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SCHELL RESOURCE AREA

WILDERNESS

TECHNICAL REPORT

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WILDERNESS  
TECHNICAL REPORT

10 JULY 1982

REVISED 25 FEBRUARY 1983

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## PREFACE

In considering the criteria and quality standards listed in the Wilderness Study Policy, several points are applicable to all wilderness study areas. To avoid repetition, these are discussed in the preface.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERICS

#### Mandatory Characteristics

Several opportunities for recreation are present in all wilderness study areas. These are:

- 1) Hiking/backpacking
- 2) Sightseeing
- 3) Nature study
- 4) Bird watching
- 5) Photography
- 6) Camping
- 7) Picnicking
- 8) Rockhounding
- 9) Vegetative collecting
- 10) Hunting
  - a. Game hunting
  - b. Varmit hunting
- 11) Trapping
- 12) Rock scrambling, climbing
- 13) Horseback riding
- 14) Predator calling

Unless these are of better than average quality, or unless they contribute to an outstanding diversity of opportunities, no specific mention is made of them in the individual study area discussions.

#### Multiple Resource Benefits

In all study areas, several other resource benefits would result from wilderness designation. All of these are a consequence of preserving the areas in their natural condition. These are:

- 1) Watershed and Water Quality - Development of water sources would be severely limited by the Wilderness Management Policy, as would developments (other than mining) that would impact the watershed.
- 2) Air Quality - All designated wilderness will maintain Class 2 air quality classification.

3) Wildlife -

- (a) A controlled burn policy for wilderness area would enhance wildlife habitat by providing a diversity of vegetative successional stages.
- (b) Since Animal Damage Control programs are limited to removing only offending individuals, non-target animals such as the kit fox will not be killed.
- (c) Preserving the areas in their present natural state results in the preservation of habitats for most species. Seedings that would create monotypical habitat will be disallowed. Maintenance of the natural environment will also result in keeping disturbances of sight and sound to a minimum.
- (d) The use of pesticides, herbicides, and other poisons and pollutants will normally be prohibited. This will prevent adverse biological consequences that are often caused by introduction of these substances into the food chain.
- (e) Riparian areas are significant in east-central Nevada because of their scarcity, and because of the abundance of wildlife and vegetation they support. If stream piping is prevented, crucial nesting habitat will be preserved resulting in slight population increases in species dependent on riparian habitat, such as Saw-Whet Owls, Cooper's Hawk, Goshawk, Great Horn Owl and Screech Owl. Stream protection will also allow muskrat, ringtail, and weasel populations to stabilize or increase slightly.

4) Recreation and Visual Resources -

- (a) Designation would help protect the scenic quality of the areas because of the restrictive Wilderness Management Policy.
- (b) Designation would give legislative protection for important sites within the areas, such as caves, ponderosa pine forests, and raptor nesting areas.
- (c) Designation would help maintain areas in a natural condition, thereby preserving opportunities for backcountry recreation.
- (d) If pinyon-juniper areas are allowed to burn, the ungulate populations would increase, benefitting hunting and viewing opportunities. The increase would result from the burning of pinyon-juniper cover, and the resulting growth of pre-climax vegetation types, such as bitterbrush and serviceberry, that are desirable wildlife forage.



- 5) Cultural Resources - Wilderness designation will offer protection for archaeological resources - both known and potential - by limiting access. Wilderness users can, if properly educated, contribute information by reporting site locations where a survey has not taken place.
- 6) Forestry - Since the Wilderness Management Policy prohibits the cutting of trees (except in special circumstances), uncommon species such as white fir and ponderosa pine will be protected by wilderness designation.
- 7) Threatened and Endangered Species - No sensitive plant species have been located in any of the study areas, but based upon their identification in adjacent or nearby ranges, such plants almost certainly do exist in the areas. Designation will bring with it protection for these plants from development and resource production activities.

### Diversity

Only one designated wilderness area exists in Nevada, and only one exists in Utah. Within a 300 mile radius of Ely, by far the heaviest concentration of wilderness areas is in California. This would indicate that, using geographic distribution alone as a criterion, more wilderness should be designed in Nevada, especially eastern Nevada.

Other factors must be considered, though. One of these is the number of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) with a population of 100,000 or more within 5 hours driving time of the study areas. Reno is not within 5 hours driving time of any Schell Resource Area study area, nor is Salt Lake City. Las Vegas is within 5 hours of all Schell study areas except Granite Spring. It is the only SMSA within the designated range of any study area.

A large number (300+) of roadless areas under wilderness consideration are within 250 air miles of Las Vegas, but only 14 designated wilderness areas lie within this range, and only 4 of these are within a day's driving time of Las Vegas.

Use from Las Vegas residents will probably not increase greatly in any designated wilderness in the Schell Resource Area. (see table 1)

Another factor in considering diversity is the representation of ecosystems in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). All of the study areas in the Schell Resource Area lie in the Intermountain Sagebrush Province, and all are of four major types: juniper-pinyon woodland, Great Basin sagebrush, mixed conifer forest, and western ponderosa forest. Of these, the best-represented in the wilderness

system is the mixed conifer forest, with 573,424 acres under designation. The least-represented is the Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem, and six Schell study areas each have more than 10,000 acres of this type. (See Tables 2 and 3). This indicates that designation of any of these is desirable for balancing the ecosystem representation in the NWPS.

Juniper-pinyon woodland is also an under-represented ecosystem (43,168 acres in the NWPS). All of the Schell study areas are partially composed of this type (Schell R.A. total: 210,598 acres), and for this reason their designation would contribute to the ecosystem variety in the NWPS.

Two study area in the Schell Reourse Area (Weepah Spring and the Far South Egans) are partially composed of western ponderosa forest ecosystems. This type is under-represented in the NWPS, but is well represented in Administratively Endorsed areas.

Generally, designation of any Schell study areas as wilderness will contribute to the diversity of ecosystems in the NWPS.

#### CONCLUSION

Application of the diversity criterion to the Schell WSA's yields mixed results. Designation of these area is desirable based upon considerations of geographic distribution and ecosystem representation, but is not warranted by the number os SMSA'a within a day's driving time.

#### II. MANAGEABILITY

There are no generally applicable points under this criterion.

#### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Parts of 4 study areas have been identified by USGS as suitable for sodium leasing: Fortification Range, Far South Egans, Mount Grafton, and the White Rock Range.

Because of the great availability of alternate sites, this is a very slight conflict. The same is true of common saleable materials such as sand and gravel.

A USGS/BM mineral survey will be conducted for all study areas recommended as suitable.

Information on minerals and energy was collected from the following sources: Schell Resource Area Unit Resource Analysis (URA 3); Mineral Resource Inventory (MRI); Fugro-MX Study; Geology, Energy and Minerals (GEM) reports; and public comments.

Proximity to Population Centers

TABLE 1-A

A. Unit Number	Total Acres	Population Centers within One Day's Travel Time of WSA's	Statutory Wilderness Within One Day's Travel Time of Identified Population Centers					
		Names of Cities and States	BLM			Other Agency		
			State	No.	Acreege	State	No.	Acreege
NV-040-169	73,216	Las Vegas, Nevada *		none		AZ	1	47,762
NV-040-172	53,224					CA	3	79,921
NV-040-177	41,615							
NV-040-197	35,958							
NV-040-202	23,625							
NV-040-206	88,175							
NV-040-242	47,633							
NV-040-246	61,137							

\* All listed WSAs are within a 5 hour drive of Las Vegas

TABLE 1-B

B. Unit Number	Total Acres	Population Centers within One Day's Travel Time of WGA's	Wilderness Areas Endorsed by the President Within One Day's Travel Time of Identified Population Centers					
		Names of Cities and States	BLM			Other Agency		
			State	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage
NV-040-169	73,216	Las Vegas, Nevada *		none		AZ	1	2,510
NV-040-172	53,224					CA	3	1,948,700
NV-040-177	41,615					NV	7	1,878,445
NV-040-197	35,958					UT	6	241,696
NV-040-202	23,625							
NV-040-242	88,175							
NV-040-246	47,633							
NV-040-206	61,137							
*All listed WSAs are within a 5 hour drive of Las Vegas								

TABLE 1-C

C. Unit Number	Total Acres	Population Centers within One Day's Travel Time of WSA's	Other Study Areas Within One Day's Travel Time of Identified Population Centers					
		Names of Cities and States	BLM			Other Agency		
			State	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage
NV-040-169	73,216	Las Vegas, Nevada *	AZ	47	1,074,392	CA	3	223,900
NV-040-172	53,224		CA	108	4,907,144	NV	14	252,585
NV-040-177	41,615		NV	44	2,233,036			
NV-040-197	35,958		UT	11	136,417			
NV-040-202	23,625							
NV-040-206	88,175							
NV-040-242	47,633							
NV-040-246	61,137							
* All listed WSAs are within a 5 hour drive from Las Vegas								
** Of these units: 29 acres 2,6 M acres are suitable and 7 areas, 6,815 acres are still being studied								

TABLE 2  
ECOSYSTEMS BY MSA

<u>MSA</u>	<u>ECOSYSTEMS *</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Mount Grafton	Mixed Conifer Forest	18,304
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	40,269
	Great Basin Sagebrush	14,643
	Total for MSA	73,216
Far South Egans	Mixed Conifer Forest	18,628
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	18,628
	Great Basin Sagebrush	15,968
	Total for MSA	53,224
Fortification Range	Mixed Conifer Forest	4,162
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	8,323
	Great Basin Sagebrush	29,130
	Total for MSA	41,615
Table Mountain	Mixed Conifer Forest	7,192
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	25,170
	Great Basin Sagebrush	3,596
	Total for MSA	35,958
White Rock Range	Mixed Conifer Forest	3,544
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	20,081
	Total for MSA	23,625
Parsnip Peak	Mixed Conifer Forest	17,635
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	44,088
	Great Basin Sagebrush	26,452
	Total for MSA	88,175
Worthington Mountains	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	14,290
	Great Basin Sagebrush	33,342
	Total for MSA	47,632
Weepah Spring	Mixed Conifer Forest	4,575
	Juniper Pinyon Woodland	39,749
	Great Basin Sagebrush	16,813
	Total for MSA	61,137

\*All of the above ecosystems are under-represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System and would add to the diversity of the system.

TABLE 3-A  
Ecosystem/Landform Representation

A. Ecosystem/Landform		Existing Representations in Statutory Wilderness										
No.	Name	BLM Areas		Other Agency Areas			BLM Areas - Other States			Other Agency Areas		
		No. Areas	Acreage	Agency	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage
3130-21	Juniper/Pinyon Woodland	NONE		NONE			NONE			CA	3	43,168
3130-32	Great Basin Sagebrush	NONE		NONE			NONE			CA	2*	7,020
3130-34	Salt Brush-Greasewood	NONE		NONE			NONE			CA	2*	19,554
M2610-5	Mixed Conifer	NONE		NONE			NONE			CA	12*	573,424
3130-10	Western Ponderosa Forest	NONE		USFS	1	58,347	NONE			OR	2	27,709

\* John Muir, Domeland and Golden Trout triple counted

TABLE 3-B

B. Ecosystem/Landform		Representations in Wilderness Endorsed by President - Pending Before Congress										
No.	Name	BLM Areas		Other Agency Areas*			BLM Areas - Other States			Other Agency Areas*		
		No. Areas	Acreage	Agency	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage	State	No.	Acreage
3130-10	Western Ponderosa Forest	NONE		USFS	3	304,445		NONE		OR	3	16,414
				FWS	1	67,900				WA	1	2,143
3130-21	Juniper/Pinyon Woodland	NONE		USFS	1	60,000		NONE		CA	4	52,640
				NPS	1	35,000				UT	1	17,530
				FWS	1	383,800						
3130-32	Great Basin Sagebrush	NONE		USFS	1	20,000		NONE		CA	4	6,830
				FWS	1	611,180						
3130-34 (086 only)	Saltbrush-Greasewood	NONE		FWS	1	740		NONE		OR	1	30,000
M2610-5	Mixed Conifer Forest	NONE						NONE		CA	18	520,366



TABLE 3 - C

C. Ecosystem/Landform		Potential Sources of Representations						
No.	Name	BLM WSA's			Other Agency WSA's			
		District	No.	Acreage	Agency	Region, Park, Refuge	No.	Acreage
3130-21	Juniper/Pinyon Woodland	Elko, Nevada	3	166,525	USFS	5-California	11	433,584
		Winnemucca, Nevada	2	14,079	USFS	4-Intermountain (NV)	7	105,828
		Carson City, Nevada	7	353,958				
		Ely, Nevada	12	285,944				
		Las Vegas, Nevada	9	281,141				
		Battle Mountain, Nev	10	482,960				
		Bakersfield, Calif.	7	82,962				
		CDCA, California	12	243,502*				
		Salt Lake City, Utah	3	64,573				
		Cedar City, Utah	3	24,118				
		Richfield, Utah	6	150,535				
3130-21	Great Basin Sagebrush	Elko, Nevada	3	23,556	USFS	5-California (includes part of White Mountains)	12	140,430
		Winnemucca, Nevada	3	27,260				
		Carson City, Nevada	5	149,665	USFS	4-Intermountain	2	7,409
		Ely, Nevada	11	215,797				
		Las Vegas, Nevada	5	315,425				
		Battle Mountain, Nev	2	152,660				
		Bakersfield, Calif.	26	226,274				
		Coca, California	6	25,858*				
		Richfield, Utah	2	30,524				
3130-34	Saltbrush- Greasewood	Winnemucca, Nevada	4	147,342	USFS	5- California	2	2,876
		Carson City, Nevada	3	79,055	USFS	4- Intermountain (NV)	3	48,710
		Ely, Nevada	1	11,700				
		Burns, Oregon	13	403,035				
		Vale, Oregon	5	130,500				
		Lakeview, Oregon	1	15,520				
		Richfield, Utah	9	209,700				
		Cedar City, Utah	1	7,300				
		Boise, Idaho	3	75,549				

\* Only about 37% suitable

TABLE 3 - C

C. Ecosystem/Landform		Potential Sources of Representations						
No.	Name	BLM WSA's			Other Agency WSA's			
		District	No.	Acreage	Agency	Region, Park, Refuge	No.	Acreage
M2610-5	Mixed Conifer Forest	Ely, Nevada	9	138,182	USFS	4- Intermountain (NV)	1	4,600
		Bakersfield, Calif.	2	3,890	USFS	5- California	69	593,143
		Medford, Oregon	1	5,640				
3130-10	Western Ponderosa Forest	Ely, Nevada	1	4,575	USFS	4- Intermountain (NV)	5	182,966
		Richfield, Utah	1	6,891	USFS	5- California	2	30,449
					USFS	6- Pacific Northwest (OR)	1	20,000

Mineral potentials were given different classification titles in the various reports. In the Schell Wilderness EIS the categories were consolidated into High, Good and Speculative potentials. The following table shows how other classifications relate to the potentials used in the EIS.

TABLE 4

MINERAL POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATIONS USED IN THE EIS	OTHER MINERAL POTENTIALS DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT
HIGH	SUBECONOMIC PARAMARGINAL SUBMARGINAL
GOOD	HYPOTHETICAL
SPECULATIVE	SPECULATIVE

IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

A. Recreation will experience several negative impacts in all areas that become wilderness:

- 1) Designation will result in an increase in recreation use. This may result in crowding at destination points such as springs, streams, caves, mountain tops, and ridge lines.

- 2) Recreational use will be restricted by the prohibition of contests and competitions.
  - 3) Outfitters and guides will be under much closer scrutiny in a designated wilderness than outside, and will be required to file for Special Recreation Use Permits (SRUP), even though the requirement technically exists for all outfitter services on public lands. The increased paperwork necessitated by more intense management will have an adverse effect on the outfitters and guides when compared to present management.
  4. If hunting and trapping of predators are prohibited by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, opportunities for trapping and coyote hunting will be adversely effected.
- B. Ranching interests in wilderness areas may experience some adverse impacts if the operator is required to use horses for activities that had previously been performed by motorized vehicle.
- C. The forestry resource will be impacted in every study area. Green cutting will be prohibited, which narrows the range of management possibilities for the resource. Christmas tree cutting will be prohibited, as will be commercial pine nut gathering.
- D. The cultural resources program will experience some negative impacts from wilderness designation. Access to and development of cultural sites for educational purposes will not be allowed. Costs of conducting archaeological research may increase since new roads cannot be built, and laboratory and living quarters will have to be located outside of the wilderness areas. Sites will not normally be stabilized, and will be allowed to deteriorate under natural conditions.

Increased visitation associated with designation will bring primary and secondary impacts, especially since locations used by earlier inhabitants also tend to draw concentrated recreational use.

- E. The Schell MFP, Step I, proposed soil surface factor reduction for large parts of all but one (Weepah Spring) of the study areas. This sort of operation would not be permitted in wilderness areas.
- F. No significant adverse impacts will result to wild horses, air quality, or soil quality.
- V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUES

Increasing pressure is being placed on the land in the Ely District by scores of oil and gas exploration companies. So far, this pressure has been concentrated on several valley areas, but is also extending into the bench lands and lower mountains. The impacts of individual exploratory operations range from almost none to severe. The cumulative impacts of many such operations in one area can profoundly affect the naturalness of the area.

This general trend of increasing pressure is almost certain to continue, with temporary anomalies due to fluctuations in oil prices and supplies. Nondesignation of wilderness study areas would open these lands to normal exploratory practices, which could damage the mandatory wilderness characteristics of naturalness. The damage would be long lasting in the dry climate of east central Nevada.

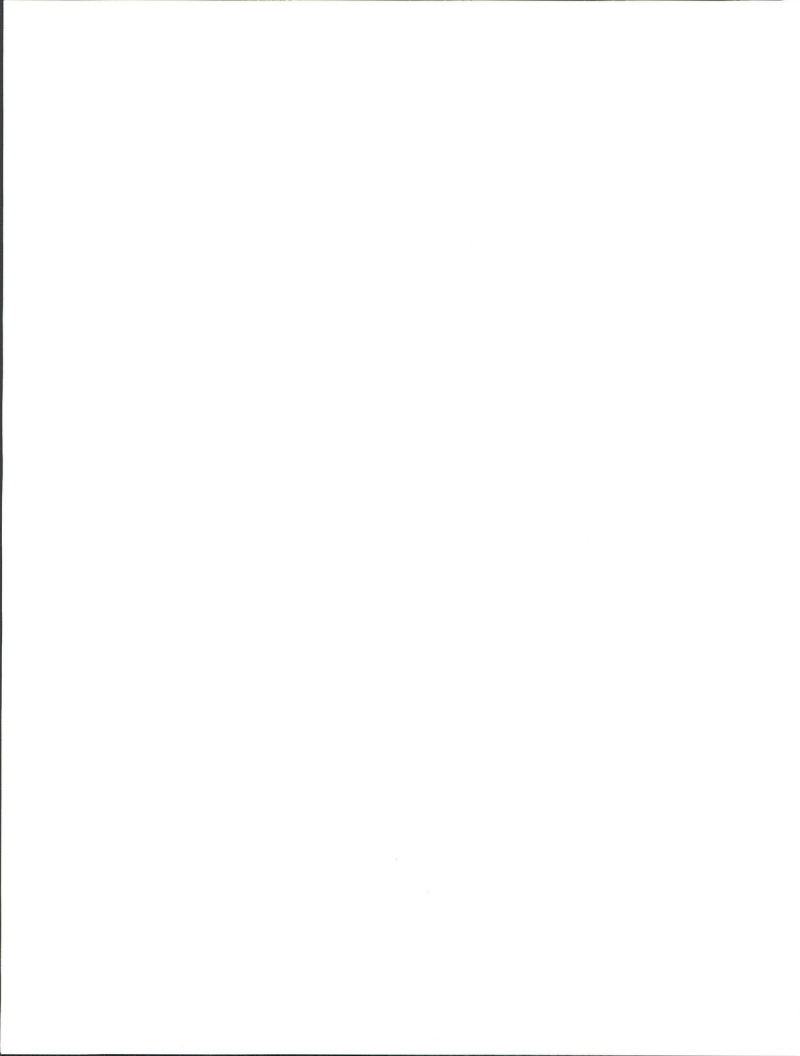
Exploration may culminate with drilling. Drilling can obviously affect naturalness, but can also impact opportunities for solitude; the quality of opportunities for primitive recreation, and features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value which serve as special wilderness features. Drilling can just as logically occur in mountains as in valleys, except that the operator must pay the additional road-building costs associated with mountain drilling.

Nondesignation would leave wilderness study areas open to mineral location, which could progress to full-scale mining. The early stages of mining under 43 CFR 3809 would have impacts very similar to those resulting from drilling, and could ultimately create far greater impacts.

The impacts on naturalness caused by energy and mineral exploration and extraction are usually subtle and cumulative. This explains the reaction of many publics who question the need for wilderness designation. Impacts to the land are generally unnoticeable to the casual observer because of their accretive nature, and this leads to the assumption that the lands are self-protecting. They are not.

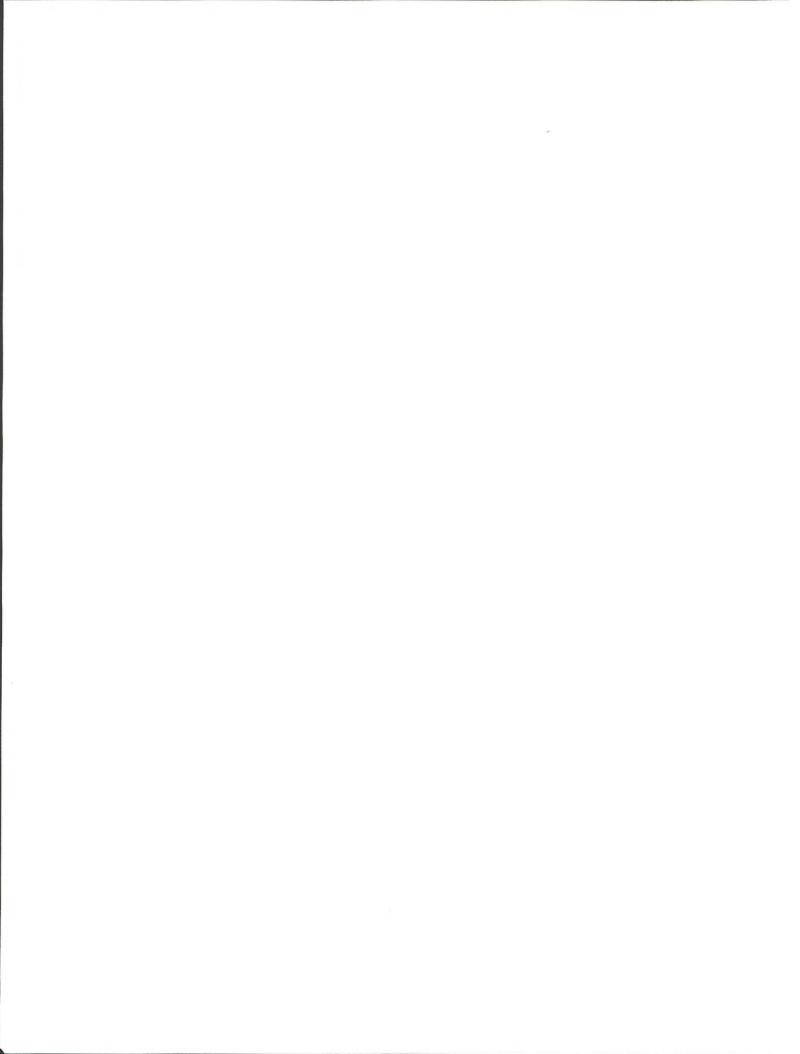
The Schell MFP, Step 2, proposes soil surface factor reductions for parts of all but one (Weepah Spring) study areas. This sort of operation can severely impair wilderness characteristics. The likelihood of these projects is very low because of fiscal constraints.

If not designated as wilderness, all study areas, with the possible exception of the Worthington Mountains, would be made available for green wood and Christmas tree cutting. The impacts from these activities would vary, depending on frequency and intensity of harvest. Impacts would likely be minor, as evidenced by the fact that several of the study areas have historically experienced exactly this type of impact.



**WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

**ANALYSIS**





## Mount Grafton

The Mount Grafton Wilderness Study Area is located about 50 miles south of Ely, in the Schell Creek Range. This WSA contains Mount Grafton (elevation 10,990 feet) which the highest peak on BLM administered land in the State of Nevada. Its topography is mainly mountainous, but includes a large amount of bench land as well. Uses of the area include grazing, mining, and recreation.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

Many range improvements, mining impacts, and cherrystemmed roads intrude into and abut the Mount Grafton study area on all sides. Nearly all of these have been technically "eliminated" from the area, but remain to influence one's perception of the naturalness of the landscape. The impact of these imprints of man varies, depending on one's location. Standing on the ridge line, the "primeval character" of the land appears virtually undisturbed. On the benches and in the lower hills and mountains, man's imprints appear as very localized impacts. Only when outside of the area looking in can one perceive any cumulative effect.

The intrusions into the area -- whether cherrystemmed out or not -- are so many that it is difficult to say where they have the most impact on naturalness. The north end is heavily intruded, most noticeable by the Deer Track Spring road and associated water developments. The Robber's Roost Seeding, the Cattle Camp Management Fence, and the Spring Valley - South Steptoe Division Fence also are significant intrusions.

The east side is heavily impacted by cherrystemmed roads. Among these are the North Creek road and roads to Sheep Creek Spring and Mill Creek Spring. Mining impacts are present at the ends of these latter two roads. An old mill site is located near Mill Creek Spring, and switchback roads and excavated areas which are present at both springs create obvious visual impacts. Water diversion ditches from both springs also impact the landscape. Other intrusions are too numerous to list. See the attached map.

The south end of the study area has been highly impacted by mining activity. Two extensive switchback roads that range above 9,000 feet form the southern boundary.. Considerable excavation has been done on the saddle in Sec. 19 of T9N, R65E. An old mine is located in Sec. 26 of T9N, R64E.

The west side of the area has many roads and ways cherrystemmed out. The lower elevations are crisscrossed by a network of bladed paths, apparently fire lines, which are revegetating.

Outside sights and sounds that impact the area include Highway 93 to the east, a paved road which links Ely with Pioche, Caliente, and Las Vegas. Car and truck traffic can be seen but not heard from the ridge. Considerable vegetative and topographic screening prevent the highway from being obvious at lower elevations.

Most of the fence lines and other range improvements require periodic maintenance. Motorized access will sometimes be necessary. Maintenance periods range from 1 to 5 years. Access by vehicles and use of motorized equipment will contribute as outside sights and sounds to the impacts on naturalness.

Other sights and sounds - from both inside and outside - will come from mining activity. The Lake Valley claim group and Deer Trail claim group are especially likely to experience considerable development. The claims are pre-FLPMA claims and carry grandfathered uses and, possibly, valid existing rights.

#### CONCLUSION

The imprints of man are most apparent on the benches of the area. Very few imprints exist in the mountains and the imprints located below on the benches are well screened by topography and vegetation so that the user who is located in the mountains perceives the area to be in a natural condition. Only the potential "sight and sound" impacts of future mining operations will threaten this naturalness.

#### Outstanding Opportunities:

The size of the Mount Grafton wilderness study area, listed at 67,700 acres during the inventory, has recently been remeasured at 73,500 acres. Topographic screening is very good. The south end is a single ridge line with a peak elevation of 10,900 feet. Many side canyons of considerable size indent the ridge on both sides. The north end is lower but still rugged with more breadth than the south end.

Vegetative screening is also excellent. Vegetation varies greatly in density from very dense to large open areas. The user will easily find many secluded spots, if he avoids the high southern ridge line where use will be concentrated. The combination of these characteristics provides for outstanding opportunities for solitude. These are not impaired by any outside sights and sounds save for mining activities. These activities are presently minimal but could become significant.

A good diversity of recreational opportunities are present in the area. Nature study can be done at many levels: wildlife is abundant and includes elk, deer, raptors, and mountain lions; the flora is diverse, with bristlecone pine, white fir, limber pine, black locust, aspen, pinyon, juniper, columbine, and other wild flowers; the geology presents a

scenic view, and some interesting characteristics, such as a large quartz deposit on the ridge. Fishing of fair quality is available in North Creek. Hunting is good and varied. Game species include deer, blue grouse, and mountain lion. Hiking is of very good quality because of the diverse terrain, the scenic surroundings, and the good access, especially to the ridge from Patterson Pass. Backpack camping is fairly difficult because of the terrain, but is enhanced by the presence of several springs. Horseback riding opportunities of good quality are available on the benches, especially on the east where there are high, large, grassy meadows. Current recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5, (see page 22).

#### CONCLUSION

Opportunities for recreation are outstanding because of their diversity. The quality of these range from fair (backpack camping) to excellent (hiking, nature study). Opportunities for solitude are also outstanding because of a combination of factors.

#### Special Features:

The Mount Grafton study area has many special features. The North Creek area is one of these. Fed by many small seeps, its perennial waters support a large riparian environment that includes the black locusts and several bird species (including owls, hummingbirds).

Two designated scenic areas are located in the study area - the Mount Grafton and the North Creek scenic areas. Part of the appeal of these is the bright fall color of the the aspen stands. The scenic quality of the WSA has been rated as "A" and "B" in the Visual Resource Management (VRM) scenic quality analysis.

Bristlecone pines occur in the classic, gnarled configuration on and near the ridge south of Mount Grafton.

Elk may periodically be seen on the north end of the area.

Many raptors nest in the area.

Archaeological potential is largely unknown, but is suspected to be high.

#### CONCLUSION

Many supplemental values are present in the study area. None have a national significance, but at least two (North Creek and the bristlecones) are of interest to a large local and some non-local publics.

#### Multiple Resource Benefits:

Only the standard list of other resource benefits will result if the

TABLE 5

## ESTIMATED RECREATION VISITS PER YEAR, BY ACTIVITY

	MOUNT GRAFTON	FAR SOUTH EGANS	FORTIFICATION RANGE	TABLE MOUNTAIN	WHITE ROCK RANGE	PARSNIP PEAK	WORTHINGTON MOUNTAINS	WEEPAH SPRING	TOTAL
Fishing	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Spelunking	0	150	0	0	0	0	100	0	250
Hiking, Mtn. Climbing Backpacking	40	10	20	20	10	20	20	10	150
Camping	200	10	10	20	10	50	50	10	360
Trapping	150	200	125	150	75	250	100	150	1200
Picnicking	40	10	10	10	10	20	0	10	100
Predator calling	75	100	60	75	35	125	50	75	595
Vegetative Collecting	50	20	30	5	5	40	0	0	150
Deer Hunting	250	150	15	25	10	70	10	50	580
Elk Hunting	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Antelope Hunting	0	0	15	0	0	5	0	0	20
Dove Hunting	100	50	30	0	0	50	40	20	290
Cottontail Hunting	100	30	30	20	10	50	0	20	260
Sage Grouse Hunting	50	30	0	10	0	10	0	10	110
ORV-use	10	5	5	20	0	5	30	0	75
Horseback Riding	30	15	10	10	5	30	0	5	105



Mount Grafton study area is designated. These benefits result from the maintaining of present, undisturbed conditions, and would accrue to wildlife, watershed, air quality, VRM, recreation, and forestry.

## II. MANAGEABILITY

The Mount Grafton study area would be managed to provide both opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude if it were designated as wilderness. Emphasis would be placed on opportunities for recreation on the ridge line south of Mount Grafton, where use would be concentrated. Opportunities for solitude would be stressed for the more diverse area north of Mount Grafton.

Two historic mining districts extend into the area. Rich silver ore was found in the Patterson District in 1869, but it was shallow and short-lived. The Geyser District includes a good portion of the eastern half of the study area where two mines are located. The Deer Trail Mine recorded production of tungsten ore in 1956, and a subeconomic vein running 400 feet long and 1-3 feet wide is known to remain. The Geyser mine apparently has produced silver ore because the ruins of a tramway and a mill site remain.

Mining in these historic districts is a grandfathered use and may carry valid existing rights. Limited development is occurring on them now and will likely continue (at a greater pace) in the future. For this reason, management of these portions of the area as wilderness will be impossible.

There are several mining claims elsewhere in the study area. Development of these is not as certain as for those with existing mines.

Ten oil and gas leases are located on the fringes of the area on the west and on the southeast corner. The bench areas have some potential for energy because of the geologic similarities between Railroad Valley and Cave and Northern Lake Valleys. Potential for the mountain areas is much lower, so that the likelihood of drilling in the mountains is low.

Many cherrystemmed roads and ways intrude into the area. The access provided by these will cause manageability problems with off-road vehicle use and with collection of forest products by motorized tools. Closure of these vehicle routes is impractical in most cases. The east side of the area is especially impacted. More than 10 significant roads and ways lead from highway 93 up into the high bench land. Closure of these is impossible for several reasons. Some carry valid existing rights and grandfathered uses associated with mining; others have rights and uses associated with grazing; most are impacts that are too severe to consider rehabilitation; and obstacles on any of them could and would be circumvented by users.

The west side has several cherrystemmed routes, and the same problems attend them as those on the east.

From the north, a road runs to Deer Track Spring. Rehabilitation of the road would be impossible because of the valid rights attached, but use limitation might be possible, and would be desirable so as to limit off-road use and wood gathering. It would also improve opportunities for solitude by limiting motor sounds.

The North Creek Area presently receives high use and would likely receive even greater use with wilderness designation. Management to provide opportunities for solitude would be impossible along the creek and in the draw above the creek. The area could be managed to preserve opportunities for recreation, but certain measures to control use might be necessary, such as construction of a hiking trail.

Some private land is located on the lower portions of the west side. Because these inholdings are located so close to the boundary, the most effective means of dealing with them is to draw the boundary around them.

Some outside sights and sounds can be seen and heard from within the area. Highway 93 can be seen from the ridge, but the impact is so insignificant that there is no management concern. Sounds of mining operations will be heard some distance away, and minimal management control is available to mitigate these.

Four major fence lines intrude into the area (T9N, R65E, Secs. 1-4; T10N, R64E, Secs. 16-18; T11N, R64E, Secs. 5, 8, 9, 16, 19-21; T11N, R65E, Secs. 18, 19, 30). Maintenance on these will be periodically required, and may at times require vehicular access.

#### CONCLUSION

The Mount Grafton study area has many manageability problems, the main one being mineral potential and cherrystemmed roads and ways.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leaseable Minerals - Ten oil and gas leases cover the lower slopes on the west part of the WSA. Portions of two leases come into the low slopes on the southeast side. The lower slopes along the south of the unit have the highest potential for oil and gas development. Cave Valley and northern Lake Valley have geology similar to Railroad Valley, a known oil producing area. These valleys lie just south of the WSA. The potential for the mountainous portions is much lower than in the valleys. There are no Known Geothermal Resource Areas or geothermal leases in or near the unit. There are warm springs along the southeast boundary. The Geyser Ranch warm springs are only about 65-70°F. Development potential is low.

An area identified by the USCS as having potential for sodium leasing covers about a square mile in the southeast corner of the unit. There are currently no sodium leases in or near the WSA. The conflict is minimal however, since there are numerous better quality areas outside of WSAs within the planning area.

**Saleable Minerals** - There are no saleable minerals sites within the WSA.

**Locateable Minerals** - The central and southern portions of the unit are within a speculative mineral area identified during the Schell URA 3 and 4. Known deposits of silver and tungsten exist around the Deer Trail Mine in T10N, R65E, Sec. 30 & 31 and the Geyser Mine in T9N, R65E, Secs. 5 and 8. Deposits also exist in T9N, R65E, Sec. 30 and T9N, R64E, Sec. 24. There is no known current production but production has taken place at the Deer Trail and Geyser Mine. Ore assays up to 0.9% WO<sub>3</sub> were reported from the Geyser Mine. Most of the mining claims are located along the known deposits mentioned above which were identified as sub-marginal in the URA 3 and 4. Most of the eastern portion of the WSA falls within the Geyser Ranch Mining District. If the market improves for silver and tungsten more mining activity will take place. The mineral conflict in the southeast part of the WSA is significant.

The Fugro report shows about 1,000 acres on the east bench with "speculative" mineral potential; about 1,000 acres in Patterson Pass with "good potential; and about 500 acres on the west bench with "speculative" potential. The rest of the area is shown to have "low" potential. Oil and gas potential in the area was identified as "low" except for about 1,500 acres on the southeast bench with "high" potential, and most of the east bench with "good" potential. (see map on page 28).

#### CONCLUSION

There is an identified mineral resource in the study area, but the economic significance of known deposits is low. There is some potential for discovery of new deposits especially in the southern part of the area. Oil and gas potential poses only a minor conflict.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

##### Range:

Present grazing quality in the WSA is poor. Most of the area is mountainous and forested. Three allotments cover the unit: Geyser Ranch on the east, Cattle Camp/Cave Valley on the northwest, and Cave Valley Ranch on the southwest. Only cattle are grazed.

Future quality is expected to remain the same. The quality could increase by running sheep instead of cattle.



The potential exists for spring developments and pipelines. A water catchment southeast of Mt. Grafton Peak would open up an area otherwise unsuitable for cattle. Presently no vegetative treatments are proposed but a potential exists for some on the lower slopes.

If the area were designated wilderness, water developments would be limited to those which would protect the resource values. Vegetative treatments would not be allowed but a wilderness let-burn policy might help mitigate their prohibition.

#### Forestry:

The Mount Grafton study area includes 3.5 percent of the Schell Resource Area base forest resources. It is within 50 road miles of Ely by highway 93, and closer on the northwest side by a good county road. Ely residents use the area for part of their supply of fire wood, Christmas trees, and posts. The area is within the demand region of both Salt Lake City and Las Vegas Christmas tree cutters, and commercial cutting has occurred in the past. If the area is designated as wilderness, the short term effects on fuelwood will be minimal, but significant impacts will result for the Christmas tree industry, especially in the long run. The economic impacts would not be felt much by the local economy as most cutters are from Las Vegas and Salt Lake City.

#### Wildlife:

Work on North and Geyser Creek for fisheries by NDOW might be hampered. Some standard stream improvement structures might not be allowed.

#### Lands:

There are six parcels of private land along the boundary. The following parcels are surrounded by the WSA: (total = 240 acres)

T9N, R65E	Sec. 4 Lot 1	39.9 acres
T9N, R64E	Sec. 4 Lot 2	39.98 acres
T10N, R64E	Sec. 34 E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80 acres
T10N, R64E	Sec. 27 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	40 acres
T10N, R64E	Sec. 10 SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	40 acres

One private parcel at Robbers Roost Spring, T11N, R64E, Sec. 33, NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  is cherrystemmed out.

#### Recreation:

Designation would cause further concentration of use at North Creek.

#### CONCLUSION

The only impacts of significance will be to the supply of forest products available to the local population and, especially, to Salt Lake City and

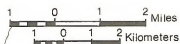
R.64 E.









R.65 E.

T.11 N.

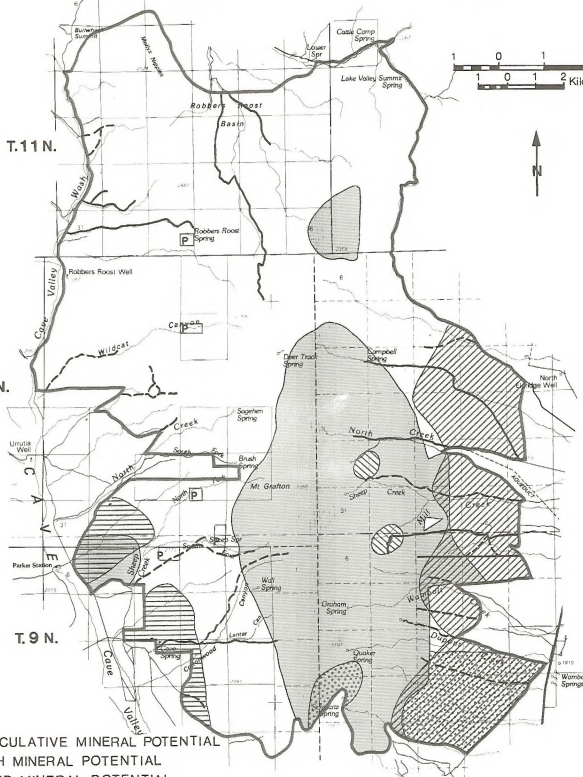
T.10 N.

T.9 N.



-  SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  HIGH MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  GOOD MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  HIGH OIL/GAS POTENTIAL
-  GOOD OIL/GAS POTENTIAL
-  ROADS
-  NOTICEABLE WAYS
-  PRIVATE LAND

## MINERAL POTENTIAL MT. GRAFTON NV-040-169



Las Vegas Christmas tree cutters. Impacts of much less significance will result to wildlife and grazing.

V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

MFP

A soil surface factor reduction is proposed for the bench land on the southeast side, and on the northeast corner.

A speculative mineral area has been identified for the entire eastern side of the mountains. Exploration and mining have occurred at several sites in the area, with ongoing operations at some of these. Because of its history and the administrative designation, this study area would have a better chance of experiencing impacts from mineral operations than most other study areas. The degree of these impacts cannot be foreseen.

A hiking/backpacking trail has been recommended from the upper end of North Creek to the top of Mount Grafton. There is very little chance that the trail will actually be built. Impacts resulting from its construction would be minimal.

General:

Grazing occurs over most of the study area. No range improvements have been recommended in MFP-2 and there is no pressure for such improvements from the allottees; but certain areas in the southeast part of the area, currently ungrazed because of the unavailability of water, could be opened up with construction of a water catchment. Small vegetative treatments would also be possible on the lower slopes. Because there is no demand for these and because they would be limited to the lower elevations, the impacts to wilderness characteristics would be small.

CONCLUSION

In the event of nondesignation, the wilderness characteristics of the Mount Grafton study area would probably be affected only by mineral exploration and extraction. The significance of the impacts cannot be predicted accurately. Existing impacts, however, include two major switchback roads (boundary roads) that extend from Patterson Pass to the ridge line above 9,000 feet.

**Far South Egans**

The Far South Egans wilderness study area is located across highway 318 from the Wayne Kirch Wildlife Management Area, and extends from Shingle Pass south to Trough Spring Canyon. It is a very rugged, mountainous area with a fringe

of bench land along most of its perimeter. Present economic uses are limited to grazing along the fringe. Historic uses have included logging in the north and on the east.

## I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

### Naturalness:

The mountainous part of the study area is in a nearly pristine condition. Exceptions are the logging areas on the north end and on the east in Sawmill Canyon. Impacts from these activities have largely rehabilitated themselves, and are now considered supplemental values rather than impairments to naturalness. Logging played an important historical role in the development of Lincoln County, and few traces of this aspect of the County's history remain. Remnants include an old mill site in Sawmill Canyon, drag trails (nearly unnoticeable), and stumps.

The most unnatural portion of the area is the west bench, where several cherrystemmed roads and ways ascend toward the mountains. Two borrow pits are located just off of highway 318.

Outside sights that may influence one's preception of the naturalness of the area include highway 318 and the Shingle Pass Road. These can be seen from the mountain tops. Sounds from the roads would not be heard by the visitor when he is more than two miles distant from them.

There are several oil and gas leases in the study area. Their development and resultant impairment of the naturalness of the area are most unlikely.

No mining claims occur in the study area.

### CONCLUSION

Except for the west bench, the Far South Egans study area is in an unusually natural condition.

### OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES:

The size of the area is 53,700 acres, and the configuration is good, with very few cherrystemmed roads. Topographic screening is excellent in the mountains, as is vegetative screening. Thick tree cover, broad mountains and large, irregular rock outcrops provide many secluded spots. The combination of these characteristics provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. Difficult access will limit use, increasing the likelihood of a solitary experience.

Several noteworthy opportunities for recreation are presented in the study area. Extensive hiking can be done throughout the area, and the high scenic quality of the area and several destination points contribute to its quality. The destination points include the logged areas, the remains of the sawmill, the ponderosa-bristlecone pine community above Sawmill Canyon, and Whipple Cave.

Whipple Cave is an extensive limestone cave that offers outstanding opportunities for spelunking. A difficult entry way, several unusual cave formations, and a voluminous main passage with massive breakdown characterize the cave. One other cave is known to exist nearby in the area.

Deer hunting of fair quality is available in the area.

Nature study opportunities are present in the area. The bristlecone and ponderosa pine are of interest because of their relative scarcity, the fact that they are intermingled, and because the bristlecone occur at a very low elevation. Deer can be viewed in this mixed forest and elsewhere in the area. Current recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22).

#### CONCLUSION

Opportunities for both solitude and for primitive recreation are outstanding. The solitude is due to screening, size, and configuration. The opportunities for recreation are due to the quality of spelunking in Whipple Cave.

#### Special Features:

A large, mixed stand of ponderosa and bristlecone pine is located above and to the west of Sawmill Canyon. These trees are interesting for several reasons. The ponderosa a relic population from earlier climatological conditions. Members of the bristlecone species are well known as the oldest living things on earth, and attract research and general interest. The occurrence of the two species together is unusual. The elevation at which these bristlecone grow is the lowest known occurrence in the Ely District.

Sometime between 1900 and 1930, this area was logged extensively. Two sawmill sites are within the area. The one in Sawmill Canyon is the more intact, with an older boiler still remaining. These are imprints of man that are of historical and educational interest.

Whipple Cave is a geologic feature that serves as a supplemental value. It is an extensive cave in good condition, with many formations formed by solutioning. The cave is still active, and is of scientific and educational interest. One other cave is known to exist in the area.

Portions of the area - especially canyons on the west side - are highly scenic.

Raptors nest in many parts of the area. The forested east bench provides nesting habitat for ferruginous hawks, and also supports sage grouse strutting grounds. Winter range for elk is located throughout the area. Mule deer summer range exists at the higher elevations.

## CONCLUSION

Many special features are present in the area. The most important of these are the ponderosa-bristlecone pine community, Whipple Cave, and the sawmill in Sawmill Canyon.

### Multiple Resource Benefits:

Wildlife would benefit from designation in that the area has habitat suitable for reintroduction of bighorn sheep. Wilderness designation would preserve this habitat and habitat for ferruginous hawks. Benefits to other resources are the general ones mentioned previously resulting from maintaining the area in its natural, pristine condition.

## II. MANAGEABILITY

The basic thrust of management for the Far South Egans study area, if it becomes wilderness, will be to provide opportunities for both primitive recreation and solitude. Few problems from high or concentrated use can be expected in successfully managing the area for these purposes. The area is remote from large population centers, and it lacks the features which traditionally attract large numbers of wilderness users, such as lakes, streams, and open, grassy meadows.

One problem which will arise is the concentration of visitors in the Whipple Cave area. Present use is estimated at 150 visits per year, and this would increase with wilderness designation. This area, which represents a fraction of a percentage of the study area, cannot be managed to provide opportunities for solitude. It may also require "minimum tool" facilities to protect the resource from deterioration by overuse.

Whipple Cave poses a special hazard to visitors because of its 60-foot vertical entrance. Wilderness designation may bring more attention and less experienced spelunkers to the cave. For both ethical and liability reasons, the wilderness management plan will have to deal with this problem.

Other special features of the area may also need special management that is not necessarily consistent with maximizing opportunities for recreation and solitude. The portions of the area where ponderosa pines grow may require management to ensure perpetuation of the stands. This could entail controlled burns, which would conflict with recreational use for short periods of time.

The Sawmill Canyon sawmill is of concern because of its special historical value. Measures to limit or educate users might be desirable.

The west side of the study area is sloping, sagebrush-covered bench land. Several roads and ways intrude into this part of the area. Most of these are bladed and have obvious berms, but several are unusable and are revegetating. Closure of one of these is effected by construction of highway 318 (AZ-8A), and another has been reseeded at its beginning to discourage use (AZ-7). The others receive various amounts of use. (See supplementary file, road/way analysis forms).

A few other cherrystemmed roads intrude into the area but closure would be impossible because of the terrain. They pose minimal problems for manageability.

A small fringe of easily accessible land surrounds the study area. There may be problems with off-road travel across this land.

There are no recorded mining claims within the study area. There are 35 oil and gas leases that cover all but the most mountainous areas. The geology of Cave Valley on the east of the area and of White River Valley in the west is similar to Railroad Valley, where oil has been produced.

No private or state lands are held in or adjacent to the study area. There are several material sites along the west boundary. The disturbed portions of these sites have been cherrystemmed, but the sites could be expanded so long as the expansion is confined within the original grant.

#### CONCLUSION

Few problems exist for managing the Far South Egans study area as wilderness. The two main problems are the cherrystems on the west side of the area, and the oil and gas leases over most of the area. There is some chance of oil and gas activity, but oil and gas potential is "low" except on the east and west fringes, where it is "good" according to Fugro (Refer to minerals conflict section).

#### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leasable Minerals - About 35 oil and gas leases cover all but the most mountainous portion of the WSA. Cave Valley on the east of the WSA and White River Valley on the west have geology similar to Railroad Valley, a known oil producing area. Several holes have been drilled just outside of the WSA but most have been dry. One well about 10 miles west had some shows. Potential in the WSA is generally low, with some potential in the beach areas.

There are no KGRAs or geothermal leases in or near the WSA. The geothermal potential is insignificant in most of the area, but is fairly good in a small zone on the southwest corner near Butterfield Spring.

Portions of Cave Valley and White River Valley have been identified by USCS as having potential for sodium leasing. The identified area in

Cave Valley abuts the WSA boundary but is several miles away from the western boundary in White River Valley. There are currently no sodium leases in or near the WSA. The conflict is minimal since there are numerous, better-quality areas outside of the WSA, for example in Utah near Salt Lake City and near Fallon, Nevada. Other areas are located in Louisiana, New Mexico, and California.

Saleable Minerals - There are no saleable mineral sites in the WSA but there are several along the west side. They will not extend into the WSA. Sand and gravel of good quality are probably present on the east and west benches.

Locatable Minerals - There are no recorded mining claims within the WSA. No areas were identified as having mineral potential the URA, the Fugro report, or the GEM Survey. The mineral conflicts with this area are minimal.

The Fugro report shows that the fringes of the area in White River and Cave Valleys have "good" potential for oil and gas. The rest of the area is shown to have "low" potential. The GEM Survey confirms this assessment. (see map on page 37).

#### CONCLUSION

Some potential for oil and gas exists on the lower elevations of the study area. Potential for locatable minerals is low. Overall conflict with energy and mineral resources is low.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

##### Range:

Present grazing quality is poor due to steep slopes and predominant forest. Fifteen square miles of sagebrush on the lower east and west slopes have higher grazing value. Two allotments, Shingle Pass and Sunnyside, cover the WSA. Unelco, Inc. is the livestock operator. Cattle graze yearlong.

The future quality of grazing in the area will probably remain the same.

Because of rough terrain there is only a slight chance that a proposed fence would be built along the resource boundary crossing the WSA. The same is true for a fence down the South Egan Range ridge. Perhaps 15 square miles along the lower slopes could be vegetatively treated. A spring could be developed and pipeline constructed on the west slope to open the area to more grazing. These potential improvements were recommended in the Schell MFP 2.

If the area were designated wilderness the vegetative treatment would probably not be allowed. However, a let burn wilderness management policy might help mitigate this prohibition. Unless the fences were necessary to protect resource values they also would not be allowed. The likelihood



of either the treatments or the fences being built even without wilderness is low. The spring development and pipeline construction could occur if it would benefit the resource values.

Forestry:

The forest resources of the study area represent 1.9 percent of the total in the Schell Resource Area. In the short term, wilderness designation would have minimal impact on the supply of woodland products available to meet current demand. With the exception of cherrystems in the north-east portion of the area, access to manageable acres requires ORV use. In the long term, demand for wood products from distant population centers may overwhelm their local supply and extend to areas such as the Ely District.

Wildlife:

Efforts to establish deer guzzlers in the WSA may be complicated.

Lands:

No private land exists adjacent to or within the WSA. There are several material sites along the boundary. On the west side there are two landing strips.

Recreation:

Designation would call attention to Whipple Cave, resulting in more crowding and vandalism.

CONCLUSION

No major conflicts exist between wilderness designation and management for resources in the study area.

V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUES

MFP

Several MFP-2 recommendations have been made for range improvements in this study area. A fence line would bisect the area along its width, and would also run from this line south to the tip of the area. Most of this fence would be in very rugged terrain, and the chances of its ever being constructed are virtually nonexistent. Two vegetative treatments are proposed, one on the east bench and one on the west bench, and a pipeline is proposed for the west side of the range. The likelihood of their eventual implementation is fairly good in the long term. The impact of the vegetative treatments on wilderness values would be low because of their location on the lower open areas. The impact of the pipeline would be greater due to its location in the higher country.

General:

A silvicultural treatment of the ponderosa pine in the area might be performed some time in the future. This would likely be a controlled burn

and soil scarification. Impacts to wilderness values could be significant if road access were necessary. The chances of this treatment occurring are slight.

It is unlikely that grazing would be increased or that new improvements would be made to the range if the area were not designated as wilderness.

About two-thirds of the area is covered by oil and gas leases, which indicates a fair interest in the energy potential of the area. Exploration work will be done in the area if it is not designated. Impacts to wilderness values would probably be limited to the bench lands.

Mining impacts to the area in the foreseeable future will be minimal. Little interest has been expressed in the area by claimants.

Several material sites are located on the west boundary of the area, and if it is not designated as wilderness, more of these may be granted to the State of Nevada.

#### CONCLUSION

Very little would happen to the wilderness characteristics of the Far South Egans study area if not designated as wilderness, with the exception of oil and gas exploration impacts on the bench lands.

R.63E.

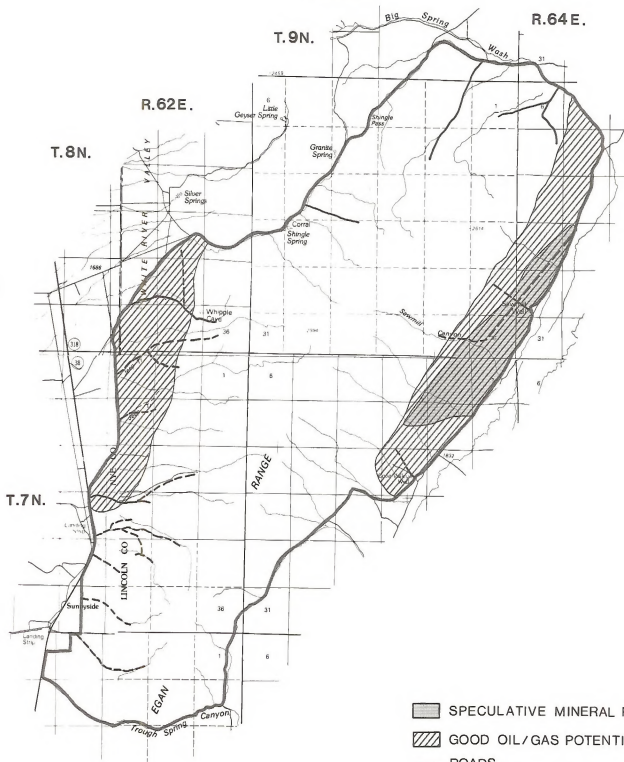
T.9N.

R.64E.

R.62E.

T.8N.

T.7N.



■ SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL

▨ GOOD OIL/GAS POTENTIAL

— ROADS

- - - NOTICEABLE WAYS

1 0 1 2 Miles  
1 0 1 2 Kilometers



**MINERAL POTENTIAL**  
**FAR SOUTH EGANS NV-040-172**

## Fortification Range

The Fortification Range study area is a single ridgeline mountain range and associated bench and valley areas. The western 1/3 and southern 1/5 of the study area is valley bottom and rolling hills which offer few recreation or solitude opportunities. The remainder of the WSA is a single north-south trending ridgeline which blends into more dissected tree covered hills in the southern portion of the range. In the north end, the ridge is bifurcated, with the more prominent fork composed of volcanic tuff which has undergone significant water erosion resulting in very interesting rock formations.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

The imprints of man that constitute significant intrusions have been deleted from the WSA during the inventory phase of the wilderness program. Range improvements to the west of the area and water developments including vehicular access in the canyons on the east are the primary imprints segregated from the area. These segregated developments impact the feeling of naturalness in the immediate area of the improvement, but have no impact on naturalness in the area as a whole.

While oil and gas leases exist over most of the area, the primary grandfathered activity is ranching. Additional impacts resulting from the exercise of grandfathered uses are not expected.

The primary outside sights and sound affecting the perceived naturalness result from vehicular use on the access routes along the perimeter of the unit, and these are very slight.

#### CONCLUSION

The area is generally in a natural condition, although cherrystemmed access routes exist in several canyons along the east side.

#### Outstanding Opportunities:

The size of the area, about 41,600 acres, is sufficient to assure some measure of solitude where there is physical screening. Good solitude opportunities are provided in the canyons on the east side of the mountain range. Relatively dense tree cover in these canyons provide effective screening in these canyons. Similarly, vegetative screening coupled with hilly terrain assures good solitude opportunities in the south half of the mountainous portion of the WSA. The configuration of the WSA helps assure solitude, although the mountainous portion is long and narrow. If a visitor were primarily interested in finding a spot within the WSA where no one would likely interrupt the solitude experience, the south half of the mountainous portion could provide this opportunity.

The probability of outside sights and sounds interrupting the user is low if existing developments around the fringes of the area are avoided. The lack of specific destinations within the unit, limited availability of water and distance from major urban centers will reduce the likelihood of disturbances or encounters with other users.

While opportunities for solitude were found to be good in portions of the area, overall opportunities are less than outstanding.

The standard range of recreational opportunities listed in the preface is available in the Fortifications. Hiking, rock scrambling, and camping can be pursued. Spelunking, cited in the original inventory has since been found to be lacking. (District Archaeologist Walt Cassidy). This is a relatively poor diversity of recreation opportunity.

Hiking - Opportunities for hiking vary from fair in the volcanic tuff in the central rocky area due to dangerous rock to good in the far north around Indian Spring.

Rock Scrambling - Good opportunities for the "boulder jumping" form of rock scrambling exist in the far north of the area. In this same area some opportunity exists for rock climbing. The central part of the range contains very scenic, water-eroded volcanic tuff formations. While attractive due to its craginess and color, the fragility of the rock formations make scrambling and climbing dangerous.

Camping - The size and shape of the mountainous portion of the area limit camping opportunities. It is anticipated that most camping will occur on the fringes with the core area used primarily for day use. In this way, lower level water is available but the entire area could be enjoyed.

Nature Study - This area has relatively high population of raptors, especially golden eagles. Antelope wild horses and feral goats can be occasionally seen in the area. Current recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22 ).

#### CONCLUSION

As a result of information gleaned since the IPP inventory, this area is felt to offer more than outstanding opportunity for solitude and more than outstanding opportunity for recreation.

This area has one of the most scenic rock formations in the Ely BLM District. These formations add to the quality of experience for all users in the area. The WSA also has populations of raptors, especially golden eagles, which enhance the various recreation pursuits in the area.

#### OTHER RESOURCE BENEFITS:

Ponderosa pines on the north end will receive additional protection from designation. Benefits that would result to other resources from wilderness designation are the ones common to all study area listed in the preface.

## II. MANAGEABILITY

The main thrust of management in the Fortification Range, if it becomes wilderness, will be to provide highly dispersed recreational opportunities in a secluded environment. Recreational use will not create any significant management problems. Certain locations will receive a concentration of use as trail heads, and some measure may be desirable to encourage use of other locations. This should not be necessary for some time after designation. It should be recognized that use will be concentrated on the ridge, where opportunities for solitude will be of lower quality than in the area as a whole.

Several roads and ways on the east side of the range have been cherry-stemmed out. Vehicles will continue to be used along these, with some small impact on solitude and naturalness in the immediate area. Closure of any of these except the road in Cottonwood Canyon would be impractical because of the open terrain. Closure of the Cottonwood Canyon road would be impossible because of valid existing rights attached to it as a service road to an improved spring and pipeline. All of these east side roads and ways are short (less than 2 miles) and are well screened by pinyon-juniper.

A fence line accompanied by a road extends into the area from the south (T7N, R67E, Sec. 6; T8N, R67E, Sec. 31). Another fence forms part of the boundary (T8N, R66E, Sec. 27, 22, 23, 24). These will require periodic maintenance and vehicular travel approximately every five years. Impacts to solitude and to perceived naturalness will be very brief.

A cherrystemmed road intrudes on the west side of the area for a distance of about 3 miles. This road will create significant problems. It intrudes deeply into the Gouge Eye, an area very susceptible to off-road vehicle use because of the relatively flat terrain.

Other parts of the area are flat and open and are susceptible to off-road travel. These include most of the area located in T8N, R66E, and most of the southern portion in T7N, R67E.

The western boundary is poorly defined along a seeding in T8N, R66E, Secs. 1, 12, and 13.

Pine nut collecting occurs all along the east side. Motorized equipment is used for commercial harvesting, and prohibition of this use would require active enforcement.

There are no private inholdings in the study area. One tract of private land on the northeast corner at Indian Spring is surrounded on three sides by the study area. Because it is a likely trail head, conflicts between the private land owner(s) and wilderness users are expected.

The entire study area is covered with oil and gas leases. The potential for oil and gas is low in most of the area, although Fugro rated a fringe of about 2 miles in width on the west side as having good potential.

No mining claims are located in the study area.

#### CONCLUSION

A few moderate manageability problems exist in the Fortification Range study area. A slight chance exists for oil and gas drilling; a road into the Gouge Eye poses ORV use problems; commercial pine nut gathering occurs in a narrow margin along the east side. None of these is highly significant.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leaseable Minerals - The unit is completely covered with 24 oil and gas leases. There has been no on-the-ground work on any of the leases. The actual potential of this area is low except for the Gouge Eye, where Fugro has identified an area of good potential. No geothermal leases have been issued in or near this WSA, and geothermal potential is low. The western side of Lake Valley has some warm springs. However these are only 65-70°F and development potential is low.

The western valley portion of the WSA lies within an area designated by USGS for potential sodium leasing. There are no sodium leases in the area.

Saleable Minerals - There are no saleable mineral sites within the WSA. Saleable minerals are present on the western bench.

The Schell URA 3 & 4 did not identify any particular mineral resource within the WSA although there is a large speculative mineral resource beginning a mile from the southern part of the WSA. The Atlanta and Silver Park Mines are located within the speculative area but are further defined as identified Economic Reserve. Gold is the main mineral mined but silver, uranium, lead, manganese and tungsten are also present.

The Fugro report shows that the entire area has low mineral potential. The GEM survey confirms this assessment. (see map on page 44).

#### CONCLUSION

The energy potential of the area is low except in the Gouge Eye. Some mineral potential exists in the southern one-fifth of the area.

### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

#### Range

Present grazing quality of the WSA is fair to poor. The interior portion is generally too rough for livestock. The lower slopes generally have unpalatable vegetation. The WSA is divided into three main allotments. The Geyser Ranch Allotment is on the west where cattle from November 1 to September 30. In the south, sheep and cattle are grazed year long. Cottonwood Allotment on the east grazes cattle grazed year long on the Wilson Creek Allotment. The South Spring Valley Allotment barely comes into the northern portion of the WSA.

The future quality of grazing in the WSA would decrease somewhat due to juniper encroachment on the lower slopes.

There are a few range improvements within the WSA. Several wells, fences and pipelines lie just outside the boundary roads.

The potential is good for more spring developments within the WSA. Some development would have pipelines associated with them, The Gouge Eye, a large horseshoe-shaped valley, located in the western central portion of the WSA, has potential for vegetative treatment.

If the area were designated wilderness some springs might be developed if development would help protect the resource. The vegetative treatment would not be allowed; however, a wilderness controlled burn policy would help mitigate the vegetative treatment prohibition.

#### Wildlife

Improvements for bighorn introduction (water) may be complicated. The reintroduction of native species is allowed however. Vegetative conversion to help reestablish Deer Herd 23 would be much more difficult under wilderness management.

#### Lands

No private land exists within the WSA. One parcel lies along the boundary on the northeast edge, surrounded on three sides.

#### Recreation

Adverse impacts to the recreation resource resulting from wilderness designation will be the general ones listed in the preface.

#### Wild Horses

The improvement of two springs in the Gouge Eye - as proposed in MFP - would be complicated and perhaps prohibited.

#### Forestry

An area along the eastern bench has been proposed for intensive management for pine nut collecting. This would be prohibited if the area were designated as wilderness.

The Fortification Range study area represents 2.5 percent of the manageable woodland in the resource area. Christmas tree cuts were made in 1960, 1964, and 1965 on the northeast edge of the unit. Commercial pine nut harvesters from Utah, New Mexico, and Texas collect pine nuts along the east side. The area is within the demand range of Las Vegas Christmas tree cutters.

The short-term impacts of removal of this portion of the woodland supply are minimal.



## CONCLUSION

Few conflict exist in the Fortification Range between wilderness designation and management for other resources, and those that do exist are of low significance.

V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUESMFP

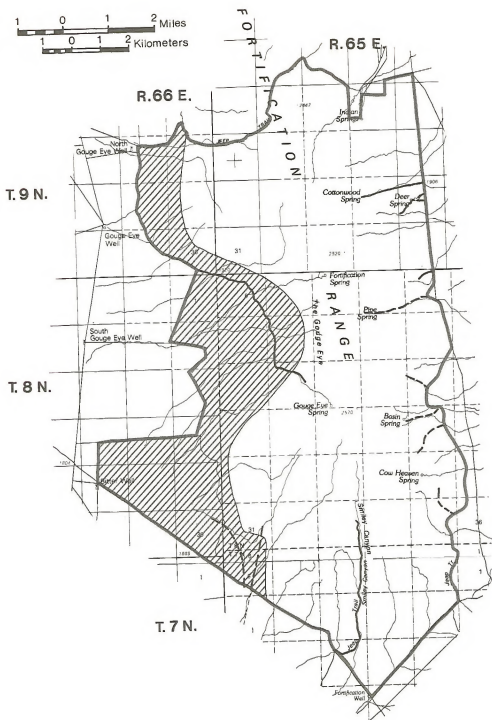
Without wilderness designation, and under MFP recommendations, the wilderness characteristics of the Fortification Range study would be affected by several activities. Two springs would be improved in the Gouge Eye for wild horses; a chaining/seeding would cover the southern tip of the area; and a narrow margin along the northeast boundary would be managed for intensive pine nut harvest. (A soil surface factor reduction is proposed for most of the unit, but is not likely to be implemented). All of these projects would affect the naturalness of the area and the quality of opportunities for solitude and recreation, but only the spring improvements would have any measurable impact, and then only if pipelines and roads to the springs were built.




General

Energy and mineral exploration may affect the naturalness of parts of the unit. As demand for forest products increases and the ability of the Bureau expands to accommodate the demand, the manageable forest of the unit will experience increased use and degradation of its naturalness. The Gouge Eye might be chained and seeded, and more springs would be developed for livestock grazing.

## CONCLUSION

In the next 10 years, few impacts would affect the wilderness characteristics of the Fortification Range if it is not designated as wilderness. Over the next 30 to 50 years, the wilderness characteristics may experience significant impacts. Most of these would result from energy and mineral exploration, range improvements, and harvest of woodland products.



-  GOOD OIL/GAS POTENTIAL
-  ROADS
-  NOTICEABLE WAYS

**MINERAL POTENTIAL  
FORTIFICATION RANGE NV-040-177**

## Table Mountain

The Table Mountain area is a high plateau with associated rolling foothills. Most of the plateau or table area has been excluded due to roads and developments. The higher elevations typically have a good variety of open areas and tree-covered areas. The southern portions of the area are hilly with relatively dense pinyon-juniper cover.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Generally all human imprints have been excluded from the area. Many roads on the plateau have been excluded, resulting in an irregular boundary. These roads vary in impact from deeply gouged bull-dozed roads to two tracks through low growth vegetation. Cumulatively, their impact is sufficiently severe to preclude rehabilitation.

Several cherrystems intrude into the area. Most severe are two routes in the north, one in T7N, R68E, Sec. 25, 36; and one in T7N, R69E, Sec. 29-31.

Even though the land is fairly flat where these occur, closure might be feasible because of the thick pinyon-juniper. Their impact on the naturalness of the area is slight. Vehicular use of the routes, however, will create an impact.

Other cherrystems are: (1) a way that extends from private land up into Bailey Creek Canyon (T6N, R68E, Sec. 21, 28, and 29); (2) a way in the Camp Valley Creek Wash that extends about a mile north of Big Jack Ranch (T5N, R69E, Sec. 5, 6, and 8); (3) a trespass road in T5N, R69E, Sec. 19 and T5N, R68E, Sec. 24. The impact of these on the naturalness of the area as a whole is insignificant.

The sights and sounds of the Alanta Mine affect one's perception of naturalness in the north end of the area. Vehicular use of the two cherrystems in the north end and on the table will also affect naturalness.

### Outstanding Opportunities:

Opportunities for solitude are constrained by the configuration of the area. The elimination of the table area has resulted in a pinched mid-section. The result is that the other characteristics that contribute to opportunities for solitude are not as effective as they would be if occurring in a more cohesive unit. Nonetheless, opportunities for solitude are outstanding. The major characteristic contributing to these is the dense vegetation of the area consisting mainly of pinyon-juniper and mahogany. While there are some open areas, other large parts of the study area have vegetation so dense that travel must often be on hands and knees. Adding to this screening is the diverse terrain consisting of rolling hills in the north, and low mountains in the south. A person can easily find many "secluded spots", and is not likely to see other users in his movement through the area.

The normal range of recreational opportunities (see "Preface") is available in this study area. The best of these are opportunities to hunt upland game birds and deer in the open areas scattered on the high table and peaks. Hiking opportunities vary, but are generally limited by the dense vegetation, which also limits backpacking opportunities. Opportunities for nature study vary from quite good up on the table where open areas occur to poor throughout the rest of the area because of dense vegetation. Interesting components of the environment include the open areas surrounded by dense vegetation; several ungrazed natural meadows; a variety of tree species; interesting geologic formations; and a diversity of wildlife.

This diversity of opportunities for recreation is not unusual, certainly not outstanding. The quality of these opportunities is also less than outstanding. Current recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22 ).

#### CONCLUSION

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding in the Table Mountain study area because of a combination of topographic and vegetative screening. Opportunities for recreation are less than outstanding, both in diversity and in quality.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

The lower elevations of the Table Mountain WSA are winter roosting areas for bald eagles. Sage grouse strutting grounds are also located within the boundary. The presence of the bald eagles is a significant attribute.

#### MULTIPLE RESOURCE BENEFITS

Wintering bald eagles would benefit from designation of the area as a wilderness since seclusion for the birds would be insured. Benefits to other resources would be those listed in the preface which are applicable to all study areas.

#### II. MANAGEABILITY

If the Table Mountain study area is designated as a wilderness, management of the area would primarily be concerned with providing opportunities for solitude. Overuse by visitors probably would not be a problem for managing the area in this way. Use will be low for several reasons; the unit is far removed from large population centers; access to the high country is difficult; and there is a lack of those features which, to many wilderness users, characterize wilderness and serve as its major attraction.

A variable which may upset this low-use prediction in portions of the WSA is the existence of a small, but potentially much larger, tourist industry just outside the boundaries of the study area. The Mount Wilson Ranch, until recently operated as a food and lodging establishment for tourists. Wilderness designation could effect a reopening of the ranch. Visitors to the ranch would then likely make recreational use of the wilderness. Residential development around the ranch would also accelerate drawing more users to the area.

Another commercial concern may soon be established at the Buckhorn Ranch, just south of the Table Mountain study area. The business - a western resort - is now under construction. Once in operation, it too can be expected to make use of the study areas, especially if they are designated as wilderness.

The Bureau of Land Management will have the authority to regulate or prohibit outfitter-guide services that such businesses might offer. If these services are allowed, some form of regulation by the Bureau and attendant costs should be anticipated. Even if disallowed, recreational use of the wilderness will be higher than if there were no lodge/resort business nearby, and management will still be more intense. The management objective, however, will still be attainable.

A difficult problem for managing the unit as wilderness will be the private inholdings scattered through the southern two-thirds of the area. Reasonable access to these is guaranteed to the private owner. Access may include roads. The Bureau has little control over development of the private land. Access to and development of these inholdings could severely impact the opportunities for solitude available in the area. Land exchange or land purchase is a possible means of resolving this problem.

The configuration and topography of the study area combine to complicate its management as wilderness. The table area in particular poses a problem. Even though the unnatural roads and ways on the table have been eliminated from the study area, they still provide broad access to the study area for off-road vehicles. Use of ORVs is heavy during deer hunting season, and control of ORV use will be difficult. This problem would be solved by closing the roads in to Table Mountain. The roads would still be used, however, by the owners of private land on the table. Closure would not be a means of including the table in the study area. The gross unnaturalness of the table area makes rehabilitation impractical.

The north end of the study area, especially around and north of Smith Canyon, is susceptible to cross-country vehicular travel, and protecting the area from this use will be difficult. The same problem attends the land in T6N, R68E, Secs. 31 and 32; T5N, R68E, Secs. 4 and 5.

The entire study area is covered by oil and gas leases. The potential for energy resources in the study area is low, but it should be noted that nearby Lake Valley has a geologic structure similar to Railroad Valley, which is currently producing oil and gas. Some chance of drilling exists in the area.

Four mining claims are located along the southeast boundary of the study area. Nearly 120 are located in the northern part of the area. The upper two-thirds of the study area lies within the Atlanta and Silver Park Mining District. The northern fifth of the area lies within a "speculative area" for mineral resources, and just north of the study area boundary

lies Atlanta, a large, producing gold mine. Potential for gold, silver, uranium, lead, tungsten and manganese exists in a 400 acre hypothetical resource area adjacent to the northern boundary. Because of these factors, mineral potential in the north end of the study area appears to be significant, and some mining should be expected.

#### CONCLUSION

Several problems exist for managing the Table Mountain study area as wilderness. The most serious of these is the conflict with minerals which exists in the north end. The north end also presents a problem because of the easy access it provides for ORVs. Private inholdings pose a very serious problem in the southern two-thirds. Use of portions of the WSA by visitors from two guest ranches/lodges may require close management some time in the future. The area may be impossible to manage to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

**Leaseable Minerals** - The entire WSA is blanketed by 14 oil and gas leases. There has been no drilling in the unit. A well, May Petroleum, was sunk about 15 miles west of the WSA in Lake Valley. The well was abandoned. Northern Lake Valley is structurally similar to Railroad Valley which is currently producing oil. The valley portions of the unit have the most potential but generally potential is low.

There are no other known leaseable minerals in or near the WSA.

**Saleable Minerals** - There are no saleable mineral sites within the WSA. There are enough sites outside of WSA's to supply the needs for sand and gravel in the foreseeable future.

**Locatable Minerals** - Four mining claims are located along the southeast boundary of the WSA. About 120 claims are located in the northern part of the unit. The upper 2/3 of the WSA lies within the Atlanta and Silver Park Mining District. A speculative area for mineral resources was identified in the Schell URA 3 and 4 for the northern one third of the WSA. The producing Atlanta Cold Mine is only a few miles north of the unit. The area around the mine is in an identified Economic Reserve. Adjacent to the northern boundary is about a 400 acre hypothetical resource area. Potential exists for gold, silver, uranium, lead, tungsten and manganese. Lead is listed as a critical mineral. Both silver and tungsten are also listed but large stockpiles of these two minerals exist.

The Fugro report fails to indicate any potential for minerals or oil and gas in the study area. The discrepancy between Fugro and the BLM's assessments is inexplicable. The BLM's assessment seems more realistic, and is supported by the GEM assessment. (see map on page 52 ).

#### CONCLUSION

Very significant conflicts exist in the northern one-third of the area between mineral potential and wilderness designation.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

##### Range

The existing grazing quality for this WSA is poor due to hilly terrain and low value forage plants. The Wilson Creek Allotment covers the unit. Cattle grazing occurs during the warm season.

Future grazing quality will remain poor without new range improvements.

A few range improvements exist along the unit's boundaries but have been cherrystemmed out. Undeveloped springs are common within the area.

The potential exists to develop a few springs within the WSA. One pipeline was proposed in the MFP 2 which would cover about 1/2 mile in the north tip of the WSA (Bradshaw Spring). It would be located in T7N, R68E, Sec. 25. The north and west portions of the WSA are most suited to vegetative manipulation; however none are currently planned.

If the area were designated wilderness, no vegetative manipulations would be allowed. Water developments might be allowed if they were necessary for resource protection.

##### Wildlife

Pinyon-juniper encroachment is a problem in this unit. Vegetative manipulation might not be allowed in wilderness but a controlled burn policy would mitigate this.

Building wildlife water structures would be complicated.

The following projects outlined in the Horsethief HMP would be adversely affected or eliminated.

- 1) #6 priority (springs) Table Mountain Meadow Restoration T6N, R68E, Sec. 15 - Fencing to exclude livestock. Cost in 1975 estimated at \$3,500. This project is not a high priority but the potential for completion exists at some time in the future. It might be allowed even if the area were designated wilderness.
- 11) #6 priority (chaining) Woods-McCullough Chain and Seed 1000A (partial). In 1975 the project was estimated to cost \$31,000. The chaining would be located in T6, 7N, R69E. The potential exists for development of this project but not in the near future. If the area were designated wilderness, vegetative manipulation (including control burns) might be allowed if it benefited the wilderness resource.

Larger scale vegetative conversions to restore Deer Herd 23 will be encumbered, in some areas prohibited.

## Lands

There are eleven parcels of private land along the WSA boundary. The following parcels are surrounded by the WSA (total 480 acres) and are without access:

T6N, R68E, Sec. 12 SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -	40 acres
T6N, R68E, Sec. 36 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -	40 acres
T6N, R69E, Sec. 31 NW $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ -	40 acres
T5N, R68E, Sec. 2 NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -	40 acres
T5N, R68E, Sec. 27 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ -	40 acres
T5N, R68E, Sec. 26 SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ -	240 acres

## Recreation

Impacts from designation are the general ones listed in the preface.

## Forestry

The Table Mountain study area includes 4 percent of the manageable woodland in the Schell Resource Area. Considerable Christmas tree harvesting occurred from 1960-66, particularly along the boundaries. An area in the northeast portion is recommended for greenwood cutting. Firewood and Christmas tree demand comes from Pioche and Las Vegas. In the short term, removal of this portion of the available supply of forest products would be compensated by other areas in the vicinity. In the long term, any reduction in available supply may cause dislocations in the supply/demand structure for wood products.

## CONCLUSION

A few conflicts exist between wilderness designation for the Table Mountain study area and management of other resources in the area, but these will be slight in the short term. In the long term, the only conflicts with the forest resource and even this is uncertain.

## V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUES

### MFP

About 1000 acres of the study area would be chained and seeded (Woods - McCullough Chaining and Seeding) in T6, 7N, R69E. This would have a definite impact on the naturalness and the size of the area.

About 4,000 acres in the northeast portion of the area would be designated as a Christmas tree and greenwood cutting area. This would also have a definite impact on the naturalness and size of the area.

The MFP has identified a "speculative" mineral area that covers the northern one-third of the study area. This indicates that mineral exploration will probably occur. Naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude would be negatively affected by this activity.



General

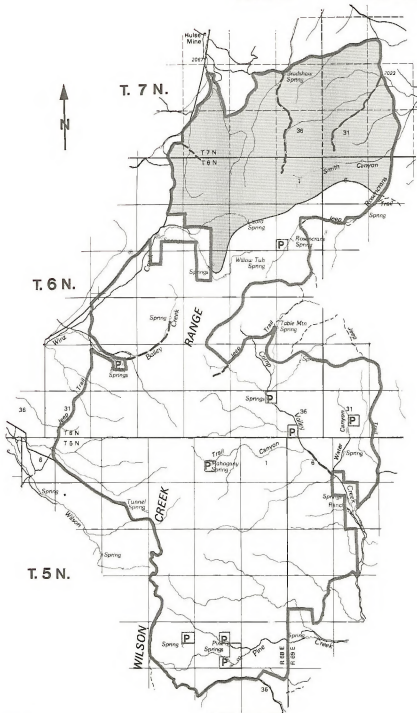
The naturalness of the northern third of the area and all of its perimeter will slowly be impaired by relatively heavy use by hunters and users of forest products.





CONCLUSION

Even though several impacts will impair wilderness values with non-designation, impairment will occur even with designation (see manageability). Loss of wilderness values cannot be attributed to nondesignation.

R.68 E.

R.69 E.



-  SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  ROADS
-  NOTICEABLE WAYS
-  PRIVATE LAND

**MINERAL POTENTIAL**  
**TABLE MOUNTAIN NV-040-197**

## White Rock Range

The White Rock Mountains are generally a single ridge, north-south trending mountain range located on the Utah/Nevada State Line in the southeast corner of the Ely District. The highest part in the mountain range is north of the WSA. The WSA is made up primarily of lower mountains with dense pinyon-juniper cover.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

Intrusions of consequence were deleted from the WSA during the inventory process. The final WSA is generally intrusion-free. Immediately outside the WSA are vehicle trails, range developments such as springs, reservoirs, seedings and fences. Generally, these peripheral developments have little if any impact on the feeling of naturalness within the area.

The only known grandfathered usage in the area is ranching. Expansion of current ranching activities is not anticipated. The only portion of the WSA which receives significant grazing is the northwest corner.

Sights and sounds from outside the area are very infrequent, and result from ranching activities and recreation users. Ranching activities would probably be limited to light equipment use. Recreation use which might disturb the naturalness of the area is limited to vehicle use on roads around the area and hunting activities.

#### CONCLUSION

The WSA is in a natural condition. Outside sights and sounds do not significantly affect the general naturalness of the area.

#### Outstanding Opportunities:

The WSA is about 23,600 acres in size. This is adequate for enhancing solitude opportunities if screening is available. The generally rectangular shape of the area is very good for maximizing solitude opportunities provided by the available screening.

The topographic screening in the WSA is generally good, with low rolling mountains dominating. The higher open mountain ridge to the north lies just outside the WSA. Vegetative screening throughout most of the WSA is excellent, made up of a dense blanket of pinyon-juniper. Within this area of thick tree cover, outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. The northwest portion of the WSA is more open, and this allows for more ranching activities than occur in the heavily timbered south half.

The area surrounding the WSA is ranching country, and some sights and sounds can be expected from this activity. Light equipment and vehicles can be expected infrequently on the boundary roads. The most disrupting other activity in and around the area is hunting. The impacts from these activities are seasonal and not significant.

Due to the density of pinyon-juniper in much of the WSA, finding a secluded spot is a relatively easy task. This WSA could accommodate large numbers of users without compromising the solitude of any user.

Other factors enhancing solitude opportunities in the area include the absence of destination points, distance from population centers and difficulty of access. Other than the numerous springs in the WSA, the area lacks specific points which would attract users. Large population centers are distant and dirt roads must be travelled for some distance to reach the area. While the rolling hill country is not extremely difficult to hike in, the area does not have many vehicle access points penetrating into the core area. These factors enhance solitude and help distribute use.

The full range of recreational activities (see Preface) can be pursued in this WSA. Hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting and nature study opportunities exist to varying degrees. This does not constitute a particularly broad spectrum of opportunities and the diversity of primitive recreation opportunities is, therefore, considered limited.

General quality of the opportunities varies from poor to good. Recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22 ).

#### Hiking:

Opportunities for hiking are good but unvaried. Grades are reasonable, but the continuous pinyon-juniper cover limits the quality of the hike.

#### Camping and Backpacking:

The relatively dense tree cover is limiting, much as for hiking. One advantage the area does possess is numerous spring sources throughout the area. Water quality is unknown.

#### Hunting:

Generally hunting opportunities are fair in the area, with decreasing opportunities in the larger expanses of pinyon-juniper and better opportunities around springs and openings in the cover.

#### Nature Study:

Fair opportunities exist in the northern portions of the area where there is greater variety in the ecosystem. In the southern half where the pinyon-juniper is thicker, opportunities decrease.

### CONCLUSION

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding throughout much of the WSA,

primarily as a result of the dense pinyon-juniper cover. Recreation opportunities are less than outstanding.

#### Special Features

No special features were identified in the WSA.

#### Other Resource Benefits:

Benefits to other resources that would result from designating the White Rock Range as a wilderness are the standard ones listed in the Preface.

### II. MANAGEABILITY

The primary thrust of management in the White Rock study area, if it becomes a wilderness, will be to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude to recreation users. There will be no difficulties posed by recreation use in attaining this objective. Use will be low due to the remoteness of the area, the lack of destination points, and the absence of stereotypical wilderness features. The variegated topography offers no obvious travel routes where use would be concentrated.

Most of the area is covered by oil and gas leases. No drilling has occurred in or near the unit, and the potential for oil and gas is low.

The northwest part of the area falls within a former Known Geothermal Resource Area, but this designation has been dropped. No geothermal leases have been taken in the area, and no warm water springs are known to exist. Potential for geothermal energy in the area is low.

There is one mining claim in the southeast corner of study area. The very southern portion of the unit is in an area identified in the Schell URA as being speculative for mineral resources. The inactive Confidence Mine is 1-1/2 miles south of the boundary. Some potential for uranium and gold may exist in this southern area, but based on current information, potential for locatable minerals is low in the unit.

No other problems exist that would complicate management of the area as wilderness. There are no private or state inholdings. Grazing occurs on the fringes of the area, but does not significantly affect opportunities for solitude or recreation.

#### CONCLUSION

Manageability of the area as wilderness is assured.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Leaseable Minerals - About 10 oil and gas leases cover the WSA. There has been no drilling in or near the unit. The oil and gas potential of the WSA is unknown although it lies in the western overthrust belt. The valley portion of the unit may have more potential than the mountainous portions.

The northwest part of the unit lies within an area identified by USGS as being prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. There are no known warm springs within the unit or in the area identified by the USGS. Due in part to its remoteness, the geothermal potential is fairly insignificant.

About 400 acres on the WSA's west side are in an area identified for potential sodium leasing. There are no sodium leases in the WSA. This resource is insignificant since the area is so remote, and since there are numerous areas designated outside of the WSA.

There are no other known leaseable mineral resources in or near the WSA.

**Saleable Minerals** - There are no saleable mineral sites within the WSA. Enough sites are present outside of WSAs to supply the needs for sand and gravel in the foreseeable future. There is fairly good potential for sand and gravel on the west side of the area.

**Locatable Minerals** - There is one post-FLPMA mining claim known to exist in the WSA. No mining district is located in or near the WSA. The very southern portion of the WSA lies in an area identified through the Schell URA 3 and 4 as being speculative for mineral resources. A small area identified as being hypothetical touches the unit in the southeast corner. The inactive Confidence Mine within this area is about 1-1/2 miles from the WSA boundary. There are uranium claims south of the WSA and there is also a potential for gold. Overall, the significance of the mineral potential for the WSA, with the exception of the southern part, is not very great.

The GEM survey gives the area a "moderate favorability" for locatable minerals on the basis of the Paleozoic sediments underlying the Tertiary volcanic sequences. (see map on page 59)

#### CONCLUSION

The value of energy and minerals in the White Rocks study area probably is low, except in the southern end where some potential for gold and uranium exists.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

##### Range

The existing grazing quality for this unit is low due to steep rocky terrain and fair to poor vegetational value. The WSA is within the Wilson Creek Allotment. Cattle graze the area. Many existing springs provide the cattle with water.

The future quality of the area may decrease without vegetative treatment of the pinyon-juniper which covers over 80% of the unit.

A potential pipeline would run from Wildcat Spring across the SW portion of the WSA for about four miles. One or two water troughs would be associated with the line. About two sections of land along the western boundary of the WSA are marginally suited for vegetative treatment. The MFP 2 recommends that the west half of the WSA undergo vegetative treatment.

If the area were designated wilderness, the vegetative treatments would not occur. Wilderness designation would have little or no impact on grazing in this unit.

#### Forestry

The White Rock area represents about 1 percent of the manageable woodland in the Schell Resource Area. Residents of Pioche, Ursine, and Utah collect firewood in the area, but demand could be met elsewhere, albeit at some inconvenience. Some Christmas tree sales occurred in the area in 1962 and 1964. Designation would cause this portion of the forest resource to be removed from the available supply.

#### Wildlife

Pinyon-juniper encroachment is a problem in the unit. Chaining and seeding would not be allowed in wilderness but a control-burn policy might mitigate this.

Building wildlife water structures might be complicated. The construction of the Wildcat Spring pipeline is also proposed by wildlife as the number 5 priority in the Horsethief HMP.

#### Lands

No private land exists in the area. The State of Utah owns some adjacent land.

#### Recreation

Adverse impacts to the recreation resource resulting from wilderness designation would be the general one listed in the preface.

### CONCLUSION

No major conflicts exist between wilderness designation and management of other resources in the White Rock study area. Some conflicts of minor importance exist.

#### V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUES

If the White Rock study area is not designated as wilderness, the Wildcat Spring pipeline would be constructed. This would have a significant impact on the naturalness of the area, and some impact on opportunities for solitude.

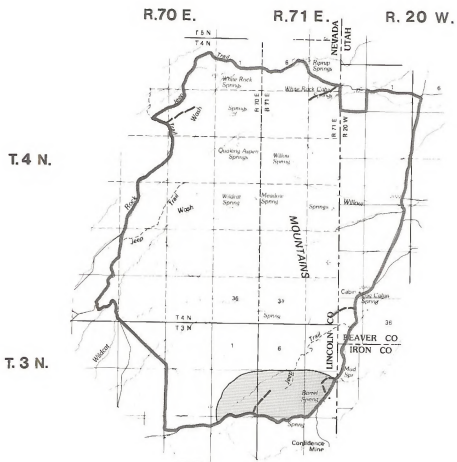
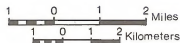
Although it is unrealistic to expect implementation of the MFP recommendation for chaining the entire western side of the study area, some vegetative manipulation can be expected. Such treatments will have definite impacts on the naturalness of the area, and consequently on opportunities for solitude. These impacts will occur primarily at the lower elevations.




As demand for forest products increases, impacts will expand into the area from wood cutting and associated road-building. This will affect opportunities for solitude and will damage the naturalness of the area.

#### CONCLUSION

Some adverse impacts can be expected to result to the wilderness characteristics of the study area if it is not designated as wilderness. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude will be adversely affected.





-  SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  ROADS
-  NOTICEABLE WAYS

**MINERAL POTENTIAL**  
**WHITE ROCK RANGE NV-040-202**

## Parsnip Peak

The Parsnip Peak wilderness study area is a large area south of Mount Wilson. The northern part of the area is mountainous, while the southern portion is low, sagebrush covered valley. Uses include grazing, especially on the Wilson Burn area; mining on the western edge; firewood and Christmas tree cutting; and hunting

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

Several of man's imprints impact the naturalness of the area. On the north end, a large fire has left a burned area - the Wilson Burn- which has been reseeded and is now covered with crested wheat grass, smooth brome, and yellow sweet clover, and is completely enclosed by a barbed wire fence, Although it is a modification of a natural environment, it is natural-appearing to the casual observer.

Also on the north end is the Buckhorn Ranch, which is currently under construction. A private recreation project, the ranch is a visual impact on the perception of naturalness that one gets when standing on higher ground in the vicinity.

The west side of the area has several cherrystemmed roads that impact naturalness. Good roads run into Hulse Canyon, Blue Rock Spring, and Tower Spring. A good road also runs into the perlite mine in T3N, R65E, Sec. 16. The impact of these - including the mine - is slight because of vegetative and topographic screening.

The south part of the area is open sagebrush. Several routes cross the land. Their impact to the naturalness of the area is noticeable but not great.

The Coal Burner Spring Road intrudes into the area from the south for a distance of four miles.

On the east, a pipeline has been constructed at Willow Spring and is highly noticeable in the immediate area, although it too is cherry-stemmed out.

A road extends into Buster Spring, but is nearly unnoticeable even when standing on it. The road serves a forty acre parcel of private land.

Two roads that form the boundary of the area run in to Parsnip Spring.

These are unnoticeable except when within about 20 feet of them.

Outside sights and sounds are very few and do not affect the perception of naturalness.

## CONCLUSION

Even though several imprints of man exist in or adjacent to the study area, their impacts on the naturalness of the area are minimal. The central portion of the area - centered around Parsnip Peak - is in a pristine condition.

Outstanding Opportunities:

The opportunities for solitude in the Parsnip Peak study area are outstanding. Although the topography is not exceptionally rugged, it is mountainous, and very dense vegetation combines with it to make solitude a guaranteed quality.

The vegetation consists predominantly of pinyon-juniper and mountain mahogany which is often so thick that the traveler must literally break a path through the limbs.

The size of the area (reported at 81,600 acres, recently remeasured at 87,500 acres) contributes to these opportunities. The configuration is a little unwieldy, but leaves a large area intact around Parsnip Peak.

Outside sights and sounds are none or few. Of course, standing on Parsnip Peak, one can see the Wilson Road, Pioche, and smaller roads and ways, but from this distance, these impacts are insignificant and may serve even to reinforce the perception of solitude.

Many opportunities for recreation are present in the area. Backpacking and camping opportunities are abundant: there are many campsites, plenty of fuelwood, and several springs (especially in the burn area), although water quality is unknown. The varied landscape and ecosystems make backpacking an experience in discovery. Opportunities are somewhat limited, though, by very thick vegetation in some parts, especially on the east. It is impossible to get through some areas with a backpack.

The difficulty of access is the main reason that much of the area is in such pristine condition; and it is this characteristic that makes the area an excellent subject of nature study. Neither man nor livestock has impacted the high country around Parsnip Peak. Vegetation is in a pristine condition, and includes some unusual features, such as a ponderosa pine / gambel oak stand and a ponderosa pine / aspen stand. Wildlife includes deer, raptors, bobcats and mountain lions. Several large rock outcrops are in the area, but one in particular just east of Parsnip is of interest to geologic sightseers because of its large size and because of its uncommon appearance. It also is highly scenic, and provides excellent habitat for wild cats.

Deer hunting opportunities in the area are fair; blue grouse hunting fair; sage grouse hunting poor to fair; cougar hunting, good. Hunting opportunities are therefore generally fair, although access deep into the area is a problem.

Horseback riding can be done in many parts of the area, although water for horses could be a problem outside of the Burn.

Good Opportunities for rock climbing exist in the area, and are appropriate for a wide range of skill levels. Recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22 ).

#### CONCLUSION

Opportunities for solitude are outstanding. Opportunities for recreation are outstanding because of their diversity, and because of the quality of nature study and hiking/backpacking/camping.

#### Special Features

The Parsnip Peak study area has several special features. The ponderosa pines and the undisturbed environments mentioned above are among these. So is the visual quality of the area, with the contrasting colors of the rock outcrops and large aspen stands poised against the dark green of the dominant tree species. Some parts of the area received a class A quality rating (VRM).

The Wilson Burn revealed several archaeological sites. Twenty-five hundred acres have been inventoried, which revealed a great density of artifacts. Elsewhere in the area, artifacts such as the hunting blind pictured in a report supplementary to the wilderness inventory are proof of earlier inhabitants.

On the southeast edge of the unit, there is an apache tears rockhounding area.

#### CONCLUSION

Several significant special features exist in the study area. The most important of these is the archaeological wealth of the area, although it has not been completely assessed.

#### Multiple Resource Benefits

Other resource benefits resulting from designation would be the standard ones which are common to all the WSA's.

## II. MANAGEABILITY

The basic thrust of management for the Parsnip Peak study area, if it becomes wilderness, would be for providing opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. No problems from recreational use are anticipated in achieving this objective. The area is large enough, and the vegetative and topographic screening effective enough, to provide solitude for several users at one time. Use will be kept low because of the remoteness of the area from large population centers and the absence

of stereotypical wilderness features. Several small areas within the unit may receive concentrated use as base camp sites. The Buster Spring, Parsnip Spring, and Hulse Canyon areas would be such likely points, and this may create some conflict with private landowners. Note, however that hunters and campers already make use of these areas.

### Wildlife

Pinyon-juniper encroachment is a problem in this unit. Vegetative manipulation by chaining and seeding would not be allowed in wilderness but a let burn policy would partially mitigate this.

Building wildlife water structures will be complicated.

The following projects outlined in the Horsethief HMP would be adversely impacted or eliminated:

- a) #2 priority Pearson Summit Chain & Seed 1,000 acres (partial) located in T2N, R68 & 69. The potential for this project is fairly high. 1975 cost estimate \$31,000. (Lower slopes on south end).
- b) #9 priority Page Creek Chain & Seed 1,000 acres (partial) located in T3N, R68E - almost entirely outside the unit on the west side. 1975 cost estimated at \$28,500. Potential for development is very low.
- c) #12 priority Parsnip Peak Chain & Seed 1,000 acres T2N, R68E, Sec. 1 & 12, T2N, R69E, Sec. 6 & 7 - Estimated cost in 1975 \$31,000. This project is a low priority. The chance of it occurring is very low.

### Lands:

Five parcels of private land exist along the WSA boundary. The following parcels are surrounded by the WSA (total 240 acres):

T4N, R68E, Sec. 4	SE $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$	40 acres
T4N, R68E, Sec. 3	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	40 acres
T4N, R68E, Sec. 14	N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{2}$	80 acres
T4N, R68E, Sec. 26	NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	40 acres
T4N, R68E, Sec. 25	SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	40 acres

2 (40 acre) parcels are at the end of cherrystems.

### Recreation

Adverse impacts to the recreation resource resulting from wilderness designation would be the general ones listed in the preface.

Special features of the area would require special management not necessarily compatible with recreation. Extensive archaeological sites exist in the area, and if recreational use increases with wilderness designation, secondary impacts to these would increase. Restricting use in these areas or educating users to respect the resource might be necessary. Accelerating the cultural resource inventory for the area to accumulate data before it is impacted is recommended.

Ponderosa pines grow in the area. Management to perpetuate these may include burning on a prescribed and periodic basis, and this would conflict with recreational use of the area for very short periods of time.

There are several private inholdings in the area, and these could cause significant problems for manageability because of the access guaranteed to private owners. One owner has already stated that he intends to improve a spring on his land, and this will require building a road. There are no known plans for the other inholdings, but they will become very desirable properties if designation occurs, and titles and plans for the land may change. One recreation-oriented business until recently was operating just outside the area (Wilson Ranch), and another is under construction (Buckhorn Ranch). The private inholdings could be very attractive to businesses.

These businesses may also pose problems similar to those outlined in the manageability section for Table Mountain. Their presence near the boundaries of wilderness areas will attract larger numbers of users than would otherwise be expected. Concentrated use might occur in certain portions of the areas, and management should address this problem.

The lower portion of the study area is sagebrush flats. Several routes have been cherrystemmed out. Off-road vehicle use would be nearly impossible to control, especially along these cherrystems. Closing the cherrystems and allowing them to rehabilitate is impractical because of the fiat, open terrain.

Much of the western side of the area has an irregular configuration. Manageability could be improved by removing some of the more irregular portions.

#### CONCLUSION

A portion of the area is capable of being managed as wilderness for the long term. Use may be concentrated at several base camp areas, and this should be monitored. Archaeological resources should be inventoried and protected. On the sagebrush flats ORV use would be impossible to control. Some of the private inholdings could be excluded from the WSA, or brought into public ownership through a cooperative land transfer.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leaseable Minerals - Over 50 oil and gas leases cover all but about 6,500 acres of the WSA. There have been no discoveries in the area; however the potential for oil and gas does exist. The valley portions and lower slopes hold the most potential for oil and gas traps. The lower areas have speculative potential.

There are no KGRAs or geothermal leases in or near the WSA. The geothermal potential is insignificant.

Two areas have been identified by the USGS as having potential for sodium leasing. One lies in the valley to the east of the WSA and covers about 1,000 acres of the unit. The other area overlaps the bottom southwest arm of the WSA. There are no sodium leases in or near the WSA. This resource is insignificant since the area is so remote and there are numerous leasing sites outside of WSAs. There are no other known leaseable mineral resources in or near the WSA.

There are no known saleable mineral resources in the WSA.

Locatable Minerals - Seventy-five mining claims lie in or near the WSA boundaries. They are all associated with boundary roads, cherrystems or other areas eliminated during the inventory. Two areas of about 1,600 acres each were identified during the Schell URA 3 and 4 as submarginal. These areas are located near Board Cabin Spring and Pearson Summit. Perlite (a volcanic glass) has been mined from an open pit in T3N, R68E, Sec. 16. Large deposits of perlite remain but are unlikely to be developed because of their distance from markets, and because of immense deposits in Arizona and New Mexico.

A speculative area in T3N, R68E surrounding and connecting the two submarginal areas was also identified in the Schell URA. A small portion of a speculative area also extends into about 700 acres in the southwest.

The Fugro report identifies two large zones in the southern, valley portion of the area as having "speculative" potential for oil and gas. This southern portion was also shown as having zones of "speculative", "good", and "high" mineral potential. The remainder and larger part of the area was shown to have "low" potential for energy and minerals.

The GEM survey for this area generally supports these findings although it gives higher potential for locateable minerals. This is based on the presence of Paleozoic sediments underlying the Tertiary volcanics that cover the area. Geochemical testing should be conducted here before this estimate of potential is accepted. (see map on page 68).

### CONCLUSION

Except in the southern third of the area where both oil and gas and mineral potential exists, few conflicts exist between wilderness and

mineral values. Because of distance from markets, and because of vast perlite deposits elsewhere, the old open-pit perlite mine will probably not be reactivated.

#### IV. OTHER RESOURCE CONFLICTS

##### Range

The existing grazing quality of the area is very good. The Mt. Wilson Burn in the north end of the WSA has high quality grazing. Most springs used by cattle are located just outside the WSA, but there are about 20 springs used in the WSA. The unit is within the Wilson Creek Allotment.

The future grazing quality of the WSA will remain high; however, some areas will decline with juniper replacing other more desirable vegetation.

The WSA boundary goes around a number of range improvements. Recorded range improvements within or cherrystemmed out of the WSA:

1. Parsnip Pipeline (#0061) located in P.U. 12 T4N, R69E, Sec. 26 36. The rancher maintains the pipeline yearly. A cat with a ripper may be needed.
2. Willow Spring Pipeline (#4046) located in P.U. 12 T3N, R69E, Secs. 13, 23, 24. Yearly maintenance by the rancher is required. A ripper cat may be needed for repairs.
3. Bowling Fence (#4226) located at T3N, R69E, Secs. 13 23, 24. BLM maintains the fence yearly on foot or horseback. No other access is available.
4. Coal Burner Spring (#4293) located in T3N, R68E, Sec. 36. Every four years the rancher maintains the spring. A backhoe may be needed for repairs.
5. Wilson Seeding (#4302) located in the northern end of the unit. . BLM inspects the seeding every five years. The seeding is fenced.

Potential for additional improvements is high. Springs could be developed to allow greater distribution of cattle. Potentially 25 sections of land could be converted from pinyon-juniper to grasses.

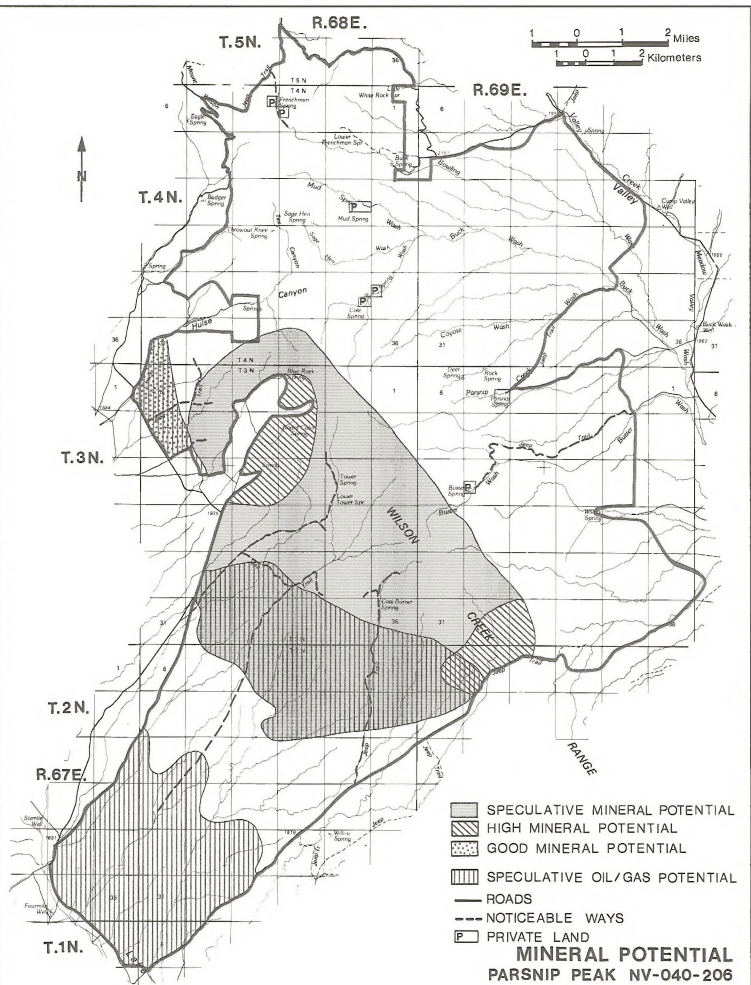
If the area were designated wilderness no vegetation treatments by chaining and seeding would be allowed. Some spring development might occur.

##### Forestry:

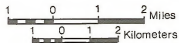
The Parsnip Peak study area represents 5.4 percent of the manageable woodland of the resource area. The unit is used by residents of Pioche (pop. 600) and surrounding ranches for fuelwood and Christmas tree cutting. It is also within the demand range of Las Vegas. The north-west portion of the study area contains the Mount Wilson burn, which has



considerable standing timber that is easily accessible and harvestable, although its commercial value will be lost in three years due to rot. Wilderness designation would cause an adverse impact to the local users. The cost of cutting fuelwood would increase, in part due to increased haul distance. Several cherrystem roads lead to prime pine nut collecting areas. If the area is designated wilderness, more pressure will be placed on other areas for commercial pine nut gathering.



T.5N. R.68E.



T.4N.

R.69E.

T.3N.

T.2N.

R.67E.

T.1N.

- SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL
- HIGH MINERAL POTENTIAL
- GOOD MINERAL POTENTIAL
- SPECULATIVE OIL/GAS POTENTIAL
- ROADS
- NOTICEABLE WAYS
- PRIVATE LAND

**MINERAL POTENTIAL**  
**PARNSHIP PEAK NV-040-206**

## Worthington Mountains

This wilderness study area consists of a north-south trending mountain range and its associated bench and valley areas to the east and west. The Worthington Mountains are an extremely rugged single ridge range made up of every formation from the Ordovician Pogonip Group to an unnamed Mississippian limestone unit. With the younger rocks occurring at the southern end.

Leviathan Cave, an active limestone cave of significance exists in the southern half of the range and is the primary attraction for most visitors.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

Generally, all man-made intrusions were deemed significant and were excluded from the area during the various wilderness inventories conducted to date. These included mining activities in the north end of the mountain range, range improvements such as fences and reservoirs, and access routes for recreation, exploration and range. These imprints are at lower elevations and, while excluded, penetrate the wilderness study area, resulting in a somewhat irregular boundary. While ways can be located within the WSA, they are insignificant to the naturalness of the area.

The majority of the intrusions are in the valley and bench portions of the WSA, leaving the mountain range free of man's imprints other than the mining activities at the north end of the range. The overall impact of man's activities are generally unnoticeable in the area as a whole. However, there are 77 mining claims in and adjacent to the northern boundary of the WSA. Of these, 30 were claimed prior to the passage of FLPMA. There is a potential that expansion activities on those claims with valid existing rights or grandfathered rights may impact the naturalness of the area in the future. The chances of these activities or grandfathered grazing activities having substantial impacts on the area in the foreseeable future are very low.

The only outside sights and sounds which might affect the naturalness of the area are mining activities to the north and ranching activities on the perimeters. The mining activities could include blasting and heavy equipment use. Ranching activities would likely be limited to light vehicle use. None of these activities are expected to significantly affect the naturalness of the area. The use of the area for low level jet maneuvers does not detract from the naturalness of the area.

## CONCLUSION

Generally all manmade intrusions have been excluded from the area and day-to-day activities do not significantly detract from the area's naturalness. Expansion of the mining activities on the north represent the greatest threat to the area's naturalness.

### Outstanding Opportunities:

This area was found to offer good but not outstanding opportunities for solitude based on the intensive inventory criteria.

The size of the area is about 47,100 acres. Generally this size is sufficient to provide some measure of solitude based solely on size. This size alone will not assure outstanding solitude, but is sufficient if other factors such as screening are available. The configuration is elongated along the north-south axis as are most units in the district. The narrowness of the mountain range detracts from the area's ability to provide opportunities for solitude.

The periphery of the area is valley bottom and benchland, which provides little if any topographic screening. The Worthington Mountain Range is a single ridge, steep sided range. Opportunities for solitude based on topographic screening are limited due to this single ridgeline character. Users will likely use the ridgeline, resulting in encounters with others. Small canyons on the steep mountain flanks provide some solitude opportunities.

Vegetative screening varies greatly. In the valley bottoms and portions of the ridgeline, little screening exists. Spotty instances of effective screening can be found in the northeast part of the mountains.

Generally, outside sights and sounds do not affect solitude. Minor mining activities and ranching may in rare instances disturb visitors in the immediate vicinity. However, on occasion the Air Force practices low level fighter and bomber maneuvers in the vicinity. During these limited periods, no solitude can be found in the area. Sonic booms penetrate even into the recesses of Leviathan Cave.

Secluded spots based on topographic and vegetative cover are at a premium in the area. In the northeast portion of the mountain range, isolated spots of seclusion can be found in the tree covered slopes. Canyons along the west flank of the mountains also provide instances of seclusion.

The two areas in the unit which might hold special attraction to the user are the ridgeline and Leviathan Cave. If multiple users are in the WSA, they are likely to be in one of these two areas, increasing the likelihood of encounters with others. However, the difficulty of access and lack of water will probably limit use along the ridge.

A variety of recreation pursuits can be undertaken in the WSA. Hiking, camping, rock scrambling, technical climbing, spelunking, fossil collecting and nature study can all be undertaken here. Quality of the opportunities vary from poor in the case of camping to outstanding in the case of spelunking. Generally, the steepness of the range and potential for denial of access due to sheer rock faces limit the area's potential for hiking. The lack of water, rarity of good camping sites and difficulty of access limit camping opportunities to poor.

Rock Scrambling- Various canyons on the south end of the range provide excellent opportunities for the "jumping from boulder to boulder" sort of rock scrambling. Difficult ascents in many of the canyons limit the scrambling opportunities. The potential also exists for the user to get "bluffed in" when attempting to leave the area.

Technical Climbing- Short face technical climbing opportunities exist throughout the southern half of the mountain range. The rock faces available are of a solid lime stone material which offer good climbing opportunities. While many short faces exist in the area for both equipment and non equipment technical ascents, none of these are considered of the length or difficulty needed to make them outstanding.

Spelunking - Opportunities exist in several known caves for the spelunker, including Jinx, Lavender and Leviathan. The potential exists for the discovery of other significant caving resources. Of the three caves noted, Leviathan offers outstanding opportunities for the spelunker. One major room in the cave is extremely active, forming a myriad of interesting formations. This cave is the primary qualifier of the WSA. With the addition of other known caves and the discovery potential, the spelunking opportunities in the WSA are one of the important recreation resources in the District.

A few types of fossils were found along the ridgeline of the mountains.

Geologic sightseeing and botanical study (bristlecone pine ) are generally limited to small portions of the WSA. Cave study is probably the foremost nature study opportunity in the area and is excellent. Recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22).

#### CONCLUSION

The diversity of primitive recreation opportunity falls short of the level needed for qualification. Of the activities available in the unit, only the spelunking opportunities in Leviathan Cave are outstanding and this opportunity qualified the area for designation.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

The caves in the area are of significance due to their quality rather than abundance. Leviathan Cave is "one of the most spectacular wild caves . . ." caving authority Ed Wood of the National Park Service has visited. ". . . There is little doubt in my mind that it is of national significance."

The stands of bristlecone pine are not of the characteristic gnarled form nor are they the ancient trees such as are found on Mount Wheeler. Their significance is not high nor are they particularly abundant on the range.

Fossil material occurs along the ridge. Further study may reveal additional values.

An Indian Sandel, a metate, and a hunting blind were discovered in the area. There are also strong indications that two Indian wickiups once existed in the entrance of Leviathan Cave. Potential is good for other finds.

At this time, only occasional bighorn sightings occur in the area. These animals are believed to be in transit between other habitat. Should an NDOW proposal to reestablish a resident bighorn population within the area come to fruition, this special feature would then become significant.

#### CONCLUSION

While the area contains several special features of interest to the user, only the Leviathan Cave resource is considered of greater than local significance. This resource may be of national importance.

#### II. MANAGEABILITY

The primary management objective for the Worthington Mountains, if they become a wilderness, will be to provide outstanding opportunities for recreation, specifically for spelunking. Leviathan Cave will undoubtedly be the main attraction of the area, and this will create some problems. High use of this resource will inevitably bring some deterioration. Management tools to minimize these impacts will probably be necessary, and could include educating users about the fragility of the resource, and limiting use by one of several methods. Construction of a trail to the cave may be necessary to protect the route over which high numbers of visitors travel, although this would increase visitation to the cave. A program to monitor impacts from visitation at the cave and on the way to the cave will be necessary.

No attempt should be made to provide opportunities for solitude in the vicinity of the cave. Use will be too high and screening insufficient to provide solitude.

Much of the north end of the range, located just outside the study area, has been heavily impacted by mining operations at the Freiburg Mine. This mine is a special case. Recorded production since the mine's beginning in the 1980's amounts to about \$18,000.

The study area may experience degradation between now and the time that it is designated as wilderness if grandfathered mining uses extend into the area. Continuation in the same manner degree would destroy the wilderness characteristics of the affected portion.

Mining may be allowed in the area if it becomes wilderness, provided that the claimant can prove he has a valid discovery. This is likely to occur in some portions. Fugro identified a thin belt of "good" mineral potential that extends 5 miles south on the bench lands below the Freiburg Mine, and another area of "high" mineral potential on the valley portion in the northwest corner. The Freiburg Mine was rated as having "low" potential.

The Schell URA lists the Freiburg Mine as an identified economic resource, and the area surrounding it (including about 7600 acres in the study area) as an undiscovered speculative resource.

Most of the west side is leased for oil and gas as is the northeast corner. The west bench was rated by Fugro as a "speculative" oil and gas area. The west and the east bench lands are also classified by Fugro as geothermal potential areas, although no geothermal leases have been issued here.

Water rights are held on two springs in the area, Wild Horse Spring and Stink Bug Spring. These rights by themselves do not confer any special privileges, but there may be valid existing rights attached to the waters that would allow continued use at the same level as on October 21, 1976.

A few cherrystemmed roads and ways intrude into the study area. Some problems with controlling off-road vehicle travel can be expected in both the vicinity of these routes and in the flatter parts of the study area generally.

One factor over which the Bureau will have little or no control is the periodic overflights by low-flying military aircraft. Opportunities for solitude are most affected by these overflights, but since the study area does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude, the impact on wilderness characteristics is not significant. (There have been reports that sonic booms are causing deterioration in the cave, and this needs to be investigated).

No private lands are held within the study area. One parcel is adjacent to the boundary in the Freiburg Mine area.

#### CONCLUSION

Some significant problems exist for managing the Worthington Mountains as wilderness in the long term. Most important of these is the sporadic but continued mineral interest in the northern third of the mountain range. Oil and gas interests may also eventually conduct on-the-ground operations on the benches. The benches and valley portions are susceptible to uncontrolled ORV use.

The southern part of the mountain range, which includes Leviathan Cave, has few manageability problems apart from concentrated visitation.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leaseable Minerals - Oil and gas leases cover the western portion of the WSA (15). Nine leases are on the northeast side as well.

The BLM has not identified any known or potential geothermal areas within or near the WSA. There are no geothermal leases.

No other known leaseable mineral resources are located in the WSA.

Saleable Minerals - There are no saleable mineral sites within the WSA.

Locateable Minerals - About 77 mining claims are in the northern portion of the WSA just south of the Freiburg mine area. The Freiburg Mining District is old, but production has been small to date.

Some lead and silver were produced. About 7,600 acres in the north central part of the WSA are in an area identified as a speculative resource due to favorable geology. The area around the granite stocks and dikes (just north of the WSA) is designated as a hypothetical resource. The Freiburg Mine area (outside WSA) is designated as an identified economic reserve. The potential exists for silver, gold, lead, tungsten and zinc.

The Fugro report shows a long, narrow area of "good" mineral potential extending south from the Freiburg Mine along the eastern bench. A "high" mineral potential area is shown in the valley in the northwest corner of the area. The Fugro report also indicates that the western (Sand Spring Valley) portion of the area is a "speculative" oil and gas zone, and that this same portion and the eastern (Garden Valley) portion have geothermal potential. This last conclusion is at variance with BLM findings.

The Gem survey shows some potential in the area immediately adjacent to the Freiburg Mine, but indicates low or no potential in the remainder of the WSA.

#### CONCLUSION

The north end of the Worthington Range has long been of interest to miners, probably with good reason. Mineral potential exists around the Freiburg Mine, and is speculative elsewhere in the range. Potential for energy exists in the valley and bench portions of the area. (see map on page 77).

### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

#### Range:

The existing grazing quality for this unit is very poor in the mountainous portion and poor to fair on the lower slopes. A grazing allotment, Worth-



ington Mountain 1021, covers the east half of the WSA. Cattle and sheep are grazed from December 1 to May 31. Two other allotments, McCutchen and Sand Spring, cover the western side of the WSA. McCutchen is grazed for 6 - 10 months a year with cattle. Cattle graze the Sand Spring Allotment for six months every two out of three years. The future quality of grazing is expected to remain the same.

Several spring developments, reservoirs and one fence are located along cherrystemmed roads. One pipeline occurs in T1S, R56E, Secs. 1 - 4. The potential for improvements is low.

If the area were designated wilderness, grazing would experience very little effect. The mountainous portions are too rough for livestock.

#### Wildlife

ADC programs might be adversely affected due to restriction of M-44 use and offending animal restrictions. If the area were designated wilderness the offending animals could be removed but use of poison baits, cyanide guns, and indiscriminate aircraft gunning would be prohibited.

#### Lands

No private land exists within the WSA. One parcel lies along the boundary.

#### Recreation

Designation of the study area as a wilderness will bring increased attention to Leviathan Cave, resulting in higher use and increased vandalism.

#### Forestry:

Low volumes and long distance from population centers result in very low conflict between wilderness designation and forest management in the Worthington Mountains study area.

### CONCLUSION

No significant conflicts exist between wilderness designation and management of other resources in the Worthington Mountains study area.

## V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS VLAUFS

### MFP

A "speculative" mineral area has been identified in the northern half of the mountain range, indicating that mineral exploration is likely to occur here. Exploration will destroy the naturalness, and therefore the size, of the area. Consequently, some negative impacts will affect the outstanding opportunities for recreation, although the main one - Leviathan Cave - will experience no impacts.

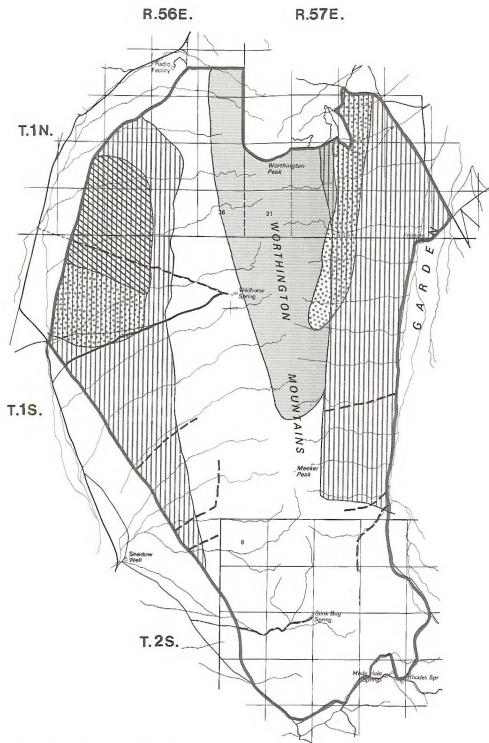
A Caliente MFP III decision was to designate a 448,000 acre area in the Tickaboo/Sand Springs Valley as an ORV open play area. This would include 15,000 acres in the Worthington Mountains study area. Use would probably be very low in the near future, but eventually could destroy the naturalness of the western valley and bench portions, and would adversely affect primitive recreation opportunities on the west side of the mountain range.







General:

Oil and gas exploration will occur on the bench and valley portions.

CONCLUSION

The wilderness values of the northern half of the mountain range and of the valley and bench portions will be lost due to energy and mineral exploration and ORV use. The southern half of the mountain range itself will remain undisturbed for the foreseeable future.



-  SPECULATIVE MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  HIGH MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  GOOD MINERAL POTENTIAL
-  SPECULATIVE OIL/GAS POTENTIAL
-  ROADS
-  NOTICEABLE WAYS

**MINERAL POTENTIAL**  
**WORTHINGTON MOUNTAINS NV-040-242**

## Weepah Spring

The Weepah Spring wilderness study area is located in the Seaman Range, south of the Timber Mountain Pass. The topography is very rugged and rocky. The heart of the unit is the mountains, surrounded by alluvial bench lands. Present economic use is almost exclusively grazing. Past use has included some limited mining.

### I. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

#### Naturalness:

The mountainous part of the unit is in a highly natural condition. The bench lands are intruded by various imprints of man. A group of ways has been excluded from the area on the north end. Their cumulative impact is substantially unnatural.

One way intrudes to a distance of two miles into the unit in T2N, R62E, Secs. 18 and 19.

Many roads and ways extend to the mountains from highway 318 on the east side. Most of these have been excluded from the area.

Two short roads intrude into the southern portion. One of these leads to Weepah Spring, the other to Keno Spring.

The west bench is criss-crossed with many roads any ways that are outside the area. Most of these are mining exploration roads. A small pocket of these roads and "Cat scrapes": are located in T2N, R62E. Sec. 6.

White Rock Spring in the south end of the unit (T1S, R62E, Sec. 3) has been cherrystemmed out because of improvements on the spring, a pipeline a road, and an area of mining, all of which combine to create an obviously unnatural area.

Outside sights and sounds include highway 318 on the east, and low level military training flights over the whole area. (Aircraft include T-38's, C-141's, B-52's, A-7's, F-4's, F-15's, F-5's, F-16's, A-10's, C-130's). The impacts from the highway are nonexistent except when immediately adjacent to it. The area is located in the Coyote Military Operations Area (MOA). Red Flag exercises are frequently conducted here, with aircraft at all levels. Ground level contour flying is practiced.

#### CONCLUSION

The area is in an almost completely natural condition. Only a few roads and ways are inside the area, and their impact is negligible. Jet aircraft fly over the area, but have no effect on one's perception of its naturalness.

Outstanding Opportunities:

The size of the study area is 61,137 acres. The configuration is a little irregular, but not so much as to damage solitude opportunities.

The topography is variegated, which is to say it is not just a single ridge line. Many steep mountains and deep canyons provide excellent screening. Combined with this is very dense tree cover in some large areas. The outside sights and sounds of highway 318 have little effect on one's feeling of solitude. Jet aircraft overflights are often startling to the user, but usually are not numerous and continuous, and have little impact on solitude.

Many opportunities for recreation are present in the area. The diverse terrain and large size of the area make for some excellent hiking and back-packing opportunities. This is especially true in the spring when small streams caused by melting snow provide water in the high country. High scenic value is provided by large ponderosa stands, interesting rock formations, and the diverse landform.

Opportunities for nature study are very good. Ponderosa pine occur in large stands, probably the largest in the district. The operation of nature is very evident in this fire-dependent ecosystem. Many of the trees have had their crowns blown out by lightning, and large fires, as evidenced by charred wood, have periodically swept through the area. The ponderosa are healthy and reproducing.

Opportunities for mountain lion hunting are fair in the area. Opportunities for deer hunting are poor.

Wildlife includes golden eagles, which can be seen at very close range. Peregrine falcons, other raptors, deer, wild horses, chukar and partridge occur in the area.

Opportunities for photography are many and of good quality because of the above described features.

Horseback riding can be done in many parts of the area, and would be enjoyable because of the diverse scenery. The limiting feature is the lack of water, and this is mitigated somewhat by the waters just outside the area. Recreation use occurs as displayed in Table 5 (see page 22).

CONCLUSION

Opportunities for solitude in the Weepah Spring study area are very good but not outstanding.

Special Features

The ponderosa forest is the area's most significant special feature. It is the best example in the Ely District, perhaps the best in eastern Nevada.

The geology of the area is very interesting from a scenic and educational standpoint. It has not been adequately assessed from a scientific perspective.

Archaeological sites abound in the area. Petroglyphs are located at several points in the south and many lithic scatters exist in and around the ponderosa pines. Unfortunately, the scatters have been picked over.

The WSA includes portions of the White River Narrows Archaeological National Register Petroglyph District.

The Seaman Range wild horse herd ranges into the study area. The herd population is estimated at 20.

Portions of the area are ungrazed by livestock. Natural flora is thereby preserved in its natural condition.

#### CONCLUSION

Several special features are present in the area. Two of these - the ponderosa pines and the archaeological sites - are significant.

#### Multiple Resource Benefits:

Wilderness designation would help insure seclusion for the peregrine falcon. It would also preserve habitat suitable for bighorn sheep, even though there is no current recommendation or plan to reintroduce these animals.

Other benefits are those common to all study areas, such as preservation of watershed, air quality, visual resources, etc.

## II. MANAGEABILITY

If the Weepah Spring study area is designated as wilderness, the "basic thrust" of the management will be for providing primitive, undeveloped recreation in a secluded environment. This objective can be easily met. Users will be few because of the remoteness of the area, and because of the relative difficulty of access. The absence of stereotypical wilderness features - such as lakes and fishing streams - will help keep use low. The users that do visit the area should be well dispersed because of the absence of destination points and obvious travel routes, and because of the numerous points of entry.

Nonconforming but accepted uses in the area include grazing, which occurs in five allotments in the area. Much of the grazing is yearlong, and is both sheep and cattle. This use does not affect the quality of the opportunities for recreation and solitude.

Mining and mineral exploration have been done in the past, but are not presently being conducted. There are claims and leases in the area, but the likelihood of mining or drilling operations being conducted in the future under wilderness designation is low. (See "Conflicts" section).

No private inholdings exist in the area.

Several important archaeological sites exist in the area. These may see increased secondary impacts if wilderness designation results in increased use. Some sort of management policy to either limit recreational use in these areas or to limit impacts from recreational users (e.g. and education program) may be desirable. A first step should be to expedite cultural inventory of these areas before their condition deteriorates.

Another supplemental value of the area which may require special management is the ponderosa forest. Controlled natural burns will be necessary to perpetuate this forest, and these may conflict for short periods of time with recreational use.

Several two-track roads and ways have been cherrystemmed out of the area. Generally, these should pose few problems for the management fo the area as wilderness. Most of these routes have already been extended as far as the terrain will allow, and are in such rough country that travel off-road on either side is unlikely.

Road closures are impractical. Several ways on the north end could not be closed because the flat, open terrain would allow circumvention of any obstacle used to close them, The same difficulty prevents the enlargement of the area on the east by reattaching the bench land, Valid existing rights and the gross unnaturalness of two roads in the south ( to Weepah and Keno Springs) make closure of these impossible.

To make certain that existing roads and ways are not extended by use, it is recommended that their end points be documented, possibly signed, and monitored.

A problem on the south end of the area along highway 318 is the imminent accessibility of the land adjacent to the road. The impossibility of preventing vehicular access into these small areas suggests that the boundary be drawn back to the base of the cliffs.

An unusual problem of this area is the fact that it is located in a Military Operations Area (MOA) where low-flying military aircraft commonly surprise the hiker, It is unlikely that the US Air Force would voluntarily exclude the area from their MOA, but this possibility could be pursued, The impact of these overflights on outstanding opportunities are normally minimal, so that this is not a significant problem.

#### CONCLUSION

No major management problems confront this area. Improvements could be made by drawing the boundary back from 318 to the cliffs in the southern part of the area.

### III. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

Leaseable Minerals - The unit has 10 oil and gas leases, all of them along the boundaries in the lower valley portion of the WSA. No known drilling has occurred in the unit. An exploratory well (American Quasar) was sunk in Sec. 19 T2N, R60E in Coal Valley, about 9 miles west of the WSA. There were some shows but nothing marketable. Another hole was drilled in Coal Valley about 10 miles south of the American Quasar. It came up dry. There may be some potential for oil and gas in Coal Valley but discoveries in the Seaman Range are far less likely.

There are no known or potential geothermal areas within or close by the WSA. The nearest warm spring and identified potential geothermal area is south of the WSA near Hiko.

No other known leaseable mineral resources are located in the WSA. Coal Valley to the west was identified as a potential sodium leasing area.

Saleable Minerals - There are no saleable mineral sites within the WSA, although several are located adjacent to or near its eastern boundary on both sides of highway 318.

Locatable Minerals - The northwest portion of the unit was identified through the Schell URA 3 and 4 as being a speculative area. There is one historic mine in Sec. 6, T2N, R62E. No active mining is occurring in or nearby the unit. There are about 400 mining claims staked in or close to the WSA boundary. All but 19 mining claims are post FLPMA. The 19 pre-FLPMA claims are located along the boundary road. None of the WSA falls in or near a mining district.

The Fugro report indicates that a very small portion of the area in T1N, R60E, has "speculative" mineral potential, with the remainder of the area having "low" potential. This same portion and the bench land in the northeast quadrant of the area are shown to have "good" oil and gas potential.

The GEM survey generally supports these findings. (See map on page 85).

#### CONCLUSION

The overall energy potential of the area is low. Some mineral potential exists in the northwest quadrant, but to an unknown degree.

### IV. IMPACTS ON OTHER RESOURCES

#### Range:

The existing grazing quality of the WSA for cattle is generally poor due to rugged terrain and low forage desirability. Forage desirability for



sheep is fair, but grazing is still limited by terrain and lack of year-long water. Five allotments occur in the WSA. Cattle and sheep are authorized to graze from fall to spring on the north and west portion of the unit. Cattle and sheep graze year long on the eastern portion.

Future grazing will likely remain unchanged.

No range improvements exist within the WSA. However, several have been cherrystemmed out along the boundary roads.

The potential for additional range improvements is minimal.

If the area were designated wilderness, the fence and spring development would only be allowed if they would enhance resource protection.

Overall, there are minimal conflicts between grazing and wilderness.

#### Wildlife:

Animal Damage Control programs might be adversely affected due to restriction of M-44 use and offending animal restrictions. If the area were designated wilderness, offending animals could be removed but use of poison baits or cyanide guns would be prohibited, as would be indiscriminate gunning from aircraft.

#### Lands:

No private land exists within or adjacent to the WSA. A public water reserve is in T1S, R62E, Sec. 3. There is no conflict.

#### Recreation:

Adverse impacts to the recreation resource resulting from designation are the general ones listed in the preface.

#### Forestry:

The Weepah Spring study area contains 1.1 percent of the manageable woodland in the Schell Resource Area. Because of this small volume, wilderness designation would have very little effect on the resource base.

### CONCLUSION

No significant conflicts exist between wilderness designation of the Weepah Spring study area and management of other resources in the unit.

## V. IMPACTS OF NONDESIGNATION ON WILDERNESS VALUES

### MFP

The Schell MFP contains only one recommendation for the Weepah Spring study area. The Schell Area Forester has recommended that the ponderosa pine in the area be treated to guarantee their perpetuation. This would involve some tree cutting and, possibly, soil scarification. Scarification would involve road building, which would significantly affect

opportunities for solitude, as would the scarification itself. Chances of this occurring are poor.

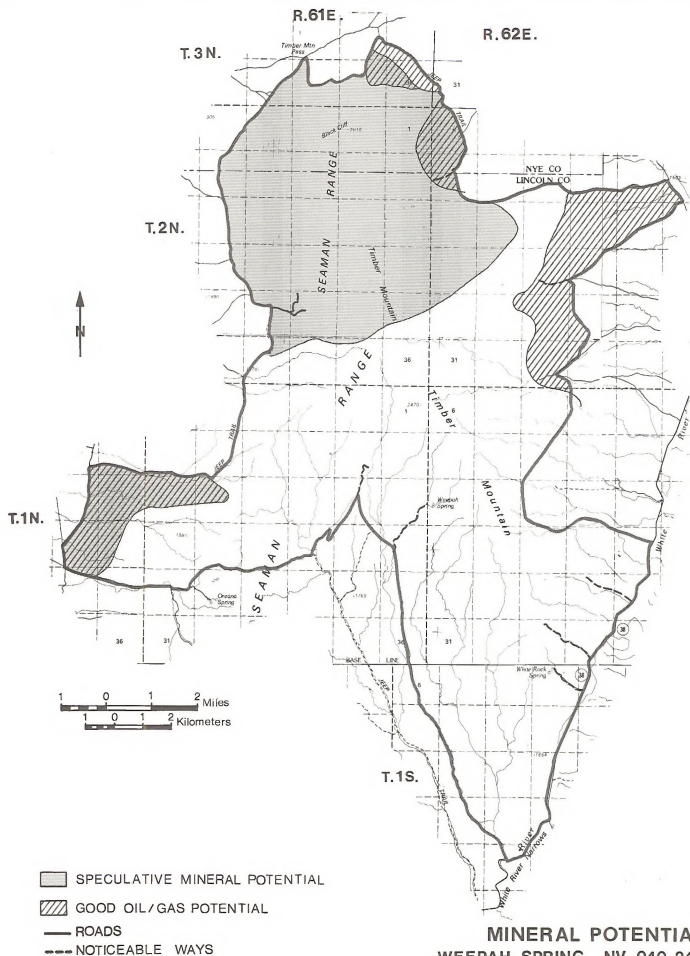
The MFP also identified a "speculative" mineral area that includes the northern third of the unit. This would indicate that mineral exploration should be expected in the area. Exploration would destroy the naturalness of the affected portion and would lessen the overall opportunities for solitude and recreation.

#### General

Some casual road building associated with recreation will occur in accessible portions. Seismic operations may impact the bench areas.

#### CONCLUSION

Without wilderness designation, the wilderness characteristics of the Weepah Spring study area would experience some degradation due to mineral exploration and, to a lesser extent, energy exploration and range improvement.



R.61E.

R.62E.

T.3N.

T.2N.

T.1N.

T.1S.



NYE CO  
LINCOLN CO

Timber Mtn  
Pass

Black Cliff

SEAMAN RANGE

RANGE

SEAMAN

Timber  
Mountain

White  
River

White  
River  
Spring

Black  
Cliff  
Spring

White  
River  
Spring

White  
River  
Spring

White  
River  
Spring

White  
River  
Spring

## PUBLIC COMMENT IN THE WILDERNESS REVIEW PROCESS

Comment has been accepted from the public at all times during the wilderness review, and has been solicited at several points during the process. A formal comment period was held for each of the following phases: (1) the initial wilderness inventory; (2) the intensive wilderness inventory; (3) Schell URA-3; (4) after Schell MFP-1; (5) scoping of EIS alternatives.

Many comments received were very general, indicating either support for or opposition to designated wilderness for a wide range of reasons. Many supporting and opposing comments were also submitted specific to each one of the eight WSA's. Some of these, too, were very general in nature. While such comments indicate public feelings about the WSA's, they provide little basis for analysis of the suitability of the areas for designation.

Many groups and individuals have commented on specific features and values of the WSA's. These have been most useful in the suitability analysis by directing it and focusing attention on certain characteristics. Each comment was considered on its own merits. There has never been a "vote counting" of comments.

Most comments are addressed in the analysis presented in this technical report and in the Wilderness EIS. The following is a brief and by no means exclusive discussion of the comments received and their usefulness to the study:

### General

Many persons were concerned with the conflicts between wilderness designation and the development of energy and mineral resources. This issue has received substantial treatment in the technical report and the EIS. Selection of the Preferred Alternative involved close consideration of the impacts to this resource.

Consideration was given to future needs for transmission and utility corridors, in particular in the Mount Grafton WSA.

Concerns were expressed by several persons and especially by one state agency that road closures would occur with wilderness designation, limiting opportunities for recreation and other activities. Since no road closures are proposed in any alternative, these concerns have been effectively addressed.

Opposition to designation derived in one case from misperceptions regarding air quality standards in BLM wilderness areas. There will be no change in air quality standards unless the state effects it.

Many comments were received during the scoping comment period indicating a need for an alternative between the MFP-2 (Preferred) Alternative and the All Wilderness Alternative. The Wilderness Emphasis Alternative was developed in direct response to these.

### WSA-Specific Comments

1. Mount Grafton - A great deal of comment was received on this unit. Those wishing to see the area designated as wilderness recount the area's mandatory characteristics and supplemental values. Opposing viewpoints come primarily from mineral interests who cite the mineral values of the area.
2. Fortification Range - Several persons have commented that this area has wilderness values higher than recognized in the BLM's inventory. These opinions constitute a subjective disagreement between the BLM and others.

Some potential for minerals has been identified by the public, and this was given consideration in the assessment of conflicts and impacts of nondesignation.

3. Table Mountain - Several persons have identified conflicts with other resource values in this unit, especially with mineral resources.
4. Worthington Mountains - This unit has received a large volume of comment. Several individuals have identified high mineral values in the vicinity of Freiburg Mine on the north end of the range. Many others have written of the high wilderness values - mandatory and supplemental - in the area. The BLM recognizes the validity of both points of view, with conditions, and these are discussed in the analysis.

Some specific comments were received for the other WSA's (Far South Egans, White Rock Range, Parsnip Peak, and Weepah Spring). These, too, were considered in the study analysis. All public comments are on file for review at the Ely District and Nevada State Offices.

No concerns have been expressed by local Indian tribes.



Form 1279-3  
June 1984)

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