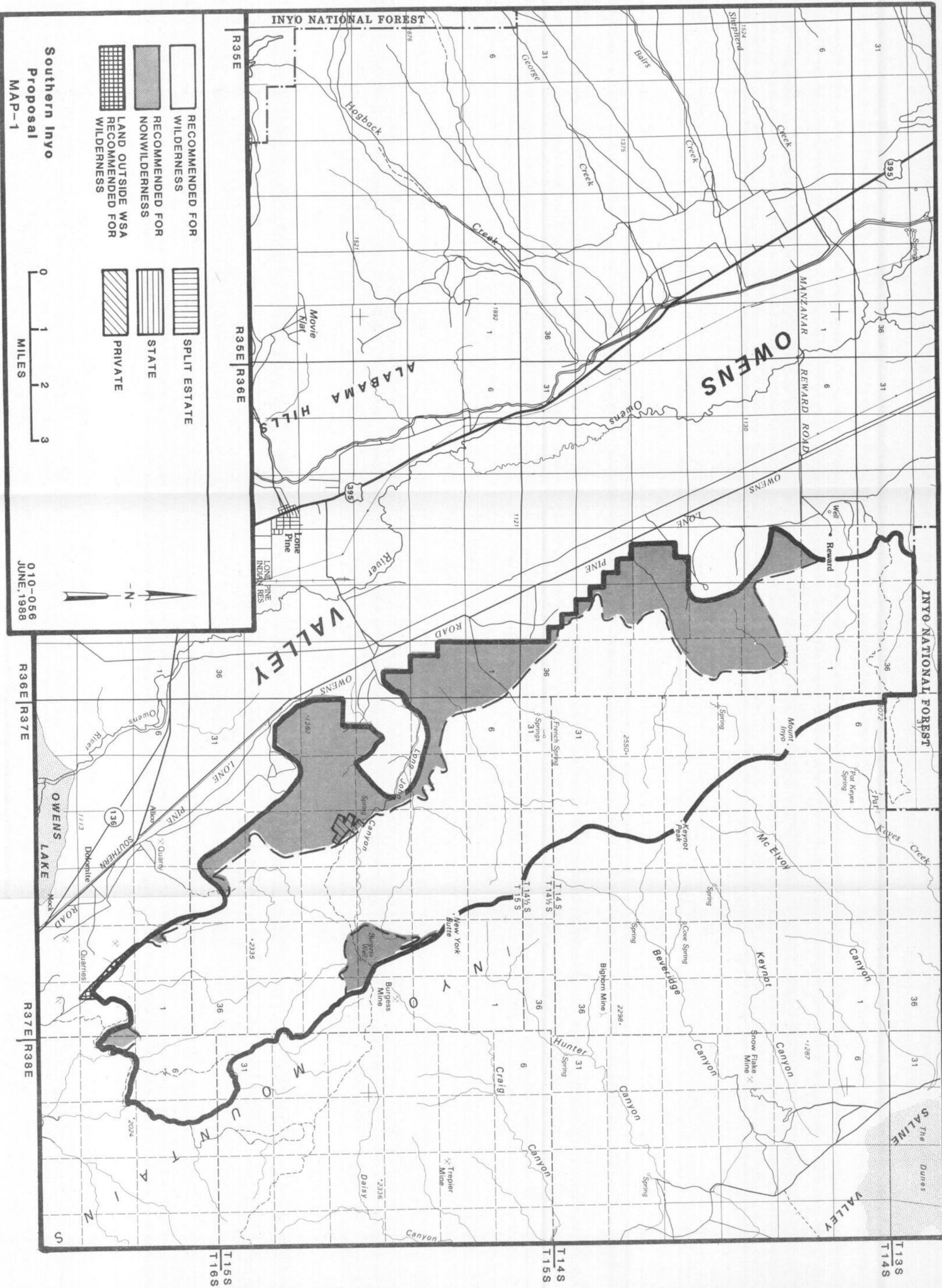


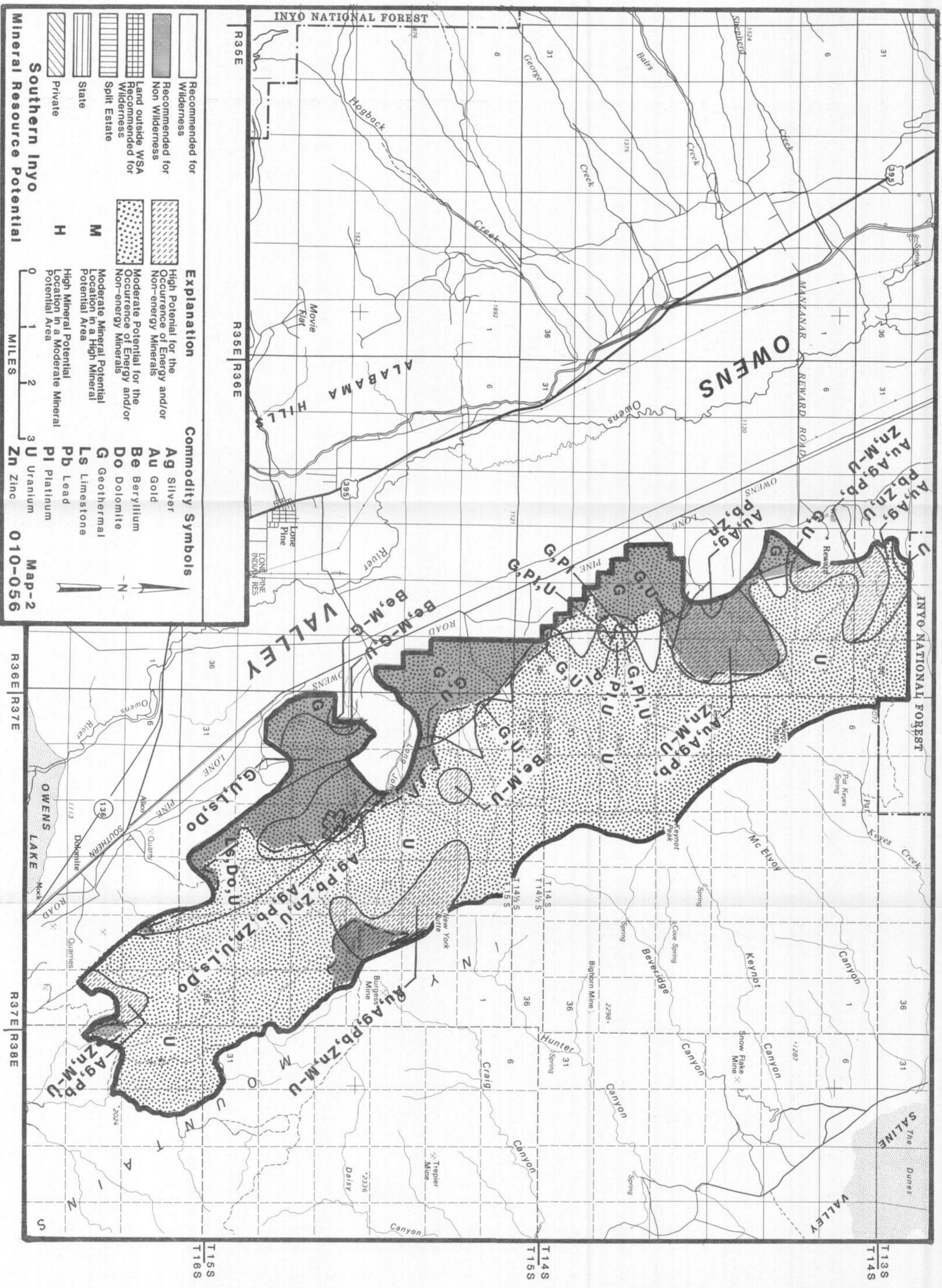
Southern Inyo

CA-010-056



Southern Inyo
Proposal
MAP-1

010-056
JUNE, 1988



Mineral Resource Potential

Southern Inyo

Map-2
010-056

Explanation

	Recommended for Wilderness		High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Recommended for Non Wilderness		Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness		Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
	Split Estate		High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area
	State		
	Private		

Commodity Symbols

Ag Silver
 Au Gold
 Be Beryllium
 Do Dolomite
 G Geothermal
 Ls Limestone
 Pb Lead
 Pl Platinum
 U Uranium
 Zn Zinc

Scale: 0 1 2 3 MILES

Map-2
010-056

T155
T16S

T144
T15S

T133
T14S

SOUTHERN INYO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-010-056)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 36,971 acres

The WSA is located in western Inyo County, four miles east of Lone Pine, California. The WSA includes 36,901 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and 70 acres of private land. There is no State land within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of the WSA follows the Inyo National Forest boundary east to the crest of the Inyo Mountains. The boundary turns south and proceeds along the ridgeline to New York Butte where it runs along a maintained road. This road veers south near the Saline Valley Salt Tram and heads toward the Owens Valley. Near the lower end of the Salt Tram, the WSA boundary turns north and generally proceeds cross-country to exclude man-made mining imprints. As it continues north, the boundary also runs linearly along the edge of private lands. The boundary terminates at the edge of the Inyo National Forest, immediately north of the Pat Keyes trail.

The area's east boundary adjoins the Inyo Mountains WSA (CDCA-122), which has been preliminarily recommended as suitable for wilderness designation in the California Desert Plan. The area's north boundary adjoins the Inyo National Forest's Paiute roadless area. This area has been recommended for wilderness in the Final Inyo Forest Land Use Plan. The unit's south boundary is adjacent to the Cerro Gordo WSA (CA-010-055), which has not been recommended for wilderness designation.

The Southern Inyo WSA occupies the west-central portion of the Inyo Mountain range. The Inyo Mountains are a linear and narrow high desert range that lie at the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province. The Sierra Nevada geomorphic province is a few miles west of the unit. Confined to the range's west slope, the unit's physical relief is the primary special feature of the area. This WSA consists of extremely rugged and precipitous mountainous terrain incised by narrow, colorful canyons. The mountainous landform overlooks the Owens and Saline Valleys, providing scenic panoramas that also include nearby desert and alpine mountain ranges. Summit elevations exceed 11,000 feet. Keynot Peak and Mt. Inyo are the two highest peaks in the WSA — each towers to slightly over an impressive 11,100 feet. The unit's ominous hulking canyons challenge hikers and horsemen alike. Scenic values are quite striking, and are heightened during early morning and evening hours. Opportunities for primitive-type recreation are abundant throughout the area. Several hiking trails lace the area. Mixed desert shrubs occupy the lower and mid-level slopes. Vegetation is sparse in the lower foothills; the higher elevations are blanketed by pinyon-juniper stands with a sagebrush understory. Some stands of bristlecone pine are located in the WSA.

Additionally, the area contains significant historical value as well as a variety of wildlife, including sensitive species candidates.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness Study Areas. A summary of the area's wilderness values was included in the Final EIS. Three different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EIS: all wilderness, partial wilderness recommending approximately 77% of the area suitable, and no wilderness.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> —	28,291	acres recommended for wilderness
		8,610	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Seventy-seven percent partialwilderness is the recommendation for this WSA, with 8,610 acres in this WSA released for uses other than wilderness. At the present time, the Bishop Resource Area is preparing a comprehensive Resource Management Plan which will be in accordance with any future wilderness designation of this unit. The all-wilderness alternative is considered to be the environmentally-preferred alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The 77% partial wilderness recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

Based on data and information available at the time the Final EIS was printed in 1987, partial wilderness is the recommendation for the unit based on the following rationale: The lands proposed contain wilderness values which are outstanding, the special features of the unit warrant wilderness designation, and the wilderness values outweigh the area's potential for other resource uses.

Overall, the wilderness characteristics for the area are outstanding. The imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable throughout the unit. The rugged and desolate physical features such as precipitous ridges, abrupt canyons, and massive mountains serve to isolate the visitor from most outside sights and sounds and provide excellent opportunities for solitude. The unit contains several hiking trails which are commonly used by backpackers from urban areas as far away as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Abundant opportunities exist for primitive types of recreation such as hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, nature appreciation, historical sightseeing, scenic photography, etc.

The unit contains numerous special features which contribute to the area's high wilderness values and warrant wilderness protection. These include portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram - a National Register historic site, stands of bristlecone pine, habitat for the

Inyo salamander - a sensitive species candidate, desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, prairie falcons, quail, and habitat for cacti.

Riparian zones such as Long John Canyon Spring, French Spring and others enhance localized scenic qualities. These springs provide important riparian habitat for wildlife.

The majority of man's work is outside of the area recommended as suitable for wilderness. However, a few primitive vehicle routes and mining-related surface disturbances are located in the unit. There are approximately 15 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access. These features are insignificant in relation to the unit's size and topographic diversity. Manageability would be enhanced if the final wilderness boundary were set back adequately to allow motorized camping on the boundary road from New York Butte to Swanse. Manageability is enhanced by the rugged topography (which precludes most opportunities for vehicle encroachment and outside influences), the area's remoteness, and the buffering effect of the adjoining Inyo Mountains WSA and the United States Forest Service (USFS) Paiute roadless area--both have been preliminarily recommended suitable for wilderness. These recommendations together encompass a much larger, more diverse ecosystem.

At the time the FEIS was printed in 1987, the partial-wilderness boundary was selected to exclude areas of moderate to high mineral resource values and areas where manageability problems were likely to occur. At that time, the suitable recommendation was based on the following narrative excerpted from the FEIS:

"With respect to conflicting resource values, numerous claims are located in the suitable area. However, metallic minerals range from no to low potential. Although uranium potential is moderate, the only known occurrence of this mineral is in the non-suitable portion. Geothermal potential is low. Nonmetallic mineral potential is primarily low, with a relatively small area (approximately 1,000 acres) rated moderate. Although beryl potential is high at a location in the west-center of the WSA, there are no known claims or related activities there. In any case, nonmetallic mineral development potential is considered low due to lack of access and market distance. In addition, nonmetallic minerals (i.e., limestone and dolomite) are abundant outside the suitable area; beryl is also available outside the WSA."

The portions of the WSA not recommended for wilderness in the FEIS include the Burgess Flat area and the lower- to mid-level foothills along the Owens Valley floor. This area includes primitive vehicle routes, mining related surface disturbances, resource conflicts, and some manageability problems. Manageability problems include potential development of a patented mining claim and the numerous unpatented mining claims in areas of moderate to high mineral potential (i.e., moderate to high probability for valid existing rights). Geothermal

potential is moderate. In addition, the western boundary is not easily identifiable due to a lack of distinguishable natural or cultural features. Multiple use management would allow for mineral development and recreational motorized access. A total of 8,610 acres or approximately 23 percent of the unit is recommended as non-suitable.

Since the FEIS, newly available data from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) has affected mineral occurrence potential ratings and associated areas in the WSA, this makes some of the FEIS minerals data obsolete. The new data coupled with a partial-wilderness recommendation based on data from the FEIS alters the scope and nature of environmental impacts related to minerals, wilderness values and manageability. For further information, see Section 3D, Energy and Mineral Resource Values, and Table 4, Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative for the Southern Inyo WSA.

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

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	36,901
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		70
Total		<u>36,971</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Study Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	28,291
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>28,291</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,610
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>8,610</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The Southern Inyo WSA has retained its overall naturalness. It has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man generally unnoticeable within the rugged confines of this WSA. The self-protective nature of the steep, foreboding canyons is a testimonial to the area's naturalness. This WSA consists of extremely rugged and steep mountainous terrain which slopes down toward Owens Valley. Summit elevations range to 11,000 feet. Mt. Inyo and Keynot Peaks slightly exceed the 11,000 foot elevation. Numerous interior drainages exist within the area. Several springs, including Long John Canyon Spring, French Spring and others, provide access to water that can be treated for drinking. The riparian areas surrounding the springs provide a moist and cooler environment

attractive to wildlife and recreational users alike. The mountainous landform towers above the Owens and Saline Valleys, providing scenic panoramas that also include the Sierra Nevada and Panamint mountain ranges. Eighty-percent of the WSA is Mojave Desert scrub and the remainder is pinyon-juniper woodland. Plant density is low. Creosote bush occupies the lower alluvial fans, and the mid-elevation mountainous slopes are dominated by shadscale, big sage, and desert needlegrass. The higher elevations support pinyon-juniper woodlands. The WSA also supports a sub-alpine forest which contains bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*) and limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*). This forest is considered a unique plant assemblage. This unique assemblage lies along nine miles of the Inyo Crest and is located in a highly remote and inaccessible area. Forest trend is considered stable.

Within the portion of the WSA recommended for non-wilderness, naturalness has been locally impaired by ten miles of primitive vehicle routes as well as associated inactive mining areas. Evident mining surface imprints include localized adits, tunnels, prospects, and other signs of related use. A patented mining claim also exists in the WSA. These man-made imprints in the WSA are located along the unit's western periphery. The area recommended suitable contains approximately five miles of primitive vehicle routes, some inactive mining areas, the abandoned Saline Valley Salt Tram (a historical value), and several old mining trails. Due to the WSA's large size and rugged physical characteristics, the cumulative effect of these influences on naturalness is very low.

2. Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are abundant in the Southern Inyo WSA. Some of these opportunities are slightly compromised along the western periphery of the unit where existing primitive vehicle routes and inactive mining areas are located.

In the vast majority of the WSA, fewer signs of man's influence enhance these outstanding opportunities for solitude. Nonetheless, the WSA's diverse terrain which includes remote, high-walled canyons and a long, jagged mountain ridge in addition to its size and vegetative screening at higher elevations, are elements that enhance visitors' opportunities to find isolation throughout the unit. Panoramic vistas and the commanding spaciousness of the Sierra Nevada, Saline Valley, and the Panamint Mountain range heighten one's sense of seclusion.

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: Visitors to this WSA can easily find outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The WSA's size, physical features, exhilarating ridgetop viewsheds, old mining trails, unique flora and fauna, and historical features are elements which attract a variety of visitors. These visitors can participate in hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, nature appreciation, historical sightseeing, scenic photography, and other activities.

In recent years, the WSA has become increasingly popular for backpacking and hiking. Old mining trails currently in use by these recreationists include the Pat Keyes Historic Mining Trail, the Long John Canyon Trail, the Forgotten Pass Trail, and the Union Wash Trail. Visitor use in the WSA is primarily of a dispersed nature.

4. Special features: The WSA contains numerous special features of noteworthy interest. Three and one-half miles of the Saline Valley Salt Tram is located within the WSA. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Salt Tram was first constructed in 1911 to carry salt (99% pure) from Saline Valley over the Inyo Mountains and into Owens Valley. It is the steepest tramway in the United States. Additionally, the Pat Keyes Historic Mining Trail (approximately six miles) is located in the unit. This trail was built between 1890 and 1910 to serve mines on the Inyo Crest.

Stands of bristlecone pine trees which are the world's oldest living plants occupy portions of the WSA's precipitous crest. The bristlecones are perhaps one of the world's most photogenic trees. These grotesque and gnarly trees eke out an existence in an inhospitable environment that has shallow, nutrient-poor soils, and a growing season measured in weeks. Gale-force winds also blast the ridges occupied by the trees.

In addition, the WSA contains habitat (Long John Canyon and French Spring Canyon) for the Inyo Mountain salamander. The salamander is an endemic species unique to the Inyo Mountains only. It is currently a candidate for the United State Fish and Wildlife Service's threatened and endangered species list. Prairie falcon nesting sites are located in the Long John Canyon area and in a nearby unnamed canyon.

The scenic grandeur of this WSA is truly captivating. The highly eroded, very steep northern portion of the unit supports little vegetation, but displays dramatic combinations of colors, hues, and erosional patterns. During the twilight hours, the brilliant colors that reflect off the range mesmerize area visitors.

Striking and sweeping panoramas of the Sierra Nevada and the Panamint Range, which are outside the unit, are observable along the WSA's higher elevations as well as its main ridges. The area's wilderness values are considered to be its rich scenic, botanical and historical characteristics.

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 36,971 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystem. The Southern Inyo WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	4	81,301	74	2,114,402
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	3	61,701	18	328,932

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's 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

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,515
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
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
 The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The John Muir Wilderness and the Golden Trout Wilderness, 18 and 23 miles to the west, respectively, are the nearest designated wilderness areas. These wilderness areas are administered by the Inyo National Forest. Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, managed by the National Park Service (NPS), is located 23 miles to the west. Other nearby designated wilderness areas include the South Sierra Wilderness and the Domeland Wilderness which are managed by the Sequoia National Forest.

C. Manageability

The area recommended as suitable is manageable as wilderness. Manageability is enhanced due to natural barriers, which would prevent vehicle access, and boundaries which are defined by cultural and natural features. It is also aided by the adjoining Inyo Mountain WSA, and Inyo National Forest RARE II area, as both have been preliminarily recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Some signing and periodic patrolling would be required to maintain the unit's natural integrity.

No conflicts are anticipated over water rights to the springs. Each spring within the WSA has been inventoried and the State of California has been notified of the Bureau's Federal water rights claim under Public Water Reserve 107's.

In light of newly available minerals data received from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) since the FEIS was printed, the nature and scope of manageability problems is likely to change.

A portion of the WSA not recommended as suitable for wilderness designation includes a set back along the Swansea Road from New York Butte south to the intersection with the ridge road. This setback would allow road maintenance and vehicle parking in the existing primitive campsites along the road.

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 Southern Inyo WSA is within the BLM New York Butte Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M data indicate that the WSA has a potential for occurrence of gold, silver, lead, uranium, dolomite, limestone, beryllium, and geothermal resources.

The 1983 G-E-M data indicated that the WSA has three areas of high and one area of moderate metallic mineral potential. The affected environment section of the 1987 FEIS incorrectly states that these areas are in the "...southern portion of the WSA." The G-E-M report shows these areas in the northwest, west-central, east-central as well as the southern portion of the WSA.

The northwestern area is rated as having a high potential for the occurrence of silver with gold and lead present as secondary ore metals. This rating is based on the existence of the Monte Carlo Mine in this area. The Monte Carlo Mine consists of eight adits and over 3,000 feet of underground workings. The westernmost adit was excluded from the WSA, however, all other workings are within the WSA boundary. It is credited with the production of more than 100,000 ounces of silver before 1902 and an unknown amount of post-1902 production. As part of the G-E-M analysis, a sample of ore was taken from one of the dumps. This sample assayed 0.005 oz/ton gold, 11.40 oz/ton silver and "major" lead. With enough tonnage, this grade of ore could make a profitable mine. Under the BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 85 percent of this high potential area would be excluded from wilderness.

The east-central area of the WSA has an area of high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, and lead. This rating is based on the existence of the Burgess Mine and the Beveridge Mining District located in this area. The District is known to have produced gold, however, the amounts and dates of production are unknown. A sample was taken during the G-E-M analysis which assayed 0.004 oz/ton gold,

9.87 oz/ton silver and 4% lead. The area of high potential was defined by the area of old diggings, bulldozer cuts, and the area of rock alteration around them. Under the BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 60 percent of this high potential area would be excluded from wilderness.

The southern area of high metallic potential contains the Flagstaff Mine, the Lost Frenchman Mine, the Pennsylvania Mine and numerous prospects. This area is known as a silver and lead producing district but no production records were available. A sample taken at the portal of the Flagstaff Mine during the G-E-M analysis assayed 0.6% lead. Under the BLM's partial wilderness recommendation, all of this area of high metallic potential would be excluded from wilderness.

The west-central area of moderate metallic potential contains the Long John Mine, the Black Warrior Mine, a group of patented mining claims and numerous prospects and tunnels in the area of Long John Canyon. Gold, silver, and lead were produced from these mines, however, production dates and records were not found. Samples taken from portals in this area during G-E-M analysis yielded a maximum of 0.008 oz/ton gold 2.54 oz/ton silver, 0.06% lead and 0.35% zinc. Under the BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 80% of this moderate potential area would be excluded from wilderness.

Most of the WSA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium. No uranium production has occurred. The Big Horn uranium prospect is located in the western portion of the WSA. The moderate potential classification was based on the presence of a favorable environment for emplacement of uranium. The granitic rocks and rhyolitic volcanics are possible uranium sources and uranium could be concentrated in any of the formations within the WSA as vein-type or fracture-fill deposits. Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, nearly all of this moderate uranium potential area would remain within wilderness. An area along the southwest edge of the WSA was designated as having moderate potential for the occurrence of the nonmetallic mineral limestone and dolomite. The carbonates are known to exist in the area but it was classified as having moderate potential due to uncertainties in their quality and marketability. Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 80% of this moderate potential area would be excluded from wilderness.

Two small areas within the WSA have potential for the occurrence of beryl. A small area in the center of the WSA has high beryllium potential due to reported production of

small amounts of beryl. A beryl occurrence is reported along the western edge of the WSA which was classified as having moderate potential in the G-E-M report. Under the BLM's partial wilderness recommendation, the moderate potential for beryl would be entirely excluded from wilderness; the area of high potential for beryl would remain within wilderness.

The western edge of the WSA is classified as having a moderate potential for geothermal resources. This classification is based on the existence of warm springs near the western edge of the WSA. Also, geothermal exploration holes were drilled just south of this area which were reported to intersect thermal waters at shallow depths. This moderate potential area is the structural extension of a high potential area to the south. Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 90% of this moderate potential area would be excluded from wilderness.

As of Spring 1986, approximately 170 unpatented mining claims were located within the WSA.

2. Summary of significant new mineral resource data collected since the suitability recommendation, which should be considered in the final recommendation: As required by FLPMA, BOM and USGS conducted mineral surveys (specific to locatable minerals) on the portion of the WSA recommended as suitable by BLM. The BOM report (Sabine, C., and others, 1986, Mineral Resources of the Southern Inyo Study Area, Inyo County, California: BOM, Open file Report, MLA-55-86.) is summarized in a joint report published by USGS. (Conrad, J.E., Sabine, C., and others, 1987, Mineral Resources of the Southern Inyo Wilderness Study Area, Inyo County, California: USGS Bull. 1705-B.)

The BOM/USGS surveys were more intensive than the G-E-M survey and the on-the-ground detail is more complete. For this reason, the potentials described in the BOM/USGS report are generally lower than the G-E-M potentials. Under BOM/USGS criteria it was possible for a prospect within a historic mining district which assayed 0.22 oz/ton gold minable grade (with enough tonnage) to have less than low potential (see USGS prospect #44, pp B24). Under the G-E-M classification scheme, this area would have a high potential rating.

There are two areas of high potential and one area of moderate mineral potential (gold, silver, lead, and zinc) in the extreme northwestern portion of the WSA (Reward Mine area). Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 75% of this high potential and 100% of this moderate potential area would remain within wilderness. The east-central high potential area (gold, silver, lead, zinc)

is modified by eliminating the southern portion and elongating the area northward. Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 75% of this high potential area would remain within wilderness.

The boundary of the southern high potential area (silver, lead, zinc) is expanded northward. Under BLM's partial-wilderness recommendation, approximately 80% of this high potential area would remain within wilderness. The northwestern area of high metallic potential and the west-central area of moderate metallic potential remain essentially the same with minor boundary adjustments.

Information supplied to the BLM by the claimant of the Cynthia claims (T. 14 S., R. 36 E., sections 23 and 26) caused BLM to re-evaluate the potential of this area. The claimant submitted assays of his concentrates which yielded a maximum of 1.86 oz/ton gold, 26.68 oz/ton silver, 8.49 oz/ton platinum and 3.85 oz/ton palladium.

The BLM duplicated the claimant's concentration process using the claimant's own equipment and the same assay laboratory that reported the high values. This was done in order to obtain a concentrate-to-ore ratio and to convert the claimant's assays into oz/ton of ore. This analysis indicates a whole-rock value of \$1.00 to \$4.00 per ton platinum (at \$400.00/ounce platinum). Grey metallic nuggets were recovered during the concentration process. These nuggets were moderately magnetic and malleable. They could be a platinum containing natural alloy. Two chip samples were then taken by BLM within the shear zone that the claimant had been sampling. The samples were analyzed by the neutron activation methods. All platinum group minerals were below the detection limits of the analysis and only trace amounts of gold were indicated in both samples.

During the BOM/USGS survey, eleven chip samples were collected from shear zones on these claims. Fire assays were performed. One sample yielded 0.8 oz/ton silver and 3.9% copper. Ten had low precious- and base-metal content. No platinum group minerals were detected. Atomic absorption assays by one laboratory gave relatively high platinum and palladium values for the Cynthia claims concentrate (0.6 oz/ton gold, .016 oz/ton silver, 0.72 oz/ton platinum, 0.10 oz/ton palladium). This result was not duplicated by BOM fire assays on identical sample splits. This is due to metallurgical properties of the Cynthia claim material that are not well understood. The present information available to BLM justifies a moderate potential for platinum in this area according to the BLM classification scheme.

The distribution of unpatented mining claims in the WSA according to BLM records dated May 6, 1988 is shown in the table below:

Table 4 Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIMS	NO.		TOTAL	ACRES		TOTAL
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.		SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	
Lode	38	36	74	760	720	1,480
Placer	4	4	8	160	160	320
Mill Sites	0	4	4	0	20	20
Total	42	44	86	920	900	1,820

E. Impacts on Resources

The following table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or non-designation of the entire area as wilderness. (For a full explanation of this summary, refer to the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness - Final Environmental Impact Statement.)

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL-WILDERNESS)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	<p>Under the Proposed Action all wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 28,291 acres designated wilderness by eliminating motorized recreation use. Negligible localized impacts would occur as a result of constructing two wildlife guzzlers with the perception of naturalness impaired on a total of 8 acres.</p> <p>Within the 8,610 acres not designated wilderness, motorized recreation use would result in negligible impacts to naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. Projected mineral development would result in a loss of naturalness on 115 acres with solitude and the perception of naturalness impaired on 500 acres in the southern portion of the WSA. Overall, the impacts to wilderness values under the Proposed Action would be negligible.</p>	<p>All-wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced under the All Wilderness Alternative due to the elimination of 100 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Should mineral development occur there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 115 acres. Additionally, the perception of naturalness and solitude would be lost within a 500-acre viewshed.</p> <p>Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as special features would be retained and slightly enhanced within the WSA.</p>	<p>The wilderness values within the WSA would be subjected to a minor overall impact by not designating the area wilderness. However, the primary impacts would be highly localized. Mineral development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired over an area of 500 acres. Continued motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) would locally result in negligible impacts to naturalness and solitude. Primitive and unconfined recreation would be diminished within the 115 acres projected for mining and within the vicinity of the 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes used for motorized recreation. Special features would not be significantly impacted, however, the primary threat would result from mining activity in the vicinity of the Saline Valley Salt Tram.</p>

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

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL-WILDERNESS)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use	Overall there would be a minor impact to motorized recreation. The effects of closure of 28,291 acres of the WSA including 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes eliminating 600 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use would be partially offset by an increase of 200 visitor days within the 8,610-acre non-wilderness portion of the WSA. There would be a net loss of 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use per year under the Proposed Action.	As a result of designating the entire WSA as wilderness, 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Since access opportunities to the Inyo Mountains are limited, this would result in a moderate impact.	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. The entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use with the current 1,000 visitor days of use projected to remain stable.
Mineral Development	There would be no impact on mineral resources. While exploration and development would be foregone within the 28,291 acres designated wilderness, this area generally has no potential to a low potential for development of mineral resources. Potential development of a silver mine could occur within an area of high mineral potential within the 8,610 acres not designated wilderness.	Overall there would only be a minor impact on development of mineral resources as a result of wilderness designation. Should a discovery of silver occur within the area of high metallic mineral potential in the southwest portion of the WSA, determination of valid existing rights would allow development under wilderness designation. Development of the potential silver deposit would be foregone if a discovery does not occur prior to designation. Other potential mineral resources would also be foregone as exploration and development activities would be prohibited.	The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry, therefore, there would be no impact on mineral development. Development of a potential underground mine for silver is the only mining activity projected for the WSA.

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (cont.)

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL-WILDERNESS)	ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Inyo Mountain Salamander	There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander. Habitat for both known populations would be within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness.	There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander as a result of the entire WSA being designated wilderness.	There would be only negligible impacts to the Inyo Mountain salamander as the result of potential or unforeseen activities within the WSA. There are no management actions projected that would impact either the populations or the habitat.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

During the inventory phase, a few comments were received which dealt with other resource values such as minerals and unique floral features.

After inventory, comments were received through the Wilderness Study process. Several comments supported wilderness designation for the WSA, while one or two comments opposed it. One comment noted the wild and rugged scenic values of the WSA while another stated that the area's extreme desolation actually detracted from its wilderness value. One letter noted the existence of a valuable quartzite deposit outside the WSA which was thought could extend into the WSA. This same comment indicated the existence of beryl deposits inside the WSA. One comment stated the ridgeline road should be excluded from the WSA; on the other hand, another comment noted the need for public access into the area. One comment pointed out the high values of flora and fauna in the WSA.

Another individual indicated that excluded portions of the WSA should be re-included. This respondent also noted the existence of the plant Dedeckera, which is located on the eastern slope of the Inyo Mountains. One comment indicated that the area is used by the Desert Peak Climbers and that the Southern Inyo WSA should be combined with the adjoining California Desert District Inyo Mountains WSA.

A public meeting and public hearing were held in association with the DEIS for the WSAs within the EIS area. The public meeting was held in Markleeville, California; the public hearing in Bishop, California. Comments were received both orally through the hearing and in writing during the 90-day public review period. A total of 99 comments were received, both oral and written. Thirty-one comments supported the Bureau's recommendation to designate the area as partially suitable for wilderness; 43 comments supported the all-wilderness alternative, 16 comments supported the no-wilderness alternative. In addition, 9 comments supported a modification of the Bureau's partial-wilderness recommendation, favoring less acreage to be recommended suitable.

No comments specific to the Southern Inyo WSA were received from Federal agencies.

The California Department of Fish and Game has stated its support to designate the Southern Inyo WSA as wilderness, but also recommends that Cerro Gordo Mine road (WSA boundary road) remain open for hunting access and that no new grazing permits be issued in this area to retain wildlife forage.

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors has passed a resolution opposing any additional wilderness areas in Inyo County. Subsequent to the passage of this resolution, the Inyo County Planning Department submitted a letter supporting wilderness designation for a portion of the WSA located north of Long John Canyon and east of the 6,000-foot contour elevation.