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WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
Battle Mountain District
Battle Mountain Nevada

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WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT
for the
SHOSHONE-EUREKA RESOURCE AREA
BATTLE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT, NEVADA

Prepared by

Battle Mountain District
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior

September 1983

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RECOMMENDATION

This report contains the results of the Bureau of Land Management's review of three wilderness study areas in Eureka, Nye, and Lander counties, Nevada. These three Wilderness Study Areas were identified under section 603 of Federal Land Policy Management Act. Based upon multiple resource analysis and public involvement, we have concluded that approximately 54,470 acres within these wilderness study areas are not suitable for preservation as wilderness and should be released by Congress for uses other than wilderness. These nonsuitable areas are listed below and are shown on maps in this report.

Area	Nonsuitable Acres BLM	Preliminary Suitable Acres BLM
Antelope (NV-060-231/241) Area contiguous with Antelope	4,800	82,600 500
Roberts (NV-060-541)	0	15,090
Simpson Park (NV-060-428)	<u>49,670</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	54,470	98,190

We are making no recommendation with respect to those lands preliminarily found suitable for preservation as wilderness, since those areas are now undergoing further consideration, involving mineral surveys being conducted by Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines. Recommendations will be transmitted at a later date, when the mineral surveys have been completed.

This report contains the results of our analysis to date on both the nonsuitable and preliminarily suitable areas in order to give as complete a picture a possible of all the lands reviewed in this wilderness study.

This report satisfies the requirement for a record of decision under the regulations 40 CFR 1505. An environmental impact statement accompanies the report.

State Director
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Director
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Secretary of the Interior

Date

WILDERNESS STUDY OVERVIEW

This wilderness study report involves three wilderness study areas (WSAs) totaling 152,160 acres. Two of the areas are wholly within the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area of the Battle Mountain District, while the third is partially within the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area and partially within the District's Tonopah Resource Area (see Map 1).

The Final Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) was completed in January of 1984. The three WSAs were studied and evaluated through this RMP/EIS using the criteria contained in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wilderness Study Policy. The RMP/EIS included four alternatives: 1) the preferred resource management plan, 2) a resource protection alternative which doubled as the all wilderness alternative, 3) an economic development alternative, and 4) a no action alternative which doubled as the no wilderness alternative. These four alternatives respectively analyzed the impact of recommending 2, 3, 1, and no areas as suitable for wilderness designation. Table 4 shows the amount of acreage recommended or not recommended in each alternative. Two management actions were considered for the Roberts and Simpson Park wilderness study areas 1) all wilderness and 2) no wilderness. Four management actions were considered for the Antelope wilderness study area: 1) all wilderness, 2) no wilderness, 3) partial wilderness, and 4) partial wilderness plus an additional 500 acres of adjacent non-WSA lands added to improve manageability.

The cumulative impacts of the preferred plan are summarized as follows: Wilderness values would be protected on 98,190 acres of public land. Designation would provide additional protection for an estimated 1,382 cultural resource sites. Wilderness designation of all 15,090 acres within the Roberts wilderness study area, 82,600 acres within the Antelope wilderness study area, and 500 acres adjacent to the Antelope wilderness study area would have a significant adverse impact upon the ability of the minerals industry to explore for and develop potential mineral deposits in these areas. Adverse impacts resulting from wilderness designation upon woodland management, livestock grazing, motorized recreation use, and the local economy would be insignificant. Table 3 is a summary of the impacts of each alternative considered.

All of the 54,470 acres recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness would be available for mineral exploration and development upon cessation of interim management. Wilderness values would be lost in the northern portion of the Simpson Park wilderness study area as a result of mineral exploration and development of known mineral values.

Table 1: Land within Wilderness Study Area Boundaries

Unit No.	<u>Name</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>	<u>Acres Private</u>	<u>Gross Total</u>
NV-060-231/241	Antelope	87,400	0	87,400
NV-060-541	Roberts	15,090	0	15,090
NV-060-428	Simpson Park	49,670	80	49,750

Table 2: Recommendations

Unit. No.	Name	Within Preliminary Suitable Boundary		Within Nonsuitable Boundary	
		Acres BLM	Acres Private	Acres BLM	Acres Private
NV-060-231/241 Plus 500 acres adjacent to Antelope	Antelope	83,100	0	4,800	0
NV-060-541	Roberts	15,090	0	0	0
NV-060-428	Simpson Park	0	0	49,670	80
Totals		<u>98,190</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>54,470</u>	<u>80</u>
					<u>4,800</u>
					<u>54,550</u>

Table 3 Comparative Analysis of Impact by Alternatives

Alternatives

Resources	Preferred	Protection	Economic Development	No Action
Woodlands	6,300 acres of woodland withdrawn from management for woodland products (NSI)	10,800 acres of woodland withdrawn from management for woodland products (NSI)	5,000 acres of woodland withdrawn from management for woodland products (NSI)	No Impacts
Wildlife	Mule deer, sage grouse and wetland/riparian habitat given added protection in 2 WSAs (SBI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but in 3 WSAs (SBI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but in only one WSA (SAI)	Added habitat protection lost in all WSAs. (SAI)
Livestock Grazing	Reestablishment of Lahontan cutthroat trout enhanced (SBI)	Same impact as Preferred alternative (SBI)	Opportunity for reestablishment of Lahontan cutthroat trout population reduced. (SAI)	Same impact as Economic Development alternative. (SAI)
Cultural Resources	Future projects may be disallowed or restricted in 2 WSAs. Potential limitations on motorized use (NSI)	Same impact as Preferred alternative but in 3 WSAs. (NSI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative except no impact in Roberts WSA (NSI)	No impacts
Visual Resources	Additional protection to 1,311 cultural sites. (SBI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but to 838 additional sites. (SBI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but to 216 fewer sites. (SBI)	No added protection to cultural resource sites. (SAI)
Visual Resources	Additional protection to visual resources in 2 WSAs. (NSI)	Additional protection to visual resources in 3 WSAs. (NSI)	Degradation of visual resource in 2 WSAs due to extensive resource use and development. (SAI)	Same impact as Economic Development alternative. (SAI)

Table 3 Comparative Analysis of Impact by Alternatives

Alternatives

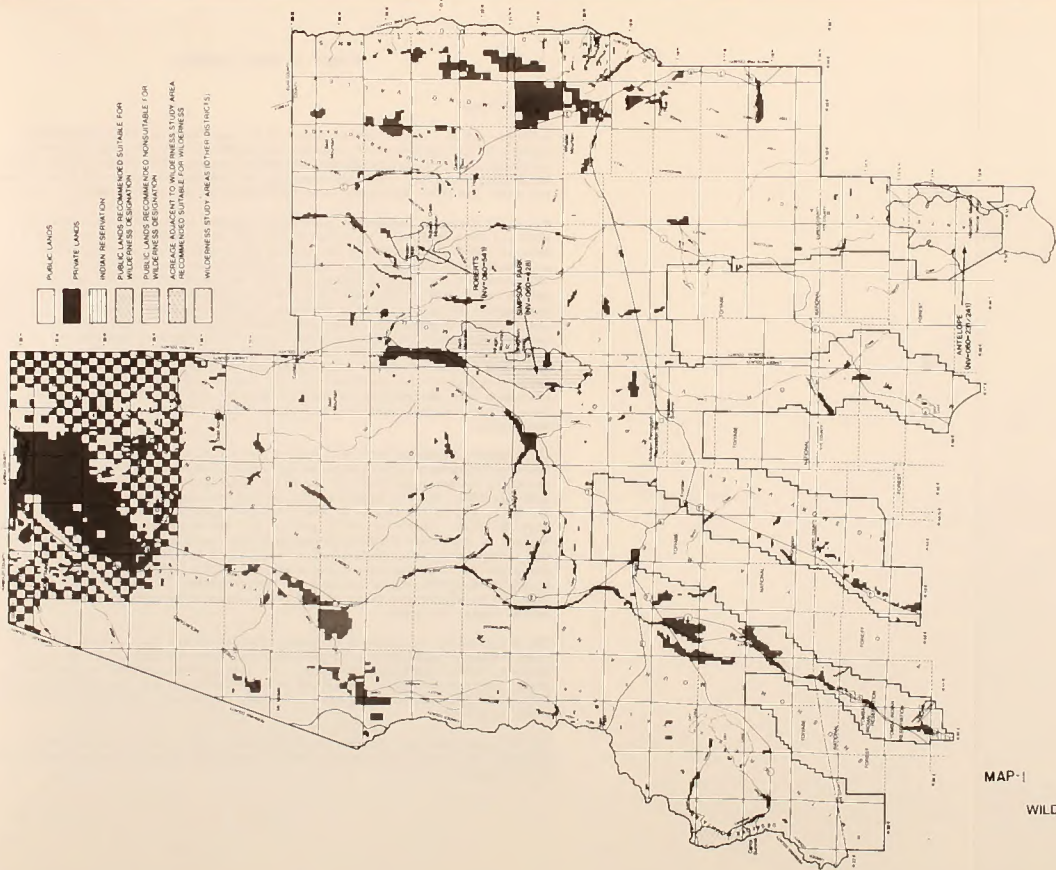
Resources	Preferred	Protection	Economic Development	No Action
Wilderness	Wilderness values protected in majority of 2 WSAs. (SBI) One WSA would lose protection. (NSI)	Wilderness values in all of 3 WSAs protected. (SBI)	Wilderness values in majority of one WSA protected, (SBI) and lost in 2 WSAs (SAI)	Wilderness values in majority of one WSA unaffected (NSI), lost in 2 WSAs. (SAI)
Recreation	Motorized recreation prohibited and primitive recreation increased on 2 WSAs (NSI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but on all 3 WSAs. (NSI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but on only 1 WSA. (NSI)	Motorized recreation would be maintained, opportunities for primitive recreation would be lost on 2 WSAs and unaffected on 1 WSA. (NSI)
Mineral Exploration and Development	Opportunity for exploration and development lost on 6,000 acres high potential, 9,000 acres moderate potential and 82,600 acres low potential for precious and base metals. (SAI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative but on an additional 4,500 acres of high potential and 45,000 acres of low to moderate potential. (SAI)	Opportunity for exploration and development of mineral potential lost on 82,600 acres of low potential. (NSI)	No Impacts.
Social and Economic	Minor beneficial impacts to local trades and services supporting wilderness users. (NSI)	Same as Preferred alternative. (NSI)	Same as Preferred alternative. (NSI)	No Impacts.
	Adverse impact to local economy due to restricted mineral exploration and development. (NSI)	Same impacts as Preferred alternative. (NSI)	No impacts.	No Impacts.

Table 4: Comparison of Areas Recommended Suitable and Nonsuitable for Wilderness Designation Under Each Alternative (acres)

Wilderness Study Area	Preferred RMP Suitable	Preferred RMP Nonsuitable	Protection Alternative		Economic Development Alternative		No Action Alternative	
			Suitable	Nonsuitable	Suitable	Nonsuitable	Suitable	Nonsuitable
Antelope	82,600	4,800	87,400	0	82,600	4,800	0	87,400
Area contiguous with Antelope	500							
Roberts	15,090	0	15,090	0	0	15,090	0	15,090
Simpson Park	0	49,670	49,670	0	0	49,670	0	49,670
Total	98,190	54,470	152,160	0	82,600	69,560	0	152,160

Source: Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area Files

Note: These Wilderness Study Areas were identified under section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act



MAP-1

WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

SCALE
 1:50,000
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 SHOSHONE-EUREKA
 WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION

A 90-day public comment period (June 24 to September 21, 1983) began subsequent to filing the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement with the Environmental Protection Agency. The public review was scheduled to provide concerned agencies and publics the opportunity to review the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement.

The draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public on June 15, 1983. A BLM notice announcing the availability of the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement was published in the June 24, 1983 issue of the Federal Register. This notice announced that the review period was to end on September 21, 1983, and included notification of public hearings to be held in Battle Mountain, Eureka, and Reno, Nevada. After the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency, over 350 copies were distributed to reviewing agencies, elected officials, and interested publics. The times and locations of the scheduled public hearings were included in a cover letter. Reading copies of the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement were distributed to public libraries and BLM offices in Nevada. News releases were issued from the Nevada State Office to local and regional news media.

Three public hearings were held during the public review period on the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement. Oral statements were presented by one individual at the first hearing in Battle Mountain, Nevada on July 23, 1983, by four people at the second hearing in Eureka, Nevada on July 27, 1983, and by ten people at the third and last hearing in Reno, Nevada on July 28, 1983. There were five people that did not comment on the wilderness aspects of the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement. One person spoke as an individual on wilderness and as a representative of an environmental organization on the remainder of the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement. Additionally, 13 written comments were received on wilderness issue of the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement.

The distribution of comments by group, residence, and the form of input on the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement is shown on Table 5, Public Responses by Group. The alternatives favored by the individuals, representatives of companies or organizations, and representatives of local, state and federal agencies are shown on Table 6, Alternative Preferences by Group.

The reasons given for alternative preferences are in the narrative which follows. The number of persons citing a reason is shown in parentheses after each comment.

Table 5: Public Responses by Group

Group	Inputs (a)	Signatures (b)	RESIDENCE			FORM OF INPUT		
			Counties within Mountain District	Other Counties in Nevada	Out of State	Hearings	Letter	Memos
Individuals	10	10	2	5	3	6	4	-
Mining Companies	2	2	-	1	1	-	2	-
Utility Companies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Organizations	8	6	-	5	1	4	4	-
Mining Organizations	2	2	-	1	1	1	1	-
Cattlemen's Association	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Agencies	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
State Government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Government	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
Total	24	22	3	12	7	11	12	1

(a) = Total of written and oral comments received.

(b) = If more than one input was received.

Table 6: Alternative Preferences by Group

ALTERNATIVES

Group (a)	Preferred	Resource Protection	Economic Development	No Action	Number Taking	
					No Position	Position
Individuals	2	2	1	-	-	6
Mining Companies	1	-	-	-	-	1
Utility Companies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Organizations	1	1	-	-	-	4
Mining Organizations	-	-	-	1	-	1
Cattlemen's Association	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Agencies	-	-	-	-	-	-
State Agencies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Government	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	4	3	2	1	-	12

(a) = A person may have identified more than one alternative.
 (b) = Specific mention of an alternative was not made in comment letter or oral testimony.

REASONS FOR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Pro

Add south half of Simpson Park wilderness study area as wilderness. Total wilderness lands for the resource area would only be 3 percent of the 4.3 million-acre resource area.

An acceptable course of action with the exception of wilderness designaion for Roberts wilderness study area.

Con

Include part of the Simpson Park Range as wilderness; the south end especially.

REASONS FOR RESOURCE PROTECTION ALTERNATIVE

Pro

A reasonable, well considered plan, allowing for maintaining multiple uses as well as protectin of the valuable pristine wilderness areas.

Sensitive resource values would be better protected and preserved.

Proposals are good but not enough. Support closing 49 ways.

REASONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE

Pro

Increases the productivity of the ranches and mining. Towns in this area would increae their business because their dependence on these two industries.

What the federal government does in this are we're in is really the future of our part of Nevada.

It offers sufficient incentive and flexibility for renewed growth in Lander County, yet will realistically approach agency and local concerns pertaining to livestock use, wild horse levels, and wildlfe habitat management. Allow full mineral development of Simpson Park area.

REASONS FOR NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

No comments received.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WILDERNESS STUDY AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Antelope Wilderness Study Area

I. NV-060-231/241, Antelope, 87,400 acres

II. A. Recommendation and Rationale

Preliminary acreage recommended as suitable total 82,600, plus and additional 500 acres adjacent to the northern boundary not currently in wilderness study area status. A total of 4,800 acres are recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Those lands recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation (area B) are on the periphery of the wilderness study area. Removing these lands from the recommended preliminary suitable area would eliminate a number of human imprints that detract from the wilderness character of the area, and increase manageability of the area by eliminating existing ways where vehicle use would be hard to control.

Those lands recommended as suitable for wilderness preservation are identified in area "A". They include portions of the Antelope and Hot Creek Ranges, an extremely remote and arid region of central Nevada. Several 9,000 foot peaks and many isolated stands of aspen exist along the 25 mile ridgeline.

Area "A" is manageable as wilderness due to the remote character and lack of roads, ways, and development associated with the unit.

Recommending area "B" as nonsuitable will increase manageability by eliminating the area where the major portion of vehicle use and manageability problems would occur. Ample vegetative and topography screening does exist to shield visitors or groups of visitors from one another.

There are no identified ore deposits within area "A" or area "B", nor do any mining claims exist in the area. There are oil and gas leases that overlap into the area. The mineral and oil and gas potential of area "A" and area "B" is rated as low. Geothermal potential is rated as moderate.

A total of 500 acres, not within the wilderness study area boundary, have been included within area "A". Currently a portion of the wilderness study area boundary is located on a township line. Addition of this 500 acres would improve manageability by providing a more easily recognizable northern boundary.

B. Statistical Table

Antelope Wilderness Study Area (NV-060-231/241)

Acres BLM.....	87,400
State.....	0
Private.....	0
Gross Total.....	87,400

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended <u>Nonsuitable</u>	4,800
BLM acres Preliminary recommended <u>suitable</u>	83,100

(includes 500 adjacent acres)

III. General Description of the Wilderness Study Area

A. Location

The Antelope wilderness study area is located in Eureka and Nye counties, approximately 40 miles wouth of Eureka, Nevada.

B. Boundaries

The wilderness study area boundary follows roads, ways, and fence lines with cherrystems excluding roads.

C. General Environment

The Antelope wilderness study area consist of a ridgeline approximately 25 miles long and has an average elevation differential of about 2,000 feet. The area is arid with scattered stands of mountain mahogany and aspen.

IV. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

A. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

1. Quality of the Areas Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness: The area is generally free from human imprints and is in a natural state. The following imprints are found within the boundary of the wilderness study area: 13 ways, 5 water developments, a small seeding in the northeast portion of the unit near Crested Wheat Ridge, 4 fences which protrude a short way into the unit, and a small exclosure in the southeast portion of the unit. All imprints are the result of livestock grazing operations and firewood cutting. The potential does exist for changing the wilderness area boundaries to omit a number of these imprints near Crested Wheat Ridge. Two fences, a seeding, 3 ways, and 5 cherrystemmed roads are included in a 4,800 acre area that could be removed by adjusting a short section of the boundary line.

Because the area is so remote and seldom visited, little development has taken place. The size of the area also contributes significantly to the diversity of landform, vegetation types, and wilderness characteristics within the unit.

Solitude: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. Located 20 miles from the nearest paved highway the area is extremely remote and seldom visited. A mixture of diverse topography and vegetation combine to form excellent screening in the unit. In addition, size and topography combine to form almost unlimited secluded spots. Because of the general absence of ways, the interior of the unit provides very limited motorized access ensuring seclusion to almost any degree sought.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area offers abundant opportunities for sustained high-elevation hiking and horseback riding, hunting, sightseeing, photography, and historical and archaeological study. These factors, in combination, provide an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation within the wilderness study area.

2. Special Features

Untrampled spring meadows, uncommon in Nevada, occur in the southern portion of the unit. A group of Shoshone Indian wickiups, the James Wild Horse Trap (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), and many scattered archaeological sites exist in the unit. These relatively undisturbed special features supplement the wilderness characteristics of the area.

3. Multiple Resource Benefits: The benefit to other resource values and uses which only wilderness designation could ensure.

In addition to its value as a setting for primitive recreation or solitude, wilderness can also provide a range of benefits to other multiple resource values and uses which are of significance.

- a. Watershed and water quality would benefit because development involving surface disturbance of the area would be limited.
- b. Wildlife species such as mule deer, birds of prey, sage grouse, and a variety of non-game birds would benefit from the added protection of wilderness designation because it would prevent habitat loss as a result of development. Prohibiting recreational motorized vehicle use for hunting activities would also benefit wildlife by limiting easy access into the area and by lessening disturbance of the area.

- c. Visual resources and scenic quality of the area would be protected because of limited development inside the unit.
- d. Cultural Resources, both known and potential, would benefit because the limited surface disturbance and recreational vehicle access into the area would mean less disturbance to archaeological sites.

4. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- a. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems and Landforms

According to the Bailey-Kuchler System of ecosystem classification, the Antelope wilderness study area lies within the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland Ecosystem. Currently, the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland Ecosystem is not represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Designation of the Antelope area as wilderness would expand the diversity of Natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms. There are presently 14 areas totaling 535,000 acres which represent this ecosystem that are administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. Many of the other wilderness study areas currently under study that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management within Nevada fit within this system.

- b. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within A Day's Driving Time (5 hours) of Major Population Centers

The Antelope wilderness study area is located within a sparsely-populated portion of central Nevada where there are no major population centers (50,000 people) within one day's driving time (5 hours). Wilderness designation of this area would not contribute to preserving opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation within a day's driving time of major population centers.

- c. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness

The Jarbidge Wilderness Area, located in northeastern Nevada, is the only area in Nevada designated as wilderness. The Jarbidge Wilderness Area totals 64,847 acres. Designation of the Antelope area as wilderness would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness. Two wilderness study areas, the Park Range (NV 040-154), and the Fandango (NV-060-190), are separated from the Antelope area by a single lane dirt road.

B. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

Area "A" in the Antelope wilderness study area is considered to be manageable over the long term. There are no private inholdings, state lands, or mining claims within the unit. The oil and gas leases along the western portion of the unit should not pose a major manageability problem. No rights-of-way are proposed within or near the area. Continued livestock grazing would not be incompatible with wilderness management. Boundaries are generally easily recognizable and offer no problems for wilderness management. An exception is an 2.5-mile portion of the northern boundary which follows a section line. Manageability could be improved by moving the boundary north to coincide with terrain features identifiable on the ground. This boundary revision would encompass an additional 500 acres. Another adjustment would be the deletion of the 4,800-acre area (Area "B") previously mentioned under Naturalness in Criterion No. 1. Deletion of this area would improve manageability by removing a number of imprints, including ways and cherrystemmed roads, where vehicle use would be a problem for manageability. Other existing ways are not considered a major problem for manageability. Recreational use of these ways would be prohibited and rehabilitation accomplished by natural regeneration.

C. Quality Standards

1. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Wilderness designation of the Antelope wilderness study area would have a significant adverse impact upon the ability of the mineral industry to explore for and develop potential mineral deposits in this area. The degree of impact upon known and potential mineral exploration and development opportunities varies by mineral type. The impact would not be reduced if only area "A" were designated.

Wilderness designation of the wilderness study area would withdraw 83,100 acres from appropriation under the mining laws and from mineral leasing as of the date of designation.

There are no mining claims or geothermal leases in area "A", but oil and gas leases do exist.

From information obtained by the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area Geologist and other individuals and groups contacted, the locatable mineral potential of the Antelope wilderness study area has been determined to be generally low with a low degree of confidence. There is few data to support this conclusion.

Most of the area is covered by several hundred feet of Tertiary volcanics related to the Williams Ridge caldera complex. Underlying limestones and dolomites are faulted and fractured which could be a good depositional environment for metallic

mineralization. The basic ingredients for mineral accumulation are present within the wilderness study area, but to date, no evidence of mineralization has been discovered. The area is rated as having low potential for locatable minerals based upon sketchy indirect evidence.

The leasable mineral potential of the Antelope wilderness study area is generally low. Sodium and potassium compounds will not be discussed any further in this section due to their very low probability of occurrence. Phosphate is rated as moderate, oil and gas potential is low, and geothermal potential is rated as moderate.

Phosphate-bearing formations are reported to occur within the Antelope Range by Rogers, et. al., 1970. However, the precise locations of these occurrences are uncertain. The Rogers report is of such a general nature that assumptions of location, quantity and grade cannot be made. Phosphate potential is classified as moderate based on indirect and sketchy data.

Geothermal potential is rated as moderate based upon indirect evidence. Large deep-seated faults bound most of the mountain ranges in Nevada. These structural environments are host to literally hundreds of thermal sites elsewhere in the state. The Antelope Range is bordered by such deep-seated faults. For a summary of the mineral potential ratings, see Table 1.

2. Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Antelope wilderness study area, or any part of it, would cause no significant adverse impacts to air quality, visual resources, recreation, wildlife, wild horses, cultural resources, water, or lands.

There is no demand for woodland products (cordwood, fence posts, and pine nuts) within the Antelope wilderness study area. The area is remote and inaccessible. There are sufficient quantities of woodland products outside the boundary of the unit in more accessible areas to meet all foreseeable demands.

Designation of the Antelope unit as wilderness would have no impact on livestock grazing use of the area. Adjustments to livestock grazing use within the area would be determined using the same monitoring program implemented on the remainder of the resource area.

Maintenance of existing projects and construction of new projects within designated wilderness areas would be governed by the procedures outlined in the Bureau's Wilderness Management Policy. Major types of projects such as seedings would be

precluded, but most types of projects could be implemented with minor changes to make them less obtrusive. No projects anticipated at this time would be precluded by wilderness designation.

3. Impacts of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Because of the past history of use of the Antelope wilderness study area and the projected low potential for development, the Antelope wilderness study area would be expected to retain its wilderness character in the long term if designation did not occur. For analytical purposes, long term is defined as 5-15 years. After this 15-year period, likelihood of impacts to wilderness values are unknown. Should the area not be designated as wilderness, alternative uses of the land would be livestock grazing, hunting, and recreational use.

If only area "B" is not designated as wilderness (as recommended in this report) only 4,800 acres would remain open to mineral entry, and there would be less impact on naturalness or on opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Overall, impacts to other resources would be insignificant if area "B" is not recommended.

4. Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section VI below).

5. Local Social and Economic Effects: Economic interest in the wilderness study derives from grazing, recreation, forest products, mineral production, and tax revenues. Analysis of these productive uses of the potential wilderness resource indicated that no significant alteration of the area economy would be expected to occur due to formal wilderness designation. While there would be some minor trade offs in income and employment impacts, with particular activities such as recreation being enhanced and mineral extraction being discouraged, the basic structure of the economy will remain intact, with no significant impacts, either beneficial or adverse.

Designation of the entire wilderness study area as wilderness would lead to expiration of 7,660 acres of oil and gas leases. This would result in an estimated annual loss of \$17,200 in taxes and federal revenue sharing to Eureka and Nye Counties.

6. No impacts to social values would occur as a result of wilderness designation.

Consistency With Other Plans: The Nevada Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommended support of wilderness designation where it is determined to be the best use of the land. Except for private lands near the

unit associated with ranching, there are no other private lands, state and local government lands, lands associated with Indian Tribes, or non-bureau-administered federal lands within or near the Antelope wilderness study area. The Bureau of Land Management is not aware of any conflicts with other plans.

V. Wilderness Study Area Alternatives

- A. Four Alternatives were analyzed for the Antelope wilderness study area in the PFEIS:

Preferred alternative - Wilderness designation of 82,600 acres within the wilderness study area and 500 acres adjacent to the wilderness study area.

Resource Protection/All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire wilderness study area (87,400 acres).

No Action/No Wilderness - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

Economic Development - Wilderness designation of 82,600 acres of the wilderness study area.

The environmental impacts of those alternatives are summarized in Table 3.

- B. The Environmentally Preferable Alternative is the All Wilderness Alternative.
- C. The Bureau of Land Management's Preferred Alternative is designated to facilitate manageability and to avoid environmental impacts.
- D. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the Bureau of Land Management will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. A wilderness management plan will be developed and implemented to minimize any impacts within the wilderness area.

VI. Summary of the Specific Public Comments on the Antelope Wilderness Study Area

The number of individuals, representatives of companies or organizations, and representatives of local, State, and Federal agencies that commented specifically on the Antelope wilderness study area is shown on Table A-1, Comments on Antelope Wilderness Study Area by Group. The reasons given for supporting a suitable recommendation and for

supporting a nonsuitable recommendation are shown in the narrative which follows. The number of persons citing a particular reason is shown in parentheses after the comment.

REASONS SUPPORTING SUITABLE RECOMMENDATION

Outstanding wilderness values (4).

Other values such as rare plants and archaeological sites that can only be protected through wilderness designation.

Pristine area.

Ecological values, including high mountain meadows which have not received substantial grazing (4).

A reservoir for scientific study.

Very large, wild, and remote with important cultural resources (2).

Low mineral potential and no private inholdings.

Attractive Areas.

Add ecosystems not currently represented in National Wilderness Preservation System.

REASONS SUPPORTING NONSUITABLE RECOMMENDATION

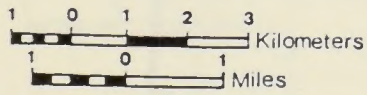
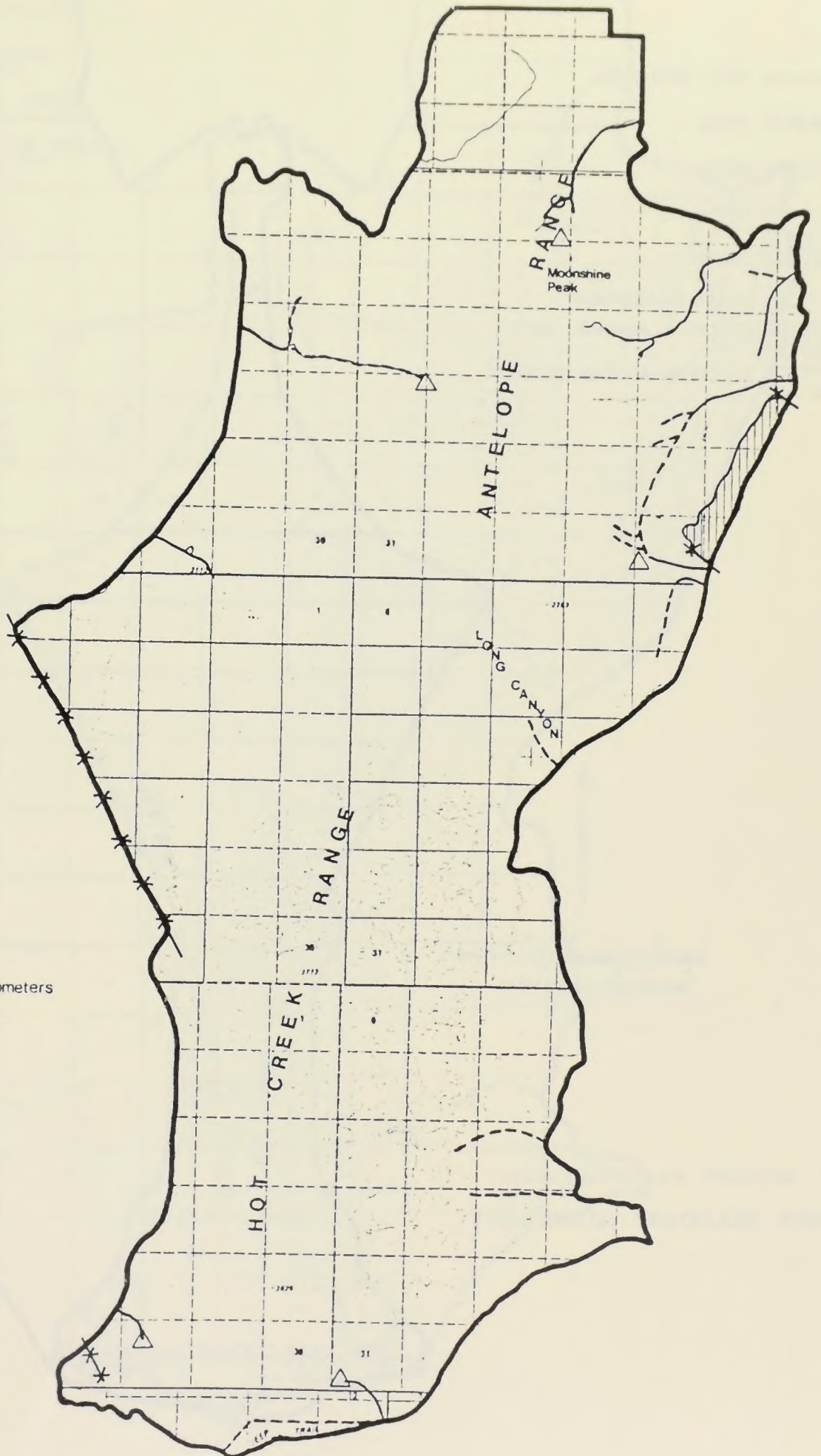
Too many roads, ranches and man-made improvements to have the solitude that is expressed in the wilderness specifications.

Suitability recommendation would preclude future development of mineral potential.

A-1 COMMENTS ON ANTELOPE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA BY GROUP

<u>Group</u>	<u>Suitable</u>	<u>Nonsuitable</u>
Individuals	7	1
Mining Companies	-	1
Utility Companies	-	-
Environmental Organizations	5	-
Mining Organizations	-	1
Cattlemen's Association	-	-
Federal Agencies	-	-
State Government	-	-
Local Government	-	-
Total	12	3

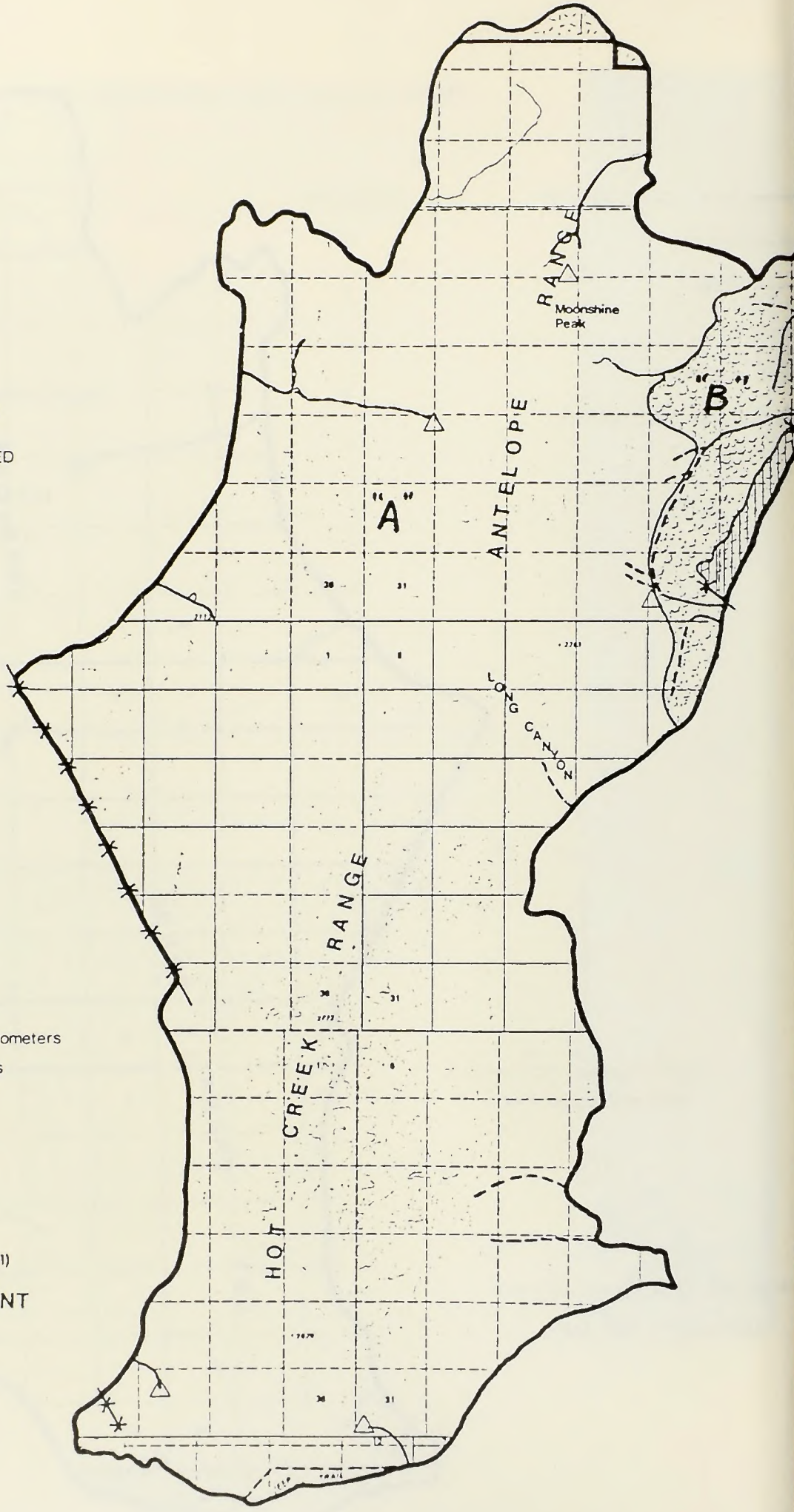
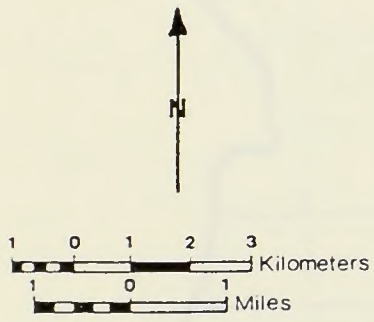
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- ×× FENCE
- ROAD
- - - WAY
- ▨ SEEDING
- △ WATER DEVELOPMENT



ANTELOPE WSA (NV-060-231/241)





IMPRINTS OF MAN

- WSA BOUNDARY
- XXX FENCE
- ROAD
- - - WAY
- ▨ SEEDING
- △ WATER DEVELOPMENT
- ▨ POTENTIAL ACREAGE ADDED
- ▨ POTENTIAL ACREAGE DELETED

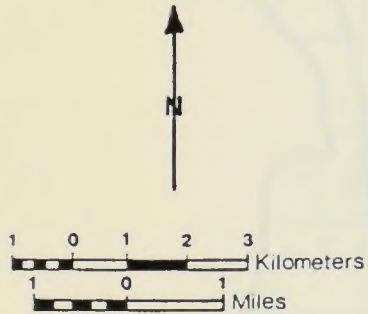


ANTELOPE WSA (NV-060-231/241)
 WSA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

MINERAL POTENTIAL (LOCATABLE)

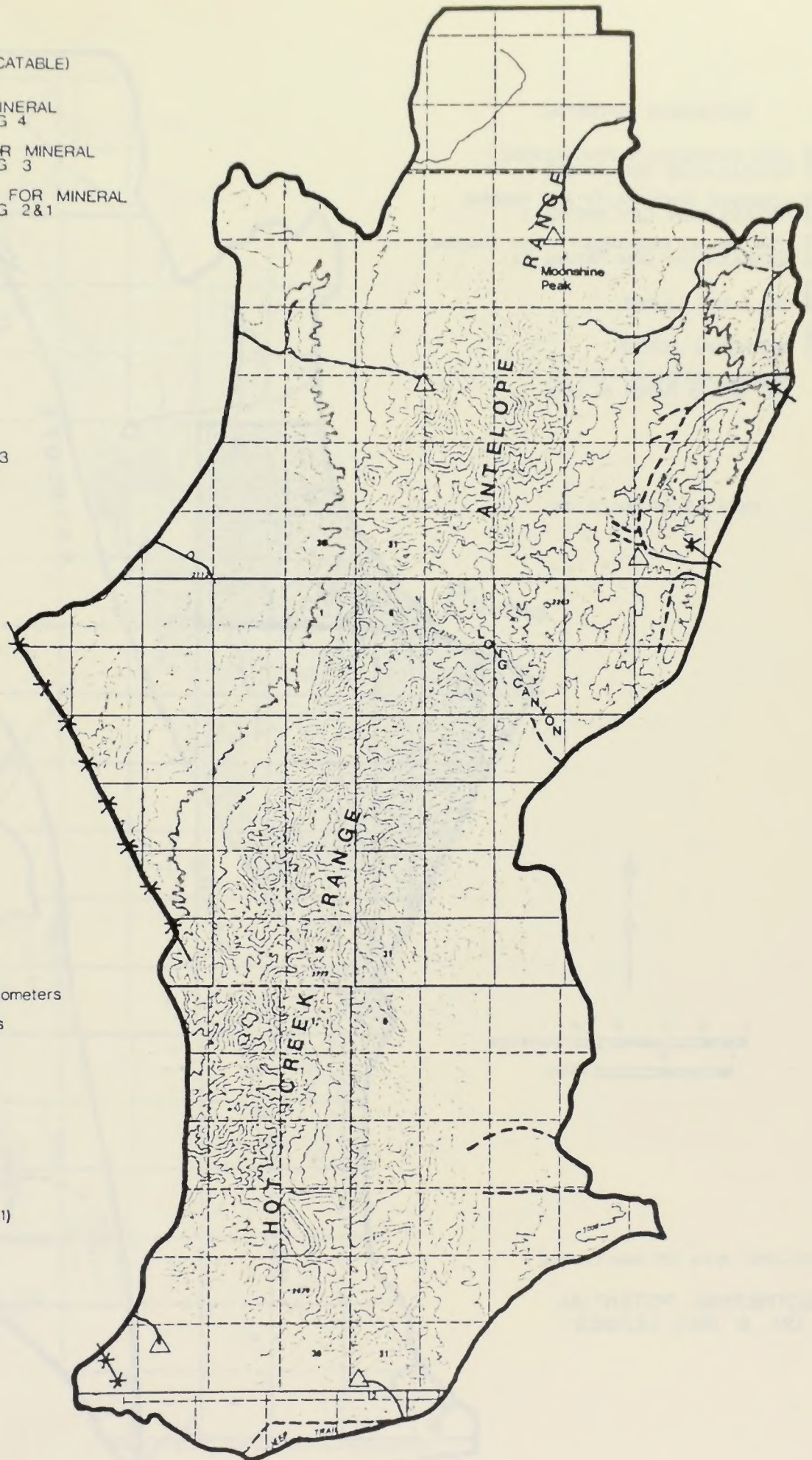
-  HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 4
-  MODERATE FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 3
-  LOW OR NO FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 2&1
-  MINING CLAIMS ON RECORD

DATA AS OF JAN 31, 1983









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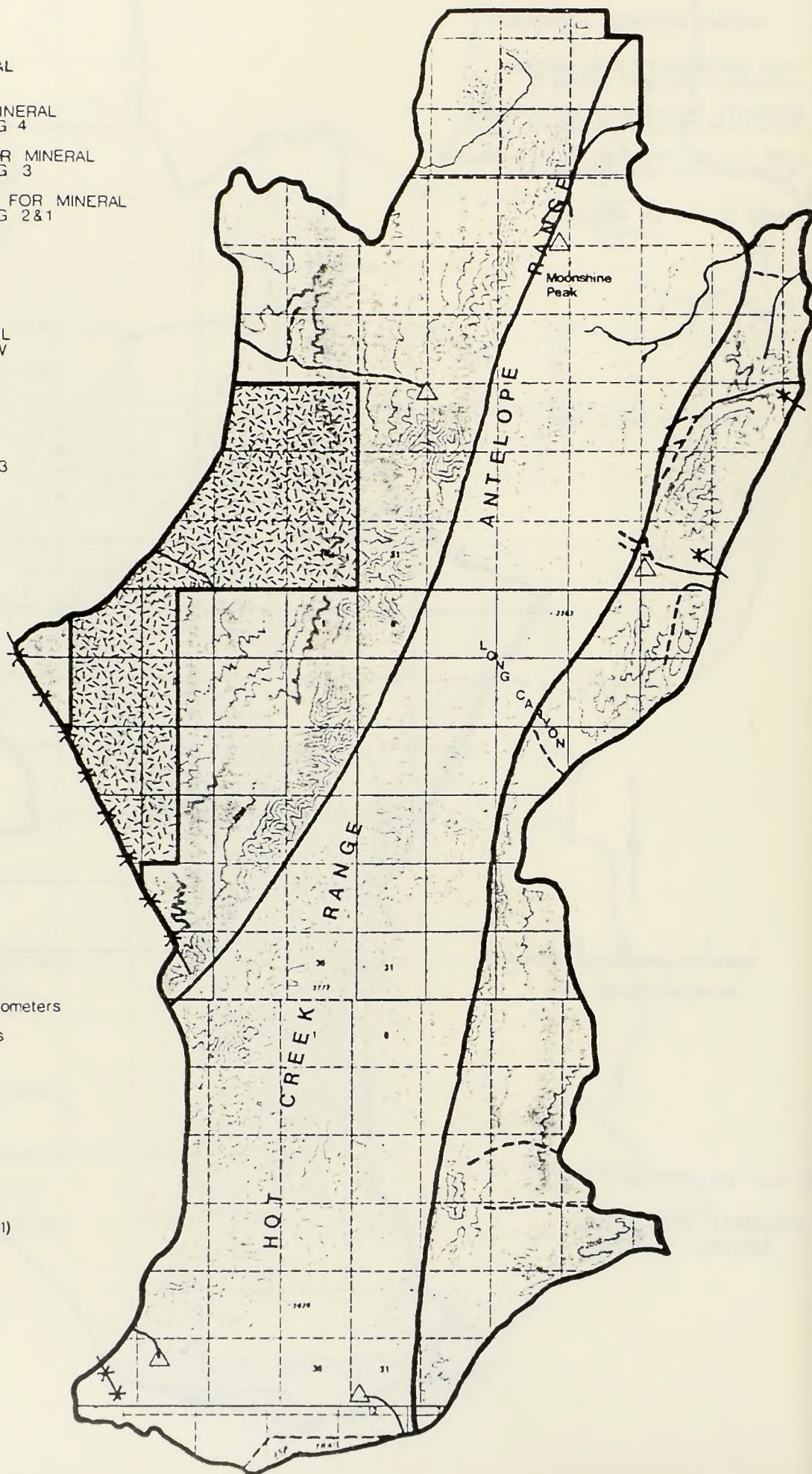
MINERAL POTENTIAL
MINING CLAIMS



GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL

-  HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 4
-  MODERATE FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 3
-  LOW OR NO FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 2&1
-  OIL & GAS LEASES
-  GEOTHERMAL LEASES
-  MINERAL POTENTIAL FOR OIL AND GAS IS RATED AS LOW

DATA AS OF JAN 31, 1983



ANTELOPE WSA (NV-060-231/241)

GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL
OIL & GAS LEASES

ANTELOPE WSA PHOTOS

ROBERTS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

I. NV-060-541, Roberts, 15,090 acres

II. A. Recommendation and Rationale

All 15,090 acres of the Roberts wilderness study area are recommended preliminary suitable for wilderness designation. Considering the small amount of acreage involved, the area offers outstanding wilderness values not common in central Nevada. The unit is characterized by narrow, deep canyons forested with willow, cottonwood, aspen, birch, and dogwood trees. Isolated stands of mountain mahogany and limber pine also exist on the barren rock ridges inside the area.

The north fork of Pete Hansen Creek is particularly attractive. From the edge of the wilderness study area boundary (and an undeveloped campsite) one can follow the perennial stream along a gently-sloping, vague trail suitable for horse-back travel through pinyon then aspen forest to a 25-foot waterfall. A number of undeveloped campsites are available nearby.

An unusual cave formation below Cooper Peak consist of a vertical shaft approximately 20 feet in diameter which is spanned by a natural arch. The cave shelters a perpetual snowbank.

The Roberts Creek/Vinini creek and the Dry Creek areas offer slopes of varying degrees and a variety of scenic attractions for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Suitable snow depths usually occur throughout this area.

Two intermittent ponds sheltered by a stand of aspen exist on the south side of Roberts Mountain. From the ponds, an old sheep herder's route ascends into a bowl surrounded by five peaks. Springs provide a reliable water source here.

Because of the rapid change in elevation, the area exhibits a variety of vegetative communities in close proximity to one another. These include a northern desert shrub community, a pinyon/juniper tree forest, a sub-alpine herbaceous/sage community, and a scattered boreal forest of limber pine.

The Roberts wilderness study area is manageable as wilderness over the long term. Sufficient vegetative and topographic screening does exist for users to find secluded spots.

The attractiveness of the peaks and overall ruggedness of the area is a dominant visual attraction from points outside the unit for many miles in any direction.

One identified lead and zinc ore deposit does exist within the Roberts wilderness study area. Because the Roberts Thrust Fault passes through the unit, there is much interest in the area. This thrust fault has been identified with gold deposits in the surrounding area. However, exploration work has been done in and around the area but to date no gold deposits have been located in the area. There are no pre-FLPMA mining claims in the area but several post-FLPMA claims do exist. There is also potential for barite in the area.

B. Statistical Table

Roberts Wilderness Study area (NV-060-541)

Acres BLM.....	15,090
State.....	0
Private.....	0
Gross Total.....	15,090

Recommendation

BLM Acres Recommended <u>Nonsuitable</u>	0
BLM Acres Preliminary Recommended <u>Suitable</u>	15,090

III. General Description of the Wilderness Study Area

A. Location

The Roberts wilderness study area is located in Eureka County approximately 40 miles northwest of Eureka, Nevada.

B. Boundaries

The wilderness study area boundary follows ridgelines, roads, ways, topographic lines, and cherrystems excluding roads.

C. General Environment

The Roberts wilderness study area is located in the Roberts Creek Mountains and contains three prominent peaks. It is irregularly shaped and surrounded on three sides by major valleys. For its size, the area offers diverse features and characteristics not common in central Nevada.

IV. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

A. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

1. Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness: The area is generally free from human imprints and is in a natural state. Those imprints present are substantially

unnoticeable in the Roberts wilderness study area as a whole. Five ways are in the unit. These ways would rehabilitate under natural conditions if they were closed to vehicle traffic. Two fences protrude into the unit. A small abandoned mining prospect was found on the north side of the unit, but is substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole. No potential exists for changing the area's boundaries. The nature of the intrusions does not warrant their exclusion.

Ranches and roads outside the boundary are visible from certain points inside the Roberts wilderness study area. These outside sights are considered minor and may add to the wilderness experience by giving one a sense of remoteness and isolation and also by heightening the user's awareness and appreciation for the area's outstanding wilderness values in contrast to sights and sounds outside the wilderness area.

There are no existing major noise source outside the unit that would have an affect upon the wilderness experience. However, the possibility does exist for development of two major mines within 10 miles of the area. Several roads form part of the boundary of the unit. The roads are not heavily traveled and the occasional vehicle noise would not affect the wilderness character of the area.

Solitude: The unit contains outstanding opportunities for solitude. Spread over an extremely jagged and varied topography, the unit is characterized by narrow, deep canyons forested with willow, cottonwood, aspen, birch, and dogwood trees. Barren rock ridges with isolated stands of mountain mahogany and limber pine combine with the canyons to offer abundant natural screening and offer many opportunities for the user to find a secluded spot.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The Roberts wilderness study area does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit offers a wide diversity of terrain, vegetation, and scenery. The massif consists of a series of rugged peaks forming a broken ridge. Numerous canyons and valleys surround the ridge breaking the unit into numerous areas.

The peaks are the primary attraction of the unit and provide the main objectives for primitive travel. The roughness of the crest encourages the use of different canyons for access to each of the peaks.

Outstanding opportunities include hiking, rock climbing, backpacking, horse back riding, nature study, hunting, and photography. Because of the character of the area, recreation values are higher than found in much of the surrounding region.

2. Special Features

Considering the small amount of acreage contained in the unit, the area offers a wide variety of special features. Much diversity in ecological features is found. Because of its rapid change in elevation, the unit exhibits a variety of habitats in close proximity to one another. These include the northern desert shrub community, a pinyon/juniper tree forest, a sub-alpine herbaceous/sage community, and a scattered boreal forest of limber pine. Open stands of mountain mahogany replace the pinyon/juniper forest and sub-alpine vegetation in some areas, primarily on south facing slopes.

The Roberts Mountain Thrust Fault, responsible for the mountain's existence, is an important structural feature of the intermountain west. The thrust provides an excellent opportunity for geological study. Universities as far away as Ohio and Nebraska, and students from England have participated in geologic field trips and mapping exercises in the area during the summer months. The main scientific values of the area are its "window on the mantel" characteristic, a geological formation associated with the Roberts Mountain Thrust Fault, and the ecological island aspect of the higher elevations. The unit offers much scenic value and dominates the view for miles around. Western Peak, a rocky, high-elevation point, is an interesting formation, and offers scenic value from many observation points outside of the unit. A perennial, twenty-five foot waterfall occurs in the north fork of Pete Hansen Creek. Two small seasonal ponds are found on Roberts Creek Mountain. Numerous caves and at least one natural arch are found in the rock cliffs within the unit.

3. Multiple Resource Benefits: The Benefit to other resource values and uses which only wilderness designation could ensure.

In addition to its value as a setting for primitive recreation or solitude, wilderness can also provide a range of benefits to other multiple resource values and uses which are of significance.

- a. Watershed and water quality would benefit because development involving surface disturbance of the area would be limited.
- b. Wildlife species such as mule deer, birds of prey, sage grouse, and a variety of non-game birds would benefit from the added protection of wilderness designation because it would prevent habitat loss as a result of development. Prohibiting recreational motorized vehicle use for hunting activities would also benefit wildlife by limiting easy access into the area and by lessening disturbance of the area.

- c. Visual resources and scenic quality of the area would be protected because of limited development inside the unit.
- d. Cultural Resources, both known and potential, would benefit because the limited surface disturbance and recreational vehicle access into the area would mean less disturbance to archaeological sites.

4. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- a. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems and Landforms

According to the Bailey-Kuchler system of ecosystem classification, the Roberts wilderness study area lies within the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland Ecosystem. Currently, the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland Ecosystem is not represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Designation of the Roberts area as wilderness would expand the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms. There are presently 14 areas totaling 535,000 acres which represent this ecosystem that are administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. Many of the other wilderness study areas currently under study that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management within Nevada fit within this ecosystem.

- b. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (five hours) of Major Population Centers

The Roberts wilderness study area is located within a sparsely populated portion of central Nevada where there are no major population centers (500,000 people) within one day's driving time (five hours). Wilderness designation of this area would not contribute to preserving opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation within a day's driving time of major population centers.

- c. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness

The Jarbidge Wilderness Area, located in northeastern Nevada, is the only area in Nevada designated as wilderness. The Jarbidge Wilderness area totals 64,847 acres. Designation of the Roberts area as wilderness would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness.

B. Criterion No. 2: Manageability

Wilderness designation of the Roberts wilderness study area would create some problems for manageability due mainly to an

unrecognizable boundary on the west side of the unit. Closure of one way may present a small problem for manageability because it would be difficult to prevent four-wheel-drive vehicles from using it. However, the area is considered to be manageable over the long term. There are no pre-FLPMA mining claims present but several post-FLPMA mining claims do exist that have potential for further development. The oil and gas leases in the northern portion of the unit should not pose a major manageability problem as the potential for oil and gas is very low. There are no rights-of-way proposed within or near the unit. Continued livestock grazing would not be incompatible with wilderness management.

C. Quality Standards

1. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Wilderness designation of the Roberts wilderness study area would have a significant adverse impact upon the ability of the mineral industry to explore for and develop potential mineral deposits in this area. The degree of impact upon known and potential mineral exploration and development opportunities varies by mineral type.

Wilderness designation of the Roberts wilderness study area would withdraw 15,090 acres from appropriation under the mining laws and from mineral leasing as of the date of designation. There are no geothermal leases in the Roberts wilderness study area, but oil and gas leases and mining claims do exist.

From information gathered by the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area geologist, the Geology, Energy, and Minerals report (GEM) prepared for this area, and information obtained from other individuals and groups contacted, the locatable mineral potential of the Roberts wilderness study area is high in the southern portion of the area and moderate in the northern portion of the area.

The southern portion of the Roberts unit has high potential for both precious and base metals as well as barite based upon indirect evidence. The structural features, stratigraphic characteristics, gravity data, aeromagnetic data, and the presence of numerous intrusive bodies all are favorable for mineral accumulation. The northern portion of the area is rated as having moderate favorability based upon both abundant direct and sketchy indirect evidence. The leaseable mineral potential for the Roberts wilderness study area is very low for oil, gas, sodium, and potassium, moderate for phosphate, and low for geothermal resources. Oil, gas, sodium and potassium will not be discussed any further in this section due to their low probability of occurrence.

Phosphate-bearing sections are reported to occur in the Vinini formation by Rogers, et. al., 1970. The section of occurrence is reported to be on Vinini Creek immediately east of the study area.

The Vinini formation is known to occur within the boundaries of the wilderness study area itself and this indirect evidence is the basis for the moderate rating.

Geothermal potential is greatest along the prominent faults of the north boundary of the Roberts wilderness study area. Large-scale faulting permeates the entire area and presents a good source for circulation of thermal waters. The geothermal potential is classified as low based upon insufficient data.

2. Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the Roberts wilderness study area would cause no significant adverse impacts to air quality, visual resources, recreation, wildlife, wild horses, cultural resources, water, or lands.

There is no demand for woodland products (cordwood, fence posts, and pine nuts) in the Roberts wilderness study area. There are sufficient quantities of woodland products outside the boundary of the unit to meet all foreseeable demands.

Designation of the Roberts unit as wilderness would have no impact on livestock grazing use of the area. Adjustments to livestock grazing use within the area would be determined using the same monitoring program implemented on the remainder of the resource area.

Maintenance of existing projects and construction of new projects within designated wilderness areas would be governed by the procedures outlined in the Bureau's Wilderness Management Policy. Major types of projects such as seedings would be precluded, but most types of projects could be implemented with minor design changes to make them less obtrusive. No projects anticipated at this time would be precluded by wilderness designation.

3. Impacts of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Because of the potential for development, the wilderness character of the Roberts wilderness study area could be expected to be lost within five years after the removal of interim management restrictions. Should the area not be designated as wilderness, the main alternative use of the land would be mineral exploration, mining, and livestock grazing. If

additional road construction and other development occurs, the wilderness character of the area will be eliminated. Nondesignation would result in the loss of protection for watershed, natural plant communities and wildlife habitat, and the loss of social benefits associated with wilderness. The cumulative effect of development would restrict opportunity for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Public Comments: (This standard is covered in section VI below)
5. Local Social and Economic Effects

Economic interest in the wilderness study area derives from grazing, recreation, forest products, mineral production, and tax revenues. Analysis of these productive uses of the potential wilderness resources indicated that no significant alteration of the area economy would be expected to occur due to formal wilderness designation. While there would be some minor trade offs in income and employment impacts, with particular activities such as recreation being enhanced and mineral extraction being discouraged, the basic structure of the economy will remain intact, with no significant impacts, either beneficial or adverse.

Designation of the entire wilderness study area as wilderness would lead to expiration of 2,500 acres of oil and gas leases. This would result in an estimated annual loss of \$5,625 in taxes and federal revenue sharing to Eureka county.

No impacts to social values would occur as a result of wilderness designation.

6. Consistency with other plans: The Nevada Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommended support of wilderness designation where it is determined to be the best use of the land. Except for private lands near the unit associated with ranching, there are no other private lands, state and local government lands, lands associated with Indian tribes, or non-bureau-administered federal lands within or near the Roberts wilderness study area. The Bureau of Land Management is not aware of any conflicts with other plans.

V. Wilderness Study Area Alternatives

- A. Four alternatives were analyzed for the Roberts wilderness study area in the PFEIS:

Preferred Alternative - Wilderness designation of the entire wilderness study area (15,090 acres).

Resource Protection/All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire wilderness study area (15,090 acres).

No Action/No Wilderness - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

Economic Development - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

The environmental impacts of those alternatives are summarized in Table 3.

- B. The environmentally preferable alternative is the All Wilderness Alternative.
- C. The Bureau of Land Management's Preferred Alternative is designed to facilitate manageability and to avoid environmental impacts.
- D. To mitigate impacts in the land not designated as wilderness after Congress has acted, the Bureau of Land Management will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. A wilderness management plan will be developed and implemented to minimize any impacts within the wilderness area.

VI. Summary of the Specific Public Comments on the Roberts Wilderness Study Area

The number of individuals, representatives of companies or organizations, and representatives of local, State, and Federal agencies that commented specifically on the Roberts wilderness study area is shown on Table R-1, Comments on Roberts Wilderness Study Area by Group. The reasons given for supporting a suitable recommendation and for supporting a nonsuitable recommendation are shown in the narrative which follows. The number of persons citing a particular reason is shown in parentheses after the comment.

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING SUITABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Outstanding wilderness values. (3)

One of the most spectacular areas in all of Nevada. (2)

Waterfalls, hiking and recreation opportunities.

Conflicts are minimal. (3)

Lovely place for walking and for observing wild flowers and wildlife.

Parts of wilderness study areas are gentle, with other parts very rugged, with twisted trees, snow banks and a real top of the world feeling.

The high, lingering snow banks, rock outcrops, scattered limber pines, lovely streams, even a waterfall and small lakes, are all the stuff of classic wilderness. (2)

Striking feature of limestone along the large mass of buttresses boldly accentuating this stunning mountain range.

North America's finest marine fossil beds.

Part of a spectacular, low-angle, tectonic thrust, more significant perhaps, than the famed Chief Mountain of the Alberta-Montana border.

Massive growth of very ancient mountain mahogany.

Vegetative diversity.

Attractive areas.

Add ecosystems not currently represented in National Wilderness Preservation System.

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING NONSUITABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Roberts Mountain thrust is the key to much of the economic mineralization in Nevada.

Strata form gold deposits of so-called nosium gold; a submicroscopic gold, the Carlin type. This structure is the one site in the whole state that has one of the best exposures.

Presence of vein barite; one of the indicators of gold mineralization being used all throughout the state.

Strong association with nearby Mount Hope mineralization, the molybdenum deposit that Exxon is developing.

Boundary of wilderness study area includes a significant portion of the Antelope Mining District which has had small productions of silver, lead, and zinc.

Geology of the area indicates the potential for economic mineralization in several commodities.

Recent Tonkin Springs gold discovery by Precambrian Exploration, Inc. within the Antelope Mining District announced reserves were 1.7 mm tons at .1 ounce gold per ton.

R-1 COMMENTS ON ROBERTS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA BY GROUP

<u>Group</u>	<u>Suitable</u>	<u>Nonsuitable</u>
Individuals	7	-
Mining Companies	-	2
Utility Companies	-	-
Environmental Organizations	5	-
Mining Organizations	-	1
Cattlemen's Association	-	-
Federal Agencies	-	-
State Government	-	-
Local Government	-	1
Total	12	4

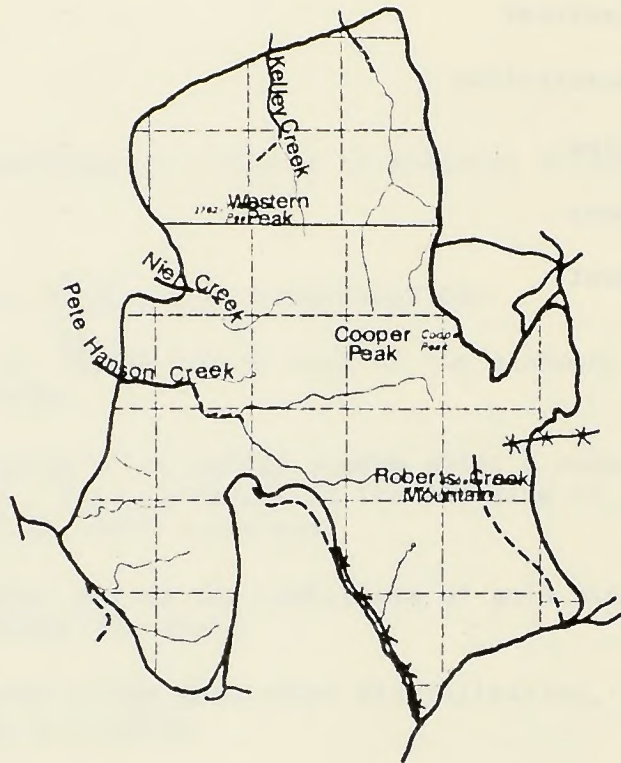
—— WSA BOUNDARY

*** FENCE

—— ROAD





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DATA AS OF JAN 31, 1983

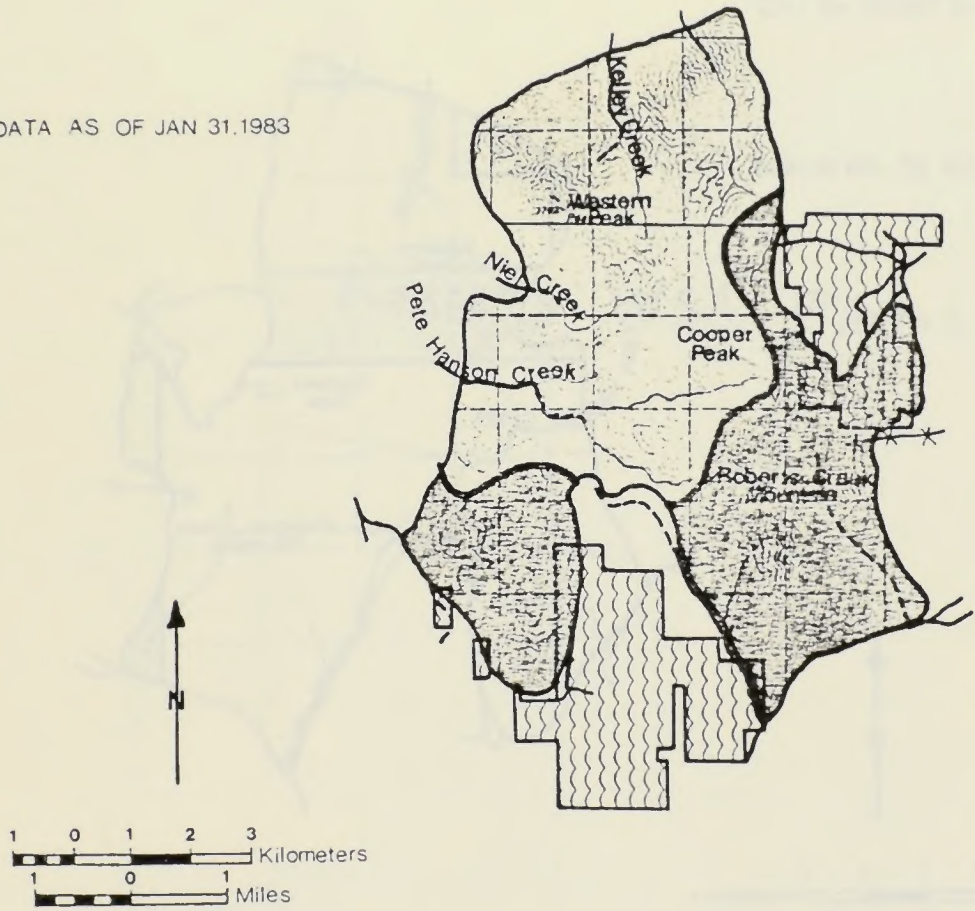


ROBERTS WSA (NV-060-541)
IMPRINTS OF MAN

MINERAL POTENTIAL (LOCATABLE)

-  HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 4
-  MODERATE FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 3
-  NONE LOW OR NO FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 2&1
-  MINING CLAIMS ON RECORD

DATA AS OF JAN 31, 1983

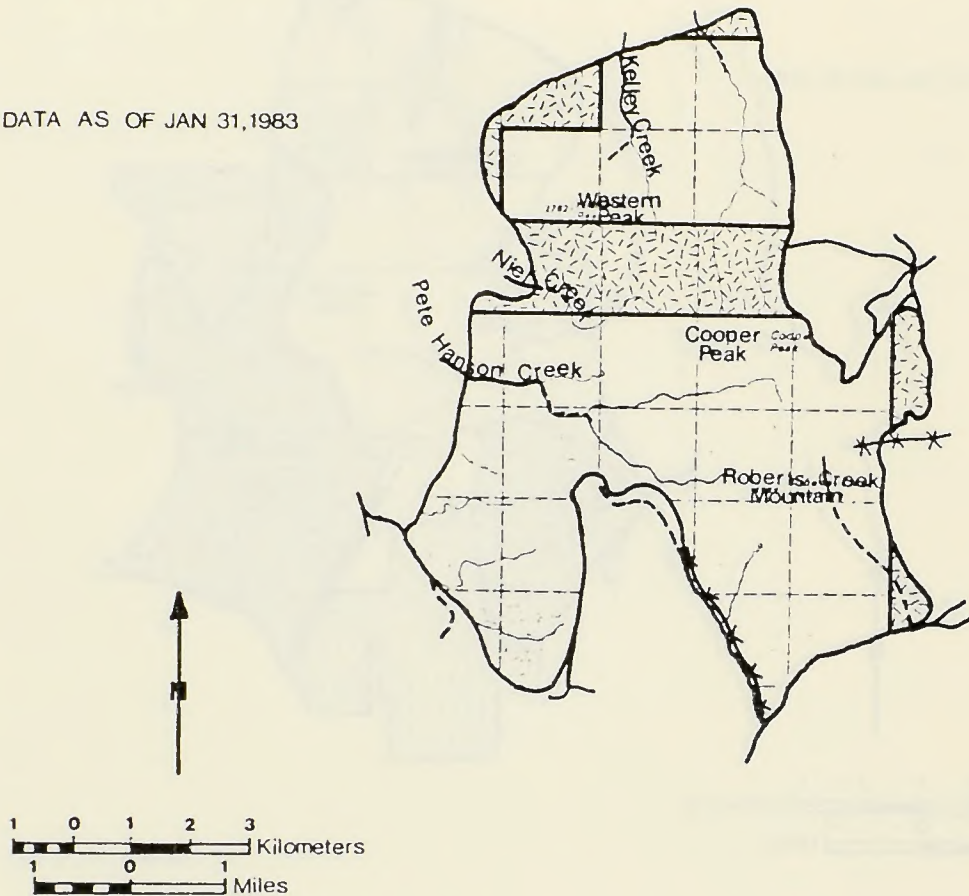


ROBERTS WSA (NV-060-541)
MINERAL POTENTIAL
MINING CLAIMS

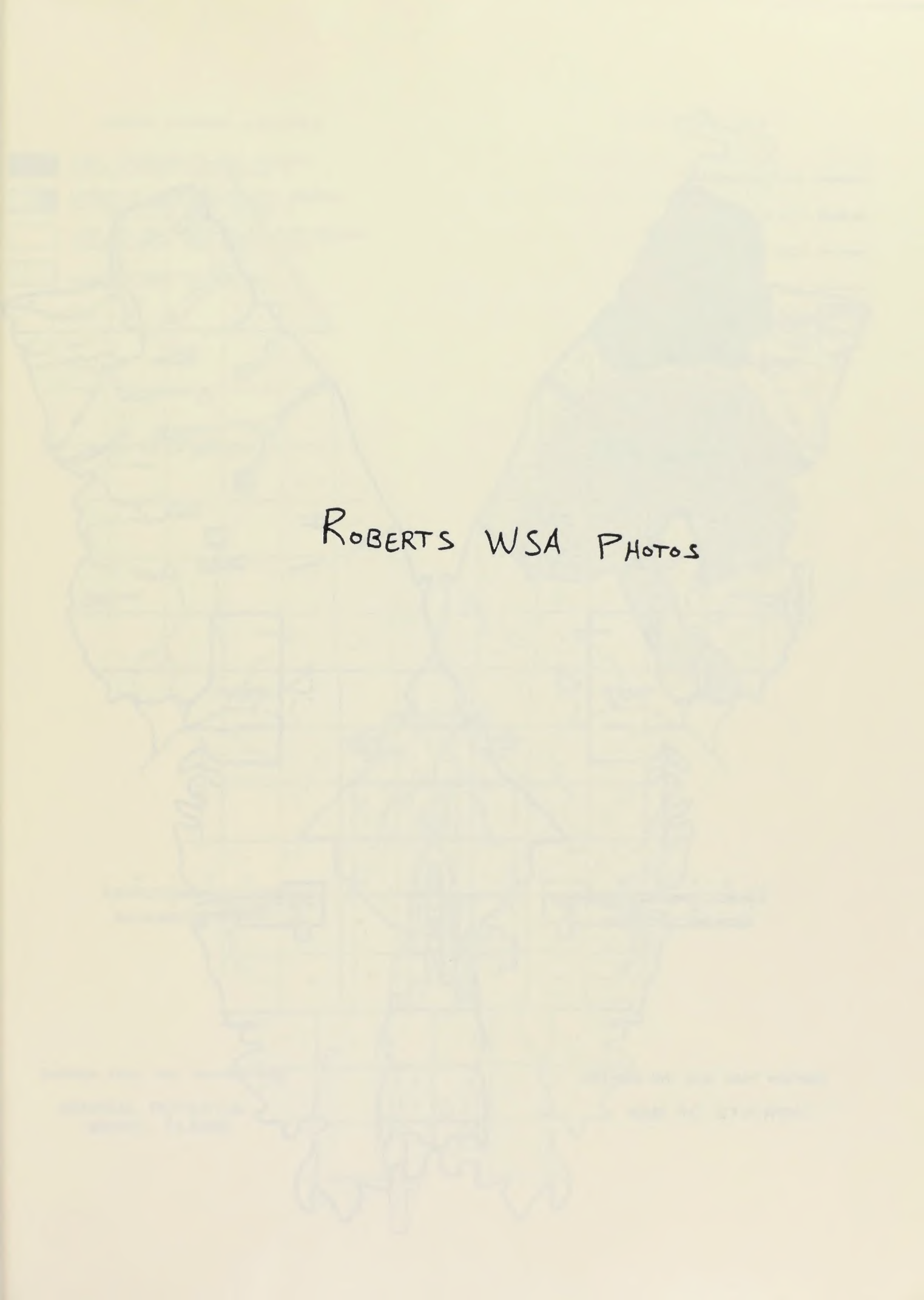
GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL

- NONE HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 4
 - NONE MODERATE FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 3
 - LOW OR NO FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 2&1
 - OIL & GAS LEASES
 - NONE GEOTHERMAL LEASES
- MINERAL POTENTIAL FOR OIL AND GAS IS RATED AS LOW

DATA AS OF JAN 31, 1983



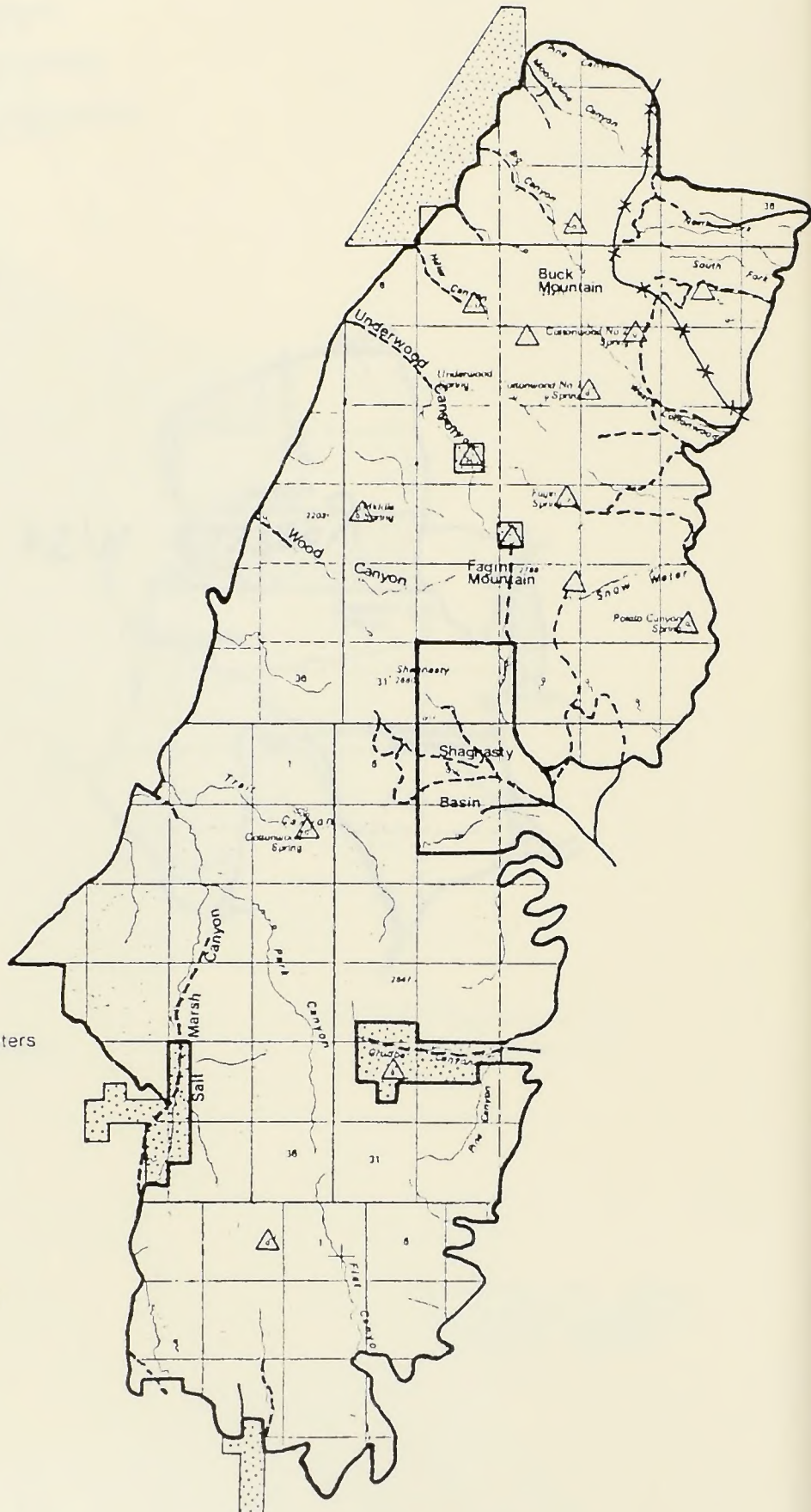
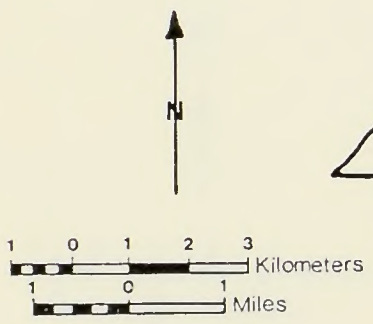
ROBERTS WSA (NV-060-541)
 GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL
 OIL & GAS LEASES



ROBERTS WSA PHOTOS




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- *** FENCE
- ROAD
- - - WAY
- ▨ PRIVATE LAND
- △ WATER DEVELOPMENT

DATA AS OF JULY, 1979

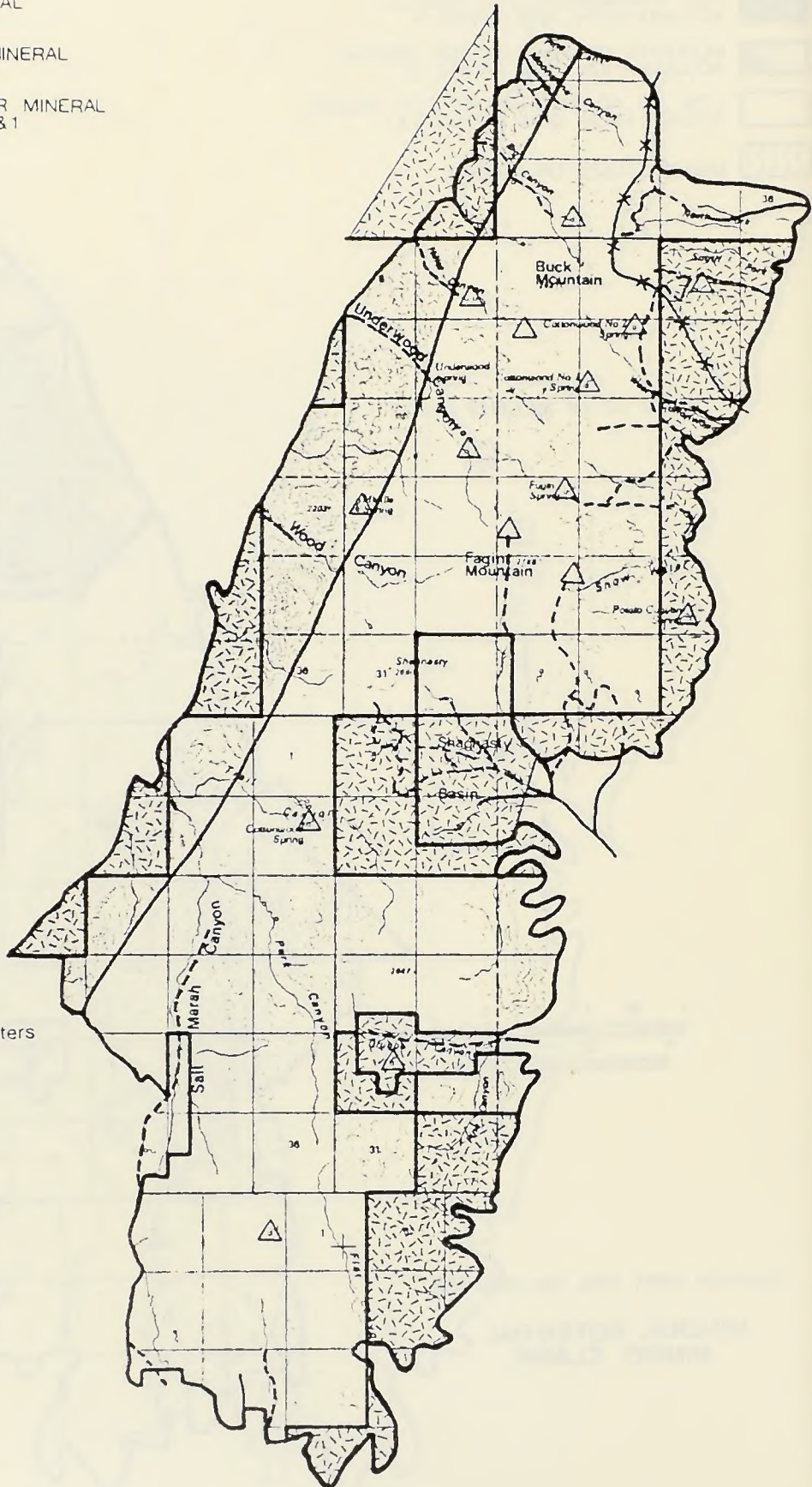
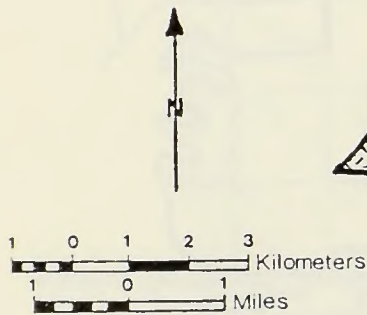


SIMPSON PARK WSA (NV-060-428)
 IMPRINTS OF MAN

GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL

- NONE** HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 4
 -  MODERATE FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 3
 -  LOW OR NO FAVORABILITY FOR MINERAL ACCUMULATION GEM RATING 2 & 1
 -  OIL & GAS LEASES
 - NONE** GEOTHERMAL LEASES
- MINERAL POTENTIAL FOR OIL AND GAS IS RATED AS LOW

DATA AS OF JULY, 1979



SIMPSON PARK WSA (NV-060-428)

GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL
OIL & GAS LEASES

Simpson Park Wilderness Study Area

I. NV-060-428, Simpson Park, 49,670 acres

II. A. Recommendation and Rationale

All 49,670 acres of the Simpson Park wilderness study area are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. Nondesignation of this wilderness study area would eliminate conflicts with private inholdings, high potential mineral areas, and would eliminate the manageability problems associated with the area.

Because of the presence of numerous roads and ways, mining scrapes, private inholdings, private land located on the periphery of the unit, and the unrecognizable boundary located on a topographic line around the majority of the unit, the area is not manageable as wilderness. Vehicle traffic on the numerous ways would be hard to control and visitors to the area would have a difficult time avoiding the unfenced private land and the human imprints associated with the unit. A more specific discussion of the units imprints and manageability problems is included in the manageability section of this report.

There are identified barite deposits in the northern portion of the area and high and moderate potential for other deposits elsewhere in the wilderness study area. No pre-FLPAM mining claims exist but many post-FLPMA mining claims are within the area. If the area is released from wilderness status, the claims would be developed.

B. Statistical Table

Simpson Park Wilderness Study Area (NV-060-428)

Acres BLM.....	49,670
State.....	0
Private.....	80
Gross Total.....	<u>49,750</u>

Recommendation

BLM Acres Recommended <u>Nonsuitable</u>	49,670
BLM Acres Preliminary Recommended <u>Suitable</u>	0

III. General Description of the Wilderness Study Area

A. Location

The Simpson Park wilderness study area is located in Lander and Eureka counties approximately 50 miles northwest of Eureka, Nevada.

B. Boundaries

Except for a short section in the north and south portion of the area, the boundary follows a 7,000-foot topographic line around the majority of the wilderness study area. The remainder of the boundary follows roads and drainages.

C. General Environment

The Simpson Park wilderness study area consists of mountainous country with scattered stands of aspen and mountain mahogany. The area is typical of many in the Great Basin region.

IV. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality

A. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

1. Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Naturalness: The northern portion of the unit contains a substantial number of human imprints that negatively affect its wilderness character. The southern portion of the unit is generally free from human imprints and is in a natural state. In the northern portion, disturbances from past mining activity are present in Moonshine Canyon and along the main ridge of the range west of Shagnasty Basin. A way extends into Moonshine Canyon for approximately one mile, and at one point crosses the slope and connects with a road in the canyon lying directly south of Moonshine Canyon. A cherry-stemmed road extends into Big Canyon approximately one mile and turns into a way that continues approximately one more mile to a spring development. A way extends into Hiller Canyon for approximately one mile. A spring development is present further up the canyon. Underwood Canyon has a way extending one and one-half miles into the unit. A spring development located on forty acres of private property is further up the canyon. Wood Canyon has a way protruding five-eighths of a mile into the unit. A spring development is present further up the canyon. At the head of Trail Canyon, a road circles in and back out of the unit. A way and a fence extend a short way into the unit on the west side of Ackerman Canyon. In Salt Marsh Canyon, a way extends north from the private ground for approximately one and one-fourth miles. Another way is present near the private ground further into Ackerman Canyon. Cow Canyon has a way extending one mile into the unit. In Grubbs Canyon, a way extends a short distance west from the boundary of the private property. Shagnasty Basin was identified during the wilderness inventory as unnatural. Numerous ways and old mining scrapes extend west from the boundary of the unnatural area into the unit. One way goes for approximately one and one-half miles to another forty-acre parcel of private land within the unit. East of this, another

way extends in one mile and then out of the unit. Another way extends from that way for approximately one and one-half miles to Fagin Mountain. Snow Water Canyon has a way extending from the cherry-stemmed road approximately one and one-half miles. Immediately north of Snow Water Canyon another way protrudes one mile into the unit. A way extends from the cherry-stemmed road in West Cottonwood Canyon and splits into two separate ways. Another way stems off from here towards Fagin Spring. At Petunia Springs a way leads to a water development and from there it extends up the mountain approximately two miles and connects into the way extending from Cottonwood Canyon. A cherry-stemmed road extends into the unit approximately one and one-half miles just north of North Fork Stream and turns into a way extending a mile and one-half both north and south of Buck Mountain. Numerous fences and several other water developments are present within the unit, mainly on the northern end.

Private land borders the unit at five places: The Gund Ranch in the northeast portion, the Indian Ranch in the southwest portion, two places at the Ackerman Ranch, and at Grubbs Canyon in the southeast portion of the unit.

Solitude: The area is long and narrow with private land protruding into the mountain range at various places, making the unit even more narrow. The northern part of the unit is made up of low mountains conducive to the growth of the northern desert shrub community, which offers little natural screening. Scattered stands of mountain mahogany and a large stand of pinyon-juniper in the southern portion of the unit offer some natural screening. However, these woodlands are in close proximity to private lands, and unavoidable intrusions such as mining scrapes and roads. With all the intrusions present, solitude would be unobtainable in the north. There is some opportunity for solitude in the southern portion of the unit.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The diversity of opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and hunting create an overall outstanding opportunity for recreation. There are no fishable streams within the unit. No outstanding recreational or wilderness opportunities exist that would attract visitors, and no known plants, rocks, or mineral of collectable value are known to exist.

2. Special Features: Quality of the area's optional wilderness characteristics

No special features of ecological or geological value, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values are known to exist in the Simpson Park wilderness study area.

3. Multiple Resource Benefits: Benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure.
 - a. Watershed and water quality would benefit because development involving surface disturbance of the area would be limited.
 - b. Wildlife species such as mule deer, birds of prey, sage grouse, and other non-game birds would benefit from the added protection of wilderness designation because it would prevent habitat loss as a result of development. Prohibited recreational motorized vehicle use for hunting activities would also benefit wildlife by limiting easy access into the area and by lessening disturbance of the area.
 - c. Visual resources and scenic quality of the area would be protected because of limited development inside the unit.
 - d. Cultural Resources, both known and potential, would benefit because the limited surface disturbance and recreational vehicle access into the area would mean less disturbance to archaeological sites.

4. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

- a. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems and Landforms.

According to the Bailey-Kuchler system of ecosystem classification, the Simpson Park wilderness study area lies within the Great Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem. The Great Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem is currently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System by one area in California which totals 62,695 acres. Designation of the Simpson Park area as wilderness would expand the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms. There are eight areas totaling 783,510 acres which represent this ecosystem that are administratively endorsed for wilderness designation. Additionally, there are several areas which represent this ecosystem that are scheduled to be studied for possible inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

- b. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within A Day's Driving Time (five hours) of Major Population Centers

The Simpson Park wilderness study area is located within a sparsely-populated portion of central Nevada where there are no major population centers (50,000 people) within one day's driving time (five hours). Wilderness designation of this area would not contribute to preserving opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation within a day's driving time of major population centers.

c. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness

The Jarbidge Wilderness Area, located in northeastern Nevada, is the only area in Nevada designated as wilderness. The Jarbidge Wilderness Area totals 64,847 acres. Designation of the Simpson Park area as wilderness would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness.

B. Criterion No. 2 Manageability

The Simpson Park wilderness study area is not considered to be manageable over the long term. Unfenced private inholdings of large acreage protrude into the unit at five places. Two private inholdings of forty acres each exist within the unit. There are a large number of post-FLPMA mining claims and mineral leases in the northern portion of the unit. Identifying wilderness boundaries would present a problem because the majority of the boundary is located along topographic lines that are unrecognizable on the ground. The development potential of the area for mining is high. Expected surface disturbing activities would present a problem for manageability. The large number of roads and ways associated with the unit would make it impossible to prevent unauthorized vehicle use. Closure of all these roads and ways would not be feasible and motorized vehicle traffic could not be controlled. Continued livestock grazing would be compatible with wilderness management.

C. Quality Standards

1. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Wilderness designation of the Simpson Park wilderness study area would have a significant adverse impact upon the ability of the mineral industry to explore for and develop potential mineral deposits in this area. The degree of impact upon known and potential mineral exploration and development opportunities varies by mineral types.

Wilderness designation of the wilderness study area would withdraw 49,670 acres from appropriation under the mining laws and from mineral leasing as of the date of designation.

There are no geothermal leases in the wilderness study area but mining claims and oil and gas leases do exist.

From information obtained by the Shoshone-Eureka Resource Area geologist and other individuals and groups contacted, the locatable mineral potential of the Simpson Park wilderness study area has been determined to be high. The northern end of the area has known outcrops of barite and excellent potential for additional deposits. The available data provide abundant direct

evidence to indicate high favorability for accumulation of mineral resources in the northern end of the Simpson Park wilderness study area.

There are presently three mining plans of operation on record for this area. Upon release from wilderness interim management procedures, further exploration would occur. Extraction of the identified locatable mineral resources would be expected.

The leaseable mineral potential of the Simpson Park wilderness study area is very low for oil, gas, and sodium; low for phosphate; and moderate for geothermal resources. Oil, gas, sodium, and potassium will not be discussed any further in this section due to their low probability of occurrence.

Phosphate-bearing sections are reported to occur in the Vinini formation by Rogers, et., al., 1970. No phosphate is specifically reported in the Simpson Park wilderness study area itself; however, the Vinini formation does cover a significant portion of the study area. Therefore, the mineral potential for phosphate is rated as low based upon indirect evidence.

Geothermal potential is greatest along the range front fault on the west side of the Simpson Park Range. Walti Hot Springs, four miles north of the wilderness study area, exhibits artesian flow of approximately five hundred gallons per minute with a measured temperature of 73 degrees centigrade (162 degrees fahrenheit). The geothermal potential is rated as moderate only due to lack of identified thermal springs at the surface.

2. Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the Simpson Park wilderness study area, or any part of it, would cause no significant adverse impacts to air quality, visual resources, recreation, wildlife, wild horses, cultural resources, water, or lands.

There is no demand for woodland products (cordwood, fence posts, and pine nuts) within the Simpson park wilderness study area. There are sufficient quantities of these woodland products outside the boundary of the unit to meet all foreseeable needs.

Designation of the Simpson Park unit as wilderness would have no impact on livestock grazing use of the area. Adjustments to livestock grazing use within the area would be determined using the same monitoring program implemented on the remainder of the resource area.

Maintenance of existing projects and construction of new projects within designated wilderness areas would be governed

by the procedures outlined in the Bureau's Wilderness Management Policy. Major types of projects such as seedings would be precluded, but most types of projects could be implemented with minor design changes to make them less obtrusive. No projects anticipated at this time would be precluded by wilderness designation.

3. Impacts of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Because of the high potential for development of the Simpson Park wilderness study area, the wilderness character of the northern portion of the area could be expected to be lost within five years after the removal of interim management restrictions. Because of the lower mineral potential of the southern portion of the area, it is expected that no development of this area would occur during the long term (5-15 years). After this 15-year period, likelihood of impacts to wilderness values are unknown. Should the area not be designated as wilderness, the main alternative uses of the land would be mineral development and livestock grazing. Nondesignation would result in the loss of protection for watersheds, natural plant communities and wildlife habitat, and the loss of social benefits associated with wilderness. The cumulative effect of development would restrict opportunity for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section VI below).

5. Local Social and Economic Effects: No significant social or economic impacts would occur as a result of nondesignation.

6. Consistency With Other Plans: The Nevada Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommended support of wilderness designation where it is determined to be the best use of the land. Except for private lands near the unit associated with ranching, there are no other private lands, state and local government lands, lands associated with Indian tribes, or non-bureau-administered federal lands within or near the Simpson Park wilderness study area. The Bureau of Land Management is not aware of any conflicts with other plans.

V. Wilderness Study Area Alternatives

A. Four Alternatives were analyzed for the Simpson Park wilderness study area in the PFEIS:

Preferred Alternative - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

Resource Protection/All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire wilderness study area (49,670 acres)

No Action/No Wilderness - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

Economic Development - Wilderness designation of none of the wilderness study area.

The environmental impacts of those alternatives are summarized in Table 3.

B. The Environmentally Preferable Alternative is the All Wilderness Alternative.

C. The Bureau of Land Management's Preferred Alternative is designated to facilitate manageability and to avoid environmental impacts.

D. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the Bureau of Land Management will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. A wilderness management plan will be developed and implemented to minimize any impacts within the wilderness.

VI. Summary of the Specific Public Comments on the Simpson Park Wilderness Study Area

The number of individuals, representatives of companies or organizations, and representatives of local, State, and Federal agencies that commented specifically on the Simpson Park wilderness study area is shown on Table SP-1, Comments on Simpson Park Wilderness Study Area by Group. The reasons given for supporting a suitable recommendation and for supporting a nonsuitable recommendation are shown in the narrative which follows. The number of persons citing a particular reason is shown in parentheses after the comment.

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING SUITABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend south end as suitable. Area still has really good wilderness values. (2)

Include at least the major central areas in wilderness designation.

It is in a natural state, roughly 6 times the requisite size, and has dissected terrain with pinyon-juniper forests offering the opportunity for solitude.

Rugged and scenic area.

Eliminate conflicts by drawing a boundary from Underwood Canyon into Shagnasty Basin. The southern two-thirds of the area is sufficiently large, rugged and heavily wooded to be manageable as wilderness. (2)

The manageability concerns are not a valid reason for rejecting the southern part of Simpson Park for wilderness.

Add ecosystems not currently in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

REASONS FOR SUPPORTING NONSUITABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Area is not manageable as wilderness. There are things that are going to happen there that are substantial.

Drawing a line across Shagnasty Basin will not help the mining industry. If you have a mine anyplace close to a wilderness area, you will not be able to operate that mine.

Too many human imprints in the northern half and Shagnasty Basin.

Unit is not very scenic.

Southern half constricted by 2 private inholdings.

SP-1 COMMENTS ON SIMPSON PARK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA BY GROUP

<u>Group</u>	<u>Suitable</u>	<u>Nonsuitable</u>
Individuals	5	1
Mining Companies	-	-
Utility Companies	-	-
Environmental Organizations	5	-
Mining Organizations	-	1
Cattlemen's Association	-	-
Federal Agencies	-	-
State Government	-	-
Local Government	-	1
Total	10	3

SIMPSON PARK WSA PHOTOS

