PCT, this unit does not have trails that traverse the land, making the more remote areas difficult to access. This factor, combined with the dense chaparral, makes cross-country exploration through these primitive areas challenging, and provides recreational experiences for the more adventurous people looking to test ones’ self reliance.

Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within the Tule Inventoried Roadless Area. These benefits may include some level of solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others, and from the developments and evidence of humans. These opportunities may be somewhat limited due to the unit’s relatively small size (9,855 acres compared to 29,872 acres in nearby Fish Canyon). Vegetative or natural features may provide some screening, but none of the area would be more than two miles from human impacts and development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are available. Tule is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. In a time and place where it seems that most areas have been developed or affected by man, cross-country exploration through these primitive areas provides challenging, primitive recreational experiences which provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding urban landscape. Although hampered by dense chaparral, cross-country exploring provides interesting challenges, and can test ones self-reliance, and sense of adventure.


Special Features and Values: The proposed addition provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals including Nevin’s barberry, Braunton’s milk-vetch, least Bell’s vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, arroyo toad, foothill yellow-legged frog, unarmored threes pined stickleback, California condor, and the two-striped garter snake.

The nearby Cottonwood Campground may serve as an access point since it is located at the northern border of the area just off the Elizabeth Lake Canyon road.

There are few known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity, which consist of a prehistoric habitation site and a couple of artifact isolate finds. Historic sites include historical mining extraction sites, and isolated CCC-era refuse deposits.

The area does not provide any specific value as wildlife corridor beyond the general function of the Angeles National Forest as the largest expanse of open space and habitat in Los Angeles County.

Description of size and shape: The 9,855 acre Tule unit meets the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. It’s relatively small size and juxtaposition to external influences would make it challenging to manage as a wilderness. The shape of the defined area is contiguous and mostly regular with only one cherry stem boundary on the eastern edge.
Summary of boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: The boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are primarily located adjacent to roads. Approximately three miles of boundary on the western side are adjacent to private lands, and as landlines would not be easily identifiable on the ground. For the 500 KV transmission lines to the south, a buffer of up to ¼ mile may be necessary as maintenance often involves low flying helicopters. For the highways along the western boundary, increasing the setback, up to 500 feet, would eliminate conflicts with management of the highway and offer greater protection to wilderness values.

Adjacent to the private lands, using an increased buffer distance of up to ¼ mile may enhance the ability to suppress wildfires that threaten private development, especially on the most northern end of the area where development is most dense.

The area is relatively close on all sides to external influences that detract from wilderness character. In particular, the southern boundary is adjacent to a major utility corridor and access road, the western boundary to a county highway and on the north lies the rural community of Lake Hughes.

Ongoing maintenance of the Lake Hughes Forestry Plantation could continue if the boundary were adjusted to exclude the area. It is approximately 50 acres in the far northern portion of Tule unit.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 845 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 8,694 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 225 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Salt Creek. Local Forest Service recreation staff observations indicate the level of use is generally low. A notable exception is the spring season on the PCT when hikers making the journey from Mexico to Canada travel through the area. Cross country hiking, hunting, and backpacking/camping are available. While there is an adjacent campground there are no Forest system trails leading from the facilities. No significant tourism potential, or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area. A minimal amount of mountain biking has occurred in the area in the past. Future opportunities would be precluded by wilderness designation.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Despite having numerous access points, such as bordering roads, the area would be easy to manage due to lack of roads, trails and rough and broken terrain which helps ensure natural conditions that promote wildlife populations. The proposed addition provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals which have been mentioned above.

There are small stands of oak/woodland within the area which may serve as potential spotted owl habitat. The area is known to be suitable habitat for federally endangered California condor (Gymnogyps californianus). The low and current levels of public use indicate that potentially all biotic species are expected to thrive successfully.
Water availability and use: If designated wilderness, roads needed to repair the water lines near the western boundary may need to be closed to motorized use. The Los Angeles Aqueduct, a major source of water for the city of Los Angeles, passes through the eastern tip of the Tule unit in a north to south direction. There is one spring mapped in the southwestern corner of the area. A majority of the streams in the area are classed as intermittent with lesser mileage of the perennial stream in Elizabeth Lake Canyon along the western boundary. The availability of water is generally very limited. No major water developments or diversion exist. Overall, Tule is a dry landscape typical of the surrounding Forest.

Livestock Operations: There are no active grazing allotments.

Timber: There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.

Minerals: Most of the area has a high potential for oil and gas occurrence, and has historically been leased. There is one current application for lease in T6N, R16W, Section 14. Approximately 40% of the area has been withdrawn from mineral entry under the 1872 Mining Law. This withdrawal was made by Congress in 1928 in recognition of the unique urban watershed function of the Angeles NF. There are no active mineral claims, mining operations or plans, or sales.

Cultural resources: Very little of the Tule IRA has been surveyed for cultural resources, due primarily to access issues. The known prehistoric and historic properties located in similar landscapes in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigation. It is unclear if culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, occur in the unit.

Authorized and potential land uses: The Los Angeles Aqueduct is authorized by an Act of Congress (BLM # LA 035321). The aqueduct passes through the eastern portion of the Tule unit in a north to south direction (T7N, R15W, Sections 26 and 35). The right-of-way is 1.2 miles, 250 feet wide, for a total encumbrance of approximately 36.4 acres in Tule unit.

Management considerations including fire, insects, diseases, and presence of non-federal lands: There are no private in holdings within the area, but there are adjacent private lands to the southwest, west, and the north. These lands contain the rural community of Lake Hughes (population 2,700), the Warm Springs Camp, and Canyon Meadows Church Camp.

There are no known management concerns for insect or disease outbreaks. Wildfires in the area would receive an aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character.

Approximately 7,709 acres (78%) of the area are mapped as Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Of these acres, approximately 37.7 are considered WUI Defense Zone as defined in the Angeles Forest Plan.

The presence of existing roads around the area provides defensible fire retaining lines which could limit the use of mechanical equipment in wilderness. OHV’s could enter the area from roads that border the south and west. This area is remote, making it time consuming and costly for law enforcement to patrol.

Management of the various facilities in utility corridor to the south would conflict with wilderness designation and have potential to degrade the quality of the area’s wilderness
characteristics. Access needs include the occasional use of low-flying aircraft, and permitted landing zones, which could be a conflict even with boundary adjustments to provide buffer space.

**Need**
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wilderness in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Approximately 13-16 miles to the west/southwest is the Sespe Wilderness, which is 219,700 acres in size. The newly designated (2009) Magic Mountain Wilderness is located on the Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District. This Wilderness area is just beyond the 14 freeway and roughly 22 air miles to the South/East with an approximate size of 12,282 acres. About 20 miles southeast is the San Gabriel Wilderness (36,118 acres), which has a class one air quality designation.

**Present visitor pressure on the other existing wilderness, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Use is generally light except for a few holiday weekends and at popular sites within the wilderness. There is low to moderate use of the existing wilderness areas, which are primarily used for daylong trips, with little overnight use.

In recent years, recreational mining has become more popular in wilderness areas with high value metals such as gold. The Sheep Mountain wilderness has been known for its minerals and is currently under pressure which is contributing to resource damage.

California’s population has been stable or decreasing over the last several years, mainly due to the economic recession of 2007-2009. The nearby communities of Lake Hughes and Green Valley have grown in the last 10 years, but population is generally stable given a lack of developable land. There is no significant increase in the state, county, or forest’s transportation network expected. Major transportation infrastructure is mostly already built.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring program’s most recent report (FY 2006) for the Angeles National Forest estimates 34,000 visits to existing wilderness. This is the lowest number of visits of the five general site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness), and indicates that for the existing supply of Forest wilderness meet public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The extent in which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The surrounding area provides similar unconfined recreation experiences. The surrounding area to the south and west has several other roadless areas (Red Mountain, Fish Canyon, Salt Creek) which provide for unconfined outdoor recreational experiences. The steepness of the topography, a general lack of accessibility, and density of vegetation in those areas work together to create unconfined outdoor recreational experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Current use and designation appears to provide adequate protection to existing
biota. Given the low current and projected levels of public use, all biotic species are expected to continue thriving successfully. The majority of the area is not readily accessible due to its remote location and rough terrain. This area already provides a primitive environment, with physical limitations on increased development and use. Wilderness designation would not substantially increase protection.

An area’s ability to provide for preservations of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The landforms and ecosystems represented in the Salt Creek unit are generally common across the Angeles and other southern California national forests. Although the area provides many naturally occurring conditions which are conducive to wilderness character, there are no unique landform types or ecosystems in this area.
Angeles National Forest

Westfork and West Fork Inventories Roadless Area

San Gabriel River Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 4,385 acre Westfork and 1,156 acre West Fork Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) lie within the San Gabriel River Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. They are generally on the western portion of the San Gabriel River Ranger District and bordered by San Gabriel Canyon to the East and the West Fork San Gabriel River and West Fork Road (2N25) to the North. The foothill cities of Monrovia, Duarte, Azusa, and Glendora are approximately seven miles south.

There are no designated system trails within the area. There is one non-motorized trail on the west side of the Westfork that runs in a north to south direction and is just west of Glen Canyon. This not a system trail and most likely made by constant visitor use.

The area is generally bounded by National Forest System Roads (NFSR). The Rincon-Shortcut Road runs along the eastern, southern and western boundaries. It is comprised of the NFSR 2N24 (Rincon Redbox), and 2N23 (Shortcut Edison). Approximately 1.9 miles of NFSR are within the unit due to mapping error. 2N25 (Westfork) runs along the northern boundary, adjacent to the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. It is also designated as a National Scenic Bikeway. The upper end of 2N25 separates the two portions of the area. Both Rincon-Shortcut and Westfork NFSR are accessed from State Highway 39 to the east.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): These units lie within the West Fork San Gabriel River watershed. There are small streams that drain into the West Fork San Gabriel River as well as Fern Spring on the eastern edge of the area.

The topography is generally very steep and rugged and is dissected with narrow canyons that traverse the area in a north to south direction. The San Gabriel Wilderness Area is directly north, across the West Fork San Gabriel Canyon, and the smaller West Fork portion of the area is adjacent to this existing wilderness. Most of the unit is north-facing slopes between West Fork Canyon and the primary topographic ridge (un-named) to the south.

The north end of this area is densely vegetated due to the riparian area which follows the boundary. As you progress south, the area transitions to a chaparral type community with sparse pockets of pines at the higher elevations and hardwoods in the canyons. West Fork is primarily composed of dense chaparral on the southern slopes with mixed species of oaks on the north facing canyons slopes.

Current uses of the area: The area experiences very little public use due to limited access points, absence of trails, very steep and rugged topography and dense vegetation. Limited hunting use occurs through cross-country hiking, either up the canyons from the West Fork Road or down the canyons from the Rincon Shortcut OHV Road.

There are permitted land uses within the area, mainly around the boundaries likely included as a result of mapping error. Uses include electrical transmission lines, a permitted sediment disposal
area associated with Cogswell Dam and approximately 0.15 miles of permitted, non-system access road.

There is a communications site on Pine Mountain, in the southern portion of the eastern IRA (Westfork).

Scenic viewing by bicyclists from 2N25 (West Fork), and from vehicles on 2N24 (Rincon Redbox) is a popular activity.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as characteristics of contiguous areas):** The area has primarily seasonal water flows that mostly drain into the West Fork San Gabriel River. The West Fork is one of few perennial streams on the Forest and appears very lush and green in comparison to dryer, south-facing hillsides.

The area is generally mountainous with typical vegetation primarily consisting of chaparral, oaks, and pines at the higher elevations.

High voltage transmission lines, Cogswell Dam, and the highly urbanized San Gabriel Valley are visible primarily from ridges and peaks within this area. The view looking north across the West Fork Canyon is of the relatively pristine San Gabriel Wilderness.

**Key Attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** The proposed area provides potentially suitable habitat for several federally listed and Forest Service sensitive plants and animals including: Nevin’s barberry (*Mahonia nevinii*), Braunton’s milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*), lemon lily (*Lilium parryi*), least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus Californicus*), mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*), and the two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis harmmondii*).

The Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), a federally listed threatened fish, inhabits the West Fork of the San Gabriel River below Cogswell Dam, and its habitat is dependent on flows from the canyons in the area. The western portion of the area contains protected nesting areas for the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), a Forest Service sensitive species.

This addition will not expand the vegetation zone of mix chaparral and oak. There are no scenic landmarks.

**Capability**

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The feeling of solitude and serenity would be low in that portion of the area that is close to NFSR 2N25 to the north. These values would also be low near the Cogswell Dam in the north/west section and near the Rincon Shortcut route to the south. The level of wilderness experience becomes higher as you move away from the road corridor where the terrain becomes steep, inhospitable and decreases in accessibility for many visitors.

The area is primarily natural in its appearance. Natural ecological processes are affected by the major utility corridor to the southwest (partially within the roadless area), primarily through
presence of invasive species. It has little human influence in comparison with surrounding areas. Portions of dozer lines along the ridge to the south, cleared during the Station Fire in 2009, appear unnatural. Approximately 0.8 miles of fuelbreak in the far eastern portion of the unit are currently planned for maintenance in the next two years. A long history of aggressive fire suppression has likely had some effect on naturalness, although a large majority of fires on the Forest are human caused.

The entire area is assigned a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) in the current Forest Land Management Plan.

Light pollution from the nearby urbanized San Gabriel Valley to the south degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree.

The area has not been extensively surveyed for non-native species. There are some invasive species along boundary roads and within the adjacent utility corridor that have likely spread into the area. The dozer lines cleared during the Station Fire may become vectors for invasive plants to spread into the area. In general, most vegetation communities within the interior contain primarily native species.

There are approximately 14.7 miles of mapped stream courses classed as intermittent, and 2.3 miles of the West Fork San Gabriel River, classed as perennial. All of them are free-flowing.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub-watersheds using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

The area contains portions of two sub-watersheds, Upper (western), and Lower (eastern) West Fork San Gabriel River. The Upper sub-watershed received preliminary rankings of Class 2 - Watersheds exhibiting moderate geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. The Lower sub-watershed was ranked as Class 3 - Watersheds exhibiting low geomorphic, hydrologic and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

Class 1 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) apply for the adjacent (to the north) San Gabriel Wilderness. No specific air quality standards other than NAAQS apply to the IRA. The area is within the South Coast Air Basin, which is in varying degrees of non-attainment under the Clean Air Act.

The overall ecosystem is healthy relative to surrounding, more developed portions of the Angeles National Forest. Air quality is the primary human factor affecting ecosystem health. Wildfire has had less of a negative effect on the ecosystem in this area than in many other parts of the Forest as evidenced by the absence of type converted vegetation. Nearly all the area is rated as either
low (36%) or moderate (58%) departure from the historic fire regime. About 322 acres are rated as high departure from historic fire regime (5%) with 11 acres unclassified. The entire area shows some recorded fire history. Major fires burned substantial portions of the area in 1911, 1915, 1924, 1957, 1960, 1968, 1999, and 2009.

**Undeveloped:** There are many developments adjacent to the area, including power lines, a major flood control dam, a communications site and roads. Several of these developments fall within the unit, mainly confined to the perimeter as a result of apparent mapping error. The majority of the area does not contain human development.

Several high voltage transmission lines are within the area along the southwestern boundary. Two radio towers, each approximately 100 feet tall, are on top of Pine Mountain in the southern portion of the area as well as the site access road.

There are approximately: 1.9 miles of Forest system road, 0.15 miles of non-system classified road, 0 miles of unauthorized road, 0 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 2 miles of unauthorized trails.

**Opportunities:** The area may provide moderately primitive recreation, and a challenging cross-country experience due to its terrain, dense vegetation, and lack of trails and access points. There are moderate opportunities for a primitive recreational experience. However, these would generally be limited to camping, hiking and hunting. This IRA does not have trails which transect the land, making the more remote areas difficult to access. This factor, combined with the dense vegetation, makes cross-country exploration through these primitive areas challenging, and provides recreational experiences for the more adventurous people looking to test ones’ self-reliance.

Experiential benefits are limited due to the small size of these areas, and close proximity to both major urban cities, as well as industrial development. Vegetative or natural features may provide some screening, but none of the area would be more than one mile from human impacts and development.

In addition to physical challenges, this area can offer moderate opportunities for solitude, and mental challenges associated with traversing rugged terrain.


**Special Features and Values:** The southwestern portion of the area contains occupied nesting habitat for the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), a Forest Sensitive Species. These areas are designated as Protected Activity Centers and the resident owls have been carefully studied and monitored for several years. There is opportunity for continued scientific study of these rare birds.

There are few known prehistoric properties located in the vicinity, consisting of a single prehistoric resource processing site. Historic sites include the remains of a historical fire lookout and a quarry, both along the margins of this unit.

There are no existing or potential research natural areas, Critical Biological Areas or unique or specific scientific or educational opportunities.
The area is used as a corridor for wildlife migrating from higher elevations to the West Fork San Gabriel Canyon, where they use perennial water sources.

**Description of size and shape:** As individual proposals, Westfork (4,385 acres) and West Fork (1,156 acres) do not meet the 5,000 acres size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. Only the western portion of West Fork is contiguous to an existing wilderness area. The small size of these areas, and the high degree of development surrounding them, leaves them highly influenced by external forces. The shape of the units is relatively contiguous and regular with some narrow slivers of land between roads. There are no ‘cherry-stem’ boundaries.

**Summary of boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Proposed boundaries generally use existing natural features and are therefore easy to establish and recognize on the ground. For major infrastructure such as 500 KV transmission lines, a buffer of up to ¼ mile may be necessary as maintenance often involves low flying helicopters. The Westfork boundary should be adjusted to exclude the area permitted to Los Angeles County for disposal of sediment from Cogwell Reservoir, as well as the associated haul road. An additional setback from the actual permit area boundary would enhance wilderness character by reducing the impact of external sights and sounds.

Careful monitoring would be needed to minimize OHV trespass from the Rincon Shortcut Road, a popular route with motorcyclists, ATVs and hunters.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones:** Backcountry (BC)- 690 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 1050 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 3773 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 52 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** The current use of the area is primarily concentrated around the northern boundary, particularly around the West Fork National Scenic Bikeway. There are several drainages that extend from the west fork bikeway but are not commonly used to access this roadless area. Hunting season is probably the time when the area experiences its highest visitor use. Aside from hunting other recreational opportunities may include hiking, dispersed camping and nature viewing. There have been no recent changes in trends relevant to recreation. No significant tourism potential or outfitter/guide operations exist in the area. A minimal amount of mountain biking has occurred in the area in the past. Future opportunities for mountain biking would be precluded by wilderness designation.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** Sensitive, threatened, Forest Service sensitive, and others occur in the area which consist of, but are not limited to: Nevin’s barberry (*Mahonia nevinii*), Braunton’s milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*), Lemon lily (*Lilium parryi*), Least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Plummer’s mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*), San Gabriel Mountain Dudleya (*Dudleya densiflora*), San Gabriel Bedstraw (*Galium grande*), California Satintail (*Imperatric brevifolia*), Fragrant pitcher sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*), Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), Arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus Californicus*), Mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana
boylii), Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis harmmondii*), San Bernardino Mountain King Snake (*Lampropeltis pervirubra*), Coastal Rosy Boa (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*), and the California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*).

The Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*), a federally listed threatened fish, inhabits the West Fork of the San Gabriel River below Cogswell Dam. Multiple surveys in the past have documented Santa Ana suckers in the West Fork San Gabriel. While this fish does not occupy the unit there is a close habitat association between the West Fork San Gabriel River and the clean water that flows south from tributaries. The Santa Ana speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus ssp.*) inhabits a number of stream and channel types such as small springs, brooks, and pools in intermittent streams and large rivers along the west fork road.

**Water availability and use:** The area provides many small tributaries that drain into the West Fork River. Fern Spring is a small but perennial water source in the far southeastern corner of the area.

**Livestock Operation:** There are no active grazing allotments.

**Timber:** There are no existing or planned timber harvest activities.

**Minerals:** Approximately 50% of the area is withdrawn from mineral entry under 1872 Mining Law. This withdrawal was made by Congress in 1928 in recognition of the unique urban watershed function of the Angeles National Forest. There are no active mineral claims, operations, sales or leases. There is one known occurrence of the mineral molybdenum in the western portion of the eastern unit as noted in the USGS Mineral Resources Data System.

**Cultural resources:** Very little of the West Fork has been surveyed for cultural resources, due primarily to access issues. The known prehistoric and historic properties located in similar landscapes in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigation. It is unclear if culturally sensitive plants, which are gathered today by some Native American traditional gatherers, occur in the unit.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** There are approximately 1.4 miles of SCE high voltage transmission line within the IRA (T. 2 N, R. 11 W, Sections 22 and 26, and T. 2 N, R. 10 W, Section 31, SBBM). These facilities are authorized under special use permits LAR403013, LAR403014, and LAR403015. Just south of Cogswell Dam is a sediment disposal site under special use permit (LAR103305) to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. Although not currently utilized, approximately 60 acres of the permitted area are within the unit for purposes of future sediment disposal. A NEPA study is currently being planned to use approximately 16 of the permitted acres in the unit for sediment disposal.

Pine Mountain Communications Site is located within the IRA - SGR405808. The site contains a Verizon Private Mobile Radio, and Forest Service radio equipment. T. 2 N, R. 10 W, Section 26, SBBM.

**Management considerations including fire, insects, diseases, and presence of non-federal lands:** Wildfires in the area would receive an aggressive suppression response as per the Angeles Forest Fire Management Plan and may include activities that would impact the area’s natural character. The entire area is Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). None of the WUI is currently mapped as WUI Defense Zone as defined in the Angeles Forest Plan. Approximately 60 acres in the eastern portion of the area are proposed for fuels reduction work.
OHV trespass occurs off the Rincon Shortcut Road and may require special management attention to avoid impairment of wilderness values.

Management of the various facilities in the utility corridor to the southwest could conflict with wilderness designation and have potential to degrade the quality of the area’s wilderness characteristics. Access needs include the occasional use of low-flying aircraft and permitted landing zones that could be a conflict even with boundary adjustments to provide buffer space.

There are no known concerns for insect or disease outbreaks. There are no non-federal lands.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wilderness in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** San Gabriel Wilderness (36,118 acres) is located approximately 0.5 miles to the north across the West Fork road (2N25). The Sheep Mountain Wilderness (41,883 acres) is located approximately three miles to the northeast. There are areas recommended for addition to Sheep Mountain in the current Angeles Forest Plan. The Pleasant View Ridge Wilderness (26,757 acres) is a new addition (2009) to the north approximately 12 air miles away.

**Present visitor pressure on the other existing wilderness, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** There is low to moderate use of the San Gabriel Mountain wilderness to the north, which is primarily used for daylong trips. The use in this Wilderness usually consists of daylong hikes, with some overnight camping.

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program’s most recent (FY 2006) report for the Angeles National Forest estimated 34,000 wilderness area visits. This is the lowest number of visits of the five general recreation site types measured by this program (day use, overnight, general forest, view corridor, and wilderness), and indicates that the existing supply of wilderness apparently meet current public demand. The majority of wilderness visitors are white males from the local area. Age distribution of wilderness visitors is relatively even between ages 20-59.

The Sheep Mountain Wilderness has, in recent years increased in popularity. While most of the use consists of hiking and backpacking, recreational mining has significantly increased. The activities themselves contribute to extensive resource damage, and alteration to the streambed which affect natural processes. Recreational mining has also attributed to a homestead type community that has degraded the scenic aesthetics and untrammeled nature of wilderness.

The extent in which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The surrounding area provides similar unconfined recreation experiences. Most of the surrounding areas with potential to provide for unconfined outdoor recreational experiences are already designated as wilderness. The steepness of the topography, a general lack of accessibility, and density of vegetation in those areas work together to create unconfined outdoor recreational experiences.

**The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values**
or phenomena: Current use and designation appears to provide adequate protection to existing biota. Given the low current and projected levels of public use, all biotic species are expected to continue thriving successfully. The majority of the area is not readily accessible due to its remote location and rough terrain. This area already provides a primitive environment, with physical limitations on increased development and use. Wilderness designation would not substantially increase protection.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: Most landforms and ecosystems represented in the area are generally common across the Angeles and other southern California national forests. The lush, green, riparian corridor in the far northern portion of the unit, influenced by one of the few perennial rivers in the area, stands out relative to the mostly dry, arid landscape of the Angeles National Forest. This area receives special attention through the Forest’s protection of Riparian Conservation Areas as well as its designation as critical habitat for the Santa Ana Sucker.
Cleveland National Forest

Barker Valley Inventoried Roadless Area

Palomar Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 11,940 acre Barker Valley Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in the northern part of the Palomar Ranger District on the Cleveland National Forest. Barker Valley is on the southeastern slope of Palomar Mountain between Aguanga Mountain and Pine Hills/Dyche Valley area and includes most of the sub-watershed for the West Fork of the San Luis Rey River.

The IRA lies south of Palomar Divide Road, south and west of Highway 79, and north of County Route S7 and NFSR 10S02. The northeastern boundary of the unit is accessible from Palomar Divide Road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 9S07 which supplies adequate opportunity for access and travel including an unimproved trailhead for a trail leading to Barker Valley. Private land abuts much of the boundary of Barker Valley unit, including Palomar Observatory land, Mendenhall, Dyche, and Will Valleys.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area encompasses the meadow and rugged, steep canyon of the upper West Fork San Luis Rey River. This is primarily lower montane landscape that typically contains patches of conifer/live oak forest in an otherwise chaparral-dominated landscape. There are also minor amounts of montane conifer and coastal foothills. There are steep rocky hillsides along with a wide open meadow and riparian habitat. Elevation ranges from approximately 3,000 to 6,000 feet. The area encompasses Barker Valley meadow, southern Mendenhall meadow and the rugged, steep canyon of the West Fork San Luis Rey River. This roadless area is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland—Shrub—Coniferous Forest—Meadow Ecosystem Province.

Current uses of the area: Recreational use includes day-use hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, seasonal water play, nature viewing and photography, environmental education, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting and fishing. The Cleveland Forest Plan designates Palomar Divide as an open shooting area while also setting direction to manage use. A special area closure Forest Order for this went into effect in 2011.

The three mile Barker Valley Trail (FDT 2E02) starts at the Palomar Divide Road and leads down to Barker Valley and the West Fork of the San Luis Rey River. Also leading to Barker Valley is an unmaintained nonsystem trail that also starts at Deer Flats off the Palomar Divide Road.

Two grazing allotments are located in this unit, one in the Mendenhall Valley area and one near Warner Ranch (adjacent to Vista Irrigation District lands).

A special use permit for Navy survival training exercises was issued in 2010 and authorizes this use in a portion of the area.

South of Palomar Divide Road is the Maple Lode Mine, which is currently listed with the Bureau of Land Management as an active mine claim.
A fuel break is managed along the northern boundary (Palomar Divide Road). There are also fuels treatments off East Grade Road in the southern part of the unit.

The Forest Service operates a telecommunication site at High Point. The High Point site is accessed by NFSR 9S07A.

The historic High Point Lookout is operated via a partnership with the Forest Fire Lookout Association.

**Appearance and surroundings** (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of Barker Valley is similar to the steep chaparral covered hillsides to the north although the meadows are distinctive. The privately-owned lands to the south and east are of a rural community or ranchland character at this time but more growth of infrastructure is possible.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** The West Fork of San Luis Rey River boasts waterfalls and pools. The meadow and riparian area provides habitat for native trout, Laguna Mountains skipper, arroyo toad and southwestern pond turtles. The 218 acre San Luis Rey River (West Ford) Special Interest Area, which was designated because of the wild trout population, is located here. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation based on fish and wildlife outstandingly remarkable values.

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wildlands has been lost and the spread of invasive non-native species has also disrupted this interplay in some locations. Naturalized invasive species have long been established in the area along the road boundary. There is a moderate potential for additional populations of new species of noxious weeds to be introduced along roads and other interfaces with developed areas or private lands. Interior or more isolated parts of this area have a moderate to low risk of new populations of invasive species.

This roadless area is contained within two watersheds: West Fork San Luis Rey River is rated as Functioning at Risk (2.1) and Matagual Creek-San Luis Rey River is rated as Functioning at Risk (1.7). These watersheds were rated down due to surveys which indicate impaired functioning of the aquatic biota and modifications to the stream system (dams and ponds). The watersheds have issues with historic soil erosion and were rated lower for due to that. The Matagual Creek-San Luis Rey River watershed contains several steep ephemeral and intermittent drainages. The West Fork-San Luis Rey River watershed has mapped perennial, fish bearing streams as well as ponds. The soils are mapped as La Posta rocky loamy coarse sand in the lower gradient slopes and Sheephead rocky fine sandy loam on the high gradient slopes, much is mapped as eroded. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf
Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

Light from the surrounding rural communities, as well as more distant urbanized communities may degrade the quality of the night sky. However, the presence of the world class Palomar Observatory about one mile west of the unit boundary is an indicator of dark sky quality.

There have been fuels treatments just off East Grade in recent years. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

Undeveloped: This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use. There are permanent improvements in the northwest portion of the unit including a 0.2 mile access road to a historic lookout tower and a Forest Service telecommunication site located on High Point.

There are approximately: 0.22 miles of Forest system road, 2.48 miles of temporary road, 1.02 miles associated with livestock grazing authorization, 1.46 miles associated with the West Fork County Camp that was rehabilitated (all but 0.1 mile decommissioned), 0.34 miles of County Route S7, 2.25 miles of undetermined routes, 0.46 mile road to mining claim, 1.0 miles access road to East Grade fuels projects, 0.52 mile road through Observatory land to Barker Valley, and 3.13 miles of Forest Developed Trail 2E02 (Barker Valley Trail).

The West Fork camp (including its road system except for the first 0.1 mile) has been decommissioned and rehabilitated. However, some rock structures remain visible in the area.

There are improvements in the allotment in Mendenhall Valley including an access road of a two track nature. This meadow area was acquired in the 1970s. In the 1980s, structures were installed to stabilize the banks of a large gully formed by a 1936 storm event. The upper structures have largely buried in. A dam was built in the 1920s to contain water for livestock near the boundary with private land.

Opportunities: Experiences often unique to wilderness such as solitude, self-reliance, adventurous and challenging experiences, and primitive recreation are available to the visitor. Although this roadless area is within a rapidly urbanizing region, its location, relatively large size, and topography give the impression of remoteness, and visitors have moderate to high opportunities to experience solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. The Palomar Observatory is readily visible from inside the boundaries of the Barker Valley unit.

Similarly, Barker Valley has moderate to high opportunities for adventure and challenge. It is described as perhaps the most isolated non-wilderness area in San Diego County (Schad 1999 p.131). Established trails are limited within this area. Considered moderately strenuous, the three mile Barker Spur Trail along an old roadbed (FDT 2E02) starts at Palomar Divide Road and descends the east side of the IRA, ending at Barker Valley meadow. There is also an unmaintained nonsystem trail starting at Deer Flats that leads to Barker Valley. And there is a set of waterfalls and pools southeast of the meadow without designated system trail access. A hike in Barker Valley is hot and steep in the summer months. Reaching the first falls requires high initiative and self-reliance. Scrambling over steep terrain and across slippery, water-polished
rock is required (Schad 1999, p.143–144). Elsewhere, dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel.

Relative to the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province, Barker Valley has a medium capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized.

Major recreational opportunities include day-use hiking, seasonal water play, wildlife and wildflower viewing, photography, nature study, environmental education, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting (deer, turkey, pigeon), fishing, horseback riding, mountain biking, relaxation and respite from urban life. This unit is inherently capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest: viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12). Recreational target shooting historically occurred along Palomar Divide; however, the area was closed to target shooting by Forest Order in 2011.

**Special features and values:** The upper West Fork San Luis Rey River is eligible for Wild and Scenic River status based on wildlife and fish outstandingly remarkable values.

Barker Valley contains the 86 acre West Fork San Luis Rey River Special Interest Area for wild trout fisheries. The middle segment of the river supports a land-locked population of native trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss* subspecies). Although the waters of the West Fork of the San Luis Rey have not been designated as wild trout waters under the California Department of Fish and Game Heritage Trout Program or Wild Trout Program, the native trout enhances the area’s wilderness capability (California Department of Fish and Game, Appendix F. 2002, p.32, 33).

Montane meadows in Mendenhall Valley support the Laguna Mountains skipper (*Pyrgus ruralis lagunae*), and San Bernardino Bluegrass (*Poa atropurpurea*), which are both federally listed endangered species. These populations and their habitats offer unique opportunities for scientific study. Mendenhall Meadow contains designated critical habitat for the Laguna Mountain Skipper and San Bernardino Bluegrass and Barker Valley is critical habitat for Arroyo Toad. In addition to native trout and Laguna Mountains skipper populations, the watershed supports a diversity of unique biological resources that have scientific and educational value including populations of arroyo chub, arroyo toads, and southwestern pond turtles (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335).

It is habitat for other species of interest such as golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Forest Service Sensitive animals known to occur in this unit include the following species: Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*) and the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*).

Forest Service Sensitive plants known to occur in this unit include the following species: Hall’s monardella (*Monardella macrantha hallii*), San Felipe monardella (*Monardella nana leptosiphon*), Cuyamaca meadowfoam (*Limnanthes gracilis parishii*), Payson’s jewelflower (*Caulanthus simulans*), and San Diego milk-vetch (*Astragalus oocarpus*).

A portion of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources and several historic sites have been identified. Barker Valley contains culturally important plants that are gathered by the Luiseño people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).
Special scenic features include a set of waterfalls and pools on the West Fork of the San Luis Rey River.

**Description of size and shape:** The 11,940 acre Barker Valley unit is of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. Most the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Barker Valley could be considered manageable but there would be minor to moderate administrative challenges as described in this evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability.” The juxtaposition of the area to private lands (and associated growth) may increasingly challenge management.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Proposed boundary locations generally avoid conflicts with roads and other improvements; however, there are some improvements within the unit (see “Availability” section). The southwest boundary of the unit has been surveyed. The northeast boundary conforms to the Palomar/Aguanga Mountain ridgeline. Elsewhere, boundaries do not conform to natural features. Boundaries are established and accurately described but not readily recognizable on the ground.

There are nonconforming Forest Service structures located just inside the northwestern boundary including an existing Forest Service communications site, fire lookout and associated road access (FSR 9S07A). Modifying the boundary to ensure that High Point improvements lie north outside of the boundary would separate incompatible activities.

Regardless of boundary modifications, mountain biking use within this roadless area would be nonconforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities would be needed and may require nonconforming structures and activities in the wilderness, including the use of mechanized equipment and the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks and fire lines. To reduce conflicts, the northeastern boundary could be described to exclude the Aguanga Ridge fuel break, which is in place for community protection, or legislative language could allow for this treatment.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 1,135 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 508 acres, and Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 10,297 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Barker Valley. Current uses include mountain biking, hunting, camping, water play, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing and photography. Palomar Divide Road (Aguanga Ridge) is popular for backcountry driving, mountain biking, and hunting. Mountain biking opportunities would be foregone within the area with wilderness designation. The area is designated as an open-shooting area; however, due to the existing unmanaged, unsafe nature of the shooting, a special Forest Order closed this area to target shooting in 2011.
Diverse kinds of off-road recreation, competitive events, and developed recreation opportunities are some of the demands that could potentially be satisfied in this area in the future.

Barker Valley Trail supplies adequate access to the area and an unimproved trailhead on Palomar Divide Road satisfies the demand for traveler transfer facilities. There is no further requirement for access or traveler facilities and the existing facilities are compatible with other management needs.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: See the “Special Features and Values” section in the Capability section. Management needs could include treatment of weeds in priority habitat area.

Water availability and use: The West Fork San Luis Rey River watershed contributes to municipal drinking water supplies and ecosystem needs.

Livestock operations: There are two livestock grazing allotments under permit in this IRA. The livestock grazing allotment in Mendenhall and Dyche Valley is for 110 head months (usually 36 cow/calf pairs for three months - starting June 1st) on 240 acres. The approximately two mile unimproved road is basically un-passable, and the permit holder sometimes, but very rarely (only for vet care, etc.) drives out onto National Forest lands. There is one concrete spring fed trough, pasture fencing, erosion control structures and most of a stock pond (dam is on private) on National Forest lands.

The livestock grazing allotment just north of Vista Irrigation District (VID) lands above Lake Henshaw is for 30 head year round although there has been less use than that in recent years. About 565 acres of the Warner allotment lie within this roadless area. There is a spring-fed trough (and spring box) and storage tank on National Forest lands just north of the VID land in the mapped area. Those are the only improvements in that part of that allotment.

Timber: The Forest allowable sale quantity is zero; vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber. Thinning has been conducted in the East Grade portion of this unit for fuels reduction.

Minerals: South of Palomar Divide Road (Section 10, T10S, R2E) is the Maple Lode Mine, which is currently listed with the Bureau of Land Management as an active mine claim. It includes approximately 0.5 miles of road for motorized access and fence improvements which are maintained by the claimholders.

Cultural resources: A portion of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources and several historic sites have been identified. Barker Valley unit contains culturally important plants that are gathered by the Luiseño people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

Authorized and potential land uses: The historic Forest Service High Point Lookout is operated through a partnership with Forest Fire Lookout Association, Inc., Riverside Chapter. There are proposals for further development or restoration of this site; however, they are not expected to result in a significant change in visibility or effects to Barker Valley.

The Forest Service operates a telecommunication site for administrative use at High Point.

U.S. Navy Survival Escape Rescue Evasion (SERE) military training has undergone an environmental analysis and currently holds a twenty year special use permit. The total area is approximately 6,400 acres. Approximately 3,000 acres are within Barker Valley. Specific
military activities authorized within Barker Valley include non-motorized use, primarily cross country orienteering exercises and survival and evasion training.

Diverse kinds of commercial communication site developments, road construction and new administrative site developments are some of the demands that could potentially be satisfied in this area.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and road use and maintenance (including use and maintenance of roaded fuel breaks) for pre-suppression activities are management techniques that could be used in this area.

Managers may want to use mechanized equipment and/or pesticides to address vegetation disease or nonnative invasive species. Pesticides are allowed in designated wilderness when necessary to protect or restore significant resource values. Likewise, mechanized equipment may be considered; however, there would be increased project complexity.

Current uses include law enforcement activities which may utilize motorized and/or mechanized equipment. In addition to law enforcement related to illegal marijuana grow site use, site clean-up and restoration efforts may be considered.

There is one private land in-holding within this unit located along the lower section of the West Fork. There are unclassified roads as well as roads under permit (e.g. to San Diego County).

The West Fork San Luis Rey is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation based on wildlife and fish outstandingly remarkable values with potential classification of scenic.

The Mendenhall Ranch near the south end of Barker Valley is being managed under an agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service as a conservation area for the Laguna Mountains skipper.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Agua Tibia Wilderness (17,979 acres) within the Cleveland National Forest is located six miles to the north and west of this area. A 7,796-acre proposed addition to the Agua Tibia Wilderness is currently pending legislation that may or may not be acted on this year. The proposed area coincides with the area that has been recommended in the Forest Plan.

Other wilderness areas that are within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the Cleveland National Forest San Mateo Canyon Wilderness (38,484 acres), Hauser Wilderness (7,547 acres), and Pine Creek Wilderness (13,480 acres) as well as the San Bernardino National Forest San Jacinto Wilderness (32,248 acres). In addition, the Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (State - 12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM—16885 acres) are also nearby.
The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of California also manage other wilderness in southern California, including Fishcreek Mountain (21,388 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (33,610 acres), Coyote Mountains (18,630 acres), Carrizo Gorge (14,741 acres), Jacumba (31,357 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM-USFS—74,718 acres), and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas are in the American Semi-desert and Desert Ecosystem Province and do not represent the values of the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province (Bailey 1995, p.56–58, 68-70; Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: The Agua Tibia Wilderness has light to moderate day use. Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in Riverside and San Diego Counties, and wilderness use is predicted to increase. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (Kocis and others 2002, p.10, 12). Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light to moderate, with some areas within the province experiencing moderate to high day use.

At the 90% confidence level, annual visitation to designated wilderness on the Cleveland NF is between 7,200 and 22,800 visits (National Visitor Use Monitoring, Cleveland report, FY 2009). The November 2007 fire siege (including Witch, Poomacha and Harris Fires) and subsequent closures may have influenced data. Visitor perception of crowding in designated wilderness on the Cleveland was rated between 2 to 6 out of 10, with 10 meaning “overcrowded”. The average rating was 3.5. On the Cleveland, day use developed sites were perceived as less crowded (average 3.3), while overnight use developed sites and undeveloped areas were perceived as somewhat more crowded (average 4.7).

The short-term day use trend continues: most of the visits to the Cleveland National Forest are day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland NF was estimated at 4.2 hours. Overall, the average visit to the Cleveland NF lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits to this forest last less than 4 hours. There are very few frequent visitors: almost 60 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY 2009). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

Demographics for visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland were 45.8% female and 54.2% male. Race/ethnicity was 13.6% Asian/Pacific Islander and 88.6% White (respondents could choose more than one racial group). Age class breakdown of visitors in designated wilderness was 10.9% of those under 16 years old; 1.9% for 16-19; 17.2% of 20-29 year olds; 15.6% of 30-39 year olds; 30.7% of 40-49 year olds; 22% of 50-59 year olds; and 1.6% of those over 70 years old. Wilderness visitor’s zip codes most commonly reported were from Riverside and Orange counties, followed by those from foreign countries and San Diego and San Bernardino Counties (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY2009).

Designation would not change access within Barker Valley and there would be no effect on transportation systems outside the wilderness. This presumes that the High Point site and access road are excluded.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Currently, nearby undeveloped lands supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness. These
lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1992).

Nearby Cutca Valley Inventoried Roadless Area supplies a similar type of recreational experience. Cutca Valley is managed to meet Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objectives in a setting where management activities are visually subordinate (Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Moderate) or dominate (SIO is Low or Very Low) to the natural character of the land. In 2008, approximately 2,000 acres of the Cutca Valley unit was added to the Agua Tibia Wilderness.

The Caliente Inventoried Roadless Area is also managed to supply semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b). Cuyamaca Rancho State Park offers opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The arroyo toad, an endangered species, occurs in Barker Valley. The toad is a riparian dependent species.

Laguna Mountains skipper (Pyrgus ruralis lagunae) habitat is found in Mendenhall Valley. Increasing public use and development projects would jeopardize this species. Provision for roadless but non-wilderness land use categories is an alternative to designation. The Laguna Mountains skipper occurs in very small numbers at only a handful of sites at Palomar Mountain. The population in Mendenhall Valley is substantially larger than those found elsewhere.

San Bernardino bluegrass has a very limited range in the Laguna, Palomar, and San Bernardino Mountains. There is designated critical habitat for both the Laguna Mountains skipper and the San Bernardino bluegrass in Mendenhall meadow and protection of this area is essential for their conservation.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness, and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Caliente Inventoried Roadless Area

Palomar Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 5,915 acre Caliente Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) lies on the eastern edge the Palomar Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest. It is located less than one mile north of Warner Springs, California. The IRA lies north of Warner Springs, south of Chihuahua Valley, east of Indian Flat Road, and west of Los Coyotes Indian Reservation as well as Lost Valley. The only authorized access on NFS land is along the western boundary of the unit from Indian Flat Road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 9S05. The only system trail within the unit, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT), supports foot travel and horseback riding and facilitates access into and through the area. Two traveler transfer points and one established trailhead facilitate access to the unit via the PCT.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Caliente is near the headwaters of the San Luis Rey River and is characterized by rough broken terrain ranging from low hills to steeper mountains with large boulders and picturesque rock outcrops. The area is covered with open shrub and woody vegetation including chamise, manzanita, red shank, ceanothus, and oaks with grass understory. Elevation ranges from approximately 3,200 to 5,400 feet. This area is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland—Shrub—Coniferous Forest—Meadow Ecosystem Province.

Current uses of the area: Recreation is a primary current use, especially hiking on along the Pacific Crest Trail and other nonmotorized uses. The Caliente unit provides a refugia for rare and vulnerable botanical and wildlife species. The San Luis Rey watershed contributes to municipal drinking water supplies and ecosystem needs. There is an active, moderate size tourmaline mining operation (Cindy B/Cryogenie Mine) in the southern part of the unit. There are also two prospecting claims (Donna Lode and Lost Peg). Fuels activities (mechanical as well as prescribed burn) along the road and as needed for pre-suppression is a current use. There is no private land within this unit.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of Caliente is similar to the surrounding chaparral covered slopes except more distinctive due to the higher elevation rock outcrops and peaks. This IRA is bordered on the northeast by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and bordered contiguously on the southeast by the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The Pacific Crest Trail is a key recreation attraction here. Use is concentrated within the PCT corridor (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986a). Intermittent springs support riparian vegetation and provide a seasonal water source for hikers and wildlife along the PCT.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The
principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Include the degree to which humans and past or present human activity may have affected natural ecological processes and conditions. The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wildlands has been lost. The spread of invasive non-native species has also disrupted this interplay in some locations. Naturalized invasive species have long been established in the area such as non-native grasses from historic agriculture introductions, albeit in relatively low amounts. There is low potential for additional populations of new species of noxious weeds due to this remote location of the forest.

This roadless area is contained within two watersheds: Agua Caliente Creek rated as Functioning (1.3) and the Canda-Aguanda-San Luis Rey River rated as Functioning (1.4). It is mainly situated in the Agua Caliente Creek watershed. The watershed was rated down due to lack of aquatic habitat, unauthorized OHV use, and issues with forest health. Agua Caliente Creek, an intermittent creek flows south through the IRA. The soils are generally mapped as Ramona gravelly sandy loam on low gradient slopes and Sheephead rocky fine sandy loam on higher gradient slopes. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

There have been fuels treatments adjacent to the unit near Indian Flats Road but not within the roadless area boundaries.

The majority of the area viewsheds are natural appearing and unobstructed by human activity. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986c. p. C-5 to C-12).

**Undeveloped:** Include the degree to which the area’s appearance is appropriate and valuable for wilderness. There are approximately 0.15 miles of unauthorized routes in this IRA. An unauthorized route links the development on the eastern border of the IRA with the PCT. There is also one unauthorized extension of the California Riding and Hiking Association trail, which connects to the PCT. The area has no system roads.

**Opportunities:** Experiences often unique to wilderness such as solitude, self-reliance, adventurous and challenging experiences, and primitive recreation. The area is expansive and natural appearing and supplies excellent opportunities for solitude. It contains a segment of the PCT that links the San Diego Ranges with the San Jacinto Mountains. Opinions regarding the challenge associated with this segment of the trail vary from very high (Stienstra and Brown 2001, p.801) to moderate (easy terrain/moderately strenuous difficulty). The degree of challenge and need for self-reliance are due to the uncertain availability of water and extreme temperatures during the summer months.
Elsewhere within the unit, the lack of trails and dense brush limits access and challenge is therefore low. Cross-country travel is generally not feasible although some of the drainages offer opportunities for boulder hopping and (seasonal) stream wading. Serious scrambling, possibly swimming, and battling with riparian alder branches have been reported (Schad 1999, p.150, 151).

Caliente has a high capability for supplying primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, relaxation, and respite from urban life. This area is inherently capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest: viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12).

Wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, prospecting, mining and rock collecting are the primary uses of the area.

Special features and values: Include those of ecological, geological, scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, or historical value. Describe rare and endangered plant and animal species and other wildlife. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail facilitates access and enhances the capability of this area to provide outdoor education and scientific study, both formal and informal, in a manner that is compatible with wilderness.

The Cindy B/Cryogenie Mine produces noteworthy, gem quality tourmaline with high geologic value. While this mineral resource is unique, it does not supply opportunities for study that are compatible with wilderness (See “Minerals” under “Availability” below).

A resting and watering spot for hikers on the PCT is located along Agua Caliente Creek. Common native wildlife found in more modified environments as well as species that face a variety of threats outside of wilderness are located within this unit.

Description of size and shape: Include the implications of the area’s size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences on the wilderness attributes. The 5,915 acre Caliente Inventoried Roadless Area is relatively small but of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. This area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive, non-motorized character within a natural appearing setting where management activities are not evident (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1986b). However, there has been some unauthorized motorized use on the PCT. This unit is bordered on the northeast by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and bordered on the southeast by the Los Coyotes Indian Reservation. The potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of this IRA is generally low; however, some unauthorized mountain bike and motorized recreation on the PCT currently exists inside the boundary. The potential demand for increased mountain biking opportunities within the IRA is moderate. The neighboring Los Coyotes Indian Reservation with its extensive network of roads and trails has become popular among mountain bikers and off-
roading enthusiasts (Schad 1999, p.145). Backcountry driving is one of the five most popular activities on the forest (Kocis and others 2002, p.12).

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities have affected this area, including the construction of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and fire use (prescribed fire).

The PCT (Pacific Crest Trail is the only Forest Service system trail within the Caliente.) supports foot travel and horseback riding and facilitates access into and through the area. Two traveler transfer points and one established trailhead facilitate access to the unit via the PCT. There is no further requirement for access or traveler transfer facilities. The existing facilities are compatible with other management needs.

Boundary surveys are lacking for this area, and boundaries are not recognizable on the ground. The boundaries do not conform to any natural features; however, the southwest boundary parallels Indian Flats Road. Its southwestern boundary is accessible from Indian Flats Road NFSR 9S05. Indian Flats Road supplies adequate opportunity for access and potential traveler transfer with the possible exception of properly located parking.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 130 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 496 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 5,679 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 106 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Caliente is currently managed to meet Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized objectives. Primitive and unconfined types of recreation that currently take place within this area are day hiking, backpacking, hunting, camping, rock collecting, field trips for environmental education, horseback riding, photography and nature study/exploration. Outside the roadless area but in the nearby vicinity is the Indian Flats developed campground.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: The Caliente unit supports rare and vulnerable botanical and wildlife species including Hall’s monardella (*Monardella macrantha hallii*), Orcutt’s linanthus (*Linanthus orcuttii*), arroyo toads (*Bufo californicus*), coast horned lizards (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), and coastal rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*) (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.135-137). Maintenance of unroaded, non-motorized conditions is one means of meeting the needs of these species. Caliente includes critical habitat for the Arroyo Toad. This species is frequently crushed by vehicles so maintaining un-roaded areas is important for conservation of this species.

Water availability and use: The San Luis Rey watershed contributes to municipal drinking water supplies and ecosystem needs.

Livestock operations: There are currently no livestock operations located within this IRA.
Timber: There is predominately chaparral vegetation with some oak woodland but no forested areas in the Caliente unit. In addition, the Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero so vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber production.

Minerals: Hard rock minerals and geothermal potentials in the area have not been evaluated (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest 1978). In Section 11, T10S, R3E, SBB&M, there is an active, moderate size tourmaline mining operation (Cindy B/Cryogenie Mine) that covers a parcel approximately 600 x 1500 feet. Section 2, T10S, R3E, Warner Springs Quadrangle, contains the Donna Lode prospecting claim and section 14 contains Lost Peg prospecting claim.

Cultural resources: No cultural resource surveys have been conducted in this area and there are no known cultural resource sites in this area.

Authorized and potential land uses: Urban infrastructure and/or road construction, developed recreation opportunities, and mountain biking are some of the demands that could potentially be satisfied in this area.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and road use and maintenance (including use and maintenance of roaded fuel breaks) for pre-suppression activities are examples of management techniques that could be used in this area. Outside the authorized mine, the Forest Service has sufficient control to prevent development of irresolvable, incompatible uses that would lessen wilderness character and potential.

There is no private land within this unit.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Cleveland National Forest Agua Tibia Wilderness, comprised of 17,979 acres, is located approximately 18 miles to the north and west of this area. A 7,796 acre proposed addition to the Agua Tibia Wilderness is currently in pending legislation. The proposed area coincides with the area that has been recommended in the Forest Plan.

Other wilderness areas that are within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the Cleveland National Forest San Mateo Canyon Wilderness (38,484 acres), Hauser Wilderness (7,547 acres), and Pine Creek Wilderness (13,480 acres). The San Jacinto Wilderness (32,248 acres) is located within the San Bernardino National Forest. Also nearby is the 12,828 acre Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages wilderness areas in southern California including Otay Mountain (16,885 acres), Fishcreek Mountain (21,388 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (33,610 acres), Coyote Mountains (18,630 acres), Carrizo Gorge (14741 acres), Jacumba (31,357 acres), and Santa Rosa Wilderness (74,718 acres, BLM/USFS).

Several large wilderness areas within Anza Borrego Desert State Park are directly to the east, northeast, and southeast (though not contiguous with) Caliente IRA, including Sheep Canyon
Wilderness, Pinyon Ridge Wilderness, Santa Rosa Wilderness, Vallecito Mountain Wilderness, Granite Mountain Wilderness, and Whale Peak Wilderness. These wilderness areas are in the American Semi-desert and Desert Ecosystem Province and do not exemplify the California Coastal Range ecosystem (Bailey 1995, p.56-58, 68-70, Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: The Agua Tibia Wilderness has light to moderate day use. Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in Riverside and San Diego Counties, and wilderness use is predicted to increase. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (Kocis and others 2002, p.10, 12). Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light to moderate, with some areas within the province experiencing moderate to high day use.

At the 90% confidence level, annual visitation to designated wilderness on the Cleveland NF is between 7,200 and 22,800 visits (National Visitor Use Monitoring, Cleveland report, FY 2009). The November 2007 fire siege (including Witch, Poomacha and Harris Fires) and subsequent closures may have influenced data. Visitor perception of crowding in designated wilderness on the Cleveland was rated between 2 to 6 out of 10, with 10 meaning “overcrowded”. The average rating was 3.5. On the Cleveland, day use developed sites were perceived as less crowded (average 3.3), while overnight use developed sites and undeveloped areas were perceived as somewhat more crowded (average 4.7).

The short-term day use trend continues as most of the visits to the Cleveland National Forest are day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland NF was estimated at 4.2 hours. Overall, the average visit to the Cleveland NF lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits to this forest last less than 4 hours. There are very few frequent visitors: almost 60 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY 2009). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

Demographics for visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland were 45.8% female and 54.2% male. Race/ethnicity was 13.6% Asian/Pacific Islander and 88.6% White (respondents could choose more than one racial group). Age class breakdown of visitors in designated wilderness was 10.9% of those under 16 years old; 1.9% for 16-19; 17.2% of 20-29 year olds; 15.6% of 30-39 year olds; 30.7% of 40-49 year olds; 22% of 50-59 year olds; and 1.6% of those over 70 years old. Wilderness visitor’s zip codes most commonly reported were from Riverside and Orange counties, followed by those from foreign countries and San Diego and San Bernardino Counties (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY2009).

Designation would not change access within Caliente and there would be no effect on transportation systems outside the wilderness.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Nearby Cutca Valley Inventoried Roadless Area supplies a similar type of recreational experience in a setting that is managed to a lower standard. Cutca Valley is managed to meet ROS Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized objectives in a setting where management activities are visually subordinate (Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is Moderate) or dominate (SIO is Low or Very Low) to the natural
character of the land. In 2008, approximately 2,000 acres of the Cutca Valley IRA was added to the Agua Tibia Wilderness.

Barker Valley IRA is likewise managed to supply semi-primitive and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Management standards for the recreation setting are the same as those for Caliente (SIO is High).

Eagle Peak IRA, as well as Sill Hill IRA and No Name IRA, all supply a similar type of recreation experience (ROS is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized) in settings that are managed to meet a range of SIOs that vary from Very Low to High (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b).

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also offers some opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Nearby, but outside the California Coastal Range ecosystem is Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The Park has large areas managed for primitive outdoor recreation experiences that exemplify the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Province.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Agua Caliente Creek contains riparian areas that have the potential to support species displaced by human activities elsewhere such as arroyo toads.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echowhawk 1999). It is worth noting that these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78).
Cleveland National Forest

Cedar Creek Undeveloped Area

Palomar Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 2,800 acre Cedar Creek Undeveloped Area is located in southern California, west of the Cuyamaca Mountains. The city of Ramona is approximately six miles to the west and Julian is approximately three miles to the northeast. This area is in the southern part of the Palomar Ranger District, in the central part of the Cleveland National Forest.

Cedar Creek and Upper San Diego River Gorge are areas the public proposed for wilderness designation recommendation and were analyzed for potential wilderness designation recommendations in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supporting the revised forest plans. They are not inventoried roadless areas and were not identified in the set of inventoried roadless area maps contained in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume 2, November 2000

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Cedar Creek supports riparian woodland plants, stands of Engelmann oak, southern coast live oak, and southern cottonwood. This is a rugged canyon landscape with elevation ranging from approximately 2,000 and 3,800 feet. This unit is representative of the California Coastal Range ecosystem.

Current uses of the area: Hiking, viewing the scenery (river gorge and canyon landscapes), seasonal water play, horseback riding, hunting (more recently including feral pigs), and primitive camping, and a designated OHV route along the southern boundary.

There are planned or existing management activities for control of exotic species including feral pigs, fish or bullfrogs, fuels treatment, watershed improvement such as decommissioning of unauthorized routes, and evaluation of a designated buy currently unoccupied livestock grazing allotment, and access thereto.

Gathering of culturally important plants by the Kumeyaay people occurs in the area. Cultural resources are not known or recorded by the Forest Service.

The area is a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes.

Existing San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) Company power lines are located through the eastern portion of this unit, including the Boulder Creek electric 69 kV transmission line, a 12 kV electric distribution line and a 30 foot wide right-of-way for brush clearance. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is currently underway to address a master permit for Forest-wide SDG&E utility lines and associated motorized access. This analysis is separate from the Sunrise Powerlink. Mechanized equipment is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance of the transmission line. Currently there are unimproved roads in the area, including those under permit to SDG&E. There are unauthorized routes in the unit, particularly off of Cedar road.
Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The canyon and ravine landscape is covered in dense brush. This area is bordered by Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area and private property (including the Pine Hills development).

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: Scenic views of the Cedar Creek gorge.

Capability
The area's potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Include the degree to which humans and past or present human activity may have affected natural ecological processes and conditions.

The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wildlands has been lost. Concentrated recreation use and the spread of invasive non-native species have also disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations. Largely due to frequent fires, surrounding developed areas, utilities, and fire suppression activities, this area has relatively larger populations of naturalized and noxious weeds and/or risks.

Exotic fish, bullfrogs and feral pigs have been introduced into this area.

This unit is contained 97% in the Cedar Creek watershed which was rated as Functioning (1.5) for National Forest lands. The Cedar Creek watershed was rated down due to invasive species mainly feral pigs and aquatic habitat indicators. Cedar Creek is a perennial, fish bearing stream with exceptional recreation values and riparian habitat. Mapped soils are generally Tollhouse rocky coarse sandy loam and Sheephead rocky fine sandy loam. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0).

See: http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

There are no fuels treatments within this unit. Portions of this unit have been burned by multiple fires including Cedar Fire (2003), Witch Fire (2007) and others. The coastal sage scrub is highly vulnerable to conversion to annual grassland when fires become too frequent and this habitat conversion can cause reductions in California gnatcatcher populations. The Forest Service and partners worked to restore areas of key gnatcatcher habitat burned by Witch Fire.

Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.
Undeveloped: This area contains non-conforming roads and structures such as SDG&E power lines and access roads for maintenance purposes. There are also remnants of an old unmaintained route known as the “Wagon Trail.”

Opportunities: The Cedar Creek undeveloped area is natural appearing with moderate opportunities for solitude. Although Cedar Creek is within a rapidly developing urban region, the canyon landscape gives an impression of remoteness and is inherently capable of supplying opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.

This area is moderately remote. It contains no designated system trails (Cedar Creek Falls, a very popular seasonal destination for local hikers is located to the south within the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area). Most of the area, for all practical purposes, inaccessible and cross-country travel involves substantial bushwhacking through dense brush and rugged, steep creek valleys. Challenge is therefore moderate.

Relative to the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province, Cedar Creek has a low inherent capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation including day-use hiking, wildlife and wildflower viewing, photography, seasonal water play, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, relaxation, and respite from urban life.

Cedar Creek is inherently capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest, including viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p. 12).

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation that currently take place here are: hiking, viewing the scenery (scenic gorge/drainage), seasonal water play, horseback riding, hunting, and primitive camping.

Special features and values: Along the San Diego River (including the lower reaches of Cedar Creek) are several stretches of high-quality riparian woodland and populations of arroyo toad (Bufo californicus) and southwestern pond turtle (Clemmys marmorata pallida) (Forest Service sensitive species). Coastal rosy boas (Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca) (Forest Service sensitive species), coast horned lizards (Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii) (California species of special concern and Forest Service sensitive species), orange-throated whiptails (Cnemidophorus hypertyrhus beldingi) (California species of concern), and two-striped garter snakes (Thamnophis hammondii) (Forest Service sensitive species) can also be found here (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335-337).

None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources and no sites have been recorded. Features related to resource collection and food processing are commonly located near stream confluences in this area. On nearby lands outside the forest, many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops. Culturally important plants occur within the area and are gathered by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

The area supports a number of rare species and habitats, including riparian woodlands, coastal sage scrub, grassland, and Engelmann oak woodlands (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335). The effect of recent wildfires on these habitats is currently being monitored. Abundant and varied wildlife enhance the area’s wilderness capability (See biotic species discussion under
Need). Nonconforming structures and activities are not necessary for management of these species or their habitat.

The opportunity for scientific studies, both formal and informal, in a manner that is compatible with wilderness is high. Cedar Creek is important for ecological studies because of the increasing scarcity of unmodified natural ecosystems in southern California.

A proposed Research Natural Area (RNA) for conservation of coastal sage scrub, which is habitat for the endangered California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*), is located along the lower reaches of Cedar Creek on the western edge of this undeveloped area.

**Description of size and shape:** This area is not sufficient in size (2,800 acres) to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition; however, it is adjacent to the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area. Cedar Creek Road – National Forest System Route (NFSR) 13S11 divides the two areas.

The city of Ramona is approximately six miles to the west and Julian is approximately three miles to the northeast. This area is in the southern part of the Palomar Ranger District, in the central part of the Cleveland National Forest. This area is adjacent to private property including the Pine Hills development.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Cedar Creek undeveloped area is separated from the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area by Cedar Creek Road - NFSR 13S11, an improved road. Cedar Creek Road is designated as an OHV route and is not maintained for travel by standard passenger-type vehicles. Most of the area has been managed to retain a semi-primitive character within a natural appearing setting, where management activities are either not evident or are subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

The ability of the Forest Service to manage this land as an enduring resource of wilderness and retain its primeval character is low.

The potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of this undeveloped area is high. There are currently nonconforming structures and activities within the roadless area boundaries. The Boulder Creek power line crosses the Cedar Creek undeveloped area (see Authorized and Potential Uses under Availability). Existing uses outside the boundary that might result in demands to allow nonconforming activities in the wilderness include mountain biking, backcountry driving, and sightseeing in high-clearance vehicles. Backcountry driving is one of the five most popular activities on the forest (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12).

Most of the area has not been surveyed and boundaries are not recognizable on the ground. The boundaries loosely conform to the Cedar Creek drainage, and the southwestern boundary parallels Cedar Creek Road - NFSR 13S11.

The area is readily accessible by a backcountry road system that includes Cedar Creek, Eagle Peak Road - NFSR 13S06, and a small segment of Boulder Creek Road.

This part of the Forest is zoned for motorized recreational opportunities; however, there are no public roads, trails, or designated parking areas within the Cedar Creek undeveloped area. Designation would not change use on transportation systems outside the wilderness unless the Cedar Creek undeveloped area is combined with neighboring roadless areas and motorized and mechanized use on Cedar Creek Road is forfeited – thereby increasing both motorized and mountain biking use on other roads in the area.
An unimproved trailhead located at Saddleback could serve Cedar Creek as well as the adjacent roadless areas and would be compatible with other management needs.

**Availability**
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (2,793 acres): Backcountry (BC)- 11 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 1,270 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 1,512 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 0 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Diverse kinds of off-road recreation, mountain biking, competitive events, and developed recreation opportunities are some of the potential demands that might be satisfied.

The Cedar Creek undeveloped area is separated from Eagle Peak IRA by Cedar Creek Road - NFSR 13S11, a road that is maintained for high clearance vehicles and designated for non-highway licensed vehicles (open to OHV use). The OHV opportunity is linear and does not offer authorized loop opportunities. The route is closed a fair amount of time due to condition or weather.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Feral pigs were introduced in this area a few years ago. They are expanding their range primarily through following tributaries and drainages. Feral pigs proliferate in riparian and oak grassland habitats and have the potential to damage these habitats and compete with native species. Exotic fish and bullfrogs are also present within the primary drainages.

Water availability and use: Cedar Creek is within the San Diego River watershed, contributes to municipal water supplies, and serves ecosystem needs.

Livestock operations: Cedar Creek contains a designated (though currently unoccupied) livestock grazing area (Pine Hills allotment) and motorized access for permit administration may be required in the future. There is currently some unauthorized grazing activity off non-NFS lands in the area.

Timber: There is predominately chaparral vegetation with some oak woodland but no forested areas in the Cedar Creek unit. In addition, the Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero so vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber production.

Minerals: There is currently no recorded mineral related activity in this unit.

Cultural resources: None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources and no sites have been recorded. Generally, features related to resource collection and food processing are commonly located near stream confluences in this area. On nearby lands outside the forest, many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops. Culturally important plants occur within the area and are gathered by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).
Authorized and potential land uses: Road construction, new administrative site development, and developed recreation opportunities are some of the potential demands that might be satisfied. Current uses include motorized access for power line maintenance.

This area is also a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes. This use has increased significantly over the past few years.

San Diego Gas & Electric has a special use permit for the Boulder Creek 69kV electric transmission line, a 12 kV electric distribution line and a 30 foot wide right-of-way for brush clearance. The improvements are in Sections 27, 33, 34, T13S, R3E, and SBB&M. Mechanized equipment is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance of the transmission line. Some existing roads serve to access powerlines and will be addressed and will be included in the Forestwide utility line master permit analyses. This improvement is readily visible and apparent from areas within the Cedar Creek unit. The Forest Service has sufficient authority to prevent development of incompatible uses that would lessen wilderness character and potential outside of the transmission line corridor.

There are some unauthorized routes in the unit. After the Witch Fire, a restoration project decision identified many routes in the Upper San Diego River area (including in this unit) for decommissioning.

The Final EIS/EIR for the Sunrise Powerlink Project identified for all southern routes Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500kV future transmission lines. One of the three routes noted as most likely for future transmission lines is the Route D Alternative corridor. Additional 230 and/or 500kV circuits could be proposed to follow this corridor to the north of Descanso, crossing No Name and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas, as well as the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek Undeveloped Areas. As illustrated in the Final EIS, the corridor falls outside of the boundary of Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area but appears to fall within approximately ¼ to one mile of its north and east IRA boundary. In the Final EIS, SDG&E indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. There are no specific proposals at this time.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and fire use (prescribed fire) could be considered in this area.

Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and road use and maintenance (including use and maintenance of roaded fuel breaks) for pre-suppression activities are valuable management techniques with applicability to this area.

Private lands along the boundary of the area were recently acquired. There are no private lands within this undeveloped area.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.
Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: There is no other National Forest wilderness in the immediate vicinity of Cedar Creek. Pine Creek (13,480 acres) and Hauser (7,547 acres) Wildernesses are located about 15 miles to the southeast on the Descanso Ranger District. The 17,979 acre Agua Tibia Wilderness is located about 32 miles away, on the northern end of the Palomar Ranger District. A 7,796 acre proposed addition to the Agua Tibia Wilderness is currently pending legislation. The proposed area coincides with the area that has been recommended in the Forest Plan.

Other wilderness areas that are within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness (38,484 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,248 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM--18,500 acres).

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of California also manage other wilderness areas in southern California, including Fishcreek Mountain (21,388 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (33610 acres), Coyote Mountains (18630 acres), Carrizo Gorge (14741 acres), Jacumba (31357 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/USFS-- 74718 acres), and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas are in the American Semi-desert and Desert Ecosystem Province and do not represent the values of the California Coastal Range (Bailey 1995, p.56–58, 68-70; Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: The Agua Tibia Wilderness has light to moderate day use. Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in Riverside and San Diego Counties, and wilderness use is predicted to increase. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (Kocis and others 2002, p.10, 12). Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light to moderate, with some areas within the province experiencing moderate to high day use.

At the 90% confidence level, annual visitation to designated wilderness on the Cleveland National Forest is between 7,200 and 22,800 visits (National Visitor Use Monitoring, Cleveland report, FY 2009). The November 2007 fire siege (including Witch, Poomacha and Harris Fires) and subsequent closures may have influenced data. Visitor perception of crowding in designated wilderness on the Cleveland was rated between 2 to 6 out of 10, with 10 meaning “overcrowded”. The average rating was 3.5. On the Cleveland, day use developed sites were perceived as less crowded (average 3.3), while overnight use developed sites and undeveloped areas were perceived as somewhat more crowded (average 4.7).

The short-term day use trend continues: most of the visits to the Cleveland National Forest are day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland NF was estimated at 4.2 hours. Overall, the average visit to the Cleveland NF lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits to this forest last less than 4 hours. There are very few frequent visitors: almost 60 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY 2009). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

Demographics for visits to designated wilderness on the Cleveland were 45.8% female and 54.2% male. Race/ethnicity was 13.6% Asian/Pacific Islander and 88.6% White (respondents could choose more than one racial group). Age class breakdown of visitors in designated
wilderness was 10.9% of those under 16 years old; 1.9% for 16-19; 17.2% of 20-29 year olds; 15.6% of 30-39 year olds; 30.7% of 40-49 year olds; 22% of 50-59 year olds; and 1.6% of those over 70 years old. Wilderness visitor’s zip codes most commonly reported were from Riverside and Orange counties, followed by those from foreign countries and San Diego and San Bernardino Counties (NVUM, Cleveland report, FY2009).

Designation would not change system access within Cedar Creek. There would be an effect on transportation systems outside the wilderness at some point in the future if Eagle Peak IRA and this unit were to be recommended for wilderness and that zoning was also applied to the system road in between.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The management objectives assigned to the Eagle Peak, No Name, and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas and the Upper San Diego River undeveloped area complement unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. All four of these areas are managed to supply semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation experiences (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum objective is SPNM). The Upper San Diego River and Sill Hill roadless areas, however, have higher scenic quality standards than Cedar Creek. The Eagle Peak unit and parts of No Name currently have lower scenic quality standards and management activities that dominate the landscape are allowed (USDA, Forest Service 1986b). Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also offers some opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The mountains and foothills of San Diego County (including the lower reaches of Cedar Creek) contain important habitat for rare and vulnerable species. The Cedar Creek undeveloped area is within one of the key ecological areas for this region and is dominated by some of the best remaining occurrences of low elevation ecosystems (e.g. riparian woodland, coastal sage scrub, and Englemann oak woodlands) that are poorly represented on public land and declining in the southern part of the Province. Englemann oak populations (*Quercus engelmanii*) are declining due to habitat loss on private lands. They inhabit the smallest natural range of any oak species in California and are located next to the fastest growing urban landscape in the country (Stephenson, Calcarone 1999, p.44, 45).

The lower reaches of Cedar Creek, on the slope above the confluence with the San Diego River, support coastal sage scrub vegetation that supplies habitat for California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*), a federally listed threatened species. The decline in numbers and distribution of coastal California gnatcatcher and the listing of the taxon as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act has resulted primarily from the loss, fragmentation, and adverse modification of habitat (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2001). Recurring wildfires in the early 1990s, 2003 and 2007 have adversely affected the coastal California gnatcatcher population in the upper San Diego River valley on the Cleveland National Forest. This is the only large population of California gnatcatcher on the Cleveland National Forest and it is at the eastern edge of the species’ range. The Cedar Creek unit includes designated critical habitat for California Gnatcatcher.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United
States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness, and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Coldwater Inventoried Roadless Area

Trabuco Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 8,402 Coldwater Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is on the northeastern slope of Santiago Peak in the Santa Ana Mountains of southern California on the Trabuco Ranger District. The unit lies south of Bedford Ridge Road National Forest System Road (NFSR) 4S03, north of Indian Truck Trail - NFSR 5S01, and generally east of Main Divide Road - NFSR 3S04 and Modjeska Peak.

Coldwater can be accessed from these three system roads. This unit is located directly south of the city of Corona and approximately 1.5 miles west of Interstate Highway 15. The Main Divide Road supplies adequate opportunity for access to the area and traveler transfer points could be developed. Without the benefit of a trail, travel through mature chaparral is regarded as nearly impossible (Schad 1988, p.5).

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The interior of the Coldwater unit is natural appearing with modest opportunities for solitude. The primary vegetation is chaparral; however, scattered springs and seasonal creeks support pockets of bigcone Douglas-fir, Coulter pine, live oak, riparian woodlands, and rare botanic species. Elevation ranges from approximately 1,500 to 5,300 feet. Coldwater is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland-Shrub-Coniferous Forest-Meadow Province.

Current uses of the area: Coldwater is currently managed for non-motorized use. Hunting, hiking, mountain biking and some equestrian use occur here. There is one unmaintained system trail in this unit and several routes that offer a high degree of challenge and adventure.

Inside the boundary of Coldwater Southern California Edison has a special use authorization for the Valley-Serrano 500 kV electric transmission line, with a 160 foot right-of-way for maintenance in accordance with the terms and conditions of their easement. These structures require maintenance and are readily visible and apparent from within the unit. Motorized or mechanized (helicopter) access is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance.

Illegal marijuana grow sites have been found in drainages.

There are no private land parcels within the unit boundaries.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): Coldwater provides a steep, rugged chaparral landscape within a rapidly growing urbanized region.

Communication sites under special use permit are located just outside the unit on Modjeska and Santiago Peaks.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: none exist.
Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting Coldwater is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost.

The spread of invasive non-native species has disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations. Naturalized invasive species exist along the Forest road on the west side. Other noxious weeds have been introduced near the boundary roads, but have or will be treated.

This unit is contained within two watersheds: Bedford Wash-Temescal Wash and Dawson Canyon-Temescal Wash. Bedford Wash-Temescal Wash is rated as Functioning (1.4) and Dawson Canyon-Temescal Wash is rated as Functioning (1.6) for Forest Service lands. Both watersheds were rated lower for the lack of aquatic habitat and the significant presence of illegal marijuana grow sites which affect water quality and contaminate soil with excessive fertilizers and chemical herbicides. Coldwater contains several steep intermittent drainages, no mapped perennial waters but contain important riparian habitats. These areas are generally steep and the soils are mapped as Exchequer series-Rock Outcrop complex or Cieneba-Rock Outcrop Complex with slopes generally 30 to 75%. Some depositional areas with lower gradients are mapped as Soboba Cobbly Loamy Sand. (The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field HUCs using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

Night skies are affected by light from the adjacent metropolitan area.

There are fuel breaks and ongoing maintenance treatments along Bedford and North Main Divide Roads. Fuels treatment along Indian Truck Trail, including thinning of dense stands of Coulter pine, is currently in the planning phase.

Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

Undeveloped: Coldwater is a steep, undeveloped area on the east slope of the Santa Ana Mountains. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is High in most of the unit with minor amounts of area also assigned the SIO of Moderate. Management activities are allowed to dominate the Bedford Ridge Road corridor and ridgeline where the SIO is Moderate.

Existing development within the unit lessens its wilderness character and potential. In addition to the Valley/Serrano power line inside the boundary, the juxtaposition of development on private lands and communication sites on the peaks that surround this area lowers the ability of the Forest to protect and manage its natural character.
There are no system roads inside of the unit. There are approximately: 1.21 miles of temporary road, 4.72 miles of Forest Development Trail, 4.07 miles of Coldwater Trail (6W01) (no public access on eastern side), 0.64 miles of Holy Jim Trail (6W03), and 2.4 miles of undetermined trail routes.

There are several non-system mountain biking routes originating from adjacent lands within the community of Lake Elsinore that traverse Coldwater at the urban interface.

**Opportunities:** Relative to other areas within the California Coastal Range Province, Coldwater has a medium inherent capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, hunting, relaxation, and respite from urban life. The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized except along roaded fuel breaks where the ROS is Semi-Primitive, Motorized.

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation that currently take place here are mountain biking, hiking, hunting, and some equestrian use. In addition, backcountry driving is one of the five most popular recreation activities on the forest (Kocis and others 2002, p.12). Lack of access limits opportunities for outdoor education and scientific study.

There are opportunities to gain feelings of solitude, adventure, and self-reliance. The steep, narrow canyons and dense vegetation give an impression of remoteness from some locations. The interior of Coldwater is natural appearing with modest opportunities for solitude. Nearby infrastructure development is readily apparent from most locations within the unit. Due to its location and physiographic orientation, Coldwater is exposed to the sights and sounds of civilization. Urban vistas and the sound of air traffic are noticeable throughout the entire Trabuco Ranger District. The 500 kV Valley/Serrano power line is located inside the boundary and is readily visible and apparent from most areas within the unit.

The opportunity to experience adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, or self-reliance ranges from low to moderate, with opportunities limited by the lack of an established trail network. The Coldwater system trail takes off the North Main Divide Road and traverses down a ridge between Coldwater and Mayhew canyons. At the lower elevation (urban interface), there are no trailheads in the national forest or private land. Primitive camping is prohibited.

**Special features and values:** Include those of ecological, geological, scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, or historical value. Describe rare and endangered plant and animal species and other wildlife.

Scattered springs and seasonal creeks sustain bigcone Douglas-fir stands, old live oak stands, sycamores, bigleaf maple, bay laurels, cottonwood, wildflowers, and a superb set of falls in Mayhew Canyon (Schad 1988, p.60, 61, 79, 80). These special scenic features contribute to the Coldwater’s wilderness capability.

**Description of size and shape:** The 8,402 acre Coldwater Inventoried Roadless Area is relatively small but of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. However, only part of the unit has been successfully managed to retain a natural appearing, semi-primitive, non-motorized character.

The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Coldwater could be considered manageable but there would be moderate administrative challenges as described in this evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability.” In addition, the
juxtaposition of the unit to private lands (and associated growth) may increasingly challenge management. In the future, the ability of the Forest to manage this area as an enduring resource of wilderness that is untrammeled by man and that retains its primeval character is low to moderate.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Coldwater has not been surveyed and the boundaries are not readily recognizable on the ground except where they lie adjacent to roads. The boundaries loosely conform to the Coldwater Creek drainage and the crest of the Santa Ana Mountains.

To be more manageable, boundaries would need to exclude power lines (including access) or legislative language would need to allow for operation and maintenance of the power lines. This would also apply to any other valid special use infrastructure, which may include several water uses near the eastern urban interface that need evaluation.

Regardless of boundary modifications, the potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of Coldwater is high. At this time, encroachments involving nonconforming structures along the urban interface are moderate, but they are expected to increase as development fills in along both the Riverside County eastern edge and the Orange County western edge of the unit. In addition, proposals have been received for large-scale infrastructure development near or under this area, including a major transportation corridor through Coldwater and another large-scale utility corridor.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 618 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 415 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 7,046 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 321 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Recreational opportunities include day hiking, mountain biking, and viewing natural features, primarily on Coldwater Trail. An unmaintained Forest Service system trail (Coldwater Trail, FS6W01) accesses the unit and drops into Mayhew Canyon. This route is extremely steep; consequently, trails in the general area are rated suitable for experienced mountain bikers and hikers only (Schad 1988, p. 79, 80). No other trails access the interior of the unit. Primitive camping is prohibited. No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Coldwater.

Other resource demands and uses that this area could satisfy include a full spectrum of recreation experiences including mountain biking, developed recreation and competitive events.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: In general, freshwater aquatic habitats are uncommon in coastal southern California and most have been substantially modified by altered stream flows. The middle and lower portions of these streams, typically found at elevations below 3,000 feet, support a high number of rare and vulnerable riparian species. Of particular importance are sections of streams that are in a relatively unmodified state (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.35-3. Management needs could include treatment of invasive nonnative species in priority habitat area.
**Water Availability and use:** Several of the east-facing drainages of the central Santa Ana Mountains are included in this unit. There are potential water use (and associated access) permit proposals needing evaluation along the lower boundary near the urban interface.

**Livestock operations:** None.

**Timber:** The Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero; vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber. Thinning of Coulter pine stands for fuels and forest health reasons is currently proposed near the Indian Truck Trail.

**Minerals:** There are an unknown number of mineral claims but no active mining in Coldwater.

**Cultural resources:** Heritage resource surveys are limited to some of the ridgelines and drainages. One historic site (Bedford Mine) has been recorded.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** The Forest Land management Plan designated the Valley/Serrano Utility Corridor, which is 12 miles long and ¼ mile wide. Approximately 1.5 miles of this corridor bisects the northern portion of Coldwater.

There is a 500 kV electric transmission line (Valley-Serrano Line) inside the boundary of the unit. These structures require maintenance and are readily visible and apparent from within the unit. Motorized or mechanized (helicopter) access is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance. In addition, Southern California Edison utility line expansion within the corridor is a potential future demand.

A portion of the land included in this study is committed through contractual agreement for use, purposes, and activities not in concert with the requirements of the Wilderness Act. Southern California Edison holds a Special Use Permit for a 500 kV electric transmission line (the Valley-Serrano line), with a 160 foot right-of-way for maintenance in accordance with the terms and conditions of their permit (Sections 32 and 33, T4S, and Section 5 and 6, T5S and T5S, R6W, SBB&M). The Valley/Serrano Line is readily visible and apparent within the unit and mechanized (helicopter) access is necessary for emergencies as well as routine operation and maintenance of the line.

The Central Pool Augmentation Project is a potential gravity feed water conveyance project connecting Lake Mathews to a treatment plant in Orange County. It may be proposed by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) at some in the future. Initial plans were for one 19’ diameter tunnel mined at maximum depths of approximately 2,500 feet through nearly six miles of Forest. Entrance and exit portal locations were proposed on non-Forest lands. Without a site specific proposal it is not possible to know exact tunnel location or if it would be proposed below Coldwater. There is potential for the tunnel to be combined in highway tunnel as described below.

The Irvine-Corona Expressway Project may be proposed by Riverside and Orange Counties. It may consist of two separate expressway tunnels linking Riverside and Orange counties (east to west: Cajalco Road to the SR-241/SR-133 exchange) of approximately 15 miles in length through the Santa Ana Mountains, including nearly seven miles of Forest. The anticipated mined tunnel diameter would be 50 feet with an approximate maximum depth of 1,500 feet. Without a site specific proposal it is not possible to know exact tunnel location or if it would be proposed below this Coldwater. Surface and underground effects could be expected.
Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: A portion of the land included in this study, including the 500kV utility corridor, is committed for use, purposes, and activities not in concert with the requirements of the Wilderness Act. Management considerations include management of the special use permit for the power line.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire may be required in this area. Management options here include motorized/mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuel breaks along Bedford, North Main Divide and Indian Roads) under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes of reducing unnatural fuels accumulation or other objectives such as habitat improvement, and mechanical/ motorized maintenance of community defense zones. Current plans include forest health (thinning) treatment along Indian Road, where there are overstocked stands of predominately Coulter pine.

Current management includes law enforcement activities which may utilize motorized and/or mechanized equipment. In addition, site cleanup and restoration of illegal marijuana grow site infrastructure may be considered.

Managers may want to use mechanized equipment and/or pesticides to address vegetation disease or nonnative invasive species. Pesticides are allowed in designated wilderness when necessary to protect or restore significant resource values. Likewise, mechanized equipment may be considered; however, there could be increased project complexity.

Designation should shift existing and future mechanized use (mountain biking) and any potential future motorized use to transportation systems outside the area. The North Main Divide Road, Bedford Ridge Road and Indian Truck Trail supply opportunities for traveler transfer. Additional access and traveler transfer facilities may be required in the future. These facilities would be compatible with other management needs.

The public currently uses the Bedford Ridge Road - NFSR 4S03 and Indian Truck Trail - FS5S01 even though the Forest does not have easements for public or administrative use.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The 38,484 acre San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is located 10 to 12 miles southeast of Coldwater within the southern part of the Trabuco Ranger District. Other wilderness that is within the California Coastal Range Province are the Agua Tibia Wilderness (15,933 acres), Hauser Wilderness (7,547 acres), Pine Creek Wilderness (13,480 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,248 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM, 18,500 acres).

The 8,300 acre Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, 8,000 acre Ronald W. Casper’s Wilderness Park, 6,600 acre Irvine Ranch canyon reserves, and the 4,000 acre National Audubon Society Starr Ranch are also located in the general vicinity and are similar to wilderness although not managed by State or Federal agencies and some motorized and mechanized uses are
permitted.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in Orange and Riverside Counties and wilderness use could also increase. Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light; however, some of the areas within the four national forests of southern California, including the Trabuco Ranger District, experience moderate to high day use. Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded, rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Chavez 1993a, 1993b).

An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use: the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours. Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.10, 12).

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The Trabuco Ranger District supplies some opportunity for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences, particularly for nearby Orange County and Riverside County residents. Most of the District outside of the roaded, developed areas supports unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. There are large blocks of area managed to supply Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized recreation experiences, including most of the nearby inventoried roadless areas (Ladd and Trabuco).

Currently, nearby undeveloped lands supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness, and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1992).

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Coldwater is one of a few remaining un-roaded areas that could serve as a link to the San Diego Ranges, Santa Rosa Plateau, Santa Ana Mountains, Chino Hills State Park, the canyon reserves of Irvine Ranch and other open space reserves to the north.

Coldwater may also support some wilderness-associated species as well as species adapted to more modified environments, including keystone predators.

As development pressures increase on private lands, the public wildlands increasingly serve as core refugia for native habitats and species.

Individual landowners, government agencies, and non-profit groups are engaged in planning efforts to create habitat reserves for maintaining biodiversity in this rapidly developing area.

The need for corridor connections from existing and newly created habitat reserves and the remaining unroaded public lands (such as Coldwater) is crucial (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.2, 6, 7).
The canyons within the Coldwater unit (Coldwater, Mayhew, Bixby, and Brown) contain some riparian areas within this range and have the potential to support species displaced by human activities elsewhere.

Specific information about biotic species within Coldwater and the influence of surrounding development is limited due to the lack of access and survey data. Two Forest Service sensitive plant populations have been recorded in the IRA: Hall’s monardella (Monardella macrantha hallii) and heart-leaved pitcher sage (Lepechinia cardiophylla). Provision for roadless but non-wilderness land use categories is an alternative to designation. The Coldwater IRA includes designated critical habitat for California Gnatcatcher, a federally-listed threatened species.

**An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems:** The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area

Palomar Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 6,481 Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in southern California, the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area lies west of the Cuyamaca Mountains and approximately three miles southeast of the city of Ramona. It lies at the southern edge of the Palomar Ranger District in the central part of the Cleveland National Forest. The IRA is reached from Eagle Peak Road (National Forest System Road (NFSR) 13S06) and Boulder Creek Road (NFSR 13S08).

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The vegetation includes a matrix of chaparral with coastal sage scrub, mature riparian woodlands, and Engelmann oak stands on the ridge tops and north-facing slopes. Elevation ranges from approximately 900 to 3,000 feet. Eagle Peak lies within the Upper San Diego River watershed and contributes to municipal water supplies in the region. This unit is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland—Shrub—Coniferous Forest—Meadow Ecosystem Province.

Current uses of the area: Recreation uses include day-use hiking, rock climbing (Eagle Peak), nature viewing and photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding and seasonal water play.

There is a designated (though currently vacant) livestock grazing area (Pine Hills allotment). Planning is underway for this allotment and access that might be needed.

There is an active mining claim in the SW1/4 Section 4, (Claim no. CAMC235568, Home Stake, lode claim).

This area is a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of Eagle Peak is that of a steep chaparral covered landscape with rock bluffs and deep canyons. It is adjacent to other roadless areas to the north and south. There are tribal lands in the Upper San Diego drainage to the west. Privately-held lands along the western boundary are of a ranchland character at this time but more growth of infrastructure is possible.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The unit includes the tall seasonal Three Sisters falls and Cedar Creek waterfalls. Eagle Peak rock cliffs and summit are in this unit. Golden eagles nest in the area.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.
Naturalness of the area: The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wildlands has been lost.

Concentrated recreation use and the spread of invasive non-native species have also disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations. This area has large populations of naturalized invasive species (exotic fish, bullfrogs and feral pigs) that have been introduced into the area (see Availability section below). In addition, there are populations of noxious weeds in Boulder Creek. This may partially be due to the history of frequent fires and surrounding development. Surveys and treatments are planned for this area.

Eagle Peak is contained within four Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds: Ritchie Creek-San Diego River (Functioning Properly), Cedar Creek (Functioning Properly), Boulder Creek (Functioning Properly), and El Capitan Reservoir-San Diego River (Functioning at Risk). All ratings are based on evaluating National Forest lands. This unit contains mapped perennial waters and fish bearing waters. Some attributes that were rated Functioning at Risk or Impaired Function in these watersheds are terrestrial species, habitat fragmentation, and native aquatic species presence. Mapped soils vary significantly over these watersheds. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0).

See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. (The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.)

Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to this unit.

There have been no fuels treatments within the boundaries of this unit.

Undeveloped: An active mining claim exists within Eagle Peak (see Minerals section under Availability). There are approximately 7.8 miles of road inventory in this IRA and approximately: 1.9 miles of Tule Springs Road (NFSR 14S07) within the unit boundary where it serves as the boundary between Eagle Peak and No Name Inventoried Roadless Areas, .21 miles of temporary routes that access wells that need evaluation, and 5.7 miles of undetermined roads in the area. Most (4.6 miles) were decommissioned following Cedar Fire but some have been reopened and need re-evaluation. Another 1.1 miles were evaluated as part of the post-Witch Fire restoration effort and are slated for decommissioning. There are approximately 0.26 miles of undetermined trail routes in this unit.

Opportunities: In general, Eagle Peak is a remote, undeveloped area. Cedar Creek Falls, however, is one of the most visited waterfalls in San Diego County with up to 100-200 visitors per day during peak visitation. The Cedar Creek waterfall is highly rated for its overall appeal (Stienestra and Brown 2001, p.790). Eagle Peak Road and the trail from Saddleback facilitate relatively easy access on a non-system trail to the creek and viewpoints above the falls. Hiking has been rated moderate with relatively easy terrain (Schad 1999, p.161, Stienestra and Brown 2001, p.790). Difficulty and challenge are moderate. The falls can also be reached from the west
via the newly established Cedar Creek Trail which also includes developments such as trailhead facilities and parking. The easement for public access through the Helix water district is pending.

There is also a triple set of waterfalls in Boulder Creek canyon called “Three Sisters.” This area is seasonally popular with recreation use increasing. A moderately strenuous hike on an unimproved trail over difficult terrain leads to the Three Sisters; the hike is recommended for experienced hikers only (Schad 1999, p.162). This route offers a high degree of challenge and adventure.

Eagle Peak is a popular rock-climbing site and is one of the four most popular climbing locations in San Diego County. Elsewhere, Eagle Peak is, for all practical purposes, inaccessible. Cross-country travel through dense brush requires substantial bushwhacking and challenge is therefore low. Overall, the opportunity for challenge and adventure within this unit is moderate. Eagle Peak is natural in appearance with moderate opportunities for solitude. Although it is within a rapidly urbanizing region, its deep canyons and rugged topographic features give the impression of remoteness and supply visitors with opportunities to gain feelings of solitude and a sense of self-reliance.

Eagle Peak has a medium inherent capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation including day-use hiking, wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, viewing scenery (Cedar Creek Falls, Three Sisters Falls, San Diego River Canyon), seasonal water play, relaxation, and respite from urban life. This area is capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest: viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12).

Special features and values: The San Diego Ranges have been identified as one of the key ecological areas in the region, and many rare and vulnerable plant and animal species are located in Eagle Peak (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p. 335). The slopes along the lower reaches of Cedar Creek and Boulder Creek (above the confluence with the San Diego River) support coastal sage scrub vegetation that supplies habitat for California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*), a federally listed threatened species. There are also several stretches of high quality riparian woodland with populations of arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) (federally listed endangered) and southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*) (Forest Service sensitive species). Coastal rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*) (Forest Service sensitive species), coast horned lizards (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*) (California species of special concern and Forest Service sensitive species), orange-throated whiptails (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*) (California species of concern) and two-striped garter snakes (*Thamnophis hammondii*) (Forest Service sensitive species) are also found here (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335-337). One native rare plant population (San Diego milk-vetch) has been recorded.

Eagle Peak is dominated by some of the best remaining occurrences of low-elevation ecosystems (e.g. riparian woodland, southern part of the Province). Tall seasonal waterfalls and sections of three perennial creeks are located within this unit.

None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources, although a few features have been located near the stream confluences. Many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the
mesas and mountaintops within the nearby Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. This area is associated with the Kumeyaay people.

Abundant and varied wildlife enhances its wilderness capability (See discussion of biotic resources under Need). Non-conforming structures are not necessary for the management of wildlife in this area. Special scenic features including rugged canyons, Eagle Peak, Cedar Creek Falls, and Three Sisters Falls enhance its wilderness capability. This area’s inherent capability to supply outdoor education in a manner compatible with wilderness is high.

Description of size and shape: The 6,481 acre Eagle Peak unit is relatively small but of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. It is also contiguous with the San Diego River and Cedar Creek undeveloped areas and the Sill Hill and No Name Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Cedar Creek Road (NFSR11311) lies between Eagle Peak and Cedar Creek roadless areas while Tule Springs Road forms the boundary between Eagle Peak and No Name roadless areas. Neither road is maintained for travel by standard passenger-type vehicles. The Cedar Creek Spur Road is a system road managed for OHV use. This area has been managed successfully to retain a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized character; however, the current management objectives for the scenery (setting) vary from very protective (unimpaired condition) to virtually unprotected (management activities can dominate the landscape) (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b). Currently, Eagle Peak is undisturbed and a portion is natural appearing: trails and routes and a segment of the Boulder Creek power line and surrounding development are the only evidence of man’s activities within the unit. The potential for the Forest to manage this land as an enduring resource of wilderness is medium.

The potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of this unit is moderate. The northern part of Eagle Peak has existing nonconforming structures and uses associated with private land. Other existing uses outside the unit boundary that might result in demands to allow nonconforming activities in the wilderness include mountain biking, and backcountry driving and sightseeing in high-clearance vehicles. Cedar Creek Road is designated for off-highway vehicle use. Backcountry driving is one of the five most popular recreation activities on the forest (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12). There is currently some limited unauthorized motorized use within Eagle Peak. Users access the unit from Tule Springs Road and Conejos Valley Road.

Little of the area has been surveyed and boundaries are not recognizable on the ground. The boundaries do not conform to the terrain or other natural features, but do parallel Cedar Creek Road and Boulder Creek Road. The north boundary can be accessed from Cedar Creek Road (NFSR 13S11). This road supplies adequate opportunity for visitor access to the northern part of the area and potential for traveler transfer. Maintenance level 1 roads on the south and west boundary are impassable to motorized traffic, but serve trail-based recreation – hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking.

Wilderness designation would have little effect on surrounding lands. This area is currently managed for non-motorized use. Cedar Creek Road, Tule Springs Road, and a non-system trail (an abandoned segment of Eagle Peak Road) separate this area from adjacent roadless areas. There are currently no roads or trails within the unit. If Eagle Peak, Cedar Peak undeveloped
area, and/or the Upper San Diego River undeveloped area were combined, transportation systems outside the wilderness, such as Boulder Creek Road and Eagle Peak Road, would experience increased motorized and mechanized use.

The unimproved trail and trailhead at Saddleback above Cedar Creek Falls does not satisfy current demand for access or for traveler transfer facilities. Improved access and traveler transfer facilities would be required. Required facilities would be compatible with other management needs and could serve the Cedar Creek undeveloped area, No Name Inventoried Roadless Area, and the Upper San Diego River undeveloped area.

**Availability**
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 799 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 1,244 acres, and Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 4,438 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: The Cedar Creek undeveloped area is separated from Eagle Peak by Cedar Creek Road (NFSR 13S11), an improved (maintenance level 2) road that is maintained for high clearance vehicles and designated for non-highway licensed high-clearance vehicles (open to OHV use). Eagle Peak is a popular area for rock climbers.

Diverse kinds of off-road recreation, mountain biking, road construction, new administrative site development, and developed recreation opportunities are some of the demands that could otherwise be satisfied in this area.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Feral pigs were introduced in this area a few years ago. They are expanding their range primarily through following tributaries and drainages. Feral pigs proliferate in riparian and oak grassland habitats and have the potential to damage these habitats and compete with native species. A variety of management measures to address the problem are being considered in a current planning effort. Exotic fish and bullfrogs are also present within the primary drainages.

Management needs could include treatment of weeds in priority habitat area. See the Special Features and Values in the Capability section.

Water availability and use: These watersheds contribute to municipal water supplies for the region as well as water for the ecosystem needs. There are no water use permits authorized in this unit.

Livestock operations: Eagle Peak is adjacent to a designated (though currently vacant) livestock grazing area (Pine Hills allotment). Planning is underway on this allotment including any needed motorized access. There is currently some unauthorized grazing activity in the area. A portion of a vacant allotment (Tule Springs) lies in this unit.

Timber: There are no forested areas within the Eagle Peak. The vegetation type is chaparral with some oak woodland. The Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero. Vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber.
Minerals: Further study is needed to better understand the hard rock minerals and geothermal potentials in the area (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest, 1978). An active mining claim in the SW1/4 Section 4, (Claim no. CAMC235568, Home Stake, lode claim).

Cultural resources: None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources, although a few features have been located near the stream confluences. Many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops within the nearby Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. This area is within the ancestral territory of the Kumeyaay people.

Authorized and potential land uses: This area is a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes. This use has increased significantly over the past few years.

The Final EIS/EIR for the Sunrise Powerlink Project identified for all southern routes Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500kV future transmission lines. One of the three routes noted as most likely for future transmission lines is the Route D Alternative corridor. Additional 230 and/or 500kV circuits could be proposed to follow this corridor to the north of Descanso, crossing No Name and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas, as well as the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek Undeveloped Areas. As illustrated in the Final EIS, the corridor falls outside of the boundary of Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area but appears to fall within approximately ¼ to one mile of its north and east unit boundary. In the Final EIS, San Diego Gas and Electric indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. There are no specific proposals at this time.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal land: Fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuel breaks), community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire could be considered in this area. Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and road use and maintenance (including use and maintenance of roaded fuel breaks along Boulder Creek, Cedar Creek and Tule Springs roads) for pre-suppression activities are uses the area under evaluation could satisfy.

There is an in-holding in Section 31, T13S, R3E, SBBM on the northern boundary of this area with a single residence. Ancillary structures and nonconforming uses within the Forest boundary have been reported.

Private lands in this area have recently been acquired. Over most of the area, the Forest Service has sufficient control to prevent development of irresolvable, incompatible uses that would lessen wilderness character and potential.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: There are no other Forest Service wilderness areas in the immediate
vicinity. Pine Creek Wilderness (13,480 acres) and Hauser (7,547 acres) are located 12 to 15 miles to the southeast on the Descanso Ranger District.

The 17,979 acre Agua Tibia Wilderness is located 32 miles away, on the northern end of the district. A 7,796 acre proposed addition to the Agua Tibia Wilderness is currently pending legislation that may or may not be acted on this year. The area coincides with the area that has been recommended in the Forest Plan.

Other Wilderness areas that are within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness (39,540 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,637 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM-16885 acres).

The BLM and State of California also manage other wilderness areas in southern California including Fishcreek Mountain (21,388 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (33610 acres), Coyote Mountains (18630 acres), Carrizo Gorge (14741 acres), Jacumba (31357 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/San Bernardino National Forest, 74718 acres), and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas, however, represent the American Semi-desert and Desert Ecosystem Province (Bailey 1995, p.56-58, 68-70, Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in San Diego County, and wilderness use is predicted to increase. Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light; however, some of the areas do experience moderate to high day use. Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded, rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Chavez 1993a, 1993b).

An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use: the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours (Kocis and others 2002, p.10, 12). Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area.

Currently, nearby undeveloped lands supply opportunities for primitive types of recreation outside wilderness, and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (USDA Forest Service 1992).

Current human use within Eagle Peak is primarily at three locations including Eagle Peak, Cedar Creek Falls, and Boulder Creek’s Three Sisters. Use at these locations has increased dramatically over the past five years which has resulted in management issues including water quality, garbage clean-up, wildfires, resource damage, and search and rescue operations.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The management objectives assigned to the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek undeveloped areas, No Name, and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas support unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. With the exception of Cedar Creek, which offers a Semi-Primitive Motorized setting, these areas are managed to supply Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized recreation.
experiences. Eagle Peak and parts of No Name currently have low scenery integrity objectives that allow for management activities that dominate the landscape; in contrast, Upper San Diego River and Sill Hill have higher visual quality standards for maintenance of the recreation setting (USDA, Forest Service, 1986b). Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also offers opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The slopes along the lower reaches of Cedar Creek and Boulder Creek (above the confluence with the San Diego River) support coastal sage scrub vegetation that supplies habitat for California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*), a federally listed threatened species. The decline in numbers and distribution of coastal California gnatcatcher and the listing of the taxon as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act has resulted primarily from the loss, fragmentation and adverse modification of habitat (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2001). This is the only large population of California gnatcatcher on the Cleveland National Forest and it is at the eastern edge of the species’ range. Eagle Peak contains designated critical habitat for the California Gnatcatcher.

There are also several stretches of high quality riparian woodland with populations of several wilderness-associated wildlife species including arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) (federally listed endangered). The national forest lands play an important role in protecting a large portion of the existing population of arroyo toad. Eagle Peak contains designated critical habitat for the Arroyo Toad.

Eagle Peak has been a nest site for golden eagle. Some of these populations have been displaced to undeveloped areas for protection and are dependent on habitat conditions within the San Diego River roadless area due to the expansion of urban development in the surrounding area.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek, and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Ladd Inventoried Roadless Area

Trabuco Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 5,300 acres Ladd Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in southern California on the northwest slope of the Santa Ana Mountains on the Trabuco Ranger District, Cleveland National Forest. The city of Corona is approximately three miles to the northeast and Los Angeles is about 40 miles to the northwest. Many southern Orange County communities are less than 20 miles from this unit.

Access to Ladd is from the Main Divide Road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 3S04 and through Silverado Canyon Road (NFSR 5S07), which requires crossing private land and where the Forest does not have authorization for public access. The Ladd Canyon Trail (7W04) starts at North Main Divide 0.5 miles from Eagle road junction and continues down to Ladd Springs. These system roads and trails supply limited opportunity for access and traveler transfer points to the unit.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Although chaparral is the dominant vegetation type, two unique plant communities also occur here: coastal sage scrub on the south-facing slopes and knobcone pine (*Pinus attenuata*) near Pleasants Peak. Along the creek edges at the bottom of the drainage, there are hardwoods and other conifers. Elevation ranges from approximately 1,500 to 4,000 feet above sea level.

Ladd Canyon (east and west forks) is the primary geographic feature in this roadless area. This roadless area is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland-Shrub-Coniferous Forest-Meadow Province.

Current uses of the area: There is no private land within the unit boundaries. Hiking, nature study, and photography occur near road corridors, Black Star Canyon Falls, and Ladd Canyon Spring. There is one unmaintained system trail in this unit (Ladd Canyon Trail) plus undetermined routes that need evaluation, including a former system road used as a trail.

The Pleasants Peak communication site is located in the northern boundary area along with an access road and 12kV distribution line (Pleasants Peak tap line) with a 20 foot right-of-way from Silverado Canyon to Pleasants Peak. The road and line are inside the unit.

Southern California Edison has a special use authorization for the Valley-Serrano 500 kV electric transmission line, with a 160 foot right-of-way for maintenance in accordance with the terms and conditions of their easement. Located in Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, T5S, and R7W, the Valley-Serrano line is readily visible and apparent within Ladd Canyon and motorized or mechanized (helicopter) access is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance of both the lines.

Marijuana grow sites have been found in drainages.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The steep, rugged canyons and chaparral landscape provide a natural-appearing backdrop to Orange County cities as well as the Silverado Canyon community to the south.
Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The serpentine rock outcrops and soils around Pleasants Peak support rare plant species and the southermmost knobcone pine (*Pinus attenuata*) stands in California. An isolated spring (Ladd) and seasonal waterfalls add diversity to this area.

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting Ladd is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost. The spread of invasive non-native species has also disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations. This area has naturalized species of plants such as introduced grasses and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*) along roads. However, there is low probability of additional or new species of noxious weeds being introduced into the interior. Volunteers assist with manual removal treatments along roads or trails.

This entire unit is within the Upper Santiago Creek which is rated as Functioning at Risk (1.8). Factors contributing for rating this watershed lower than functioning are water quality, aquatic habitat and biota, and road density. The area is the headwaters for Silverado Creek and consists of the forks of Leda Creek which is mapped with areas that are fish bearing and perennial. The area is generally steep and the soils are mapped as Exchequer series-Rock Outcrop complex with slopes generally 30 to 75%. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0).

See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf). Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. (The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.)

Night skies are affected by light from the adjacent metropolitan area. Fuels treatments along the North Main Divide Road lie inside Ladd. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

**Undeveloped:** Ladd is a steep, undeveloped, unroaded area on the west slope of the Santa Ana Mountains. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is High in most of the unit. Most of the area is presently undisturbed, but management activities may dominate the ridgeline between Ladd Canyon and Baker Canyon (assigned Scenic Integrity Objective is Moderate) and development within and immediately adjacent to this unit diminishes the overall scenic integrity of the area.

There are approximately 2.47 miles of roads, approximately: 0.60 miles of Forest System Road 3S04B (access to communication site), 1.68 miles of undetermined routes (one of these is the...
former 5S03), 1.68 miles associated with access to water use, 0.68 miles of Forest Development Trail (Ladd Canyon Trail 7W04), and 2.81 miles of undetermined trail routes.

Opportunities: Relative to other areas within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province, Ladd has a low capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized except for the area south of the 500 kV utility corridor that is managed as Roaded Natural.

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation that currently take place here are hiking, hunting, and some equestrian use. Although this area is inherently capable of supporting three of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest, viewing natural features, relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12), opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited by the lack of an established trail network and surrounding private lands. Primitive camping is prohibited.

Opportunities for solitude and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of developments and other evidence of humans are limited due to the location, physiography, orientation, and the scope and scale of development within and adjacent to the area. The sound of air traffic is noticeable throughout Ladd. Although within a rapidly growing urbanized region, with development and infrastructure readily apparent from some locations, the topography and dense vegetation give an impression of remoteness from other locations.

Primitive routes within Ladd currently offer a high degree of adventure and challenge and the North Main Divide supplies opportunities for traveler transfer. A short unmaintained route leads from the North Main Divide Road to Ladd Canyon Spring. The hike to the spring is rated moderate. No Forest Service system trails access the interior of the unit. A cross-country trip requires substantial bushwhacking. Another primitive route accesses Black Star Canyon Falls on the west side of the unit requires crossing private land (no public access). Boulder-hopping, bushwhacking, and moderate hands-and-feet scrambling are required to reach the falls. A strenuous hike over difficult terrain is required (Schad 1988, p.66, 68). However, elsewhere within Ladd the vegetation is regarded as impenetrable, and opportunities for adventure and challenge are low. Travel through mature chaparral is almost impossible without the benefit of a trail (Schad 1988, p.5).

Special features and values: The serpentine rock outcrops and soils around Pleasants Peak support rare plant species and the southernmost knobcone pine (Pinus attenuata) stands in California. The knobcone pine population is identified as a locally rare community. This area supports plants that have adapted to the unique chemistry of serpentine-derived soils including knobcone pine (Pinus attenuata), dwarf soaproot (Chlorogalum pomeridianum) and a minor component of bigcone Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga macrocarpa). An idiosyncratic mix of chaparral species, serpentine barrens, and outcrops of anorthosite (a very rare type of metamorphic rock) are located within Ladd [1] (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999. pg. 55, 41, 60). These features (serpentine outcrops) comprise one of 12 rare ecological communities identified in the Mountauns and Foothills Assessment area. This combination offers unique opportunities for scientific study, both formal and informal, in a manner that is compatible with wilderness (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.41, 55, 59, 60). (See biotic discussion under Need.)

There are several populations of native rare plants in this area including intermediate Mariposa lily (Calochortus weedii v. intermedius) and heart-leaved pitcher sage (Lepechinia cardiophylla).
Description of size and shape: The Santa Ana Mountains are the westernmost extension of the Peninsular Range and are largely surrounded by urbanization. The 5,300 acre Ladd Inventoried Roadless Area barely meets the 5000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act.

The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Ladd could be considered manageable but there would be moderate administrative challenges as described in this evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability.” In addition, the juxtaposition of the unit to private lands (and associated growth) may increasingly challenge management. The ability of the Forest Service to manage this area as an enduring resource of wilderness that is untrammeled by man and that retains its primeval character is low to moderate.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Some of the western edge of Ladd has been surveyed. There is a high potential for encroachments on the southern boundary of this area. Approximately 50 to 100 existing encroachments have been reported.

The boundaries are not readily recognizable on the ground, although they loosely conform to the Ladd Canyon drainage and the crest of the Santa Ana Mountains, including Pleasants Peak and Bedford Peak. The north and northeastern boundaries parallel the north Main Divide Road (NFSR 3S04) and the southeastern boundary parallels the Silverado Motorway (NFSR 5S03). Half of the Ladd boundary is accessible from roads. The Main Divide Road supplies adequate opportunity for access to the area and traveler transfer points could be developed.

To be more manageable, boundaries would need to exclude power lines (including access) or legislative language would need to allow for operation and maintenance of the power lines. This would also apply to any other valid special use infrastructure, which may include a short road segment and water use in the southwest of the area that needs evaluation.

Regardless of boundary modifications, the potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses along the boundary of this roadless area is high. There is an existing communication site under special use permit on Pleasants Peak as well as a power line and access road. There is a possibility of encroachment involving both activities and structures. If the area should be proposed for wilderness, the boundary should be described to ensure that the Pleasants Peak communication site as well as powerline and road are outside. The utility line and road could be cherry stemmed.

Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 626 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 662 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 3,073 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 940 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Ladd. Recreation opportunities include day hiking and viewing natural features, primarily on the short, unmaintained trail to Ladd Springs. Opportunities are limited due to lack of trail system. Primitive camping is prohibited.
Other resource demands and uses that this area could satisfy include a full spectrum of recreation experiences including mountain biking, developed recreation and competitive events.

Some nonconforming use within the unit (unauthorized off highway vehicle or 4-wheel drive use originating from the Main Divide Road corridor) has been reported. Barriers have been installed to discourage this use.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: See also “Special Features and Values” in the Capability section. Management needs could include treatment of invasive non-native species in priority habitat area.

Water availability and use: Several west-facing drainages (Ladd Canyon) of the central Santa Ana Mountains are included in this unit. A potential water use (and access road) requiring evaluation are located in this unit.

Livestock operations: None.

Timber: The Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero; vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber. Thinning of a small stand of Coulter pine for fuels and forest health reasons may be proposed in the future.

Minerals: There are an unknown number of mineral claims, but no active mining in this unit.

Cultural resources: Only the road corridors in the area have been surveyed for heritage resources; however, the likelihood of finding heritage resources is limited due to the steep topography.

Authorized and potential land uses: The Forest Land Management Plan has designated the Valley/Serrano Utility Corridor, which is 12 miles long and ¼ mile wide. Approximately two miles of this corridor bisects the southern portion of Ladd.

There is a 500 kV power line (Valley-Serrano Line) in the southern part of Ladd and a 12 kV power line (with road) that bisects the area. These structures require maintenance and are readily visible and apparent from within the unit. Motorized or mechanized (helicopter) access is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance of both the lines. In addition, the Southern California Edison utility line expansion within the corridor is a potential future demand.

Pleasants Peak communication site is located in the northern boundary area. Inside the unit is an access road and 12kV distribution line (Pleasants Peak tap line) with a 20 foot right-of-way from Silverado Canyon to Pleasants Peak. The road and line features require maintenance and are non-conforming with designated wilderness.

A potential gravity feed water conveyance project (Central Pool Augmentation Project) connecting from Lake Mathews to a treatment plant in Orange County may be proposed by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) in the future. Initial plans were for one 19’ diameter tunnel mined at maximum depths of approximately 2,500 feet involving nearly six miles of National Forest System (NFS) lands. Entrance and exit portal locations were proposed on non-NFS lands. Without a site specific proposal it is not possible to know exact tunnel location or if it would be proposed below this unit but this is a possible future use. There is potential for the water tunnel to be combined in highway tunnel.
Two separate expressway tunnels linking Riverside and Orange counties (east to west Cajalco Road to the SR-241/SR-133 exchange) approximately 15 miles in length through the Santa Ana Mountains including nearly seven miles of National Forest System land (Irvine-Corona Expressway Project) may be proposed by Riverside and Orange Counties. The anticipated tunnel mined diameter would be 50 feet with an approximate maximum depth of 1,500 feet. Without a site specific proposal it is not possible to know exact tunnel location or if it would be proposed below this unit but this is a possible future use. Surface and underground effects would be expected.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: A portion of the land included in this study, including the 500kV utility corridor, is committed for use, purposes, and activities not in concert with the requirements of the Wilderness Act.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire (fire use) may be required in this area. Management options here include motorized/mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuelbreaks) under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes of reducing unnatural fuels accumulation or other objectives such as habitat improvement, and mechanical/motorized maintenance of community defense zones.

Current management includes law enforcement activities which may utilize motorized and/or mechanized equipment. In addition, site cleanup and restoration of illegal marijuana grow site infrastructure may be considered.

Current use of transportation systems outside the wilderness would not change as a result of designation. Additional access and traveler transfer facilities may be required in the future. These facilities would be compatible with other management needs.

Managers may want to use mechanized equipment and/or pesticides to address vegetation disease or nonnative invasive species. Pesticides are allowed in designated wilderness when necessary to protect or restore significant resource values. Likewise, mechanized equipment may be considered; however, there would be increased project complexity.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The 38,484 acre San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is located about 15 miles southeast of this area within the southern part of the Trabuco District. Other wilderness that is within the California Coastal Range Ecological Province are the Agua Tibia (17,979 acres), Hauser (7,547 acres), Pine Creek (13,480 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,248 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM - 18,500 acres).

The 8,300 acre Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, 8,000 acre Ronald W. Casper’s Wilderness Park, 6,600 acre Irvine Ranch canyon reserves, and the 4,000 acre National Audubon Society Starr Ranch are also located in the general vicinity and are similar to wilderness although
not managed by State or Federal agencies and some motorized and mechanized uses are permitted.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly in Orange County, and wilderness use is predicted to increase. Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light; however, some of the areas within the province experience moderate to high day use.

Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded, rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Chavez 1993a, 1993b).

An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use: the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours. Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.10, 12).

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The Trabuco Ranger District supplies some opportunity for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences, particularly for nearby Orange County and Riverside County residents. Most of the Trabuco Ranger District outside of the roaded, developed areas supports unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. There are large blocks of area managed to supply Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized recreation experiences, including most of the nearby inventoried roadless areas (Trabuco and Coldwater). Although the management objectives for maintenance of the recreation setting support a natural appearing landscape (scenic integrity objective is high), management activities are allowed to dominate the ridgeline in the Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area and the Valley Serrano power line bisects the Coldwater Inventoried Roadless Area (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1986b).

Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (USDA Forest Service 1992).

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The Santa Ana Mountains are the westernmost extension of the Peninsular Range and are largely surrounded by urbanization. Ladd is one of a few remaining unroaded, undeveloped areas that has the potential to link the San Diego Ranges, the Santa Rosa Plateau, the Santa Ana Mountains, Chino Hills State Park, the canyon reserves of Irvine Ranch, and other open space reserves to the north and to the west.

Ladd may support wilderness-associated species as well as species adapted to more modified environments. In general, as development pressures increase on private lands, public wild lands increasingly serve as core refugia for native habitats and species. Individual landowners, government agencies, and non-profit groups are engaged in planning efforts to create habitat reserves for maintaining biodiversity in this rapidly developing area. The need for corridor connections (such as in Ladd) from existing and newly created habitat reserves and the
remaining undeveloped public lands is essential (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.2, 6, 7).

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

No Name Inventoried Roadless Area

Descanso Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 4,897 acre No Name Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located approximately twenty five miles east of the city of San Diego and lies in the foothills of the Peninsular Mountain Range. The unit is on the northern edge of the Descanso Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest. There are several locations around the border of No Name where other lands (Capitan Grande Indian Reservation and private) are contiguous.

This is a remote area due to access constraints. No Name is bordered by Boulder Creek National Forest System Road (NFSR 13S08) on the east side. There are no designated trails, into the unit off this access route. No Name is also bordered by Tule Springs Road (NFSR 14S07) on the north and west. There is no authorized public access because some portions of these roads cross private land.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The topography is composed of generally steep-sloping hills and mountains ranging in elevation from 2,500-3,500 feet. No Name lies within the upper San Diego River watershed and contributes to municipal water supplies in the region.

Current uses of the area: Equestrian, scenic viewing, hiking, hunting, photography, and primitive camping recreation opportunities occur here. Hunting, which used to occur to a limited degree in this area, has increased greatly with the introduction of feral pigs to the area. There has been intense hunting pressure here in recent years due to increased accessibility after the 2003 Cedar Fire and the quality of the pig habitat in the area.

The combination of the Cedar Fire and introduction of feral pigs has also led to an increase in illegal motorized vehicle use. And there has been an increase in the number of unauthorized motorized trails created. Scientific and educational values are currently constrained by lack of access.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The No Name Inventoried Roadless Area is natural appearing with inherent capability for a wide range of experiential benefits including solitude (that can be interrupted from the sounds of low flying aircraft both military and private), awareness and adventure. In the future, however, the remoteness of the area and the opportunities for solitude may be compromised by its size and the development of adjacent lands. No Name lies within the upper San Diego River watershed and contributes to municipal water supplies in the region. It encompasses rugged terrain, oak woodlands, mixed-chaparral, and supports rare and vulnerable plant and animal species.

Capability

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The
principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order
of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** No Name is a very remote area due to limited access, location and
topography. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

There are existing roadbeds along and within the unit boundary that were once part of the Forest
transportation system. Although there is no designated public access, these roads continue to be
utilized by motorized vehicles from the surrounding landowners. This use is interrupting the
interplay of biotic species, negatively impacting the experience of remoteness and solitude, and
creating additional negative impacts to the watershed. Additional unauthorized routes are being
created off the existing roadbeds.

There are no dams, water diversions or impoundments that degrade the free-flowing condition of
streams. The water quality is being negatively impacted by illegal vehicle use and the existence
of feral pigs. Vegetation removal from these activities is increasing sedimentation into streams.

The introduction and spread of feral pigs starting in the San Diego River and spreading along
tributaries such as Conejos Creek has and will continue to promote the spread of non-native
plants and affect the biota of this area unless management action is taken to reduce these
impacts. Feral pigs and the opportunity to hunt them will likely invite the continued and
unauthorized access by motorized vehicles.

Populations of naturalized terrestrial invasive species are established in this area along road
boundaries and private or developed lands and within range allotments. The potential risk for
new populations or species is moderate.

There are exiting home and ranch developments in close proximity to the eastern and northern
boundaries of the unit. The Capitan Grande Indian Reservation borders No Name on the western
and southern boundaries. The Capitan Grande Indian Reservation owns and operates a casino in
close proximity to the unit. The degree to which No Name is shielded from lights, sights and
sounds of civilization is determined by your location within the unit.

The No Name Inventoried Roadless Area is contained within two watersheds: El Capitan
Reservoir-San Diego River rated as Functioning at Risk (1.9) and Conejos Creek rated as
Functioning Properly (1.1). El Capitan Reservoir-San Diego River watershed was rated lower
due to issues with terrestrial invasive species, soil erosion and contamination, water flow
characters, and aquatic habitat fragmentation. No Name does not contain significant number of
miles of mapped perennial streams or fish-bearing streams. Most of the unit is characterized by
intermittent and ephemeral stream channels networks. Soils mapped included Fallbrook sandy
loam, Cienieba rocky sandy loam, and Visalia sandy loams in lower gradient depositional areas.
(Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC)
using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6),
Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0).

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads
and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity
(development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on
aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

Undeveloped: There are approximately 1.9 miles of Tule Springs Road (NFSR 14S07) within the unit where it serves as the boundary between the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area. There are approximately 1.65 miles of temporary roads associated with San Diego Gas and Electric 69kV transmission lines. Needed maintenance roads will be included under the special use permit as a part of the master permit planning process. There are approximately 4.27 miles of undetermined roads in the area that were decommissioned following 2003 Cedar Fire, but some have been re-opened and need re-evaluation. There are approximately 2.64 miles of undetermined trail routes that require evaluation.

As a result of the Cedar Fire, the dense brush that once made this area difficult to access is now substantially thinner and allows for a significantly increased use by unauthorized motor vehicle use due the moderate development along the boundary of the unit. This creates an appearance less remote and undeveloped.

Opportunities: No Name is natural appearing with inherent capability for a wide range of experiential benefits including solitude, awareness, and adventure. In the future, however, the remoteness of the area and the opportunities for solitude may be compromised by its size and the development of adjacent lands.

Relative to other places within the California Coastal Range, No Name has a medium inherent capability for supplying primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as day-use hiking, wildlife and wildflower viewing, photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, relaxation and respite from urban life.

Special features and values: The inherent capability of this area to supply outdoor education and scientific study is comparable to the rest of the Upper San Diego River watershed but is currently limited due to lack of access and information about both the cultural and biological diversity of the area. No special scenic features have been identified.

None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources although a few cultural features have been located at the stream confluences. Many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops on nearby lands just outside the Forest boundary. Culturally sensitive plants occur in the area and are gathered today by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

The geology and botanical composition provide an opportunity for scientific study and educational value. However, this opportunity is constrained due to the lack of access.

Description of size and shape: The 4,897 acre No Name Inventoried Roadless Area is not of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. However, it is contiguous with and could be combined with the neighboring Eagle Peak unit and managed as a whole. The No Name boundaries are not recognizable on the ground nor do they conform to the terrain or other natural features. There is an appearance of a moderate amount of development along the borders of the unit.

No Name is separated from Eagle Peak unit by Tule Springs Road - NFSR 14S07, an unimproved (maintenance level 1) road that is currently available with land owner permission on
a case-by-case basis for administrative access. Tule Springs Road is not maintained for travel by a standard passenger-type vehicle and public access is prohibited.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: The potential for conflict with existing public uses outside the boundary of No Name is high. Because of the moderate development outside the boundary of the unit and the inherent nature of landowners to consider the back country open to motorized vehicles, boundary modifications would probably not reduce the impact of motorized vehicles.

There is a San Diego Gas and Electric power line and road under Forest Service special use permit. The unit boundary could be modified on the eastern edge to exclude the impaired visual quality that currently exists with San Diego Gas and Electrics power line.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire may be required in this area.

The success of managing No Name to retain its Back Country Non-Motorized character has been low and will most likely continue. The scenery management objectives vary from somewhat protective, where management activities are noticeable but subordinate to the natural character, to virtually unprotected, where management activities can dominate the landscape (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1986b). The potential for the Forest Service to manage this land as an enduring resource of wilderness is low.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 210 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 924 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 3,527 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 236 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: No Name has limited recreational use due to difficult access. Popular recreation activities within the Cleveland National Forest, viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, equestrian, hiking and walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12), could potentially take place here. Hunting, which used to occur to a limited degree in this area, has increased greatly with the introduction of feral pigs to the area. The demand for hunting will increase as long as these pigs continue to flourish.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: The vegetation types are oak woodlands and mixed-chaparral, and supports rare and vulnerable plant and animal species. The San Diego Ranges have been identified as one of the key ecological areas in the region (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335). The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost. Feral pigs were introduced on adjacent private land. The spread of invasive non-native species is beginning to disrupt this interplay in some locations.

Ramona horkelia (Horkelia truncate) is a Forest Service sensitive plant species located in this area. Approximately 40 occurrences are known, most of which are on public lands. The
mountains and foothills of San Diego County contain a large number of rare species and habitats. Public lands and habitat reserves are patchily distributed in the San Diego ranges. As development intensifies, far-sighted planning is needed to ensure that habitat connectivity is maintained between the mountains and the remaining natural areas in the coastal and inland valleys (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p. 335).

Species adapted to more modified environments as well as some wilderness-associated wildlife includes the southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*) and coastal rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*). They are found within the No Name roadless area. Maintenance of unroaded, non-motorized conditions is one means of meeting the needs of these species.

**Water availability and use:** There are no perennial rivers, streams or lakes within No Name. The drainages are ephemeral in nature, with the length of time water is available within these drainages depending upon rainfall totals. The largest rainfall totals occur annually between January and March.

**Livestock operations:** There is a history of livestock grazing within the boundaries of No Name. However, there are currently no livestock operations occurring here.

**Timber:** There are no forested areas within No Name and thus no timber production. The vegetation type is chaparral and oak woodlands.

**Minerals:** There are no active mining claims in this unit.

**Cultural resources:** None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources although a few cultural features have been located at the stream confluences. These features include resource collection and processing elements associated with the traditional ancestral territory of the Kumeyaay people. Many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops on nearby lands just outside the Forest boundary.

Culturally sensitive plants occur in the area and are gathered today by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

**Authorized and potential land uses:** San Diego Gas & Electric has a special use permit for the Boulder Creek electric transmission line (a 12 kV electric distribution line) and the 12 kV West Cuyamaca distribution line with a 30-foot wide right-of-way for brush clearance and road maintenance in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. This activity is not in concert with the requirements of the Wilderness Act.

This segment of the line has become more readily visible as pole replacement occurred and improvements to access roads and width of brush clearance along the pole line have increased since the 2003 wildfires. Motorized and mechanized access is necessary along the pole lines for emergencies as well as routine operation and maintenance of the line.

The Final EIS/EIR for the Sunrise Powerlink Project identified for all southern routes Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500 kV future transmission lines. One of the three routes noted as most likely for future transmission lines is the Route D Alternative corridor. Additional 230 kV and/or 500kV circuits could be proposed to follow this corridor to the north of Descanso, crossing No Name and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas as
well as the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek Undeveloped Areas. As illustrated in the Final EIS, the corridor falls outside of the boundary of Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area but appears to fall within approximately ¼ to one mile of its north and east IRA boundary. In the Final EIS, San Diego Gas and Electric indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. There are no specific proposals at this time.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: The designation of this area as wilderness would limit the future range of uses, management alternatives, and techniques. With certain exceptions, motorized equipment, structures, installations, roads, commercial enterprises, aircraft landings, and mechanical transport would be prohibited. Other resource demands and uses that could be satisfied include a full spectrum of recreation experiences.

Diverse kinds of off-road recreation, mountain biking, competitive events, road construction, new administrative site development, developed recreation opportunities, and commercial communication site and utility corridor development are some of the demands that could potentially be developed in this area if access is secured.

Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuel breaks) under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and mechanical/motorized maintenance of community defense zones are management options with applicability to No Name. Road corridors (roaded-fuel breaks) supply the means to supply adequate fire protection to adjacent private property and reservation lands. Potential uses include mountain biking, but recreation opportunities are currently limited due to the lack of public access.

Designation would not change use on transportation systems outside the wilderness. This area is currently zoned for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized land use in the Forest Land Management Plan. There is currently no access to roads and trails within the unit. However, if No Name were to be combined with the Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area any potential future motorized and mechanized use on Tule Springs Road would be forfeited, although existing transportation systems outside the units would continue to support motorized/mechanized travel in the general area. Unless easements for public access can be acquired, new trail and trailhead developments may be required. Required facilities would be compatible with other management needs.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildnesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: There is no other Forest wilderness in the immediate vicinity. Pine Creek (13,480 acres) and Hauser (7,547 acres) are located 10 to 15 miles away on the southern part of the Ranger District. The 17,979 acre Agua Tibia Wilderness is located about 35 miles to the north on the northern part of the Palomar District. Other wilderness areas that are within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the San Mateo Canyon (38,484 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,637 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM - 18,500 acres). The BLM and state of California also manage other wilderness areas in southern California including Fishcreek Mountain (25,940 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (35,080 acres), Coyote Mountains
(17,000 acres), Carrizo Gorge (15,700 acres), Jacumba (33,670 acres) Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/San Bernardino National Forest - 78,127 acres) and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. This wilderness exemplifies the American Semi-desert and Desert Ecosystem Province (Bailey 1995, p.56-58, 68-70, Miles and Goudey 1997, p.131 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Population growth and urbanization have increased significantly over the last ten years in San Diego County and has increased the demand for wilderness. However, visitor pressure at other wilderness in southern California is considered light.

Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded, rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Chavez 1993a, 1993b). An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use: the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours. Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.10, 12).

Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1992).

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The management objectives assigned to the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek undeveloped areas and Eagle Peak and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas support unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. These surrounding areas are likewise managed to supply semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation experiences except for the Cedar Creek unit. However, the Upper San Diego River and Sill Hill units have higher visual quality standards than those assigned to No Name. Eagle Peak and parts of No Name currently have scenic integrity objectives that allow for management activities that dominate the landscape (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b).

In general, remote camping is allowed in backcountry areas of the Descanso Ranger District except for the Laguna Recreation Area. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also offers some opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands are located to the south of the Ranger District and supply primitive camping, hiking, and backpacking opportunities. Non-wilderness parts of Anza Borrego Desert State Park supply unconfined outdoor recreation opportunities within a desert ecosystem (i.e. the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Provinces).

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: In general, freshwater aquatic habitats are uncommon in coastal southern California and most have been substantially modified by altered stream flows. The middle and lower portions of these streams, typically found at elevations below 3,000 feet, support a high
number of rare and vulnerable riparian species—such sections of streams that are in a relatively unmodified state are particularly important (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.35-38). Conejos Creek and Sand Creek contain some riparian areas within this range and have the potential to support species displaced by human activities elsewhere.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Area

Palomar and Descanso Ranger Districts

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 5,294 acre Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in southern California on the western slopes of the Cuyamaca Mountains. The boundary lies within the Palomar and Descanso Ranger Districts of the Cleveland National Forest. The unit is located approximately six miles south of Julian and approximately 35 northeast of San Diego. Sill Hill shares its eastern boundary with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and contains the 750 acre King Creek Research Natural Area (RNA).

Sill Hill is reached from Boulder Creek Road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 13S08. Access from the top (east) through the State Park is for administrative use only.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The topography is composed of gently rolling terrain to rugged, steep canyon mountains. Elevation ranges from 3,500-5,000 feet above sea level. Sill Hill lies within the Upper San Diego River watershed and contributes to municipal water supplies in the region. The headwaters of King Creek lie within. This unit is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland—Shrub—Coniferous Forest—Meadow Ecosystem Province.

Current uses of the area: Current recreation use includes equestrian, scenic viewing, hiking, hunting, photography and primitive camping. There are vegetation treatments such as thinning and reforestation in this unit. Electric transmission and distribution lines (and associated right-of-way) are authorized.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of Sill Hill is one of a steep, rugged landscape with forest vegetation at the higher elevation. It is adjacent to other roadless areas to the north and south. There are existing home and ranch developments in close proximity to the western and southern boundaries of Sill Hill. The Capitan Grande Indian Reservation is just a few miles to the west and the community of Sherilton Valley borders the unit on the south.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Sill Hill is a very remote area due to limited access, location, and topography. There are no designated trails within the unit. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit. There are no dams, water diversions, or impoundments that degrade the free-flowing condition of streams.
This area has low to moderate risk for new invasive species. Naturalized species of invasives exist on the boundaries with developed areas and roads and fire suppression activities. However, the interiors are more protected in this relatively remote and natural location.

The introduction and spread of feral pigs within the San Diego River and spreading along tributaries such as Conejos Creek has and will continue to promote the spread of non-native plants and affect the biota of this area unless management action is taken to reduce these impacts. Feral pigs and the opportunity to hunt them will likely invite the continued and unauthorized access by motorized vehicles.

The eastern portions of Sill Hill include Boulder Creek (Functioning Properly, (1.6)) and the Conejos Creek (Functioning Properly, (1.1)) watersheds. Both watersheds are considered in good shape with minor issues due to terrestrial invasive species, forest health, and aquatic habitat fragmentation lower in the watershed. The unit contains mapped perennial and fish bearing waters as well as areas of important riparian habitat. Mapped soils are generally Tollhouse rocky coarse sandy loam and Sheephead rocky fine sandy loam. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

Undeveloped: The dense brush and timber that once made this area difficult to access prior to the 2003 Cedar Fire is now substantially thinner and thus allows for a significant increase in unauthorized motor vehicle use. This is also in part due to the moderate development along the boundary of the unit leading to the creation of an appearance less remote and undeveloped.

There are no National Forest System trails in Sill Hill; there are approximately: 6.6 miles of undetermined roads in the area. Most (approximately 4.7) were decommissioned following Cedar Fire. Approximately 1.9 miles associated with Cuyamaca Peak power line access are currently being evaluated, 0.93 miles of temporary roads, 0.04 miles is under permit to access private land, 0.1 miles require evaluation, and 0.8 miles accesses 69kV transmission line.

There are existing permitted roads within Sill Hill for the purpose of the operation and maintenance of a San Diego Gas and Electric line. There is also evidence of old road scars within the area. Although there are no authorized motor vehicle routes within the unit these roads continue to be utilized by vehicles. This use is interrupting the interplay of biotic species and negatively impacting the experience of remoteness and solitude.

Opportunities: Sill Hill is natural appearing with inherent capability for a wide range of experiential benefits including solitude (that can be interrupted from the sounds of low flying aircraft both military and private), awareness, educational experiences from visiting King Creek RNA and adventure. In the future, however, the remoteness of the area and the opportunities for solitude may be compromised by its size and the development of adjacent lands.
Relative to other places within the California Coastal Range, Sill Hill has a medium inherent capability for supplying primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as day-use hiking, wildlife and wildflower viewing, photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, relaxation and respite from urban life.

There are existing developments to the west and south of Sill Hill. The degree to which this unit is shielded from lights and the sounds and sights of civilization is determined by your location.

**Special features and values:** The inherent capability of this area to supply outdoor education and scientific study is comparable to the rest of the Upper San Diego River watershed but is currently limited due to lack of access and information about both the cultural and biological diversity of the area. No special scenic features have been identified.

None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources although a few cultural features have been located at the stream confluences. These features include resource collection and processing elements associated with the traditional ancestral territory of the Kumeyaay people. Many heritage sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops on adjacent lands outside the unit and Forest boundary.

The geology and botanical composition provide an opportunity for scientific study and educational value. Several rare plant populations exist in this area including Cuyamaca Cypress, Orcutt’s Brodiaea, and Dunn’s mariposa lily. The establishment of the King Creek Research Natural Area (RNA) was established to protect the rare and sensitive Cuyamaca cypress and allow for non-manipulative observation, research, and ecological study.

The Sill Hill Waterfall is a destination point for many backpackers and hikers.

**Description of size and shape:** The 5,294 acre Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Area is of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition, in part because it is contiguous with wilderness in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

The success of managing Sill Hill to retain its Back Country Non-Motorized character has been low. The scenery management objectives vary from somewhat protective, where management activities are noticeable but subordinate to the natural character, to virtually unprotected, where management activities can dominate the landscape (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1986b). The potential for the Forest Service to manage this land as an enduring resource of wilderness is high.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** The Sill Hill boundaries are not recognizable on the ground nor do they conform to the terrain or other natural features. There is an appearance of a moderate amount of development along the borders of the unit. The potential for conflict with existing public uses outside the boundary of this unit is high. Because of the moderate development outside the boundary modifications would probably not reduce the impact of motorized vehicles with Sill Hill.

There is a San Diego Gas and Electric power line and road under Forest permit. Adjusting the boundary to exclude the impaired visual quality that currently exists with San Diego Gas and Electrics power line is probably not possible.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of
mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire may be considered in this area.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 219 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 4,373 acres, Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 197 acres, and Critical Biological (CB)- 506 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Sill Hill experiences limited recreational use due to difficult access. Popular recreation activities within the Cleveland National Forest, viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, equestrian, hiking and walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12) could potentially occur here. Hunting, which used to occur to a limited degree in this area, has increased with the introduction of feral pigs to the area as well as the increased accessibility to the land after the 2003 wildfires. As long as these pigs continue to flourish the demand for hunting will increase.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Boulder Creek, which is within the unit, contains coastal rosy boas (Lichamura trivirgata roseofusca) and coast horned lizards (Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii). The remoteness of this area and its general unroaded condition has allowed these species to compete with increasing public use and development that affects their habitats elsewhere.

The King Creek Research Natural Area contains Forest Service sensitive species including: Cuyamaca cypress (Cupressus stephensonii), Dunn’s mariposa lily (Calochortus dunnii), Orcutt’s bordiaea (Brodiaea orcuttii), and Cuyamaca larkspur (Delphinium hesperium ssp. cuyamacae). The RNA status adequately provides for protection of these habitats. Provision for roadless but non-wilderness land-use categories is an alternative to potential wilderness recommendation.

The vegetation types are mixed conifer and Cuyamaca Cypress on the steeper slopes and mixed chaparral throughout the remaining unit. The San Diego Ranges have been identified as one of the key ecological areas in the region (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335). The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost.

Feral pigs that were introduced into the San Diego River and are impacting the No Name Inventoried Roadless Area are spreading up King Creek and Boulder Creek within Sill Hill and beginning to impact the environment. The spread of invasive non-native species from these feral pigs will begin to disrupt this biota interplay in some locations. This will continue until management action is taken.

Water availability and use: King Creek and Boulder Creek are within the Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Area. The drainages are ephemeral in nature and the length of time water is available within these drainages depends on rainfall totals. Largest rainfall totals occur annually between January and March.
Livestock operations: There is a history of livestock grazing within the boundaries of the unit. There are currently no livestock operations occurring within Sill Hill.

Timber: The area is diverse in tree species; Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, coulter pine and white fir. The rare and sensitive Cuyamaca cypress exists within Sill Hill. There is no commercial timber activity.

Minerals: There are no active mining claims in this unit.

Cultural resources: None of the area has been surveyed for heritage resources although a few cultural features have been located at the stream confluences. These features include resource collection and processing elements associated with the traditional ancestral territory of the Kumeyaay people. Many sites have been recorded along the streams and on the mesas and mountaintops on nearby lands just outside the Forest boundary. Culturally sensitive plants occur in the area and are gathered today by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

Authorized and potential land uses: San Diego Gas and Electric has a special use permit for the Boulder Creek electric transmission line (a 12 kV electric distribution line) and the 12 kV West Cuyamaca distribution line with a 30-foot wide right-of-way for brush clearance and road maintenance in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. This activity is not in concert with the requirements of the Wilderness Act. This segment of the line has become more readily visible since the 2003 wildfires as pole replacement occurred and improvements to access roads and width of brush clearance along the pole line have increased. Motorized and mechanized access is necessary along the pole lines for emergencies as well as routine operation and maintenance of the line.

The Final EIS/EIR for the Sunrise Powerlink Project identified for all southern routes Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500kV future transmission lines. One of the three routes noted as most likely for future transmission lines is the Route D Alternative corridor. Additional 230 and/or 500kV circuits could be proposed to follow this corridor to the north of Descanso, crossing No Name and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas, as well as the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek Undeveloped Areas. As illustrated in the Final EIS, the corridor falls outside of the boundary of the Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Area but appears to fall within approximately ¼ to one mile of its north and east of the unit boundary. In the Final EIS, San Diego Gas and Electric indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. There are no specific proposals at this time.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: The designation of this area as wilderness would limit the future range of uses, management alternatives, and techniques. With certain exceptions, motorized equipment, structures, installations, roads, commercial enterprises, aircraft landings, and mechanical transport would be prohibited. Other resource demands and uses that could be satisfied include a full spectrum of recreation experiences.

Diverse kinds of off-road recreation, mountain biking, competitive events, road construction, new administrative site development, developed recreation opportunities, and commercial communication site and utility corridor development are some of the demands that could potentially be developed in this area if access is secured.

Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuelbreaks) under normal (non-
emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and mechanical/motorized maintenance of community defense zones are management options with applicability to No Name. Road corridors (roaded fuel breaks) supply the means to supply adequate fire protection to adjacent private property and reservation lands. Potential uses include mountain biking but most recreation opportunities are currently limited due to the lack of public access.

Designation would not change use on transportation systems outside the wilderness. This part of the Forest is currently zoned for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized use in the Land Management Plan. There is currently no access to roads and trails within Sill Hill.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildlinesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** There is no other Forest wilderness in the immediate vicinity. Pine Creek (13,480 acres) and Hauser (7,547 acres) are located 10 to 15 miles away on the southern part of the Ranger District. The 17,979 acre Agua Tibia Wilderness is located about 35 miles to the north on the northern part of the Palomar Ranger District. Other wilderness within the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province are the San Mateo Canyon (38,484 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,637 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM - 18,500 acres). The BLM and state of California also manage other wilderness areas in southern California including Fishcreek Mountain (25,940 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (35,080 acres), Coyote Mountains (17,000 acres), Carrizo Gorge (15,700 acres), Jacumba (33,670 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/San Bernardino National Forest - 78,127 acres) and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas exemplify the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Province (Bailey 1995, p.56-58, 68-70, Miles and Goudy 1997, p.131 to 13-16).

**Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Population growth and urbanization have increased significantly over the last ten years, in San Diego County, and has increased the demand for wilderness. However, visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is considered light.

Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded, rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Chavez 1993a, 1993b). An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use: the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours. Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.10, 12).

Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1992).
The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The management objectives assigned to the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek undeveloped areas and Eagle Peak and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas support unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. These surrounding areas are likewise managed to supply Back Country Non-Motorized recreation experiences except for Cedar Creek. However, the Upper San Diego River and Sill Hill have higher visual quality standards than those assigned to the No Name Inventoried Roadless Area. Eagle Peak and parts of No Name currently have scenic integrity objectives that allow for management activities that dominate the landscape (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b).

Remote camping is generally allowed in backcountry areas of the Descanso Ranger District except for the Laguna Recreation Area. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also offers some opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands are located to the south of the Ranger District and supply primitive camping, hiking, and backpacking opportunities. Non-wilderness parts of Anza Borrego Desert State Park supply unconfined outdoor recreation opportunities within a desert ecosystem (i.e. the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Province).

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The King Creek area of Sill Hill (and minor acreage in adjacent State Park) is home to the only United States population of Cuyamaca cypress, a vanishing relict species. The unique scientific values of the King Creek area are subject to certain protections by its Research Natural Area designation.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest

Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area

Trabuco Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 23,341 acre Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in southern California on the western slopes of the central Santa Ana Mountains, in the northern part of the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest.

Los Angeles is about 40 miles to the northwest of this area. Many southern Orange County communities (Mission Viejo, Laguna Beach, San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente) are less than 15 miles west of this part of the Trabuco Ranger District. Ronald W. Casper (Orange County) Wilderness Park and the 4,000 acre National Audubon Society Starr Ranch Sanctuary adjoin Trabuco on the southwest.

Trabuco can be accessed from the Main Divide Road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 3S04, Trabuco Canyon Road (NFSR 6S13), Blue Jay Campground, portions of the Ortega Highway and canyon communities on the western slope of the Santa Anas. Trailheads at Holy Jim, Falcon, Blue Jay, Upper San Juan and Hot Springs access the Holy Jim (6W03), Trabuco Canyon (6W04), San Juan (6W05), San Juan Loop (5W08), Los Pinos (6W06), Chiquito (6W07), Viejo Tie (6W09) and West Horsethief (6W11) Forest Development Trails. These roads and trails supply adequate opportunity for access and have traveler transfer points.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): This is primarily coastal foothills and lower montane landscape. Chaparral is the most common vegetation but the area is also characterized by oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub and corridors of riparian hardwood forest. Conifer/live oak forest and patches of big cone Douglas-fir also occur here. Elevation ranges from approximately 1,000 to 5,200 above sea level.

The major streams (Holy Jim, Trabuco Creek, Bell Canyon, and Hot Spring Canyon) sustain groves of live oaks, alders, bay laurels, big leaf maples, sycamores and ferns. This unit is characterized as the M262 California Coastal Range Open Woodland-Shrub-Coniferous Forest-Meadow Province.

Current uses of the area: A parcel of private land lies within this unit in Section 19. Parcels of private land are also adjacent to the western boundary. Marijuana grow sites have been found in many drainages.

Recreation use is relatively heavy. The area’s trails are used by hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. There is an annual competitive recreation event attended by approximately 300 competitors. Several other large events also include both long distance running and mountain biking.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The steep, rugged canyon landscapes of this unit provide a natural-appearing backdrop to developed Orange County communities. Developed areas and interface surround the Forest here, including along
the south boundary where Ortega Highway (State Highway 74 - a busy commuting corridor between Riverside and Orange Counties) is located.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** Higher elevations support rare and vulnerable animal species such as the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) and several unique botanic species. The 720 acre Chiquito Basin Botanical Special Interest Area is located in the eastern part of this area. Visitors are drawn to the area’s seasonal waterfalls including San Juan Falls, Holy Jim Falls, Chiquito Falls and several falls in Hot Spring Canyon. Lower Hot Spring Canyon contains Orange County’s best and tallest waterfall (Schad 1988, p.114).

**Capability**

The area's potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting Trabuco is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost.

Concentrated recreation use and the spread of invasive non-native plant and animal species have disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations. Invasive species in the San Juan Creek degrade habitat for endangered species. There are exotic bullfrogs present in the Trabuco and San Juan drainages. This area has naturalized invasive plants such as grasses along the road boundary lines and near recreation sites. In general, the risk of introduction of new noxious weeds is low to moderate depending on the elevation and proximity to development, roads or recreation. Invasive species eradication efforts have been implemented as mitigation associated with highway improvement project work. In addition, volunteers are currently engaged in manual removal treatments.

The Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area is contained in the Arroyo Trabuco (Functioning at Risk, 1.8)), Middle San Juan Creek (Functioning, 1.3), and Upper San Juan Creek (Functioning at Risk, 1.8)) watersheds. All ratings are based on evaluating Forest lands. This unit contains mapped perennial waters and fish bearing waters. Some attributes that were rated Functioning at Risk or Impaired Function in these watersheds are terrestrial species, habitat fragmentation, and native aquatic species presence. Mapped soils vary significantly over these watersheds. (Note: The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0).

See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf). Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.
Night skies are affected by light from the adjacent metropolitan area. The only fuels treatments to-date have been the roaded fuel break at Main Divide Road and up between El Cariso Village and Blue Jay Campground. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

Undeveloped: For the most part, this area has been successfully managed to retain a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized character within a natural appearing setting where management activities are not evident, although management activities are allowed to dominate trail corridors and ridgelines. The Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) is High in most of Trabuco except for some area in Falls and Bell Canyon where it is Moderate.

There are approximately 0.98 miles of road, including: 0.15 miles of road associated with a special use, 0.83 miles of undetermined routes requiring evaluation, 31.3 miles of Forest Development Trails (6W03, 6W04, 6W05, 6W06, 6W07, 6W09 and 6W11) and 3.39 miles of undetermined trail routes.

Opportunities: Relative to the California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province, Trabuco has a medium capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized. The Trabuco Canyon and Hot Springs areas immediately outside the unit are managed as Roaded Natural. Although Trabuco is within a rapidly urbanizing region it is large enough to seem remote and supplies moderate opportunities for solitude, and isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. Potential exposure to the sights and sounds of civilization (the Orange County metropolitan area) varies throughout the area and is dependent on location, geomorphology, and orientation. Special use permit communication sites on Modjeska Peak and Santiago Peak are readily visible and apparent from within the roadless area. The sound of air traffic is noticeable throughout Trabuco and the din of traffic on the Ortega Highway is noticeable from many locations.

Trabuco has moderate to high opportunities for adventure and challenge. Parts of the area are seemingly remote but relatively easily reached. An extensive system of dirt tracks (fire roads, fuel breaks, and abandoned roads) and several interconnected trails make it relatively easy for hikers and mountain bikers to get around. Access to the interior of the area requires high initiative and self-reliance. There are many trails and routes that are very challenging and suitable only for experienced hikers and mountain bikers in excellent condition. Several of the trails within this area are considered the best in Orange County. Lower Hot Spring Canyon offers the most strenuous and challenging mountain bike trail in Orange County. It is remote and accessible to only the most experienced hikers and mountain bikers and contains one of the best waterfalls in the county (Schad 1988, p.61, 77-79, 81-82, 85-87, 90-98, 114).

Recreation opportunities include day hiking and walking, picnicking, seasonal water play, wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, hunting, horseback riding (limited use), relaxation and respite from urban life. Mountain biking is popular in the unit. This unit is inherently capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest: viewing natural features, viewing wildlife, relaxing, and hiking/walking. In addition, backcountry driving is one of the five most popular recreation activities on the forest (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12). Primitive camping is prohibited.
Special features and values: This area has several populations of native rare plants including San Miguel savory (Satureja chandleri) and mesa horkelia (Horkelia cuneata ssp. Puberula).

The Chiquito Basin Botanical Area supports high-quality deer grass meadow, large stands of coast live oak riparian forest and the largest known population of San Miguel savory (Satureja chandleri), a Forest sensitive plant species (Winter and Davis 2001, p.15). Several trees occurring here are at or close to the southern end of their range, including bigleaf maple (Acer macrophyllum), California bay (Umbellularia Californica), and Pacific madrone (Arbutus menziesii Pursh) (restricted to a tiny area in upper Trabuco Canyon). Orange County’s biggest alder grove is also located within the Trabuco roadless area (Schad 1988, p.6, 81).

Trabuco also contains unique and important plant communities (high quality deergrass meadow, large stands of coast live oak riparian forest, chaparral, and sage scrub), rare plant species including Fish’s milkwort (Polygala cornuta var. fishiae), and the largest known and northernmost population of San Miguel savory (Satureja chandleri), a Forest sensitive species. There are an estimated 25 known occurrences of San Miguel savory on federal, state, and private lands. Occurrences in the Santa Ana Mountains and San Diego County appear stable, but the species may be vulnerable to horticultural collecting (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.316). Fish’s milkwort is a plant of limited distribution and is vulnerable to destruction of habitat and over-collecting (Winter and Davis 2001, p.16). Pockets of bigcone Douglas-fir and canyon live oak below the Main Divide are nesting areas for California spotted owls (Strix occidentalis occidentalis), a Forest sensitive species (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.191).

Other rare and vulnerable species found in the area include arroyo toad (Bufo californicus) (Federally listed Endangered), coastal rosy boas (Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca) (Forest Service Sensitive species), coast horned lizards (Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii) (California species of Special Concern and Forest Service Sensitive species), and Orange-throated whiptails (Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi) (California species of Concern) (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.136, 175, 180).

Scenic features include varied and colorful vegetation such as deciduous trees and wildflowers, steep canyons and unique rock formations, bird and wildlife watching opportunities, San Juan Falls, Holy Jim Falls, Chiquito Falls, and several falls in Hot Spring Canyon. Lower Hot Spring Canyon contains Orange County’s best and tallest waterfall (Schad 1988, p.114). These features contribute to the area’s capability.

Culturally sensitive plants are known to occur in the vicinity of the Trabuco IRA and are gathered by the Juaneño people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

The area’s capability to supply outdoor education is enhanced by its size as well as juxtaposition to a large urban population.

Description of size and shape: The Santa Ana Mountains are the westernmost extension of the Peninsular Range and are largely surrounded by urbanization. The Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area is the largest remaining unroaded unit outside of designated wilderness on the Cleveland National Forest. Trabuco is sufficient in size (23,320 acres) to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. It is size is second only to the existing 39,691 acre San Mateo Canyon Wilderness.

The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Trabuco could be considered manageable but there would be moderate to high administrative challenges as described in this
evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability.” In addition, the juxtaposition of the unit to private lands (and associated growth) may increasingly challenge management. The ability of the Forest to manage this area as an enduring resource of wilderness that is untrammeled by man and that retains its primeval character is medium.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** There have been some surveys on the southeast corner of the area but boundaries are not readily recognizable on the ground. The boundaries only loosely conform to San Juan Canyon, Santa Ana Mountain crest and Joplin Creek. The south, northeast, and northwest boundaries run parallel to Ortega Highway (State Highway 74), Main Divide Road, and Joplin Creek respectively. The boundaries within the unit parallel Trabuco Canyon Road. The San Juan River Canyon forms a barrier to some non-conforming motorized use.

The potential wilderness boundary should exclude the small areas due east and north of Section 19 private property to be more manageable. New housing development is expected in this private property, although it is possible that the westernmost part of Section 19 (near Chiquito Basin) may be acquired by the Forest. In that case, only the easternmost part would be further developed. The area to the north of Section 19 and near Long Canyon Road includes a special use road, water tank, power line and underground waterline. The boundary should ensure that any Forest administrative sites, developed areas or associated infrastructure or fuels treatment be excluded.

The potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of this roadless area is high regardless of boundary modifications. There is a possibility of encroachment involving both activities and structures. Neighboring areas in private ownership are undergoing development. Trabuco Road receives high use year-round. Mountain biking use is popular throughout the unit and would be non-conforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness. The ability of the Forest to manage this area as an enduring resource of wilderness that is untrammeled by man and that retains its primeval character is low to moderate.

There are some improved parking areas and traveler transfer points adjacent to the area. Should the area become wilderness potential future motorized or mechanized use would be concentrated on roads, trails, and routes outside the area. One or more traveler transfer points with facilities (trailheads) are needed to meet current and anticipated levels of use. These facilities would be compatible with other management needs.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and fire use (prescribed fire) may be required in this area.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones (acres):**
- Backcountry (BC)- 757 acres,
- Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 181 acres,
- Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 21,245 acres,
- Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 1,157 acres.
Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Trabuco. But Trabuco appears to have moderate to high day use. Anecdotal information also indicates that trails throughout this area receive heavy use by both hikers and mountain bikers. The shorter San Juan Loop is particularly popular (personal communication, District Ranger Fletcher, May 2011).

Recreational opportunities include mountain biking, day hiking and walking, picnicking, seasonal water play, wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, hunting, horseback riding (limited use), relaxation and respite from urban life.

The road and trail system and non-system routes supply some of the best mountain biking opportunities in Southern California. Mountain biking is a very popular activity both outside and inside this roadless area. Partners such as the Warrior Society organize trail maintenance efforts. The potential demand for increased mountain biking opportunities is extremely high. Non-system roads permit easy passage into some of the more remote areas by bicycles, off-road vehicles, and motorcycles (Schad 1988, p. 64). These mountain biking opportunities would be foregone with wilderness designation and use should shift to roads, trails, and routes outside the wilderness. A high level of enforcement effort and cost would be needed to enforce the prohibition on mountain biking; without such effort, continuation of at least some of the use would continue. Additional access would need to be developed outside the area to meet the current demand. Other resource demands and uses that this area could satisfy include a full spectrum of recreation experiences.

Races, endurance runs, and special events occur in this unit including heavily attended annual events for both mountain bikers and runners. These uses would be foregone opportunities with wilderness recommendation.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Management needs could include treatment of invasive non-native species in priority habitat area. Managers may want to use mechanized equipment and/or pesticides. Pesticides are allowed in designated wilderness when necessary to protect or restore significant resource values. Likewise, mechanized equipment may be considered; however, there would be increased project complexity. Also see “Special Features and Values” in the Capability section.

Water availability and use: Major streams in the unit include Holy Jim, (Upper) Trabuco Creek, Bell Canyon, and Hot Spring Canyon.

Livestock operations: None.

Timber: The Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero; vegetation projects are conducted only for objectives other than timber. Thinning has been conducted in the North Main Divide portion of this unit for fuels reduction.

Minerals: Trabuco Canyon has historically been important for mining activity. There is a tin mine in the upper reaches of Trabuco Creek. In the past there have been numerous other mining claims along Trabuco Creek. At present there are inactive mineral claims and closed mines in the unit. A dredging operation in Trabuco Canyon is currently on hold.

Cultural resources: Heritage resource surveys are limited to some of the ridgelines and drainages. Several prehistoric resource collection and food-processing areas have been recorded along streams and at stream confluences. These features are within the ancestral territory associated
with the Juaneño people. Culturally sensitive plants are known to occur in the vicinity of Trabuco and are gathered by the Juaneño people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

**Authorized and potential land uses:** There is an authorized special use road within Trabuco that includes a portion of a road that leads to the Lake Elsinore water tank (which serves various administrative sites). There is a proposed military aircraft training landing site located along the unit boundary. Recreation special use authorizations, developed recreation, and the Santiago Peak communication site are located along and adjacent to the unit boundary.

**Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands:** Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuel breaks) under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes of reducing unnatural fuels accumulation or other objectives such as habitat improvement, and mechanical/motorized maintenance of community defense zones are all management options that could be applied here.

Current uses include law enforcement activities which may utilize motorized and/or mechanized equipment. In addition, site cleanup and restoration of illegal marijuana grow site infrastructure may be considered.

Managers may want to use mechanized equipment and/or pesticides to address vegetation disease or nonnative invasive species. Pesticides are allowed in designated wilderness when necessary to protect or restore significant resource values. Likewise, mechanized equipment may be considered; however, there would be increased project complexity.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** The 38,484 acre San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is located three miles southeast of Trabuco on the southern end of the Ranger District.

Other wilderness within the California Coastal Range Ecological Province are the Agua Tibia (17,979 acres), Hauser (7,547 acres), Pine Creek (13,480 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,248 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM--18,500 acres).

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of California also manage other wilderness in southern California including Fishcreek Mountain (25,940 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (35,080 acres), Coyote Mountains (17,000 acres), Carrizo Gorge (15,700 acres), Jacumba (33,670 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/San Bernardino National Forest - 78,127 acres) and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas exemplify the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecological Province (Bailey 1995, Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 14-16).

**Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Population growth and urbanization in southern Orange and Riverside Counties is expanding rapidly and wilderness use is predicted to increase. In general, visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in Southern California is light (San Mateo Wilderness use is light to moderate), however some of the areas within the province experience moderate to high day use.
Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded (rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 5) (Chavez 1993a, 1993b).

An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use (the average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours). Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others 2002, p.10, 12).

Changes in transportation and nationwide travel patterns reflect a decrease in international travel. People are less likely to travel long distances for recreation opportunities. In general, travelers are staying closer to home (Telephone conversation, Chavez 2003). Nevertheless, anecdotal information from Forest personnel indicates that this unit receives use by international forest visitors, including mountain bikers from Europe.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The Trabuco Ranger District supplies some opportunity for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences, particularly for nearby Orange County and Riverside County residents. Some nearby non-Federal lands in the area that provide unconfined outdoor recreation experiences include the 8,000 acres Ronald W. Casper (Orange County) Wilderness Park and the 4,000 acre National Audubon Society Starr Ranch Sanctuary adjoin Trabuco on the southwest. The 8,300 acre Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve and 6,600 acre Irvine Ranch canyon reserves are also located in the region.

Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness and there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on wilderness (USDA Forest Service 1992).

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The Santa Ana Mountains are the westernmost extension of the Peninsular Range and are largely surrounded by urbanization. The Trabuco Inventoried Roadless Area is the largest of the few remaining unroaded, undeveloped areas within the Cleveland National Forest that has potential to link the San Diego Ranges, Santa Rosa Plateau, Santa Ana Mountains, National Audubon Society Starr Ranch Sanctuary, Chino Hills State Park, the canyon reserves of Irvine Ranch and other open-space reserves to the north. Trabuco supports wilderness-associated species as well as species adapted to more modified environments, including keystone predators. As development pressures increase on private lands the public wild lands increasingly serve as core refugia for native habitats and species. Individual landowners, government agencies and non-profit groups are engaged in planning efforts to create habitat reserves for maintaining biodiversity in this rapidly developing area. The need for corridor connections from existing and newly created habitat reserves and the remaining undeveloped public lands (such as Trabuco) is essential (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.2, 6, 7).

Trabuco contains designated critical habitat for the Arroyo Toad (*Bufo californicus*), a federally-listed endangered species. See also “Special Features and Values” under Capability for a description of unique species or communities.
An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echowhawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego and Riverside Counties.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p. 78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Cleveland National Forest
Upper San Diego River Undeveloped Area
Palomar Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 4,905 acre Upper San Diego River Undeveloped Area is located in southern California west of the Cuyamaca Mountains. This area is in the southern part of the Palomar Ranger District, the central part of the Cleveland National Forest. Julian is approximately three miles to the east.

Cedar Creek and Upper San Diego River Gorge are areas the public proposed for wilderness designation recommendation and were analyzed for potential wilderness designation recommendations in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) supporting the revised forest plans. They are not inventoried roadless areas and were not identified in the set of inventoried roadless area maps contained in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume 2, November 2000.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): This roadless area encompasses the rugged, steep canyon at the headwaters of the San Diego River. Elevations range from approximately 900 feet at the riverbed to about 3,600 feet in the upslope ridgeline area. In addition to coastal sage scrub vegetation, mature southern cottonwood, willows, and riparian woodlands thrive here.

Current uses of the area: Types of recreation here include scenic viewing, hiking, hunting, seasonal water play, photography and primitive camping. There is an active mining claim. This is a low-flight zone for military and private aircraft. There are both permitted and unauthorized grazing operations.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): On the west, Mount Gower Open Space Preserve and the suburbs of the city of Ramona border the area. El Capitan Grande Indian Reservation adjoins the southern end. The proposed San Diego River Research Natural Area (RNA) is within both the Upper San Diego River and Upper San Diego River Gorge undeveloped area.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: There are scenic views of the canyon and river gorge landscape. And there is habitat for many sensitive and endangered species including California gnatcatchers, arroyo toad, and southwestern pond turtle.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area's availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The normal interplay between biotic species inhabiting this area is mostly intact, although natural fire intervals have been modified and some connectivity to other wild lands has been lost. Concentrated recreation use and the spread of invasive non-native species have also disrupted the biotic interplay in some locations.
There are populations of naturalized invasive plants. The area may be at moderate to high risk for introduction of other exotic plants due to frequent wild land fires, fire suppression activities and surrounding development. Although the area is relatively remote, about half of it abuts developed or private land.

Exotic fish, bullfrogs and feral pigs have been introduced to this area (see Availability section below).

This unit is contained entirely within the Ritchie Creek-San Diego River watershed which was rated as Functioning, (1.6) the lower end of Functioning. The watershed was rated down for invasive species, especially the presence of feral pigs, rangeland vegetation condition, and fragmentation of aquatic habitat lower and outside the watershed. This section of the San Diego River is mapped as fish bearing and perennial and has exceptional recreational and watershed values for the Cleveland National Forest. Mapped soils are generally Tollhouse rocky coarse sandy loam and Sheephead rocky fine sandy loam. The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field HUCs using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. The Availability section includes factors that contributed to the current rating.

There have been no fuels treatments. Portions of this unit have been burned by multiple fires including Cedar Fire (2003), Witch Fire (2007) and others. The coastal sage scrub is highly vulnerable to conversion to annual grassland when fires become too frequent and this habitat conversion can cause reductions in California gnatcatcher populations. The Forest Service and partners worked to restore areas of key gnatcatcher habitat burned by Witch Fire.

Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this unit.

Undeveloped: There are no designated system trails in the Upper San Diego River Undeveloped Area. There are some non-conforming structures (unclassified trails, encroachments) and activities. Approximately four miles of unclassified roads are located within the northern portion of the area. They are scheduled to be decommissioned and rehabilitated.

Opportunities: The Upper San Diego River is natural appearing with moderate opportunities for solitude. Although it is adjacent to a rapidly developing community, the canyon landscape fosters the impression of remoteness and supplies visitors with opportunities to gain feelings of solitude and a sense of self-reliance.

A trip down the San Diego River Canyon requires high initiative, fitness and self-reliance. The opportunity for challenge and adventure is high (Schad 1999, p.159). The Upper San Diego River has a medium capability for providing primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hiking, seasonal water play, wildlife and wildflower viewing and photography, nature study, short backpacking trips, primitive camping, hunting, horseback riding, relaxation and respite from urban life. It is inherently capable of supporting four of the five most popular recreation activities on the Cleveland National Forest, viewing natural features, viewing wildlife,
relaxing, and hiking/walking (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.12). Primitive and unconfined types of recreation that currently take place here include scenic viewing, hiking, hunting, seasonal water play, photography and primitive camping.

**Special features and values:** The San Diego Ranges have been identified as one of the key ecological areas in the region and many rare and vulnerable plant and animal species are located in the Upper San Diego River (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p. 335). The San Diego River Canyon above El Capitan Lake contains an extensive stand of coastal sage scrub that supports an important population (20 to 30 pairs of California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*) (Federally Threatened species). There are also several stretches of high-quality riparian woodland with populations of several important wilderness-associated wildlife species including the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) (Federally listed Endangered) and Forest Sensitive species including southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), Coastal rosy boas (*Lichanura trivirgata roseofusca*), Coast horned lizards (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*), and two-striped garter snakes (*Thamnophis hammondii*). Orange-throated whiptails (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*) (California Species of Concern) have also been identified in the area (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, 335-337). One Forest Sensitive plant species, Dean’s Astragalus (*Astragalus deanei*) occurs in the area.

Most of the area has not been surveyed for heritage resources, but some features related to resource collection and food processing are located at stream confluences and on the mesa tops above the San Diego River canyon. Culturally sensitive plants can be found here and are gathered by Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

This area contains stretches of high-quality riparian woodlands that shelter threatened and endangered species and a number of rare species. Fires in 2003 swept through extensive stands of coastal sage scrub vegetation that supported an important population of California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*). Recovery of these areas and their ability to support gnatcatcher populations in the future is currently being monitored. Abundant and varied wildlife enhances the area’s wilderness capability. (See biotic species discussion under Need). Nonconforming structures and activities are not necessary for management of these species or their habitat.

Opportunity for scientific studies, both formal and informal, in a manner that is compatible with wilderness is high due to the diversity of ecological values and increasing scarcity of unmodified natural ecosystems elsewhere in Southern California.

The undeveloped area is being evaluated concurrently for consideration as part of the San Diego River Research National Area. Special scenic features that contribute to the area’s wilderness capability include several seasonal waterfalls within the San Diego River Canyon.

**Description of size and shape:** The 5,933 acre San Diego River undeveloped area is relatively small but of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. It is contiguous with other roadless areas (Cedar Creek and Eagle Peak) but separated from them by an unimproved road - National Forest System Road (NFSR) 13S06. This road is not maintained and is impassable to motorized vehicles. The Upper San Diego River has a long and narrow shape, which is less than ¼ mile wide in some areas.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Most of this area has been successfully managed to retain a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized character within a
naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident or are subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

The Upper San Diego River Undeveloped Area has an undisturbed, natural character. Private land surrounds much of this area. Urban development occurs on the western rim of the river canyon. The ability of the Forest to manage this land as an enduring resource of wilderness and retain its primeval character is moderate. The potential for conflict with existing or potential public uses outside the boundary of this roadless area is medium.

The upper San Diego River roadless area adjoins urban development on the eastern side of the city of Ramona (San Diego County Estates, which houses a sizeable proportion of Ramona’s population).

There have been few surveys in the area except on the western boundary and boundaries are not recognizable on the ground. They loosely conform to the San Diego River drainage and the canyon constitutes a barrier to some nonconforming motorized use. The canyon also adequately shields the area from the sights and sounds of civilization. The boundary can be accessed from Eagle Peak Road and Cedar Creek Road. These roads supply adequate opportunity for access and traveler transfer.

Currently the roadless area is managed for non-motorized use. No Forest system roads or trails presently exist inside this area. Designation would not change current use on transportation systems outside the wilderness; however, any potential future motorized or mechanized use would be limited to roads and trails outside the area. Three routes supply access. There are improved parking and facilities at Inaja and two traveler transfer points (one on the east side of the area: Saddleback Road – NFSR 13S06 and one to the west: Thornbush adjacent to the canyon that provide access to non-system routes into this area. The San Diego River traveler transfer points have facilities and improved system trail access. These additional facilities including system trails would be compatible with other management needs.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zones (6,744 acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 1 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 1 acres, Backcountry Non-motorized (BCNM)- 6,705 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 38 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** Recreation that occurs here includes scenic viewing, hiking, hunting, seasonal water play, photography and primitive camping.

Some of the other resource demands and uses that this area could satisfy include a full spectrum of recreation experiences; diverse kinds of off-road recreation, mountain biking, competitive events, and developed recreation opportunities could potentially be satisfied in this area.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** Feral pigs were introduced in this area several years ago. They are expanding their range primarily through following tributaries and drainages. Feral pigs proliferate in riparian and oak grassland habitats and have the potential to
damage these habitats and compete with native species. Exotic fish and bullfrogs are also present within the primary drainages.

**Water availability and use:** The Helix Water District owns the land below the 995 foot elevation within the San Diego River corridor, including the area below Cedar Creek Falls. The Upper San Diego River contributes to municipal drinking water supplies. The Upper San Diego River Gorge contains the headwaters for the San Diego River and provides water for the local ecosystem.

**Livestock operations:** The Upper San Diego River also contains a designated, though currently vacant, livestock grazing area (Pine Hills Allotment) and motorized access may be requested for permit administration in the future. There is also some unauthorized livestock grazing within this unit.

**Timber:** The Cleveland National Forest allowable sale quantity is zero.

**Minerals:** The NW1/4 of Section 34 contains one active placer mining claim currently operated by the Gold Prospectors of America.

**Cultural resources:** Most of the area has not been surveyed for heritage resources but some features related to resource collection and food processing are located at stream confluences and on the mesa tops above the San Diego River canyon. Culturally sensitive plants can be found here and are gathered by the Kumeyaay people (Craig and Pfeiffer 1995).

**Authorized and potential land uses:** This area is also a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes. This use has increased significantly over the past few years.

Commercial communication site development, utility corridors, road construction, and new administrative site development could potentially be satisfied in this area.

San Diego Gas and Electric has a special use permit for the Boulder Creek electric transmission line (a 12 kV electric distribution line) and a 69 kV transmission line with a 30 foot wide right-of-way for brush clearance in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit (Sections 27 and 34, T12S, R3E, SBB&M). This improvement is readily visible and apparent from the northern tip of the Upper San Diego River Undeveloped Area. Motorized access is necessary for emergency repairs and routine operation and maintenance of some segments of the transmission line.

The Final EIS/EIR for the Sunrise Powerlink Project identified for all southern routes Future Transmission System Expansion routes for both 230 kV and 500kV future transmission lines. One of the three routes noted as most likely for future transmission lines is the Route D Alternative corridor. Additional 230 and/or 500kV circuits could be proposed to follow this corridor to the north of Descanso, crossing No Name and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas, as well as the Upper San Diego River and Cedar Creek Undeveloped Areas. As illustrated in the Final EIS, the corridor falls outside of the boundary of Eagle Peak Inventoried Roadless Area but appears to fall within approximately ¼ to one mile of its north and east unit boundary. In the Final EIS, SDG&E indicated that transmission system expansion is foreseeable, possibly within the next 10 years. There are no specific proposals at this time.

**Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands:** The Helix Water District owns the land below the 995 foot elevation within the Upper San
Diego River corridor, including the area below Cedar Creek Falls (Section 1, T14S, R2E, SBB&M). A public access easement is pending approval.

This area is also a popular low-flight zone for both military and private aircraft, specifically helicopters and aerobatic planes. This use has increased significantly over the past few years.

Due to the threat of wildfire, fire suppression and pre-suppression activities including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks, community defense zones, fire lines, the use of mechanized equipment, and the use of prescribed fire could be considered in this area. There are currently some non-conforming structures (unclassified trails, encroachments) and activities within the boundaries of this area.

Mechanical maintenance of fuel breaks (including roaded-fuel breaks along Eagle Peak Road and Saddleback and other State and County roads) under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire for purposes other than reducing unnatural fuels accumulation, and mechanical/motorized maintenance of community defense zones adjacent to private property that joins the area are examples of management techniques that could be employed here.

There are no private lands within the boundary of the undeveloped area and some private lands have recently been acquired in the area. The Forest has sufficient control over a portion of the undeveloped area to prevent development of irresolvable, incompatible uses that would lessen wilderness character and potential.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: There is no other Forest wilderness in the immediate vicinity. Pine Creek (13,480 acres) and Hauser (7,547 acres) are located about 15 miles to the southeast on the Descanso Ranger District. The 17,979-acre Agua Tibia Wilderness is located about 25 miles away on the northern end of the Palomar Ranger District. A 7,796 acre proposed addition to the Agua Tibia Wilderness is currently pending legislation. The area coincides with the area that has been recommended in the Forest Plan.

Other Wilderness within the California Coastal Range Ecological Province include the San Mateo Canyon (38,484 acres), San Jacinto Wilderness (San Bernardino National Forest - 32,248 acres), Mount San Jacinto State Park Wilderness (12,828 acres) and the Otay Mountain Wilderness (BLM 16,885 acres).

The BLM and state of California also manage other wilderness in southern California including Fishcreek Mountain (21,388 acres), Sawtooth Mountain (33610 acres), Coyote Mountains (18630 acres), Carrizo Gorge (14741 acres), Jacumba (31357 acres), Santa Rosa Wilderness (BLM/San Bernardino National Forest – 74,718 acres), and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park. These wilderness areas represent the American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Province (Bailey 1995, p.56-58, 68-70, Miles and Goudey 1997, p.13-1 to 13-16).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Population growth and urbanization in San Diego County are expanding rapidly and wilderness use is predicted to
increase. Visitor pressure on other wilderness areas in southern California is light; however some areas experience moderate to high day use. Visitors to wilderness areas on the Cleveland National Forest rated their visit 1.6 (on a scale from 1 to 10) concerning crowding. The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness is slightly more crowded (rated 1.9 on a scale from 1 to 50) (Chavez 1993a, 1993b). An important trend in wilderness use is short-term day use (average stay on the Cleveland National Forest is 2.2 hours). Based on this trend, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails. Hiking and walking are among the most popular recreation activities in the area (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report, Kocis and others, 2002, p.10, 12).

At the present time there is no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness. These lands however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on wilderness (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1992).

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: The management objectives assigned to the Cedar Creek, No Name, Eagle Peak, and Sill Hill Inventoried Roadless Areas complement unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. With the exception of Cedar Creek, these areas are managed to supply non-motorized experiences in a Semi-Primitive setting. Cedar Creek offers a primitive but motorized setting. With the exception of Sill Hill, however, the standards for maintenance of the recreation setting (Scenic Integrity Objectives) are lower than the standards that apply to the Upper San Diego River. Eagle Peak and parts of No Name currently have management objectives that allow activities to dominate the landscape (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 1986b). Cuyamaca Rancho State Park also supplies some opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands are located to the south of the Descanso Ranger District and supply primitive camping, hiking, and backpacking opportunities. Generally, dispersed camping is allowed in backcountry areas of the Descanso Ranger District except in the Laguna Mountain Recreation Area.

Non-wilderness areas within the Anza Borrego Desert State Park supply unconfined outdoor recreation opportunities in a desert setting (i.e. American Semi-Desert and Desert Ecosystem Province). Nearby El Capitan Grande Indian Reservation lands supply a similar setting and recreation experience for tribal members.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The Upper San Diego River is among the key ecological areas for this region and is dominated by some of the best remaining occurrences of low-elevation ecosystems (e.g. riparian woodland, coastal sage scrub, grassland, and Engelmann oak woodlands) that are poorly represented on public land and declining in the southern part of the Province. Factors affecting ecological integrity in the watershed include urban encroachment from the west, high fire frequencies, and non-native plant and animal species (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999, p.335-337).
The San Diego River Canyon above El Capitan Lake contains an extensive stand of coastal sage scrub that supports an important population (20 to 30 pairs of California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica*) (Federally Threatened species)). Fires in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003, and 2007 swept through these stands. Recovery of these areas and their ability to support gnatcatcher populations in the future is currently being monitored. Outside the roadless area, there has been a substantial loss of coastal sage habitat due to urbanization. Engelmann oak stands have suffered similar losses. The Upper San Diego River contains designated critical habitat for California gnatcatcher.

There are also several stretches of high-quality riparian woodland with populations of several important wilderness-associated wildlife species including the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) (Federally listed Endangered). National Forest lands play an important role in protecting a large portion of the existing population of arroyo toad. The Upper San Diego River contains designated critical habitat for arroyo toad.

Golden eagles nest within the Upper San Diego River area. Some of these populations have been displaced to undeveloped areas for protection and are dependent on habitat conditions within the unit due to the expansion of urban development in the surrounding area.

**An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems:** The California Coastal Range Ecosystem Province makes up 0.8% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 2.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS as it has three times as much representation in the NWPS as it has in the land area in the continental United States (Loomis and Echohawk 1999). It is worth noting that most of these wilderness acres are largely located well north of San Diego County.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Mateo Canyon Wilderness, Agua Tibia Wilderness, Pine Creek Wilderness and Hauser Wilderness satisfy this objective.
Los Padres National Forest

Antimony Inventoried Roadless Area

Mount Pinos Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 40,513 acre Antimony Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Mount Pinos Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The area is adjacent to the small communities of Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods, Pinyon Pines Estates and Pine Mountain Club; all approximately two hours north of Los Angeles. Most of the area lies north of or adjacent to the San Andreas Rift Zone. The area is split by a deep drainage known as San Emigdio Creek. Other drainages include Pleito, Salt and Cherry Creeks and Black Bob, Deadman, Cloudburst and Santiago Canyons. A strip of private land along San Emigdio Canyon bisects the area. In addition, major paved roads and residential developments along the periphery impact the serenity of the area along the southern boundary. Centrally located on the southern edge is the Pine Mountain Club subdivision. Further to the eastern boundary are the communities of Cuddy Valley, Lake of the Woods and Frazier Park. Extensive private lands are found on the northern border. These lands are along Black Bob Canyon, Salt Creek, Pleito Creek, Devil's Kitchen and others. Private landowners do not currently provide access through these lands.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area consists of folded and faulted non-marine sedimentary rock formations south of the fault and a mixture of intensified fractured and faulted granite, gneiss and schist north of it. Numerous small peaks and drainages that primarily flow into the San Joaquin Valley characterize the topography. Elevations range from 3,250 to 7,495 feet atop San Emigdio Peak.

Approximately three quarters of the total area in Antimony are Pinyon Pine (Pinus monophylla) (20,500 acres) or other conifers (Bigcone Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga macrocarpa), Douglas-fir/Ponderosa Pine (Pseuodotsuga macrocarpa/Pinus ponderosa), “Eastside” Pine- mixed conifer stands with Fir or Ponderosa Pine dominant and mixed evergreen). Annual grasslands comprise approximately 1,300 acres and are not very prevalent. There is a minor component of coastal sage scrub with buckwheat (Eriogonum spp.) and rabbitbrush (Ericameria nauseosa) as the dominant cover. There are also 26 acres of valley oak (Quercus lobata) and 3,100 acres of canyon live oak (Quercus chrysolepis).

Current uses of the area: Recreation use in Antimony is generally light except for a few holiday weekends and a couple of popular destinations within the areas. Portions of the area receive intensive, seasonal use by hunters and year-round use by Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts and mountain bikers. The area is used for wood gathering, recreational target shooting and pinyon nut collection.

The unit is bisected in the middle by a north-south private land corridor in San Emigdio Canyon connecting to the Pine Mountain Club community. Private land extends into the unit but it is ‘cherry-stemmed’ from inclusion. Only one private land in-holding (120 acres in size) is located here; it is in Black Bob Canyon - Sections 15 and 22, T. 9 N., R. 20 W.
There are six primitive campgrounds (Valle Vista, Caballo, Marian, Pleito Creek, Salt Creek and Cherry Creek). Each contains picnic tables, fire rings and rustic toilets. These campgrounds are accessed by roads outside the boundary of Antimony or by 14.4 miles of motorized trails (19W01, 20W01, 20W14, 20W17, 21W01, 22W12, 21W06) within Antimony.

There is a Wildlife Viewing Area west of Valle Vista camp. A portion of the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge is adjacent to the western portion of the unit.

There are three active and one vacant livestock grazing allotment.

There are uranium, antimony, gold, and silver mines in the area that are no longer in operation. Evidence of mining operations and associated access roads can still be seen on the landscape but are not current uses.

There are no system roads in the unit. There are approximately 15 miles of undetermined roads and undetermined OHV trails in the unit. There are 14.4 miles of motorized OHV trails in the unit. There is some overlap between the Antimony unit and roads that are used in fire suppression activities for access and as part of a roaded fuel break. These include Noreste Road, 9N53, 9N19A, 9N34, 9N52, 9N21, and 9N01A. There are 9.2 miles of non-system trails caused by unauthorized OHV activity and 6.0 miles of undetermined routes probably associated with historic mining operations.

There is one shaded fuelbreak in the conceptual phase on Tecuya Ridge from San Emigdio on the Forest boundary, east on Tecuya Ridge to Tecuya Mountain and to the Forest boundary. There are fuelbreaks, planned prescribed burns and roads that are maintained around the communities near Antimony (for example, Unit D of the Pine Mountain Club Project). There is one water source and seven helispots in the area identified for potential use during fire management operations.

There are two ozone-monitoring plots where vegetation sampling occurs.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The area is about 24 miles long and three miles wide. Its linear configuration affords few locations where one can get away from the impacts of humans, particularly along the south facing slopes from Apache Saddle (at the fire station) to the eastern boundary of the area. About half of the vegetation is coniferous forest and one quarter is shrublands.

The area serves as a scenic backdrop to the following rural mountain communities: Frazier Park, Pinyon Pines Estates, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. The forested mountains with perennial streams provide an attractive landscape. Recreation developments (trails, OHV routes and campgrounds) provide access to this area. The level of development here is consistent with the surrounding private land.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: From the ridge tops there are excellent vistas of the southern portion of San Joaquin Valley. Special attractions to the area include the San Andreas Rift Zone and formations near the fault that moved here from their original location near the Salton Sea. There are opportunities to view the California condor...
(Gymnogyps californianus) and the California spotted owl (Strix occidentalis). There is a Wildlife Viewing Area west of Valle Vista camp. A portion of the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge is adjacent to the western portion of the Antimony unit.

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: There are no perennial streams that run through Antimony. All streams are intermittent or ephemeral as this area is in the desert montane landscape on the rain shadowed inland, or Cuyama Valley side, of the coastal ranges. Santiago Canyon runs for about five miles through this unit but is intermittent, flowing during the winter and spring, but not enough to establish willows or other non-herbaceous riparian vegetation. And it does not support any riparian or aquatic wildlife species. There are no impoundments along that portion of Santiago Creek within the unit or within the Los Padres National Forest itself.

In general the health of the plant community is vigorous, with mature pinyon pine and juniper with some mature conifer that has not been burned frequently. The smaller patches of high elevation conifer here and throughout the Los Padres National Forest are at risk from excessive fire frequency.

About 59% of Antimony is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. Another 41% of the unit is managed to maintain the integrity of a Moderate SIO in which management activities may appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape. All National Forest System lands within the unit meet or exceed these objectives, although there are several roads and some mining activities that have left scars in the landscape and therefore do not meet these objectives. These scars are small and not significant within the scope of this evaluation because they would not jeopardize the character of the entire roadless area.

Antimony is primarily composed of six Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds that drain northward to the Cuyama River. These watersheds are Santiago Creek, Los Lobos Creek, San Emigdio Creek, Pleito Creek, and Tecuya Creek running west to east. They are uniformly Class 1 properly functioning, watersheds on National Forest System lands, although much of the area of these watersheds extends northward onto extensively grazed private land from which surface disturbance and reduction of plant cover reduces the value of the water runoff to the Cuyama River. The inclusion of private lands, which accounts for approximately 67% of the total watershed area, reduces the ranking of these watersheds to Class 2, functioning at risk. These watersheds also are impacted by soil contamination from atmospheric deposition of sulfur and/or nitrogen due to proximity to the Interstate 5 corridor. Although the unit on National Forest System lands is fully functional from a watershed perspective, limitations on access would not enhance nor preserve water quality because of downstream influences.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.) in the unit, but nothing that is different than what occurs elsewhere within the Forest and nothing the Forest is specifically treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation in Antimony.
This area has, to some extent, long fire-free intervals because of agency fire suppression efforts, but there have been more than 100 fire starts recorded within Antimony’s borders from 1911 to 2009. This area has experienced few sizeable wildfires but a significant number small fire starts, predominantly lightning-caused, have occurred. The Post Fire in 2010 was the most recent event and it burned approximately two percent of the unit. There is a high uniform distribution of live and dead fuels found in these coniferous vegetation types. The management of the conifer stands in Antimony is designed to increase them to Condition Class 1 (Forest LMP, Part 3, Table 3.3).

Most of the unit is in Kern County (with 2,400 acres in Ventura County). It is designated non-attainment for ozone and particulates for current air quality.

**Undeveloped:** The appearance of the landscape remains relatively natural. Most roads here are narrow jeep ways. A road scar is visible as a result of the Antimony Mine activity. There are six campgrounds that are accessed by roads outside the boundary of the unit or by 14.4 miles of motorized trails within the unit. There are a number of old, unclassified roads from previous mining and timber harvesting activities. The most obvious are a road down Bradley Ridge, the road accessing the patented mining claim on Antimony Peak and the road from the northern Forest boundary into Black Bob Canyon that accesses Black Bob Mine. There is also an old rock quarry near the top of San Emigdio Mountain with a visible scar on the hillside.

There are uranium, antimony, gold and silver mines in the area but they are no longer in operation. Management emphasis is on protecting communities from fire and vegetative treatments to preserve the forested areas.

There are approximately: 5.3 miles of Forest system road, 16.1 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 3.3 miles of Forest Designated Trail - 23W28 (Blue Ridge Trail), 22 miles of motorized roads/trails accessing Special Use Permit Range allotment, 1.6 miles of motorized roads/trails accessing Special Use Permit – other, and 12.3 miles of undetermined miles of roads/motorized trails.

**Opportunities:** The natural integrity of the area and opportunities for solitude have both been compromised by numerous roads, OHV trails and mining developments. Approximately 87% of Antimony is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective. Lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 8% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective with lands that are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant. Facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. The remaining 5% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural ROS objective with lands that allow for recreation development that blends with the natural environment and provides for some level of user convenience.

Opportunities for wilderness challenge are limited because of the linear shape of this area and the proximity of urban development. There is limited to moderate opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. The relatively large (40,513 acres) size of this area does not provide isolation from human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development. Similarly, the
developed roads and trails provide motorized and non-motorized access to this area. Expansive vistas afforded from peaks accessed by roads and trails are located in this area.

Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, OHV trails and roads, horseback riding, camping (developed and primitive), nature viewing and hunting.

Special features and values: One sensitive plant to have been found in this unit is a small population of *Imperata Layia heterotricha* (pale-yellow layia). There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Antimony.

The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) uses Antimony extensively for travel and roosting as they soar on uplifted winds along the southern boundary of the San Joaquin Valley. This is an important part of the historic range of the condor. There is a condor release facility at Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge to the west of the unit. Condors often roost on Brush and San Emigdio Peaks. There has also been California spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis*) detected in the older conifers within this unit and undocumented reports of northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*). Sooty grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosus*) were observed prior to about 1980.

The cultural and historic values within the Antimony Inventoried Roadless Area are comprised of significant cultural and heritage resources with listings on the National Register of Historic Places. The most significant are the traditional cultural properties (TCP) comprised of pictographs (rock art) and milling features. There are nine archaeological sites within Antimony. Two of the nine sites are highly significant. One consists of both pictographs (rock art) and petroglyphs (carvings in stone). The other site is a large monument in honor of Juan Jose Fustero, last of the Tataviam at Piru Lake who died in 1921.

There are no distinctive landforms, water or vegetation.

Description of size and shape: The linear shape of this unit, which is also adjacent to major roadways and having multiple roads, indicates that management as a wilderness would be difficult. It is separated from the Chumash Wilderness by a corridor with major private land holdings so it could never be effectively managed with other wilderness areas. Motorized activities on the roadways into the area (not part of the unit) could influence management.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Should the area be designated for wilderness, address whether or not boundary changes would enhance the wilderness characteristics or whether or not it would be possible to use boundary modifications to separate incompatible activities from those characteristics. The area is bordered by Wind Wolves Preserve, a conservation area operated by the Wildlands Conservancy, on the north and by Mil Potrero Highway from Pine Mountain Club to the western extremity.

Other than the portion of the northern boundary that abuts Wind Wolves Preserve this area would be difficult to manage as wilderness. It would be desirable to adjust the boundary of the unit so as to exclude the area east of San Emigdio Canyon, thereby eliminating considerable conflict with existing developed uses and private land intrusions. The remaining western portion of the unit would also require some boundary modification. If the boundary were moved to the north of the main ridgeline from San Emigdio Canyon to San Emigdio Mountain the western portion of the area would be more reasonably manageable as wilderness.
Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 2,944 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 36,820 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 749 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Cross-country hiking could offer a challenge to the experienced hiker and rock climbing in the canyons within the area could provide some challenge and excitement. There are opportunities for hiking on the Blue Ridge Trail (23W28). Additional hiking and horseback riding opportunities are available on unclassified trails. Snow play and sledding occurs along Mil Potrero Highway in various locations. Hunting and viewing scenery occur in this area. Santiago Canyon provides some opportunities for rock climbing. There are 3.8 miles of hiking trails, 14.4 miles of motorcycle trails, 9.2 miles of unclassified roads and six small primitive campgrounds (Cherry Creek, Salt Creek, Marian, Caballo, Valle Vista and Pleito Creek). No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Antimony.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Part of the area includes historic roost sites of the California condor. The area contains big game species as mule deer, mountain lion and black bear as well as historic range for Tule elk and pronghorn. Small game species here include fox, quail, band-tailed pigeon, coyote, bobcat and rabbit. Many species of the rodent family live in the area. The area serves as winter deer range. California condors, pronghorn and Tule elk are all species that require large tracts of land in order to maintain viable populations. All three species occupy areas that are part roadless and part roaded. Current monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roaded areas is precluding or reducing the use of these areas by these animals. The recovery plan for the California condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species. The area provides opportunities for big game hunting (primarily deer) as well as bird hunting (primarily quail and pigeon). California condor, pronghorn and Tule elk have had their historic ranges substantially reduced due to increased human populations and developments. All three species have been re-introduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Antimony roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in Antimony are not substantially affecting the habitats of these species.

Water availability and use: Antimony provides the headwaters for a series of six watersheds that extend northward onto extensively grazed private land from which surface disturbance and reduction of plant cover reduces the value of the water runoff to the Cuyama River. Private lands account for approximately 67% of the total watershed area. These watersheds also are also impacted by soil contamination from atmospheric deposition of sulfur and/or nitrogen due to proximity to the Interstate 5 corridor. The unit does provide a quantity of water to a system that eventually reaches the Santa Maria River and is used as a municipal and agricultural water source at numerous locations along the way. Water quality, while good at the upper reaches on public land, will continue to be degraded by downstream development offering little opportunity for improvement by limiting access to the public portions of the watersheds.

Livestock operations: There are three active and one vacant livestock grazing allotment within the unit. These allotments include 13 spring developments and 5.4 miles of fence. The
improvements could remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cowhead-Active</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson Canyon-Active</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Emigdio-Vacant</td>
<td>25,276</td>
<td>61.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago-Active</td>
<td>7,847</td>
<td>19.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33,830</td>
<td>82.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: There are approximately 40 acres of reforestation within the area that requires maintenance.

Minerals: A high potential for saleable products such as gravel and building stone exists and there is also a high potential for non-strategic and strategic minerals. There is low potential for phosphate production and geothermal resources. There is moderate to low potential for oil and gas leasing in the area.

There are a number of old, undetermined roads from previous mining and timber harvesting activities. The most obvious are a road down Bradley Ridge, the road accessing the patented mining claim on Antimony Peak and the road from the northern Forest boundary into Black Bob Canyon that accesses Black Bob Mine. There is an old rock quarry near the top of San Emigdio Mountain with a visible scar on the hillside. There are uranium, antimony, gold, and silver mines in the area that are no longer in operation. Black Bob Mine has been reclaimed as part of the Forest Service abandoned mine lands (AML) program.

Cultural Resources: Only portions of Antimony have been assessed for heritage/cultural resources with archaeological assessments conducted only for specific projects. The portions surveyed have several significant archaeological resources documented and recorded (a description of these resources can be found under Special Features and Values section of this report).

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no special use authorizations other than the grazing permits described above. Grazing and recreational uses are the highest potential uses in the unit.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal land: There is a need for the limited use of mechanical equipment to manage vegetation for ecosystem health and fuel reduction in Pine Mountain Club and alongside roads and intersections of roads with planned fuelbreaks.

Approximately 749 acres of this unit are zoned as Developed Area Interface (DAI) indicating a concerted effort to manage vegetation within these acres to protect property adjacent to the unit. Heavy vegetation modifications are required to meet the objectives to protect life and property and to lower the risk of the structures acting as fuel sources within adjacent communities. The potential resistance to fire control is rated moderate. Designation of wilderness adjacent to the private land in Pine Mountain Club, Cuddy Valley, Lake of the Woods, Frazier Park, and Lebec could limit the possibilities for fuels management activities and the establishment and management of fuelbreaks adjacent to this growing urban interface. A shaded fuel break across Tecuya Ridge is in the conceptual design phase following the objectives of the Forest LMP Vegetation Management Standard, S4.
Wilderness designation could limit the ability to treat noxious weed infestations that are an ever increasing threat, particularly from fire suppression and recreation vehicles, but also from other vectors such as wildlife and wind movement.

There are approximately 40 acres of reforestation within the area. There is considerable concern for potential dwarf mistletoe and bark beetle infestation in the coniferous species.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Within a 20 mile radius of Antimony are the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres).

**Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Visitation to the nearby Chumash Wilderness is light to moderate. Population growth and urbanization are increasing rapidly on the Interstate 5 corridor and wilderness use is expected to increase. Snow play, OHV and hunting pressure are also expected to continue to increase as the population expands towards the area from the Los Angeles Basin.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the use in the Los Padres National Forest is short-term day visits. The average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns are usually concentrated in the first few miles of wilderness trails.

**The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences:** Much of the Mt. Pinos area non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes or land areas with a comparable level of development for recreation opportunities. Increasing use from expanding area populations are expected to increase pressures on these areas.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Of particular importance in the Antimony unit are the high density of California condors and their regular flights from east to west along the north facing slopes of this mountain.
range. Reliable strong winds are crucial to condor movements and the winds blowing southward from the San Joaquin Valley that are lifted up by the San Emigdio Mountains provide excellent soaring conditions for the condor and are the reason this is an important historic condor area. Wilderness designation could preclude wind energy development and potential impacts to condors. In addition to the value of Antimony as condor habitat, the Forest LMP identifies the unit as a habitat corridor connecting to the Hopper Mountain Wildlife Refuge to the north.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The higher elevation coniferous forest of the Antimony area and the surrounding mountainous areas of the Mt Pinos Ranger District are unique to the Los Padres National Forest. These higher elevations provide cooler summer temperatures and higher precipitation than the dry coastal chaparral vegetation types typified on by the coastal regions of the Forest.
Los Padres National Forest

Black Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Lucia Ranger District

Overview
Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 16,830 acre Black Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in the northeastern part of the Santa Lucia Ranger District, 20 miles northeast of San Luis Obispo. The area is bounded on the north and west by the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest, on the south by a power transmission line corridor and on the east by Fernandez Road (28S02). There is a corridor within the unit for the paved Black Mountain Road (29S10) that provides access to the communication site at the top of Black Mountain. Access is from U.S. Highway 101 and State Highway 58 via Pozo Road and Navajo Road (29S02) or via Red Hill Road (29S15).

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area is part of the La Panza Range and contains moderately rough terrain with elevations ranging from 1,700 feet along the west side to 3,622 feet atop Black Mountain. The area is in the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. The vast majority of the unit is dominated by chaparral vegetation with pockets of blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), gray pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) and Coulter pine (*Pinus coulteri*) typical of the interior Santa Lucia Range. The headwaters of Shell and Huerhuero Creeks and a portion of the headwaters for the Salinas River are located here.

Current uses of the area: The Black Mountain Communication Site is located on the top of Black Mountain in the center of the roadless area. A large white dome covers equipment used by the Federal Aviation Administration. The paved Black Mountain Road (29S10) is ‘cherry-stemmed’ outside of the unit; however, the final segment of the road and the entire communication site is within the unit. A Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) power line runs to the communication site from the south of the mountain. Power line tower access roads are also present in the vicinity of the power line. There are several undetermined roads that provide access to PG&E power lines in the unit. These roads are not under special use permit.

Recreation use includes day and overnight hiking, horseback riding, nature viewing and photography, hunting and OHV riding. The Wilson Canyon Trail (15E01), Black Mountain Trail (15E03) and Fernandez Trail (15E04) non-motorized trails are located entirely with this unit. Motorized OHV trails here include the Navajo By-Pass Trail (16E23), Howards Hill (15E05), Quail (15E10) and part of the Power Line Road (15E07). The nearby area includes Friis Campground as well as Navajo Flat OHV Trailhead and Navajo Campground just outside the southeast boundary.

There are one active and three vacant livestock grazing allotments and the Black Mountain Wild Horse Territory within and adjacent to the unit. The area has no identified water sources or helispots for fire management operations. The area contains old dozer lines (pre-attack lines) along the main ridges. Many of these dozer lines are now used in the administration of the grazing allotments and for fuels management projects. The perimeters and defensible space around campgrounds, roadsides, and communication site are routinely maintained for reduction of hazardous fuels.
Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The overall appearance of the area is of rounded landforms covered with dull green chaparral. The landscape is lacking in variety and distinctive landforms, vegetation or water forms, which make it minimally attractive.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The area contains no particular distinctive features except that the highest point, Black Mountain. There is a Communication Site on top of the Mountain that includes a large white dome visible from many miles away. The Sierra Nevada mountain range may be seen (especially if they are covered in snow) from Black Mountain and other ridges in the area.

The Black Mountain Wild Horse Territory, partially within the unit, supports approximately 20 horses. There are Southern Pacific pond turtles (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*) in Navajo Creek. California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) fly over this area but do not use it as a roosting or nesting area.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability

Naturalness of the area: There are no perennial streams that flow through the Black Mountain unit. Huerhuero, Shell, Fernandez, Wilson, Ben Willow and Navajo Creeks flow outward from Black Mountain through this unit for about two miles each. These are mostly dry, ephemeral creeks that flow for about two months a year and have intermittent pools for another six months. There are no fisheries or other aquatic species associated with these creeks except for a small Southern Pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*) population in Navajo Creek.

The communication site atop Black Mountain, with its large white dome, is a major visual alteration, drawing attention as the only distinguishing landmark of the scenic landscape.

About 70% of Black Mountain is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. Another 30% is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO in which management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Currently all the lands within the unit meet and exceed these objectives although the communication site on Black Mountain, with its large white dome, dominates the view and does not meet the SIO of the area. It creates an impact that causes the landscape being viewed from within or out of the unit to underachieve the SIOs.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the unit but nothing unusual from what occurs elsewhere on the Forest. The grasses are not being treated because they are not dominating the vegetation and they are found in many other areas of the Forest.

Of the five 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds that primarily comprise the Black Mountain roadless area, Shell Creek and the east and middle branches of Huerhuero Creek drain northward while Pozo Creek and Toro Creek-Salinas River drain southward to Santa Margarita Lake. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf All watersheds eventually flow into the Salinas River and feed municipal water systems making preservation of water quality important. The National Forest System land portions of these
watersheds are uniformly Class 1 and are functioning properly. Road density is low and vegetation disturbance from fires is within expected limits. However, all of these watersheds were judged as being poorer on private lands due to the presence of disturbance from development and grazing. Since these watersheds average over 50% private, the opportunities for further improvement of water quality by reducing access is limited.

The area has an extensive wildfire history (see table below). The entire land area of Black Mountain has burned multiple times over the past century. Most recently the Highway 58 Fire burned 100% of the area in 1996. These large fires have caused stress on the ecosystem and created large even age stands of chaparral that limits biodiversity of wildlife. Natural ecological processes and conditions have been reduced. Notable wildfires include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of IRA Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highway 58</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friis</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilitas 1</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unnamed)</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Largest fire on record in the Black Mountain unit.

About 400 acres have not had light, understory fires which are their characteristic fire regime for hardwood and coniferous forests. Fire suppression activity has altered the forested structure over the past 100 years for these 400 acres, making the vegetation type vulnerable to type conversion if and when a wildland fire occurs during typical summer conditions. However, the shrub lands have a fire return interval that is considered their natural condition in pre-settlement periods.

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear and only the relatively low elevations hinder the areas use for observation of the sky at night.

Undeveloped: The appearance of the unit is relatively intact and natural. Black Mountain is currently managed for both non-motorized and motorized multiple uses. Motorized OHV recreation is the dominant use in adjacent areas.

There are approximately: 1.3 miles of Forest system road, 1.3 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 12.9 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 5.4 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 2.1 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

The Black Mountain Communication Site is located in the middle of the unit with access to the site from the paved Forest Road 29S10. This road has been partially ‘cherry-stemmed’ to exclude it from the roadless area. This site still dominates the visual appearance of the area.

Friis Campground is located immediately adjacent to the unit with access to the site from a motorized route (29S14). This three unit developed campground can accommodate up to 15 PAOT (people at one time) and provides tables, stoves, fire rings and tent pads at each site. The road and campground have been excluded from the unit.
Opportunities: Approximately 14% of Black Mountain is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective. Lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant. Facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Approximately 86% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. The remaining 14% is managed to meet the Semi-primitive Motorized ROS objective where recreation facilities are designed to protect the landscape from human impacts rather than provide for the convenience of the user.

Recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and OHV use in open space valued as a backdrop for, adventure, sightseeing, hunting and viewing wildlife and the wild horse herd in the area.

The sights and sounds of OHV activity within and adjacent to Black Mountain influence the ability of the unit to provide solitude, the feel of remoteness and the lack of human influences. The lack of vegetative screening establishes an open feel and a connection to the larger landscape including the sights and sounds of human activity outside the unit.

Special features and values: This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. All of these plant species are known to occur in areas outside of the unit as well. There is also a small portion of critical habitat for Chlorogalum purpureum var. reductum (Camatta Canyon amole) in southeast corner of the unit. No occupied habitat for C. purpureum var. reductum occurs in the unit. The following species occur in the unit: Arctostaphylos pilosula (Santa Margarita Manzanita), Calycadenia villosa (dwarf western rosinweed), Chorizanthe rectispina (straight-awned spineflower), and Eriastrum luteum (yellow-flowered eriastrum).

The area is important for the Black Mountain wild horse herd. There are no Critical Biological Areas in this unit. Federally designated critical habitat for the federally threatened Camatta Canyon amole occurs along Red Hill road and a few hundred acres of non-occupied critical habitat occur in the Black Mountain unit. However, the soil types here do not support the Camatta Canyon amole.

The California Condor (Gymnogyps californianus) regularly flies over this area in it’s wanderings up and down the Central Coast, following the updrafts of the coastal range between Big Sur and either Bittercreek or Hopper Condor refuges. A Forest Service Region 5 Sensitive species of Pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus) is likely found here because they inhabit dry chaparral habitats with small rock outcrops. A Forest Service Region 5 Sensitive species of Southern Pacific pond turtle (Actinemys marmorata pallida) is abundant in the ponds along Navajo Creek and in the lower end of Navajo Creek itself. The California legless lizard (Anniella pulchra) is found in sandy loam and likely occurs in the degraded granitic soils along Navajo Creek.

The Camatta Canyon amole Special Interest Area is adjacent to Black Mountain but only includes the occupied portion of the amole’s critical habitat and thus does not overlap with the unit. There are no designated wild and scenic rivers or rivers eligible for classification as wild
and scenic. Black Mountain contains no significant landscape features, distinctive landforms, vegetation or water presence that is of note.

Description of size and shape: Due to the proximity of the proposed boundary lines on the north and west, the potential for trespass from private properties may be high. The Forest is aware that some trespass is occurring on the north end of the proposed boundary.

The 16,843 acre Black Mountain unit is of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. Most the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Black Mountain could be considered moderate to major challenges because of the openness of the area as described above. The area maintains a primeval character but is highly influenced by human activities such as the communication site and OHV recreation.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Managing the Black Mountain roadless area as a wilderness would be difficult. It is not possible to readily and accurately describe, establish, and recognize land ownership and wilderness boundaries on the ground because they do not follow topographic features. The private lands on the west side of this area are rapidly developing with trespass onto the National Forest increasing. Preventing motorized intrusions would be a difficult management problem due to the existing Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail system and old dozer lines.

Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 2,031 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 13,655 acres, and Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 1,157 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: The attraction for OHV use relates to the trail network of 15 trails with approximately 41.6 miles of motorized recreation opportunities in the vicinity of the area. Only 4.3 miles of OHV trails are within the unit itself. The close proximity to cities like Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo and the desire for activities such as hunting, mountain biking, and hiking draw visitors to the area. The unit is part of the open space setting of the Pozo-La Panza OHV trail network. The trail network provides connected motorized trails that together provide the opportunity for recreation experiences in a natural landscape. These trails are located within and adjacent to Black Mountain.

Hunting and OHV use, including competitive events, are the main recreational activities of the area. The focus within this place is to support these activities. If the area was recommended as a wilderness the OHV recreation opportunities would be greatly reduced because the connections between trails would be lost, visitor use would likely be reduced and impacts to the remaining OHV routes would increase.

There is little opportunity for solitude despite the size of the area because it is entwined with the major OHV trail system. Opportunities for primitive recreation are limited although opportunities for semi-primitive recreation would remain in adjacent areas. No major challenges
in outdoor recreation management exist. No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Black Mountain.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** See the “Special Features and Values” section in the Capability section. There are a variety of wildlife species common across the Los Padres National Forest including deer, bear, gray fox, bobcat, mountain lion and other wildlife associated with chamise chaparral habitats. There are no fisheries in the area as this area is inland and receives little rainfall. There are Southern Pacific pond turtles (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*) in Navajo Creek and California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) fly over this area but do not use it as a roosting or nesting area. There are no unique habitats that only occur in this unit or that are not well represented in other areas of the Forest. The general area is popular with wild pig and deer hunters and access by vehicle to trailheads is important to their experience.

**Water availability and use:** A dozen wildlife-watering sources (guzzlers) have been constructed throughout the area but these have a minimal impact on the natural integrity on the area. There are fences around the guzzlers.

All of the watersheds within Black Mountain were judged as being of poorer quality once they reach private lands due to the presence of disturbances from development and grazing. Since these watersheds average over 50% private, the opportunities for further improvement of water quality by reducing access is limited. All of the watersheds eventually feed municipal water systems and therefore preservation of water quality is important.

**Livestock Operations:** There are one active and three vacant livestock grazing allotments and the Black Mountain Wild Horse Territory within and adjacent to the unit. The Black Mountain Wild Horse Territory supports approximately 20 horses. The wild horse herd needs to remain relatively undisturbed. Present management has been successful due to limited public access. Administrative motorized access remains an option for herd management.

These allotments and the Black Mountain Wild Horse Territory include 10 spring developments, 18.8 miles of fence and three stock ponds. The improvements could remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment and IRA related information for this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navajo-Active</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navajo-Black-Vacant</td>
<td>8,839</td>
<td>52.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwind-Vacant</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Creek-Vacant</td>
<td>5,915</td>
<td>35.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain Wildhorse Territory</td>
<td>13,762 (Total Acres)</td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,884</td>
<td>88.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timber:** Timber products may be created through the construction of Wildland Urban Interface defense zones along with thinning activities designed to improve the health of the remaining forest. These products and services will be needed to help enhance the forested environment and it move towards the condition where it has the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbances. Vegetation is 95% chaparral and 5% conifer species.
Minerals: There are recently active gold and uranium claims in the southeast portion of the area but these have been determined to be of low-grade quality. There is low potential for both strategic and non-strategic minerals and a low potential for saleable minerals such as gravel and building stone. Low potential exists for oil and gas and for geothermal and phosphates.

Cultural resources: There are a number of known archaeological sites of undetermined significance. The cultural and historic values within the Black Mountain unit are comprised of approximately 18 cultural and historic resource sites. The most significant are the traditional cultural properties (TCP) comprised of pictographs (rock art) and milling features. The Black Mountain area has only been partially assessed for heritage/cultural resources.

Authorized and potential land uses: The Black Mountain Communication site is located in the center of this roadless area although it has been ‘cherry stemmed’ out of the unit. It is accessible via an asphalt-surfaced road (29S10) and is located on top of Black Mountain. The FAA facility antenna dome can be seen from any ridge in the area and from most locations within the unit.

There is a PG&E power line and associated access road leading through the unit to the communication site. Additionally, there are 5.4 miles of roads under special use authorization within the area associated with the major electrical transmission line which runs just outside the southern boundary of the unit.

The air quality has been designated as “attainment” for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards. There are no private in-holdings within the unit.

Black Mountain has about 3,900 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) threat zone where fuel treatments should concentrate on reducing the potential for stand-replacing fires, “emphasis on reduction of ladder fuels and periodic reduction of surface fuels” (Forest LMP Part 3, Appendix K, page 82).

The area contains old bulldozer lines (pre-attack lines) along the main ridges. Many of these bulldozer lines are now used in the administration of the grazing allotments and some are part of the designated OHV trail system.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Black Mountain roadless area is eight air miles northeast of the Santa Lucia Wilderness (18,679 acres), four air miles northwest of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness (19,760 acres) and six air miles north of the Garcia Wilderness (14,100 acres). All are relatively small wilderness areas with limited access and low use, suitable for day trips and short overnight trips. The San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) is located 26 air miles to the southeast. The San Rafael Wilderness is much larger area than the other wildernesses in the area with several access points suitable for multiple day trips. The San Rafael also receives relatively light use with moderate use occurring on popular trails on certain weekends. All of these wilderness areas are located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use at
all Forest wildernesses is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The recommendation of this area as wilderness may not have any influence on visitor use of other Forest wilderness.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. The average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors; almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns were generally concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Most of the area surrounding Black Mountain Roadless Area is relatively undeveloped National Forest System lands. Some of the area is private land that provides no public access to National Forest System land. The National Forest System lands are mostly accessible to the public and offer a wide range of recreational opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There are no wildlife or plant species/habitats that would not survive in less than primitive surroundings. The Southern Pacific pond turtle occurs throughout the Los Padres National Forest and the population in this unit subsists mainly in ponds on private land. California condors are not using the area for roosting, nesting or feeding and other wildlife species associated with chaparral are common across the Forest and adjacent private lands. This portion of the Forest may be considered a link to the northern mountain ranges along the Temblors east of the Salinas Valley but movement of the species using the unit are not affected by current or foreseen management practices. Private land use surrounding this unit is primarily grazing which is generally compatible with wildlife movement compared to other more disruptive development such as farming/deer fencing or urbanization so the importance of Black Mountain as a corridor in need of protection is not outstanding.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. A few of the characteristics of this ecosystem are typical but are readily available throughout the character type.
Los Padres National Forest

Cuyma Inventoried Roadless Area

Mount Pinos Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 19,641 acre Cuyama Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Mount Pinos Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The area is in the Upper Cuyama Valley within an hour drive of the small communities of New Cuyama, Cuyama, Maricopa, Taft, Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. It is approximately two hours from Ventura and Santa Maria. The Tinta Motorcycle Trail (24W02) is along the southwestern boundary of the area and the adjacent Dick Smith Wilderness.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area is composed mainly of brush-covered foothills and canyons and some oak grassland. The southwest portion of the area has steep, heavy brush covered slopes. Elevations of this area range from approximately 3,000 feet to 5,878 feet at Cuyama Peak.

The unit is part of the central California coastal ranges including the alluvial plain along the Cuyama River and part of the Sierra Madre Mountains. The climate is hot and sub-humid to arid. The area includes steep mountains with narrow canyons, low hills and alluvial fans along the Cuyama River. The mountains are oriented from northwest to southeast, curving at the southeastern end to the San Andreas fault.

The majority of vegetation types are mixed chaparral and other shrub land types. Approximately one third of the total acres (900 acres) in Cuyama could support or were once coniferous types, including Bigcone Douglas-fir ($Pseudotsuga macrocarpa$) or conifer with chaparral understory. Annual grasslands (55 acres) are not very prevalent. There are pockets of canyon live oak ($Quercus agrifoilia$) and shrub land (which includes scrub oak) comprise about 110 acres.

Current uses of the area: There are three active livestock grazing allotments. There are no active mining operations in the area and no evidence of past mining activities.

The primary recreational uses of the area are nature viewing and hunting. Motorized access is limited to the Buckhorn (9N11) and West Dry Canyon Roads (8N19) along the west and north boundaries of the area and an OHV route (Tinta Trail 24W02) just outside the southwest boundary of the area. West Dry Canyon Road traverses into the area to access Cuyama Peak. There are no designated or maintained system trails into the area.

Buckhorn Road to the west and Dry Canyon Road to the south mainly border the Cuyama unit. Parts of these roads are included in the borders, including the section of road from the intersection of Tinta Trail with Dry Canyon. This part of the road is used to access Cuyama Peak.

The area has no identified water sources or helispots for fire management operations. Roads 8N19 and 9N11 and open fire lines/fuel breaks on ridges, along with safety zones, have been used for initial attack on wildfire starts and as contingency lines during extended fire periods.
Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The unit maintains a natural appearing landscape that serves as a scenic backdrop for the State Highway 166 corridor and the small communities of the Cuyama Valley.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: California condors (Gymnogyps californianus) take advantage of prevailing coastal winds to soar along the Sierra Madre ridge on the southern edge of this area. Cuyama Peak provides scenic views toward the Cuyama Valley.

Capability
The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Santa Barbara Canyon flows intermittently for about six miles along the western edge of this unit and supports some riparian vegetation but no fisheries, and has no surface diversions or impoundments. Other creeks in this arid part of the Forest only flow during the wettest part of the year.

There are no identified rare plant species or populations in the unit that are declining due to public uses and/or development occurring on National Forest System lands.

Most (87%) of Cuyama is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO), in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. Some (13%) is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO, in which management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Current conditions of the landscape indicate that these objectives are being met.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus species) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Other invasive plants found in the unit include star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis), tocalote (Centaurea melitensis), fennel (Foeniculum vulgare), salt-cedar (Tamarisk spp.), spotted knapweed (Centaurea maculosa) and tree tobacco (Nicotiana glauca).

The Cuyama unit is composed of four 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) watersheds: Berges Canyon-Cuyama River, Deer Park Canyon-Cuyama River, Rancho Nuevo Creek, and Santa Barbara Canyon.

See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. These watersheds are predominantly on National Forest System Lands with approximately 10% being on private lands. As a whole, these watersheds show poor flow characteristics due to channel disturbance. The overall rating for Cuyama is Class 2, functioning at risk. The potential for water quality improvement through channel improvements is good in this unit although access into the area to manage water quality would be influenced by the ultimate zoning designation.

The Cuyama roadless area is within a Forest-designated High Oil and Gas Potential Area. While all roadless areas are excluded from surface occupancy for oil development there could be oil development in adjacent areas.
This area has experienced relatively little wildfire over the past century. The vast majority of historic fire ignitions are the result of lightning. The only fire of significance to burn into Cuyama was the 2007 Zaca Fire which affected 3% of the unit. Fire suppression within Cuyama has left the forested areas in a condition where they are in a diminished capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbance. The density of the native stands is far above historic levels which as a result have increased the risk of stand replacing fires and major insect attacks. Forest products and watershed protection may be threatened due to the current condition of the forested areas in the unit. There has been almost no other modification of the natural vegetation by humans other than periodic wildfires that may be human-caused and light to moderate grazing of the small percentage of annual grasses.

The area has remained rural and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development other than a few ranches located outside the study area. Night skies are moderately clear.

There are no ecosystem or plant communities that could be considered rare or at risk in this unit. These dry chaparral communities are well represented both within the adjacent San Rafael Wilderness and along the north slope of the Sierra Madre Mountains.

**Undeveloped:** The management theme for this place is to maintain a scenic backdrop adjacent to a nearby agricultural setting. The emphasis is on non-motorized uses and grazing activities. The existing condition is that of a natural appearing landscape with roads and grazing activities that do not dominate the overall appearance. There are three grazing allotments.

There are approximately: 2.4 miles of Forest system road, 1.6 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 0.1 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 2.4 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 10.5 miles of undetermined roads.

The West Dry Canyon Road 8N19 to Cuyama Peak is partially within the unit and could remain if the unit were recommended as wilderness. This appears to be a mapping accuracy error when the roadless area was established.

There are 10.5 miles of undetermined roads, primarily in Pato Canyon and to a prospect near Gyp Canyon.

**Opportunities:** Cuyama provides a low sense of solitude, adventure, and self-reliance due to the proximity of State Highway 33 and the agricultural development in the Upper Cuyama Valley. The area along Dry Canyon Road 8N40C provides a higher level of solitude, adventure, and self-reliance since you are some distance from private land and do not have views of rural development or the State highway.

The landform slopes toward the valley floor assuring that the majority of the unit is exposed to views of the agricultural development below that limits the availability of having the feel of solitude, self reliance and adventure. Dense vegetation cover restricts movement within the unit, precluding much cross country travel that further restricts the opportunity for visitors to experience unconfined recreation.

Several unclassified and temporary roads, primarily from grazing permit and mining activities, have compromised the natural integrity of the area and opportunities for solitude.
Some (13%) of Cuyama is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective, in which lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant. Facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the Forest visitor. But most (87%) are managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS objective in which lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided.

Major recreational opportunities include hunting, nature viewing and OHV trail riding just outside the unit. Motorized access to Cuyama Peak provides scenic views and is the location of an abandoned fire lookout. There are no designated trails in the area.

Special features and values: There are no critical biological areas or special interest areas. There are no federally designated critical habitats. There are no distinct or unique landscape features.

Most of Cuyama consists of steep, dry, chamise chaparral ranging from about 5,000 feet above sea level down to about 3,000 feet near the Cuyama River floodplain. Because this area borders the Cuyama floodplain there is a small chance that several species diagnostic of the San Joaquin Valley may inhabit or move through the edge of this unit.

The Federally threatened Kern Primrose Sphinx moth (Euproserpinus euterpe) is found on flat alluvials along the east side of the Cuyama River adjacent to the unit. Although this occurrence is outside of Cuyama, there may be some isolated pockets of suitable habitat within the unit. The Federally threatened California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) may fly over this area but this unit is not a traditional roosting or nesting area. A Forest Service Region 5 Sensitive species - legless lizard (Anniella pulchra) is found in this area, although this species is widespread across the Forest and this unit does not provide any unique habitat.

There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this area. The former lookout tower on Cuyama Peak is used for scenic viewing of the area. The entire unit is a scenic backdrop for the Cuyama Valley and communities along State Highway 166 that is eligible for classification as a scenic byway.

There are no waterfalls or unique vegetative or wildlife habitats in this area. The Cuyama roadless area is a part of Los Padres National Forest wildlife corridor linking habitats near Mt. Pinos and the Santa Clara Valley to the Garcia and Santa Lucia Mountains to the north. Most wildlife follow rivers or ridges in their movements and this unit is mostly north sloping chaparral, so it in and of itself does not provide a unique or important linkage for wildlife. It is a part of a larger whole and at this time is not threatened as a wildlife linkage from human activity.

Cuyama has not been identified as a place that offers any particularly unique research natural areas or educational opportunities. Similar habitats exist along the north slope of the Sierra Madre westward to Rock Front.

Description of size and shape: The area could be difficult to manage as wilderness due to the large amount of interface with private land and the general inaccessibility of that interface to monitor for trespass activities.

Cuyama is 19,641 acres in size, sufficient in size to manage in an unimpaired condition. Most of the area has been successfully managed to retain a natural appearance where management activities are not evident. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Cuyama
could be considered manageable but there would be minor to moderate administrative challenges as described in this evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability”. The juxtaposition to private lands (and associated growth) may increasingly challenge management. Although the unit is adjacent to the existing Dick Smith Wilderness these external pressures will continue.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Designation of wilderness directly adjacent to a large extent of private property may create future conflicts as that private property continues to be developed.

Although the road to Cuyama Peak (8N19) is currently within the unit, it is evident the inaccurately placed ‘cherry-stem’ for the road and lookout tower was intended to exclude the road and lookout tower.

Where roaded fuel breaks and structures are near to the boundaries, adjustments should account for defensible space and fuel reduction projects that may use mechanized equipment or herbicide applications.

Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 2,141 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 17,452 acres, and Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 48 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Cuyama provides little opportunity for cross-country hiking (there are no maintained non-motorized trails in the area). Travel in most areas is difficult because of the steep terrain and heavy vegetation. The temporary and unclassified roads here could provide travel corridors in some of the canyon bottoms; however, they would be dead-end routes. Dispersed camping is allowed but water sources are very scarce in the area. The area also provides the opportunity for big game hunting (primarily deer), upland birds and small game hunting (primarily quail and rabbits). No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Cuyama.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: California condors require large tracts of natural landscapes in order to maintain viable populations. This endangered species occupies areas that are part roadless and part roaded. Current monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roaded areas is precluding the use of these areas by these birds nor does the data show that California condors use designated wilderness areas more frequently than non-wilderness areas. The recovery plan for the California condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species.

The historic range of the California condor has been substantially reduced due to increased human populations and developments. California condors have been reintroduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Cuyama roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in Cuyama are not substantially affecting the habitat of this species. A combination of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized land use designations would provide California condors with suitable
habitat while allowing wildlife managers to continue to use motorized vehicles in their conservation efforts.

Water availability and use: The watersheds that comprise the Cuyama roadless area are 90% National Forest System lands and thus are relatively undeveloped. Water quality from the Forest is good with the exception of periodic sediment loads caused by loss of vegetation cover from fires. The unit drains to the Cuyama River which eventually merges with the Santa Maria River to the west. It is a water source for several local communities and for ground water recharge.

Livestock Operations: There are three active livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include six spring developments and 2.9 miles of fence. The improvements could remain should the area be recommended as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burges-Active</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>8.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara Potreros-Active</td>
<td>12,533</td>
<td>63.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinta-Active</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,991</td>
<td>81.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Timber products, such as firewood, chips, and/or botanical products, may be created through thinning and fuelbreak maintenance activities.

Minerals: The area is available for oil and gas leasing and is identified as possessing high potential. Currently there are approximately 2,326 acres under application for oil and gas leasing. No surface occupancy would be allowed for any future lease granted within the unit.

Cultural resources: None of the Cuyama Inventoried Roadless Area has been assessed for heritage/cultural resources.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are three active grazing permits.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: This area has a complex fire regime that makes access for fire suppression activities, fire prevention and maintenance of fuelbreaks an important resource protection tool. Fuel break maintenance is especially important in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) threat zone and alongside roaded fuel breaks such as Sierra Madre fuel break.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of the area are the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Use in the
wilderness areas mentioned above is generally light except on a few holiday weekends and at a couple of popular destinations within the wildernesses.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM).

Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average visit lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits to this forest last less than 4 hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Currently, nearby undeveloped lands supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness. These lands, however, are going to decrease in acreage as the demands on public lands increase, resulting in increasing visitor pressure on other wildernesses. A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Mt. Pinos Ranger District is designated Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) or Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification. Many of the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences are available in these non-wilderness areas.

The Fox Mountain and the Malduce-Buckhorn Inventoried Roadless Areas, adjacent to this unit as well as the San Rafael and Dick Smith Wildernesses offer similar primitive opportunities: The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena.

Cuyama does not provide a particular or unique habitat or refuge for species that are not found abundantly elsewhere, and there are no threats within the unit or in other similar habitats elsewhere that would elevate the need to protect Cuyama as wilderness.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. A few of the characteristics of this ecosystem are typical but are readily available throughout the character type.
Los Padres National Forest

Diablo Inventoryed Roadless Area
Santa Barbara Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 19,608 acre Diablo Inventoryed Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Santa Barbara Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. Diablo is bounded on three sides by Forest Service administrative roads. These travel ways are typically referred to as Forest Service “jeepways,” because of their rugged nature and the need for all-wheel drive. The Forest Service road maintenance classification for these routes is a Level 2. The roads include the Hildreth Jeepway (6N17) on the west and north, the Potrero Seco Road (6N03) on the east and the Pendola Jeepway (5N01) on the south. Additionally, the unit is bounded on the west by the Agua Caliente Road (5N16) with approximately one mile extending into the study area terminating at Agua Caliente Hot Springs. The Hildreth Jeepway has been studied for future potential motorized public access opportunities. The Caliente Trail (25W06) begins at Big Caliente hot springs and traverses into the area. Part of the unit, approximately 2,000 acres, is located in the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Continuous dense chaparral vegetation with sandstone outcropping are the predominate features within Diablo. Diablo currently has diverse vegetation types. The major shrub land types are chamise (Adenostema fasciculatum) associations and ceonothus (Ceonothus spp.) mixed chaparral, with small acreages of montane chaparral, coastal scrub (scrub oak), coastal sage (buckwheat (Erigonum spp.) dominated) and upper Montane mixed chaparral. The Management Indicator Species (MIS) vegetation type is 710 acres of Bigcone Douglas-fir (Psuedotsuga macrocarpa) and 730 acres of Canyon Live Oak (Quercus chrysolepis). There are mixed conifer and pine associations as well. Barren areas also exist.

Current uses of the area: Public vehicle access does not occur on the portion of the Potrero Seco Road in this unit. The Big Caliente Picnic Area (and hot springs), Rock Camp Campground and Upper Caliente Campground are within the unit and contain improvements typically found in a developed recreation setting. The Big Caliente Picnic Area and Rock Camp Campground are both accessible by motor vehicle. The Big Caliente Picnic Area (and hot springs) has a two seat concrete block vault toilet, parking area for 8 to 12 vehicles, concrete in-ground bathing pool and an adjacent block dressing room. Rock Camp Campground is a two site campground providing parking spurs, picnic tables, single seat vault toilet building, barbeques and fire rings. Upper Caliente Camp is accessible by the Aqua Caliente Trail and is a rustic primitive camp site consisting of picnic table and a sheet metal stove.

Approximately 2,000 acres of the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area are located in this area. Use restrictions by Forest Order apply to this portion of the area. The restrictions include camping and fires only in designated campsites.

The 1.7 mile Caliente Trail (25W06) is the only designated system trail located in the unit. An unmaintained non-system section of the Caliente Trail extends additional 1.3 miles into this unit.
Camping, day and overnight hiking, hunting and mountain biking occur in Diablo. Hot springs are located on Aqua Caliente Creek along the Caliente Trail. Limited hiking and mountain biking opportunities are available on the Hildreth and Pendola Jeepways which border the area.

Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use by permit is available on the Potrero Seco Road on the eastern boundary of the area. Most of this use is adjacent to the unit, not within its boundary. Street legal motorized access to the public is allowed on the Potrero Seco Road on a permit basis issued by the Ojai Ranger District. Ten permits are issued daily for recreational use of a section of the Porter Seco Road from State Hwy 33 to a locked gate slightly north of Monte Arido Peak.

There are two vacant livestock grazing allotments.

Segments of fuel breaks here were type-converted to annual grassland so that topographical features could be used to contain wildland fires. In the past five years, fuel break maintenance occurred during large wild land fires. Currently, use is access/fuelbreak maintenance. Roaded fuel breaks surround (and in segments) and overlap this unit, including the P-Bar/Hildreth fuel break with Forest Routes 6N17 and 5N16 and the Monte Arido fuel break with Forest Route 6N03. There are two water sources and 27 helispots in the area identified for potential use during fire management operations.

There is an annual removal of yellow star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis) at the Pendola fire station. This work is done by hand and with volunteer labor. The actual area of removal is on the boundary of this roadless area but affects the movement of star thistle propagules into the unit.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The landscape attractiveness in Diablo is minimal, lacking in variety and distinctive features of landform, vegetation or water forms. The overall appearance of the unit is mundane; chaparral vegetation, rounded landforms, typical of the character type but lacking the variety found in other locations nearby.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The Agua Caliente Creek offer rare aquatic and riparian habitat in this otherwise dry and hot chaparral-dominated area. These creeks support several threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

The Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area extends into Diablo. Approximately 2,000 acres of the designated developed recreation area are within this unit. The emphasis within this recreation area is day use and overnight camping.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The unit is natural appearing and free of any noticeable disturbances. The unit has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development.

Approximately 81% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 19% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO in which activities can appear slightly altered but never
dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Currently all the lands within the unit meet and exceed these objectives. The reason for the Moderate SIO is because these sections of the unit are seldom seen.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* species) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Roads on the north and south boarders of the unit are infested heavily by invasive yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*).

Bullfrogs and tamarisk are found in the riparian areas and threaten aquatic species here.

Diablo is composed entirely of Agua Caliente Canyon, Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watershed which is entirely on National Forest Lands. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

Agua Caliente is a Class 2, functioning at risk, watershed. Existing issues that resulted in this rating are a lack of vegetation from recent fires, soil erosion and reduced soil productivity, altered channel function from excessive runoff, dams, and the presence of invasive species. This unit drains to the Santa Ynez which is a major municipal water source.

The naturalness of the area has been affected by fire history and fuels projects. Diablo has a long history of large fires burning substantial portions of the unit. Most of the area has burned twice over the past 100 years. The Zaca fire burned through all but the southwest corner of the unit in 2007. In addition, the Diablo prescribed burn was implemented in this area in 2000. In Diablo, the calculated rates of fire return range from 20 to 51 years.

There were about 27 suppressed fire starts from 1911 to 2009. One fuel project of about 11,000 acres was implemented in 2000. Reoccurrence of high-intensity fires may further type-convert the 1,700 acres of woodland vegetation within the unit. The 18,000 acre Diablo Prescribed Burn project (also noted as Camino Cielo Block L) was designed and implemented to reintroduce fire into the ecosystem for the benefit of reducing wild land fire effects, increase species diversity by creating a mosaic of vegetation age-classes and vegetation types and break the ‘destructive fire/flood cycle that exists’ in this area.

Undeveloped: Diablo is managed predominately for non-motorized use. Diablo is located in the interior of the Forest, remote from urban development and removed from major travel way ozone sources. As a result, air quality is good and likely to remain so. There are approximately 2.5 miles of Forest system road.

Permanent improvements in the southwest portion of the unit include two campgrounds and a developed hot springs. Rock Camp and Big Caliente Hot Springs are accessed from Forest Road 5N16 outside of the unit boundary. Upper Caliente Campground is accessed by the approximately 1.7 mile Agua Caliente Trail 25W06.

Opportunities: Diablo is a remote location with outstanding opportunities to experience adventure, self-reliance, and solitude. Approximately 91% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective in which lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided.
The remaining 9% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective in which lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. This 9% of the unit is because of the jeepway mentioned above that provides primarily administrative access to the area.

The area offers landscapes that are typical of the ecosystem but no outstanding or remarkable features that are not preserved elsewhere in adjacent designated wilderness.

Major recreational opportunities within the area include camping, day and overnight hiking, hunting, nature viewing; only one developed system trail exists in Diablo. Hot springs are located on Aqua Caliente Creek along the Aqua Caliente Trail. Motorized jeepways delineate the area boundary but are not located in the area. The Potrero Seco Road located on the eastern boundary of the area provides motorized OHV access by daily permit. The Hildreth and Pendola Jeep ways located on the west, north and southern boundaries are accessible for motorized administrative and fire management purposes only. All three jeepways also provide hiking and mountain biking opportunities. However, this use is limited as the roads are steep, lack water, and are extremely dry and hot during summer months.

Some experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Diablo. These benefits may include low to moderate opportunities to experience solitude and isolation from sights and sounds as access into the area is limited to one developed trail which is only maintained for 1.7 miles and 1.3 additional miles of unmaintained non-system trail. Physical and mental challenge, spirit of adventure and awareness, and sense of self-reliance and inspiration are low to moderate. Although Diablo provides a sense of remoteness for the southern California the area, dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel.

Special features and values: This unit contains one sensitive plant in its southwest corner, umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*). There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Diablo. The riparian areas of Agua Caliente and the Santa Ynez River support the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), the federally endangered arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), the sensitive southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) and two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*).

As noted above the most sensitive habitat is the aquatic riparian zone in Big Caliente and the Santa Ynez River. Arroyo toads, California red-legged frogs, two-striped garter snakes and southwestern pond turtles inhabit these reaches. There are also many neo-tropical migrants that use the riparian zone here including the sensitive willow flycatcher.

There are no Forest special interest areas in Diablo. There are no wild and scenic rivers or candidate rivers. The integrity of the landscape is essentially intact although there are no significant features.

Description of size and shape: The 19,608 acre Diablo roadless area is of sufficient size and shape to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. The area is almost completely bordered by administrative access roads primarily utilized for resource and fire management. The Hildreth Jeepway borders the east and north boundaries while Potrero Seco road borders the west and the Pendola to Monte Arido road borders the south boundary. These roads are for administrative access only and are closed to the public. However, the unit has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are
not evident. It is adjacent to the Matilija Wilderness to the east. The Mono area lies between this unit and the Dick Smith/San Rafael Wilderness to the north, portions of which have been proposed as wilderness in the Forest Plan. Thus, designation of Diablo in addition to the Mono recommended wilderness would create continuous wilderness from the Dick Smith/San Rafael to the Matilija Wilderness. However, the roads surrounding Diablo are used aggressively for fire management and suppression and only recently served as firebreaks for a fire that threatened to move south toward the community of Carpenteria. Designation of Diablo as wilderness leaves very little buffer to the coastal communities to the south and while fuels management might be carried on if the area is wilderness, it will be much more expensive and difficult to implement without road access. As mentioned, the area currently retains a primitive, undisturbed character while allowing sufficient access for wildfire protection.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Maintaining wilderness character would be difficult adjacent to the heavily used Agua Caliente Hot Springs, Agua Caliente Road, and Pendola area. The potential exists for vehicle trespass in this roadless area from the Potrero Seco Road. Mechanical and herbicide use occurs along the roadways and fuelbreaks.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 1,749 acres, and Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 17,859 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: There are no specific visitation figures available for Diablo. Big Caliente Picnic Area and Rock Camp lie within the unit and contain improvements typically found in the developed recreation setting: parking spurs, picnic tables, block toilet building, pit toilet, barbeques and fire rings. The hot springs area consists of a square concrete in-ground bathing pool and adjacent block dressing room. There is one Forest Service designated trail within the study area. The Caliente Trail (25W06) begins at the Big Caliente Hot Springs Parking Area and travels north three miles where it terminates near Upper Caliente Camp. The first 1.7 miles of the trail is designated system trail and the remaining 1.3 miles are non-system trail. Upper Caliente Camp is a single site rustic trail camp providing dispersed camping opportunities.

Future OHV route opportunities have been discussed for the perimeter ridge jeepways surrounding the Diablo roadless area. OHV access to the public is allowed on the Potrero Seco Road on a permit basis issued by the Ojai Ranger District. Ten permits are issued daily for recreational use of a section of the Porter Seco Road from State Highway 33 to a locked gate slightly north of Monte Arido Peak.

The designated Caliente Trail is located within Diablo. With the exception of this short 1.7 mile system trail and 1.3 mile non-system trail, recreational opportunities are limited to travel on jeepways and roads on the perimeter of the area. Off-trail access or cross-country travel is difficult in the heavy chaparral vegetation. Extremely rugged travel along the two main waterways could provide opportunities for very remote access and adventure oriented wilderness visitation. Mountain bicycles use the existing roads and jeepways that surround this area.
Motorized Off-Highway-Vehicle trespass does occur on the jeepways. There is one dispersed camp within the unit, Upper Caliente, located along the Aqua Caliente Trail.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: There are a few open ridgelines and open grassy habitats that are suitable as foraging areas for California Condor, a federally designated endangered species. Present use is limited but expected to increase as numbers grow to recovery levels. Condors have shown an ability to inhabit areas with much human development. They, like most other wildlife, are more adapted to unaltered habitats.

Agua Caliente and Rock Creeks are both federally designated and occupied critical habitat for the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), a federally designated threatened species. The former also supports a healthy population of California pond turtle (*Actinymes marmorata*), a federally designated sensitive species. Frog mortality as a result of vehicle traffic on the access road to Big Caliente Hot Springs is a subject of intensive monitoring conducted by the Forest. Sediment loads being delivered into Big Caliente Creek are only slightly elevated above natural background levels due to the recovery of vegetation after the Zaca Fire of 2007 and relative lack of roads and other human factors in the watershed. The frog population there is considered secure at this time. Sediment deposition into breeding ponds and upon egg masses is thought to be a major factor in the decline in red-legged frog populations in southern California. Natural deposition after fires has been an issue, particularly after large fires such as the Zaca Fire, that fill in breeding pools across the Santa Ynez drainage. At this time it is not felt that the roads in Diablo are a recovery issue for the California red-legged frog.

Water availability and use: There is a constructed road and water pond just inside Diablo. This is a debris basin that is filled with sediment and no longer functional but it does block movement of aquatic species upstream and downstream. The basin constructed in the 1930s spans Agua Caliente Creek at a height of over 100 feet. This man-made structure has backed up soil over the years creating a large silt basin now forested in cottonwood trees and a jungle of riparian vegetation. This impoundment is unsound and would not sustain the force of a winter flow if the sediments behind it were removed.

Two main waterways, Diablo and Agua Caliente Creeks, are located within the interior of this area. These drainages provide year round water flows with some deep pools and falls. These drainages flow into Gibraltar Lake and then down the Santa Ynez into Cachuma Lake, both of which are a municipal water source for Santa Barbara.

Livestock Operations: There are two vacant livestock grazing allotments in the Diablo unit. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caliente-Vacant</td>
<td>4,406</td>
<td>22.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potrero Seco-Vacant</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,075</td>
<td>25.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Timber products may be created through fuelbreak maintenance, road public safety activities, and thinning activities. Products include firewood, mulch/chips, and other botanical products, such as native plant seeds/acorns used for restoration projects.
Minerals: The entire unit is located within an existing watershed withdrawal that precludes mineral entry. There is no evidence of past mining activity.

Cultural resources: The cultural and historic values within the Diablo roadless area are comprised of approximately 35 cultural and historic resource sites. The most significant are the traditional cultural properties (TCP) comprised of pictographs (rock art) and milling features. The unit has been only partially assessed for heritage/cultural resources. Additional heritage resource evaluations are needed.

Native American Tribal Communities use forest lands also. There is no information that is specific to current Native American use of this area. Information available is at a broader scale than just this area. Traditional use of sites within Diablo may occur but it is not an activity that is shared since it has a religious/spiritual context.

Authorized and potential land uses: Restoration projects along the perimeter roads are in the initial design phase. They include invasive weed removal, potential native plant restoration/planting and hazardous fuel reduction projects. The Diablo Prescribed Burn project for resource management was reviewed and the NEPA decision confirmed in January 2007 (prior to the Zaca Fire).

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: There is a need for fire suppression access and stream channel maintenance as described above. Maintaining wilderness character could be difficult adjacent to the heavily used Agua Caliente Hot Springs, Agua Caliente Road and Pendola area. The potential exists for vehicle trespass into this roadless area from Potrero Seco Road.

Within Diablo, fuelbreak maintenance requires access along existing jeepways that are within and adjacent to the unit. The Hildreth Jeepway has been studied for future potential motorized public access opportunities.

The portion of the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area located within the unit restricts camping and campfires to designated sites.

Mechanical maintenance and herbicide application of fuelbreaks under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire (Diablo project), and road use and maintenance for pre-suppression activities (including use and maintenance of roadded fuel breaks) are valuable management techniques with applicability to this area. Management of invasive yellow star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis) could be affected by additional restriction on the use of mechanical treatments and application of herbicides to reduce this infestation within wilderness.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Located approximately four air miles north of this unit is the combined San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) and Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres). To the east, Diablo abuts the Matilija Wilderness (29,600 acres) for approximately six miles.

The Juncal roadless area is adjacent to Diablo (19,608 acres) and within 10 miles of the Madulce-Buckhorn recommended wilderness addition (5,360 acres) to the Dick Smith
Wilderness; the Mono recommended wilderness addition (27,012 acres) to the Dick Smith Wilderness; and the Matilija recommended wilderness addition (2,700 acres) to the Matilija Wilderness. All of these existing wilderness areas and recommended additions are of similar landscape character and wilderness characteristics.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Visitation in the San Rafael, Dick Smith, and Matilija Wilderness areas is considered light to moderate and areas show minimal impact from use. Each of these wilderness areas offers opportunities for similar experiences within similar ecosystems. There is little expectation that population changes will change use patterns to any significant extent.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Santa Barbara Ranger District is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM). Much of the Santa Barbara Ranger District non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes and provide opportunities for primitive outdoor experiences.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The most important species in Diablo are the riparian/aquatic dependent species mentioned above, that require healthy riparian and natural water flows, relatively free of invasive species such as yellow star thistle and bullfrogs. Upper Aqua Caliente Creek is a riparian wildlife corridor which connects riparian system corridors from the Cuyama and Sespe watersheds to the east. This connection is only for mobile non-aquatic species such as large mammals that prefer to travel riparian corridors including mountain lion (Puma concolor) and black bear (Ursus americanus). The upper Agua Caliente is also an excellent wildlife corridor for aquatic species within this drainage and also into the Santa Ynez, Mono and Indians drainage, all of which are important to several Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive species including the California red-legged frog (Rana aurora draytonii), arroyo toad (Anyraxis californicus), least Bell’s vireo
(Vireo bellii pusillus) and southwester willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus). The primitiveness of the surrounding landscape helps sustain good riparian conditions but is not essential. On the other hand, road and trail access are necessary if the debris dam were to be removed and if the star thistle is to be effectively controlled.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: Agua Caliente Canyon Creek is the main drainage for Diablo unit which in turn feeds the upper Santa Ynez River. The neighboring drainage is Mono Creek which, like Agua Caliente and the upper Santa Ynez, is an undammed stream containing high quality riparian habitat with landlocked populations of steelhead trout, red-legged frogs, pond turtles, and arroyo toads. The naturalness of the Diablo unit is an important factor for preservation of this ecological system.

There are better examples of the landform and ecosystem type in the nearby wilderness. This area illustrates many of the same characteristics; however, they are more prominent in the nearby areas.
Los Padres National Forest

Dry Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area

Ojai Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 17,048 acre Dry Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is 15 miles north of Ventura in the coastal mountain range within the Ojai Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. Access to the Dry Lakes area is from State Highway 33 (Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway) via the Ortega Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail (23W08) from the south, the Dry Lakes bulldozer line from the east and Cherry Canyon Road (6N01) from the north.

This area is adjacent to and due east of the existing Matilija Wilderness. It is separated from the Matilija Wilderness by a corridor containing a buried gas pipeline, a primitive road that is used by heavy equipment for pipeline maintenance and a northern portion of the Ortega OHV trail with its associated Ortega Trail Camp. The area is bordered on the south by Matilija Canyon and on the east and north by State Highway 33.

Two-thirds of Dry Lakes is bordered by State Highway 33, a major route to the Cuyama Valley that connects to the coastal Highway 101. Within a 100 mile radius are major communities from Santa Maria to the north, Los Angeles to the south and Santa Barbara and Ventura in-between. The management emphasis of the Highway 33 corridor is to provide these communities with accessible recreation opportunities. Private lands are located adjacent to the unit along the Highway 33 corridor and along Matilija Canyon Road on the northern and southern edges of the unit.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): Dry Lakes is in the San Rafael-Topatopa subsection of the Coast Ranges that is a transition between the Coast and Transverse Ranges of the ecological sub-regions of California. The topography is composed of steep drainages, relatively flat plateaus and gentle slopes. Elevations range from 1,300 to 5,850 feet above Ortega Hill. Prior to the 1985 Wheeler Fire the vegetation was composed of 6% conifer, 5% oak-grassland, 28% mixed chaparral and 61% other chaparral. However, the entire area was burned and vegetative re-growth may now vary somewhat. The area contains the 400 acre Dry Lakes Ridge Botanical Area that preserves remnant stands of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and several relict plant species.

Current uses of the area: Recreational use includes hiking, OHV riding, nature viewing and hunting. The Ortega OHV Trail (23W08) is a single-track motorcycle route which starts on Highway 33 and traverses across the center of the area for 6.4 miles to the Cherry Creek Road. A bulldozer line is used by the public for non-motorized access to the Dry Lakes Ridge Botanical Area from a turnout along State Highway 33. The Ortega Trail Camp is located on the Ortega OHV Trail.

There is a special use authorization for the gas pipeline and associated road in the area. There is no current mining activity or known historical mining activity in the area.

There are eight helispots identified for fire management operations within the unit but no water sources. Fuel reduction activities or pre-suppression fire activities occur alongside roads, in
defense zones from structures, on strategic ridgelines (or already established fuel breaks) and along motorized routes.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas):** The appearance of the area varies from open, dry lakebeds on a ridge top in the Botanical Area to vast chaparral covered slopes. The Matilija escarpment, exposed sandstone bedrock, is highly visible from Highway 33. The natural appearance and integrity of the area are very much intact although the buried gas pipeline access-way presents a minor scar along the western boundary.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** There are excellent vistas of the coastal range, coastline, and Channel Islands from Ortega OHV Trail, Dry Lakes Ridge and numerous turnouts along State Highway 33. The eastern edge of the area contains the scarp of a large landslide visible from State Highway 33.

The Dry Lakes Special Interest Area was set aside for its outstanding botanical values. The area encompasses over 400 acres of dry lakes formed from a relatively small internal basin located at the axis of a steeply folded anticline. Of botanical and scientific interest are the disjunct relict plant species including balsam lotus (*Lotus stipularis*), bitter dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus* ssp. *consimilis*) and broomrape (*Orobanche bulbosa*); none of which are found on nearby ridges. In addition, there are remnant stands of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*).

Belly Ache Spring is located in the southeastern portion of the unit. There is a waterfall that the public can access from State Highway 33. The reliable perennial water flow from Belly Ache Springs on the south-facing slope of Dry Lakes Ridge suggests that a large volume of water is retained in the strata.

**Capability**

The area's potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Approximately 88% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. Much of Dry Lakes is viewed from the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway.

The remaining 12% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear as slight alterations but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Currently all the lands within the unit meet and exceed these objectives although one area that underachieves is the ‘Tule slide’ that occurred along State Highway 33 in February, 1998.

Dry Lakes contains portions of Abadi Creek - Sespe Creek, Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija Creek and Tule Creek-Sespe Creek Hydrologic Unit Code 6 watersheds. See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf). The unit is at least 95% National Forest System lands and the watersheds comprising it are Class 1, properly functioning, with the exception of Tule Creek - Sespe Creek which comprises 36% of the watershed and is a high class 2, functioning at risk. The unit drains to the Sespe River. There are few water quality and species issues with this unit.
There are a few improvements in the unit, including the Ortega OHV Trail (23W08) that traverses the southern half of the area, Ortega Camp and the dozer line along Dry Lakes Ridge and adjacent to the Ortega Trail. An historic bulldozer line is used by the public for non-motorized access to the Dry Lakes Ridge Botanical Area from a turnout along State Highway 33. This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use. There are approximately 6.4 miles of motorized trail (Ortega Trail - 23W08) in the unit.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.). Other invasive plants found here include Spanish broom (Spartium junceum), star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis), tocalote (Centaurea melitensis), fennel (Foeniculum vulgare) and tree tobacco (Nicotiana glauca).

The land within Dry Lakes has an established history of periodic large wildfires. The entire area has burned twice over the past century with portions of the unit experiencing fire four or five times. There is a concentration of human-caused fire origins along the Highway 33 corridor in the southeast portion of the unit. The most recent fire of significance was the Wolf Fire in 2002. Nearly two-thirds of Dry Lakes has had more frequent fires than indicated by the natural fire regime of the ecosystem. The southern third of Dry Lakes is a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) threat zone that encompasses the entire Developed Area Interface (DAI) land use zone and more. This area would benefit from fuel reduction strategies that could keep wild land fires from spreading from the threat zones into the WUI defense zones that are close to the borders of the Dry Lakes unit. There is an overlap of WUI defense zones and Developed Area Interface within this roadless area.

Fire activity has altered the small stands of forested land within this unit over the past century. A reoccurrence of high intensity fires will continue to diminish and further type-convert remaining forest cover to shrub or grassland. The forested stands within this unit have lost the ability to recover from a wide range of disturbances and are important to the area’s ecology and biodiversity. Management activities would be needed to maintain, restore and enhance the values within this area for current and future needs.

Dry Lakes has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear.

Although the watersheds comprising this unit are rated as fully functioning overall, they are also uniformly rated as being subject to soil damage by the effects of ozone. This is due to the location of the unit on the Santa Barbara front and the proximity of urban communities.

Undeveloped: The emphasis is on recreation opportunities in concert with the Highway 33 corridor (Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway). More specifically, this recreation emphasis is on public access and improvement of developed recreation facilities. At least two-thirds of the boundary of Dry Lakes is immediately adjacent to State Highway 33.

There are approximately: 0.5 miles of Forest system road, 6.4 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, and 0.2 miles of road/motorized trail Special Use Permit (SUP)- other.

Opportunities: Numerous opportunities for solitude exist in spite of the views of Matilija Canyon Road (5N13), State Highway 33 and gas pipeline scars in portions of the area. The Dry Lakes and Tule Creek areas afford a certain amount of seclusion. Cross-country exploring, while providing some interesting challenges, is hampered by dense chaparral vegetation.
The Dry Lakes Ridge bulldozer line offers non-motorized access to Dry Lakes Ridge Botanical Area (a special feature) although part of this access route is quite steep.

There are a number of opportunities for primitive recreation associated with hunting and hiking along the buried gas pipeline corridor as well as hiking along Tule Creek. Approximately 89% of Dry Lakes is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective in which lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided.

Approximately 3% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective in which facilities blend in to the landscape to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

The remaining 8% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural ROS objective in which facilities provide some convenience for the visitor and borrow elements such as color and form from the natural surroundings. This objective allows for moderate interaction among visitors.

Recreational opportunities include OHV motorcycle riding, nature viewing and hunting.

Special features and values: The only two sensitive plants that have been found in this unit are a small population of California satintail (*Imperata brevifolia*) and scattered populations of late-flowering mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii* var. *vestus*). There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Dry Lakes.

Highway 33 which borders the unit is both a National Forest Scenic Byway and a State Scenic Highway. It is 37 miles long and extends from the edge of the city of Ojai to the junction of Lockwood Valley Road at the Ozena Fire Station.

A portion of Sespe Creek that is adjacent to the northern and eastern portion of Dry Lakes is being studied for inclusion as an additional Wild and Scenic River segment. The Dry Lakes watershed on the north side drops directly into the Sespe River is outside of Dry Lakes but is critical habitat for the southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and arroyo toad (*Anyaxus californicus*). This river is also occupied by southwestern pond turtles (*Actinimys marmorata*) and two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*). California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) occasionally fly over this area and may roost on the ridgelines. California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*) have been sighted in nearby Cherry Creek and there is also habitat for the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in this unit.

The Dry Lakes roadless area contains the entire 400 acre Dry Lakes Ridge Special Interest Area (SIA). The SIA was designated for its botanical interest including a remnant stand of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and a number of disjunct relict plant species including balsam lotus (*Lotus stipularis*), bitter dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus* ssp. *consimilis*) and broom-rape (*Orobanche bulbosa*). There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this unit.

Description of size and shape: The 17,048 acre Dry Lakes unit is 6.5 miles long, five miles wide and of sufficient size and shape to provide the solitude and natural surrounding expected of wilderness. The area is largely primitive and unmodified by human actions. However, the area contains the Ortega OHV trail that bisects the lower one third of the unit. The trail would need to
be closed or the wilderness boundary drawn to exclude the trail leaving a remainder that is reduced in sized and suitability for wilderness. Further, the area would continue to be influenced by being immediately adjacent to motorized use around the entire boundary, whether it is OHV use on the west, or State Highway 33 traffic to the east.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** A buried gas pipeline and the Cherry Canyon Road preclude this unit being contiguous with Matilija Wilderness. The boundary of the unit is along these features. The Ortega OHV Trail bisects the southern portion. With these constraints in mind a smaller parcel could have boundaries defined adequately. If the boundary were changed at Ortega Camp to run parallel to and north of the southern portion of Ortega OHV Trail the remaining northern portion of the unit would be reasonably manageable. This would allow continued use of the Ortega OHV Trail and continued mechanized maintenance of this trail. It would also delete over half of the “cherry stem” effect of the buried gas pipeline.

The southern edge of the unit overlaps with the defense zones of structures built just outside of the Forest boundary. Road pullouts with a buffer for fuel reduction activities should be maintained. Road buffers for fuel reduction work should be maintained at distances appropriate for public and firefighter safety.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 1,470 acres, Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 15,055 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 523 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific visitation figures are available for Dry Lakes. Visitor day use occurs primarily in association with Ortega OHV trail that currently has light use. The unit also provides opportunities for hunting, primarily deer and quail.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** Wildlife consists of bear, deer, mountain lion, bobcat, and coyote; smaller species include fox, mountain and valley quail, rabbit, raccoon, and gray squirrels.

**Water availability and use:** The major drainage for the northern portion of the unit is Tule Creek that flows easterly into Sespe Creek. The southern portion is drained by the north fork of Matilija Creek. All water from this unit ultimately contributes to the Ventura River and serves a large coastal population.

**Livestock Operation:** There are no livestock grazing allotments in this area.

**Timber:** The Dry Lakes Ridge SIA contains unique stands of ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) and other vegetation. Timber products may be created through the construction of WUI defense zones along with thinning activities or roadside safety clearance activities. These products and services would be needed to help enhance the forested environment and move it towards the condition where it has the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbances.
Minerals: The middle of the area contains the 1,500 acre Matilija escarpment. It is exposed sandstone bedrock that is highly visible from Highway 33. There are no mining claims in the area.

Cultural Resources: There are two archaeological sites within the Dry Lakes unit. These sites are simple lithic scatters with no formed artifacts or features. Additional assessments could provide more information regarding the archaeological resources in this unit.

Authorized and potential land uses: There is a special use authorization for the gas pipeline in the area.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: The buried gas pipeline will remain as a use in the unit into the foreseeable future. Due to required intermittent maintenance on the line with heavy equipment, the impacts associated with the pipeline and associated access-way are expected to continue indefinitely.

There is no management plan for the Dry Lakes Ridge Special Interest Area (SIA).

The existing Ortega OHV Trail cuts across this area and is used by motorcycles. This trail provides an opportunity for semi-primitive motorized recreation as it offers a challenging route suitable for experienced motorcycle riders. This is also the only motorcycle route on the Ojai Ranger District. Wilderness designation would eliminate OHV use and the need for mechanized maintenance of Ortega Trail. Previous routes were eliminated from motorcycle use by 1992 Wilderness legislation. Current maintenance practices rely on mechanized equipment including chainsaws and trail tractor. Loss of mechanized maintenance methods would seriously hamper the ability to keep the route adequately maintained for public use and to prevent resource damage.

Dry Lakes and the area adjacent to the upper Ortega OHV Trail serve an important function as a fire line during suppression activities. During the wildfires in the unit dozers created a swath cleared of vegetation. The trail was utilized as a fire line during the Wheeler Fire in 1985, the Wolf Fire in 2002 and the Day Fire in 2006.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of the area are the Matilija Wilderness (29,600 acres), Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres), San Rafael Wilderness (190,968 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (71,350 acres) and Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres). These nearby wildernesses collectively offer protection for similar types of natural ecosystems. They also offer similar non-motorized recreation opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness.
There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’ most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to the Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Ojai Ranger District is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. Many of the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences are available in these non-wilderness areas. The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There are no species in this unit that have demonstrated an inability to survive within less than primitive surroundings nor other unique scientific values or phenomena.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: Dry Lakes is typical of the Coastal Foothills Landscape composed primarily of chaparral with lesser portions of grassland, coastal scrub, and oak woodland. Some coastal sage may be present which needs to be protected from frequent fire return intervals. The unit does not have any particular geologic or vegetation feature that is not well represented elsewhere and in particular need of protection.
Los Padres National Forest

Fox Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area

Mt. Pinos and Santa Lucia Ranger Districts

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 52,109 acre Fox Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Mt. Pinos and Santa Lucia Ranger Districts of the Los Padres National Forest. The unit is bounded on the north by the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest, on the south by Sierra Madre Road (32S13) and the San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness, on the east by Santa Barbara Canyon Road (9N11) and on the west by Bates Canyon Road (11N01).

The unit is in the Upper Cuyama Valley within an hour drive of the small communities of New Cuyama, Cuyama, Maricopa, Taft, Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. It is approximately two hours from Ventura and Santa Maria.

Private land blocks access to the northeast side of the unit with the exception of Aliso Canyon. Other access points are from Santa Barbara Canyon, Buckhorn Road (N911) and Bates Canyon or trail access from Sierra Madre Ridge. There are parcels of private land within Fox Mountain.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Fox Mountain is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges sub-section of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. The mountains are oriented from northwest to southeast. The climate is hot and sub-humid to arid.

The unit consists of a steep mountain escarpment that stands in striking contrast to the flat, rural Cuyama Valley floor adjacent to it. Valley facing slopes are steep and periodically interrupted by narrow, highly eroded canyons and draws. In addition, there are scattered potreros (long mesas that slope upward towards higher terrain) on Sierra Madre Ridge. Creeks in this area provide intermittent streams flow during the wet winter months and drain into the Cuyama River to the north.

The elevations in this unit range from approximately 3,000 (in the foothills) to 5,843 feet at Peak Mountain. The vegetation is comprised mainly of chaparral (25,000 acres), sagebrush-dominated species (50 acres) and coastal sage scrub (9,000 acres). There are approximately 15,000 acres of pinyon - western juniper (*Pinus monophylla - Juniperus californicum*) associations with a pre-settlement regime of about 200 years between catastrophic wild land fires.

Current uses of the area: Recreation in Fox Mountain is relatively low because access is limited and it is ‘off the beaten path’. Some hunting occurs but the landscape is most prized for its dispersed recreation opportunities and scenic qualities. Some of the most popular activities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife (especially the California condor) viewing and hang-gliding. Most recreation travel occurs on the roaded perimeter of this area.

Four developed campgrounds are located at the edges of this unit. Bates, Painted Rock, and Aliso are accessible by road. The Salisbury Potrero Campground is also a primitive facility accessible only by the Bull Ridge Trail. These campgrounds have minimal development and may have tables, fire rings and primitive vault toilets.
Watersheds of this unit are the source of water for people living in the Santa Maria Valley.

The area currently serves as a scenic backdrop and open space visible from local communities and State Highway 166, the main road adjacent to the area.

The Bull Ridge (26W01), Salisbury Canyon (26W02) McPherson (27W01), Aliso (27W01) and Rocky Ridge (27W04) trails provide 19.9 miles of designated system routes. There is a ‘cherry-stemmed’ road (27W01) up Aliso Canyon from Aliso Campground to Hog Pen Spring.

The Olive Canyon Communication Site and associated road are located in Castro Canyon. McPherson Peak Communication Site is located along the Sierra Madre Road and is partially included in the unit. This may be a mapping error when the unit’s boundary lines were established.

There are three active livestock grazing allotments within the unit.

There are special use authorizations in Castro and Salisbury Canyons for water developments and associated access roads on the eastern side of the unit. There are special use authorizations in Schoolhouse, Stovall and Green Canyons for water developments and associated access roads.

There is evidence of historic oil and gas exploration and development; however, there are no current active mines or oil and gas developments within the unit.

Sierra Madre Ridge Road is the center of a key fuel break. This fuel break extends 300 feet to either side of the road. Segments of this fuel break were type-converted to annual grassland by the Forest so that the topographical features could be used quickly to contain any wild land fires. In the past five years, fuel break maintenance requiring the use of mechanized equipment occurred during the La Brea Fire. Not all of the pre-planned lateral fuel breaks were completed during the La Brea fire but many of the fire lines that were put in started from Sierra Madre fuel break. Mechanical maintenance and herbicide application on fuel breaks occur under normal (non-emergency) circumstances, prescribed fire, road use and maintenance and during suppression activities. The area has no identified water sources or helispots for fire management operations.

The Lion Canyon condor release site is located within the unit. This is one of the first condor release sites established in the early 1990s. It has since been abandoned because of difficult winter access on the Sierra Madre Road. There are no roads within the unit at present that were used for this release.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of the Fox Mountain unit is characteristic of the adjoining landscapes - steep mountain slopes and chaparral covered hillsides of dense vegetation. Potreros are distinctive along the ridge tops. (Some sections along the ridge tops were affected by human activity when vegetation was type-converted using herbicides.). There are also several private parcels within the unit.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: There are excellent vistas of the Dick Smith and San Rafael Wilderness areas. Lion Canyon and the potrero along Sierra Madre Ridge are unique landscape features. There is the moderate to high possibility for viewing a California condor while in the area.
Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: With the exception of remnants (less than three acres) of a few small oil and gas exploration sites the area is natural appearing and free of disturbances.

There are no system roads in the Fox Mountain unit. There are approximately 51 miles of undesignated roads in the unit associated with historic oil and gas exploration and development.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.) but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Disturbed areas have yellow star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis) and tocalote (Centaurea melitensis). A small infestation of Russian knapweed (Acroptilon repens) occurs along the Sierra Madre road south of Lion Canyon.

There are 2.9 miles of roads under special use authorizations not covered by grazing permits. There is no current access to private property in-holdings within the unit.

The land within this unit has a varied fire history. The southeastern portion has experienced numerous small lightning fires with few growing larger than ten acres; much of the land has never burned in recorded history. The central and northwestern portions of the unit show an extensive period of fires during the 1920s and 1930s with much of the land burning two or three times. More recently, the 2006 Perkins Fire burned a quarter of the land area within the unit. The 2009 La Brea Fire was the most recent incident of significance to affect the area, burning two percent of the unit. There is a risk that the shrub land areas here may type-convert to non-native, weedy species if there are too-frequent fires occurring.

Approximately 88% of Fox Mountain is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective, (SIO) in which the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 12% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO in which management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Current conditions indicate that these objectives are being met throughout the unit with the exception of a few minor disturbances from roads and communication sites. The integrity of the landscape is being maintained.

Similar and immediately adjacent to the Cuyama Inventoried Roadless Area, Fox Mountain sits at the upper end of a series of HUC 6 watersheds that drain northward to the Cuyama and contain large proportions of privately owned and heavily grazed land downstream. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Also similar to Cuyama, Fox Mountain is within a High Oil and Gas Potential Area with the possibility of immediately adjacent oil development. There are a number of HUC 6 watersheds situated such that the tops of the drainages are on Forest Service land and the lower parts are private. The most substantive of these watersheds are Bitter Creek - Cuyama River (1,146 National Forest System – NFS – acres), Branch Canyon Wash (11,318 NFS acres), Castro Canyon (6,566 NFS acres), Cottonwood Canyon - Cuyama River (973 NFS acres), Salisbury Canyon Wash (10,786 NFS acres), Santa Barbara Canyon (6,003 NFS acres), Schoolhouse Canyon – Cuyama River (5,926 NFS acres), Tennison Canyon - Cuyama River (4,937 NFS acres) and Wells Creek (4,937 NFS acres).
acres). These watersheds add up to 51,849 acres of this 52,082 acre roadless area. The watersheds are uniformly Class 1, functioning properly, with few resource issues on NFS lands. However, these watersheds are privately owned on the lower reaches where there is more soil disturbance from extensive grazing and which add up to approximately 50% of the total area. Thus, water quality is influenced by downstream conditions regardless of the Federal management status of the unit. Opportunities to improve water quality by restricting access to NFS lands are limited.

An important component within Fox Mountain that may need protection from the effects of severe wild land fires are the 300 acres of hardwood stands of mixed hardwoods and valley foothill riparian stands. The pre-suppression fire regimes for these stands are low severity but relatively frequent fires. The Forest plans to complete environmental analysis for fuel breaks here within fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development other than the small communities adjacent to the area along the valley floor outside the unit. Night skies are clear with very little disturbance or influence from outside sources. There are no activities that are related to heritage/cultural resource that are known to have caused effects to the ecological processes of this unit.

Undeveloped: This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use. Four developed campgrounds, Painted Rock and Aliso are located in this area and are accessible by road. The Salisbury Potrero Campground is accessible by trail. These campgrounds have minimal development and may have tables and primitive vault toilet. These facilities relocated at the fringes of this area; however, the presence of these facilities does raise the development level of the area.

There are approximately: 1.3 miles of Forest system road, 16.1 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 2.9 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, 2.0 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails, and 19.0 miles of designated trails.

Designated Communication Sites are located in Castro Canyon and along the Sierra Madre Ridge/Road at McPherson Peak.

The air quality for the HUC 6 watersheds in this unit are consistently ranked Class 2 or functioning at risk, even though the overall rating for the watersheds is Class 1 functioning properly. This means other factors override air quality, which is influenced by proximity to the I-5 corridor and the landlocked nature of the Cuyama Valley. Continuing population growth and traffic in the Valley are projected to continue this trend.

Opportunities: The area provides a high sense of solitude, adventure and self-reliance due to the steep landform, vegetative cover and lack of major development as well as the overall size of the unit, although the non-motorized area presents views of the rural and agricultural activities in the Cuyama Valley. Travel within the unit is difficult for the same reasons.

The landform slopes toward the valley floor assuring that the majority of the unit is exposed to views of the agricultural development below that limits the availability of having the feel of solitude, self reliance and adventure.

The motorized area provides the opportunity for hiking, hunting, primitive camping, riding and packing on the maintained trails. Travel off maintained trails in most areas is difficult because of
the heavy vegetation. The temporary and unclassified roads would provide travel corridors in most of the canyon bottoms and some ridge tops; however, access is blocked by private land. Dispersed camping is allowed, however water sources are very scarce in the area.

Approximately 6% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective. This means that lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant. Facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Approximately 94% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS objective. This means that lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Four seldom-utilized hiking trails exist in the area provide access for day hiking, hunting and nature viewing. The area serves more as an open space backdrop than as a recreation area.

Fox Mountain is a good location to observe the California condor as it flies along the ridgelines but there are no established observation sites.

Special features and values: The Fox Mountain unit contains about 50% of the 5,592 acre Sierra Madre Special Interest Area, (SIA). This SIA was designated for its cultural significance. It expands the Eastern Sierra Madre Ridge Archaeological District that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is noted for its traditional values of importance as well as archaeological sites. There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers or candidate rivers within this area.

There are no identified rare plant species or populations that are declining due to public uses and developments occurring on National Forest System lands. This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Fox Mountain. All of the following plant species are known to occur in areas within and outside of the unit: Blakeley's spineflower (*Chorizanthe blakleyi*), umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*), Fort Tejon woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum var. hallii*), pale-yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*), and Parish's checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii ssp. parishii*).

Description of size and shape: Fox Mountain is 52,109 acres, sufficient in size to manage in an unimpaired condition. Most of the area has been successfully managed to retain a natural appearance where management activities are not evident. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Fox Mountain could be considered manageable but there would be minor to moderate administrative challenges as described in this evaluation especially in the following section and under “Availability”. The juxtaposition to private lands (and associated activities including oil and gas exploration) may increasingly challenge management. Although the unit is adjacent to the existing San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness, it will continue to be separated by the Sierra Madre road corridor which is intensively and repeatedly treated as a fuel break. These external pressures are expected to continue.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Designation of wilderness directly adjacent to the large extent of private property will probably create future conflicts as the private property continues to be developed along the Forest boundary. A boundary adjustment in the Olive Canyon area would avoid the electronic site becoming a non-conforming use.
There may be a need to adjust the boundary in upper Lion Canyon to accommodate continued California condor releases and supplemental feeding activities and to address high oil and gas potential along the northeast boundary of the area. Boundary adjustments to allow for routine fire prevention patrols, invasive weed removal and roadside hazardous fuel reduction projects would be needed to maintain the area and safeguard the area from degradation.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 2,874 acres and Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 49,235 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** Recreation use in this area is relatively low because access is limited and is ‘off the beaten path.’ Fox Mountain provides minimal opportunity for cross-country hiking as most of the area is difficult because of the steep terrain and heavy vegetation. No specific visitation figures are available for Fox Mountain.

The area also provides the opportunity for big game hunting (primarily deer) and upland birds and small game hunting (primarily quail and rabbits).

Experiential benefits to the visitor to this area are low to moderate because of limited access and steep terrain. The opportunity for solitude and isolation is conditioned as the north facing scenic views look directly into the rural and agricultural area of Cuyama Valley floor. South facing vistas provide a more favorable sense of solitude and the view looks into the mountains and ridges of the San Rafael Wilderness. Steep brush covered terrain provide a difficult physical and mental challenge to any travel off the roads and trails. The unit is relatively large at 52,109 acres but access into it is limited.

Four campgrounds are located in this unit. Three are accessible by road and one only by hiking trail. About 19.9 miles of hiking trail are located in this unit, providing routes that generally traverse the area from a north-south orientation.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** The historic range of the California condor has been substantially reduced due to increased human population and development. California condors have been re-introduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Fox Mountain roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in the Fox Mountain roadless area are not substantially affecting the habitat of this species. Wildlife biologists currently use management practices to protect, enhance, and conserve this species that are not generally consistent with wilderness management objectives (e.g. use of motorized vehicles to transport, release, and monitor individual animals and to place supplemental feed). A combination of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized land use designations could provide California condors with suitable habitat while allowing wildlife managers to continue to use motorized vehicles in their conservation efforts.

California condors require large tracts of land in order to maintain viable populations. Currently, this endangered species occupies areas that are part roadless and part roaded. Current monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roaded areas is precluding the use of these areas by
these birds nor does the data show that California condors use designated wilderness areas more frequently than non-wilderness areas. The recovery plan for the California condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species.

This north slope of the Sierra Madre Mountains is a minor part of a wildlife corridor along the Sierra Madre Ridge. Most species use riparian zones or ridgelines to travel between populations and this unit starts at the ridgeline and goes northward along the slopes. Although wildlife use this area and the ridgeline along the upper edge and the small creeks running north and south to travel short distances, these north facing slopes in the unit are not used heavily as a corridor. Similar wilderness habitats are abundant in the San Rafael Wilderness area adjacent to and south of the Fox Mountain.

Water availability and use: The headwaters of the watersheds within this unit are in good functioning condition and water quality is subsequently good from Forest Service lands. The lower parts of the watersheds are private lands that are heavily grazed with subsequent impacts to water quality. Streams from a series of canyons are intermittent and flow to the Cuyama River which eventually confluences with the Santa Maria River and provides municipal water to several communities. There would be little likelihood of improving water quality by restricting access to this unit and would only serve to limit management options in event of fire.

Livestock operations: There are three active livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include the following range improvements: 48 spring developments, one corral, two stock ponds and 22.3 miles of fence. The range improvements could remain should the area be designated wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliso-Active</td>
<td>3,116</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Canyon-Active</td>
<td>13,854</td>
<td>26.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara Potreros-Active</td>
<td>27,015</td>
<td>51.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43,984</td>
<td>84.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: No timber products are available within this unit.

Minerals: The area is available for oil and gas leasing and has high potential; however, the area between Montgomery and Salisbury Potreros is withdrawn from surface occupancy (see the Availability of Forest Lands for Oil and Gas Leasing map in 1988 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan).

Cultural resources: Portions of the Sierra Madre Cultural Resource Area are included in the unit. More than any other area on the Los Padres National Forest, the Sierra Madre area (within the Fox Mountain roadless area) is known for its rich cultural history and resources. It has the most extensive (pictograph) rock art sites and is considered an ‘Archaeological District’ as criteria for National Register listing. Numerous documentation and reports have been written regarding the rock art sites within the Sierra Madres area.

There are over 54 documented archaeological sites within the Fox Mountain roadless area, the majority consisting of rock art with associated milling features and possible ceremonial features. Additional heritage/cultural resources within this unit are remnants of historic camps, small lithic
reduction and Native American (Chumash) subsistence sites. Native Americans use the area for religious and traditional activities as well as traditional material gathering.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** There is a communication site in Olive Canyon and associated road special use authorization in Castro Canyon. The first quarter mile of road is multi-purpose (providing access to both range improvements and the communications site) while the remaining 2.9 miles of road are for access to the Olive Canyon Communication Site and water development special use authorizations and associated roads in Castro, Salisbury, Schoolhouse, Stovall and Green Canyons. The unit also partially includes the McPherson Peak Communication Site.

**Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands:** Wilderness designation may complicate implementation of fuels treatment projects and the maintenance of the Sierra Madre fuel break system (approximately 37 miles in length). Access for patrols and engine crews would allow for routine fire prevention and hazardous fuel reduction projects alongside the road prism. Several roads provide access to three developed recreation campgrounds. Access and use of these sites is generally dependent upon motorized access.

Overall the Fox Mountain unit is the most sensitive unit for heritage/cultural resources. Wilderness designation would benefit these resources through restriction of specific activities that may cause ground disturbance or alter the existing environment.

There are two small private in-holdings within the unit. The parcel in Cox Canyon is currently being acquired by the Forest Service. The other parcel in Goode Canyon is not currently accessed by road.

This unit contains a natural wildlife setting and has not nor is presently accessed by any roads that are used to manage wildlife. Even if the Lion Canyon condor release site were to be used again it would not require road access into this unit.

The Fox Mountain boundaries overlap some sections of Sierra Madre Road, Buckhorn Road and roads to a communication site. Access roads are critical in initial attack. Mechanical maintenance and herbicide application of the roaded fuel breaks occurs under normal (non-emergency) circumstances are valuable management techniques with applicability to this area.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Within a 20-mile radius of the area are the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), the Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), the Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and the Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres). The Fox Mountain unit is adjacent to the San Rafael and Dick Smith Wildernesses as well as the 19,641 acre Cuyama roadless area.

The unit is of sufficient size and shape to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. Most of the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident.
Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses nearby and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as Wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use visits. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There is a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Recreation use in the study area is light and would likely remain available for opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation use even if this area was not designated as Wilderness. The adjacent large wilderness areas adjacent to the study area will continue to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation use.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The landforms in this unit provide uplifting winds which attract condors to fly along it, particularly in their north to south migrations. There are also historic roost/nest sites in Lion Canyon. The same winds that attract the condors make the ridgeline suitable for wind energy development, which can cause fatal collisions between soaring condors and the wind generators. To the extent that wilderness designation would minimize wind development in this unit beyond existing measures, such designation could benefit the condor.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. The characteristics of this ecosystem are typical and readily available throughout the character type. There are no unique features or shortage of examples of this character type.

This unit is not identified as an area of ecological sensitivity in the Southern California Mountains and Foothills Assessment. The area is composed of a series of canyons with
intermittent and ephemeral streams that drain northward to the Cuyama and extend well beyond Forest boundaries so that water quality is more a function of downstream uses on private land. This unit therefore has little importance to preservation of ecosystems.
Los Padres National Forest

Garcia Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area

Santa Lucia Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 7,848 acre Garcia Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Santa Lucia Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest at the southern end of the Santa Lucia Mountains.

The area consists of four separate sections adjacent to the existing Garcia Wilderness. Three parcels are located near Stony Creek along the southern boundary of the Wilderness and one along the northwestern side near Hi Mountain.

In general, these parcels are bounded on the south by the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest and private lands; on the east by private lands, and Branch Creek Road (30S02) and Branch Mountain Road (31S02); and on the northwest by Pozo – Arroyo Grande Road (30S05) and private lands. The unit is located within 15 to 20 miles of the city of Arroyo Grande and near several central coast communities.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): Garcia Mountain is within the coastal foothills landscape that generally lies on the coastal side of the mountains at lower elevations and is vegetated with chaparral and oak woodlands. It is relatively gentle hilly terrain with some exceptions.

Elevation ranges from 1,500 to 2,700 feet. Vegetation is primarily chaparral. Pine ridge, along the southern boundary of the Garcia Wilderness, is an extremely broken sandstone formation with numerous erosion-caused caves, cavities, and ledges.

The general vegetation types in Garcia Mountain are comprised mainly of 1,500 acres of mixed evergreen woodland and shrublands. The chaparral types found within this unit are mixed chaparral and chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum) chaparral. The mixed evergreen or hardwood forests are composed of coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia) woodland, blue oak (Quercus douglasii) woodland, and about 23 acres of valley oak woodland.

Current uses of the area: Recreation use includes day-use hiking, nature viewing and photography, hunting and OHV riding. System non-motorized trails are limited. Only the Trout Creek Trail (15E06) traverses within the southern edge of the northwestern Garcia Mountain unit. Approximately 0.1 miles of trail 16E06 (Stony Creek Trail) also briefly traverses the the unit. Another non-system hiking trail connects Forest Road 30S02 to trail 16E06 in the eastern section of this unit. The Garcia OHV trail (15E11) is 4.5 miles in length, begins near High Mountain Campground and runs through the northwestern portion of the unit.

There are three active and one vacant livestock grazing allotments.

There is one water source and 18 helispots identified in the area for potential use during fire management operations. The roads in this area also serve as firebreaks, including 31S03 within the unit.
Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The four separate sections of this roadless area are generally uniform in their appearance. The landscape attractiveness is minimal, lacking in variety and distinctive features of landform, vegetation or unique waterforms. The overall appearance of the unit is typical chaparral and oak woodland on gentle hilly terrain. The broken sandstone formation with numerous erosion-caused caves, cavities, and ledges along Pine Ridge at the southern boundary of the Garcia Wilderness does provide minimal enhancement to the character of this area.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: Short lengths (less than 200 meters) of Trout Creek and Stoney Creek and the upper Salinas River are included in the Garcia Mountain roadless area. All three of the watersheds have California red-legged frogs (*Rana aurora draytonii*) within the entire watershed boundary but only the unit in the Salinas River has the red-legged frog. The California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*) has been seen in Trout Creek but not Garcia Mountain.

Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The southern piece of the unit includes 1.4 miles of the Pine Creek Road (31S03) that accesses private lands within the area. Approximately 58% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 42% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear to slightly alter the landscape appearance but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed.

The headwaters of the Salinas and Huasna Rivers originate along the flanks of Garcia Mountain adjacent to this unit. Garcia Mountain has been fragmented by creation of the Garcia Wilderness which was carved out of the center of the larger area leaving several disjointed areas around the perimeter still classified as the Garcia Mountain roadless area. The fragments and HUC 6 watersheds involved are Arroyo Seco, 3,533 acres; Big Spring-Salinas River, 1,947 acres; and Upper Huasna River, 2,241 acres.

See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed.Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed.Condition_Framework.pdf). The watersheds are classified as Class 1, functioning properly. Two of the watersheds, Arroyo Seco and Upper Huasna, are approximately 66% privately owned which are judged to be poorer functioning than National Forest System lands because of greater development and disturbance.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the units but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here.

The three discontinuous sections of this unit have all experienced large fires in the past 100 years, collectively burning over 99% of the land area. The area has relatively few fire ignitions and all notable fires began outside of the current boundary. The 1988 Camp Fire affected only the westernmost portion of the unit and burned 57% of the area. The following tables display fire related information:
Garcia Mountain IRA Fire History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most recent fire</th>
<th>1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic fire ignitions within the unit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant fires in the unit</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large fires (burning &gt;10% of the unit)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Garcia Mountain IRA Notable Fires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of unit Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unnamed)</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unnamed)</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unnamed)</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Largest fire on record in unit.

All three sections of the unit are in the WUI Environment. The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear. The unit is relatively isolated from major travel ways and communities. Nor are there sources of atmospheric particulates from local activities. Air quality is good.

Undeveloped: Management emphasis in this unit is on livestock grazing and wildlife habitat as well as improvement of partnerships with adjacent landowners.

There are approximately: 1.7 miles of Forest system road, 4.6 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 5.0 miles of Special Use Permit Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 4.7 miles of Special Use Permit-Other roads/motorized trails, and 0.7 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

There is approximately 0.1 miles of Forest Designated Trail 16E06 (Stony Creek Trail) which briefly traverses into the unit. The Trout Creek Trail (15E06) traverses within the southern edge of the northwestern Garcia Mountain unit and non-system hiking trail approximately 2.3 miles long connects road 30S02 to trail 16E06 in the eastern parcel of this unit. The Garcia OHV trail (15E11) is 4.5 miles long in this unit.

Opportunities: The opportunity for solitude is high. Approximately 84% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 16% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities
are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Major recreation opportunities include day-use hiking, short backpacking trips, hunting, horseback riding and OHV riding. Some experiential benefits are available to the visitor within the three parcels of Garcia. These benefits may include low to moderate opportunities to experience solitude and isolation from sights and sounds as access into the area has limited developed trails and an unmaintained non-system trail. An OHV route and other roads on the perimeter of this area reduce the opportunity for solitude.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, spirit of adventure and awareness, and sense of self-reliance and inspiration are low to moderate. Although Garcia provides a sense of remoteness for southern California, the area, with dense chaparral and steep slopes, precludes much cross-country travel.

Special features and values: There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this area. The unit contains no distinctive landscape features and is typical of the landscape character type.

These units contain occurrences of a few sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Garcia Mountain. All of the following plant species are known to occur in areas within and outside of the unit: Palmer's mariposa lily \( (Calochortus palmeri \text{ var. palmeri}) \), San Luis Obispo mariposa lily \( (Calochortus simulans) \) and Umbrella larkspur \( (Delphinium umbraculorum) \).

Stoney Creek borders the southern end of the westernmost unit of the Garcia Mountain roadless area and a small portion of the upper headwaters is within the unit. Lower reaches outside of the unit sustain permanent pools of water that support the California red-legged frog \( (Rana aurora draytonii) \). There are also records of the California spotted owl \( (Strix occidentalis) \) in the dense live oak canopy of Trout Creek outside of the unit. This important riparian area supports many aquatic species and wildlife that depend on riparian ecosystems. Dense chaparral in most of this unit supports species usually associated with brush such as the California quail, cottontail rabbits, gray fox, and bobcat. The rock outcrops along Pine Ridge likely support bat species that use rock cavities such as the sensitive pallid bat \( (Antrozous pallidus) \).

Description of size and shape: The potential for trespass from private properties is high due to the proximity of the unit’s boundary lines. The 7,848 acre Garcia Mountain unit is of sufficient size to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition when combined with the existing Garcia Mountain Wilderness. Most the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Garcia Mountain could be considered moderate to major challenges because of the extent of private lands adjacent to the parcels. The area maintains a primeval character but is highly influenced by the activities such as the OHV recreation.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: The high degree of private land interface with the unit boundaries would make for incompatible activities occurring adjacent to the unit if designated wilderness. Established boundaries would make wilderness management difficult and costly. Regardless of boundary modifications, current mountain bike use within the unit would be non-conforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness.
Access for fire suppression and fire prevention patrols is important in this unit. The current boundaries overlap some road segments and could be adjusted to continue to allow transportation for multiple purposes.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 869 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 5,795 acres, and Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 1,184 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: Annual recreation visitor days are primarily associated with hunting and motorized activities. No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Garcia Mountain. The study area is seldom, if ever, utilized for primitive camping.

The natural integrity of the area is high. A major attraction of the area is off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Hi Mountain Campground (outside the unit) is accessible by vehicle except during wet weather. Hunters use the area heavily in the fall. Other uses include mountain biking, hunting and horseback riding.

Nearby ridge tops outside the unit are used to observe the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*).

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: The southeastern two sections of this unit support grazing operations that are compatible with wildlife if managed for light to moderate grazing. Access for wildlife viewing and hunting into this area is limited by private property. Marijuana cultivation also introduces herbicides and pesticides into the watershed as well as reducing chaparral understory habitat. There are no roads necessary to manage particular issues with wildlife species in this unit.

Water availability and use: The headwaters of the Salinas and Huasna Rivers originate along the flanks of Garcia Mountain. The Salinas River flows north and serves the important agricultural industry and municipalities of the Salinas valley. The Huasna River flows south and is part of the Cuyama/Santa Maria River system and serves similarly important agricultural and municipal uses.

Livestock Operations: There are three active and one vacant livestock grazing allotments as displayed in the table below. These allotments include the following range improvements: four spring developments, one stock pond and 3.5 miles of fencing. The improvements could remain should the area be designated as wilderness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnold-Active</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenales-Active</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>21.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huasna-Active</td>
<td>4,189</td>
<td>53.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trout Creek-Vacant</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>23.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,836</td>
<td>99.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timber: Timber products may be created through roaded fuel break maintenance and thinning activities designed to improve the health of the oak woodlands and the serotinous conifer stands. These products and services will be needed to help enhance the forested environment and move it towards the condition where it has the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbances.

Minerals: The area is classified as having moderate oil and gas potential. The entire area is considered low potential for phosphate, geothermal energy and locatable or saleable minerals.

Cultural resources: A total of five archaeological sites exist within the segments of Garcia Mountain roadless area. Less than half of these segments have been surveyed for heritage/cultural resources so there may be more resources than identified through existing survey information. The five sites consist of small lithic scatters and seasonal subsistence camps with bedrock mortars. These sites would be enhanced by wilderness designation since there would be less proposed project activities under the restrictions for wilderness areas.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no additional authorized or known potential land uses within this unit.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: The area is designated as “attainment” for all National Ambient Air Quality standards for Class II air sheds and will be managed to meet Class II standards if designated as wilderness.

The 720 acres of forested stands within this unit have lost the ability to recover from a wide range of disturbances because the forest stands would typically have had lighter, more frequent surface fires. Instead, this area has little recorded fire history.

The desired values within this watershed are for forested stands to be in a healthy condition. They are at greater risk of being consumed in a large wild land fire because the fire history has been altered in the few stands. Even mature individual trees may suffer mortality and have crown fires in severe fires if the surrounding matrix has ladder fuels. For these reasons two segments of the unit were under consideration for project environmental analysis in the near future. If these areas are designated as wilderness, allowance for fuel projects and fire prevention activities could safeguard these resources.

Each of the parcels within the unit is adjacent to private lands. There would be additional boundary management concerns of encroachments from private lands.

There is one section of the unit, close to Ranchita Estates, in the WUI Threat Zone. CALFIRE is planning to complete fuel breaks to protect the community. The Forest plans to tie in to their fuel breaks to provide an effective network of fuel breaks on both private and public lands. The Forest is in the initial project design for a prescribed fire and maintenance of roaded fuel breaks in two segments of the unit. There is overlap of the unit’s boundary with some of the roads outside the boundary that could compromise access for fire suppression and fire prevention patrols.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.
Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Garcia Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area is three parcels of land, all adjacent to the 13,933 acre Garcia Wilderness. The additional acreage of the unit could add similar types of landscape to the wilderness.

Garcia Mountain is two air miles east of the Santa Lucia Wilderness (18,679 acres) and one air mile northeast of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness (19,760 acres). All are relatively small wilderness areas with limited access and low use, suitable for day trips and short overnight trips. The San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) is located 26 air miles to the southeast. The San Rafael Wilderness is a much larger area than the other wildernesses in the area with several access points suitable for multiple day trips. San Rafael also receives relatively light use with moderate use occurring on popular trails on certain weekends. All of these wilderness areas are located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the district and forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other Wilderness area.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM). Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). In general, use patterns will be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Much of the non-wilderness lands on the Santa Lucia Ranger District encompass similar landscapes and recreation opportunities. Most of the area surrounding Garcia Mountain area is relatively undeveloped National Forest System lands. Some of the area contains private lands with no access to public lands. The National Forest System lands are accessible to the public and offer a wide range of recreational opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values
or phenomena: There are no wildlife species that need this area that require a primitive setting in order to survive. The wildlife species present, including the California condor, California red-legged frog and California spotted owl, all of which occur nearby or within the unit and are able to survive without designating this area as wilderness.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The landforms and ecosystems of the area are common and not in need of preservation, although the limited access and relatively preserved nature of the area suggest that the area will remain intact for the foreseeable future.
Los Padres National Forest

Juncal Inventoried Roadless Area

Santa Barbara Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 12,295 acre Juncal Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located on the eastern edge of the Santa Barbara Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The boundaries consist of four administrative roads and jeepways. The roadless area is bounded on the north by the Pendola Jeepway (5N01), on the east by the lower portion of the Potrero Seco Road (6N03), on the west by the Camuesa Road (5N15) from the old Juncal Campground to the Pendola house and on the south by the Juncal Road (5N13). The eastern boundary of the Juncal is adjacent to the Matilija Wilderness. Along the southern boundary, but not in the unit, are Juncal Dam and Jameson Reservoir. The reservoir and surrounding private lands are owned by the Montecito Water Department.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): Steep terrain and dense continuous chaparral vegetation acts to discourage visitation into the unit. Elevations range from a low of 1,680 feet on the west side near Pendola to 4,800 feet near Old Man Mountain on the east boundary.

The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. A majority of the characteristics of this ecosystem are typical but are readily available throughout the character type. The shrubland vegetation types consist of coastal sage scrub, along with mesic chaparral, semi-desert chaparral, and xeric chaparral. Transitional zones with chaparral comprising 60% cover and woodland of 40% cover also exist. Oak is intermixed with other vegetation including oak forest with chaparral understory (60:40% cover respectively) and oak grassland areas. Canyon live oak is intermixed with sections containing riparian vegetation above 5,000 feet. Pockets of annual grassland and Big-cone Douglas fir have also been mapped prior to the Zaca Fire. Big-cone Douglas fir and the oak species are Management Indicator Species with a desired condition of increasing or sustaining these vegetation types.

Current uses of the area: There is one vacant livestock grazing allotment in the unit. The steep rugged terrain of this area and lack of developed trails precludes easy access. Most of the recreation use occurs along borders where roads are located. About 1,045 acres of the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area extends into this unit on the western border. This recreation area extends along the Santa Ynez River and the emphasis is day use and overnight camping.

The vegetation management objective for upper Santa Ynez watershed is to maintain the water supply by using the management tools of prescribed burning, fuel breaks, maintaining access roads, water development and wild land fire suppression. Roaded fuel breaks are partially within Juncal borders including Divide Peak/Monte Arido. There is one water source and 17 helispots identified for potential use during fire management operations.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): This area is seen as a rugged scenic landscape of steep mountains and narrow canyons. Continuous, dense chaparral with sandstone outcroppings are the predominant feature within the unit. Streams and
creeks flow intermittently during wet winter months. Summers are very dry with hot temperatures.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: There are no special or outstanding natural features within this area.

Capability
The area's potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The only disturbance in Juncal is the minimal road mileage. Approximately 77% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 23% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Current conditions meet the objectives throughout the unit.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Roadways on the north and south borders of the unit are heavily infested by yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). Significant amounts of salt-cedar (*Tamarisk* spp.) and giant reed (*Arundo donax*) occur on the southern border of the unit along the Santa Ynez River. These infestations are being treated with mechanical methods and herbicides. The reservoir system in the Santa Ynez drainage, including Jameson Lake, harbors non-native aquatic species such as bullfrogs and warm water fish such as bullhead and sunfish that are detrimental to native fish and amphibian populations.

Although this unit borders the Santa Ynez River it does not include it and the side channels in the unit are ephemeral. The 12,295 acre Juncal is composed of essentially one 11,916 acre Hydrologic Unit Code, HUC 6 watershed, named Juncal Canyon-Santa Ynez River and drains via the north fork of Juncal Creek directly to the Santa Ynez River. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

The watershed is 98% National Forest lands and is rated as Class 2, functioning at risk. Identified issues are aquatic, both physical (because of dams and biotic because of invasive plant species) and biotic. Existing dams both alter the stream flows and block passage of steelhead trout contributing to habitat fragmentation. Other resource issues are minimal.

The Juncal unit has a history of large, extensive fires. The entire area within the unit has burned twice and places where large fires have overlapped have burned five times. Over 50% of the land within the unit burned in three separate fires between 1932 and 1985. There were a few fire starts which were suppressed within the area but none more recent than 1970s. Most of the area is vulnerable to fire coming into the area. Suppression efforts along the access roads and fuel breaks have affected the vegetation types because the frequency of fires can contribute to vegetation conversion if the fire return interval is considerably shorter or longer than the general fire regime. A flank of the 2007 Zaca Fire was stopped by suppression efforts at the northern border of the unit.
Fire activity has altered the forested structure over the past 100 years. The reoccurrence of high intensity fires within this unit may continue to diminish and further type-convert much of the forested environment within Juncal. The forested stands within this unit have lost the ability to recover from a wide range of disturbances.

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear. Air quality for the watershed containing this unit was rated as Class 1 for its location on the ocean front and the presence of onshore/offshore breezes.

**Undeveloped:** Management emphasis is on protecting and perpetuating the wild undisturbed character of the place with an attention on improving the riparian areas and habitat. This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use. There are no maintained system trails located in the unit. One non-system trail in the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area on the western edge runs one mile in length from the Camuesa Road (5N15) to the Pendola Jeepway (5N01). There are approximately 8.1 miles of Forest system road and 1.1 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trail

**Opportunities:** Approximately 90% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately the remaining 10% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Major recreation opportunities are primarily focused on dispersed day use activities that offer solitude and few opportunities to interact with others. These activities focus on the areas immediately adjacent to the roadways of the area. Pendola Jeepways on the north and the Potrero Seco Road on the eastern boundary provide hiking and mountain biking opportunities. However, the use is limited as the roads are steep, extremely dry and hot during summer months and not open for public motorize travel.

Some experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Juncal as the rugged expanse of the area provides a sense of extreme remoteness from the nearby populated areas of Southern California. These benefits include moderate opportunities to experience solitude and isolation from sights and sounds because of limited interior access to the area.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, spirit of adventure and awareness, and sense of self-reliance and inspiration are moderate. Although Juncal provides a sense of remoteness for the southern California area, dense chaparral and steep slopes are challenging for much cross-country travel.

**Special features and values:** The aquatic and riparian habitats along the Santa Ynez River that borders this area on the west and south include federally designated and occupied critical habitat for the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), a federally designated threatened species. The area of river adjacent to the former location of the Juncal Campground supports one of the largest populations within the Forest. The campground was decommissioned and removed because of its proximity to sensitive habitat. There is also federally designated and occupied Arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) habitat in certain areas along the Santa Ynez River, west of the
former campground site. Sensitive species that inhabit the riparian zone here include the southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallid*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*) and willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*). The Upper Santa Ynez Critical Biological Zone bounds the southern edge of this unit and was designated along the riparian corridor in recognition of the many threatened, endangered and sensitive species this habitat supports. Sedimentation moving from the Juncal uplands into these important habitats is usually only slightly above natural levels due to lack of roads and other human factors that cause erosion. But the 2007 Zaca Fire burned this area intensely, causing large amounts of fine sediments to enter the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries.

With the exception of a limited amount of foraging habitat, there are no suitable habitat features in this area that would attract and maintain California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), a federally designated endangered species.

This unit does not contain occurrences of sensitive plant species but two species (Palmer's mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri var. palmeri*) and Umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*) are found closely adjacent. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Juncal.

The cultural and historic values within Juncal are comprised of approximately 17 cultural and historic resource sites. The entire area has not been assessed for heritage/cultural resources.

There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this area.

**Description of size and shape:** The 12,295 acre Juncal unit is of sufficient size and shape to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. Most of the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** The need for boundary variations exists in conjunction with the adjacent roadless areas. About 1,045 acres of the Upper Santa Ynez Recreation Area are located in this area. Adjusting the roadless area boundary to exclude the recreation area would generally avoid conflicts with created by this overlap. Regardless of boundary modifications, mountain biking use within the unit would be non-conforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness.

The most significant management challenge is to implement the vegetation management plan to achieve the goal of maintaining water supplies. This is to be accomplished through the use of prescribed burning, fuel breaks, access roads, water development and wild land fire suppression. This necessitates the retention of motorized access to existing jeepways (fuel breaks) and roaded fuel breaks. A roaded corridor for this purpose might be needed along the Potrero Seco Road, and if surrounding roadless areas were also designated as wilderness, a need would also arise to create a roaded corridor along the Pendola Jeepway and other access roads.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.
Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 1,128 acres and Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 11,167 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: There are no specific visitation figures for Juncal; however, visitation is primarily day use. There are no designated trails or trail camps here. Recreational opportunities are limited to travel on jeepways and roads adjacent to the unit. Mountain bicyclists use the existing roads and jeepways that surround this area. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) trespass does occur from these jeepways. There is one dispersed camp, Upper Santa Ynez, located along the Juncal Road on the southern boundary. Public vehicle access is not available on the portion of the Potrero Seco Road (6N03) in this unit.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Fisheries in the upper Santa Ynez River and the North Fork of Juncal Creek attract fisherman during the winter and spring. Rainbow trout are limited to using these upper waterways for spawning and returning to the reservoir. Control of aquatic invasive species should be a management objective here.

Water availability and use: The unit is drained by the north fork of Juncal Creek directly to the Santa Ynez River just upstream of Jameson Lake. It then flows to Gibraltar Reservoir and thence to Cachuma Lake before flowing downstream to the Lompoc Valley. Water runoff from Juncal contributes as a water source to multiple communities along the Santa Barbara front and along the lower reaches from Solvang to Lompoc where it recharges the groundwater basin. Maintenance of quality water runoff is an important emphasis for this watershed.

Livestock Operations: There is one vacant livestock grazing allotment. There are no known range improvements associated with the allotment. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pendola-Vacant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Timber products, such as firewood or mulch, may be created by thinning activities designed to improve the health of the vegetation. Downed logs and snags provide diversity of wildlife habitat. These products and services are needed to enhance the forested environment and move it towards the condition where it has the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbances.

Minerals: There is a watershed protection withdrawal which precludes mineral entry. There is no evidence of historic mining activity in the unit.

Cultural resources: Juncal has not been entirely assessed for cultural resources. Further evaluations are necessary for adequate documentation of the cultural resources.

Authorized and potential land uses: The vacant Pendola gazing allotment is the only authorized use.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Public safety and access to areas for firefighters to launch firing operations safely to contain fires need to be maintained around the perimeter and on the Monte Arido/Divide Peak fuel break. Fire access and maintenance of fuel breaks are management considerations. The administrative roads are needed for access to wildfires and flood prevention projects. The need to
use the jeepways in this roadless area for fire suppression activities has been historically demonstrated.

The Montecito Water District owns private land in-holdings adjacent to the southern boundary of the unit. Their operations and maintenance of the Juncal Dam and Jameson Lake will continue for the foreseeable future.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Located approximately seven air miles north of this area is the combined area of the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) and Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres). The Juncal Inventoried Roadless Area abuts the Matilija Wilderness (29,600 acres) along approximately five miles of its eastern border.

Juncal is adjacent to the Diablo Inventoried Roadless Area (19,608 acres) and within 10 miles of the Madulce-Buckhorn recommended wilderness addition (5,360 acres) to the Dick Smith Wilderness, the Mono recommended wilderness addition (27,012 acres) to the Dick Smith Wilderness and the Matilija recommended wilderness addition (2,700 acres) to the Matilija Wilderness. All of these existing wilderness areas and recommended additions are of similar landscape character and contain strong wilderness characteristics.

**Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Visitation in the San Rafael, Dick Smith and Matilija Wildernesses is considered light to moderate and areas are minimally impacted.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring Report – NVUM – of May 2010). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there,’ most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness on the Los Padres National Forest was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average visit to the Forest lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits last less than 4 hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated within the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Nearby undeveloped lands currently supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness. (See the
Approximately 90% of this unit is managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation uses (see discussion under Opportunities in the capability section of this document). All of the adjacent areas of the Forest provide similar unconfined recreation opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The species of concern that occur nearby are all aquatic and live in the Santa Ynez River and riparian zone and so would not be protected further by changes in land zones here. Sedimentation issues that may arise from within the unit and affect Santa Ynez water quality are not foreseen to change or be protected further by changes in land zone status since there are no plans or need for more roads that could affect sedimentation and the steepness of landform within the unit would preclude road development.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: This area has the ability to provide for the preservation of examples of the landforms, water and vegetation found in the area. None of these features are distinctive but they do represent the character type of the region.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Rafael, Dick Smith and Matilija Wilderness areas satisfy this objective.
Los Padres National Forest

Machesna Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area

Santa Lucia Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 12,288 acre Machesna Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is within the Santa Lucia Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The unit is 20 air miles east of San Luis Obispo and consists of four separate parcels adjacent to the Machesna Mountain Wilderness Area.

Three parcels are bordered by private lands, the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest and the Pozo – La Panza Road (29S01) to the north and Branch Mountain Road (31S10) to the south. The fourth parcel is bounded by the American Canyon Road (30S04) and the Branch Creek Road (30S02).

Access is best obtained from the Pozo Fire Station via the Pozo – La Panza Road (29S01) and Branch Mountain Road (31S02). There is an undetermined road located approximately one-half mile toward Bowman Springs on the unconnected eastern portion of this unit between the Forest boundary and the existing wilderness boundary. There is also a short section of trail beginning outside the Forest on the “Bowman Springs” road crossing the proposed area and then following the current wilderness boundary a short distance. The Pine Mountain OHV route (16E09) traverses across the northern boundary of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness between the units to an intersection with the Pozo – La Panza Road (29S01) to the west.

Machesna is situated in a narrow extension of the Forest containing the La Panza Range with private lands on either side. When the Machesna Mountain Wilderness was designated in the center of the Machesna Roadless Area, four geographically separate areas on the perimeter were left with boundaries adjacent to other public lands. Because the areas are smaller than the original unit the percentage of their perimeters adjoining private land is greater. The area on the north side of Machesna Mountain Wilderness has the least common boundary with private lands but the other three have extensive private interface that limit public access but also suggest other forms of intrusion such as cattle grazing (a management emphasis).

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The La Panza Range is the dominant landform. A number of drainages traverse the area. Elevation ranges from 1,500 feet near Frazier Canyon to 3,777 feet atop San Jose Peak on the western edge of Machesna Mountain Wilderness at the junction of American Canyon Research Natural Area (RNA). The natural integrity of this area is generally undisturbed aside from Pine Mountain OHV Trail (16E09). Chaparral vegetation dominates the landscape. Eighty percent of all chaparral is in the same age class as a result of the Highway 58 Fire in 1996. Another 20% of the stand is in the 11-31 year and older age class. Although dominated by chaparral, there are groups of conifers in some of the drainages. Most of the area is mapped as cretaceous or granitic bedrock. The cretaceous is marine bedrock, which has been uplifted and displaced along northwest-southeast trending faults including La Panza Fault.

The Machesna unit is located in the Interior Santa Lucia Range subsection of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. This is a steep mountainous section that is far enough from the Pacific
Ocean that marine effects are diminished. The climate is hot and sub-humid. This landscape is characterized by steep mountains with rounded ridges and narrow canyons. The predominant plant species include blue oak and mixed conifer on at higher elevations. Chamise series is common on shallow soils. Mixed chaparral shrub-lands also occur in this unit. Water runoff is rapid and all but the largest streams are dry most of the year.

**Current uses of the area:** The area is important for OHV riding, viewing scenery, photography and hunting. The hiking trails located in the unit are Castle Crags - 1.7 miles (16E01) and American Canyon - 0.2 miles (16E03). One OHV road is located in this area - Pine Mountain at 5.1 miles (16E09) in the northern section.

American Canyon Campground is located in this unit. The facility has several campsites, rustic vault toilet and fire rings. The campground is accessible by motor vehicle. However, the road to the campground crosses private land and the land owner often closes a gate that restricts vehicle access.

There are four active livestock grazing allotments in the unit. There are no special use authorizations other than the grazing permits. There are no active mining operations or evidence of historic mining operations.

There are 26 helispots in the area identified for potential use during fire management operations and four small water sources. Maintenance of four ‘dozer’ offloading areas and possibly two staging areas are current uses within this unit’s northern section. The road prism and road sides are annually maintained as fuel breaks. Defensible space is maintained at American Canyon Campground. There are four water sources/springs that are maintained as a resource for wildlife and potentially for fire support.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas):** The center of Machesna Mountain Wilderness is dominated by 4,068 foot Machesna Mountain. The fragmented surrounding areas that comprise the remainder of Machesna unit are at lower elevations in a rolling chaparral landscape with scattered blue oak woodlands, gray pines and occasional annual grasslands. The area, particularly to the north of Machesna Mountain Wilderness, is known for its OHV opportunities.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** California condor (Gymnogyps californianus), a federally designated endangered species, still occasionally soar over this unit and may once again nest at the nearby historic Beartrap or Castle Crags cliff sites. Peregrine falcons were cross-fostered into existing prairie falcon nests at Castle Crags in the 1990s but have not returned. Prairie falcons still nest in Castle Crags and can be seen hunting over the northernmost Machesna unit.

The Castle Crags landforms are a looming rock outcrop which form a scenic attraction and landmark within the existing wilderness but can be an attraction for the surrounding area as well.

**Capability**
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.
Naturalness of the area: Approximately 70% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 30% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. The majority of Machesna Mountain meets these objectives, achieving a natural appearing landscape.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Other invasive plants found in the unit include star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*).

The Machesna Mountain roadless area was fragmented into four geographically distinct areas by the creation of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness in 1984. These areas further divide into Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds as follows: Big Spring-Salinas River contributes 2,752 acres to both the west and south areas, Navajo Creek contributes 1,661 acres to the north area, Place Creek-San Juan Creek contributes 1,997 acres to the north and east areas, Pozo Creek contributes 1,424 acres to the north area, Rogers Creek-San Juan Creek contributes 2,775 acres to the south area and Upper Alamo Creek contributes 1,671 acres to the south area. See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Ondition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Ondition_Framework.pdf). This accounts for 12,283 acres of the 12,288 acre unit. These watersheds are generally Class 1, properly functioning, on National Forest lands with the exception of Upper Alamo Creek which is Class 2, functioning at risk. Resource issues are few except at Upper Alamo, which has bullfrog and sunfish invasive species. However, these watersheds average over 50% privately ownership and are judged to be poorer in function than Forest lands. The opportunity to make further improvements in water quality with changes in management emphasis is thus limited.

The mix of species found in the area is mostly natural. There are animals usually associated with the dominant habitats of grasslands, oak/grasslands and chaparral as well as some special status species such as the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), which was actively re-introduced into the Machesna Mountain Wilderness in 1995. However, the Highway 58 Fire destroyed all of the condor release structures and hiding cover for the workers a year later and the efforts were therefore stopped at this location. Condors occasionally still soar over this area.

This discontinuous roadless area has an extensive history of large fires. Fires originating from within the four units have been predominantly human-caused and concentrated in the larger northern and southern units. A series of fires between the 1915 and 1940 burned most of the land within the present unit boundaries. Most recently, the 1996 Highway 58 fire burned 99% of the unit. As such, nearly all the vegetation is even-aged chaparral. Without active management, this vegetation type tends to reduce wildlife habitat and biodiversity over time and may be at risk to burn in a future large fire event.

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear.

Undeveloped: For the area of the Machesna roadless area to the north of Machesna Mountain Wilderness, management emphasis is on dispersed recreation and OHV use. A motorized trail bisects this area and separates it from the Machesna Wilderness. The other three areas on the east, west and south have a management emphasis on livestock grazing and relationships with adjacent private landowners.
There are approximately: 0.1 miles of Forest system road, 5.1 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 1.1 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 5.4 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 2.1 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails. There are approximately 1.8 miles of Forest designated (non-motorized) trails, including 1.7 miles of the Castle Crags Trail (16E01) and 0.2 miles of the American Canyon Trail (16E03).

Opportunities: While some areas could provide a feeling of solitude, the well-traveled roads surrounding most of this area could reduce the wilderness experience due to vehicle noise. Approximately 53% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 47% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the Forest visitor.

Some experiential benefits are available to the visitor within two sections of the Machesna unit. These benefits may include low to moderate opportunities to experience solitude and isolation from sights and sounds as access into the area has few trails. One OHV route in the northern section reduces the opportunity for solitude.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, spirit of adventure and awareness, and sense of self-reliance and inspiration are low to moderate. Although Machesna provides a sense of remoteness for the southern California the area, dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel. Major recreational opportunities in this unit include OHV riding, viewing scenery, photography and hunting.

Special features and values: A California condor release site was established along the northern end of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness and adjacent to the northernmost Machesna Mountain area in 1995. Several condors were released here up until 1996, when the Highway 58 fire burned over this area destroying the release site and killing two condors. The Beartrap Cliffs in the existing Machesna Mountain Wilderness are visible from the roadless area and also historically support condor nesting as well as peregrine falcons (Falco peregrinus). Peregrines were cross-fostered into prairie falcon nests here during the early 1990s.

This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. All of these plant species are known to occur in areas outside of the unit as well. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Machesna Mountain. Species within and outside the unit include: Santa Margarita manzanita (Arctostaphylos pilosula), Palmer's mariposa lily (Calochortus palmeri var. palmeri), San Luis Obispo mariposa lily (Calochortus simulans), Umbrella larkspur (Delphinium umbraculorum) and Parish's checkerbloom (Sidalcea hickmanii ssp. Parishii).

A soil type similar to that which supports the Camatta Canyon amole (Chlorogalum purpureum var. reductum) is located in the easternmost Machesna Mountain unit but site surveys there during May 2011 did not find any amole. This area is heavily overgrown with large chamise (Adenostoma fasciculatum).

There are no critical biological areas in this unit. Important habitats include the cliff nesting areas nearby in the Machesna Mountain Wilderness and the blue oak grasslands in the southernmost
unit of this unit. There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this area. Scenic features include the Castle Crags outcrops, a distinctive landform within the unit.

Description of size and shape: The largest of the four parcels is relatively small, approximately 2.5 miles by 4.5 miles at its widest points. The detached section to the east contributes less than one square mile. The proximity to private ranch lands and roads at the boundaries of the fragmented remainder sections of the unit affects the wilderness attributes within these areas.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Restricting motorized use on the established and popular Pine Mountain OHV route would be difficult. The route provides a riding ‘loop’ as it connects to other OHV routes at each end. This route bisects the northern section of this unit. A boundary change would not enhance wilderness characteristics because of the length and location of the OHV route.

Establishing and posting boundaries on the ground would be costly and difficult to define from Frazier Canyon along a private in-holding and southeast to the current wilderness boundary as well as around the private land on the northern boundary. Most other portions of the boundary could follow an existing road. Boundary adjustments for this reason would not necessarily improve wilderness characteristics.

Boundary adjustments would be recommended for defensible space in campgrounds and should also exclude maintained sites of dozer off-loading areas, roads and roadsides and water sources. Forest Routes 30S17 and 30S12 are used for pre-suppression activities and access and are within one of the units.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.


Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Machesna. The unit is seldom, if ever, used for primitive camping. The natural integrity of the area is high. The largest draws for the area are off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, viewing scenery, photography and hunting. Access to the unit is limited to the one OHV road and two trails.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Wildlife species include deer, mountain lion, bear, and coyote as well as small game species such as mountain and valley quail, dove, and cottontail rabbit. California condors are adequately protected with existing management. Motorized access aids in tracking condors from this area, particularly along the Pine Mountain Road.

Water availability and use: The east side of Machesna drains directly into the Salinas River. The west side drains to San Juan Creek and then to the Salinas River. The agriculturally important Salinas Valley and communities therein benefit from water produced within the Forest.

Livestock Operations: There are four active livestock grazing allotments in the unit. These allotments include the following range improvements: six spring developments, two stock ponds
and 4.3 miles of fence. The improvements could remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Avenales-Active</td>
<td>4,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas-Active</td>
<td>1,205</td>
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<td>Piletas-Active</td>
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<td>10.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Bee-Active</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,519</td>
<td>69.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Vegetation adjacent to roads could be used for mulch, small-diameter firewood and botanical products.

Minerals: There is evidence of historic mining activities within the unit; however, there are no current mining operations.

Cultural resources: The Machesna roadless area has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources. Areas that have been assessed contain three archaeological sites consisting of large food processing stations with bedrock mortars and ground stone implements.

Authorized and potential land uses: Private land in-holdings will limit any potential access needs for road special use authorizations or other related special use authorizations. Only grazing authorizations and associated improvements are authorized within the area.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Helispots exist here but need little maintenance. Fire activity and potential resistance to fire suppression would be high.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Machesna Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area at its closest point is six air miles northeast of the Santa Lucia Wilderness (18,679 acres), adjacent to the Machesna Mountain Wilderness (19,760 acres) and two air miles east of the Garcia Wilderness (14,100 acres). These wilderness areas are each relatively small with limited access and low use, mostly suitable for day trips and short overnight trips. The larger San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) is located 15 air miles to the southeast. This wilderness represents the same eco-system type as Machesna.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other nearby wilderness.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National
Visitor Use Monitoring report– NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there,’ most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns are generally concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The unit is adjacent to the Machesna Mountain Wilderness which receives light use due to limited and difficult access. Designation of additional wilderness would make access to the existing wilderness more difficult.

The San Rafael Wilderness is much larger than other wilderness in the area with several access points suitable for multiple day trips. The San Rafael also receives relatively light use, with moderate use occurring on popular trails on certain weekends. All of these wilderness areas are located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Much of the non-wilderness lands on the Santa Lucia Ranger District encompass similar landscapes and recreation opportunities. Most of the area surrounding the Machesna area is relatively undeveloped National Forest System lands. Some of the area contains private lands with no access to public lands. The Forest lands are accessible to the public and offer a wide range of recreational opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The historic nesting and roosting areas near this unit are in an existing wilderness and are thus protected already. The addition of new wilderness areas surrounding these sites may not substantially enhance condor recovery efforts as the unit is not used by condors, there is no indication of a future threat to the condors that would emanate from this unit and there is already a half mile to one mile of wilderness around the historic nesting and roosting areas.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The Machesna Mountain Wilderness as well as the Garcia Wilderness provides better examples of the landform types and ecosystems of the California Coastal and Interior ranges than are notable here. The Machesna Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area, adjacent to the Machesna Mountain Wilderness, is overwhelmed by the presence of the existing wilderness identifiable landforms.
Los Padres National Forest

Madulce Buckhorn Inventoried Roadless Area

Santa Barbara Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 14,186 acre Madulce Buckhorn Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) has two sections separated by the Dick Smith Wilderness. The western section is located within the Santa Barbara Ranger District (SBRD) and the eastern section is within the Mt. Pinos Ranger District (MPRD), Los Padres National Forest.

The Santa Barbara Ranger District section’s southern boundary is Camuesa Road (5N15), the western boundary is Buckhorn Road (9N11) and the eastern boundary in the upper portion of this roadless area is the Indian Creek dozer line to Buckhorn Creek. The eastern boundary continues south down a short segment of Buckhorn Creek to the confluence with Indian Creek. The eastern boundary then continues down Indian Creek from this confluence approximately two miles. The southern boundary is an unnamed ridgeline from Indian Creek west to the Camuesa Road. About 2,881 acres of this portion of the unit is zoned as Recommended Wilderness in the Forest Land Management Plan. The Mt. Pinos Ranger District section is bordered on the south and west by Tinta Canyon Road (7N04), west by the Tinta OHV Trail (24W02) and east by a gas pipeline corridor and private lands.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): There are outstanding examples of large sandstone outcrops rising out of a dense stand of mixed conifers and chaparral in the extreme northern portion of the SBRD section.

The MPRD portion is composed mainly of brush-covered foothills and canyons and some oak grassland. The southwest part of the area has steep, heavy, brush-covered slopes. The character of both portions of Madulce Buckhorn is that of a landscape of steep rugged mountains and narrow canyons. Thick brush makes cross-country travel difficult. Creeks in the canyons tend to go dry during the late summer season.

Madulce Buckhorn had a diversity of vegetation types including about 1,400 acres of conifer and 600 acres of hardwood stands prior to the Zaca Fire of 2007. The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California.

Current uses of the area: The OHV routes Camuesa Road (5N15) and Buckhorn Road (9N11) are partially in this unit. The area is routinely used by the public for day hikes and short packing trips. Other recreational opportunities include equestrian use, mountain biking, camping (primitive and backcountry sites), nature viewing from scenic vistas and photography. Hunting is a very popular activity in both portions of this unit during late summer and fall. The majority of equestrian use and mountain biking occurs on the Camuesa and Buckhorn roads. There is unauthorized OHV use occurring on dozer lines where they intersect the Buckhorn and Camuesa Roads.

There is one active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments. There is an oil and gas pipeline and associated temporary maintenance road running through the eastern portion of the unit in
Section 34. There are three water sources and 14 helispots identified for potential use during fire management operations.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): Madulce Buckhorn lies just inland of the ridge extending from the Transverse Range and separating the coast from the inland ranges of the Santa Lucia Mountains. It is part of the rugged landscape that characterizes the San Rafael Wilderness and Dick Smith Wilderness. The wide variation in elevation, lack of disturbance and habitat complexity supports a high degree of biodiversity. It is part of an expansive and severe landscape with steep slopes and narrow canyons that includes the San Rafael, Dick Smith, and Matilija Wildernesses, Sisquoc Wild and Scenic River and Sisquoc Condor Sanctuary.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The large sandstone outcrops and steep sheer mountain faces are prominent geographic features on the southern edge of the unit and are visible from scenic points outside the area. The Mono Basin Special Interest Area is within this unit as is the Indian Creek Critical Biological Area.

Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Approximately 90% of Madulce Buckhorn is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 10% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Existing conditions throughout the unit meet these objectives.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Some tamarisk (salt cedar) has invaded the riparian zone along Indian Creek and bullfrogs are in the lower portion below the Mono Dam spillway but have not yet been seen in the upper portions of the Indian Creek drainage.

The Madulce Buckhorn contains a small portion of the 5,422 acre Mono Basin Special Interest Area (SIA) in the northwest corner. Mono Basin is a large aquatic and riparian habitat of rich biodiversity formed by siltation deposits. Scientific studies of the many plant and animal species are ongoing.

Madulce Buckhorn contains 3,152 acres of the Gibraltar Reservoir-Santa Ynez River and 8,254 acres of the Indian Creek Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. This accounts for 11,406 acres of the 11,489 acre unit. Both watersheds are at least 90% National Forest lands and are rated Class 2, functioning at risk. A variety of resource issues exist. The Indian Creek watershed has experienced recent severe burn intensities affecting vegetation cover and channel function. The Gibraltar Reservoir-Santa Ynez River watershed has been classified with water quality problems as well as having a dam that interferes with fish migration causing
habitat fragmentation. This unit would benefit from zoning that allows access to address these issues.

The two portions of Madulce Buckhorn, separated by the Dick Smith Wilderness, have somewhat different fire histories. Nearly the entire southern portion burned in 1923 and the much of it burned again in the 2007 Zaca Fire. This area has recorded two small human-caused fire starts. The northern portion has recorded a number of small fires started by a mix of lightning, human-caused or undetermined-origin. The 2007 Zaca Fire also burned through almost all of this area; suppression efforts held the fire near the eastern boundary.

Fire suppression within this unit has left the forested areas in a condition where it as a diminished capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbance. Most of the northern portion of Madulce Buckhorn was forested prior to the 2007 Zaca Fire. Timber density was above historic levels, which increased its susceptibility to stand replacing fires and major insect attacks. The Zaca Fire effectively placed many of these stands into a non-forested condition and the ecosystem will take decades to recover.

This loss of forest cover from the Zaca Fire has reduced the amount of quality wildlife habitat within the unit and diminished the protective quality the forest stands once provided to the watershed. Management activities, including but not limited to reseeding, fuels reduction and invasive species control, may be needed to restore and enhance the values within this area for current and future needs.

Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in this roadless area are not substantially affecting the habitat of the California red-legged frog (Rana aurora draytonii), arroyo toad (Anaxyrus californicus), least Bell’s vireo (Vireo bellii pusillus) and southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus).

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear. Air quality is judged to be good in Madulce Buckhorn. There are few sources of air pollutants other than wildfires and prescription burning.

Undeveloped: This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use. There are approximately: 9.6 miles of Forest system road, 1.7 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 2.5 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 0.2 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 1.9 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

There are approximately 7.4 miles of Forest Developed Trails: 1.6 miles of 24W02 (Tinta OHV Trail), 0.1 miles of 24W10 (Grapevine Trail), and 5.7 miles of 27W12 (Buckhorn Trail).

Opportunities: Management emphasis is on protecting the wild undisturbed character of the place with an attention on improving the riparian areas and habitat. In the northern portion the emphasis is also on law enforcement and the eradication of illegal marijuana cultivation.

The Madulce Buckhorn roadless area within the SBRD is relatively remote with outstanding opportunities to experience adventure, self-reliance and solitude. However, the area within the MPRD provides a low sense of solitude, adventure and self-reliance due to the proximity of State Highway 33, motorized forest trails and roads and the rural development in the Upper Cuyama Valley.

A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base outside of the study area on both ranger districts is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM)
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification. Many of these non-wilderness areas have similar landscapes and offer the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Approximately 92% of the unit is managed to meet the SPNM ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 8% of the unit is managed to meet the SPM ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping (primitive and backcountry sites), nature viewing, photography, OHV (less than 50 inches wide) and hunting (deer, turkey, black bear). Hidden Potrero, Middle Camuesa and Lower Buckhorn are trails camps that are located in the unit.

**Special features and values:** Madulce Buckhorn is located on the north and east flanks of Little Pine Mountain within the SBRD. It and the adjacent proposed Little Pine Roadless Area support the only extensive mixed conifer forest within the SBRD.

California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) were reintroduced into areas of their historic range in the mid-1990s from a release site approximately 14 air miles away from the area within the MPRD. Like many species of wildlife, condors are pre-adapted to natural or unaltered habitat conditions but have also shown some ability to co-exist with humans. California spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) are also suspected to nest within this roadless area.

Madulce Buckhorn contains a small portion of the 5,422 acre Mono Basin Special Interest Area in the northwest corner. Mono Basin is a large aquatic and riparian habitat of rich biodiversity formed by siltation deposits. Scientific studies of the many plant and animal species are ongoing. The Indian Creek Critical Biological Area also occurs along one edge of this unit and harbors several aquatic and riparian species including the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*), least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*).

California condors require large tracts of land in order to maintain viable populations. Currently, this endangered species occupies areas that are part roadless and part roaded. Current monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roaded areas is precluding the use of these areas by these birds nor does the data show that California condors use designated wilderness areas more frequently than non-wilderness areas. The recovery plan for the California condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species.

The southeastern portion of this unit includes a portion of Indian Creek (just above the Mono debris basin) that supports several aquatic threatened, endangered and sensitive species which include: Arroyo toad (*Anaraxys californicus*) - occupied and designated critical habitat for this endangered species, California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) - occupied and designated critical habitat for this threatened species, Least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) - occupied and designated critical habitat for this endangered species, Southwestern pond turtles (*Actinemys marmorata*) – Region 5 sensitive species, two-stripe garter snakes (*Thamnophis*...
hamondii) – Region 5 sensitive species, and willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii) – Region 5 sensitive species.

One occurrence of the Forest Service sensitive plant Carmel Valley malacothrix (Malacothrix saxatilis var. arachnoidea) occurs on the western border of the unit along the Buckhorn Road. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Madulce Buckhorn.

The Mono Basin Special Interest Area along Indian Creek in the lower end of this unit was established in recognition of important botanical and zoological values – a riparian ecosystem with arroyo toads, red-legged frogs, least Bell's vireo and willow flycatchers.

There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in this area. The cultural and historic values within the Madulce Buckhorn Inventoried Roadless Area are comprised of approximately seven cultural and historic resource sites. The unit has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources.

Description of size and shape: Madulce Buckhorn is 14,186 acres in total but split into two areas, one on either side of the Dick Smith Wilderness. The larger area on the west side is 11,489 acres and is a wedge-shaped piece that fits into a gap between the San Rafael Wilderness and Dick Smith Wilderness. The Buckhorn Road separates the area on the north and west from the San Rafael Wilderness but that road goes on to bisect the two wildernesses completely. The area directly adjoins the Dick Smith Wilderness to the east and enhances the potential wilderness value of the Dick Smith Wilderness by widening a narrow neck of wilderness that is barely one and one half miles wide to one that is four miles wide. The addition would thus improve the ability of the Dick Smith Wilderness to provide a primitive and remote experience.

The second area on the east side of Dick Smith Wilderness is much smaller at 2,697 acres. It is separated from the Dick Smith Wilderness by Dry Canyon Road on the west side and is bordered by private land on the east side. Further, it is in the travel influence zone of State Highway 33. These factors make the area marginal as a wilderness addition.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Inclusion into the wilderness system of the SBRD portion of Madulce Buckhorn would eliminate a segment of a popular mountain bicycle trail. The potential for unauthorized OHV use could occur along the west and south boundaries from the existing Camuesa/Buckhorn OHV route.

Revising the southern boundary of this roadless area using the Buckhorn Trail would allow for the continued use of mountain bicycles on the trail. Creating a buffer outside of the wilderness along the Buckhorn Road would allow the inclusion of existing fire lines. The Indian Creek dozer line could be retained as an administrative motorized corridor for fire suppression and prescribed fire purposes.

Designation of wilderness for the MPRD parcel directly adjacent to the large extent of private property may create future conflicts as the private property continues to be developed. A boundary adjustment on the northeast side of the unit would avoid the gas pipeline becoming a non-conforming use.
Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC)- 746 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 2,599 acres, Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 5,183 acres, Critical Biological (CB)- 273 acres, Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 75 acres, and Recommended Wilderness- 5,310 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: There are no specific visitation figures for Madulce Buckhorn. However, anecdotally the visitation is primarily day use. There are few opportunities for visitors to access this area due to the dense growth of chaparral within the SBRD portion of the unit. Travel off-trail is limited to a few miles within the main drainages. The area is bisected by the designated Buckhorn Trail (27W12) from the Buckhorn Road to Lower Buckhorn Camp. The trail continues along the eastern boundary down the Indian Creek. This is the only trail within the area and is a popular backcountry loop for mountain bicyclists. The Indian Creek Trail (26W08) intersects with the Buckhorn Trail at the Dick Smith Wilderness boundary and travels north into the wilderness. There is little to no public use of the Indian Creek dozer line for recreational travel.

The area provides an opportunity for cross-country hiking (there are no maintained hiking trails in the area) within the MPRD portion of the unit. However, travel in most areas is difficult because of the steep terrain and heavy vegetation. Dispersed camping is allowed but water sources are very scarce in the area. The area also provides opportunities for big game hunting (primarily deer), upland birds and small game hunting (primarily quail and rabbit).

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: Management needs for wildlife include the control of riparian invasive species including tamarisk and bullfrogs. Road access is not necessary; actions may be taken by use of trails along Indian Creek and by vehicle on the existing Camuesa Road (outside the unit). There is no need to maintain or create roads in this unit to manage any of the threatened, endangered and sensitive species, including the California condor and spotted owl.

Water availability and use: The SBRD Portion of the unit area is primarily the Buckhorn Creek watershed. The upper reaches of Buckhorn Creek maintain year-round water with a healthy rainbow trout fishery. Buckhorn Creek flows directly to the Santa Ynez River just above Gibraltar Reservoir. Downstream from Gibraltar is Cachuma Lake, a major water source for communities along the Santa Barbara front. And downstream from Cachuma Lake are the communities of Buelton and Lompoc that also use the water. Watershed protection is important in Madulce Buckhorn but some access is needed to manage resource issues related to damaged channels and invasive species.

Livestock Operations: There are one active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include the following range improvements: one spring development, one corral, and 0.4 miles of fence. The range improvements would remain for allotment administration should the area become designated wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.
### Table: Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caliente-Vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Ynez-Vacant</td>
<td>153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tinta-Active</td>
<td>1,331</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,516</td>
<td>10.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timber:** Timber products may be created through thinning, fuel reduction and public safety activities. Mechanized equipment may be used for these activities.

**Minerals:** The area is available for oil and gas leasing within the MPRD portion of Madulce Buckhorn. And part of the area is identified as having high potential. Any future oil and gas leasing would occur with no surface occupancy restrictions.

The area is within a watershed withdrawal that precludes mineral entry within the SBRD portion. There is no evidence of historic mining activities in the unit.

**Cultural resources:** Cultural resources surveys for Madulce Buckhorn have not been conducted for the entire area.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** The MPRD portion of the unit contains a grazing allotment and oil and gas pipeline with a linear special use authorization.

**Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands:** Mechanized equipment has been used in this area to protect the water supply from threat of wildfires, including the construction and maintenance of fuel breaks and water sources, fire lines and prescribed fire. There are historic and current fire lines and fuel breaks associated with and adjacent to the Buckhorn Road along the western boundary that are visible on the main ridges.

The Indian Creek dozer line is an important north-to-south wildfire control line. This dozer line was last reopened during the 1995 Ogilvy Fire. It is part of the network of fuel breaks in the area. Inclusion of this unit into a recommended wilderness land use zone would place the entire length of this fire control line within wilderness. The dozer fire lines located along the ridges adjacent to the Buckhorn Road are also viewed as critical wildfire control points.

Historically, it has been necessary to use the pre-suppression lines in the Santa Barbara part of this roadless area for fire suppression activities. Future planning efforts to maintain existing fuel breaks could be lost with inclusion of this area into the wilderness system.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Within a 20 mile radius of Madulce Buckhorn are the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres), Matilija Wilderness (29,243 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres). This unit is also near the Diablo roadless area (19,608 acres) and the Madulce Buckhorn recommended wilderness addition (5,360 acres) to the Dick Smith Wilderness.
This unit is within 10 miles of the Mono recommended wilderness addition (27,012 acres) to the Dick Smith Wilderness (71,350 acres) and the Matilija recommended wilderness addition (2,700 acres) to the Matilija Wilderness (29,243 acres). All of these existing wilderness areas and recommended additions are of similar landscape character and contain strong wilderness characteristics.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Visitation in the San Rafael Wilderness and Dick Smith Wilderness is considered light to moderate and areas are minimally impacted by people. There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM – of May 2010). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average visit to the Forest lasts less than 8 hours; over half of the visits to this forest last less than 4 hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most 5 times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The portion of the unit within the MPRD is in the Upper Cuyama Valley, an hour’s drive of the small communities of New Cuyama, Cuyama, Maricopa, Taft, Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. It is approximately two hours from Ventura and Santa Maria. Use in these wilderness areas is generally light.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Currently, nearby undeveloped lands supply opportunities for primitive type recreation outside wilderness. (See the discussion above under “Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses”).

Approximately 92% of this unit is managed for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation uses (see discussion under Opportunities in the capability section of this document). All of these areas provide similar unconfined recreation opportunities.

The MPRD portion of the unit would be difficult to manage as wilderness due to the large amount of interface with private land and the general inaccessibility of that interface to monitor for trespass activities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The protections already in place for the threatened, endangered and sensitive species are multi-layered and provide protection for these species mentioned above. These protections include arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, least Bell’s vireo, and southwestern
willow flycatcher designated critical habitat; Mono Basin Special Interest Area; Indian Creek Critical Biological Area; LMP Riparian Conservation Area; the Endangered Species Act protection and requirements; Wild and Scenic River eligibility; and the existing backcountry non-motorized designation. A wilderness designation would not likely provide significant extra protection for these species.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California. A few of the characteristics of this ecosystem are typical but are readily available throughout the character type.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Rafael, Dick Smith, Matilija Wilderness areas satisfy this objective.
Los Padres National Forest
Quatal Inventoried Roadless Area

Mount Pinos Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 7,255 acre Quatal Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Mount Pinos Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. This area is in the Upper Cuyama Valley within an hour drive of the small communities of New Cuyama, Cuyama, Maricopa, Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. It is approximately two hours from Ventura and Santa Maria.

Quatal is bounded on the south by Quatal Canyon and road, on the north by the County Cerro Noroeste Road and private land, on the northwest by the Ballinger Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area (specifically the eastern portion of the Rim OHV Route) and on the west by private land adjacent to the Monolith Cement Mine.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): The area adjoins the Cuyama Valley on the west in an area intensely folded with older bedrock thrusts over young sedimentary formations that are steeply dipped or overturned near the adjacent San Andres fault. Sandstone clay and shale crop out on steep canyons with highly eroded slopes generally known as ‘Badlands.’ Elevations range from 3,800 feet to 5,400 feet near the head of Quatal Canyon where there are a number of tributary drainages to the south-southwest. Most of the area is pinyon-juniper (Pinus monophylla/Juniperus californicum) with some grassland, sagebrush and chaparral vegetative types. Nearly all of the vegetation is in the over 31-year age class.

Current uses of the area: The pinyon pines are managed for their aesthetic and pinyon nut crop values. Recreation use in this area consists of dispersed camping, hunting, mountain biking, target shooting and OHV use. There are no campgrounds. The Quatal Canyon Corridor Route consists of a sandy wash with four spurs off Forest Road 9N09 for four-wheel drive vehicles. This route connects with Quatal Canyon Road and Quatal Trail.

There is one active livestock grazing allotment. There are no current mining activities; however, there is evidence of historic gypsum mining in Section 23. The area has no identified water sources or helispots for fire management operations. Roads and roadsides within and surrounding the area are maintained for fire suppression access and fuel breaks.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of the southern portion of the unit has been affected by minor roads (used as OHV routes in drainage bottoms) but it mostly retains a natural appearance.

There are some locations of paleontological value in the northern cliffs and spectacular erosion of the badlands in the area. The area in the vicinity of Cowhead Potrero offers scenic wildflower displays in the spring.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The highly dissected landforms are unique scenic attractions of the unit. They are also inaccessible and much of the area remains seldom seen except from adjacent roads.
**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Approximately 97% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 3% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Quatal currently meets these objectives.

The unit lies almost entirely within the Quatal Canyon HUC 6 watershed. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Quatal Canyon contributes 7,247 acres of the 7,255 acre total. Quatal Canyon watershed is 92% National Forest lands and is rated as Class 1, functioning properly. Air and water quality are identified issues but are not sufficient to tip the balance to Class 2, functioning at risk, although the watershed is at the margin. This unit is not likely to be sensitive to zoning changes.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here.

This unit has very little recorded fire history. No large fires have started in or burned through the area. Small fire ignitions include a mix of lightning and human-caused events. Vegetation in Quatal tends towards a higher frequency of fires but the vegetation type has an extremely long fire regime of 100+ years (there are nearly 1,000 acres that have no data, however). Maintenance of pre-settlement fire regimes in this unit would require light understory burns with holding lines as well as maintenance of roads and roadsides as fuel breaks.

The unit has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear. The area is largely in the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District and is designated “attainment” for National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

There is very little human impact. There are no existing roads or trails or other uses that affect the habitats or species here. The California Natural Diversity Database shows one occurrence of the Federally Endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia silus*) but this population in the upper Cuyama is actually thought to be either the long-nosed subspecies of the leopard lizard or a hybrid between the two and not federally listed. Otherwise, there are no known occurrences of threatened, endangered, proposed and sensitive wildlife species.

There is one location of the Forest Service sensitive plant pale yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*).

**Undeveloped:** The area is managed as a naturally evolving and naturally appearing landscape within a recreation setting. This area is currently managed predominately for non-motorized use.

There are approximately: 0.1 miles of Forest system road, 2.0 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 1.2 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

**Opportunities:** The natural integrity and appearance of the area have been unaffected except for minor road intrusions. However, one can see human made improvements (i.e. housing) in the
western portion of Quatal Canyon on private property. The four short OHV trails compromise the opportunity for solitude, as does the Monolith Gypsum Mine outside the western boundary and the proximity of Quatal Canyon and Cerro Noroeste Roads.

The unit is large enough to offer some feeling of remoteness, however much of the area includes views of the roadway or the minor developments adjacent to the unit. This development outside the unit is likely to continue further reducing the feel of remoteness or the presence of others.

Major recreational opportunities include hunting, viewing scenery and limited OHV trails on the southern boundary. Opportunities for primitive recreation are limited although there are possibilities for cross-country day hikers.

Approximately 92% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. The remaining 8% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural ROS objective where lands are managed to balance the natural character of the landscape with the use of the facilities provided. The portion of the unit that falls under this ROS class is the immediate corridor of the highway.

Special features and values: The California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) has had their historic range substantially reduced due to increased human populations and development. Condors have been reintroduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Quatal roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in the Quatal roadless area do not substantially affect the habitat of this species.

The federally threatened blunt-nosed leopard lizard had been identified in Quatal Canyon in 1983 but this sighting was later changed to long-nosed leopard lizard by the observer. Recent allele research questions the genetics of this locale and whether it represents more of a long-nosed or blunt-nosed species. The federally threatened Kern primrose sphinx moth (Euproserpinus euterpe) and its suitable habitat is found near the mouth of Quatal Canyon but not within this unit.

Pale yellow layia (Layia heterotirca) is the only sensitive plant that occurs in the unit. There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Quatal. The Quatal Special Interest Area was established because of the unique eroded badland topography with Miocene vertebrate fossils.

There are no designated or eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Description of size and shape: The unit is of sufficient size and shape to preserve and use in an unimpaired condition. Most of the area has been successfully managed to retain a primitive character within a naturally appearing setting where management activities are not evident.

The juxtaposition of the unit is such that it is fairly linear and adjacent to a roadway that prohibits escape from the sounds of the road from most locations within the unit and leaves little opportunity to explore very deeply into the unit.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Relocation of boundaries to avoid conflict would reduce the size of the area to a point where it would not be
reasonable to consider it for wilderness. The conflicts include existing mining operations on adjacent private lands, intensive OHV use to the north and west of the unit and limited designated OHV trails within the unit.

Quatal would be difficult to manage as wilderness because adjacent OHV use in the Ballinger OHV Area and an active gypsum mine on private lands in Section 24 west of and adjacent to the unit would present significant conflicts. Traditional uses, such as pinion nut and wood gathering, require the use of motor vehicles.

Wildlife biologists currently use management practices to protect, enhance, and conserve the California condor that are not generally consistent with wilderness management objectives (i.e. the use of motorized vehicles to transport, release, and monitor individual animals and to place supplemental feed). A combination of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized land use designations would provide California condors with suitable habitat while allowing wildlife managers to continue to use motorized vehicles in their conservation efforts.

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) defense zone that lies within Quatal should be excluded because it may have projects that allow for vegetation type conversion.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 7,255 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** There are four short spur OHV routes totaling 1.6 miles that are accessed via Quatal Canyon Road. There are no non-motorized trails in the area but visitors can hike in the fringes of the area without too much difficulty. There are a number of non-system trails.

Recreation use is mostly associated with small and big game hunting, pinyon nut collecting and firewood gathering. There are no developed trail camps in the area.

Toad Springs OHV Trail (22W01) has a designated ‘cherry stem’ corridor through the adjacent Chumash Wilderness. The trail is damaged from a slide and cannot be repaired. The Chumash Wilderness legislation stipulates this route will remain open to OHV travel until construction of a replacement route is completed. The ‘cherry stem’ will then be incorporated in and managed as part of the Chumash Wilderness. No suitable re-route has yet been identified. However, a logical location for such a proposed new route may be through a portion of the Quatal unit.

No specific visitation figures are available for Quatal. Present visitor use on all wildernesses within the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness may not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** Big game species include mule deer, mountain lion, and bobcat. Other species include pigeon, dove, Valley quail, coyote and rabbit. There are no particular wildlife management needs that require road access.
Water availability and use: Streams flow for a short period during the winter and during summer thunderstorms. Average annual rainfall is seven inches.

Livestock Operations: There is one active livestock grazing allotment within Quatal. This allotment includes 0.2 miles of fences. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballinger Canyon-Active</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Timber products, such as firewood or mulch, may be created by thinning activities designed to improve the health of the vegetation and reduce the ladder fuels in the understory and surrounding tree stands. Downed logs and snags provide diversity of wildlife habitat.

Minerals: There is low potential for strategic minerals and moderate potential for non-strategic minerals. There is low potential for phosphates and geothermal resources. There is moderate potential for oil and gas development. There are inactive gypsum mines. There has been some surface disturbance as a result of mining in Section 23. There is little potential for saleable products such as gravel and stone.

Cultural resources: There are no known archeological sites; however, the area is known for its paleontological values. Heritage resources have not been assessed for this area.

Authorized and potential land uses: There are no special use authorizations within the unit; however, there is potential for minerals development as described above.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: The single leaf pinyon woodlands are relicts from past climates. Fire return intervals of less than 35 years after a stand-replacing fire would not allow the trees to set seed and intense wild land fires have the potential to destroy the seed bank, thereby eliminating this vegetation type from the landscape. Pinyon pine woodlands are vulnerable to local extinctions.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of Quatal are the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), the adjacent Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres). Each of these wilderness areas better reflects examples of local ecological types.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Use in these wilderness areas is generally light except for a few holiday weekends and a couple of popular destinations within the wildernesses. There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age
of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most of the visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Recreation use in the study area is light and would likely remain available for opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation use even if this area was not designated as Wilderness. The Chumash Wilderness area adjacent to the study area will continue to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation use.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There are no species in this area that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive conditions or need further protection.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: Better and more extensive examples of the highly eroded badland terrain have been protected immediately adjacent to the area in the Chumash Wilderness and Quatal Geologic Area.
Los Padres National Forest

Sawmill Badlands Inventoried Roadless Area

Mount Pinos Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 51,376 acre Sawmill Badlands Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Mount Pinos Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest.

The unit is located in the Upper Cuyama Valley within an hour drive of the small communities of New Cuyama, Cuyama, Maricopa, Taft, Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods and Pine Mountain Club. It is approximately two hours from Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Maria.

The eastern boundary is adjacent to two large private land parcels consisting of multiple ownerships (Pine Mountain Club community and Lockwood Valley). The core of the Sawmill Badlands roadless area was designated as the Chumash Wilderness in 1992 as described in the ‘Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act.’ The largest roadless remnants of the original unit lie to the west and south of the Wilderness. In all cases blocks of forest defined by the Chumash Wilderness are one Sawmill Badlands boundary and state, county, and forest development roads or private property are the remaining boundaries. There are also two small, disjoint areas to the east.

Section 1 contains 2,381 acres. Private land and the Mil Potrero Highway border this section on the north, Cerro Noroeste Road on the west, Cerro Noroeste Road and the Chumash Wilderness on the south and by private land and National Forest System lands on the east. The GIS database name for this portion is Sawmill Badlands (Able).

Section 2 contains 14,239 acres. Private land, Quatal Canyon Road (9N09) and the Cuyama Valley border this section on the north; private land and State Highway 33 border the west; Apache Canyon Road (8N06) borders the south-southeast; and the Chumash Wilderness borders the area to the east. This section includes Chumash Addition NW.

Section 3 contains 22,578 acres. The Apache Canyon Road (8N06) and private land borders the north-northwest side of this section, private land and State Highway 33 border the south-southwest side, private land borders the south, Dry Canyon Road (8N40) borders the south-southeast side and the Chumash Wilderness borders the west-northwest side. This section includes Chumash Addition SW and Badlands-Apache.

Section 4 contains 9,903 acres. The Chumash Wilderness borders the north, the Chumash Wilderness and Dry Canyon Road (8N40) border the west, Lockwood Valley Road (9N03) borders the south and private land borders the east. The GIS database name for this portion is Sawmill Badlands (Wagon Wheel Springs). There are also three isolated parcels totaling approximately 547 acres in the Lockwood Valley area (east of Section 4).

Section 5 contains approximately 544 acres. The Chumash Wilderness borders the area to the north, west and south and the Chula Vista Parking lot located near the summit of Mt. Pinos borders the east.
Section 6 contains 1,508 acres. Private land and Mil Potrero Highway border the north, the Chumash Wilderness borders the west and National Forest System land borders the south and east. The GIS database name for this portion is Sawmill Badlands (Antimony).

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The western portion (Sections 2, 3, and 4) of the area is generally described as badlands with mostly pinyon-juniper vegetation and some areas of brush and grassland. The eastern portion (Sections 1, 5, and 6) is primarily mixed conifer. Section 5 includes the summit area of Mt. Pinos (elevation 8,302 feet), a designated botanical Special Interest Area (SIA).

Sawmill Badlands is included in the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the ecological Sub-regions of California. It includes mountains, hills and valleys of the transverse ranges that are near the Pacific Ocean. The climate is temperate to hot and sub-humid. The predominant natural plant communities include chamise, scrub oaks and California sagebrush. This area includes steep mountains, with narrow rounded summits and narrow canyons.

Current uses of the area: Recreation in the scattered sections of this unit include nature viewing, cross-country hiking, hunting, outdoor education outings, photography and extensive OHV riding. There are 1.3 miles of designated hiking trails. There are 14.8 miles of designated OHV routes.

The following designated OHV roads and trails are located in the unit: Toad Springs (22W01), Quatal Canyon (23W01, 23W02, 23W10, 23W11), Apache Canyon (24W05, 22W06), Sulphur Springs (23W29), Dry Canyon (22W10, 22W13), West Fork (22W13) and Wagon Springs (22W07). Dome Springs Campground located at the end of Dry Canyon Road is the only campground in this area. The facility includes six campsites, picnic tables, fire rings, rustic vault toilet and trailhead.

There are six active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments within the unit. The special use authorizations for the unit are as follows: permitted water systems and associated transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6, an organization camp and Mt. Able Communication Site in Section 1, telephone transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6, Mt. Pinos Communications Site in Section 5 and electrical transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6. The special use authorizations for the western portion of Sawmill Badlands are as follows: permitted water systems and associated transmission lines in Sections 2 and 3, permitted roads in Section 2 and stream gauges in Section 4. Depending on the vegetative condition around these sites, routine hazardous fuel reduction is necessary around the perimeter of these special use sites.

There is evidence of historic mining activities; however, there is no active mining activity. One spring and many guzzlers are currently maintained in area for benefit of wildlife and public and may also be useful for fire suppression and prevention actions.

A healthy forest and hazardous fuel reduction project at Pine Mountain Club is currently being implemented and will be maintained to comply with environmental concerns and the Community-wide Protection Plan for southern Kern County. Overlap occurs in parcel one of this unit.

Mechanical equipment is used for fuel reduction alongside roads and some of the maintained roads overlap within the unit. Fuel reduction projects alongside County-maintained roads are planned with partners. There are some fuel wood sales of dead and down trees as well as
approximately 100 acres of reforestation, primarily in Section 1. There are approximately 100 acres of plantations under active management with monitoring, watering when necessary, survivorship surveys and replanting.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The landforms at lower elevations of the unit remnants are dry and rugged in a landscape of pinyon juniper, desert chaparral, and desert scrub. Rainfall is low, streams few and in some cases a dry wash with ephemeral flows. The scenic backdrop is a rugged badland, shows little disturbance and is natural appearing as few other activities are present in the area.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The Mount Pinos Summit Special Interest Area (SIA) provides an opportunity for the interpretation and enjoyment of the subalpine plant communities. It supports two small populations of limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) above 8,000 feet and is a popular destination for native plant enthusiasts. This area currently has no motorized access for the general public.

The badlands are a locally unique landform; however, most of the best examples of badlands are already included in the Chumash Wilderness. There are considerable paleontological finds in Sulphur Canyon and the upper reaches of Dry Canyon,

Quatal Canyon SIA encompasses a unique eroded canyon landform of special scenic value with eroded cliffs and pedestals of bare soil.

**Capability**

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The Sawmill Badlands roadless area was severely fragmented by the creation of the Chumash Wilderness. The largest remaining fragments are to the west and south. On the west side are the Apache Canyon, Burgess Canyon-Cuyama River, Oak Creek-Cuyama River, Quatal Canyon and the Reyes Creek-Cuyama River Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds, portions of which add to 34,344 roadless area acres. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. On the south side are the Dry Canyon, Lockwood Creek and Wagon Road Canyon HUC 6 watersheds, portions that total 13,962 acres. This accounts for 48,376 acres of the 51,376 acre total of the unit. The remaining acres are smaller fragments on the north and east.

On the west side, the watersheds average 87% on National Forest lands and are uniformly Class 1, functioning properly. Quatal and Oak Creek-Cuyama River watersheds have identified water quality issues and Quatal exhibits air quality issues in the form of ozone soil contamination but otherwise functions well enough to remain Class 1. This side of the unit is within a High Oil and Gas Potential Area and is subject to oil and gas development in adjacent areas.

On the south side, Dry Canyon and Wagon Road Canyon watersheds are Class 1 and at least 98% National Forest lands while Lockwood Creek is 73% National Forest lands and is Class 2, functioning at risk. Dry Canyon and Wagon Road Canyon have issues with stream barriers causing habitat fragmentation. Lockwood Creek has diminished function in stream channels, riparian vegetation and forest cover.
Approximately 92% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 8% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Currently the majority of the lands within the unit meet these objectives although there are several roads and some mining activities that have left scars in the landscape and do not meet these objectives. These scars are small and not significant within the scope of this evaluation because they would not jeopardize the character of the unit.

The highest elevation areas of conifers in this unit near the summit of Mt. Pinos and Cerro Noroeste are used regularly as roosting sites by the endangered California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) especially during the summer as they seek cooler areas to rest that are near to their soaring areas in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The lower elevation juniper/sage units of this unit to the south and west of Mt. Pinos and Cerro Noroeste are a part of a larger area of similar habitat but do not contain any crucial corridors for species using this habitat.

This discontinuous roadless area predominately surrounding the Chumash Wilderness has experienced relatively little wildfire across the landscape. The area averages approximately one fire start per year with 60% of all ignitions being lightning-caused. The 2006 Day Fire burned into a corner of the southern portion, affecting 8% of that area and 1% of the total Sawmill Badlands acreage. Fire suppression and vegetation management projects have altered the ecosystems on the boundaries of the Sawmill-Badlands. The perimeters of Frazier and Pine Mountain Club have fuel reduction and forest thinning projects. Routine maintenance of fuel reduction is completed around Apache Saddle station, campgrounds and roads. Some of the roadside maintenance is completed by partners (i.e. Kern County Fire) and some roads overlap with the Sawmill Badland units.

The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear with very little disturbance or influence from outside sources.

Undeveloped: The overall appearance of each of the parcels within this unit is of a natural appearing landscape that is evolving over time. The management emphasis is on accessibility for both the Mt. Pinos area and the Highway 33 scenic corridor. This emphasis includes providing hiking, biking, equestrian and OHV opportunities reflective of the Mt. Pinos area role as the recreation gateway for the east side of the Forest.

There are approximately: 7.3 miles of Forest system road, 19.0 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 21.0 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 12.7 miles of SUP- Other roads/motorized trails, 8.8 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails, and 1.3 miles of the McGill (21W02) and Mt Pinos/Tummaite (21W03) Forest developed trails.

Dome Springs Campground in Section 4 has six campsites. The campground is located at the end of Dry Canyon Road (8N40) and can be accessed by motor vehicle.

Opportunities: Approximately 3 percent of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 88% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to
protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. The remaining 9% of the unit is managed to meet the Roadded Natural ROS objective where facilities allow for recreation development that blends with the natural environment and provides for some level of user convenience. The Roadded Natural portions are those areas immediately adjacent to the roadways outside of the unit.

The area provides a low to moderate opportunity to experience adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, or self-reliance due to the proximity of rural development in the western portion and urban interface in the eastern portion.

The area provides a low to moderate sense of solitude, adventure, and self-reliance due to the proximity of state, county, and forest development roads or private property. The natural integrity of the area is largely intact; however, there are a number of temporary and unclassified roads, primarily associated with grazing allotments, located on the western portions of the area.

Recreation opportunities in the scattered sections of this unit include nature viewing, cross-country hiking, hunting, developed camping, outdoor education outings, photography and extensive OHV riding. Recreation is generally limited to the boundaries of these units as they are extremely rugged and dry and there are no system hiking trails. Cross country travel is limited because of the extremely steep and broken terrain.

**Special features and values:** The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) has had their historic range substantially reduced due to increased human populations and developments. Condors have been re-introduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Sawmill Badlands roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in the Sawmill-Badlands roadless area are not substantially affecting the habitat of this species. Condors require large tracts of land in order to maintain viable populations. Currently, this endangered species occupies areas that are part roadless and part roadded. Current monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roadded areas is precluding the use of these areas by these birds nor does the data show that California condors use designated wilderness areas more frequently than non-wilderness areas. The recovery plan for the condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species. Condor and northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) use the higher elevation conifers in this area near Mt. Pinos and Cerro Noroeste.

The Sawmill Badlands unit contains the entire Quatal Canyon Special Interest Area (SIA) and nearly all of the 450 acre Mount Pinos Summit SIA (excluding the road corridor). The Quatal Canyon SIA was designated for its unique geology and geological processes which have exposed formations of sandstone beds and demonstrate the bedrock history of water erosion. This geologic area is of scenic value and interest. The Mount Pinos Summit SIA was designated for its botanical interest including the high elevation limber pine.

**Description of size and shape:** The largest areas to the west and south are primitive in character and of sufficient size and shape to provide the wilderness qualities of solitude and remoteness and to contribute to the adjacent Chumash Wilderness. This is particularly true of Section 3. Section 4 of itself is shallow, only one to two miles deep, but could be said to extend the Chumash Wilderness and to loosely connect the Sespe Wilderness although the Lockwood Valley road corridor would continue to bisect them. The smaller fragments on the north and east
are isolated or are small and bordered by private lands and roads that access developed recreation.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Should the area be designated for wilderness, address whether or not boundary changes would enhance the wilderness characteristics or whether or not it would be possible to use boundary modifications to separate incompatible activities from those characteristics.

Boundaries shown along private land in the western portion of the area would be extremely difficult to identify due to inadequacy of earlier land surveys. Any designation of wilderness in this portion should be located well away from private land and along easily identifiable natural features.

Designation of wilderness directly adjacent to the large extent of private property on the eastern portion of the unit would probably create future conflicts as the private property continues to be developed. The boundary would be difficult to locate and post due to intrusion of private land, irregular shape and vague location.

There are existing uses near the Pine Mountain Club community, the access corridor to Mount Abel, areas of traditional Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use in Quatal and Apache Canyons and the extensive holdings of private land around the western and southern perimeter. Designation of recommended wilderness adjacent to the private land in Pine Mountain Club, Lockwood Valley and the numerous private parcels along the western boundary of the area limits the possibilities for fuels management activities and the establishment and management of fuel breaks adjacent to this growing urban interface in the Developed Area Interface land use zoning.

It appears that the Apache Saddle Fire Station may be within the unit. Regardless of boundary modifications, mountain biking use within the unit would be nonconforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 47,469 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 1,915 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 1,992 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Sawmill Badlands. Sections 5 and 6 contain portions of non-motorized trails and Section 4 has four miles of designated OHV routes. Section 3 has 5.4 miles and Section 2 has 6.6 miles of designated OHV routes.

There are no maintained trails in Section 1 of the area; Sections 2, 3, and 4 have several designated OHV routes; Section 5 currently provides motorized access by permit to the summit of Mount Pinos; and Section 6 contains a portion of the McGill Trail, a popular mountain bicycle route. Sections 5 and 6 have heavy mountain bike use and Section 1 has light mountain bike use. The open vegetation allows cross-country hiking; conversely badland terrain often limits cross-county hiking to localized areas in the western portion. The area provides the opportunity for big game hunting (primarily deer) as well as bird and small game hunting (primarily quail and
rabbit). Dispersed camping is allowed but the lack of water is a limiting factor. The badland landform provides good opportunities for photography and scenic viewing.

Sections 1 and 6 provide possible opportunities for development of ski facilities, both downhill and cross-country, that would be forgone with wilderness designation. On the south and western portions (Sections 2, 3, and 4) there is a proposed OHV route to replace the Toad Springs OHV Route through the Chumash Wilderness.

There is one developed campground (Dome Springs) with six campsites. It also serves as a trailhead for OHV use and for hiking into the Chumash Wilderness. The campground is development level 2 and is located at the end of Dry Canyon road at the Chumash Wilderness boundary.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** There are no specific wildlife management needs that require road access into the unit. Roads that may allow fire access and reduce the potential for fire to remove conifer habitat at the higher elevations indirectly helps protect condor roost sites and potential goshawk nesting areas.

**Water availability and use:** The entire unit is very dry with no perennial streams even though there are some springs and seeps scattered throughout. Most streams are very sediment-laden and flashy, flowing only during and immediately after heavy rain storms. Winter precipitation is often in the form of snow that melts slowly and does not often cause above ground flow in the creeks.

**Livestock operations:** There are six active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments within the Sawmill Badlands unit. These allotments include the following range improvements: 17 spring developments and 5.5 miles of fence. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.
### Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apache-Active</td>
<td>8,941</td>
<td>17.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burges-Vacant</td>
<td>4,391</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Canyon-Active</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Canyon-Active</td>
<td>9,216</td>
<td>17.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piru(57)-Vacant</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatal-Active</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Spring-Active</td>
<td>6,550</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegis-Active</td>
<td>5,360</td>
<td>10.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,443</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.93</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Timber:

There are some fuel wood sales of dead and down trees as well as approximately 100 acres of reforestation (primarily in Section 1). And there are approximately 100 acres of plantations under active management with monitoring, watering when necessary, survivorship surveys and replanting. Management activities within the coniferous vegetation such as reforestation, safety activities or salvage after wildfires. These activities may require the use of mechanized equipment.

### Minerals:

Gypsum is mined in the area. There is a moderate potential for saleable products such as gravel and building stone. And there is a moderate potential for strategic and non-strategic minerals, and there is low potential for phosphates and geothermal resources. There is high potential for oil and gas development in the western portions of the area.

### Cultural resources:

The Mt. Pinos summit is considered a Traditional Cultural Landscape or Property that may be affiliated with traditional religious and cultural importance. Since the area is being used currently and in the past for ceremonial activities (during solstice and throughout the year) by the Chumash Tribe, it has been considered a place of great importance to the Chumash people. Ethnographic studies have been written documenting traditional use of the area by the Chumash people. An ethnographic study was done by Helen McCarthy, Cultural Resource Research and Consulting; for Mount Pinos: IWHINMU’U (Tribal Name) and is on file at Los Padres National Forest Supervisor’s Office.

Cultural resources recorded within all segments of Sawmill Badlands supports the traditional use of the area by tribal groups with approximately 31 sites recorded. These sites predominately consist of flake stones, lithics and several subsistence sites with milling features. Also included in recorded sites is Juniper Quarry 1 and 2 and the Dome Spring Ridge site.

### Authorized and potential land uses:

Nine organizational camps are located on the periphery of the eastern portion of the area. The special use permits for the east portion of Sawmill Badlands are as follows: permitted water systems and associated transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6, an organization camp in Section 1, telephone transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6, an electronic communications site in Section 5, and electric transmission lines in Sections 1 and 6. The special use permits for the west section of Sawmill Badlands are as follows: permitted water systems and associated transmission lines in Sections 2 and 3, permitted roads in Section 2 and stream gauges in Section 4.
Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Developed Area Interface land use areas in Sawmill Badlands may be considered for heavy vegetation modification which may be incompatible with wilderness designation. There are fuel reduction and thinning projects being implemented near Pine Mountain Club and other communities. Access to fuel breaks near communities and permitted areas need to be maintained for resource protection.

Management practices may be used to protect, enhance and conserve wildlife species that may not be consistent with wilderness designation (i.e. the use of motorized vehicles to transport, release, and monitor individual animals and to place supplemental feed). A combination of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized land use designations would provide California condors with suitable habitat while allowing wildlife managers to continue to use motorized vehicles in their conservation efforts.

Designation of recommended wilderness along the western and southern portions of the area would further complicate or preclude relocation of the Toad Springs OHV Route addressed in the Condor Range and River Protection Act that designated the Chumash Wilderness.

The Quatal SIA is primarily for visual and recreation and not a wildlife area. The Mt Pinos Summit SIA may need fuel reduction or prescribed fire to maintain the limber pine.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of Sawmill Badlands are the San Rafael Wilderness (190,968 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres).

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the district and forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts...
less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Recreation use in the unit is moderate and would likely remain available for opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation use even if this area was not designated as wilderness. The adjacent large wilderness areas adjacent to the study area will continue to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation use.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The special species of interest in this unit are the California condor and the goshawk. Both of these species do have the ability to survive in less than primitive surroundings given the Forest Service and U.S. Fish Wildlife Service controls and regulation already in place are employed.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The landforms and ecosystems of the area are common and not in need of preservation, although the relatively preserved nature of the area suggests that the area will remain intact for the foreseeable future.
Los Padres National Forest

Sespe-Frazier Inventoried Roadless Area

Mount Pinos Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 74,482 acre Mount Pinos Ranger District portion of the Sespe-Frazier Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) was originally composed of one very large roadless area totaling 106,916 acres that was subsequently fragmented by the creation of the Sespe Wilderness in the center of the unit. This left a number of smaller sections around the perimeter of the Sespe Wilderness that are still referred to as Sespe-Frazier roadless area. On the north or Mt. Pinos Ranger District side of the unit these fragmented sections can be broadly grouped into three separate areas.

The westernmost area lies just south of the junction of State Route 33 and County Route 90/100 (Lockwood Valley Road) at Ozena in the Upper Cuyama Valley. It is bounded by State Route 33 on the west, Pine Mountain Road (6N06) on the south, the existing Sespe Wilderness on the east and private land in Ozena Valley on the north. The area is composed of 3,355 contiguous acres immediately adjacent to the Sespe Wilderness to the east but it is also immediately adjacent to highways on the west and south.

The easternmost and largest section comprises a total of 69,965 acres and is partitioned into several sub-areas by road corridors. The largest portion lies south of the community of Frazier Park. A contiguous sub-area of 12,080 acres is immediately adjacent to the Sespe Wilderness but is partitioned from the rest of the unit by a corridor road (8N01) that is also known as the Gold Hill Road which travels from Hungry Valley to Alamo Mountain. It is bounded by Piru Creek on the north, the existing Sespe Wilderness and private land on the west and south and the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area on the east. Another contiguous sub-area of 52,985 acres lies to the north and west. It is bounded by Piru Creek on the south, the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area on the east, private property and West Frazier OHV Road (8N42) on the north and the existing Sespe Wilderness on the west. Finally, the unit is further partitioned by Grade Valley Road (7N03) to Mutau Flat creating three smaller contiguous areas totaling 4,900 acres adjacent to the Sespe Wilderness.

The third section consists of three isolated small tracts of National Forest System lands immediately adjacent to private land. The area, totaling 1,162 acres, is located four miles east of the Ozena Fire Station and is bounded on the north by Alamo Creek and private land, on the west by private land, and on the south and east by private land and the existing Sespe Wilderness.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): In Section 1 chaparral and/or coastal sage scrub covers most of the slopes with coniferous species at higher elevations. In Section 2 chaparral and/or coastal sage scrub covers most of the slopes with interspersed areas of coniferous species. Riparian vegetation occurs along Piru Creek. In Section 3 chaparral and/or coastal sage scrub covers most of the slopes though there are areas of coniferous species, primarily in the higher elevations. Riparian vegetation occurs along Piru and Lockwood Creeks as well as a number of tributaries.
The Sespe Wilderness, around which all the remaining fragments of the Sespe-Frazier roadless area lie, is bisected by the backbone ridge of the Transverse Range that separates the wetter coastal-influence front country from the drier Cuyama Valley side of the Forest. The fragments on the Mount Pinos side are desert montane interspersed with high peaks that extend upward into the montane conifers. The Sespe Wilderness is located on the highest ground. Vegetation is predominantly pinyon juniper, desert chaparral and desert sage but occasionally ranges into mixed conifer. While there are peaks as high as Frazier Mountain at 8,000 feet, only 5% of this country exceeds 6,000 feet in elevation. The largest unit fragments on the Mt. Pinos side border Lockwood and Cuddy Valleys. This area is the headwater for Piru Creek and Lockwood Creek. To the north, part of the area drains to Cuddy Creek but is not the headwater.

Current uses of the area: Special use authorizations exist for roads to private in-holdings in Long Dave Valley and other private in-holdings located west of Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area. A weather station under special use authorization to Ventura County Flood Control is located just west of Dutchman Campground.

Recreation use includes day-use hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, seasonal water play, seasonal snow play, nature viewing and photography, extensive OHV 4X4 and single track riding, developed and primitive camping, hunting and fishing.

The following designated non-motorized trails are in located the unit: Boulder Canyon (23W03), Raspberry (23W42), Johnson Ridge (20W16), Stonehouse (20W35), Fishbowls (21W05), Thorn Point (21W07) and Buck Creek (18W01).

The following designated OHV trails are located in the unit: Tejon (19W03), Snowy (19W04), East Frazier (19W06), Goldhill (19W17), West Frazier (20W02), West Frazier 2 (20W03), Arrastra (20W05), Miller-Jeep (20W06), Piru (20W07), Cottonwood (20W09), Yellowjacket (20W24) and Whata (20W25).

This unit contains six rustic campgrounds: Thorn Meadows, Dutchman, Sunset, Cottonwood and Halfmoon. The campgrounds have been three to 10 camp sites, vault toilets, fire rings and may or may not have tables.

This unit contains three trailheads that access the Sespe Wilderness. These sites are: Fishbowls, Johnson Ridge and Buck Creek. These sites are generally a parking area with few or no amenities.

There are two active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments within the unit. Section 1 contains portions of the Ozena grazing allotment and special use authorizations for a rain gauge, a seismic monitoring station and an oil and gas pipeline. There is one permitted slough disposal site and two additional sites that have been identified for future use.

In Section 2 there are three special use authorizations for stream and rain gauges in the area. The area includes portions of the Piru grazing allotment. There are also mining claims within the area in addition to the patented claim on Piru Creek.

In Section 3 there are special use authorizations for water developments and transmission lines for the communities of Frazier Park and Lake of the Woods, gas pipeline, rain gauge and for a private access road (Long Dave). The area includes portions of the Piru grazing allotment. There are also mining claims within the area in addition to the patented claims on Piru Creek and
Frazier Mountain. There are additional claims that are in the patent process for bentonite clays in the area.

Section 2 has a history of mineral extraction. The potential for mineral location is high. There are currently four applications for approximately 2,396 acres of oil and gas leasing in the area. In Section 2 there is a patented mining claim along Piru Creek and several parcels of private property along Mutau Creek that could become in-holdings if wilderness were designated. There is a road to the primary parcel (Mutau Flats).

In Section 3 a history of mineral extraction and the potential for mineral location is high. There is a patented mining claim along Piru Creek and another on East Frazier Mountain.

Alamo Mountain II fuel and vegetation treatment project is within this unit. Light understory burns and thinning activities are being used to maintain the health of the forest and reduce the severity of the effects from wild land fires. Both the Alamo Mountain II and the Day Fire reforestation projects require continued maintenance.

Collectively there are 12 water sources and 77 helispots in the unit identified for potential use during fire management operations. Water sources need periodic inspection and maintenance.

There are existing fire lines that were used during recent wildfires. They are currently acting as fuel breaks and need some level of maintenance to keep their functionality. Because of the topography and low road density in the Forest there are limited opportunities for rapid suppression activities based on geographic features. These are the ones that have been successful in the past, and need to be available in the present and future. The benefits of these fire lines also continue past fire suppression, e.g., wildlife corridors, wildlife viewing, nesting habitat with edges and biodiversity increase, recreational uses and opportunities for threatened, endangered and sensitive species habitat improvement or management (i.e. condor feeding sites).

Guzzlers are maintained for the benefit of wildlife, public and fire prevention activities.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas):** The eastern and largest area of the unit is an ecologically diverse landscape that ranges from 2,500 feet to 8,000 feet in elevation and that provides a scenic backdrop for local communities and for the Interstate 5 corridor. This area also provides diverse recreation opportunities with road access to developed campgrounds and a network of OHV trails. It is in proximity to increased human activity as communities in Frazier Park, Lockwood Valley and along the I-5 corridor continue to develop. The westernmost area of the unit is a small area adjacent to the Highway 33 corridor on the west and the Sespe Wilderness on the east that is natural in appearance and provides public access opportunities and a visual backdrop for State Highway 33.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** There are several mountain peaks (White Mountain and Alamo) that provide orientation points but are not distinctive as scenic attractions. In Section 2 and 3 the Condor Range and River Protection Act designated Piru Creek as a study river for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Although relatively inaccessible and sensitive to human disturbance, the Upper Piru Critical Biological Area is an important aquatic and riparian critical habitat for the endangered arroyo toad.

The Foster Bear Pond Special Interest Area has one vernal pool and another pool that usually has year round water that attracts many species of wildlife. There are no threatened, endangered or
sensitive species that are reliant on this pond but a two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*) was seen in the pond after the 2006 Day Fire.

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Approximately 81% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 19% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear slightly altered but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed.

In the first parcel, the natural integrity and appearance are fairly high once you get away from the private land, roads, and recreation developments that exist along the edges. There is a small private parcel within the area near Pine Mountain ridge and the western portion of the area has a gas pipeline corridor under special use permit.

In Section 2 the natural integrity and appearance is fairly high once you get away from roads, OHV routes and private parcels. In Section 3 the natural integrity and appearance is fairly high once you get away from roads, OHV routes and private parcels; however, the area is heavily influenced by motorized use.

The Sespe-Frazier roadless area is both large and fragmented from creation of and addition to the Sespe Wilderness. There are four distinct and discontinuous areas of Sespe-Frazier unit. On the Mt. Pinos side, the largest is in the east and is comprised of Cedar Creek-Piru Creek, Lockwood Creek, Snowy Creek-Piru Creek, Los Alamos Creek, Castaic Lake and Seymour Creek Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds.

See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf). The total area of this east portion is 69,965 acres. The watersheds in this area are Class 1, functioning properly, with the exception of Tule Creek-Sespe Creek which is Class 2, functioning at risk. They are 84% or greater National Forest lands. Resource issues vary. Abadi Creek-Sespe Creek contains 303d listed waters and aquatic invasive species. Alamo Creek has stream barriers causing habitat fragmentation. The Tule Creek-Sespe Creek has altered stream flows from the natural regime, and invasive species. There are a number of roads and OHV trails in these areas that are permanent contributors to watershed disturbance. However, these roads and trails are maintained and have been considered in the functioning classification of the watersheds.

In the west is an area comprised of parts of two HUC 6 watersheds, Alamo Creek, and Reyes Creek-Cuyama River, totaling 4,517 acres for that portion on the Mount Pinos Ranger District. These watersheds average 88% National Forest lands and are Class 1, functioning properly. Alamo Creek has habitat fragmentation due to stream barriers. These issues are best dealt with if the area is zoned to permit access for resource management.

Air quality is generally good. There are no significant ongoing pollution sources of significance other than intermittent sources from wildfires or prescribed fires. The area has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear except in those areas adjacent to the Highway 5 corridor.
This discontinuous unit surrounding the Sespe Wilderness has a large number of units with a varied fire history. Large fires often affect 100% of one or more units. The northern units have experienced the majority of small fire ignitions within the area (a mix of lightning and human-caused). Much of the landscape had not been burned until the 2006 Day Fire affected approximately half the northern area. Isolated areas in these units have experienced two or three significant fires prior to burning in 2006. The fire history and fire regime is complex for this unit. There are about 20,000 acres that have more frequent fires for the vegetation types that occur in MPRD portion of the Sespe-Frazier roadless area.

The unit is relatively intact for wildlife species and their habitats. Some roads and OHV trails bisect the area but these are native material, narrow roads that are not used heavily and do not likely interrupt wildlife travel through the forested areas. Piru Creek, which runs east and west through this unit, is the heart of the most important habitat for threatened, endangered and sensitive species and other wildlife in the area and provides a movement corridor for aquatic species as well as large mammals. The transportation system may have minor interference with this corridor.

Undeveloped: The largest area south of Lockwood Valley and Frazier Park is interlaced with roads and OHV trails yet retains its primitive character and is relatively undisturbed visually from any distance. The area provides an undisturbed appearing backdrop for local communities and the Interstate 5 corridor. The smaller area near Ozena and bordering State Highway 33 is similarly primitive and provides a visually undisturbed backdrop. The management emphasis in this unit is on OHV recreation opportunities and vegetation management. Section 2 contains Gold Hill/Alamo Mountain Road (18N01) and 7N01 (and Loop), Stewart Mountain Road (7N03), Mutau Road and Thorn Meadows Road (7N03B) all form ‘cherry stems’ into the area. There are approximately: 4.5 miles of Forest system road, 66.9 miles of Forest system trail, motorized, 32.8 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 43.0 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 7.2 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

In Section 3 non-system roads provide access through the area to private property (Castaic Mine, Long Dave Valley, Maxey Ranch and Tibbetts Ranch). Section 1 contains approximately 4.5 miles of designated non-motorized trails: Boulder Canyon 4.3 miles (23W03) and Raspberry 0.2 miles (23W42). Section 2 contains approximately 8.4 miles of designated non-motorized trails: Johnson Ridge 3.4 miles (20W16), Stonehouse 2.1 miles (20W35), Fishbowls 2.3 miles (21W05), Thorn Point 0.1 miles (21W07) and Buck Creek 0.5 miles (18W01). Section 2 has approximately 66 miles of designated OHV routes: Tejon (19W03), Snowy (19W04), East Frazier (19W06), Goldhill (19W17), West Frazier (20W02), West Frazier (20W03), Arrastra (20W05), Miller-Jeep (20W06), Piru (20W07), Cottonwood (20W09), Yellowjacket (20W24) and Whata (20W25).

In Section 3 there is visible evidence of previous logging activity on Frazier Mountain as well as current plantations and thinning activities.

Opportunities: Section 1 provides a fairly low level of challenge for most users. The opportunity for solitude is moderate in the interior portions of the area. The section is bordered on three sides by State Highway 33 which carries significant traffic. Section 2 provides a low to moderate level of challenge and the opportunity for solitude for most users. Even with the relatively large
69,965 acre size of this section it also has 66.9 miles of OHV trails. Section 3 is small at 1,162 acres and is fragmented and bordered by private lands.

Similarly, physical challenges and spirit of adventure in this area is dominated by OHV riding on the extensive developed motorized trails. Few non-motorized trails are located in this area. Conifer forest at higher elevation allows for moderate cross country hiking and dispersed camping is allowed.

Approximately 10% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 88% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. Approximately 2% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural ROS objective where facilities provide for some convenience for the visitor and borrow elements such as color and form from the natural surroundings. This objective allows for moderate interaction among visitors as is not compatible with wilderness activities.

Major recreational opportunities include day-use hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, seasonal water plan, seasonal snow plan, photography, developed and primitive camping, hunting (deer, upland game, turkey), fishing, relaxing and viewing nature. This area has extensive designated OHV roads and trails and developed recreation sites and provides a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities.

Special features and values: The Sespe-Frazier unit contains a large portion of Upper Piru Creek which is recommended for designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Upper Piru Creek is a perennial stream that provides recreational opportunities and is outstandingly remarkable for its geological features and prehistoric/ethnographic sites. It also provides habitat for the arroyo toad and a trout fishery.

Sections 2 and 3 contain both suitable and occupied willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus) habitat. There is one known location of a goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) nesting site. There is one known California spotted owl (Strix occidentalis) nesting site in this section. The California Department of Fish and Game introduced a population of bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis) into this area. The sheep tend to be shy and avoid human contact whenever possible. The California Department of Fish and Game manages Piru Creek and Lockwood Creek as heritage trout streams. There are two species of fairy shrimp that are found in two areas of Section 3, the vernal pool (Branchinecta lynchi) and conservancy (Branchinecta conservatio).

There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Sespe-Frazier. This unit covers a very large and ecologically diverse area distributed among a number of disjunct sub-units. It, therefore, contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. The following plant species are known to occur within and outside of the unit: Abrams' flowery puncturebract (Acanthoscyphus parishii var. abramsii), Mount Pinos onion (Allium howellii var. clokeyi), Palmer's mariposa lily (Calochortus palmeri var. palmeri), Late-flowering mariposa lily (Calochortus weedii var. vestus), Umbrella larkspur (Delphinium umbraculorum), Ojai fritillary (Fritillaria ojaiensis), Pale yellow layia (Layia heterotirca), Flax-
like monardella (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *Oblonga*), Baja pincushion plant (*Navarretia peninsularis*) and Transverse Range phacelia (*Phacelia exilis*).

The Upper Piru Critical Biological Area covers Piru Creek and the surrounding riparian zone from Pyramid Lake upstream about five miles in this unit. This area is also designated critical habitat for arroyo toads that breed here. There is an infestation of tamarisk here but diligent volunteer efforts have kept this population at bay.

The most notable threatened or endangered species in this unit are the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and the southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). The Hopper Mountain Condor Refuge lies near the southern end of this unit and the Bitter Creek Condor Refuge lies to the north. Consequently condor soar over this unit frequently and also nest in the southeastern-most and southern-most Sespe Frazier units. The southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) has been seen migrating through Reasoner Canyon and upper Piru Canyon near Halfmoon Campground but there are no breeding records from here. Several sensitive species that use higher elevation habitats can be found in this unit as well, including the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Mt. Pinos lodgepole chipmunk (*Tamias speciosus callipeplus*), southern rubber boa (*Charina bottae umbratica*), yellow-blotched ensatina (*Ensatina escholtzii croceator*), and Tehachapi slender salamander (*Batrachoseps stebbinsi*).

The Foster Bear Ponds Special Interest Area are ponds with permanent water south of Lockwood Valley in clay soils that support fairy shrimp and a host of other aquatic species including the Region 5 sensitive two-stripe garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*), damselflies and dragonflies and neo-tropical migratory birds.

The 38 mile segment of Upper Piru Creek has been determined eligible for wild and scenic designation. This upper reach of Piru Creek transverses across the section 2 of this unit. The wild and scenic river eligibility protects the characteristics of the creek from degradation by development. A non-motorized or wilderness designation for the MPRD Sespe-Frazier unit will not provide additional protection to this segment of Piru Creek.

**Description of size and shape:** The largest area of the unit is on the east, south of Lockwood Valley and Frazier Park. It is large enough to provide solitude and the management emphasis here has been to retain a primitive nature. This belies another emphasis of the area, which is to provide a primitive experience for developed recreation and OHV use and which is evidenced by roads and OHV trails in the area. The OHV trails link to the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation area on the east boundary of the unit. The north boundary is totally privately owned and subject to increasing urban development. At the western edge of the unit near Ozena lies a smaller area that borders on State Highway 33. It is 3,355 acres in size and roughly two miles deep. It could be considered an extension of the Sespe Wilderness which forms the western border but the management emphasis of State Highway 33, which is also known as the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway, is to provide opportunities for developed recreation in a scenic setting for which this area is a good candidate. Finally, there are three very small fragments of the roadless area interspersed with private land along Alamo Creek.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Should the area be designated for wilderness, address whether or not boundary changes would enhance the wilderness characteristics or whether or not it would be possible to use boundary modifications to separate incompatible activities from those characteristics.
Section 1 could be managed as wilderness without relative difficulty. Section 2 would be difficult to manage as wilderness due to the numerous OHV routes, forest roads and private land in-holdings in the area. If the area were adjusted to reflect the boundaries as noted below, the manageability would be less difficult. Section 3 would be difficult to manage as wilderness due to the numerous OHV routes, forest roads, private land in-holdings and the communities of Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods, and Lockwood Valley that border the area.

Designation of wilderness adjacent to private land may limit the possibility for fuel management activities and the establishment and management of defensible fuel profile zones.

The northern boundary near Ozena Valley should be relocated away from the private property to a location that allows for fuel management activities and establishment and management of defensible fuel profile zones. The western boundary needs to be located with consideration of maintenance activities along State Highway 33 and identified and potential slough disposal areas as well as the oil and gas pipeline. Relocation of the southern boundary to one-quarter mile north of Pine Mountain Road would allow for management of the recreation sites and access to the private parcel.

Boundary adjustments would not improve the overall manageability of Section 3 due to the number of designated motorized trails with the section and roads on the outside perimeter of the section.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 66,267 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 3,067 acres, Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 4,270, Critical Biological (CB)- 103 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 775 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific visitation figures are available for MPRD portion of the Sespe-Frazier. Much of the unit is utilized for motorized recreation. Diverse kinds of developed recreation and off-road opportunities could potentially be satisfied in this area in the future.

Section 1 provides the opportunity for backcountry camping, hiking, viewing scenery and horseback riding as well as large game hunting. Approximately 6.5 miles of designated non-motorized trail traverses the area. In Sections 2 and 3, recreation use is primarily associated with OHV use. Hunting small and big game and upland birds, hiking, horseback riding, limited fishing and viewing scenery are secondary uses.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** The California condor has had their historic range substantially reduced due to increased human populations and developments. Condors have been reintroduced into areas of their historic range in and adjacent to the Sespe-Frazier roadless area. Current and projected human uses and developments on National Forest System lands in the Sespe-Frazier roadless area do not substantially affect the habitat of this species. Condors require large tracts of land in order to maintain viable populations. This endangered species occupies areas that are part roadless and part roaded. Monitoring data does not indicate that the presence of roaded areas is precluding the use of these areas by these birds.
nor does the data show that condors use designated wilderness areas more frequently than non-wilderness areas. The recovery plan for the condor does not recommend the designation of additional wilderness areas as a means of promoting the recovery of the species.

This unit is very fractured and widespread and covers many habitat types from low elevation coastal scrub to high elevation conifer. The main issues regarding wildlife management here are fire and fuels, water quality, invasive species, condor management and high elevation conifer protection. Bullfrogs and tamarisk are significant threats to riparian habitat. Arundo is also present in the vicinity.

**Water Availability and use:** Recent large and intense wildfires have triggered immense sediment loads into the Sespe and Piru drainages. While arroyo toads may benefit from these fine sediments steelhead does not. Aside from the water quality implications of sediment loading, most of the Sespe flows to the Ventura River via the Sespe, Piru, and Santa Clara River systems. A small part of the Sespe drains to the Cuyama River and eventually the Santa Maria River. In both cases the water supplies important agricultural and municipal uses.

**Livestock Operations:** There are two active and two vacant livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include the following range improvements: nine spring developments and 7.0 miles of fence. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness.

The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frazier Mountain-Vacant</td>
<td>2,338</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozena-Active</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piru(57)-Vacant</td>
<td>29,820</td>
<td>27.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegis-Active</td>
<td>1,077</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,373</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.04</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timber:** In Section 2 there is visible evidence of previous logging activity in the Alamo and Sewart Mountain areas. At the lower elevations near the town of Piru human-caused fire starts every few years are type-converting the habitats toward grass and coastal sage. In the higher elevations heavy fuel buildup threatens existing conifer stands.

**Minerals:** Section 2 has a history of mineral extraction. The potential for mineral location is high. There are four current applications for approximately 2,396 acres of oil and gas leasing in the area. There is a patented mining claim along Piru Creek in Section 2 and several parcels of private property along Mutau Creek that would become in-holdings if the unit is designated wilderness. There is a road to the primary parcel (Mutau Flats). Section 3 has a history of mineral extraction and the potential for mineral location is high. There is a patented mining claim along Piru Creek and another on East Frazier Mountain.

**Cultural Resources:** There are known cultural and historic sites within Sections 2 and 3. The cultural and historic values within the MPRD portion of the Sespe-Frazier roadless area are comprised of approximately 98 cultural and historic resource sites. The most significant are the traditional cultural properties (TCP) comprised of pictographs (rock art) and milling features. The unit has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources. The information provided
is based on documentation of archaeological assessments conducted for specific projects proposed within the unit.

**Authorized and potential land uses:** Section 1 contains portions of the Ozena grazing allotment and special use authorizations for a rain gauge, a seismic monitoring station, and an oil and gas pipeline. There is one permitted slough disposal site and two additional sites that have been identified for future use.

In Section 2 there are three special use authorizations for stream and rain gauges in the area. The area includes portions of the Piru grazing allotment. There are also mining claims within the area in addition to the patented claim on Piru Creek.

In Section 3 there are special use authorizations for water developments and transmission lines for the communities of Frazier Park and Lake of the Woods, gas pipeline, rain gauge and private access road (Long Dave). The area includes portions of the Piru grazing allotment. There are also mining claims within the area in addition to the patented claims on Piru Creek and Frazier Mountain. There are additional claims that are in the patent process for bentonite clays in the area. There are no special use authorizations in section 4.

**Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands:** Wildlife biologists use management practices to protect, enhance, and conserve species that may not be consistent with wilderness management objectives (i.e. use of motorized vehicles to transport, release, and monitor individual animals and to place supplemental feed). A combination of semi-primitive motorized and semi-primitive non-motorized land use designations would provide California condors with suitable habitat while allowing wildlife managers to continue to use motorized vehicles in their conservation efforts.

Vehicle access to Hardluck Campground is very important to the efforts at controlling the tamarisk population in this Critical Biological Area as well as vehicle access to Half Moon Campground.

There are planned fuel treatments in the Alamo Mountain area in Section 2 that require mechanized equipment for safety and efficiency. Public firewood gathering by permit occurs along Piru Creek near Mutau Road and along Alamo Mountain Road with the permit holder usually using power tools to cut downed trees and using trucks to transport the firewood.

In Section 3 there are planned fuel treatments in the Frazier Mountain area and near the interface areas with the communities on the northern boundary of the area to create defensible space. Public fuel wood gathering and small fuel wood sales occur on Frazier Mountain and in the Grade Valley area. There are a number of recent and on-going silvicultural treatments on Frazier Mountain. Reforestation after fires and other stand management activities could be restricted if the area were designated as wilderness. Developed Area Interface (DAI) zoned areas may be considered for heavy vegetation modification.

Designation may complicate the administration of the grazing allotment. During the period leading up to the designation of the current Sespe Wilderness landowners in the Mutau Creek area were very adamant about not becoming an in-holding in the wilderness due to the limitations it created for the future use of their land.
In Section 3 wilderness designation would severely limit OHV trail loop opportunities currently available on the Mount Pinos District and cause trespass problems where the roadless area is adjacent to Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area.

**Need**

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

**Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area:** Sections 1 and 3 are within a 15 mile radius of the San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres), Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres). Section 2 is within a 20 mile radius of the Dick Smith Wilderness (71,350 acres), Chumash Wilderness (37,248 acres) and Sespe Wilderness (218,508 acres).

**Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation:** Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the district and forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as Wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other Wilderness areas.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Mt. Pinos Ranger District is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification. Many of the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences are available in these non-wilderness areas.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values
or phenomena: There is a need to protect the corridor of the Piru River through this unit but this is a very narrow corridor compared to the entire roadless area. Existing uses are compatible with this corridor at the present level of use but could be improved by reducing road crossings or other management not related to the overall land use classification of this unit. Condors also use this unit as an area that they soar over but they do not nest or feed and only occasionally roost here on Alamo and Frazier Mountain (which are excluded from this unit).

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The unique Transverse Range, with its relatively young and structurally active faults, extends eastward and includes all of the Angeles National Forest and parts of the San Bernardino National Forest. The landform is well represented by three National Forests.
_Los Padres National Forest_

**Sespe-Frazier Inventoried Roadless Area**

Ojai Ranger District

**Overview**

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The Ojai Ranger District portion of the 34,434 acre Sespe-Frazier Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) was originally composed of one very large roadless area that was subsequently fragmented by the creation of the Sespe Wilderness in the center of the unit. This left a number of smaller sections around the perimeter of the Sespe Wilderness that are still referred to as Sespe-Frazier roadless area. On the south or Ojai Ranger District side of the unit these fragmented sections can be broadly grouped into six areas because they are separated spatially or by existing road corridors.

Area 1 contains 8,625 acres. It is bounded by State Highway 33 and Sespe Creek on the south and west, Sespe Wilderness on the east and northeast, Reyes Peak on the northeast and Gypsum Mine Road on the north. This section includes approximately 3,155 acres of Chorro Grande (additional acreage in Chorro Grande that falls outside of this inventoried roadless area is evaluated separately).

Area 2 contains 4,609 acres. It is bounded by Sespe River Road (6N31) on the north, Chief Peak Road (5N42) on the west, Nordhoff Ridge Road (5N08) on the south and the Sespe Wilderness on the east.

Area 3 contains 11,879 acres. It is bounded by the Sespe Wilderness on the north, Nordhoff Ridge Road on the northwest, Sisar Road (4N15) on the west and private land in Bear Canyon on the south. The section boundary of this unit lies north of La Broche Canyon Road (4N04A) and then traverses around private land in Santa Paula Canyon. It continues along the interface of forest and private land on the south and then along the interface of forest and private land on the east. This area contains Topatopa Bluff, a tremendous scenic escarpment that can be seen for miles around the Ojai, Santa Clara and Simi Valleys.

Area 4 contains 821 acres. It is bounded by the Sespe Wilderness and Sespe Condor Sanctuary on the north and west, Tar Creek on the northeast, Squaw Flat Road (6N16) on the east, a gated road south of Squaw Flat Road on the southeast and the Forest boundary on the south.

Area 5 contains 5,632 acres. It is bounded by the Sespe Wilderness on the northwest, Sespe Condor Sanctuary on the west and private land in the southern portions of Sections 28 - 30 in the south and southeast. The eastern boundary begins approximately one-eighth of a mile west of Piru Canyon Road (4N13), where it crosses National Forest System Lands in Section 22. The eastern boundary then traverses around a large private parcel in Sections 21 and 16 and continues along Piru Canyon Road in Sections 10 and 15 on the northeast. It then again meanders around private land in Sections 10 and 4 on the northeast and north.

Area 6 contains 868 acres. It is bounded by Sespe Wilderness on the north and Piru Creek in Section 4 on the northwest. The boundary excludes the private land in Section 10 on the west. It continues just east of Blue Point Campground and Piru Creek on the west, and follows around private land in Section 15 on the southwest. It lies just south of Canton Canyon Creek on the south. The north-south line on the east extends from the south side of Section 15 to the top of
Section 3, starting at the intersection of the line at the top of Township 5N with the Sespe Wilderness boundary.

**Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)):** The area is part of the Northern Transverse Ranges subsection of the Southern California Mountains and Valleys section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California.

In Area 1 chaparral covers most of the slopes with coniferous species at the higher elevations. Riparian areas contain sycamore and oak trees. Natural integrity and appearance are fairly high away from the highway, roads, and private and recreation developments that exist along the edges.

In Area 2 chaparral covers most of the slopes with interspersed areas of coniferous species. Riparian vegetation occurs along Lion Canyon. Natural integrity is similar to that in Section 1.

In Area 3 chaparral covers most of the slopes with interspersed areas of coniferous species. Riparian vegetation occurs along Sisar and Santa Paula Creeks. Natural integrity is similar to that in Section 1.

In Area 4 chaparral covers most of the slopes. Riparian vegetation occurs along Redrock Creek on the northeast edge. Natural integrity and appearance are fairly high throughout the area.

In Area 5 chaparral covers much of the slopes although there are interspersed areas of meadowlands and some coniferous species. Riparian vegetation occurs along both Reasoner Canyon, which traverses the middle of this area, and Agua Blanca Creek on the northern edge. Natural integrity and appearance are fairly high throughout this area except for evidence of grazing and occasional drift fences.

In Area 6 chaparral covers most of the slopes with interspersed areas of meadowlands. Natural integrity and appearance are fairly high away from roads and recreation developments that exist along the edges.

**Current uses of the area:** Area 1 includes portions of the Reyes Peak (23W04), Chorro Grande (23W05), Potrero John (23W06), and Middle Sespe (22W04) and Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trails (22W03). They are used for a variety of non-motorized activities including hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Oak Camp is located 1.7 miles from State Highway 33 on the Chorro Grande Trail. Also in this section is a permitted buried gas pipeline. Due to required intermittent maintenance on the line with heavy equipment, the impacts associated with the pipeline and associated access roadway is expected to continue indefinitely. A waterline and stream diversion special use authorization is located north of private property near the Felt Ranch. A portion of the Sespe Creek Wild and Scenic River is in this unit.

Area 2 includes portions of the Rose-Lion Connector (22W16), Lion Canyon (22W06) and Rose Valley Falls Trails (22W15). They are used for a variety of non-motorized activities including hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Rose Valley Campground, West Fork Lion Trail Camp, Howard and Elder Camps are located in the area. Sisar Peak Communication Site and access road is located here also. In Rose Valley there is an access road to a water tank to support the former Rose Valley helibase and structures. There is a spur road to a seasonal wildlife pond on Nordhoff Ridge Road west of Sisar Peak. Maintenance of landslide-prone areas is managed under a Caltrans Special Use Authorization along State Route 33.
Area 3 includes portions of the Red Reef (21W08), Last Chance (21W09) and Santa Paula Canyon Trails (21W11). They are used for a variety of non-motorized activities including hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. The following trail camps are located in this area: Whiteledge, Big Cone, Cross, Cienega and Bluff Camps.

In Area 3 there is a fuel break south of Topatopa Bluff, a key component in fire suppression activities along the Ojai Front.

In Area 3 private land oil leases have Special Use Authorizations north of Mud Creek Canyon.

In Area 3 south and east of San Cayetano Peak are access roads to the Santa Paula Ridge fuel break, water pipeline and road special use authorizations. A special use authorization for a powerline to private property is located in Bear Canyon. There are likely numerous powerline and utility easements that are not documented and provide services to private lands.

In Area 4 there is an undetermined route which traverses the area through Sections 25, 30 and 31 for one mile before entering the Sespe Wilderness/Sespe Condor Sanctuary. Between 1901 and 1952 11 oil wells were drilled on private lands along Sespe Creek. The Audubon Society acquired the property and donated it to the Forest Service upon agreement to cap the existing oil wells, and remove the structures. There is also a small helispot on a ridge top approximately 0.2 miles in from Squaw Flat Road.

In Area 5 the Potholes (18W04) and the Agua Blanca Trails (19W10) are used for a variety of non-motorized activities including hiking and horseback riding as these two trails provide access into the Sespe Wilderness. Access to the trailheads are difficult as the forest user must park their vehicle at the Piru Lake boat launch next to the swimming beach and hike 2.8 miles down a paved road prior to arriving at the Pothole Trailhead and an additional 1.4 miles for the Agua Blanca Trailhead during the summer months. During the winter months, the forest user must park their vehicle at the Piru Lake Reasoner Day Use Area and hike 5.0 miles prior to arriving at the Potholes Trailhead.

In Area 5 two grazing allotments require motorized access to operate and maintain. A special use authorization for a waterline and stream diversion is located in Reasoner Canyon. An apiary permit and associated road exists south of Blue Point landmark.

In Area 6 the one road is necessary for access to private land. It is not a public road. Maintenance of this road involves mechanized equipment. The southern portion shows some evidence of grazing. The buried distribution line and water tank for the water system are within this area. An undetermined dirt road that accesses a private parcel of land in Canton Canyon traverses the southern portion of this section for approximately 0.5 miles. There are three active livestock grazing allotments in the unit.

Collectively there are no water sources but there are 18 helispots identified within the unit for potential use during fire management operations.

There are existing roads which are used for wildland fire suppression access. There are existing fire lines and roads that are effectively functioning as fuelbreaks since the Wolf, Piru and Day Fires. Fire lines exist along the Reyes Peak/Pine Mountain Road with one lateral line to the north and one fire line following the road and trail to Reyes Peak and then south to State Highway 33. A short fire line leads across the Sespe River following the Sespe River Trail for several miles.
west of Piedra Blanca Trailhead. Another fire line was put in around Snow Canyon in the southeast corner of the unit.

Overlap in the unit occurs with routine hazardous fuel reduction that utilizes mechanized equipment at Middle Lion and Rose Valley Campgrounds, Reyes Peak Trailhead, Reyes Peak Trail, Sespe River Trail, Rose Valley, West Fork Lion and Lion Canyon Trails. There may be overlap of routine hazardous fuel reduction at Pine Mountain and Reyes Peak Campgrounds. There is an existing fuelbreak which is accessed along Nordhoff Ridge within the Ojai community defense zone project area.

Activities in the area include a Big-cone Douglas fir restoration along Red Reef Trail that would require access along Nordhoff Ridge and fuel break.

A part of the southern extent overlaps the Ojai community defense zone project that requires maintenance activities to occur for hazardous fuel reduction.

Military training routes occur over the south end of the unit.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas):** Of the six areas comprising the south (ORD) portion of the Sespe-Frazier unit the westernmost is part of the State Highway 33 corridor, also known as the Jacinto-Reyes Scenic Byway. The State Highway 33 corridor crosses the transverse range and is an important connection from the coastal cities inland to the Cuyama Valley. Appearance, plant communities and geology are diverse and dominated by the highway and the concentration of traffic emphasizing access. The western three areas are part of the Ojai front lying along the transverse ridge and providing a scenic backdrop for the coastal communities. Slopes are south-facing and dominated by chaparral with patches of grassland and oak woodland at lower elevations and conifers on the ridges at higher elevations.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** Area 3 contains Topatopa Bluff, a scenic escarpment that can be seen for miles around the Ojai, Santa Clara and Simi Valleys. The unit is viewed from State Highway 33 also known as the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway.

**Capability**

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Approximately 89% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. Another 11% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear as slight alterations but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. The majority of the landscape meets these objectives with the exception of many of the roads throughout and adjacent to the unit.

Although the location description identifies six areas separated geographically or by road corridors, from a watershed point of view there are four distinct and discontinuous areas of the Sespe-Frazier unit along the south or Ojai side. The western-most area is comprised of the Abadi Creek-Sespe Creek, and Tule Creek-Sespe Creek HUC 6 watersheds. See
http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. As the names imply these watersheds flow to Sespe Creek. The total acreage is approximately 97,134 acres with portions in both the Ojai and Mt. Pinos Ranger Districts. The watersheds in this area are Class 1, functioning properly, with the exception of Tule Creek-Sespe Creek which is Class 2, functioning at risk. They are 84% or greater National Forest lands. Resource issues vary. Abadi Creek-Sespe Creek contains 303d listed waters and aquatic invasive species. Alamo Creek has stream barriers causing habitat fragmentation. Tule Creek-Sespe Creek has altered stream flows from the natural regime, and invasive species. In general this area could benefit from zoning that allows continued access.

To the southeast is an area of the unit that is comprised of part of one HUC 6 watershed, Lake Piru-Piru Creek approximately 5,863 acres in size. This is a Class 2 watershed that is 56% National Forest lands. It is characterized by multiple wildfires that are more frequent than the normal return interval with loss of vegetative cover, altered stream flow characteristics, dams downstream from National Forest lands that cause habitat fragmentation for migratory fish and aquatic invasive species. This area coincides with a High Oil and Gas Potential Area. Oil and gas development could occur on lands immediately adjacent. Continued access to address resource issues is desirable.

In the south is an area comprised of parts of three HUC 6 watersheds, Boulder Creek-Sespe Creek, Santa Paula Creek and Tar Creek. This area is roughly 11,947 acres in size and the watersheds that contain it average 66% National Forest lands. Of the three watersheds Tar Creek is Class 2 while the other two are Class 1. All three watersheds are judged to have soil contamination from the presence of ozone and Tar Creek has a stretch of 303d listed waters. Boulder Creek-Sespe Creek has aquatic invasive species. This area coincides with a High Oil and Gas Potential Area. Oil and gas development could occur on lands immediately adjacent.

In the west is an area comprised of parts of four Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds, Abadi Creek-Sespe Creek, Alamo Creek, Reyes Creek-Cuyama River and Tule Creek-Sespe Creek totaling 97,134 acres with portions in both the Ojai and Mount Pinos Ranger Districts. These watersheds average 92% National Forest lands and are Class 1 with the exception of Tule Creek-Sespe Creek which is Class 2. Tule Creek-Sespe Creek is judged to have issues with channel function, aquatic invasive species and soil contamination from ozone. Alamo Creek has habitat fragmentation due to stream barriers and Abadi Creek-Sespe Creek has aquatic invasive species. These issues are best dealt with if the area is zoned to permit access for resource management.

This discontinuous roadless area surrounding the Sespe Wilderness has a large number of parcels with a varied fire history. Large fires often affect 100% of one or more units. For summary purposes, only the portions of the roadless area within the Ojai Ranger District are described here. The land in the southern units has a history of periodic large fires with most areas being burned two or three times over the past century. Some areas have been burned four or five times. Most ignitions occurring within the roadless area are human-caused. The massive 1932 Matilija Fire burned most of the land in these units and is an important example of historic fire conditions in chaparral fuels prior to alteration of fire regimes by widespread fire suppression. Most recently, the Ranch Fire burned 100% of the easternmost two parcels within the unit.

This unit has Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) defense, WUI threat and WUI Environment within its boundaries. WUI defense areas are those areas near structures and communities that
require the highest degree of protection. WUI threat areas are those areas which extend around the WUI defense areas, usually about 1.5 miles past the boundary of the WUI defense zones. According to the 2005 Forest Land Management Plan, emphasis for projects within the Threat Zone is to reduce ladder fuels and periodically reduce surface fuels. The WUI Environment is generally 7.5 miles away from developments or the distance in which a summer fire could go in normal summer conditions and within a single burn period. These areas provide opportunities for reintroducing fire into the landscape as needed or protecting specific resources which would have more severe effects from a wild land fire. The fire history and fire regime are complex for this roadless area. There are about 20,000 acres that have more frequent fires for the vegetation types that occur in the Sespe-Frazier unit.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.) in the unit. Other invasive plants found in the unit include star thistle (Centaurea solstitialis), tocalote (Centaurea melitensis), fennel (Foeniculum vulgare), salt-cedar (Tamarisk spp.), Italian thistle (Carduus pycnocephalus), spotted knapweed (Centaurea maculosa) and tree tobacco (Nicotiana glauca).

The area has remained rural in nature and has moderate light pollution and influence from urban development and the oil and gas development nearby. As these areas of the Sespe-Frazier unit all uniformly stretch across the face of the transverse ridge, the watersheds have been identified as being prone to soil damage from the presence of ozone from the coastal communities. Otherwise, air quality is good with frequent exchange by offshore/onshore winds.

Undeveloped: The fragments of unit left on the Ojai side of Sespe Wilderness are split between the Ojai Piru front and the State Highway 33 areas of influence. The desired condition and management emphasis for both are similar in maintaining a scenic backdrop and providing recreation opportunities for communities along the Ojai front and for access from the State Highway 33 corridor. In addition, the Ojai-Piru front is a community defense zone with emphasis on access for fuels treatments.

There are approximately: 5.1 miles of Forest system road, 4.7 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 5.1 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 2.1 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails. There are approximately 32.7 miles of Forest Developed Trails within the entire unit.

Portions of four recreational trails cross Area 1, each of which is open to hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. The Chorro Grande Trail (23W05) runs north and south through approximately 2.1 miles of the unit. A short one-quarter mile stretch at the start of Potrero John Trail (23W06) crosses this area. Mountain bikes are not allowed here as most of the trail is in the Sespe Wilderness. The third trail is Middle Sespe Trail (22W04) which runs east and west for 6.5 miles along the north bank of Sespe Creek. Approximately one-quarter mile of the Reyes Peak Trail (22W04) is included in this unit beginning at the trailhead.

Area 2 contains 5.6 miles of the Lion Canyon Trail (22W06) located along the eastern edge of this section. It provides access to the East and West Fork Lion Trail Camps. The entire 1.6 mile Rose-Lion Connector Trail (22W16) provides access from Rose Valley Campground to the Lion Canyon Trail. The half-mile Rose Valley Falls Trail (22W15) starts at Rose Valley Campground and leads to the base of the lower fall that cascades over an arkosic sandstone cliff. The Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail (22W03) is in the unit.
Area 3 contains four designated trails. The southern portion of the Red Reef Trail (21W08) travels through this area for approximately 2.7 miles between Hines Peak Road (5N08) on the north and Sisar Canyon Road (4N15.2) on the south. The area includes White Ledge Camp, a small trailside camp set in an oak/sycamore riparian thicket along upper Sisar Creek. Santa Paula Canyon Trail (21W11) crosses the area for 5.3 miles from Big Cone Camp eastward to Bluff Camp. At a spot just north of Big Cone Camp this trail intersects with Last Chance Trail (21W09). It runs north for approximately half a mile before entering the Sespe Wilderness at Cross Camp, a small but popular trailside camp. Big Cone Camp is a four unit dispersed campsite in a grove of Big-cone Douglas fir at the terminus of former Santa Paula Canyon Road (4N03). It is now considered the Santa Paula Canyon Trail (21W11). This road starts at State Highway 150 at Thomas Aquinas College and turns into a trail behind the college for 3.4 miles to Big Cone Camp. It is gated and posted no public vehicle traffic for this entire length as the trail crosses three contiguous private parcels of land. Since the floods of 2005 the road starting at the orchard no longer exists. In one location it traverses an orchard and public trail traffic is routed to a separate trail. The trail receives a high volume of hiker and mountain bike use as an access to Santa Paula Creek and its popular swimming holes. Stream use by the public is heaviest between Big Cone Camp and Cross Camp.

The portion of Santa Paula Canyon Trail along East Fork Santa Paula Creek to Bluff Camp receives very light use and is not currently maintained. It is nearly impassable due to landslides. Near its eastern end, the trail intersects Santa Paula Peak Trail (20W16) that is 4.4 miles long and climbs up and over Santa Paula Peak (elevation 4,957 feet). It continues south of the peak to its terminus at a private gated road coming up Timber Canyon from State Highway 126. There is no public trail easement to allow crossing private lands to access this trail. Some horse users are given permission by the landowner for access to maintain and use this trail. By doing so, two small trail camps (Bluff and Cienega) are accessed at the eastern end of Santa Paula Canyon Trail.

The Pothole Trail (18W04) crosses this area for approximately 2.0 miles starting at Piru Canyon Road and climbing up to 3,200 feet elevation at the Sespe Wilderness boundary. This trail is not regularly maintained and receives light use. A short section of Agua Blanca Trail (19W10) crosses this area at the extreme northern edge for approximately 0.5 miles. This trail also does not receive regular maintenance and is lightly used.

The relatively small size of the six areas and their proximity to a combination of developments including private lands with structures, State Highway 33 and the community of Ojai are external influences which would have an impact on wilderness attributes.

Internal influences of developments include a range of special use authorizations including: Area 1 - contains a special use permit for a buried gas pipeline adjacent to the area on the west side. Area 2 - contains the Sisar Peak Communication Site at the southeastern edge of this area. Area 3 - contains the currently vacant San Cayetano grazing allotment. It also contains a small parcel of private land near the east edge of the area. Area 4 - contains a special use permit for an apiary site. Area 5 - contains portions of two grazing special use permits for the Temescal and Pot Hole allotments. Area 6 - contains a portion of a grazing special use permit for the Piru allotment and a special use permit for a road accessing private land. This area also contains a small parcel of private land along the west edge of the area.
Opportunities: Approximately 89% of Sespe-Frazier (MPRD) is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 1% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where facilities blend in to the landscape to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. The remaining 10% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where facilities provide some convenience for the visitor and borrow elements such as color and form from the natural surroundings. This objective allows for moderate interaction among visitors.

Topatopa Bluff is a major landform scenic attraction within this study area and is part of the backdrop for the Ojai community.

Collectively these six areas provide primitive recreation opportunities that include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, backcountry camping, fishing and hunting.

Cross-country exploring provides some interesting challenges although travel is hampered by dense chaparral vegetation. There are considerable challenges in the area as there are few trails. Numerous opportunities for solitude exist in spite of views of State Highways 33, 126 and 150 and the Sespe River Road, Piru Canyon Road, coastal cities and oil and gas development from portions of the area. The opportunity for solitude is moderate to high in the interior portions of all sections with the exception of Area 3 near Santa Paula Creek. The climate itself can present a challenge to the visitor. In summer, the weather is extremely hot and dry, while in winter snow can be found on the upper slopes.

Special features and values: Upper Sespe Creek in Area 1 is a study river for possible inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System from its headwaters to Rock/Howard Creeks. The same is true of Santa Paula Creek in Area 3. The Topatopa Bluff is a unique scenic feature within the unit.

There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Sespe-Frazier. This unit covers a very large and ecologically diverse area distributed among a number of disjunct sub-units. It therefore contains a variety of sensitive plant species listed below, mostly in small scattered occurrences. The following plant species are known to occur in areas within and outside of the unit: Abrams’ flowery puncturebract (Acanthoscyphus parishii var. abramsii), Mount Pinos onion (Allium howellii var. clokeyi), Palmer’s mariposa lily (Calochortus palmeri var. palmeri), late-flowering mariposa lily (Calochortus weedii var. vestus), umbrella larkspur (Delphinium umbraculorum), Ojai fritillary (Fritillaria ojaiensis), pale yellow layia (Layia heterotirca), flax-like monardella (Monardella linoides ssp. Oblonga), Baja pincushion plant (Navarretia peninsularis), and Transverse Range phacelia (Phacelia exilis).

The Upper Sespe Critical Biological area includes about two miles of the Sespe River and the surrounding riparian zones just upstream of the Sespe Wilderness boundary and overlaps with this unit on the north side of the Sespe River. There are southern steelhead and arroyo toad occupied and critical habitats which also support pond turtles, two-striped garter snakes and many other aquatic organisms. There are invasive species including bullfrogs (Rana catesbiana),
sunfish, and tamarisk here also that are a threat to the threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

The most notable threatened or endangered species in this unit are the California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) and the southern steelhead (Onchorhynchus mykiss). The Hopper Mountain Condor Refuge lies near the southern end of this unit and the Bitter Creek Condor Refuge lies to the north and consequently the condors soar over this unit frequently and also nest in the southeastern-most and southern-most Sespe-Frazier units. The southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus) has been seen migrating through Reasoner Canyon and upper Piru Canyon near Halfmoon Campground but there are no breeding records. Several sensitive species that use higher elevation habitats can be found in this unit as well, including the northern goshawk (Accipiter gentilis), Mt. Pinos lodgepole chipmunk (Tamias speciosus callipeplus), southern rubber boa (Charina bottae umbratica), yellow blotched ensatina (Ensatina eschscholtzii croceator), and the Tehachapi slender salamander (Batrachoseps stebbinsi).

Description of size and shape: The relatively small size of the six areas and their proximity to a combination of developments including private lands with structures, State Highway 33, the community of Ojai are external influences that could have an impact on wilderness attributes.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: In Area 3 the roadless area is adjacent to significant blocks of private land where access and routine hazardous reduction need to be maintained. In addition, the southern area has been identified as a gap in the community defense zone where a fuel break could be strategically beneficial to complete the network of protection against fires entering or leaving the forest. Boundary adjustments for potential wilderness should exclude this strategic ridgeline from the Frost Fuel Project to the lookout towards Santa Paula Peak through private lands and on towards San Cayetano Peak, then east towards the access road onto the Forest.

In the 1,700 acres of Developed Area Interface land use zone it is important to provide for direct community protection with maintenance of emergency access and evacuation routes and construction of fuelbreaks. Boundary adjustments in Areas 1 and 3, where significant amounts of private lands are adjacent to the boundary, would not enhance wilderness characteristics due to the proximity of the Highway 33 corridor and the community of Ojai, respectively.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres): Backcountry (BC) - 1,438 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 137 acres, Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 29,094 acres, Critical Biological (CB)- 18 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 1,747 acres.

Recreation, including tourism: There are no specific visitation figures for the ORD portion of the Sespe-Frazier. This unit provides developed and primitive recreation opportunities that include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, camping, fishing and hunting. Recreation use in this area is relatively high due to the proximity to urban areas (Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles).
State Highway 33 (Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway) provides direct access to the Rose Valley Recreation Area which includes Piedra Blanca Trailhead, one of the gateways into the Sespe Wilderness.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** This unit is very fragmented and widespread and covers many habitat types from low elevation coastal scrub to high elevation conifer. The main issues regarding wildlife management here are fire and fuels, water quality, invasive species, condor management and high elevation conifer protection. Present access routes are used for these wildlife management issues and should be retained, particularly the OHV access into the three easternmost units of the ORD portion of the Sespe Frazier unit for condor recovery efforts such as condor capturing, nest reconnaissance, and recovery of injured condors.

At the lower elevations near the town of Piru, human-caused fire starts every few years are type converting the habitats toward grass and coastal sage. In the higher elevations, heavy fuel buildup threatens existing conifer stands. This habitat conversion creates grasslands that do not support the viability of the native mix of wildlife species.

Recent large and intense wildfires have triggered immense sediment loads into the Sespe and Piru drainages and while arroyo toads may benefit from these fine sediments, steelhead does not.

As mentioned above bullfrogs and tamarisks are significant threats to riparian habitat. Arundo is also in the vicinity. Vehicle access along the existing road in Piru Creek is necessary to control these infestations.

**Water availability and use:** All of the streams that flow into the areas of ORD portion of the Sespe-Frazier that reach along the transverse front feed either the Sespe or Santa Paula Creeks, which in turn are part of the Santa Clara River watershed. Water from these areas is thus an important source for the Ventura metropolitan area (Ventura County and cities).

**Livestock Operations:** There are three active livestock grazing allotments in the Ojai unit. These allotments include 17 spring developments and 1.2 miles of fence. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment Acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piru (55)-Active</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot Holes-Active</td>
<td>1,746</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temescal-Active</td>
<td>1,286</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,088</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timber:** Timber products, such as firewood, chips, and/or botanical products, may be created through thinning and fuelbreak maintenance activities.

**Minerals:** Most of Area 1 has been rated as having no potential for oil and gas occurrence; however, there is a small area of high potential in the northeast portion of this section. There are no existing locatable mineral mines in the area. There is low potential for saleable products such as gravel and building stone, and for strategic and non-strategic minerals. But there is a high potential for phosphates and for geothermal resources. Vegetation and soil disturbance are still
evident from the gas line constructed in the late 1950s. Maintenance of the existing pipeline is performed per the terms of a special use permit.

Most of Area 2 has been rated as having no potential for oil and gas occurrence. Most of Area 3, 4 and 5 has been rated as having high potential for oil and gas occurrence. The southern half of Area 6 is in an area of high potential for oil and gas occurrence. Any oil and gas leasing for exploration and development will be subject to no surface occupancy within the unit.

Cultural resources: The cultural and historic values here are comprised of approximately eight cultural and historic resource sites. The most significant are the traditional cultural properties (TCP) comprised of pictographs (rock art) and milling features. The unit has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources.

Authorized and potential land uses: Area 1 contains a special use permit for a buried gas pipeline adjacent to the area on the west side. Area 2 contains the Sisar Peak Communication Site at the southeastern edge of the unit. Maintenance of landslide prone areas along State Route 33 is managed under the Caltrans road Special Use Permit (SUP). A campground expansion area exists to the east of Rose Valley Campground. Area 3 contains the vacant San Cayetano grazing allotment. It also contains a small parcel of private land near the east edge of the area. Area 4 contains a Special Use Authorization for an apiary site. Area 5 contains portions of two grazing special use permits for the Temescal and Pot Hole allotments. Area 6 contains a portion of a grazing special use permit for the Piru allotment and a special use permit for a road accessing private land. This area also contains a small parcel of private land along the west edge of the area.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Current road and trail access would allow for fire suppression activities to occur within the WUI threat zones of the area. There are 1,700 acres of Developed Area Interface land use zoning and minor acreages of WUI Defense zones that were not part of the Ojai community defense zone project that may be subject to vegetation modification treatments.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of the unit are the Matilija Wilderness (29,600 acres), Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres), San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres) and Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres). Collectively these nearby wildernesses all offer protection for similar types of natural ecosystems. They also offer similar non-motorized recreation opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. Use levels typically increase during the spring months. There are a few popular spots that do receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.
There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There is a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Ojai Ranger District is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification. Many of the same opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences are available in these non-wilderness areas.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Existing land use classifications such as Wild and Scenic River and designated Critical Habitat, as well as existing Forest Plan direction and Endangered Species Act direction are sufficient to protect native and threatened, endangered and sensitive species from detrimental impacts. Some vehicle access is desirable in this unit to manage condor recovery efforts, fire-induced habitat type conversion and invasive species.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: The 219,700 acre Sespe Wilderness provides for the preservation of the major and many minor identifiable landform types and ecosystems of this ecological zone. There are no notable remaining examples that would be preserved through designation of the unit as recommended wilderness.
Los Padres National Forest

Spoor Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area
Santa Lucia Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 13,776 acre Spoor Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Santa Lucia Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest.

The unit is a narrow corridor bordered by the Sierra Madre Road (32S13) on the southwest boundary and by private lands and the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest to the north. Bates Canyon Road (11N01) forms the eastern boundary. The roadless area is separated from the San Rafael Wilderness by the Sierra Madre Road. A private road is located at Moon Canyon. Bates Canyon Campground is found along the eastern boundary. Motorized public access is from State Highway 166 on the Sierra Madre Road or Bates Canyon Road. The area may also be accessed from La Brea Canyon Road (11N04) and Miranda Pine Road (11N03). From the south access by foot, horseback, or mountain bike is possible from the gate near McPherson Peak. The roads in this area provide important access to the existing San Rafael Wilderness Trailheads. It is 25 air miles east of Santa Maria.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): Vegetation consists of chaparral with patches of conifers in canyons and peaks. The northward flowing drainages are ephemeral but wet enough to support a live oak woodland habitat in the very bottom of the canyons. Extensive areas of mixed chaparral with scattered grey pine (Pinus sabiniana) and Coulter pine (Pinus coulteri) cover this north facing slope across the unit as would be expected in the desert montane landscape.

This unit is in the interior part of the southern Coast Ranges of California. It is far enough inland from the coast that the climate is modified only slightly by marine influences. All streams are dry throughout the summer. There are no natural lakes.

Current uses of the area: No recreational trails, roads or facilities are located inside this area. Roads adjacent to the area provide OHV, mountain biking, hunting, hang gliding and nature viewing. Bates Canyon and Miranda Pine Campgrounds are located on the boundary of the area. There is a Communication Site located at Plowshare Peak immediately outside the unit boundary. There are two active and one vacant livestock grazing allotments within the unit. There are road special use authorizations located along the eastern boundary of the unit adjoining private lands in Miranda, Kelly and Ekart Canyons. There is no active mining or evidence of historic mining or oil and gas operations within the unit.

There are five helispots in the unit identified for potential use during fire management operations but no water sources. There are existing fuel break and fire lines which were used during the Zaca and La Brea Fires. The Sierra Madre fuel break is a key area for fire suppression activity. The recent fire lines act as fuel breaks and to keep their functionality would need some level of maintenance. The benefits of these fire lines also include use as wildlife corridors, wildlife viewing, nesting habitat with edges and biodiversity increase, recreational uses and opportunities for TES habitat, improvement or management (condor feeding sites).
Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The unit maintains a natural appearance, free from any major disturbances from the character of steep lands, narrow canyons and overall rugged landscapes. There are no prominent peaks or distinctive features to make this unit more noticeable when viewed from a distance or from within the unit. It does serve as a backdrop for the scenic corridor of State Highway 166 and the small communities of the Cuyama Valley.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: Spoor Canyon serves as an important scenic backdrop for the Cuyama Valley.

Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: There are no major disturbances other than a 20 year old buried pipeline that is recovering well. The unit has remained rural in nature and has very little light pollution or influence from urban development. Night skies are clear.

Approximately 98% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 2% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear to slightly alter but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed. Currently this unit meets and exceeds those objectives.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (Bromus spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here.

Spoor Canyon is the northernmost roadless area along the Sierra Madre Ridge with watershed head waters at the top of the ridge and extending northward into private lands in the Cuyama Valley. The Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds and portions in the unit are Clear Creek-Cuyama River, 2,866 acres; Cottonwood Creek-Cuyama River, 1,353 acres; Mustang Canyon-Cuyama River, 3,950 acres; and Powell Canyon, 5,595 acres. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

These watersheds average 40% of National Forest lands. Three of four of these watersheds have water quality issues with 303d listed stretches of streams. Mustang Canyon-Cuyama River is the exception and is the only watershed that is Class 1, functioning properly. The other three are Class 2, functioning at risk. From the standpoint of aquatic habitat concerns Clear Creek-Cuyama River is judged to have channel shape and function issues while Cottonwood Creek-Cuyama River is judged to have habitat fragmentation due to stream barriers. Clear Creek-Cuyama River is also identified as having aquatic invasive species issues. Both Powell Canyon and Cottonwood Creek-Cuyama River watersheds are judged to have poor soil productivity and excessive soil erosion. Many of these issues relate to wildfire that has burned the area repeatedly in recent years and removed the vegetation cover. Private lands downstream are poorer rated due to greater disturbance from grazing. It is unlikely that a zoning change to restrict access would
improve water quality because repeated removal of vegetation cover by fire is due to external ignition sources. The area will continue to be impacted.

This unit has an extensive history of large fires burning through the area but few ignitions originating from within the boundaries. The vast majority of land within the unit has been burned multiple times. It should be noted that suppression actions along the western border of the unit (at the Sierra Madre Ridge fuel break) were effective at stopping or slowing the 1999 Spanish Fire, 2006 Bald – San Rafael Complex and the 2009 La Brea Fire. Fire suppression efforts, including dozer lines and road, and fuel reduction projects have noticeably changed the vegetation.

The watershed assessment for the series of Hydrologic Unit Code 6 watersheds that comprise this unit is judged air quality to be Class 1, fully functional. Air quality degrades to the southeast as the Cuyama valley approaches the I-5 corridor and the south end of Spoor is right at the boundary where air quality deteriorates to Class 2. Basically, air quality is good and sources of airborne particulates are few with the exception of wildfires.

Undeveloped: The management emphasis in this unit is on maintaining the natural appearing landscape as a scenic backdrop viewed from Cuyama Valley and also on grazing management. There are no non-motorized trails, campgrounds, camps or other recreation facilities within the unit.

There are approximately: 0.3 miles of Forest system road, 1.4 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 0.1 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

Opportunities: The opportunity for solitude is limited because of the proximity of the Sierra Madre and Bates Canyon Roads. There are many peaks and ridges where State Highway 166 and other man-made developments are highly visible. Sounds from motor vehicle travel are heard through most of this area. Cross-country travel is hampered in this area by pockets of heavy brush, steep terrain, and the lack of system trails.

The landform slopes toward the valley floor assuring that the majority of the unit is exposed to views of the agricultural development below. Travel off the maintained trails in most areas is difficult because of the heavy vegetation. Dispersed camping is allowed; however, water sources are limited.

Approximately 75% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. Approximately 25% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. This ROS classification is primarily along the Sierra Madre Ridge and road corridor adjacent to the unit.

Major recreational opportunities are limited to roads (Sierra Madre and Bates Canyon) bordering the area and no maintained trails access the unit. Two small campgrounds, Miranda Pines and Bates Canyon, are located on the border of the unit. Hunting, nature and scenery viewing, mountain biking, OHV and hang gliding are activities occurring in and around this unit.
Special features and values: There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Spoor Canyon. This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. The following plant species are known to occur in areas outside of the unit: San Luis Obispo mariposa lily (*Calochortus simulans*), Blakeley's spineflower (*Chorizanthe blakleyi*), umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*), and Parish's checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii ssp. Parishii*).

The Region 5 sensitive California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*) occurred on the north facing slopes in densely canopied riparian zones such as Bates Canyon prior to the 2009 La Brea Fire. It is likely that the spotted owl still occurs in many of these drainages in but access to most of them through the brush is nearly impossible. Many other neo-tropical migrants such as the summer tanager (*Piranga rubra*) are found along these north slopes. The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) soars along the Sierra Madre Ridge but rarely feeds or roosts in these steep canyons of this unit.

There are no special interest areas or critical biological areas. There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers in or bordered by this area. The study area is significant as a scenic backdrop for the Cuyama Valley area, especially along scenic State Highway 166.

Description of size and shape: Spoor Canyon is of sufficient size but of poor shape or juxtaposition to be capable to be effectively managed as wilderness. The unit is only 1.7 miles wide and linear in shape. While it abuts private land there are no distinguishing landmarks to establish a boundary and protect from motorized access. The juxtaposition is such that a wilderness experience of remoteness would be difficult to achieve and fuels management and actions to improve watershed function would not be cost effective.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: The northern boundary of this area is very difficult to describe, establish, and mark on the ground as it follows no topographic features. It crosses many canyons and borders on private ranch land for many miles where access is difficult to manage. Most of the area surrounding the Spoor Canyon Roadless Area is relatively undeveloped.

Boundaries should be adjusted to allow continued maintenance of the Sierra Madre fuel break. A boundary adjustment on the western and southern edges of the unit along the Sierra Madre fuel break and a buffer along 11N01 and around Plowshare Peak to allow for the continued maintenance and use of mechanized equipment would enable more cost effective fuels management.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.


Recreation, including tourism: There are no specific recreation use figures for Spoor Canyon. Recreation use of this area consists primarily of access during hunting season. There are access points to the San Rafael Wilderness and hang gliding launch points from the Sierra Madre Ridge east over this area to the Cuyama Valley.
Opportunities for hang gliding, OHV use, mountain biking and developed camping are located on the fringe of the unit. They may be impacted if Spoor Canyon were designated as wilderness. The impact to these recreation uses could be minimized if the Sierra Madre road was excluded or cherry stemmed out of the recommended wilderness. The only launch sites for hang gliders are along the Sierra Madre Ridge.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: The only roads in the area are the Sierra Madre and Bates Canyon Roads which access (but are outside of) the southern/western edge of this unit. They are sufficient to manage wildlife issues within the unit. Any other access into the canyons would necessarily be on foot and no need for increased road access is anticipated.

Water availability and use: This area is part of the Cuyama and Sisquoc River drainages. Water flow is seasonal and only during the wettest months does above ground flow reach the Cuyama River. Springs in the lower reaches of the Forest have been accessed by private landowners for domestic and livestock use.

Livestock Operations: There are two active and one vacant livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include 2.4 miles of fence. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine Canyon-Active</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter-Active</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockfront-Vacant</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Vegetation projects are conducted for objectives other than timber. Thinning and vegetation type conversion has been conducted within the Sierra Madres fuel break that extends within this unit.

Minerals: There is no current mining or oil and gas development within the unit and no evidence of past activities. The unit is within a designated high oil and gas potential area. No surface occupancy would be allowed on any future lease issued for oil and gas exploration and development; however, surface occupancy of oil and gas exploration and development could occur on private lands adjacent to the unit and may have impacts to the wilderness character.

Cultural Resources: The Spoor Canyon roadless area has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources. No archaeological/cultural resources are recorded within this unit. There are several subsistence sites consisting of lithics and milling features that fall in close proximity or directly outside of the unit boundary. However, the southern portion of Spoor Canyon falls within the Sierra Madre Ridge, which is an area known for numerous archaeological resources and it can be surmised that such resources would also be present within this area.

Authorized and potential land uses: There is a communication site at Plowshare Peak adjacent to the unit which may expand in use in the future. Three grazing permits are currently authorized in the unit. There are three road special use authorizations located in Miranda, Kelly and Ekart Canyons totaling 1.4 miles. Expanded private land development and potential oil and gas development on private lands is likely along the northern boundary of the unit.
Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Spoor Canyon is impaired by repeated wildfire impacts to vegetation, poor water channel function and 303d water quality issues. The adjacent San Rafael Wilderness boundary was designated at the top of Sierra Madre Ridge, which left the shallow Cuyama-side watersheds as buffers from the grazing and energy developments of the Cuyama Valley. The 13,776 acre size of the unit is deceptive because of the long, narrow shape, generally about 1.7 linear miles wide. A remote wilderness experience would be difficult to achieve as would the need for access for cost-effective fire and fuels management and actions to improve watershed function.

Availability for wilderness is limited by the visual impacts of the Plowshare Peak Communication Site on the southwestern boundary. Noise from Sierra Madre Road (32S13) on the southern boundary and Bates Canyon Road (11N01) on the east boundary is evident. Future development in the Cuyama Valley to the north of the area may also impact wilderness characteristics of the unit.

The Sierra Madre Ridge is a strategic ridge that is historically used during fire suppression and fuel management efforts. It is important during fire suppression to prevent fire going either direction between the rural Cuyama Valley and the remote San Rafael Wilderness. Lateral dozer lines from the Sierra Madre Fuel Break are re-established during incidents as needed.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: The Spoor Canyon Roadless Area is 22 air miles northeast of the Santa Lucia Wilderness (18,679 acres), 15 air miles southeast of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness (19,760 acres), and 14 air miles southeast of the Garcia Wilderness (14,100 acres), each of which are relatively small wilderness areas with limited access and low use, suitable for day trips and short overnight trips. The San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres) is adjacent on the west side just across Sierra Madre Road. The San Rafael Wilderness is a much larger area than the other wildernesses in the vicinity with several access points suitable for multiple day trips. All of these wilderness areas are located about halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The Demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6 % reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value
separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns are generally concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Recreation use in the unit is light and would likely remain available for opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation use even if this area was not designated as wilderness. The adjacent large wilderness areas adjacent to the study area will continue to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation use.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There are no threatened, endangered or sensitive species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or that need extra protection. The condors that soar over the area and the spotted owl are relatively tolerant to some human use of the unit.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: This unit is the interior part of the southern Coast Ranges of California. The same ecosystem is adequately preserved in the nearby San Rafael Wilderness. Although this unit is an important scenic backdrop for the Cuyama Valley it has few distinguishing features that are not already preserved with better examples nearby.
Los Padres National Forest

Tequepis Inventoried Roadless Area

Santa Barbara Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 9,089 acre Tequepis Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located within the Santa Barbara Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The unit is located less than an hour’s drive from the towns of Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Ynez, Solvang and Buellton. The larger metropolitan areas of Goleta, Santa Barbara and Montecito are also within an hour’s drive to the south along State Highway 101.

This roadless area is bounded on the south by the West Camino Cielo Road (5N19). The northern boundary consists primarily of private property and the administrative boundary of the Los Padres National Forest with no public access into the roadless area. The western boundary is the Forest boundary. The eastern boundary contains portions of a fire road from West Camino Cielo to Brush Peak. The eastern boundary abuts West Camino Cielo Road and runs north approximately one half mile west of State Highway 154, avoiding private property but not following any landform or easily recognizable features. Private lands adjoin the entire northern border of the unit and other National Forest System lands border the entire southern side of the unit. There is one undeveloped private land in-holding with no existing road access.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): This section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California contains mountains, hills, valleys of the Transverse Range that are close enough to the Pacific Ocean for the climate to be modified greatly by the marine influence. The subsection is on moderately steep to steep hills with narrow canyons. Predominant natural communities include the California sagebrush, mixed chaparral, coast live oak, chamise series, valley oak series and mixed sage series. Elevations range from near sea level to 3,000 feet. Water runoff is rapid and all but the major streams are dry during the summer.

Current uses of the area: Recreational use includes viewing scenery and photography from the West Camino Cielo Road. There are also day hikes and mountain biking on the 3.4 mile Tequepis Trail (29W06). This trail begins just east of Broadcast Peak on West Camino Cielo Road and transverses the area north to a trailhead at the Circle V Ranch organization camp near State Highway 154. Unauthorized OHV riding on fire roads also occurs in this area. Portions of the Winchester Canyon Gun Club target range are located in Tequepis. The special use permitted range is located at the east end of the unit and have been in operation since 1964. Target shooting is authorized on West Camino Cielo Road at two designated shooting areas. These shooting areas are on the boundary and adjacent to the unit.

Mountain biking, nature viewing, four-wheel driving and motorcycle riding occur on West Camino Cielo Road which forms the southern boundary of this area. The West Camino Cielo Road provides access to communication sites on Santa Ynez and Broadcast Peaks. The western seven-mile segment, approximately half of West Camino Cielo Road from Santa Ynez Peak to Refugio Pass, is paved. Vandenberg Air Force Base constructed this road portion for access to Santa Ynez Peak for periodic viewing and monitoring of scheduled rocket launches.
There is one special use pasture livestock area within the unit. There are water systems and associated road special use authorizations in De Vaul Canyon and for electric transmission line access near Brush Peak. The Southern California Edison Co. 20kV Santa Clara - Goleta Transmission line runs through the eastern portion of the unit.

The Circle V Range has a water system special use authorization and associated access road into the unit in Tequepis Canyon. Pacific Gas and Electric Company have a special use authorization to operate an electrical distribution line serving the Communication Sites on the ridgeline outside of the unit. The above ground power line runs from Santa Ynez Peak north through the unit to private land.

There are 16 helispots in the unit identified for potential use during fire management operations but no water sources (although there are five immediately adjacent to the unit on West Camino Cielo Road).

An existing project (Camino Cielo Defensible Fuel Profile Zone) and routine hazardous fuel reduction are maintained along the West Camino Cielo road and ridge top around the communication sites and to and around water sources. Existing fences were constructed along the road to allow the area to regenerate after the recent wildfires. All of these features form and are within the southern boundary of the unit.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The view from many vantage points located in this unit are of human activities taking place on State Highway 154, Lake Cachuma, Bee Rock Quarry and the San Marcos Golf Course that is privately owned and operated.

Tequepis presents a rugged, wild-appearing highly scenic backdrop for the coastal communities. It is one of the ‘Key Places’ identified in the Forest Land Management Plan and represents some of the most picturesque national forest locations. Rocky outcrops, although not a recreational attraction, provide contrast of color within the deep green chaparral. Views of the Santa Ynez Valley, Lake Cachuma and mountainous wilderness and remote distant views are dramatic. The area provides immediate access from urban areas to a natural forest environment and is an important area for viewing scenery. The scenic backdrop of this unit adds to the value of inland properties.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: The communication sites at the most prominent peaks have become focal points along the ridge top of Camino Cielo. Dramatic views from the unit include the Lake Cachuma and most of the Santa Ynez valley. The area is viewed by millions of people each year. It is valued as a major community scenic backdrop. Several rock outcrops in the study area are noticeable but not distinctive enough to serve as a draw for recreation activities.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: There are limited opportunities to experience wilderness characteristics due to the high level of human activity. The adjacent area has a mixture of roads and other
facilities that influence the character of the unit. Although the study area has only a few alterations it is influenced by the extensive alterations of the landscapes adjacent to it.

All of Tequepis is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. This objective is not currently being met because of the extensive modifications made to the vegetation patterns along the ridgeline in the construction of the fuel break, including the type conversion of the natural occurring landscape and the roads and communication facilities adjacent to the unit.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation here. Other invasive plants found in the unit include star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

Given the topography of Los Padres National Forest there are not very many places to keep wild land fire from reaching communities, especially if the area has high fuel loads. The Camino Cielo DFPZ overlap with this unit has been repeatedly identified as the main fuel break protecting Goleta and Santa Barbara.

Tequepis had herbicides applied along the southern border that type-converted a portion of the unit to annual (non-native) grasslands. In addition pine plantations were planted and maintained.

Almost this entire unit has burned at least once in the past 100 years and over half of the area has been burned twice. The unit has no recorded lightning fires. All historic ignitions have been human-caused or undetermined. The 1955 Refugio Fire burned across 91% of the unit. Most recently the Fairway Fire burned 3% of the unit.

Tequepis largely contains portions of two Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds: Kelly Creek-Santa Ynez River, 5,707 acres; and Quiota Creek-Santa Ynez River, 3,058 acres. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. These two watersheds account for 8,765 acres of a total of 9,089 acres for the unit. Both watersheds are Class 1, functioning properly for the National Forest portions of the watersheds. These two watersheds average 23% National Forest lands with the rest in private ownership. The private lands are judged to be poorer in function than National Forest lands due to relatively greater development and disturbance. Resource issues are relatively few with exception of fire return interval which is actually longer than the norm contributing to a dense vegetation cover.

Fire activity has altered the forested structure over the past 100 years. The reoccurrence of high intensity fires within this unit will continue to diminish and further type-convert much of the forested environment within the unit. The forested stands within this unit have a closed canopy and high fuel loads underneath and have lost the ability to recover from wild land fires. The desired values within this watershed have been compromised and active management activities will be needed to restore and enhance the values within this unit.

The area has remained rural in nature but has light pollution and influence from urban development on the coast side of the ridge. Night skies are frequently interrupted by urban influenced lights. Being located on the interior of the coastal ridge and thus insulated from urban development along the Santa Barbara front, air quality is good.
Undeveloped: The desired condition and emphasis for this unit is on maintaining the scenic qualities of the landscape while providing recreation opportunities in a biologically diverse ecosystem.

There are approximately: 0.1 miles of Forest system road, 5.2 miles of SUP Range Allotment roads/motorized trails, 2.8 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, and 8.5 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails.

There are approximately 3.4 miles of Forest Designated Trail 29W04 (Tequepis Trail). Hiking, mountain biking, viewing scenery and photography occur along the Tequepis Trail and along the West Camino Cielo Road on the ridge top. This steep trail runs from the bottom to the top of the ridge and provides wide vistas of the Santa Ynez Valley and Lake Cachuma to the north. Once on the ridge top at West Camino Cielo Road there are additional panoramic views of the east-west running along ridge top peaks and down to the Pacific Ocean, Channel Islands and cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta.

There is a special use permit for a target range at the east end of the unit between Brush Peak and West Camino Cielo road. A portion of the permitted target range is within the unit. Additionally there are two designated recreation shooting areas located on West Camino Cielo road. These sites are on the area boundary; however, the shooting sound carries into the unit.

There is one special use livestock grazing allotment area in the unit. Major communications sites on Santa Ynez and Broadcast Peaks together with two single user communication sites in the same vicinity along the ridgeline influence the undeveloped character of the unit.

Opportunities: A large percentage of the non-wilderness land base on the Santa Barbara Ranger District is designated semi-primitive motorized (SPM) or semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification. Much of the Santa Barbara Ranger District non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes and provide opportunities for primitive outdoor experiences.

Feelings of solitude and serenity provided by this unit are considered low to moderate. The area does have a fairly natural appearance; however, there is a high level of disturbance on both boundaries.

The sounds of motorized vehicles on West Camino Cielo Road and the towers and antennas on the communication site peaks (Santa Ynez and Broadcast Peaks) influence the ability of the unit to provide solitude, the feel of remoteness and the lack of human influences and development. Highway 154 and buildings on private land are part of the landscape view from this area. Excellent vistas of the Santa Ynez river drainage, Lake Cachuma, the San Rafael Mountains, and distant views of the San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness are available at the upper end of the Tequepis Trail and along West Camino Cielo Road.

A moderate sense of adventure, sense of self-reliance and inspiration are apparent in this area as dense brush on the north facing slope generally prohibits cross country travel. The Tequepis Trail provides physical challenge and limited sense of adventure as it climbs 2,280 feet from the bottom trailhead at the special permit authorized Circle V Ranch organization camp to the ridge at West Camino Cielo Road. The trailhead is located in the Circle V Ranch and the first one quarter mile of trail passes through the highly developed camp.
Approximately 86% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor. The remaining 14% of the unit is managed to meet the Roaded Natural ROS objective where lands and recreation facilities are managed to blend with the natural character of the landscape but may be noticeable and offer some level of convenience for the forest visitor.

Tequepis is bounded by the West Camino Cielo road. Just across the road are three designated shooting areas and immediately east of the unit is a permitted gun range. The area is popular to OHV users and there has been a history of non-system OHV trails being created in the unit.

Target shooting occurs at the special use permitted Winchester Canyon Gun Club at the east end of the unit as well as at two designated shooting areas on West Camino Cielo Road, all adjacent to the unit.

Four wheel drive use occurs on the West Camino Cielo Road. Unauthorized OHV (motorcycle and ATV) riding occurs on fire dozer lines that connect to West Camino Cielo Road outside the unit. Mountain biking occurs on West Camino Cielo Road as well as on the 3.4 mile Tequepis Trail.

Special features and values: Bear and Hot Springs drainages on the eastern edge of this unit are federally designated critical habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*). Sedimentation into breeding pools is thought to be one of the largest threats to the frog throughout its range. Erosion above natural levels is limited to some disturbed spots associated with West Camino Cielo Road. The current amount is not considered excessive; however this could change if additional roads or other construction occurs in the area. There are several records of California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), a federally designated sensitive species in Tequepis Canyon. With the exception of non-motorized recreation throughout (hikers and mountain bikers) and that associated with a trailhead and outdoor school in the lower canyon (mostly outside the unit) little human activity occurs that might disturb the owls. The Federally-endangered steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) has been observed in Quiota Creek in this unit and the lower portions of Mine and San Lucas Creeks below and north of this unit are steelhead Critical Habitat.

Use of this area by California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) a federally designated endangered species, is expected to increase as their numbers grow to recovery level. Although they do successfully inhabit areas altered by humans, they are best adapted to remote areas. Of special concern, especially to young birds, is exposure to hazards associated with man-made structures, especially electronic communication sites located on ridge tops. There are three such sites located on West Camino Cielo Road.

There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Tequepis. This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. All of the following plant species are known to occur in areas outside of the unit: Refugio manzanita (*Arctostaphylos refugioensis*), late-flowering mariposa lily (*Calochortus weedii var. vestus*), umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*), Ojai fritillary (*Fritillaria ojaiensis*), and Santa Ynez false lupine (*Thermopsis macrophylla*).
There are no special interest areas. There are no wild and scenic rivers nor are there any eligible candidates. The rocky outcrops contrasting against the vegetation colors offer a scenic feature of this area that is quite prominent.

**Description of size and shape:** At 9,089 acres, the unit might be of sufficient size to be considered as wilderness, especially if it adjoined an existing wilderness but in this case it does not. The area is completely isolated from any existing wilderness. The unit is long and narrow and lies just across the ridge from National Forest lands that are heavily impacted and influenced by the urbanized Santa Barbara front. These impacts and influences include two mountain peaks devoted to communication sites that visually dominate the ridgeline, sound from a permitted gun club, extensive OHV use that has proven to be hard to regulate with extensive non-system trails and light pollution from the nearby coastal communities. There are scenic views of Lake Cachuma but the Cachuma side is also prone to development and influenced by the busy State Highway 154. The shallow width of the unit, averaging 1.6 linear miles, means little quiet and solitude.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Designation of wilderness directly adjacent to the large expanse of private property could create future conflicts as the private property continues to be developed. Uncontrolled vehicle access may occur from surrounding private ranches and properties. Ability to post and establish wilderness boundaries along jagged property lines would be difficult and costly to maintain.

Future OHV opportunities along ridge tops to the north within the unit would require adjustments to current boundaries along West Camino Cielo Road. Some of the ridge and hill tops currently impacted by OHV trespass are on the north side of the road.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 7,932 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 1,157 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** The Tequepis Trail (29W06) passes through the middle of this unit. With the exception of this trail public access is limited to West Camino Cielo Road, fuel break roads and dozer lines.

Target shooting occurs at the special use permitted target range as well as at two designated shooting areas on West Camino Cielo Road. Designation as wilderness may impact this use as the special use permit area is currently partially in the area. Unauthorized OHV use will continue to be a management issue.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** There are no access roads that are necessary for wildlife management.

**Water availability and use:** Tequepis lies on the inland side of the first transverse ridge in from the ocean and it flows directly into Cachuma reservoir or just below it. The reservoir is part of the Santa Ynez river system. Those canyons that flow directly to the reservoir contribute to the Santa Barbara municipal water supply via underground tunnel connecting the city to the reservoir. Canyons at the west end of the unit drain to the Santa Ynez river just below the
reservoir and contribute to the downstream municipal water supplies of several communities as well as the important agricultural uses of the Lompoc Valley.

Livestock Operations: There is one special use pasture livestock area. There are no improvements. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
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<td>De Vaul SUP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timber: Timber products, including firewood, chips and botanical products, would be available through the construction of WUI defense zones along with thinning or understory clearing activities designed to improve the health of the oak woodlands and pine plantations. These products and services would be needed to help enhance the forested environment and it move towards the condition where it has the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide range of disturbances.

Minerals: There is no evidence of past mining and no current mining operations in the unit.

Cultural resources: The Tequepis Inventoried Roadless Area has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources. One recorded archaeological site falls along the boundary of this unit within the area that has been assessed for heritage/cultural resources. This site consists of a small lithic scatter with one milling feature.

Authorized and potential land uses: The northern trailhead for the Tequepis Trail is associated with two outdoor camps; the Circle V Ranch authorized by special use permit on National Forest lands and the Boy Scout Camp located on private land. Both camps are approximately two miles south of State Highway 154. The Circle V Range has a water system special use authorization with associated access road into the unit in Tequepis Canyon. To access the unit the Tequepis Trail follows the water system road into the roadless area as it passes through the Circle V Ranch.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company have a Special Use Authorization to operate an electrical distribution line serving the communication sites on the ridgeline outside of the unit. The above ground power line runs from Santa Ynez Peak north through the unit to private land. Waterlines, springs and diversion structures and associated access roads are operated under Special Use Authorizations in the vicinity of Tequepis and De Vaul Canyons and electrical transmission line access roads near Brush Peak. The Southern California Edison Co. 20kV Santa Clara - Goleta Transmission Line runs through the eastern portion of the unit.

West Camino Cielo Road is maintained under a Special Use Authorization to Santa Barbara County. This road provides access to communication sites on Santa Ynez and Broadcast Peaks as well as two single use communication sites in the same vicinity on the ridgeline. The western seven-mile segment, approximately half of the West Camino Cielo Road from Santa Ynez Peak to Refugio Pass, is paved. Vandenberg Air Force Base improved this road portion under a separate road maintenance agreement for access to Santa Ynez Peak for periodic viewing and monitoring of scheduled rocket launches. These developments adversely influence the wilderness character of the unit.
Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Unauthorized OHV use is occurring on most portions of the ridgeline where old roads and dozer lines exist. Approximately 10 miles of cable and wire fence has been constructed along West Camino Cielo Road to prevent unauthorized OHV use. Ridge top areas may provide for future OHV trail opportunities. It would be difficult to prevent OHV use into the fringe of the area along the north side of West Camino Cielo Road.

Any wildfire in this unit presents an immediate threat to the adjacent developed lands. Additionally this area is periodically affected by sundowner winds which contribute to extreme fire behavior. A full range of fuels treatments and fire suppression tactics are required to maximize safety in this unit. There are approximately 40 acres of WUI community defense zone located within the boundaries and 1,100 acres of Developed Area Interface land use zones. The Los Padres National Forest and partners have indicated areas within this unit where fuel breaks could be extended or prescribed burns are planned. The Tequepis Trail is currently maintained using power saws and other equipment. The Camino Cielo defensible fuel profile zone with broadcast burning is located within this unit.

Maintenance of ridge top fuel breaks and fuel type conversions are necessary for fire suppression, pre-suppression activities and fuel management efforts. Approximately 1,100 acres of this unit are zoned as Developed Area Interface indicating a concerted effort to manage vegetation within these acres to protect resources adjacent to the unit. Heavy vegetation modifications are required to meet the objectives.

Regardless of boundary modifications, mountain biking use within the unit would be non-conforming if the area were to be designated as wilderness.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Located approximately fifteen air miles north of Tequepis are the San Rafael (197,380 acres) and Dick Smith Wildernesses (67,800 acres). Each of these wilderness areas exhibit similar open space characteristics and better examples of the ecosystem type.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average
duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.

Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Recreation use within the unit is light and would likely remain available for opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation use even if this area was not designated as wilderness. Non-wilderness areas at East Camino Cielo, Figueroa Mountain and the nearby San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness near the unit will continue to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation use.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: At this time there is no specific need to maintain a completely primitive landscape in order to provide for the viability of threatened, endangered, proposed or sensitive species. There are no immediate or foreseeable threats to steelhead, spotted owl, condor or California red-legged frogs here. Unforeseen threats may be managed through environmental analysis and Endangered Species Act (ESA) procedures and would not require a more strict land protection designation. The above species have some tolerance for human activities if designed and managed correctly.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: This section of the Ecological Sub-regions of California contains mountains, hills, valleys of the Transverse Range of California. The same ecosystem is adequately preserved in the nearby San Rafael Wilderness. Although this unit is an important scenic backdrop for the Santa Ynez Valley it has few distinguishing features that are not already preserved within the existing wilderness system.

The Forest Service defines adequate representation of an ecosystem to include two or more distinct examples of at least 400 hectares that epitomize a particular ecosystem (Davis 1989, p.78). The San Rafael and Dick Smith Wilderness areas satisfy this objective.
Los Padres National Forest

White Ledge Inventoried Roadless Area

Ojai and Santa Barbara Ranger Districts

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 18,640 acre White Ledge Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is ten miles north of Ventura within the Ojai and Santa Barbara Ranger Districts of the Los Padres National Forest. The unit totals 18,640 acres and is contiguous with the exception of two areas of 26 and 31 acres respectively that are separated and surrounded by private land. It is bounded on the north by Murietta Canyon Road which separates it from the Matilija Wilderness and the Diablo roadless area. The eastern boundary is defined by the junction of the Franklin Trail down to the Divide Peak Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail and then angling down along a power line to where it meets private property. The southern boundary is irregular private property ownership eastward to a pipeline which becomes the eastern boundary. White Ledge lies within the coastal Santa Ynez Mountain range.

Access to the White Ledge area is from State Highway 33 (the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway, a National Forest Scenic Byway) via Matilija Canyon Road, a county road. Minor access is also provided by Murietta Road (5N13) on the northwest corner of the area, Franklin Trail (25W09) on the north west side and Divide Peak OHV Route (26W22) and East Camino Cielo Road (5N12) on the west side. Public access along the southern flank is not possible because private lands preclude access. Matilija Canyon Road, Murietta Road, Superior Ridge Road (4N05) and the buried gas pipeline surround the eastern flanks of the area.

This area is nearly contiguous with the existing Matilija Wilderness along half of the northern boundary. It is separated by the gravel-surfaced Murietta Road along the south side of Matilija Wilderness and north side of this area.

A Southern California Edison (SCE) electrical transmission line on the west and private lands on the south and east influence the boundary and size of the unit. The community of Carpenteria is located four miles to the south of the unit. Ojai is located six miles to the east of the unit where it can be accessed from the Matilija Canyon Road, about a 15 minute drive from Ojai.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): White Ledge is part of the San Rafael-Topatopa subsection of the transverse ranges. The topography is a rugged mountainous setting composed of predominantly steep drainages with some gentle slopes. Elevations range from 1,300 feet to 4,840 feet at White Ledge Peak. Prior to the 1985 Wheeler Fire the vegetation was composed of 6% conifer, 5% oak-grassland, 28% mixed chaparral and 61% other chaparral. However, the entire area was essentially burned and vegetative re-growth varies somewhat. It now tends to be even-aged.

The vegetation associations found within White Ledge include chamise chaparral (about 400 acres), coastal sage scrub and mixed chaparral. Other vegetation types that occur within the unit include 550 acres of coast live oak woodland and about 350 acres of valley riparian woodland.

Current uses of the area: There are no designated system non-motorized trails. There is a ‘cherry stem’ route that provides access to Divide Peak for OHV use (5N12). Alder Creek Trail Camp is located here. There is one active and one vacant livestock grazing allotment. There are no other
Special Use Authorizations. There is no evidence of historic mining activities. Military aircraft participate in training exercises that occur within range of this unit.

There are eight helispots in the area identified for potential use during fire management operations but no water sources. There are maintained fuel breaks and roads used for access within and surrounding this area. Maintained fuel breaks include East Camino Cielo 2 (also called Monte Arido/Divide Peak) and the Ojai Community Defense Zone that overlaps the southeastern boundary of this area (Chismahoo and Superior Units). The perimeter area around Botello Ranch and road is also part of a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Defense Zone and the southwestern border is part of the WUI Threat Zone where strategic placement of fuel breaks may occur. Besides their close proximity to communities, the southern fuel breaks and roads are an important protection area because maritime influence on the relative humidity, temperature, and vegetation (coastal sage scrub) make this a tactically advantageous area for fire suppression and concentration of fuel reduction efforts. Community partners also have roads and/or planned or existing fuelbreaks that Los Padres National Forest can extend onto National Forest System lands.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): Most of White Ledge is on or near the ridgeline, offering panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, Channel Islands and the remote backcountry. Immediately to the south is the backside of White Ledge Peak, a prominent peak in the area. Lake Casitas is also seen to the south. Views east and west look along one of the main spines of the Transverse Range. Also seen to the east is the community of Ojai. Views to the north look into the Matilija Wilderness and adjacent forestlands to the west of the Matilija Wilderness. The appearance of the area is characterized by a major ridgeline with large, steep canyons extending down to the north and south. The slopes are generally covered with chaparral. The middle of the area contains a unique feature, the prominent White Ledge Peak.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: White Ledge Peak (elevation 4,640 feet) is a prominent rocky peak. Its south side offers a bare-rock face that is visible from great distances. It is a popular day hike that does not have any designated trails associated with access. The unit offers excellent coastal views, rare in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: The natural appearance and integrity of the area are very much intact. There are several improvements in the area. They include Alder Creek Trail Camp, the unmaintained Franklin Trail (25W09), Camino Cielo Road/Ocean View Trail and several unnamed dozer lines. Alder Creek Camp is a small camp in the northwest corner of the unit along Alder Creek. The area is flanked on the east side by a buried gas pipeline.

East Camino Cielo Road on the western boundary intersects the Divide Peak OHV route which is a ‘cherry stem’ route into the area but not part of the area. The Ocean View Trail historically traversed the ridge from Divide Peak to Camino Cielo Road, leading to State Highway 33.
Private land blocks access to the trail on the eastern terminus. The trail, once designated 24W08, has been abandoned and is no longer in the trail system inventory. It is overgrown and mostly inaccessible. Multiple constructed roads and dozer lines are present in the unit.

There are also several dozer lines descending from the Divide Peak area northerly to Murietta Saddle and the intersection of the Murietta Road (5N13) and the Potrero Seco Road (6N03). The Divide Peak Road (5N12.1) was ‘cherry-stemmed’ to exclude the road from the unit. Land use zoning in the Forest Land Management Plan along the entire ‘cherry-stemmed’ section to the terminus of the Divide Peak Road is Back Country. The Back Country zoning continues from this point along a narrow corridor following the ridgeline to the intersection of the Potrero Seco and Murietta Roads at Murietta Saddle. The Back Country zoned corridor provides for the opportunity for a proposed motorized trail on the disturbed ridgeline used as a dozer line in past fire suppression efforts.

This unit has an extensive history of large fires starting outside the boundary and burning through the area. Only three ignitions have been recorded within White Ledge and none grew to significant size. Nearly the entire unit burned in the 1932 Matilija Fire and again in the 1985 Wheeler Fire. Most of the unit has experienced wildfire three to five times. The most recent fire event was the Wheeler Fire in 1985.

Approximately 85% of the unit is managed to maintain a High Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) where the landscape appears unaltered to the casual observer. The remaining 15% of the unit is managed to maintain a Moderate SIO where management activities can appear as slight alterations but never dominate the appearance of the landscape being viewed.

There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus spp.*) in the unit. Other invasive plants found in the unit include: star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatic*), Cape-ivy (*Delairea odorata*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

White Ledge lies on the Santa Barbara front and has portions of four watersheds: Carpenteria Creek-Frontal Santa Barbara Channel, 6,370 acres; Coyote Creek, 6,136 acres; Juncal Canyon-Santa Ynez River, 2,451 acres; and Matilija Creek, 3,683 acres totaling to 18,640 acres in the IRA. See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf.

These watersheds vary widely in proportion of National Forest lands to private ownership. The two frontal watersheds, Carpenteria Creek-Frontal Santa Barbara Channel and Coyote Creek, average 43% National Forest lands and are heavily developed by adjacent urban areas. The back two watersheds are 95% National Forest lands. These watersheds are rated as Class 1, functioning properly, with the exception of Juncal Canyon-Santa Ynez River which is rated as Class 2, functioning at risk. Juncal Canyon-Santa Ynez River and Matilija Creek have aquatic invasive species and all of the watersheds have dams causing habitat fragmentation. Juncal Canyon-Santa Ynez River falls to a Class 2 for having interrupted flows from a number of dams and barriers. This unit as a whole contains watersheds with the infrastructure associated with the nearby urban areas.

The area has remained rural in nature and has minimal light pollution except from urban areas along the coast. The desired condition and emphasis for this unit is on maintaining the scenic qualities of the landscape as a backdrop for coastal communities while providing recreation opportunities. There is one trail camp (Alder Creek). There are two grazing allotments.
There are approximately: 2.3 miles of Forest system road, 0.2 miles of SUP Other roads/motorized trails, 0.5 miles of undetermined roads/motorized trails, and 0.3 miles of Forest Designated Trail – Divide Peak OHV Route (26W22).

Opportunities: Numerous opportunities for solitude exist despite views of Matilija Canyon Road (5N13), State Highway 33, coastal cities and gas pipeline scars within portions of the area. Areas on the north side of the ridgeline offer greater opportunities for solitude. Cross-country exploring provides some interesting challenges although hampered by steep terrain and dense chaparral vegetation. There are considerable challenges in the area as there are few trails.

Approximately 99% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and motorized activities are not part of the recreation opportunities provided. The remaining 1% of the unit is managed to meet the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS objective where lands are managed to assure that the natural character of the landscape remains dominant and facilities are provided for recreation in order to protect the natural integrity of the landscape rather than for the convenience of the forest visitor.

Recreational opportunities include day use and overnight hiking on the Franklin Trail and camping at the backcountry Alder Creek Trail Camp.

Special features and values: The California condor (Gymnogyps californianus) frequents this area, making westward forays from the Hopper Mountain Condor Refuge. They do not roost or nest here. The California spotted owl (strix occidentalis) has been found in some of the densely canopied riparian areas along the south side of the unit.

There are no special interest areas. There are no designated or eligible wild and scenic rivers.

There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within White Ledge.

This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. All of the following plant species are known to occur in areas within and outside of the unit: late-flowering mariposa lily (Calochortus weedii var. vestus), umbrella larkspur (Delphinium umbraculorum), Ojai fritillary (Fritillaria ojaiensis), and Southern jewelflower (Streptanthus campestris).

Description of size and shape: White Ledge is large enough in size to provide room to seek a measure of solitude. However, the unit contains the Divide Peak OHV Route and is separated from the more remote Matilija Wilderness and Juncal roadless area to the north by Murietta Canyon Road. The southern boundary is private land that prevents access. This unit is directly north of the coastal city of Carpinteria and is part of a community defense zone with emphasis on fire breaks and fuels management to protect urban development on the Forest boundary. The close proximity to Carpinteria and the populated State Highway 101 corridor suggests that the nighttime skies would be affected by community and highway lighting.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Should the area be designated for wilderness, address whether or not boundary changes would enhance the wilderness characteristics or whether or not it would be possible to use boundary modifications to separate incompatible activities from those characteristics.
Boundary adjustments to exclude Ocean View Trail. East Camino Cielo Road, and Camino Cielo Road from the wilderness would roughly bisect this area. Each resulting area would then be too small to properly administer as wilderness. Approximately 0.3 miles of Divide Peak OHV Route (26W22) is located in the unit. Boundary adjustments would be needed for roads used for access and maintained fuelbreaks.

The two small parcel of unit surrounded by private lands in the Matilija Canyon area make them impractical for management as wilderness.

**Availability**

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 221 acres, Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 2,546 acres, Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 15,757 acres, and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 116 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** There are no specific use figures for White Ledge. Recreation opportunities in this area are mainly concentrated along the Franklin Trail, East Camino Cielo Road and the ‘cherry stemmed’ Divide Peak OHV area on the western edge of the area. Opportunities include hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. “Peak baggers” will also use this route as an access to White Ledge Peak, a popular destination due to its prominence in the area. And the area provides opportunities for hunting (primarily deer and quail).

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** Wildlife consists of bear, deer, mountain lion, bobcat and coyote; smaller species include fox, mountain and valley quail, rabbit, raccoon and gray squirrels.

**Water availability and use:** Going from west to east, the unit is drained by Eldorado, Steer, Rincon, Coyote, and Santa Ana Creeks, some of which are part of the Ventura River system. Water runoff is thus an important source of municipal water.

**Cultural Resources:** There is only one recorded archaeological site within White Ledge. The components of this site consist of prehistoric food processing (midden) camp with lithic materials. Since the unit has not been entirely assessed for heritage/cultural resources, there is a high probability that additional archaeological resources exist within the unit that can provide more information on the history and prehistory of this area.

**Livestock Operations:** There are one active and one vacant livestock grazing allotments. These allotments include one quarter mile of fences. The improvements would remain should the area be designated as wilderness. The following table displays allotment information for this IRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment Name and Status (active/vacant)</th>
<th>Sum of Allotment acres w/in IRA</th>
<th>% of IRA with Allotment Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coyote- Active</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steer Creek-Vacant</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timber:** Timber products, such as firewood, chips, and/or botanical products, may be created through thinning and fuelbreak maintenance activities.
Minerals: The southern portion of this area has been rated as having a high potential for oil and gas occurrence.

Authorized and potential land uses: There is a linear special use permit for a gas pipeline adjacent to the area on the east side. There is a SCE electrical transmission line adjacent to the west side. Grazing is the only authorized use within the unit.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: Existing roads adjacent to the unit are used for access for fire prevention, law enforcement, fire suppression and pre-suppression (fuel reduction and safety projects). Management plans prepare for the probability of human-caused fires with the accompanying necessity of community protection along with the best management for ecosystem sustainability.

The Divide Peak Road (5N12) and designated OHV route extend into the unit through a ‘cherry-stemmed’ exclusion to the unit. The OHV use impacts the solitude of that portion of the unit.

The two small parcels surrounded by private lands are difficult to manage as National Forest System lands. The Monte Arido Fuel Break, East Camino Cielo Fuel Break and Ojai community defense zone should be maintained as key pre-suppression elements.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Within a 20 mile radius of the area are the Matilija Wilderness (29,600 acres), Sespe Wilderness (219,700 acres), San Rafael Wilderness (197,380 acres), Dick Smith Wilderness (67,800 acres) and Chumash Wilderness (38,150 acres). Collectively these nearby wildernesses all offer protection for similar types of natural ecosystems. They also offer similar non-motorized recreation opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: Present visitor use on all wildernesses on the District and Forest is relatively low. There are a few popular spots that receive extra visitor pressure but no restrictions on use have been necessary to maintain wilderness characteristics or preserve the sustainability of the wilderness setting. The designation of this area as wilderness would not have any influence on visitor use of other wilderness areas.

There were an estimated 63,700 recreation visits to all Los Padres National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the FY 2009 Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring report – NVUM). The demographics are 57% male, 43% female; 86% white race/ethnicity; 29% ages 50 – 59 and 9.4% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (34%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘4’. About 10.6% reported a ‘5’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 9.3 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 2.6 hours. This indicates mostly day use.
Most visits to Los Padres National Forest are short-term day use. The average duration of visits to designated wilderness here was estimated at 9.3 hours. Overall, the average Forest visit lasts less than eight hours; over half of the visits last less than four hours. There are a modest number of frequent visitors: almost 11 percent of the visits are made by people who visit at most five times per year (NVUM). Use patterns will generally be concentrated on the first few miles of wilderness trails.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: White Ledge is adjacent to the existing Matilija Wilderness and Juncal roadless area, separated by Murietta Road (5N13). Much of the non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes or land areas with a comparable level of development for recreation opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: California condors occasionally soar over this area but are not reliant on any wild aspects of this unit to maintain their viability or mobility. Condor behavior is adaptable to most human development but some structures such as power lines and wind turbines may cause fatal collisions. Condors could be protected to a higher degree than present if a more strict area designation prevents these types of development beyond controls in place.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: White Ledge is typical of the Coastal Foothills Landscape composed primarily of chaparral with lesser portions of grassland, coastal scrub, and oak woodland. Some coastal sage may be present which needs to be protected from frequent fire return intervals. Aggressive fire management to protect coastal communities should keep the area within ecological parameters for fire return interval. Otherwise, the unit does not have any particular geologic or vegetation feature that is not well represented elsewhere and in particular need of protection.
San Bernardino National Forest

Cactus Springs B Inventoried Roadless Area

San Jacinto Ranger District and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: This 3.102 acre unit lies within the San Jacinto Ranger District and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument of the San Bernardino National Forest. It is located generally south of California State Highway 74 (Palms to Pines Scenic Byway), both east and north of National Forest System Road (NFSR) 7S02 (Santa Rosa Truck Trail) and west of NFSR 7S01 (Sawmill Road). The existing Santa Rosa Wilderness is directly east. Cactus B is in the upper Palm Canyon watershed, near the community of Pinyon Pines. The Santa Rosa Indian Reservation is west and south. Urbanized Coachella Valley communities, including Palm Springs, are located about ten miles northeast. And Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is located approximately three miles south.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): This is primarily boulder-strewn high desert with dense chaparral and pinyon-juniper ecosystems. Elevations range from about 4,500 to 7,200 feet with a northeast aspect. Topography is fairly steep from State Highway 74 up towards Santa Rosa Mountain. A few minor, intermittent streams are present. There is some mixed conifer at the higher elevations.

Current uses of the area: Cactus Springs B is interspersed by several parcels of private land. They include T 7 S, R 5 E, Section 9 (multiple owners); T 7 S, R 5 E, S 17 (the south half owned by Friends of the Desert Mountains and the north half, Spring Crest, with multiple owners) and T 7 S, R 5 E, S ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 21 (owned by Riverside County, on which they have a communication facility). A portion of the Forest Service Ribbonwood Equestrian Campground lies within the boundary of this area.

A water system for a portion of the nearby Pinyon Pines community has been under special use permit from the Forest to the Pinyon Pines County Water District (PPCWD) since 1967. The permitted water source is Pigeon Spring, located halfway along the border between Sections 22 and 23 in T7S, R2E, just north of the Sawmill Truck Trail. The horizontal well and piping provide potable water for 77 residences in the Pinyon Pines community, as well as for the local fire station and the Forest Service’s Pinyon Campground and Ribbonwood Equestrian Campground. The pipeline extends north from the spring through the NW ¼ of section 23 and the west half of sections 14 and 11. There are two 10,000 gallon water tanks utilized only for fire suppression located in the SW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 11(not within the unit), adjacent to Sawmill Truck Trail (Forest Road 7S05). The PPCWD uses 7S05 for motorized access to maintain these two tanks, the well and the pipeline. A back-up well is located near the junction of Forest Roads 7S05A and 7S15 in Section 11. Two additional horizontal wells and a pipeline are located within Omstott Creek; they are in the NE ¼ of section 15 and the pipeline extends north through Section 10 into the unit. These wells have not produced much water and are not currently connected to the main water system.

There is a major electronic site on nearby Toro Peak (within the Santa Rosa Indian Reservation) accessed by NFSR 7S02. It lies outside the unit.

The 3.5 mile non-motorized Sawmill Trail (5E02) partially lies within this unit. From State Highway 74, across from the Pinyon Flats Campground, take the road south to the designated
parking area (also for Cactus Spring Trail), just before the Pinyon-area Riverside County Transfer Station. One can ride a horse or a bicycle, hike, or use a four-wheel drive vehicle up the first 5.5 miles of the rough Sawmill Truck Trail (7S05). The Sawmill Trail starts at the top of the road and connects with Santa Rosa Truck Trail. The road and trail ascend from 4,000 feet up to 7,600 feet and offers views of the forest and desert areas below.

**Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas):** The appearance of the Cactus Springs B unit is similar to surrounding terrain; steep, primarily chaparral covered hillsides.

**Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks:** Santa Rosa Mountain at 8,070 feet is a scenic landmark visible from many vantage points in this area. It is located just south of the Cactus Springs B unit.

**Capability**

The area’s potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

**Naturalness of the area:** Cactus Springs B is somewhat natural and free from disturbance. The Scenic Integrity Objective is High. There are some non-native invasive grasses (*Bromus* spp.) mapped in the unit but nothing different than what occurs elsewhere on the Forest and nothing the Forest is treating as they are found in many other areas and are not dominating the vegetation of here. Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), Saharan mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) and yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) are expanding up into this area from lower elevations.

Deep Canyon is the primary stream (1.56 miles) in this unit. There are half-dozen other small, unnamed intermittent streams that also flow here as well as several natural springs. All are free-flowing; there are no developed surface water diversions or impoundments.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See [http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf). Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

The majority of Cactus Springs B is within the headwaters of the Palm Canyon Wash watershed, which rated as Functioning at Risk (2.0). Factors contributing to this rating include potential water quality issues from historic minerals operations, water quantity issues from the developed spring system, and a road and trail density, proximity to water, and mass wasting coefficients of fair, poor road and trail maintenance, and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure. A portion on the eastern side is in the Upper Deep Canyon watershed, which rated as Functioning Properly (1.6). Factors bringing this watershed to the boundary of an at-risk
condition include potential water quality issues from historic minerals operations, Best Management Practices failures from Forest Road 7S05, spring developments, and the communications facilities at the top of the watershed, and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure.

Light from the nearby urbanized communities in the Coachella Valley, including Palm Springs, degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this area. The wildfire history in this unit is extensive but with mostly minor acreage burned. The two largest wildfires (since the Forest began record keeping) were in 1940 (2,086 acres) and 1944 (831 acres).

Undeveloped: There is a permanent improvement in the northeast portion of Cactus Springs B – the Forest Service Ribbonwood Equestrian Campground. Approximately 25 acres of this developed recreation facility lies within the unit. It was constructed around 1994 with eight (8) family units and a group area that may hold up to 75 visitors. The facility has a water system. Use of this facility is seasonal.

A Riverside County (Trash) Transfer Station is adjacent to this unit on the east. Human occupation and modification of the area, including evidence of structures, construction, and habitations are also present in the community of Pinyon Pines and the Spring Crest area. This includes a community water system under special use permit to the Forest.

Views of and sounds from State Highway 74 are evident at times and from certain vantage points. Roads surround the unit on all four sides. There are approximately: 1.93 miles of system road, 0.60 miles of temporary road, 5.24 miles of unauthorized roads, 2.43 miles of system non-motorized trail, and 0.08 miles of unclassified trail.

Opportunities: Some experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Cactus Springs B. These benefits may include low to moderate feelings of solitude, the opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. That is because this unit is relatively small (3,101 acres) in size, does not have significant screening from vegetative or natural features, and is close to human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are low to moderate. Although Cactus Springs B is relatively remote for southern California the area offers limited isolation and thus low to moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. Dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel. It is rare to truly feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. This is reflected in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here, mostly Semi-Primitive Motorized with some Roaded Natural. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping (developed and primitive), nature viewing and hunting.

Special features and values: All of Cactus B is within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Rising abruptly from the desert floor, the Monument reaches an elevation of 10,834 feet at the summit of Mount San Jacinto. Providing a picturesque backdrop to local communities, it significantly contributes to the Coachella Valley's lure as a popular resort and
retirement community and is a desirable backcountry destination that can be accessed via trails from both the Valley floor and Idyllwild.

The Monument’s boundary encompasses about 272,000 acres, including 65,000 acres within the San Jacinto Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest, and 89,500 acres within the Bureau of Land Management’s California Desert Conservation Area. The Monument includes two federal Wilderness Areas: the Santa Rosa Wilderness which contains 61,600 acres of BLM and Forest Service lands and 19,470 acres of the Forest Service’s San Jacinto Wilderness.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument was established by an Act of Congress on October 24, 2000 “in order to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, land forms, and natural and cultural resources in these mountains and to recreate therein” (Public Law 106-351).

There are no federally listed endangered or threatened wildlife species. There are many sensitive wildlife species, including grey vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) and San Diego Mountain king snake (*Lampropeltis zonata pulchra*). The area is a part of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) for wildlife/botany conservation.

Portions of Cactus Springs B have been surveyed for heritage resources. There are known prehistoric properties located there including a network of prehistoric trails. Other prehistoric properties located in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigations. Culturally sensitive plants occur and are gathered today by some Cahuilla Indian.

There are no threatened or endangered plant species or their habitats within Cactus Springs B. This unit contains a variety of sensitive plant species, mostly in small scattered occurrences. The following plant species are known to occur in areas within and outside of the unit: *Astragalus biebristatus* (crested milkvetch), *Dietera canescens var. ziegleri* (Ziegler’s aster), *Draba corrugata var. saxosa* (rock draba), *Galium angustifolium* ssp. *jacinticum* (San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw), *Heuchera hirsutissima* (shaggy-haired alumroot), *Lilium parryi* (lemon lily), *Saltugilia latimeri* (Latimer’s woodland gilia), *Streptanthus campestris* (southern jewelflower), and *Calochortus palmeri* var. *munzii* (Munz’s mariposa lily) has several larger occurrences in this area.

Mid to large size mammals such as peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) may travel between the northern and southern Santa Rosa mountains through this area. There is the potential for the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) to travel from the San Jacinto Mountains to the Santa Rosa Mountains. However, surveys have not detected any spotted owls in the Santa Rosa Mountains.

There are no outstanding landscape features other than Santa Rosa Mountain at 8,070 feet, visible from many vantage points in this area. It is located just south of the Cactus Springs B unit. There are no existing or potential research natural areas. There are no Critical Biological Areas. There are no unique or specific scientific or educational opportunities.

**Description of size and shape:** Cactus Springs B is 3,102 acres in size, less than the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. However, it would meet this recommendation when viewed as a contiguous addition to the existing Santa Rosa Wilderness. The size, rectangular
shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Cactus B could be considered manageable but there would be administrative challenges and wilderness resources as described above. The unit is not untrammeled by humans and retains only some of its primeval character.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Proposed boundary locations generally avoid conflicts with roads and other improvements; however there are some improvements within the unit. The Santa Rosa Truck Trail intersects with the roadless area boundary at several locations. A major anomaly is the motorized Sawmill Truck Trail that would divide the existing Santa Rosa Wilderness from this potential new unit. Another concern would be Ribbonwood Campground. Other boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads and follow section lines, although the portions of boundary that follows the section lines would be moderately difficult to administer. The presence of a ‘checkerboard’ of private land sections interspersed throughout the unit could lead to significant wilderness management challenges. Also of concern are the fuel management issues and the proximity to the Pinyon Pines community.

**Availability**
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Cactus Springs B. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping (developed and primitive), nature viewing, and hunting. With wilderness designation some mountain biking opportunities would be forgone.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 2,984 acres and Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 118 acres.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** No specific wildlife management needs/concerns. Manage habitat for watchlist and sensitive wildlife species. Manage Santa Rosa Mountains for potential spotted owl habitat.

**Water availability and use:** A water system for the Pinyon Pines community is under special use permit to the Forest. See discussion above.

**Livestock operations:** No grazing allotments.

**Timber:** None.

**Minerals:** New mineral and geothermal rights have been withdrawn under National Monument authority. Any claims are subject to valid existing rights. This unit has many gold, tourmaline and other prospects in the form of pits, abandoned shafts and adits. These include:

SB-Able 65-72. Gulch placer mining claims staked by a promoter.

Palm Canyon Marble mine (several claims). USBM Location No. 265. Use is low. There are pits and trenches as well as roads to the site.

Garnet Queen Mine and Mill Site. USBM Location No. 267. Tungsten mill site constructed during the 1940s. Use is low and access is via a NFSR.
Pigeon Creek Mine and Mill. Pits and adits caved in. Tungsten prospect. There is a non-system road leading to the mine. No mining claims on the property.

The mineral resource potential for any major discovery is low. Remediation of all unsafe mine workings may be substantial and costly. Unauthorized prospectors frequent the area after winter rains and major fires to look for pegmatite veins which may expose pockets of quality gem stones. The area surrounding this unit has produced world-class gem stones.

Cultural resources: Portions of Cactus Springs B have been surveyed for heritage resources. There are known prehistoric properties located there including a network of prehistoric trails. Other prehistoric properties located in the area represent unique classes of sites which merit further investigations. Culturally sensitive plants occur and are gathered today by some Cahuilla Indian.

Authorized and potential land uses: Approximately 28 acres of this unit contain special use authorizations as described above.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: This unit lies within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) as follows: WUI – Defense Zone – 158 acres; WUI – Threat Zone – 2,919 acres, and WUI – Developed Area – 3 acres.

Some vegetative mortality has occurred in this area due to the recent drought and insects/disease. The northern boundary of this area borders the community of Pinyon Pines. The Santa Rosa Fuels Reduction Project is in the planning stages with a decision expected in September, 2011. It would reduce fuels and wildfire hazards on National Forest lands south of Highway 74 near Spring Crest, Ribbonwood Equestrian Camp, and the Santa Rosa Indian Reservation on approximately 7,116 acres. That includes a large portion of the Cactus Springs B Inventoried Roadless Area. Under the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forest Initiative, emphasis is placed on reducing the risk of wildfire within the wild land-urban interface around communities at risk. The condition found on the majority of the project area has been characterized as a forest where the probability of a catastrophic wildfire occurring is moderate to high. See this link for detailed information and map: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project_content.php?project=20990.

Cactus Springs B is interspersed by several parcels of private land. They include T 7 S, R 5 E, Section 9 (multiple owners); T 7 S, R 5 E, S 17 (the south half owned by Friends of the Desert Mountains and the north half, Spring Crest, with multiple owners) and T 7 S, R 5 E, SE ¼ of Section 21 (owned by Riverside County, on which they have a communication facility).

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Santa Rosa Wilderness, 13,787 acres of National Forest System and 64,340 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands (added in California Desert Protection Act of 1994), is located directly east of Cactus Springs B.

San Jacinto Wilderness, 32,248 acres of National Forest System and 12,828 acres of Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness State Park lands, are located approximately 10 miles northwest. Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness, 5,585 acres of National Forest System, is located approximately 15 miles

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west. It was designated in 2009. South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness, 20,217 acres of National Forest System, is located approximately 15 miles northwest. It was designated in 2009.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: There is currently light, mostly day use in the Santa Rosa, Cahuilla, and South Fork San Jacinto Wildernesses. And there is moderate, mixed day and overnight use in the San Jacinto Wilderness. Visitation has increased somewhat in this area with the new Monument designation. The nearby Coachella Valley population is increasing. The area is easily accessible by vehicle from the Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire and San Diego metropolitan areas in two hours or less.

There were 85,100 recreation visits to all San Bernardino National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring – NVUM – Report of May 2010). Demographics: 63% male, 37% female; 97% white race/ethnicity; 28% ages 50 – 59 and 8% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (35%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘6’. About 10% reported a ‘7’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 6.8 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 3.9 hours. This indicates mostly day (not overnight) use.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. Much of the San Jacinto Ranger District non-wilderness land encompasses similar landscapes and recreation opportunities. Nearby Pyramid Peak Inventoried Roadless Area, just north of Cactus Springs B, is an example. Nearby undeveloped Forest, BLM and State lands also provide landscapes and opportunities for primitive recreation. There appears to be no direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area. Two new Forest wildernesses, Cahuilla Mountain and South Fork San Jacinto, were just designated in the Omnibus Lands Act of 2009.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There is a low ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems in Cactus Springs B. The California Chaparral Forest and Shrub Ecosystem Province makes up 0.3% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 0.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48 states as of 1998. That ratio has since grown. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS (Loomis and Echohawk 1999).
San Bernardino National Forest

Cucamonga C Inventoried Roadless Area

Front Country Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 4,102 acre Cucamonga C Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in the western portion of the Front Country Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest. It is bounded on the west by the Forest boundary with the Angeles National Forest; on the south by National Forest System Road (NFSR) 1N34; on the east side by Day Canyon; and on the north by the existing Cucamonga Wilderness. Cucamonga C is from Cucamonga B separated by Day Canyon, with the C unit being to the west. This area is comprised of the Cucamonga Creek watershed. It lies west of the Lytle Creek Ranger Station and Lytle Creek community, with the more urbanized Rancho Cucamonga and Upland communities located in the valley about one mile south.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): Cucamonga C contains steep, heavily dissected ridges with dense chaparral ecosystems and some riparian areas in the lower elevations and mixed conifer in the upper elevations. Elevations range from about 3,400 to 6,700 feet with a southern aspect. Topography is very steep from FDSR 1N34 up towards the boundary with the Cucamonga Wilderness. A few minor, intermittent streams are present along with some of the perennial Cucamonga Creek.

Current uses of the area: A large portion of the land within the Cucamonga C Inventoried Roadless Area was classified as ‘Backcountry Non-Motorized’ land use zone in the 2005 Forest Plan Revision. There are no parcels of private land within this unit.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of the Cucamonga C unit is similar to surrounding terrain; steep, primarily chaparral covered hillsides.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: Cucamonga Canyon has become increasingly popular for visitors who hike on user-created trails to waterfalls and natural pools. The most popular user-created access point is via a residential neighborhood in the City of Rancho Cucamonga, into the canyon, hiking nearly a mile through property owned by the Cucamonga Valley Water District. The Water District does not currently sanction access on its land and has posted “No Trespassing” signs. With no official trailhead, visitors park on city streets near the area. Several visitors have been injured while climbing up the rocks or jumping from the falls and have required airlifts out of the canyon for medical attention.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Cucamonga C is relatively natural and free from disturbance. The Scenic Integrity Objective is mostly High but with a significant component of Moderate.

The unit burned most recently in the Grand Prix fire in 2003 and non-native grasses are present in the area following this disturbance. Non-native grasses are increasing along the urban...
interface of the Forest and it is unknown at this time how well the area is recovering and whether the non-native grasses will begin to dominate the area.

A few minor, unnamed intermittent streams are present within the unit. All of these streams are free-flowing within the unit; there are no developed surface water diversions or impoundments. Several major streams flow through a portion of this unit for a total of 3.81 miles. They include: Cucamonga Canyon- 3.18 miles, Day Canyon- 0.30 miles, and Deer Canyon- 0.33 miles.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

Cucamonga C is within the Upper Cucamonga Creek watershed, which rated is Functioning at Risk (2.7). Multiple factors contribute to this rating including: the population pressure on recreation, road and trail issues including failures of BMPs and partial decommissioned roads, type conversion from frequent fires and resulting landslides, 303d listings, water diversions for downstream community use, and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure. The Cucamonga Valley Water District claims a water easement in the Deer Canyon area of this unit.

Light from the nearby urbanized communities in the Inland Empire degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree. Class I National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for the adjacent Cucamonga Wilderness.

The fire history in this unit is extensive with many recorded wildfires since the Forest began record keeping. The most recent event here was the 2003 Grand Prix Fire (13,287 acres shared between Cucamonga B and Cucamonga C). Other major (1,000 acres plus) events occurred in 1953 (1,879 acres) and 1970 (4,894 acres shared between Cucamonga B and Cucamonga C).

Undeveloped: There are no permanent improvements in the unit. Human occupation and modification of the area, including evidence of structures, construction, and habitations are present in the greater Inland Empire in the valley to the south. Views of and sounds from Interstate 210, State highways and local roads are evident at times and from certain vantage points.

Portions of the Cucamonga Truck Trail 1N34, which is the southern boundary of much of this unit, washed out following the Grand Prix Fire of 2003. It has not been rebuilt and is closed to use public motorized use from the Forest boundary at Cucamonga Canyon to just west of Joe Elliott dispersed camping area on the east.

There are approximately: 1.28 miles of Forest system road, 3.47 miles of unauthorized road, and 0.02 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized.
Opportunities: Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Cucamonga C. These benefits may include low to moderate feelings of solitude, the opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. That is because this unit is 4,084 acres in size, has some screening from vegetative or natural features, and is somewhat distant to human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are low to moderate. Cucamonga C is somewhat remote for southern California and the area offers some isolation and thus low to moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. Dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel, although that has changed somewhat due to recent major wildfires. It is possible to somewhat feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. This is reflected in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here is all Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized.

Major recreational opportunities include hiking, water play, nature viewing and hunting.

Special features and values: Cucamonga Canyon, as described above in Overview, Key Attractions section. Some of the largest sugar pines (*pinus lambertiana*) in southern California are found on San Sevaine Ridge. This is San Gabriel bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) range. Critical habitat for mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) as well as future breeding habitat for a captive breeding program exists. Modeled habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) exists. Territories for California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) exist.

Most of Cucamonga C has not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. The presence of prehistoric sites is highly likely based on topography and the availability of water. Culturally sensitive plants that were gathered by Serrano Indian people occur here.

Roof pendants of limestone have been mapped with high mineral potential. Given the present market condition of the ground calcium carbonate market it is unlikely these roof pendants will be developed for locatable mineral uses in the foreseeable future.

There are no known threatened, endangered or sensitive plants within this area but it may not have been surveyed as there have been no recent projects in this area. The State natural diversity database also does not show any mapped occurrences of rare plants in this area. There is no modeled habitat for any threatened or endangered plant species in this unit.

There are outstanding landscape features visible from some vantage points in this area: Thunder Mountain, Telegraph Peak, Timber Mountain, Bighorn Peak and Cucamonga Peak. All are in the adjacent Cucamonga Wilderness.

There are no existing or potential research natural areas. There are no Critical Biological Areas. There are no unique or specific scientific or educational opportunities. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply. There are no significant wildlife corridors and connectivity issues.

Description of size and shape: Cucamonga C is 4,102 acres in size, less than the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. However, it could be a contiguous addition to the existing Cucamonga Wilderness. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in
Cucamonga C would be considered manageable but there would be administrative challenges as described above. The unit is mostly untrammeled by humans and retains substantial primeval character. The shape of the unit and juxtaposition to external influences pose minor to moderate challenges to wilderness resources.

**Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:** Proposed boundary locations generally avoid conflicts with roads and other improvements; however there are some improvements within the unit. These boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads, creeks and follow section lines, although the portions of boundary that follows the section lines would be moderately difficult to administer. Other factors include: A water tank appears to be included within the area boundary: T 1 N, R 7 W, Section 7.

Portions of the Cucamonga C unit are relatively close to the Inland Empire valley communities, especially Rancho Cucamonga. In the past, motorized equipment and mechanical transport have been used as part of initial attacks on wildfires here.

The areas contain habitat for San Gabriel bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*). Management activities for this species may conflict with wilderness designation.

**Availability**
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

**Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):** Backcountry (BC)- 27 acres and Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 4.075 acres.

**Recreation, including tourism:** No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Cucamonga C. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, water play, nature viewing and hunting. There would be some effects on dispersed recreation uses. Some mountain biking opportunities would also be forgone with wilderness designation.

**Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:** This is San Gabriel bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) range. Critical habitat for mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) as well as future breeding habitat for a captive breeding program exists. Modeled habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) exists. Territories for occupied California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) exist.

**Water availability and use:** The Cucamonga Valley Water District claims a water easement in the Deer Canyon area of this unit.

**Livestock operations:** None.

**Timber:** None.

**Minerals:** Approximately 0.4 acres are withdrawn from mineral entry. Individual mining claims and prospects are described in Cucamonga B.

**Cultural resources:** Most of Cucamonga C has not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. The presence of prehistoric sites is highly likely based on topography and the availability of water. Culturally sensitive plants that were gathered by Serrano Indian people occur.
Authorized and potential land uses: Approximately 0.15 acres of this unit contains special use authorizations as described above.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: This unit lies within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI), specifically, 251 acres in the WUI Threat Zone. Some vegetative mortality has occurred in this area due to the recent drought and insects/disease. The southern boundary of this area is near Rancho Cucamonga. There are no fuels management projects currently underway in this unit.

Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Cucamonga Wilderness, 12,781 acres of National Forest System, is located adjacent to the west. Sheep Mountain Wilderness, 41,883 acres of National Forest System (primarily on the Angeles National Forest), is located two miles northwest. Additional wilderness designation may be useful and appropriate here.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: There is light to moderate, mostly day use within the Cucamonga and Sheep Mountain Wilderness areas. The Inland Empire and High Desert (Hesperia, Victorville) populations are growing rapidly. The area is easily accessed by vehicle from the Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire, and San Diego metropolitan areas within two hours.

There were 85,100 recreation visits to all San Bernardino National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring – NVUM – Report of May 2010). Demographics: 63% male, 37% female; 97% white race/ethnicity; 28% ages 50 – 59 and 8% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (35%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘6’. About 10% reported a ‘7’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 6.8 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 3.9 hours. This indicates mostly day (not overnight) use.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Much of the Front Country Ranger District non-wilderness land encompasses similar landscapes and opportunities as Cucamonga C.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: Nelson's bighorn sheep are affected by development. There is a need to provide a sanctuary for certain biotic species, including San Gabriel bighorn sheep.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: There is a low to moderate ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems in Cucamonga C. The California Chaparral Forest and Shrub Ecosystem Province
makes up 0.3% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 0.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48 states as of 1998. That ratio has since grown. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS (Loomis and Echohawk 1999).
San Bernardino National Forest

Pyramid Peak A Inventoried Roadless Area

San Jacinto Ranger District and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: This 15,824 acre unit lies within the San Jacinto Ranger District and the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument of the San Bernardino National Forest. It is located north of California State Highway 74 (Palms to Pines Scenic Byway). It is bounded on the north by the Forest boundary, on the west by the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, on the south by various Forest Service roads and the Forest boundary, and on the east by Asbestos Mountain and the Forest boundary. Pine Mountain is a prominent topographic feature. The major drainage is the Palm Canyon watershed. It is northwest of the community of Pinyon Pines with the more urbanized Coachella Valley communities located 10 miles north. Also, it is near the Santa Rosa Indian Reservation and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Indian Reservation. And Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is located approximately five miles south.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s): This is primarily boulder-strewn high desert with dense chaparral and pinyon-juniper ecosystems. Elevations range from about 2,000 to 7,123 feet at Palm View Peak with a generally east/northeast aspect. Topography is fairly steep from State Highway 74 down towards Palm Canyon and up towards Palm View Peak. A few minor, intermittent streams are present along with the intermittent Palm Canyon Creek. There is some mixed conifer at the higher elevations.

Current uses of the area: Approximately 7,358 acres within the Pyramid Peak A Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) were classified as ‘Recommended Wilderness’ land use zone in the 2005 Forest Plan Revision.

Pyramid Peak A is interspersed by several parcels of private land; T 6 S, R 4 E, Sections 15 (owned by Friends of the Desert Mountains) and 23 (private ownership). Other private land parcels border this unit on the southeast (Pinyon Flat area).

The Palm Canyon Trail 4E01 lies within the unit as does the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Palm Canyon is a desert trail that starts just off Highway 74, west of the Pinyon Flats Campground, at the end of a short paved road. The trail starts on National Forest and heads north for about nine miles descending the length of Palm Canyon towards Palm Springs. It winds in and out of washes and therefore can be difficult to follow. It is popular with hikers as well as mountain bikers. The trail terminus is on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation. The Pacific Crest trail traverses more than six miles of the western boundary of Pyramid Peak A on its way from Mexico to Canada. No mountain bikes are allowed on the PCT.

This area includes 15,062 acres of the active Wellman Allotment (the winter range), which typically runs up to 45 head on a year-round basis. There are range improvements on this allotment that require routine maintenance, including fences, corrals, and water developments.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of the Pyramid Peak A unit is similar to surrounding terrain; steep, primarily chaparral covered hillsides.
Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: There are impressive, expansive scenic vistas from many vantage points. Palm View Peak and Pine Mountain are scenic landmarks.

Palm Canyon was designated a Wild River in the 2009 Omnibus Lands Bill. It is characterized here by steeply sloping canyons and narrow ridges, with deep, rugged canyons. The unique presence of the California fan palm (California’s only native palm) gives this canyon its name. It is a nationally significant palm oasis. The creek bed in Palm Canyon is almost always dry, flowing underground for much of the year. A few short reaches have modest seasonal surface flow, providing haven for small oases. The scenery here is regionally spectacular, with deep, rugged, rocky canyons, thick riparian vegetation, and palm oases. Winter and early spring storms bring ephemeral waterfalls. Summer thunderstorms bring flash floods. It has outstandingly remarkable values for 8.1 miles in length (and approximately 3,824 acres in size), from private land on the south to the Forest boundary on the north for scenery, pre-history and botany. Also, it is free of impoundments, inaccessible except by a non-motorized trail, and in a primitive watershed with unpolluted waters.

Capability
The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Pyramid Peak A is relatively natural and free from disturbance. The Scenic Integrity Objective is Very High in that portion of the unit classified as Recommended Wilderness, High in the remainder of the unit but also with several very small parcels of Moderate. The area has been grazed prior to it becoming national forest and continues to have livestock grazing today.

Palm Canyon and its tributaries have tamarisk (an invasive plant species) throughout the riparian area of this unit. The Forest is planning to eradicate this plant using manual removal and herbicides. There are no known non-native animal species in the area.

One major stream, Palm Canyon, flows through a portion of this unit for a total of 7.78 miles. A few other minor, unnamed intermittent streams are also present. All of these streams are free-flowing within the unit; there are no developed surface water diversions or impoundments.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.
The southern portion of Pyramid Peak A is in the Headwater of Palm Canyon Wash watershed, which rated as Functioning at Risk (2.0). Factors contributing to this rating include potential water quality issues from historic minerals operations, water quantity issues from the developed spring system, a road and trail density, their proximity to water, mass wasting coefficients of fair, poor road and trail maintenance and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure.

The majority of this unit is in the Upper Palm Canyon watershed, which rated as Functioning at Risk (1.7). Factors bringing this watershed just above the boundary of an functioning properly condition include potential water quality issues from historic mining, spring development and public recreation use near the palm oases and potential road issues on recently acquired lands.

Light from the nearby urbanized communities in the Coachella Valley, including Palm Springs, degrades the quality of the night sky to some degree. Class II National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for this area. The wildfire history in this unit is extensive with many recorded wildfires since the Forest began record keeping. The most recent large event here was in 1994 (10,463 acres). Other major (1,000 acre plus) events occurred in 1920 (1,582 acres), 1942 (2,530 acres), 1975 (1,747 acres).

Undeveloped: There are no permanent improvements in this unit. Human occupation and modification of the area, including evidence of structures, construction, and habitations are present in the nearby community of Pinyon Pines. Views of and sounds from State Highway 74 are evident at times and from certain vantage points. There are approximately: 0.92 miles of Forest system road, 0.64 miles of temporary road, 3.37 miles of unauthorized road, 15.66 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0.06 miles of unauthorized OHV trails, and 18.67 miles of unclassified trail.

Opportunities: Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Pyramid Peak A. These benefits may include moderate to high feelings of solitude, the opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. That is because this unit is relatively large (14,138 acres) in size, has significant screening from vegetative or natural features, and is somewhat close to human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are moderate to high. Pyramid Peak A is relatively remote for southern California and offers some isolation and thus moderate to high adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. Dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel. It is possible to truly feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness.

This is reflected in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), mostly Primitive in that portion of the unit recommended as wilderness and Semi-Primitive Motorized with some Roaded Natural in the rest. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and nature viewing. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail lies within this area.

Special features and values: All of Pyramid Peak A is within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Rising abruptly from the desert floor, the Monument reaches an elevation of 10,834 feet at the summit of Mount San Jacinto. Providing a picturesque backdrop to local communities, it significantly contributes to the Coachella Valley's lure as a popular...
resort and retirement community and is a desirable backcountry destination that can be accessed via trails from both the Valley floor and Idyllwild.

The Monument’s boundary encompasses about 272,000 acres, including 65,000 acres within the San Jacinto Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest, and 89,500 acres within the Bureau of Land Management’s California Desert Conservation Area. The Monument includes two federal Wilderness Areas: the Santa Rosa Wilderness which contains 61,600 acres of BLM and Forest Service lands and 19,470 acres of the Forest Service’s San Jacinto Wilderness.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument was established by an Act of Congress on October 24, 2000 “in order to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, land forms, and natural and cultural resources in these mountains and to recreate therein” (Public Law 106-351).

This unit contains a few occurrences of two sensitive plant species: *Arabis johnstonii* (Johnston’s rock cress) and *Penstemon californicus* (California penstemon). All of these plant species are known to occur in areas outside of the unit as well. There are no threatened or endangered plant species known within this unit. There is modeled habitat for one endangered species: *Poa atropurpurea* (San Bernardino bluegrass). There are also desert fan palm oases known in Palm Canyon within Pyramid Peak A.

There are no existing or potential research natural areas. There are no Critical Biological Areas. There are no unique or specific scientific or educational opportunities. Palm Canyon, Pyramid Peak, Hells Kitchen and Live Oak Canyon with Hidden Falls are special features.

The area can be considered a part of a Cultural Landscape containing many Traditional Cultural Properties. Much of Pyramid Peak A has not been surveyed for cultural resources, but based on topography, natural resources and surveys in nearby areas, there is a high probability that both historic and prehistoric properties are present. Historic mining sites are known to exist in the area.

Peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsonii*) use both the northern and southern Santa Rosa mountains as home range habitat. Male bighorn sheep will travel between ewe groups, which are more sedentary. There are approximately 5,800 acres of key peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) habitat in Pyramid Peak A. However, at this time, there is no designated critical habitat for the species. Critical habitat was vacated on April 14th 2009 (FR Vol 74, No. 70 pgs 17288-17365). In addition, there is suitable habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) in Palm Canyon and its tributaries. To date neither species has been sighted in the area. It is not suitable for arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) or mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*).

Several plants grow in this area that are of importance for food, basket materials, and medicine. Little of the area has been inventoried for heritage resources, however known archaeological sites are considered very important to Cahuilla Indians. Cahuilla place names for the area are still remembered.
Description of size and shape: Pyramid Peak A is 15,824 acres in size, more than the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in this unit would be considered manageable but there would be administrative challenges as described above. The unit is somewhat untrammeled by humans and retains only some of its primeval character. The shape of the unit and juxtaposition to external influences pose moderate challenges to wilderness resources.

Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements: Proposed boundary locations generally avoid conflicts with roads and other improvements; however there are some improvements within the unit. These boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads and follow section lines, although the portions of boundary that follows the section lines would be moderately difficult to administer.

Approximately 7,358 acres within the Pyramid Peak A Inventoried Roadless Area were classified as ‘Recommended Wilderness’ land use zone in the 2005 Forest Plan Revision. Some manageability factors include:

The existing multi-use Palm Canyon 4E01 trail would not be able to continue to provide mountain bike recreation opportunities if the proposed wilderness boundary was extended east to the Forest boundary for the full Inventoried Roadless Area. However, this boundary has been adjusted back to the bottom of Palm Canyon. As a result, almost all of the Palm Canyon Trail has been excluded, except where it intersects at several locations with the proposed wilderness boundary at the bottom of Palm Canyon. At those intersections, estimated to be approximately three quarters of a mile in length, the trail will, over time, be relocated to the east to preserve this important mountain biking corridor. The Live Oak Canyon 4E03 Trail would be partially excluded. Inclusion of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is also a concern but it could be excluded.

This area includes a large portion of the active Wellman grazing allotment (the winter range), which typically runs 45 head on a year-round basis. There are range improvements on this allotment that require routine maintenance, including fences, corrals, and water developments.

The BCMUR land use zoning was allocated in this area to allow the Forest to address vegetation (fuels) management needs and concerns for the protection of the Pinyon Pines community.

Availability
The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.


Recreation, including tourism: No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Pyramid Peak A. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and nature viewing. With wilderness designation popular mountain biking opportunities may be forgone.
Wildlife species, populations, and management needs: There are some wildlife guzzlers. The eastern portion of this unit lies within the Santa Rosa Mountains State Game Refuge.

Water availability and use: Water is available in Palm Canyon at Little Paradise and Agua Bonita during wet years and/or after major storm events.

Livestock operations: Approximately 15,062 acres of the Wellman grazing allotment as described above.

Timber: None.

Minerals: There are old mines and access roads in the southern portion of the area. New mineral and geothermal rights have been withdrawn under National Monument authority. Asbestos mines (Donna C) are currently being remediated for public health and safety. Other sites include:

Hill Top and Satterfield are active placer mining claims.

Gold Shot is an old mine that the Forest recently cleaned up and foamed (closed) the flooded mine shafts. Historic mining equipment has been preserved at the mine site. This mine has one of the oldest rotary stamp mills (over 100 years old). Inactive.

Big Jim Prospect. Gold is the main commodity with sulfide minerals. Minor potential for acid water drainage but can be remediated with limestone. Forty feet long decline on the site. Four miles north of Highway 74 with a remote property access. Inactive.

Mica Prospect. There are several pits and trenches. Inactive.

Pinto Lode claim. Abandoned mining claim.

Nightingale Dolomite Mine. Quarry has an 80 foot high wall that has not been reclaimed. Easy access from Highway 74. Dolomite is not a locatable mineral; therefore no mining claims could be located.

Cultural resources: Much of Pyramid Peak A has not been surveyed for cultural resources, but based on topography, natural resources and surveys in nearby areas, there is a high probability that both historic and prehistoric properties are present. Historic mining sites are known to exist in the area.

Authorized and potential land uses: None.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: This unit lies within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI), specifically, 3,677 acres are within the WUI Threat Zone.

There would be significant effects on fire management. There has been some vegetative mortality in this area due to the recent drought. The southeastern boundary of this area borders the community of Pinyon Pines. In the past, motorized equipment and mechanical transport have been used as part of fast, aggressive initial attacks on wildfires in this area for community protection. This type of suppression activity will be more difficult, as would prescribed burning, if the area were designated as wilderness. As a result, the proposed wilderness boundary has been adjusted back away from Pinyon Pines.
Need
The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: Santa Rosa Wilderness, 13,787 acres of National Forest System and 64,340 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands (added in 1994 California Desert Protection Act of 1994), is located three miles southeast. San Jacinto Wilderness, 32,248 acres of National Forest System and 12,828 acres of Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness State Park lands are located three miles northwest. Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness, 5,585 acres of National Forest System, is located approximately 15 miles southwest. It was designated in 2009. South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness, 20,217 acres of National Forest System, is located approximately 15 miles west. It was designated in 2009. There may be some direct, specific need for additional wilderness in this area.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: There is light, mostly day use in the Santa Rosa, Cahuilla, and South Fork San Jacinto Wilderness. And there is moderate, mixed day and overnight use in the San Jacinto Wilderness. Visitation has increased somewhat with the new Monument designation. Coachella and Hemet Valley populations are increasing rapidly. The area is easily accessed by vehicle from the Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire, and San Diego metropolitan areas within two hours.

There were 85,100 recreation visits to all San Bernardino National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring – NVUM – Report of May 2010). Demographics: 63% male, 37% female; 97% white race/ethnicity; 28% ages 50 – 59 and 8% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (35%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘6’. About 10% reported a ‘7’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 6.8 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 3.9 hours. This indicates mostly day (not overnight) use.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Much of the San Jacinto Ranger District non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes and opportunities.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: The current unroaded, relatively remote nature of this area has helped maintain the habitat quality for the endangered Peninsular bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis nelsoni). The need to provide sanctuary for the bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis nelsoni) is high. This area is considered both lambing and dispersing habitat for the sheep.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: There is a low to moderate ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems in Pyramid Peak A.
The California Chaparral Forest and Shrub Ecosystem Province makes up 0.3% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 0.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48 states as of 1998. That ratio has since grown. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS (Loomis and Echohawk 1999).
San Bernardino National Forest

Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area

Front Country Ranger District

Overview

Location and vicinity, including access by type of road or trail: The 10,270 acre Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) is located in the east side of the Front Country Ranger District of San Bernardino National Forest. It is bordered on the north and east by the San Gorgonio Wilderness, on the west by National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 1S08 and 1S09, and on the south by the San Gorgonio River. Raywood Flat B includes two distinct units: 3,312 acres of slopes above State Highway 38 up to the existing San Gorgonio Wilderness boundary and 7,547 acres of the Yucaipa Ridge area. These areas are situated within the upper Santa Ana River and Mill Creek watersheds, near the Oak Glen Fire Station and the communities of Oak Glen and Forest Falls. Larger, more urbanized Inland Empire communities are located about 10 miles southwest.

Geography, topography and vegetation (including the ecosystem type(s)): The area consists primarily of steep, heavily dissected ridgelines within a dense chaparral ecosystem at lower elevations with mixed conifer above. Elevations range from about 5,400 up to 9,133 feet at Little San Gorgonio Peak with an aspect that varies. Topography is steep to very steep up towards the boundary with the San Gorgonio Wilderness. Many minor, intermittent streams are present along with the perennial San Gorgonio River and Mill Creek.

Current uses of the area: Approximately 1,939 acres within the Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area – Yucaipa Ridge sub-unit and 1,901 acres within the Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area – Mill Creek sub-unit for a total of 3,890 acres were classified as ‘Recommended Wilderness’ land use zone in the 2005 Forest Plan Revision. A portion of this unit is proposed for wilderness designation in the 2010 ‘California Desert Protection Act,’ S. 2921. A small portion of the Momyer and Vivian Creek Trails cross this unit near Forest Falls on their way into the San Gorgonio Wilderness. There are multiple parcels of private land within this unit.

Appearance and surroundings (such as the characteristics of contiguous areas): The appearance of the Raywood Flat B unit is similar to surrounding terrain; steep, primarily chaparral covered hillsides.

Key attractions, if any, such as sensitive wildlife and scenic landmarks: Yucaipa Ride is a prominent landmark, with Little San Gorgonio Peak its highest elevation at 9,133 feet.

Capability

The areas potential for wilderness is described using characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area’s availability or need. The principal wilderness characteristics that follow are generally, but not necessarily, listed in order of importance or desirability.

Naturalness of the area: Raywood Flat B is mostly natural and free from disturbance. The Scenic Integrity Objective is Very High in those sections of Recommended Wilderness, High in most of the rest of the unit with a few very small patches of Moderate.
Historically stocked non-native trout persist in creeks in this area. The area is no longer stocked by California Department of Fish and Game. There are no current plans to remove this species.

A few minor, unnamed intermittent streams are present. Most are free-flowing within the unit; however, there are developed surface water diversions and/or impoundments along portions of the San Gorgonio River in Big Oaks Canyon. Several major streams run through a portion of this unit for a total of 5.93 miles. They include: Falls Creek- 0.97 miles, Little San Gorgonio- 1.34 miles, Mill Creek- 1.00 miles, San Gorgonio River- 1.21 miles, and South Fork San Gorgonio River- 1.41 miles.

The Watershed Condition Analysis rated all 6th Field Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) using 12 indicators to determine if they were Functioning (Class 1, rating 1.0 to 1.6), Functioning at Risk (Class 2, rating 1.7 to 2.2), or Impaired Function (Class 3, rating 2.3 to 3.0). See http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/Watershed_Condition_Framework.pdf. Direct effects from roads and trails accounted for 15% of the rating. Indirect effects from roads and trails contributed to an additional 12%. Water quality accounted for 10% and water quantity (development of springs or diversions) accounted for 10%. Additional indicators focused on aquatic habitat, aquatic biota, and terrestrial biological features. Under capability, wilderness areas should be rated as Class 1 or have the potential to be moved to a Class 1 condition with some focused watershed restoration work. Availability will address the resource conditions that contributed to the current rating.

Raywood Flat B lies within five separate watersheds. The recommended areas will be a small portion and potentially have little influence on the overall rating, except in the case of the South Fork Whitewater River.

Yucaipa Creek (12% National Forest ownership) watershed rated as Functioning Properly (1.6). Factors bringing this watershed to the boundary of an at-risk condition include potential water quality issues from historic minerals operations, lack of road maintenance, too little fire history and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure.

Little Gorgonio Creek (12% National Forest ownership) watershed rated as Functioning at Risk (1.8). This area has similar issues as Yucaipa Creek but also has additional water diversions and known invasive species presence.

Headwaters San Gorgonio River (35% National Forest ownership) watershed rated as Functioning at Risk (2.0). Major diversions in the Whitewater River have altered the proper functioning of this watershed by transferring water from one watershed to another. The water conveyance system has contributed to major landslides and erosion problems. A large number of linear features (roads and trails) are located within riparian buffers.

South Fork Whitewater River (53% National Forest ownership) watershed rated as Functioning at Risk (1.7). The major diversion of the Whitewater River that do not provide for sufficient in-stream flows to support riparian habitat is the primary factor for this predominantly wilderness watershed from being Functioning Properly. Other minor concerns include historic mining and invasive species.

Mill Creek (82% National Forest ownership) watershed rated as Functioning at Risk (2.0). Factors contributing to this rating include 303d listings, potential water quality issues from historic minerals operations, large water diversion for power generation, a lack of road...
maintenance, a substantial road and trail network in the riparian area, type conversion and atmospheric deposition from high population pressure. However, the large area of current wilderness creates a lower score compared to watersheds with these factors that do not contain wilderness.

Light from the nearby urbanized communities in the Inland Empire degrades the quality of the night sky somewhat. Class I National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply for the adjacent San Gorgonio Wilderness. The wildfire history in this unit is extensive with many recorded wildfires since the Forest began record keeping. However, there have been no major (1,000 acre plus) events recorded since 1909.

Undeveloped: There are no permanent improvements in the unit. Human occupation and modification of the area, including evidence of structures, construction, and habitations are present in the nearby communities of Forest Falls and Oak Glen as well as the greater Inland Empire in the valley to the southwest. Views of and sounds from State highways and local roads are evident at times and from certain vantage points.

There are approximately: 2.27 miles of Forest system road, 2.97 miles of temporary road, 9.36 miles of unauthorized road, 0.12 miles of Forest system trail, non-motorized, 0.47 miles of unauthorized OHV trails, and 1.19 miles of unclassified trail.

Opportunities: Experiential benefits are available to the visitor within Raywood Flat B. These benefits may include moderate to high feelings of solitude, the opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from the developments and evidence of humans. That is because this unit is relatively large (11,918 acres) in size, has significant screening from vegetative or natural features, and somewhat distant to human impacts and intrusions like roads and agency and public development. Also, public access is very limited along Yucaipa Ridge due to private land.

Similarly, physical and mental challenge, a spirit of adventure and awareness, and a sense of self-reliance and inspiration are moderate to high. Raywood Flat B is relatively remote for southern California and area offers some isolation and thus moderate adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, and self-reliance. Dense chaparral and steep slopes preclude much cross-country travel, although that has changed somewhat due to recent major wildfires. It is possible to feel a part of nature, to have a vastness of scale and a degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills that are measures of primitive and unconfined recreation one might find in other southern California wilderness. This is reflected in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) here; Primitive in the Recommended Wilderness sections and mostly Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized everywhere else. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, camping (primitive), nature viewing and hunting.

Access is via NFSRs 1S09 (to the west), 1S22 and Forest Trail 1W08, the Oak Glen Divide Trail. This trail is not well-maintained by the Forest due to lack of access/use. Public access along the entire Yucaipa Ridge and into Raywood Flat is non-motorized, and limited and difficult at best due to adjacent private lands, gated roads and administrative uses. Visitors not allowed into Banning Canyon – administrative use only as this is an important water supply for local communities.

Special features and values: Modeled habitat for mountain yellow-legged frog (Rana muscosa) in the San Gorgonio River as well as Alger Creek and Falls Creek exists within this IRA. Critical
habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*). Important occupied habitat for California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*).

Only a small portion of Raywood Flat B has been surveyed for cultural resources. There are known historic properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register located in the area. There is a high likelihood that prehistoric properties are also present based on the topography and numerous sources of water. Culturally sensitive plants that were gathered by Serrano Indian people occur here.

The mineral potential of this area is low to unknown. Some mine sites have been identified as described under ‘Availability’ below.

This area contains a variety of sensitive plant species mostly in small scattered occurrences which include: *Arenaria lanuginosa* ssp. *saxosa* (rock sandwort), *Botrychium crenulatum* (scalloped moonwort), *Calochortus plummerae* (Plummer’s mariposa lily), *Lilium parryi* (lemon lily), and *Parnassia cirrata* var. *cirrata* (Fringed grass-of-fernassus).

There are also historic occurrences of the following sensitive species that may still be present in the area (although some locations are vague and may or may not be within the unit or the occurrence may have been extirpated): *Castilleja lasiorhyncha* (San Bernardino Mountains owl’s clover), *Gilia leptantha* ssp. *leptantha* (San Bernardino gilia), *Heuchera parishii* (Parish’s alumroot), and *Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *parishii* (Parish’s checkerblooom).

There are other known locations of many of these species in other areas of the Forest. There are no threatened or endangered plant species within this unit although there are modeled habitats for: *Castilleja cinerea* (ash-gray Indian paintbrush), *Poa atropurpurea* (San Bernardino bluegrass), and *Taraxacum californicum* (California taraxacum).

This area is near Whitewater canyon, a very important corridor for mid-large size mammals such as mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), black bear (*Ursus americana*), and coyote (*Canus latrans*) between the San Bernardino Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountain. Connectivity between these mountains is vital for animals to disperse and establish territories.

There are outstanding landscape features visible from some vantage points in this area: Little San Gorgonio Peak, Galena Peak, Wilshire Peak, Cedar Mountain, and Birch Mountain are special features. San Gorgonio Peak in the adjacent San Gorgonio Wilderness at 11,499 feet is the tallest mountain in southern California.

There are no existing or potential research natural areas. There are no Critical Biological Areas. There are no unique or specific scientific or educational opportunities. Class I National Ambient Air Quality Standards apply to the adjacent San Gorgonio Wilderness.

**Description of size and shape:** Raywood Flat B is 11,270 acres in size, more than the 5,000 acre size recommendation in the Wilderness Act. Portions of it could be a contiguous addition to the existing San Gorgonio Wilderness. The size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences in Raywood Flat B would be considered manageable but there would be administrative challenges as described above. The unit is mostly untrammeled by humans and retains substantial primeval character. The shape of the unit and juxtaposition to external influences pose minor to moderate challenges to wilderness resources.
Summary of the boundary conditions, needs, and management requirements:

Proposed boundary locations generally avoid conflicts with roads and other improvements; however there are some improvements within the unit. These boundaries could be readily and accurately described as they are located adjacent to roads, creeks and follow section lines, although the portions of boundary that follows the section lines would be moderately difficult to administer.

Approximately 1,939 acres within the Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area – Yucaipa Ridge sub-unit and 1,901 acres within the Raywood Flat B Inventoried Roadless Area – Mill Creek sub-unit for a total of 3,890 acres were classified as ‘Recommended Wilderness’ land use zone in the 2005 Forest Plan Revision.

Availability

The availability of potential wilderness areas is described using other resource potential. Pertinent quantitative and qualitative information including current use, outputs, trends, and potential future use and/or outputs for the applicable resources is summarized in this section.

Forest Plan Land Use Zone (acres):
- Backcountry (BC) - 222 acres,
- Backcountry Motorized Use Restricted (BCMUR)- 545 acres,
- Back Country Non-Motorized (BCNM)- 5,960 acres,
- Developed Area Interface (DAI)- 645 acres,
- Existing Wilderness- 8 acres,
- and Recommended Wilderness- 3,890 acres.

Recreation, including tourism:
No specific recreation visitation figures are available for Raywood Flat B. Major recreational opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, camping (primitive), nature viewing and hunting. There would be some effects on dispersed recreation uses. Mountain biking opportunities on a short portion (one quarter mile of dead-end trail) of Section 28 to Little San Gorgonio Peak would be forgone with wilderness designation.

Wildlife species, populations, and management needs:
Modeled habitat for mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) in the San Gorgonio River as well as Alger Creek and Falls Creek exists. Critical habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) exists. Important occupied habitat for California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) exists.

There are major management challenges in the riparian areas of this unit due to unauthorized vehicular incursions and illegal activities.

Water availability and use:
Planning for major FERC licensing project (that includes additional roads) is underway.

Livestock operations:
None.

Timber:
None.

Minerals:
Approximately eight acres have been withdrawn from mineral entry (San Gorgonio Wilderness). Some mine sites have been identified and include: Peg Leg 45 (mining claim status unknown); Southern California Sandstone and Mentone Sandstone (material sales site abandoned); Saint Patrick (Uranium prospect which includes two bulldozer cuts that are half a mile above Forest Falls. Access is difficult and a mine dump may be source of contaminants.); and Mill Creek Mine and Mill (Workings include a high wall in three large open cuts. There is an open adit about 18 feet long. Commodity is tungsten in limestone bedrock.).
Cultural resources: Only a small portion of Raywood Flat B has been surveyed for cultural resources. There are known historic properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register located in the area. There is a high likelihood that prehistoric properties are also present based on the topography and numerous sources of water.

Authorized and potential land uses: Approximately 174 acres of this unit contain special use authorizations as described above.

Management considerations including fire, insects and diseases, and presence of non-Federal lands: This unit lies within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) as follows: WUI – Defense Zone – 1,587 acres, WUI – Threat Zone – 8,963 acres, and WUI – Developed Area – 23 acres.

Some manageability factors include: There is an existing above-ground power line from Forest Falls that serves the radio tower on private land in Section 21 that also crosses National Forest System roadless area land. This structure is not within a recommended wilderness designation.

A small diversion dam exists in the extreme southwest corner of Section 28, Gillman Canyon. The proposed wilderness boundary excludes this structure.

There is a considerable amount of private land acreage within Raywood Flat B (a “checkerboard” pattern), which may add to the complexity of wilderness management and access and may also bring higher wildfire suppression costs. Fuel breaks and other fuels management projects are underway (Oak Glen) as well as understory prescribed burning (Angelus Oaks).

There are many parcels of private land and some access roads. The San Gorgonio River watershed is the source of drinking water for the city of Banning.

There has been some vegetative mortality in this area due to the recent drought. The southwest boundary of Raywood Flat B is relatively close to the growing community and urban interface of Oak Glen, and the north-central boundary is relatively close to the Forest Falls community.

Need

The following factors were considered in the process used in assessing the need for each potential wilderness area.

Location, size, and type of other existing wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area: San Gorgonio Wilderness, 56,722 acres of National Forest System and 37,980 acres of Bureau of Land Management lands (added in 1994 California Desert Protection Act of 1994), is located adjacent to this unit. Bighorn Mountain Wilderness, 39,195 acres of National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands (added in California Desert Protection Act of 1994), is located 15 miles to the north. Some additional wilderness designation would be useful and appropriate here.

Present visitor pressure on other existing wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation: There is moderate to heavy mixed day and overnight use in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. Inland Empire populations are increasing. The area is moderately accessible by vehicle from the Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire and San Diego metropolitan areas within two hours.

There were 85,100 recreation visits to all San Bernardino National Forest wilderness areas in FY 2009 (this and the following demographics are from the Forest National Visitor Use Monitoring
Demographics: 63% male, 37% female; 97% white race/ethnicity; 28% ages 50 – 59 and 8% under the age of 20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘hardly anyone there’, most (35%) visitors rated their stay in the wilderness as a ‘6’. About 10% reported a ‘7’ or above towards overcrowding. Most people reported being satisfied with the performance of the Forest Service during their wilderness visit. The average duration of a visit to a designated Forest wilderness was 6.8 hours; median (numeric value separating the higher half of a sample from the lower half) visit duration was 3.9 hours. This indicates mostly day (not overnight) use.

The extent to which non-wilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences: Some of the Front Country Ranger District non-wilderness lands encompass similar landscapes and opportunities. However the Raywood Flat B area is more distinct and unique.

The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena: There is a need to provide a sanctuary for California spotted owl.

An area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems: There is a high ability for Raywood B to provide for preservation. The California Chaparral Forest and Shrub Ecosystem Province makes up 0.3% of the total land area in the United States but is represented in 0.5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the lower 48 states as of 1998. That ratio has since grown. Therefore, this Province is well represented in the NWPS (Loomis and Echohawk 1999).