

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Draft Wilderness Evaluation Report

Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation Exclusions

PW-03-01-069

June 2009

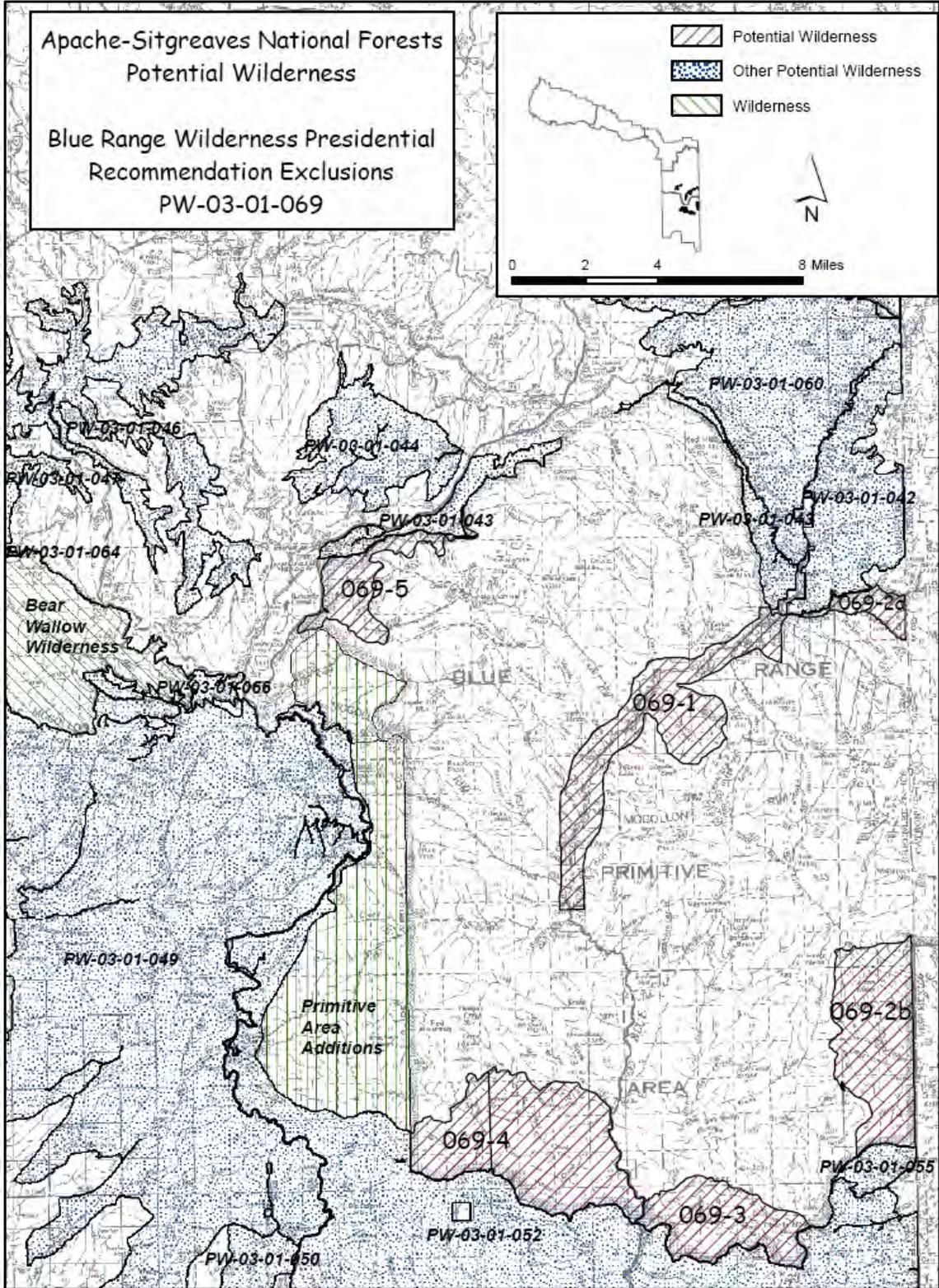
This draft potential wilderness evaluation report is divided into four parts: background, capability, availability, and need. Capability and availability are intended to be objective evaluations of existing conditions in the exclusions to the Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation.

The most important area of focus for public comment is the “need” evaluation. The intent of this part of the evaluation is to consider if the potential wilderness fits into the National Wilderness Preservation System at the regional level. This report offers data that helps us understand different sources that might generate need. Ultimately, however, need for wilderness is generated by public demand. Therefore, public input is an essential component of this part of the potential wilderness evaluation.

We would like your feedback on this draft report - if we have missed an important detail or if you would like to share your comments or other input, please contact us. Written comments can be sent to: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Attention: Forest Plan Revision Team, P.O. Box 640, Springerville, Arizona 85938, or E-mail: asnf.planning@fs.fed.us. We are also available by phone; ask for a planning team member at 928-333-4301 or 928-333-6292 (TTY).

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Introduction

As part of the Forest Plan Revision process for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs), the Forest Service has prepared this Wilderness Evaluation Report for the Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation Exclusions.

Purpose

The Forest Service must evaluate all lands possessing wilderness characteristics for potential wilderness during plan revision (39 CFR 219.17). Completion of a potential wilderness inventory and evaluation is an essential step in the plan revision process. Wilderness is just one of many special area designations that the Forest Service considers during plan revision, but it is one of only three special area evaluations that are mandatory. If an area is recommended for wilderness designation, then the revised plan would contain desired conditions, objectives, and/or guidelines that would protect its wilderness characteristics.

The Process

The wilderness evaluation began with an inventory of potential wilderness, which includes areas of federal land over 5,000 contiguous acres and other areas that meet the criteria in FSH 1909.12 Ch. 71, and then determined if those areas meet the definition of wilderness. Once a list of potential wilderness areas was created, each area was evaluated for capability, availability, and need. These evaluation factors are described in the introduction to each evaluation step and in Appendix A. This report summarizes the wilderness capability, availability, and need evaluations based on the best available information.

The ASNFs will use this report to determine whether or not to make a preliminary administrative recommendation for wilderness designation for the Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation Exclusions. The Responsible Official's (Forest Supervisor) recommendation will be documented in the final Plan and the Plan Approval Document. Public comments on this report will be accepted and considered throughout the plan revision process. If a potential wilderness is recommended for wilderness, the recommendation will receive further review by the Chief of the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture. If the Chief of the Forest Service intends to move forward with a wilderness recommendation, the Forest Service will complete a detailed analysis of the trade-offs and impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, including further public review and comment. Ultimately, only Congress has the authority to designate wilderness.

Background

Name	Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation Exclusions
Number	PW-03-01-069
Acres	33,661
Ranger Districts	Clifton, Alpine
History (if applicable)	<p>The Blue Range Primitive Area was administratively designated by the Forest Service (L-20 regulations) in 1933 to preserve its wilderness qualities.</p> <p>In 1971, the Forest Service submitted a recommendation to the president for the Blue Range Wilderness in New Mexico and Arizona. The president forwarded the recommendation to Congress, who eventually acted on a portion of the recommendation. In 1980 Congress designated, and the president signed into law, the Blue Range Wilderness in New Mexico. That portion of the Forest Service and presidential recommendation in Arizona has not been acted upon; the Blue Range Primitive Area continues to be the only remaining “Primitive Area” in the United States.</p> <p>The entire Blue Range Primitive Area has been managed as wilderness as prescribed in the 1987 Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Plan.</p> <p>Several portions of the Blue Range Primitive Area were found to not have wilderness character and were excluded from the Forest Service and presidential recommendations. The following rationale for the exclusions is from the 1971 Blue Range Wilderness proposal:</p> <p>Exclusion 1 (7,791 acres)¹ is unsuitable because of the large areas of highly developed private land, roads, and power lines, with wood, fence post, and saw log cutting having been done over several portions of the area. Signs of the early cutting are still visible.</p> <p>Exclusion 2 (7,995 acres) bears the unmistakable imprint of man’s activities. Roads, ranching headquarters, and many structural range improvements, as well as areas where timber has been cut for various purposes invade the area in several places. Manmade structures are numerous.</p> <p>Exclusion 3 (4,665 acres) would eliminate land believed to be potentially valuable for minerals. There are many lode mining claims already located on it. Several actively eroding bulldozer roads are located here. The area varies little from the surrounding country which is not wilderness in character.</p> <p>Exclusion 4 (10,404 acres) has been severely abused by man. Logging, post and pole cutting, over grazing, structural improvements, and three tracts of privately owned land have destroyed the wilderness character of the area. It is generally a fairly open, rolling country, more similar to the nonwilderness to the south than the high quality wilderness to the north.</p>

¹ Exclusion acreages are from GIS and are approximate.

Exclusion 5 (2,804 acres) is a high, timbered area above the Mogollon Rim. It is relatively flat had has been partially logged over the past. A low standard road crosses the area from east to west. Past abuse by livestock is evident on some meadows in the area.

Location, Vicinity, and Access	Approximately 23 miles north of Clifton, Arizona, and 30 miles south of Springerville in Greenlee County. The areas are located in the ASNFs in eastern Arizona. Primary access from the north is via U.S. Highways 180 and 191 and Forest Roads (FR) 281 and 287. Access from the south is via U.S. Highway 191 and FR 475.
Geography and Topography	The general Blue Range area is characterized by rough broken terrain with deep rocky canyons. There is little flat terrain in the area. The Mogollon Rim traverses the northern end. The Blue River flows north to south through the area. Numerous side canyons and drainages feed into the Blue River. Elevations range from 4,500 feet on the south to over 9,000 feet on the north.
Surroundings	<p>Most of the areas are located between the Blue Range Wilderness presidential recommendation and surrounding potential wildernesses. The Arizona/New Mexico state line delineates the eastern edge of Exclusions 2a and 2b. There are eight parcels of private land in Exclusion 1.</p> <p>Since 1971 the Forest Service has acquired one parcel of private land in Exclusion 1 and three parcels of private land in Exclusion 4.</p>
Vegetation	<p>A variety of vegetative communities is found within the potential wildernesses. Vegetation types vary with elevation, aspect, and slope and include spruce-fir forest (5)², mixed conifer forest (1, 5), ponderosa pine forest (1, 2a, 3, 4), Madrean pine-oak woodland (1, 2a, 2b, 3), piñon-juniper woodland (1), interior chaparral (3), semi-desert grassland (1, 2b, 3, 4), wetland/cienega (5), montane willow riparian forest (1, 2a, 4), and mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian forest (1, 3, 4). Mullein, a Class C noxious weed, is found along U.S. Highway 191 (5) and FRs 281 (1) and 232 (2a). Tamarisk, a Class B noxious weed, is found along the Blue River (1, 3, 4). Musk thistle, a Class A noxious weed, is found along a section of FR 281 (1). Bull thistle, a Class C noxious weed, is found along a section of U.S. Highway 191 (5).</p> <p>Vegetation is a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) for the Blue River because of the great diversity of vegetation communities associated with the changes in elevation, including the deciduous shrub and tree canopies.</p>
Appearance and Key Attractions	<p>The area is characterized by rough broken terrain with deep rocky canyons. Unusual and spectacular rock formations are common throughout the area. The box canyons along the Blue River are unique. Key attractions are the Blue River, diverse scenery, and wildlife hunting and viewing.</p> <p>Scenery is a WSR ORV for the Blue River because of the diversity of landforms, colors, and vegetation found along the river corridor. Scenery is also a WSR ORV for Little Blue Creek because of the diversity of landscapes along the creek. Landscapes range from high mountain meadows to an incised narrow canyon to a semi-slot canyon.</p>

² Numbers in () are the exclusion number.

Special Designations The Blue River eligible WSR is located within Exclusions 1, 3, and 4. Little Blue Creek eligible WSR is adjacent to Exclusion 3.

CURRENT USES

- Recreation** Current recreation activities are primarily hunting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, and viewing scenery and wildlife. There are four trailheads and all or portions of ten trails (15.6 miles) in Exclusion 1, one trailhead and all or portions of two trails (1.7 miles) in Exclusion 2a, three trailheads and all or portions of five trails (10.3 miles) in Exclusion 2b, all or portions of four trails (6 miles) in Exclusion 3, all or portions of four trails (12.2 miles) in Exclusion 4, and two trailheads and all or portions of seven trails (8.9 miles) in Exclusion 5. All of the areas have a recreation emphasis of Primitive.
- Recreation is a WSR ORV for the Blue River and Little Blue Creek because of the diversity of recreation opportunities in a remote and primitive setting.
- Wildlife** Large wildlife species found in the area include elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. A variety of small animals and birds also inhabit the area. Threatened Mexican spotted owls are found in the area (1, 2a, 2b, 5). A northern goshawk (sensitive) post-fledging family area is also located in the area (5). Threatened loach minnow are found in the Blue River (1, 3, 4). Threatened Gila trout are found in Raspberry Creek (1). Candidate wildlife species include western yellow-billed cuckoo, Mexican gartersnake, and New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. Sensitive wildlife species include bald eagle, American peregrine falcon, northern goshawk, Arizona Bell's vireo, narrow-headed gartersnake, Arizona toad, and lowland leopard frog. Sensitive fish species include longfin dace, Sonora sucker, and desert sucker.
- Fish species and habitat are WSR ORVs for the Blue River because of the high number of native fish species. Wildlife species and habitat are WSR ORVs for the Blue River because of the diversity of species and habitats.
- Range** The potential wildernesses are within the Bush Creek (1), Fishhook/Steeple Mesa (1), Raspberry (1), KP Summer (1, 5), Cow Flat (1, 2a), Bobcat-Johnson (2a), Alma Mesa (2b, 3), Sandrock (3, 4), AD Bar (4), Foote Creek (5), and Hannagan (5). The numbers of cattle in many allotments has been reduced since 1971. Grazing has not occurred Sandrock Allotment since the early 1980s. There is a total of 23.3 miles of fence, of which 4.8 are forest boundary, in Exclusions 2a (0.4 miles), 2b (15.5 miles), 3 (2 miles), and 4 (5.4 miles).
- Water** The Recreational (1) and Wild (3, 4) sections of the eligible Blue River are partially within or adjacent to the areas. The Wild section of the eligible Little Blue Creek is adjacent to Exclusion 3. Perennial streams include Raspberry (1), McKittrick (1), Steeple (1), Fishhook (1), Foote (1), Grant (1, 5), and Little Blue (3) Creeks; Lanphier (1) and Steeple (1, 2a) Canyons; and the Blue River (1, 3, 4). Other streams are intermittent or ephemeral. Of the 30 springs in areas 1, 2b, 3, 4, and 5; 15 are developed. There is also a well (2b).
- Minerals** There are no mining claims, mineral withdrawals, or coal, oil and gas, or geothermal leases in the potential wildernesses. The Blue River Metallic Mineral District (3) is an unclassified altered zone, with no historic production.

**Heritage
Resources**

Portions of the potential wildernesses are within the area that was used extensively by the prehistoric Mogollon culture.

Historic resources are a WSR ORV for the Blue River because of the length of post-settlement use in the area. Prehistoric resources are also a WSR ORV because the Blue River corridor contains extensive evidence of occupation and use by the Mogollon culture.

Fire

Seventy-three fires (most < ¼ acre and the largest approximately 185 acres) occurred between 1968 and 2006. The majority, including the largest, were caused by lightning. Twenty-seven fires occurred in Exclusion 1, 1 in Exclusion 2a, 4 in Exclusion 2b, 15 in Exclusion 3, 7 in Exclusion 4, and 19 in Exclusion 5.

Capability Evaluation

Wilderness capability describes the basic characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness designation, regardless of the area's availability or need. Five sets of factors are used to determine capability: naturalness, level of development, opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, special features, and the ability of the Forest Service to manage the area as wilderness. The first four factors consider how the current conditions of the potential wilderness fit the definition of wilderness. Manageability is slightly different because it evaluates features of the area that would make it more or less difficult to manage as wilderness, such as size, shape, and juxtaposition to external influences. The following summarizes the information found in Appendix B.

Summary

Natural

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, and extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek and extreme southern end

Exclusion 1 is essentially unnatural and contain a bladed road, several trail heads, and numerous structures. The other potential wildernesses are essentially natural and the diversities of vegetation and wildlife species are key features. Vegetation includes spruce-fir, mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, montane willow riparian, and mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian forests; Madrean pine-oak and piñon-juniper woodlands; interior chaparral; semi-desert grassland; and wetland/cienega. The areas provides habitat for a wide variety of special status animal species. Free-flowing, perennial streams include Raspberry, McKittrick, Steeple, Fishhook, Foote, Grant, and Little Blue Creeks; Lanphier and Steeple Canyons; and the Blue River. There are no known impoundments. The Blue River has been found to contain *E. coli* bacteria below Strayhorse Creek; there are no other known water quality concerns. The Blue River through these areas is an eligible WSR with proposed classifications of Recreational and Wild. Little Blue Creek is an eligible WSR with a proposed classification of Wild. Mullein is found along area roads. Musk thistle is found along a section of FR 281. Bull thistle is found along a section of U.S. Highway 191. Tamarisk is found along the Blue River. The night sky is not affected by ranch lights along the Blue River.

Undeveloped

High - 2a, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek

Low - 1 (except Sawmill Creek) and 2b

1 (except Sawmill Creek), 2b - There is obvious evidence of human activity. Exclusion 1 includes a bladed county road and extensive private lands with structures. Exclusion 2b has fences, a well, a developed spring, stock tanks, corrals, and a cabin.

2a, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek - There is currently little evidence of human activity. With the passage of time, many of the human-caused features described in the 1971 wilderness proposal are no longer evident. Exclusion 2a has fences and a corral. Exclusion 3 has fences, corrals, developed springs, and stock tanks. Exclusion 4 has fences, corrals, and a cabin.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek

- 1, except Sawmill Creek - There are few opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation because of the bladed road, private lands, and configuration of the area.
- 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek - There are outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, especially when considered with the presidential wilderness recommendation. Recreation opportunities include backpacking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, viewing wildlife, and photography.

Special Features and Values

High

Special features and values include outstanding panoramic views, unusual and spectacular rock formations, box canyons, high potential for ecological and cultural research, and habitat for a variety of rare or unique species, including Mexican spotted owl (1, 2a, 2b, 5), northern goshawk (5), Apache trout (5), Gila trout (1), and loach minnow (1, 3, 4).

Manageability

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek

- 1 - This area has a bladed road through it and cannot be managed as wilderness.
- 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek, - These potential wildernesses could be managed to protect their wilderness character because they are currently managed as wilderness. There are no known encumbrances or resource conflicts.

OVERALL CAPABILITY

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, and Sawmill Creek

Low - Exclusion 1 without Sawmill Creek

Availability Evaluation

Availability criteria indicate the availability of a potential wilderness for wilderness designation by describing other resource and land use potentials for the area. Availability examines the potential impact of designating an area as wilderness to both the current and future land uses and activities. In essence, it is a summary of the trade-offs between wilderness and other uses. The following summarizes the information found in Appendix C.

Summary

Water Yield

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek and extreme southern end

1 - The area is of value for water yield. With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area includes are numerous structures along the FR 281 and Blue River corridor that require maintenance and that affect wilderness characteristics.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1 - The areas are of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

Habitat Management

High - 2a, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek

Medium - 2b

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek

1 - With the exception of Sawmill Creek, the area needs frequent management over the next decade for aquatic animals.

2a, 3, 4, 5 - No wildlife or aquatic animal management activities have been identified.

2b - Some management activities requiring motorized equipment may be needed in the area.

Aquatic Restoration

High - 2a, 2b, 5, Sawmill Creek

Medium - 1, 3, 4

1, 3, 4 - Aquatic restoration activities are needed. Tamarisk is currently found along the Blue River.

2a, 2b, 5, Sawmill Creek - There are currently no aquatic restoration activities identified.

Vegetation Restoration

Medium - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek and extreme southern end

1 - This exclusion, with the exceptions of Sawmill Canyon and the extreme southern end, includes the FR 281 corridor. This road corridor requires thinning to reduce fuels and long-term motorized maintenance and fuel reduction activities.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - Vegetation treatments, primarily burning, may be needed to reduce fuels and to restore grassland ecosystems.

Public Access Needed

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek and extreme southern end

1 - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area has developed recreation sites including trailheads.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access.

Land Use Authorizations

High - 2a, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1 (except extreme southern end and Sawmill Creek), 2b

1 - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area requires motorized equipment for access and maintenance of FR 281.

2a, 5 - Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness.

2b - Current permitted grazing use and the ability to use motorized equipment and tools within the area to maintain range developments is critical to the operation and effectiveness of grazing management. Stateline Cabin is used extensively for the management of the Alma Mesa Allotment. There is a special authorization for the grazing permittee to access to this cabin with motor vehicles.

3, 4 - These areas are mostly located in the Sandrock Allotment which is not currently permitted for grazing. Grazing has not been permitted since the early 1980s.

Adjacent Non-FS Lands

High - 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Low - 1, except Sawmill Creek and extreme southern end

1 - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area contains numerous pieces of private land along FR 281.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wildernesses.

Minerals

High

1, 2a, 2b, 4, 5 - There is a low potential for future mineral uses.

3 - There is a low to moderate potential for future mineral uses.

OVERALL AVAILABILITY

High - 2a, 3, 4, 5, Sawmill Creek, extreme southern end of 1

Medium to High - 2b

Low - 1

Need Evaluation

The evaluation criteria below indicate how the potential wilderness might fit into the National Wilderness Preservation System, which includes all wilderness areas in the United States. Need is considered at the regional level and must incorporate public participation. The criteria used to evaluate need include consideration of other wilderness and non-wilderness areas that provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation or preservation of certain ecosystem characteristics. The following summarizes the information found in Appendix D.

Summary

Factor 1 - The location, size, and type of other wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area. Consider accessibility of areas to population centers and user groups. Public demand for wilderness may increase with proximity to growing population centers.

Low

There are adequate wilderness opportunities in the vicinity of Blue Range Wilderness Presidential Recommendation Exclusions. Within 100 miles of these potential wildernesses there are 1,574,507 wilderness and primitive area³ acres. Within 100 miles of Silver City, New Mexico, the closest population center, there are 472,888 potential wilderness acres on the ASNFs and 1,204,467 Wilderness and primitive area acres. Within 130 miles of Tucson, there are 354,490 potential wilderness acres on the ASNFs and 1,487,287 Wilderness and primitive area acres.

Factor 2 - Present visitor pressure on other wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation.

Medium

According to the 2001 National Visitor Use Monitoring study, approximately 38,000 people visited the three Wilderness areas on the ASNFs. Most of this use was concentrated in the two smaller, more easily accessed Wildernesses, Mount Baldy and Escudilla. Visitor use in Mount Baldy is locally considered high, while visitor use in Escudilla is considered moderate to high. Use in Bear Wallow Wilderness is lighter because it is less easily accessed and slightly larger. Wilderness users on the ASNFs are predominantly male, white or Hispanic/Latino, between the ages of 31 and 60, and live in the Phoenix and Tucson areas.

Approximately 70 percent of the Arizona visitors to the ASNFs are from the Phoenix (58 percent) and Tucson (11 percent) metropolitan areas. Populations in these areas have increased much faster than in the more rural areas. Visitors from the four counties where the ASNFs are located account for another 20 percent. In general, there has been no to moderate population growth in these counties. Recently, there have been major highway improvements between Phoenix and the ASNFs.

It can be assumed that with increasing populations and improved transportation features, wilderness use on the ASNFs would continue to increase, especially in those areas where the trailheads are easily accessed.

³ The Blue Range Primitive Area is the last remaining such area in the United States. It is managed as wilderness in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2320.3(11).

Surrounding National Forests (Coconino, Coronado, Gila, and Tonto) all have much higher numbers of wilderness visits than the ASNFs. Use on the Coconino, Coronado, and Gila is high, while use on the ASNFs and Tonto is moderate.⁴

Regionally, increased demand for additional wilderness in both Arizona and New Mexico should be anticipated based on population growth that occurred from 1990 to 2000, which far exceeded the national growth rate. Assuming Arizona continues to grow at a rate much higher the national rate, visits to wilderness will continue to increase. Arizona, in particular, could benefit from additional wilderness.

Public demand increases with proximity to six population centers: Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque. Consider wilderness recommendations within 100-150 miles of those cities to provide for that demand. Some additional public demand for wilderness in the Southwestern Region will occur from people moving to rural communities near the National Forests.

Nationwide, Wilderness represents 17 percent of all federal agency acres. In the Southwestern Region 13 percent of the Forest Service lands are Wilderness. Only 6 percent of the federal acres in northeast Arizona are wilderness acres. For wilderness acres in the Southwestern Region to be at the national average would require the addition of about 1 million acres.

Factor 3 - The extent to which nonwilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

Low

There are adequate nonwilderness lands on or near the ASNFs that could provide unconfined outdoor recreation experiences. Within 100 miles of the Silver City, New Mexico, the closest population center, there are over 1.5 million acres of primitive area, Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA), and Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Additionally, there are over 900,000 acres managed for semi-primitive and primitive recreation on the ASNFs. Many of these acres overlap with Wilderness, the Blue Range Primitive Area, IRAs, and potential wilderness.

Within 130 miles of Tucson, there are over 1 million acres of primitive area, IRAs, and WSAs. Additionally, there are over 383,000 acres managed for semi-primitive and primitive recreation on the ASNFs. Many of these acres overlap with Wilderness, the Blue Range Primitive Area, IRAs, and potential wilderness.

Factor 4 - The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena.

Low

The ASNFs have identified 11 Threatened and Endangered species, 105 Species of Concern⁵, and 208 Species of Interest⁶ that occur or are found on the forests. None of these species require a primitive wilderness environment to survive. However, some (Mexican gray wolf, for example) would benefit from reduced disturbance and human encounters.

⁴ This is based on use categories developed by the Forest Service Wilderness Advisory Group, with low use defined as 0-10,000 visits, medium as 10,001 – 30,000 visits, and high being greater than 30,000 visits. Total wilderness use for a forest from NVUM was divided by the number of wildernesses the forest is lead for, to get an average amount of use per wilderness.

⁵ Species of Concern are species for which management actions may be necessary to prevent listing under the Endangered Species Act.

⁶ Species of Interest are species for which management actions may be necessary to achieve ecological or other multiple-use objectives.

Factor 5 - Within social and biological limits, management may increase the capacity of established wildernesses to support human use without unacceptable depreciation of the wilderness resource.

Low

There is little opportunity for management to increase the capacity of the established wildernesses on the ASNFs. Both Mount Baldy and Escudilla Wildernesses are heavily used, are less than 10,000 acres, are easily accessed by motor vehicles, and have limited trail systems. Encounters with other wilderness visitors in both areas are high. No management changes have been identified for Bear Wallow Wilderness because the use is much lighter.

Factor 6 - An area's ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems. Consideration of this factor may include utilization of Edwin A. Hammond's subdivision of landform types and the Bailey-Kuchler ecosystem classification. This approach is helpful from the standpoint of rounding out the National Wilderness Preservation System and may be further subdivided to suit local, subregional, and regional needs.

Medium

These potential wildernesses contain two underrepresented ecosystems: 770 acres of piñon-juniper woodland (1) and 5,985 acres of semi-desert grassland (2b, 3, 4).

OVERALL NEED

Low to Medium, contains two underrepresented ecosystems

Appendix A: Wilderness Evaluation Process

The following is summarized from Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 70. This process is used by the Forest Service to determine whether there are areas that could be recommended for wilderness designation by Congress. The process includes three steps: an inventory of potential wilderness areas, an evaluation of the potential wilderness areas, and a determination if a recommendation will be pursued for any potential wilderness areas.

Inventory of Potential Wilderness Areas

The first step in the evaluation of potential wilderness is to identify and inventory all areas within National Forest System Lands that satisfy the definition of wilderness found in the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Areas identified through this process are called potential wilderness areas. This inventory of potential wilderness is not a land designation. It is completed with the express purpose of identifying all lands that meet the criteria for being evaluated for wilderness suitability and possible recommendation to Congress for wilderness designation.

The inventory of areas relies on local knowledge and judgment regarding unique, site-specific conditions of each area being considered. The boundaries of areas for the potential wilderness inventory should facilitate easy on-the-ground identification.

Inventory Criteria

Areas qualify for inclusion in the potential wilderness inventory if they meet the statutory definition of wilderness and meet either criteria 1 and 3 or criteria 2 and 3 below.

1. Areas contain 5,000 acres or more.
2. Areas contain less than 5,000 acres, but meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Can be preserved due to physical terrain and natural conditions.
 - b. Self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
 - c. Contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.
3. Areas do not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanently authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100th meridian (sec. 71.12).

Areas may be included in the potential wilderness inventory even though they include the types of areas or features listed in FSH 1909.12, 71.11.

On the ASNFs, GIS was used to identify those areas that met the inventory criteria. Site-specific information was gathered from Ranger District (District) personnel to provide background information, identify features not shown in GIS, and determine where the Region 3 criteria on roaded areas, fingers, and extrusions should be applied.

Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas

An area recommended for wilderness must meet the tests of capability, availability, and need. In addition to the inherent wilderness quality it possesses, an area must provide opportunities and experiences that are dependent upon or enhanced by a wilderness environment. The ability of the Forest Service to manage the area as wilderness is also considered.

Capability

The capability of a potential wilderness is the degree to which an area contains the basic characteristics that make it suitable for wilderness recommendation without regard to its availability for or need as wilderness. The following characteristics are considered in evaluating a potential wilderness area:

1. Natural - an area is substantially free from the effects of modern civilization and generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.
2. Undeveloped - the degree to which an area is without permanent improvements or human habitation.
3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation - the capability of the area to provide solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation. This includes a wide range of experiential opportunities. Solitude is the opportunity to experience isolation from sights, sounds, and the presence of others from developments and evidence of humans.
4. Special Features and Values - an area is capable of providing other values such as those with ecologic, geologic, scientific, educational, scenic, historical, or cultural significance.
5. Manageability - the ability to manage an area as wilderness as required by the Wilderness and how boundaries affect manageability of an area.

Responses to the capability questions were drafted at the ASNFs Supervisors Office and reviewed by District personnel. Any changes were incorporated into the capability evaluation.

If an area is found to not be capable of being wilderness (a rating of Low), it is not carried forward into the Availability Evaluation.

Availability

Areas determined to meet wilderness capability requirements are considered potentially available for wilderness designation. The determination of availability is conditioned by the value of and need for the wilderness resource compared to the value of and need for other resources. Other resource potential including current use and potential future use is analyzed for the various resources involved.

Constraints and encumbrances on lands may also govern the availability of lands for wilderness. The degree of Forest Service control over the surface and subsurface of the area is also considered. The Forest Service should have sufficient control to prevent development of incompatible uses that would negatively affect wilderness character and potential.

Responses to the availability questions were drafted by at the ASNFs Supervisors Office and reviewed by District personnel. Any changes were incorporated into the availability evaluation.

Need

The need for an area to be designated as wilderness is determined through an analysis on a regional basis by evaluating such factors as the geographic distribution of areas and representation of landforms and ecosystems to which it contributes to the overall National Wilderness Preservation System. This need is demonstrated through a public involvement process, including public input to the evaluation report.

A set of GIS models, information papers, and analyses were provided by the Region 3 Regional Office. This information was synthesized at the ASNFs Supervisors Offices and reviewed by District personnel. Any changes were incorporated into the need evaluation.

Appendix B: Capability Evaluation and Ratings

Capability Characteristics

Natural

1. Presence of non-native species.

High - Non-native species are not evident.

Medium - Non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Low - Non-native species are common or scattered throughout the area.

Rating: **Medium** - Mullein is found along U.S. Highway 191 and FR 281 and 232. Musk thistle is found along a section of FR 281. Bull thistle is found along a section of U.S. Highway 191. Tamarisk is found along the Blue River.

2. Rivers within the potential wilderness are in free-flowing condition.

High - Rivers within the area are considered free-flowing.

Medium - Some rivers have impoundments or other issues that affect their free-flowing character.

Low - Rivers within the potential wilderness are seasonal or heavily impacted by impoundments.

Rating: **High** - Perennial streams in the areas include Raspberry, McKittrick, Steeple, Fishhook, Foote, Grant, and Little Blue Creeks; Lanphier and Steeple Canyons; and the Blue River. All other drainages are either intermittent or ephemeral. There are no known impoundments. The Blue River through these areas is an eligible WSR with proposed classifications of Recreational and Wild. Little Blue Creek is an eligible WSR with a proposed classification of Wild.

3. Quality of night-sky as affected by light pollution.

High - The night sky is clear with little to no interference from light pollution.

Medium - Some stars are visible and there is moderate degradation from light pollution.

Low - Few stars are visible at night and the presence of light pollution is evident.

Rating: **High** - There are no nearby population centers and the night sky is not affected by ranch lights along the Blue River.

4. Presence of pollutants that degrade water.

High - All rivers/streams have been sampled and there are no water quality issues.

Medium - There are no known water quality issues within the area but the not all rivers/streams have been sampled.

Low - There are rivers within the area that are listed on the State Impaired Waters List (303d).

Rating: **Low to Medium** - The Blue River has been sampled and has been found to be impaired below Strayhorse Creek because of *E. coli* bacteria. The remaining streams in the potential wildernesses have not been sampled; there are no known water quality issues with these waters.

5. Area provides elements of biological diversity and naturalness, including unique habitats, TES or rare plants and wildlife.

High - Has critical or unique habitats and diverse ecological conditions.

Medium - Has a mix of habitats and ecological conditions.

Low - Has limited ecological conditions and habitats.

Rating: **High** - Biological diversity is high and essentially natural. The areas provides habitat for a wide variety of special status animal and plant species. Vegetation, Wildlife species and habitat, and Fish species and habitat are ORVs for the eligible WSRs adjacent to and within these areas.

6. Area contains a variety of natural resources, including a variety of tree species and structures, intermingled grasslands or meadows, numerous recreation opportunities, diversity of wildlife habitats, and wildlife, etc.

High - Diverse amount of natural resources.

Medium - Mixed amount of natural resources.

Low - Limited amount of natural resource diversity.

Rating: **High** - Diversity of natural vegetation and wildlife species are key natural features. Vegetation includes spruce-fir forest, mixed conifer forest, ponderosa pine forest, Madrean pine-oak woodland, piñon -juniper woodland, interior chaparral, semi-desert grassland, wetland/cienega, montane willow riparian forest, and mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian forest. The potential wildernesses also contain some areas of old spruce, fir, and mixed conifer. Hiking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife viewing, and photography are the main recreation opportunities. Wildlife species and habitat are diverse because the varied topographic, soil, and vegetative conditions within the area combine with perennial streams to provide habitat for numerous wildlife species.

Undeveloped

7. Area has current or past evidence of human activity.

High - Little or no evidence of human activity.

Medium - Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human activity.

Low - Obvious evidence of human activity.

Rating: **High and Low** - There is currently little evidence of human activity in Sawmill Creek and Exclusions 2a, 3, 4, and 5 and obvious evidence in Exclusions 1 and 2b. With the passage of time, many of the human-caused features described in the 1971 wilderness proposal are no longer evident. Exclusion 1 includes a bladed county road and extensive private lands with structures. Exclusion 2a has fences and a corral. Exclusion 2b has fences, a well, a developed spring, stock tanks, and corrals. There are fences, corrals, developed springs, and stock tanks in Exclusion 3. Exclusion 4 has fences, corrals, and a cabin.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

8. Area provides physically and mentally challenging recreation opportunities that promote adventure and self-reliance.

High - Most of the area provides challenging recreation opportunities.

Medium - Some parts of the area have the potential for challenging recreation opportunities.

Low - Few parts of the area can provide challenging recreation opportunities.

Rating: **High** - The areas, except for most of Exclusion 1, provide physically challenging recreation opportunities, especially when considered with the proposed wilderness.

9. Opportunity to experience solitude and isolation from human activities while recreating in the area.

High - Significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.

Medium - Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are likely.

Low - Little opportunity of feeling alone.

Rating: **High** - The areas, except for most of Exclusion 1, provide opportunities for solitude especially when considered with the proposed wilderness. Signs of civilization are only visible in conjunction with U.S. Highway 191 and FR 281.

10. Opportunity to engage in primitive and unconfined recreation such as backpacking, kayaking, hunting, fishing, etc.

High - There are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Medium - There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Low - There are few to no opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Rating: **High** - The areas, except for most of Exclusion 1, provide a wide variety of primitive recreation opportunities including backpacking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, viewing wildlife, and photography.

Special Features and Values

11. Area contains outstanding or distinct features like rock formations, panoramic views, etc.

High - Many distinct features or few but exceptional features.

Medium - Some distinct features.

Low - One or no distinct features.

Rating: **High** - There are outstanding panoramic view throughout the areas. Unusual and spectacular rock formations are common throughout the area. The box canyons along the Blue River are unique.

12. Area has potential for scientific research, environmental education, or historic/cultural opportunities.

High - Good potential for two or more types of these opportunities.

Medium - Potential for one type of opportunity.

Low - Little or no potential for this type of opportunity.

Rating: **High** - There is the potential for scientific research because of the ecological diversity of the areas and the presence of cultural resources.

13. Area contains unique or rare species of plants and/or animals.

High - Area has several unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Medium - Area has a few unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Low - Area has no unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Rating: **High** - A variety of rare or unique species, including Mexican spotted owl (1, 2a, 2b, 5), northern goshawk (5), Apache trout (5), Gila trout (1), and loach minnow (1, 3, 4) are found in the areas.

Overall Capability: High - Sawmill Creek and Exclusions 2-5

Low - Exclusion 1 without Sawmill Creek

Manageability

14. Ability to manage the area for wilderness character, including distance and influence from outside activities; opportunity to access the area; and resource conflicts or encumbrances.

High - Isolated from areas of activity; controlled or limited access; no encumbrances or resource conflicts.

Medium - Somewhat isolated from areas of activity; adequate access opportunities; some resource conflicts and/or encumbrances.

Low - Areas of activity are nearby; many access opportunities; many resource conflicts and/or encumbrances.

Rating: **High** - Sawmill Creek and Exclusions 2-5; Access to Exclusions 2b and 5 is good. The areas are currently managed as wilderness. There are currently no mining claims in any of the areas.

Low - Exclusion 1 without Sawmill Creek. Access is good. The area surrounds private lands and includes many areas of activity.

15. Motorized use within the area.

Yes - Has motorized vehicle use.

No - Does not have any motorized vehicle use.

Rating: **No** - Exclusions 2-5 are currently managed as wilderness.

Yes - Exclusion 1 has a road through it, but motorized vehicle use is not allowed off the road.

Overall Manageability: High - Sawmill Creek and Exclusions 2-5

Low - Exclusion 1 without Sawmill Creek

Appendix C: Availability Evaluation and Ratings

Availability Characteristics

1. Areas that are of high value for water yield or on-site storage where installation and maintenance of improvements may be required.

High - No impoundment needed.

Medium - Minor improvements will have an effect.

Low - Identified impoundment that will have an effect on wild characteristics.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - The area is of value for water yield. With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area includes are numerous structures along the FR 281 and Blue River corridor that require maintenance and that affect wilderness characteristics.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - **High** - The areas are of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

2. Areas needing management for wildlife or aquatic animals that MIGHT conflict with wilderness management.

Low - Intense management (motorized equipment: helicopters, chainsaws, broadcast burning) and frequent entries (= or <5 yrs).

Medium - Management requires helicopters but no motorized equipment on the ground and frequency is generally less than 10 years.

High - Low management requirements with no motorized equipment required to meet objectives and infrequent entries.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - With the exception of Sawmill Creek, the area needs frequent management over the next decade for aquatic animals.

2a, 3, 4, 5 - **High** - No wildlife or aquatic animal management activities have been identified.

2b - **Medium** - Some management activities requiring motorized equipment may be needed in the area.

3. Area needing active aquatic restoration activities.

Low - The majority of watershed needs attention.

Medium - Site-specific improvements needed.

High - Properly functioning with no or little restoration activities needed.

Rating: 1, 3, 4 - **Medium** - With the exception of Sawmill Creek, the aquatic restoration activities are needed. Tamarisk is currently found along the Blue River (1, 3, 4). Should a major flood occur on the Blue River, there would be a need to restore and improve the floodplain.

Sawmill Creek, 2a, 2b, 5 - **High** - There are currently no aquatic restoration activities identified.

4. Area needing active vegetative restoration activities due to specific species survival (such as White Bark Pine restoration) or identifiable fuel reduction activity to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire or known areas of severe insect infestation that will lead to heavy tree mortality.

Low - The need for vegetation restoration is a higher priority and requires long-term management and mechanized or motorized equipment.

Medium - Areas needing high intensity management activities for a short time period (< or = 5 years). These areas could be available for wilderness after those activities are completed (like fuel reduction activities). Some intense restoration work over small areas could be accomplished without conflicting with wilderness management (species conservation work not requiring motorized equipment).

High - The area needs little vegetative restoration.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - This exclusion, with the exceptions of Sawmill Canyon and the extreme southern end, includes the FR 281 corridor. This road corridor requires long-term motorized maintenance and fuel reduction activities.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - **Medium** - Vegetation treatments, primarily burning, may be needed to reduce fuels and to restore grassland ecosystems.

5. Areas having such unique characteristics or natural phenomena that general public access should be developed to facilitate public use and enjoyment.

High - Does not exist or minimal development will be provided.

Medium - Requires minor development or improvement that does not qualify as a developed recreation site but is a higher development level than is normally found within wilderness.

Low - Has a developed recreation site or features that warrant construction of a developed recreation site.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area has developed recreation sites including campgrounds and trailheads.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - **High** - There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access.

6. Lands committed through contracts, permits or agreements that would be in conflict with wilderness management (some minor permitted uses may be still be allowed).

High - Current authorizations do not conflict with potential wilderness.

Medium - Current authorization(s) but can be terminated or there is long-term authorization or commitment but does not require motorized equipment for access or maintenance.

Low - Currently exists, must be retained (long-term commitments), and requires motorized equipment for access or maintenance.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern end, the area requires motorized equipment for access and maintenance of FR 281.

2a, 5 - **High** - Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness.

2b - **Low** - Current permitted grazing use and the ability to use motorized equipment within the area and tools to maintain range developments is critical to the operation and effectiveness of grazing management. Stateline cabin exists within 2b and is use extensively for the management of the Alma Mesa Allotment. There is a special authorization for the grazing permittee to access to Stateline cabin with motorized vehicles.

3, 4 - **High** - These areas are mostly located in the Sandrock Allotment which is not currently permitted for grazing. Grazing has not been permitted since the 1987 ASNFs Forest Plan.

7. Forest Service has sufficient control to prevent development of irresolvable, incompatible use that would lessen wilderness character and potential.

High - No inholdings and no non-federal lands adjacent to potential wilderness.

Medium - No inholdings but adjacent lands may be private.

Low - Inholdings exist.

Rating: 1 - **Low** - With the exception of Sawmill Creek and the extreme southern, the area contains numerous pieces of private land along FR 281.

2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 - **High** - There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wildernesses.

Overall availability: 2b - **Medium to High**

Sawmill Creek, extreme south end of 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5 - **High**

1 - **Low**

Appendix D: Need Evaluation

Factor 1 - The location, size, and type of other wildernesses in the general vicinity and their distance from the proposed area. Consider accessibility of areas to population centers and user groups. Public demand for wilderness may increase with proximity to growing population centers.

There are 24 Wildernesses and 1 primitive area⁷ within 100 miles of PW-03-01-069. The total acreage of these areas is 1,574,507 acres. The Forest Service (FS) manages 14 of these areas, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 9, and the National Park Service (NPS) manages 2.

Potential Wilderness	Existing Wilderness within 100 Miles	Existing Wilderness Acreage	Distance from Potential Wilderness	Managing Agency
PW-03-01-069	Aldo Leopold	206,700	71	FS
PW-03-01-069	Apache Kid	44,835	96	FS
PW-03-01-069	Aravaipa Canyon	19,790	81	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Bear Wallow	11,113	9	FS
PW-03-01-069	Blue Range	35,815	8	FS
PW-03-01-069	Blue Range Primitive Area	179,819	3	FS
PW-03-01-069	Cebolla	66,445	97	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Chiricahua	88,793	100	FS
PW-03-01-069	Chiricahua National Monument	12,161	94	NPS
PW-03-01-069	Dos Cabezas Mountains	11,855	83	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Fishhooks	11,400	47	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Galiuro	75,585	86	FS
PW-03-01-069	Gila	558,549	41	FS
PW-03-01-069	Mount Baldy	7,627	25	FS
PW-03-01-069	Needle's Eye	6,277	83	BLM
PW-03-01-069	North Santa Teresa	5,733	64	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Peloncillo Mountains	19,244	71	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Petrified Forest	52,058	86	NPS
PW-03-01-069	Redfield Canyon	6,206	90	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Salome	18,688	100	FS
PW-03-01-069	Salt River Canyon	32,035	87	FS
PW-03-01-069	Santa Teresa	28,769	68	FS
PW-03-01-069	Sierra Ancha	18,198	93	FS
PW-03-01-069	West Malpais	37,839	97	BLM
PW-03-01-069	Withington	18,973	95	FS
	TOTAL	1,574,507		

⁷ The Blue Range Primitive Area is the last remaining such area in the United States. It is managed as wilderness in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2320.3(11).

There are 12 Wildernesses, 1 primitive area, and 1,204,467 wilderness and primitive area acres within 100 miles of Silver City, New Mexico. There are 28 potential wildernesses and 472,888 potential wilderness acres on the ASNFs within 100 miles of Silver City (only acres within 100 miles are shown; actual and potential wildernesses may be larger).

Population Center	Wilderness within 100 Miles	Wilderness Acres within 100 Miles	Potential Wilderness Within 100 Miles	Potential Wilderness Acres within 100 Miles
Silver City	Aldo Leopold	206,700	PW-03-01-021	992
	Apache Kid	44,835	PW-03-01-022	1,031
	Bear Wallow	11,113	PW-03-01-063	5,381
	Blue Range Primitive Area	179,819	PW-03-01-029	1,160
	Blue Range	35,815	PW-03-01-065	484
	Chiricahua	88,793	PW-03-01-047	5,713
	Chiricahua National Monument	12,161	PW-03-01-064	172
	Dos Cabezas Mountains	11,855	PW-03-01-046	11,317
	Escudilla	5,210	PW-03-01-035	6,032
	Fishhooks	11,400	PW-03-01-044	6,497
	Gila	558,549	PW-03-01-066	1,205
	Peloncillo Mountains	19,244	PW-03-01-043	2,344
	Withington	18,973	PW-03-01-069	33,662
	TOTAL	1,204,467	PW-03-01-041	9,435
			PW-03-01-049	76,048
			PW-03-01-040	2,653
			PW-03-01-060	15,222
			PW-03-01-043	1,835
			PW-03-01-042	7,835
			PW-03-01-050	7,959
			PW-03-01-051	44,075
			PW-03-01-052	156,297
			PW-03-01-055	1,254
			PW-03-01-067	30,340
			PW-03-01-053	17,526
			PW-03-01-058	5,217
			PW-03-01-057	5,692
			PW-03-01-054	15,510
			TOTAL	472,888

There are 34 Wildernesses, 1 primitive area, and 1,487,287 Wilderness and primitive area acres within 130 miles of Tucson. There are 13 potential wildernesses and 354,490 potential wilderness acres on the ASNFs within 130 miles of Tucson (only acres within 130 miles are shown; actual and potential wildernesses may be larger).

Population Center	Wilderness within 130 Miles	Wilderness Acres within 130 Miles	Potential Wilderness Within 130 Miles	Potential Wilderness Acres within 130 Miles
Tucson	Aravaipa Canyon	19,790	PW-03-01-054	15,510
	Baboquivari Peak	2,776	PW-03-01-058	5,217
	Bear Wallow	11,100	PW-03-01-053	17,526
	Blue Range Primitive Area	23,390	PW-03-01-057	5,692
	Chiricahua	88,793	PW-03-01-067	30,340
	Chiricahua National Monument	12,161	PW-03-01-051	44,075
	Coyote Mountains	5,795	PW-03-01-052	139,894
	Dos Cabezas Mountains	11,855	PW-03-01-050	7,959
	Fishhooks	11,400	PW-03-01-069-3	1,689
	Four Peaks	60,487	PW-03-01-069-4	10,395
	Galiuro	75,585	PW-03-01-049	74,133
	Mazatzal	42,986	PW-03-01-066	865
	Miller Peak	20,381	PW-03-01-064	172
	Mount Wrightson	25,596	PW-03-01-047	1,023
	Needle's Eye	6,277		354,490
	North Maricopa Mountains	61,157		
	North Santa Teresa	5,733		
	Organ Pipe Cactus (NPS)	280,403		
	Organ Pipe Cactus (FWS)	120,043		
	Pajarita	7,897		
	Peloncillo Mountains	19,244		
	Pusch Ridge	56,743		
	Redfield Canyon	6,206		
	Rincon Mountain	38,611		
	Saguaro	77,119		
	Salome	18,688		
	Salt River Canyon	32,035		
	Santa Teresa	28,769		
	Sierra Ancha	18,198		
	Sierra Estrella	14,746		
	South Maricopa Mtns	58,963		
	Superstition	158,920		
	Table Top	34,696		
	White Canyon	6,981		
	Woolsey Peak	23,763		
		1,487,287		

Factor 2 - Present visitor pressure on other wildernesses, the trends in use, changing patterns of use, population expansion factors, and trends and changes in transportation.

Item 1

Each Federal agency that manages wilderness collects and reports visitor use information differently. The Forest Service reports wilderness use by each national forest, not each wilderness. The National Park Service collects backcountry visitor use only for overnight stays. The Bureau of Land Management reports use for each wilderness.

According to the 2001 National Visitor Use Monitoring study, approximately two percent of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) users visited the three wilderness areas on the forest. This figure is similar to other non-urban forests in the Southwestern Region. More urban forests (Cibola and Coronado) reported approximately 25% of their users visited wilderness areas.

Most of the wilderness use on the ASNFs is concentrated in the two smaller wilderness areas, Mount Baldy and Escudilla. These areas are each less than 10,000 acres, are easily accessible by motor vehicles, and have limited trail systems. Visitor use in Mount Baldy is considered high with use concentrated on two of the three trails. Visitor use in Escudilla is considered moderate to high with use concentrated on one trail. Encounters with other wilderness visitors in both areas are high. Use in Bear Wallow Wilderness is lighter because it is less accessible and is slightly larger. There are no accurate use figures for the Blue Range Primitive Area, which is managed as wilderness.

Approximately 70 percent of the Arizona visitors to the ASNFs are from the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas. Populations in these areas have increased much faster than in the more rural areas. Visitors from the four counties where the ASNFs are located account for another 20 percent. In general, there has been no to moderate population growth in these counties. Recently, there have been major highway improvements between Phoenix and the ASNFs.

It can be assumed that with increasing populations and improved transportation features, wilderness use would continue to increase in those wilderness areas on the ASNFs that are easily accessible to the recreating public.

Item 2

The ASNFs include three designated wilderness areas, the nation's sole remaining primitive area, and 322,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas. Users of designated wilderness areas fit a profile similar to other forests' users: 1) they are predominantly male (81 percent), 2) white (91 percent) or Hispanic/Latino (6 percent), 3) between the ages of 31 and 60, and 4) often travel from the Phoenix and Tucson areas. NVUM data suggest that roughly 45,000 wilderness visits were made during fiscal year 2001 although the error rate on this data is very high (± 56 percent) because of the relatively low number of visitors interviewed (Kocis et al. 2002). There are no use figures specific to the Blue Range Primitive Area or the inventoried roadless areas.

Regional Demand for Wilderness

1. Increased demand for additional wilderness in both Arizona and New Mexico should be anticipated based on population growth that occurred during the period of 1990 to 2000, which exceeded the national growth rate.

2. Assuming Arizona continues to grow at a rate greatly outpacing the national rate (predicted to be about 3 times the national rate), the number of visits to existing wilderness will continue to increase, and Arizona in particular could benefit from additional wilderness.
3. Demographics related to visitor race and ethnicity will affect the rate of increase in wilderness visits in the Southwestern Region. Even though the faster growing racial/ethnic groups have relatively low participation rates, wilderness use is still expected to increase because of the overall population growth rate.
4. Public demand increases with proximity to six population centers: Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque. Consider wilderness recommendations within 100-150 miles of those cities to provide for that demand.
5. Some additional public demand for wilderness in the Southwestern Region will occur from the influx of people moving to communities in the vicinity of the National Forests.
6. In terms of geographic distribution of wilderness, the Southwestern Region is under-represented with five percent fewer wilderness acres as compared with the representation nationally. Additionally, all quadrants in Arizona and New Mexico are under-represented with the exception of the southwest and southeast quadrants in Arizona. The most under-represented quadrants when compared with total federal wilderness acres are southeast and northwest New Mexico, and northeast Arizona which are at 6 percent or less in the number of wilderness acres.
7. Desirability of the scenic mountainous settings available in the rural communities within and adjacent to national forests in the Southwestern Region will attract new retirees and others, further contributing to a growth in wilderness visitation.

Factor 3 - The extent to which nonwilderness lands on the NFS unit or other Federal lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences.

There are 53 Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) and 1,206,507 IRA acres within 100 miles of Silver City. There are 11 BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and 173,476 WSA acres within 100 miles of Silver City (only acres within 100 miles are shown; actual IRAs and WSAs may be larger).

Within 100 miles of Silver City and on the ASNFs, there are 359,469 acres managed for Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) recreation, 282,175 acres managed for Semi-Primitive Non-motorized (SPNM) recreation, and 287,933 acres managed for Primitive recreation. Many of these acres overlap with Wilderness, the Blue Range Primitive Area, IRAs, and potential wilderness.

Population Center	Inventoried Roadless Area within 100 Miles	IRA Acres within 100 Miles	National Forest
Silver City	1978 Administratively Endorsed Wilderness Proposal	4,281	Gila
	Apache Kid Contiguous	45,288	Cibola
	Apache Mountain	17,484	Gila
	Aspen Mountain	33,100	Gila
	Bear Wallow	876	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Black River Canyon	8,351	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Brushy Mountain	7,191	Gila
	Brushy Springs	5,728	Gila
	Campbell Blue	6,995	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Canyon Creek	9,814	Gila
	Centerfire	13,115	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Chiricahua	76,876	Coronado
	Black & Aldo Leopold Wilderness Contiguous	49,545	Gila
	Blue Range Wilderness Contiguous	1,978	Gila
	Gila Wilderness & Primitive Area Contiguous	78,973	Gila
	Datil	13,941	Cibola
	Devils Creek	89,814	Gila
	Dry Creek	26,690	Gila
	Eagle Peak	33,976	Gila
	Elk Mountain	6,542	Gila
	Escudilla Mountain	884	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Frisco Box	38,932	Gila
	Gila Box	23,741	Gila
	Hell Hole	35,034	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Hot Air	31,677	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Largo	12,715	Gila
	Lower San Francisco	59,248	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Lower San Francisco	26,432	Gila
	Meadow Creek	34,137	Gila
	Mitchell Peak	35,361	Apache-Sitgreaves
Mother Hubbard	2,174	Apache-Sitgreaves	

Population Center	Inventoried Roadless Area within 100 Miles	IRA Acres within 100 Miles	National Forest
	Mother Hubbard	5,888	Gila
	Nolan	13,035	Gila
	Nolan	6,772	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Painted Bluffs	43,074	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Peloncillo	22,047	Coronado
	Pinaleno	23,363	Coronado
	Pipestem	34,560	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Pipestem/Lower San Francisco	152	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Poverty Creek	8,760	Gila
	Salt House	21,823	Apache-Sitgreaves
	San Jose	14,952	Cibola
	Santa Teresa	131	Coronado
	Sawyers Peak	59,696	Gila
	Stone Canyon	6,793	Gila
	Sunset	28,920	Apache-Sitgreaves
	T Bar	6,815	Gila
	Taylor Creek	16,621	Gila
	The Hub	7,489	Gila
	Wagon Tongue	11,397	Gila
	Wahoo Mountain	21,847	Gila
	White Cap	8,026	Cibola
	Winchester	13,453	Coronado
	TOTAL	1,206,507	

Population Center	BLM Wilderness Study Area within 100 Miles	WSA Acres within 100 Miles
Silver City	Cowboy Springs	6,228
	Horse Mountain	7,881
	Big Hatchet Mountains	15,370
	Continental Divide	73,879
	Cedar Mountains	14,875
	Florida Mountains	2,106
	Peloncillo Mountains	3,981
	Apache Box	6,218
	Cooke's Range	19,858
	Gila Lower Box	8,515
	Blue Creek	14,565
		TOTAL

There are 42 Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) and 860,959 IRA acres within 130 miles of Tucson There are 6 BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and 42,180 WSA acres within 130 miles of Tucson (only acres within 130 miles are shown, actual IRAs and WSAs may be larger).

Within 130 miles of Tucson and on the ASNFs, there are 101,939 acres managed for Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) recreation, 189,810 acres managed for Semi-Primitive Non-motorized (SPNM) recreation, and 92,218 acres managed for Primitive recreation. Many of these acres overlap with the Wilderness, the Blue Range Primitive Area, IRAs, and potential wilderness.

Population Center	Inventoried Roadless Area within 130 Miles	IRA Acres within 130 Miles	National Forest
Tucson	Bear Wallow	784	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Black Cross	5,959	Tonto
	Black River Canyon	734	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Boulder	40,310	Tonto
	Butterfly	42,278	Coronado
	Catalina St. Pk.	950	Coronado
	Cdo Wsa	1,954	Coronado
	Cherry Creek	11,357	Tonto
	Chiricahua	76,892	Coronado
	Galiuro	28,314	Coronado
	Goldfield	15,239	Tonto
	Happy Valley	7,971	Coronado
	Hell Hole	15,498	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Hell Hole	19,536	Gila
	Horse Mesa	9,136	Tonto
	Hot Air	31,677	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Lime Creek	8,662	Tonto
	Lower Dragoon	1,165	Coronado
	Lower Rincon	3,278	Coronado
	Lower Romero WSR	10	Coronado
	Lower San Francisco	1,045	Gila
	Lower San Francisco	36,279	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Mazatzal	2,626	Tonto
	Middle Dragoon	10,544	Coronado
	Middle Romero WSR	60	Coronado
	Mitchell Peak	35,362	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Oracle	22,354	Coronado
	Painted Bluffs	43,074	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Peloncillo	56,469	Coronado
	Picacho	4,963	Tonto
	Pinaleno	130,834	Coronado
	Pipestem	34,560	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Pipestem/Lower San Francisco	152	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Salome	2,928	Tonto
	Salt House	21,822	Apache-Sitgreaves

Population Center	Inventoried Roadless Area within 130 Miles	IRA Acres within 130 Miles	National Forest
	Santa Rita	6,079	Coronado
	Santa Teresa	8,921	Coronado
	Sierra Ancha Wilderness Contiguous	7,778	Tonto
	Sunset	28,920	Apache-Sitgreaves
	Tumacacori	44,626	Coronado
	Upper Dragoon	2,533	Coronado
	Upper Rincon	2,990	Coronado
	Upper Romero WSR	150	Coronado
	Whetstone	20,733	Coronado
	Winchester	13,453	Coronado
		860,959	

Population Center	BLM Wilderness Study Area within 130 Miles	WSA Acres within 130 Miles
Tucson	Apache Box	6,218
	Baker Canyon	4,697
	Blue Canyon	14,565
	Gila Lower Box	8,515
	Guadalupe Canyon ISA	4,204
	Peloncillo Mountains	3,981
		42,180

Factor 4 - The need to provide a refuge for those species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena.

The ASNFs have identified 11 Threatened and Endangered species, 105 Species of Concern⁸, and 208 Species of Interest⁹ that occur or are found on the forests. None of these species require a primitive wilderness environment to survive. However, some (Mexican gray wolf, for example) would benefit from reduced disturbance and human encounters.

⁸ Species of Concern are species for which management actions may be necessary to prevent listing under the Endangered Species Act.

⁹ Species of Interest are species for which management actions may be necessary to achieve ecological or other multiple-use objectives.

Factor 5 - Within social and biological limits, management may increase the capacity of established wildernesses to support human use without unacceptable depreciation of the wilderness resource.

There are three existing wildernesses on the ASNFs, all on the Apache side. Two, Mount Baldy and Escudilla, are less than 10,000 acres, are easily accessible by motor vehicles, and have limited trail systems. Visitor use in Mount Baldy is considered high with use concentrated on two of the three trails. Visitor use in Escudilla is considered moderate to high with use concentrated on one trail. Encounters with other wilderness visitors in both areas are high. For these two areas there are limited management opportunities to accommodate additional use. The third wilderness, Bear Wallow, is slightly larger, is more difficult to access, and has four trails. Visitor use is considered low. Here, additional demand could be accommodated without management changes.

Factor 6 - An area's ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems. Consideration of this factor may include utilization of Edwin A. Hammond's subdivision of landform types and the Bailey-Kuchler ecosystem classification. This approach is helpful from the standpoint of rounding out the National Wilderness Preservation System and may be further subdivided to suit local, subregional, and regional needs.

The Southwestern Regional Office used the process outlined in Loomis and Echohawk (1999)¹⁰ to determine the underrepresented landforms and ecosystem types in Wilderness within Region 3.

The following landforms within the White Mountains-San Francisco Peaks-Mogollon Rim ecoregion section (where the ASNFs are located) are underrepresented in Wilderness in the region: Burro Mountains Oak-Juniper Woodland, Coconino Plateau Woodland, and San Francisco Peaks Coniferous Forest. Only Burro Mountain Oak-Juniper Woodland and Coconino Plateau Woodland are found on the ASNFs.

The following ecosystem types are underrepresented in Wilderness in the region: Desert Communities, Great Basin/Colorado Plateau Grassland, Great Plains Grassland, Piñon-Juniper Woodland, Sagebrush Shrubland, and Semi-desert Grassland. Only Great Basin Grassland, Piñon-Juniper Woodland, and Semi-desert Grassland are found on the ASNFs.

These potential wildernesses contain two underrepresented ecosystems: 770 acres of Piñon-Juniper Woodland (1) and 5,985 acres of Semi-Desert Grassland (2b, 3, 4).

Overall Need: Low

¹⁰ Loomis, John and Echohawk, J. Chris. 1999. Using GIS to identify under-represented ecosystems in the National Wilderness Preservation System in the USA. *Environmental Conservation*. 26 (1): 53–58.

UNDERREPRESENTED LANDFORMS

Potential Wilderness	Name	Acreage	Acres of Burro Mountains Oak-Juniper Woodland	Acres of Coconino Plateau Woodland
PW-03-01-001	Leonard Canyon	22,405		7,171
PW-03-01-003	West Chevelon Canyon	9,493		3,689
PW-03-01-011	Black Canyon	4,913		4,911
PW-03-01-053	Cold Spring Mountain	17,541	1,878	
PW-03-01-054	Hells Hole	15,524	15,439	
PW-03-01-056	Chevelon Canyon North	6,678		6,612
PW-03-01-057	Coal Creek	5,698	370	
PW-03-01-058	Big Lue Mountains	5,222	4,932	

UNDERREPRESENTED ECOSYSEMS

Potential Wilderness	Name	Acreage	Acres of Great Basin Grassland	Acres of Piñon-Juniper Woodland	Acres of Semi-Desert Grassland
PW-03-01-001	Leonard Canyon	22,405		9,245	
PW-03-01-003	West Chevelon Canyon	9,493		5,273	
PW-03-01-006	Wildcat Canyon South	6,972	5	993	
PW-03-01-011	Black Canyon	4,913	819	3,963	
PW-03-01-040	Mother Hubbard	2,656		922	
PW-03-01-042	Noland	7,843		333	
PW-03-01-049	Hot Air/Salt House	76,111			5,743
PW-03-01-050	Sheep Wash	7,965			1,259
PW-03-01-051	Painted Bluffs	44,106			6,896
PW-03-01-052	West Blue/San Francisco	156,437			32,538
PW-03-01-053	Cold Spring Mountain	17,541			4,790
PW-03-01-054	Hells Hole	15,524			4,856
PW-03-01-056	Chevelon Canyon North	6,678	2,244	4,372	
PW-03-01-057	Coal Creek	5,698			1,027
PW-03-01-058	Big Lue Mountains	5,222			1,172
PW-03-01-060	Centerfire	15,239		503	
PW-03-01-062	Chevelon Lake	6,585		596	
PW-03-01-063	Milk Creek	5,387	400	2,039	
PW-03-01-067	Sunset	30,365			17,755
PW-03-01-069-1	BRPA Exclusion 1	7,792		770	245
PW-03-01-069-2B	BRPA Exclusion 2b	6,958			3,404
PW-03-01-069-3	BRPA Exclusion 3	4,665			304
PW-03-01-069-4	BRPA Exclusion 4	10,404			2,032