

Comments about the ten Potential Recommended Wilderness Areas:

Although the “Overview” document indicates there are 11 areas, that appears to be a misprint and we can only find 10. Below are some other misprints, problems and errors:

The map supplied by the Forest Service is very vague, hard to read and does not clearly show the borders or roads. All legal roads should be excluded from recommended Wilderness areas. The Inyo County roads generally get a 200 foot setback. Other roads generally get a 75 foot setback but they should also be given a 200 foot setback .

The area called Harkless Flat contains Soldier Canyon and is about four miles away from the actual Harkless Flat.

The area called Soldier Canyon does not include Soldier Canyon but has Crooked Road Canyon and Deadman Canyon.

The two areas referred to as Pilot Mountain should be called Piper Mountain and are additions to the Piper Mountain Wilderness area.

Further information can be found at the following links:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd486856.pdf

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/planning/?cid=STELPRD3803608>

Below are quotes taken from the information above that is supplied by the Forest Service. Based on this information it would appear that the areas should not be designated “Wilderness”:

Polygon 1246-Pilot Mtn #1, Harkless Flat and Soldier Canyon

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There are numerous roads and motorized trails within this polygon along the edge, as well as through the middle of the polygon. Off highway vehicle recreation, dispersed camping, mineral exploration and sightseeing are popular activities throughout this area, primarily during the spring and fall months.

Several of the canyons along the western escarpment of the mountains are scenic destinations for day hikers, though some also have motorized trails and off highway vehicle recreationists. While opportunities for primitive recreation do exist, travel in the lower elevation desert environment is challenging due to the lack of surface water and steep topography

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There may be opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation, although surface water is limited and terrain makes travel difficult. There is limited opportunity to reshape to polygon

to make it more suitable or manageable for wilderness characteristics due to the proximity to roads and motorized trails. There are general tribal concerns regarding tribal access and use.

Polygon 1281-White Mtn. East and West

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There was historic mining and associated timber harvest in the area. There may have been grazing in the past as well. Only about 20 percent of the area has been surveyed for cultural resources.

This polygon has several motorized trails within it.

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There are legacy grazing and mining impacts

However, it is likely to hear regular noise from vehicles on White Mountain Road (paved forest road that is a National Forest Scenic Byway), as well as Wyman Canyon Road.

The area contains sage grouse habitat, which may require active management. There are general tribal concerns regarding tribal access and use. There is one private land inholding, access is unknown

There was historic mining and associated timber harvest that occurred in the area. No developments were noted except possibly one historic structure. It is unknown if there are grazing improvements in the area.

Polygon 1391-South Sierra East-

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There are also motorized trails present within the polygon

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There are recreation developments in the eastern portion of the polygon

There is dispersed camping and a dirt parking area at the trailhead. There are range improvements within the polygon. There is drift fence at the Olancha Pass Trailhead area, Wildrose Trail, and Pacific Crest Trail north of Kennedy Meadows campground. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has infrastructure in Haiwee Canyon. Very little of the area has been surveyed. Fewer than 10 properties are known, including remains of a historic corral, historic ditch, historic refuse scatters, and numerous prehistoric artifacts scatters and milling stations.

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In South Sierra East, there is livestock grazing that occurs in the area. There are developments related to grazing improvements, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power infrastructure (Haiwee Canyon area), and recreation developments that may be in the area.

Polygon 1236-Inyo Mountain Wilderness Addition

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Mining was extensive in this area. There may have been small areas of historic harvest related to mining. There are also active grazing allotments in the area. There are remnants of historic mining in many areas, including some that are substantially noticeable. Mine prospects, mine tailings, mining road and mining adits are found throughout the area.

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There are numerous roads and motorized trails within this polygon along the edge, as well as through the middle of the polygon. Off highway vehicle recreation, dispersed camping, mineral exploration and sightseeing are popular activities throughout this area, primarily during the spring and fall months. There is lower use in the summer due to heat. The opportunity for solitude is very limited in the areas in proximity to the road and motorized trail system. There are few quiet places free from motorized noise within the polygon, away from roads and motorized trails and mostly in the canyons.

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The opportunity for solitude is degraded due to the proximity to motorized recreation (roads and motorized trails). There may be opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation. There is limited opportunity to reshape to polygon to make it suitable or manageable for wilderness characteristics. The highest potential opportunity is where the polygon adjoins the Inyo Mountains Wilderness, however much of that area is bounded by roads or motorized trails which would make reshaping impractical. There are general tribal concerns regarding tribal access and use.

Polygon 1242-Pilot Mountain Wilderness Addition

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h. Most of the polygon is within a mapped wildfire restoration zone (60 percent) and a wildfire maintenance zone (40 percent)

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There has been some historic mining and timber harvest.

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Polygon 1258-Deep Springs North

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Historic mining and grazing has occurred in the area in the past. There are remnants of historic mines associated with the Wilkerson Mining Complex and Mexican Mine (cabins, adits, tailings). The roughly 25 documented cultural properties include remains of the Wilkerson Mining Complex, the Mexican Mine (cabins, adits, tailings), a stone cabin, hunting blind and

rock structure, as well as numerous prehistoric rock ring and artifact scatters. Approximately 20 percent of the area has been surveyed for cultural resources.

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The western half of the polygon is in proximity to paved forest highway (White Mountain Road, which is a National Forest Scenic Byway), Highway 168, and roads and motorized trails, which limit the opportunity for solitude in these areas. The northern boundary follows Wyman Canyon Road, which is a lightly traveled system road, but is a main route that connects to Silver Canyon Road on the west side of the White Mountains, and traverses to the east side of the White Mountains to Deep Springs Valley

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Very little of the area is surveyed. Three documented properties include a historic can dump, a prehistoric lithic scatter and the Gunter Creek Mining Site. The Gunter Creek Mine area contains several structures, including roads, trash, pipe, lumber, adits, shafts and platforms. Public comments indicate there are single track trails used by mountain bikers and motorcycle riders in the area.

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There is likely regular noise from vehicles on road and motorized trail network to the west that could be heard along the western perimeter of the area. There is regular noise that would be heard from vehicles near White Mountain Road in the northeast corner. T