

Beauty Mountain

CA-060-020G

BEAUTY MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-020G)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 12,732 acres

The Beauty Mountain WSA is located across the boundary of Riverside and San Diego Counties. Temecula, California, situated approximately 30 miles west of the WSA is the closest community. The WSA includes 11,364 acres of BLM lands and 1,368 private inholdings totalling 12,732 acres (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA boundaries on the north, west and south are extremely irregular, delineated by surrounding private land. The eastern boundary follows the alignment of the California Riding and Hiking Trail, which in this area serves as the temporary route of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

The Beauty Mountain WSA is comprised of a series of steep, rugged mountainsides dominated by Beauty Mountain and Iron Springs Mountain. These mountains rise above the more gentle relief of the plateau that forms the western half of the WSA. Deep canyons have formed from drainage off the erosion-resistant ridges. Elevations range from 2,920 feet near Culp Valley in the northwest to 5,548 feet at Beauty Mountain in the east.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft, Supplemental Draft, and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project. Three different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the FEIS: no wilderness, all wilderness and partial wilderness recommending roughly 55% of the WSA suitable for wilderness designation.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 0 acres recommended for wilderness
11,364 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The rationale for this nonsuitable recommendation are as follows: (1) the wilderness values for most of the area are not outstanding; (2) the current use levels have had no detrimental effect on the wilderness values the area possesses; (3) off-highway vehicle (OHV) use levels, restricted by the area's lack of public motorized access, will not increase enough to significantly affect these values; (4) current management has proven effective in maintaining the area's existing resources; and (5) no significant conflicts have been identified.

The All-Wilderness recommendation is environmentally preferable as it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term.

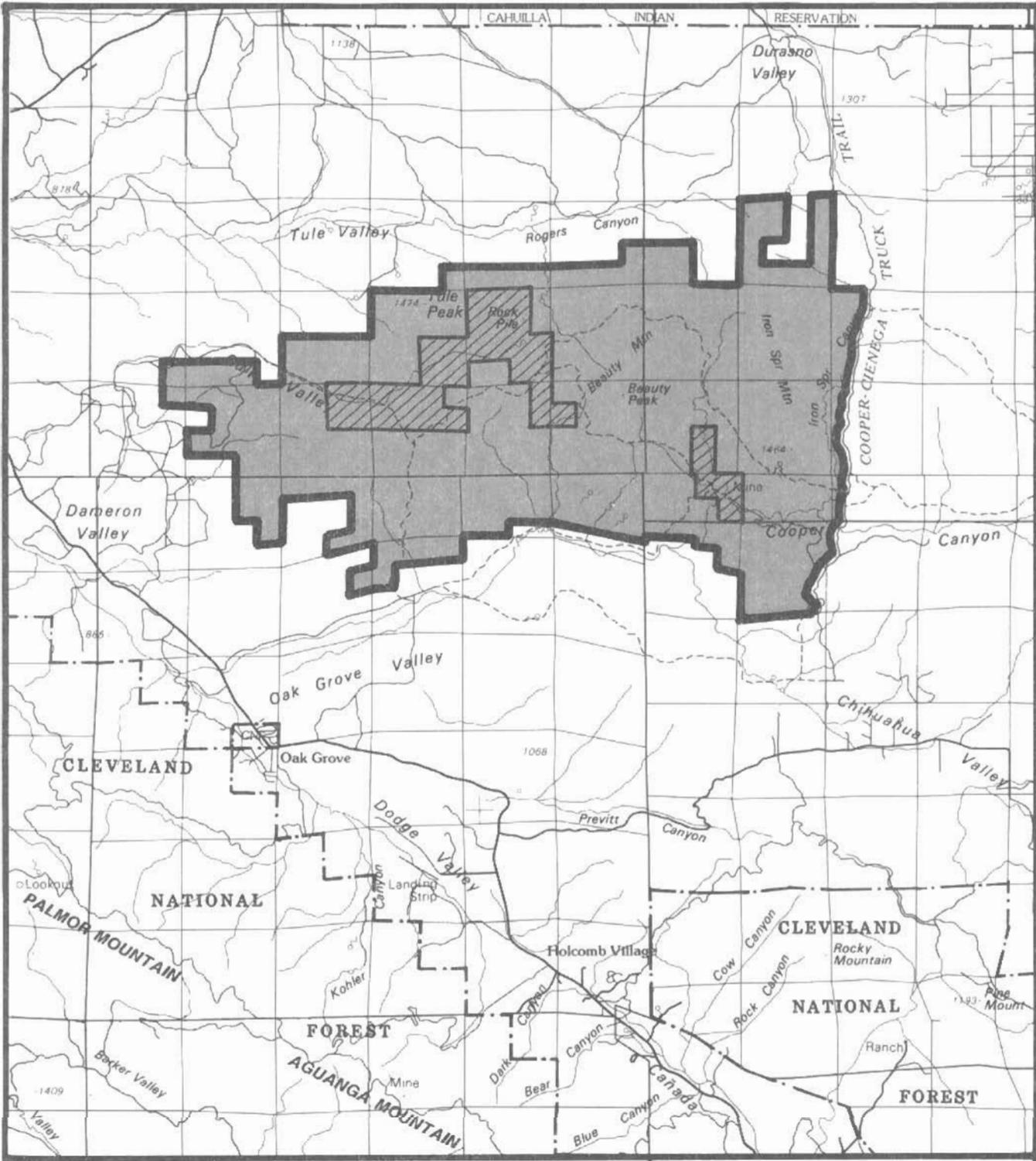
The wilderness values of this WSA, while sufficient to meet the Section 2(c) criteria of the 1964 Wilderness Act, are less than outstanding. Within this WSA, naturalness has been reduced by the development of private inholdings, specifically the facilities at the Pawnee Mine. Access routes, ancillary to the mine and other private interests, lace the WSA. Although opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist within this WSA, these opportunities are not fully realized because of the restricted public access. There are approximately 13 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Current uses of the area have little effect on the area's wilderness values. Most of the current recreational uses of the WSA center around the California Riding and Hiking Trail corridor. This use consists of hiking, backpacking and trail riding. Approximately 200 visitor use days (VUD) of deer and upland game hunting per year occur in this WSA. Most hunting use originates from the deer camps, located on private lands adjacent to the WSA. Hunting pressure within the WSA would be much greater if not for the lack of public access. Mining and grazing make up the remaining current uses of this WSA. Most mining activity consists of casual prospecting and recreational rockhounding. As for grazing, most of the WSA is covered by one of three allotments in the area. Livestock utilization of each of the three allotments is about 150 animal unit months (AUM). Existing range improvements are limited to fences across a portion of the area. This limited use has had little impact on the area's marginal wilderness values.

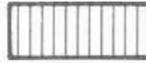
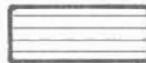
OHV use, is severely limited. The potential for high quality motorized recreational opportunities exists, but is unrealized due to the availability of similar opportunities elsewhere, and the absence of public access. Approximately 23 miles of vehicle routes exist within the interior of the WSA. All but 3.6 miles of this road network is overgrown and shows little evidence of recent OHV use.

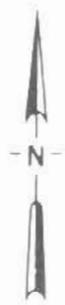
The management framework plan prepared for this area, contains management guidelines which adequately protect and preserve the area's wilderness values. The actions outlined in the plan address limiting vehicle use; using prescribed burning to improve wildlife and livestock browse and increase the vigor of the existing vegetation, much of which is fire-dependent; developing wildlife water sources; and providing for new range improvements.

No significant conflicts with this recommendation have been identified. Current plans call for the construction of several new range developments on the Beauty Mountain allotment, including two water developments and one mile of fence. A prescribed burn of 1,000 acres is also planned in the allotment for a projected increase of 30 percent in forage allocation. These planned actions are consistent with the proposed action.



-  NONE
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Beauty Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**



060-020G
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	11,364
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		1,368
Total		<u>12,732</u>
 <u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
 <u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	11,364
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>11,364</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is in essentially a natural condition, and is heavily vegetated on the north and east sides. A number of access routes to mining claims or other areas of interest exist within the unit because they are not maintained, they are highly eroded and becoming overgrown with brush. These routes are generally not apparent from most parts of the WSA, and the presence of twisting canyons, other topographic relief, and vegetation make them substantially unnoticeable. The major intrusion within the WSA is

the patented Pawnee Mine, surrounded by the WSA, and its associated structures and road. These intrusions are generally unobservable within the unit, and the works of man are substantially unnoticeable.

2. Solitude: Many features combine to ensure that opportunities for solitude are available throughout the study area. The WSA's relative remoteness, large size, rugged and diverse terrain, and dense vegetation support a sense of isolation and solitude. The majority of the boundary is adjacent to private land and access to the WSA is limited since permission of the landowner to cross his property is required.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The WSA currently supports a limited degree of hunting as well as hiking and backpacking. The diverse scenery provides attractive subject matter for both photography and painting. Deteriorating routes will continue to provide pedestrian access into the heart of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 5,234 acres of the California Chaparral/Coastal Sagebrush and 6,130 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystems. The Beauty Mountain WSA would not increase the diversity of the chaparral types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. These ecosystems are represented in currently designated wilderness areas.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
California Chaparral/Coastal Sagebrush	2	49,849	1	344
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,080
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California Chaparral/Coastal Sagebrush	2	49,849	1	344
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,080

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc	20	1,166,142	35	528,590
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest Federally designated wilderness area is the Agua Tibia Wilderness Area, administered by the Cleveland National Forest, located ten miles west. Also within a 50 mile radius are the following designated wilderness areas: Hauser, Pine Creek and San Mateo Canyon Wilderness Areas, administered by Cleveland National Forest; Santa Rosa, San Jacinto, and San Gorgonio Wilderness Areas, administered by San Bernardino National Forest; Joshua Tree Wilderness Areas, administered by Joshua Tree National Monument; and Mount San Jacinto and Anza Borrego Desert State Wilderness Areas.

C. Manageability

The Beauty Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. The fact that public access is restricted by the surrounding private land enhances manageability of the area as wilderness by virtually eliminating the possibility of intrusions by OHVs. However, there are factors that would complicate manageability to some degree.

The development of private inholdings would effect manageability of the Beauty Mountain WSA. Access needs and the effect of intruding sights and sounds could affect wilderness values.

Likewise, the valid existing rights retained by mining claimants have the potential to create manageability problems by affecting all-wilderness values. Mining claimants possessing valid existing rights

can develop their claims in a manner reasonably incidental to their mining operation even if wilderness designation should occur. The only restrictions placed on these activities is that they not cause unnecessary or undue degradation, leaving sufficient latitude to cause severe impacts to existing wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The WSA was not included in the BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral Assessment process completed in 1980. However, mineral resource data for the area was analyzed in the 1987 final EIS for the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project. Mineral data in the EIS indicated that the WSA had low potential for mineral occurrence. In 1983, over 30 placer mining claims, and 11 lode mining claims were recorded with the BLM in the WSA.

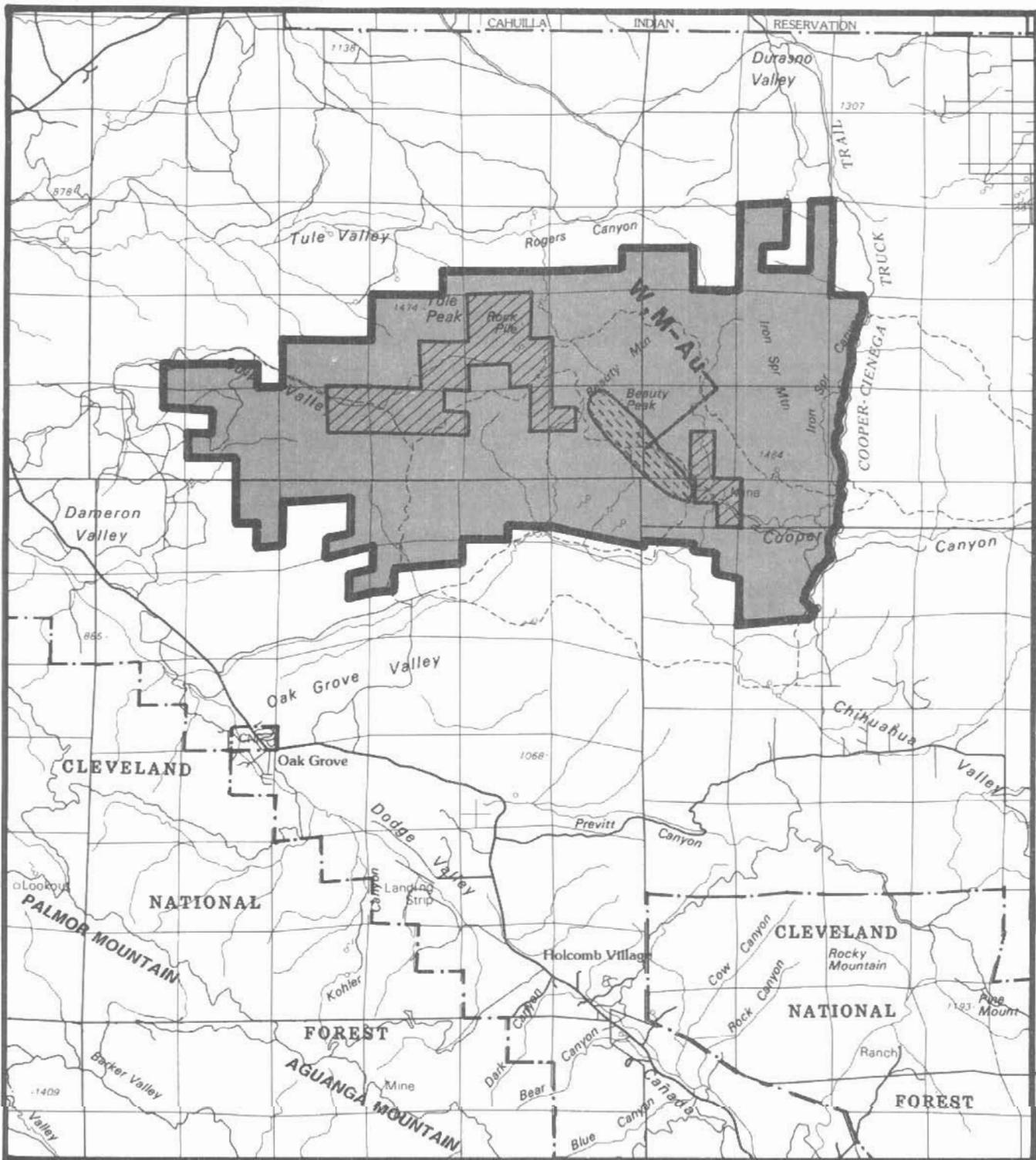
In 1986, the BLM conducted a literature search and a drive-through survey of the WSA. It was found that the WSA contains known deposits of tungsten and minor amounts of gold. The most valuable deposits are in the southeastern portion of the WSA along a fault in which tungsten was historically produced from the Pawnee Mine (date and amount of production unknown). Several mining claims were recorded in this area with the BLM. During the drive-through survey intrusive pegmatites were observed throughout the WSA. In San Diego County, these pegmatites are historically found to contain gem or collector quality tourmaline and many mining claims have been patented in the past for this type of mineral. However, the pegmatites in the WSA were generally found to be small (one to ten inches) with only small fibrous tourmaline occurring.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: The area along the fault zone from Beauty Peak to Cooper Canyon in the east-central portion of the WSA has a high potential for the occurrence of tungsten and a moderate potential for gold under the BLM classification system. These classifications are based on known occurrences and/or favorable geological environment and anomalous resource values, and are shown on the accompanying mineral potential map. No evidence of the occurrence of gem/collector quality minerals, leaseable mineral resources, mineral materials such as sand and gravel, or energy resources was found within the WSA.

As of December, 1987, 11 unpatented lode mining claims aggregating 220 acres were on record with the BLM in the northeastern and southeastern portion of the WSA. Also, as of December, 1987 no mineral sales or leases had been issued within this WSA. The following table summarizes the mining claim records data:

Table 4 - Mining Claims

Type	No.			Acres		
	Suitable	Nonsuit.	Total	Suitable	Nonsuit.	Total
Mining Claims						
Lode	0	11	11	0	220	220
Placer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mill Sites	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	11	11	0	220	220



- NONE Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- Au** Gold
 - W** Tungsten



**Beauty Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
060-020G**

E. Impacts on Resources

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	No-Wilderness/ No Action	All-Wilderness Alternative	Partial-Wilderness Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values	<p>The management actions under the No Wilderness/No Action proposal would have a moderate negative impact on wilderness values in the WSA. Some of the impacts on naturalness - those from motorized and nonmotorized recreationists, range improvement, and fire suppression activities - would affect less than 5 percent of the WSA. However, impacts from increased levels of livestock use would affect major portions of the WSA and be evident to many visitors to the area. Prescribed burning would severely impact up to 1,000 acres (depending on how much was burned in a given year) for about a year, but the area would then recover and perceived naturalness would benefit from increases in</p>	<p>Wilderness values would be retained on more than 95 percent of the WSA. While the elimination of OHV use would improve naturalness on about 700 acres, mining development would have long-term negative impacts on naturalness. Impacts from range improvements and fire suppression activities would be minor.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness because those opportunities depend, to a large degree, on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special features of the WSA are its outstanding vistas. They would be unaffected under this alternative except for the long-term (up to 50</p>	<p>Impacts on wilderness values would be retained on more than 95 percent of the WSA and would be the same as under the All-Wilderness Alternative except that only about 75 percent of the ORV use would be eliminated.</p>

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	No-Wilderness/No Action	All-Wilderness Alternative	Partial-Wilderness Alternative
Impacts on Wilderness Values (continued)	<p>vegetation vigor and wildlife. Mining development would have long-term negative impacts on naturalness on up to 500 acres of the WSA.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would mirror the impacts on naturalness because the opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>Special features are the scenic views of the WSA. Prescribed burns would open up some vistas and mar some, the impacts being temporary (2 to 4 years). The mineral development anticipated on 210 acres would have a long-term (up to 50 years) impact on less than five percent of the vistas from the WSA.</p>	<p>years) impairment of less than five percent of them by the anticipated mineral development.</p>	

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	No-Wilderness/ No Action	All-Wilderness Alternative	Partial-Wilderness Alternative
Impact on Upland Game Species Habitat	Overall, benefits to deer and quail would be minor. Benefits from prescribed burning and water development would be mostly counterbalanced by habitat disturbance from mining.	There would be a minor reduction in deer and quail populations. Benefits from water developments and the elimination of CHVs would be more than counterbalanced by habitat disturbance from mining.	The impacts would be essentially the same as under the All-Wilderness Alternative.
Impact on Livestock Grazing	Forage allocations to livestock would increase by 50 AUMs(30 percent) within ten years. The forage utilization efficiencies of the operations would increase.	Forage allocations to livestock would remain at 150 AUMs.	Impacts would be the same as under the All-Wilderness Alternative.
Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels	Motorized recreational use would drop about 12 percent to approximately 185 VDs per year.	There would be no motorized recreation use within the WSA.	Motorized recreational use would drop about 75 percent to slightly more than 50 VDs per year.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Those who commented questioned the procedures of using roads to subdivide units, not treating solitude and primitive recreation synonymously, and application of "small" to various sized units. Some respondents mentioned roads outside the inventory which they

thought disqualified the unit as wilderness. Many respondents listed uses which they preferred for this land. These included mining, rockhounding, land exchanges, fire control, and wildlife management. The Pawnee Mine and access road were frequently cited as conflicting with wilderness.

The many comments on management of the unit apply to the Study Phase. Comments about features outside the unit and on the sight and sound doctrine were not used in evaluating the unit.

2. Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau recommended 6,190 acres of the WSA as suitable for wilderness and the remaining portion as nonsuitable.

Eighteen respondents commented on the Beauty Mountain WSA. Twelve favored wilderness; of these, eight wanted the entire WSA designated suitable, while four accepted the Bureau's recommendation. Five respondents opposed wilderness altogether, and one requested that adequate arrangements be made for management and prevention of wildfires.

Three of the individuals favoring wilderness mentioned the three rare plants which are found in this region (studies since then have determined that no rare plants are present in this WSA). Another stated that Beauty Mountain would be a valuable wilderness area, because low-altitude ecosystems are under-represented in the NWPS. One organization recommended enlarging the WSA by incorporating several surrounding inventory units and closing intervening roads. The area was said to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation, both of which would be particularly valuable in an area so close to major population centers.

Opponents of wilderness mentioned the impact this status would have on mineral exploration and development. They preferred that the area be left open to these activities, although one stated that wilderness would be acceptable in areas which had been shown to be lacking in gold or strategic mineral resources.

The USFS stated that wilderness management would be harmful to two listed species, the Stephen's kangaroo rat and the Least Bell's vireo (inventories since then have determined that no suitable habitat for either species exists within this WSA), and also to the gray fox, bobcat, mountain lion and mule deer, since it would not allow appropriate thinning and renewal of the chaparral habitat. The California Department of Forestry expressed concern that wilderness designation would interfere with its plans and methods for providing fire protection.

3. Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS): The Bureau recommended that all of the WSA be designated nonsuitable for wilderness. Primary reasons were: (1) the possible impacts of wilderness on the California Department of Forestry's plans and methods for providing fire protection; (2) increasing mining activity in the southern part of the unit; and (3) proximity of designated wilderness in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Of the 44 responses received in response to the SDEIS, 39 favored wilderness for this area. Most expressed shock and dismay at the Bureau's change of position concerning this WSA. Eight of the 39 were willing to accept the Bureau's original recommendation of 6,190 acres to be designated suitable. The remaining 31 wanted suitability recommendations for the entire area.

Many respondents argued that existing wilderness management policies allow for fire control and pre-suppression activities, and, hence, this was not an adequate reason for changing the suitability recommendation. They also stated that the existence of wilderness eight miles away in Anza Borrego Desert State Park did not eliminate the need for wilderness at Beauty Mountain. The climate at Beauty Mountain is suitable for year-round recreation, since it is warmer than the San Jacinto Wilderness and cooler than the Anza Borrego Wilderness. Further, the coastal sage brush ecosystem present at Beauty Mountain need additional representation in the NWPS. Also mentioned were the three rare plants and the State-listed rare Stephen's kangaroo rat which are found in the WSA (none of these species are found in the WSA), as well as the need for additional wilderness in this rapidly urbanizing region.

The five opponents of wilderness for Beauty Mountain gave the following reasons: a gem and mineral club wanted access to potential or existing mining claims and recreational mining spots; the Cleveland National Forest and an off-highway vehicle organization supported the Bureau's recommendation saying it would provide the best management for the Area; the San Diego Association of Governments and the Atlantic Richfield Co. opposed wilderness because of its possible impact on fire control.