Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: North San Mateos Mountains Area
D3_ADJ2: 42 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/20/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer)
Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Meeting: 2/19/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations within area boundaries. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous evergreen mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, turkey, and elk populations, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **High**, no reported nonnative populations are present and plant and animal communities appear natural.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports no known information.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no areas of previous fires.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
    - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
    - Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows small amount of an unknown travel route located in the southeastern corner of the eastern parcel. The eastern parcel is located directly east of Road #4 and the western parcel is approximately 550 m (1/4 mi) from National Forest System Road 549 which is a major thoroughfare for this area (measured from the northwestern corner of the area). The western parcel is directly adjacent to Road 549.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity within the area.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in area provides some limited screening due to scattered pinyon juniper habitat but doesn't screen the noise of adjacency roads.
  - There is high traffic noise from National Forest System Road 549 since it is a major thoroughfare and it is a high use area as a camping corridor.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Area is adjacent to wilderness on southern and eastern boundaries and is surrounded to N/E/W by private land in the eastern parcel and adjacent to private land in the northeast and south in the western parcel. High traffic noise from adjacent roads. Thinning activities occur on private with pervasive effects to solitude due to size of area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities/presence is unavoidable.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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<u>Question 2b</u>. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Day hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, car camping.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Mountain biking on Road 4.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 0.0011% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 18% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 2b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Low</u>** finding; there are few opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation due to the small size of the area surrounded by private land, which affects ability to be unconfined.

<u>Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent</u> to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

<u>Note:</u> If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **<u>Narrative:</u>** This area is less than 5,000 acres but is adjacent to existing wilderness so this criterion does not apply.

<u>Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities</u>: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?
Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** No presence of rare plant and animal communities.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant and animal communities.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** None.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** None.
    - 6% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, there are no outstanding landscape features.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of unknown, percent surveyed 0%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a **Low** finding due to few cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** There is an ephemeral creek in the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

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Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Monica grazing allotment occurs in the area which is active.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Area is within the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** The eastern parcel is surrounded by private land except for the southern boundary which is adjacent to existing wilderness and the western parcel is adjacent to National Forest System Road 549 on the west, private land to the east and south. The shape and configuration of the western portion is long, linear, directly adjacent to a road, at most 200'wide, and the terrain is relatively open and flat; these factors contribute to boundary management issues.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private inholdings and existing wilderness border the area. Thinning has occurred within the adjacent private land which is pervasive and prevalent. Camping is allowed on the private land. Area has adjacency to National Forest System Road 549.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use does occur in this area but there are no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 0% WUI.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** None.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Some mountain biking occurs along Road 4.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** No cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.

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[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Evidence of illegal use into existing wilderness from western parcel.
    - The northeastern parcel has limited access except from existing wilderness since surrounded to the N/E/W by private land.
    - Team discussed a Low finding for the southwestern parcel adjacent to 549; due to the management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives two findings for each parcel: the northeastern parcel surrounded by private land receives a **High** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in isolated spots and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics high throughout the area. The southwestern parcel adjacent to 549 receives a **Moderate** finding; due to the management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/2/16: Finding: The team finds that this area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the majority of the area. Preferred Proposal: Continue to manage area for desired conditions and for multiple uses. Alternatives: Public comment received recommends areas should have an emphasis on backcountry management. Public comment continues that the focus should be on prescribed fire, wildlife habitat improvement, habitat conservation, no new roads or motorized trails, primitive recreation, maintain existing recreation improvements, honor existing permitted grazing, and maintain existing range improvements. Public comment also continued that mining should be prohibited.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16:

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character due to findings of Low for primitive and unconfined recreation and solitude, which are crucial aspects of wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Continue to manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ2 IDT Findings 01/20/16	D3_5K10 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	1a	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**High**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Low**	**High**
	2b	**Low**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Moderate

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	4c	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**High/Low**	**High/Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 3H, 1H/L, 2L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 1H/M, 2L** Supplemental: 5L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Continue to manage area for desired conditions and for multiple uses.	Continue to manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses.
Alternatives for Area		Public comment received recommends areas should have an emphasis on backcountry managementwildlife habitat improvement, habitat conservation, no new roads or motorized trails, primitive recreation, maintain existing recreation improvements, honor existing permitted grazing, and maintain existing range improvements. Public comment also continued that mining should be prohibited.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

Steering committee updated notes to reflect information from District Ranger.
Steering committee decided on High/Moderate for 5a.
Steering committee considered alternative put forward by public comment to manage with a focus should be on prescribed fire, wildlife habitat improvement, habitat conservation, no new roads or motorized trails, primitive recreation, maintain existing recreation improvements, honor existing permitted grazing, and maintain existing range improvements. Steering committee considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. Steering committee decided that since legal access across the private land in northeastern portion is not in place, it would be difficult to implement specific active management activities. Additionally, these are the only areas providing access and staging areas to existing wilderness for possible management activities, fire suppression, etc.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area
D3_5K5: 5964.17 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/12/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne DeRosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy (Sierra County), Diego Montega (Village of Magdalena Mayor).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Predominantly pinyon juniper, with portions of deciduous shrub mix, grama mix, and mountain mahogany.
  - Public comment was received that the area contains invasive plants that are both native and unnatural across the land. These plants include juniper, Russian thistle, rubber rabbit brush, kochia, and snakeweed. These invasive plants have moved the natural sites of the area away from historical conditions. It would require human management to regain the historic conditions of the area. Discussion among the team that this belongs under discussion for management (5a) since these are native but invasive species that will need to be looked at controlling.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Russian thistle, snakeweed, and kochia are scattered throughout the area (as reported in public comment).

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows one small burn in the fire history (Goat fire) within the center of the area from 1990; team discussed that this most likely does not appear unnatural to the average visitor.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that current species composition and structure of the area appears substantially unnatural; team discussed this is most likely due to fuelwood cutting impacts on structure (appearance of stumps and evidence of cuts). District specialists report that manipulation of structure is adjacent to roads and is not in the interior where access is limited.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding due to the manipulation of fuelwood cutting along roads appears unnatural to the average viewer in isolated spots (as reported in public comment).

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned,

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows a number of unauthorized routes and decommissioned routes throughout the area; District specialists report that some of the routes are visible today but not all due to the washout effect of these routes occurring within drainages.
- Public comment received about ground training (team discussed to consider this under 5a); commenter reported that a road is used to access range improvements is within the area. Geospatial data shows that no improvements exist in Phase 3 area boundaries so this may have been within a prior inventory phase.
- Public commenter continued that there is a privately held mining claim with tailings that are visible and creates a cherry stemmed road into the area boundaries. Additional public comment received that there are several roads created from mineralization. Minerals specialist reports there are no active mining claims within area boundaries; one patented claim was cherry stemmed out and areas with previous activity are no longer in the area. Additional public comment received that vanadium and silver mines occur in the area; Minerals specialist reports that areas with closed mining claims occur in the general vicinity but are not within the area boundaries.
- Additional public comment received that the area should be assessed for wilderness potential due to numerous archaeological sites and hills which are largely unscathed by human development. District specialist reports that the interior portion of the area where the hills are is largely undeveloped.
- Additional public comment received that there are roads within the area; only decommissioned and unauthorized routes currently occur within the boundaries.
- Additional public comment received that none of the Bear Mountains should be wilderness due to user created routes.
- Discussion among team about the appearance of roads; scars on the ground take time to rehabilitate and there is little screening; therefore it should receive a low finding. Discussion among team that there are no other improvements in the area and that some routes may have been washed out; therefore it should receive a moderate finding.

<u>Question 1c Findings</u>

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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This area receives a **Low** finding, due to the evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas (unauthorized and decommissioned routes), due to the long time for the area to rehabilitate, and due to no/little visual screening of these road footprints.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** In some of the deep canyon areas there is quiet, but the fuelwood cutting along roads and the high use of roads bordering the area boundaries are evident due to the area's topography. Private land occurs adjacent to the northern portion of the area and activities from there are evident. There is also military training in the area.
    - Public comment received that the area is bordered on all sides by roads (southeast and east sides) and a heavily traveled County road. With gentle terrain the entire area slopes to the County road, impacting the visitor's opportunity to experience solitude. The area's shape and the protrusion of private property causes unavoidable pervasive sights and sounds from outside of the area.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** There is a cherry-stemmed road leading to private land in the southern portion which contains a former mining claim. The Village of Magdalena is in the southeastern geographic location outside of the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no screening within the area to prevent or lessen road and fuelwood cutting noise; human activities are unavoidable.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Hunting for big game (particular species including deer and elk) and hiking occurs in the area (cross-country).
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There may be low use of the area for mountain biking.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 0% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding, due to many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** This criterion does not apply to this area.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no reported populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no rare plant and animal populations are reported.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** 39% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Public comment received that the area has a group of arid hills, canyons, and alluvial fans. Team discussed that these appear elsewhere.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; area has few to no outstanding features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative:** FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 3.1%. District specialist concurs with this finding, based on knowledge of what is in the area.
  - Public comment received that the area has numerous archeological sites.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D4_ADJ4 receives a **High** finding; area has several historic and cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no research natural areas.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.

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- **Narrative:** Goat Spring is in the area but does not have important watershed features. There are no high quality water resources in the area.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality watershed features occur in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** There is a grazing allotment overlapping the entire area (Bear Mountain Grazing Allotment); active grazing occurs in the area but there are no improvements being maintained within the area. There are no active mining claims within the area and previously used areas are not within the area.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** There is one private land inholding in the south but access has already been cherry-stemmed out. The other private land in the northern portion is accessed outside of the area.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Area is completely surrounded by Forest Service land other than a few private land inholdings.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use in the area is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. No known conflict with tribal, cultural and traditional uses in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** 0% WUI; Landscape team member reports that 62.7% has been rated for wildfire hazard potential under the FS Wildfire Hazard Management potential (this will be considered further in the analysis phase).

- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in the area. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use.
  - Public comment received that the area is used by military for ground and air training.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** The active permit for military training currently in the area uses mechanized transport in a small portion of the area.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** There is a telephone line outside of the area boundaries with an easement outside the boundaries. Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** There is one cherry-stemmed road in the southern portion of the area accessing private land.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** The majority of this area is all within the Goat Spring IRA, which is compatible with managing for wilderness character.
  - Team discussed the military training activity environmental analysis and the need for two findings due to unknown outcomes of the analysis (range of alternatives includes no action, improvements, and no more military training). The team decided that this area receives two findings due to the military training analysis currently underway, and the range of alternatives this analysis entails. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of High. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (continued military training is the proposed action).

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to current military training in the area and the proposed action in the current environmental analysis is proposing continued military training.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives): The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses. Clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities. Continue to manage archaeological resources with special management objectives. Alternatives: Public comment was received to recommend these areas as potential wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16

The Steering Committee finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities). Continue to manage archaeological resources with special management objectives.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K5 Bears IDT Findings 01/12/16	D3_5K5 Bears Steering Committee Decision 02/05/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Low**	**Low**
	2a	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**High (if no more military training)** **Low (if continued military training)**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 1H, 1H/L, 2M** Supplemental: 1H, 4L	**Required: 1H, 2M, 3L** Supplemental: 1H, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No

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Preferred Proposal	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Arch special mgmt	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Arch special mgmt
Alternatives for Area	---	----

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

STC decided on a Low finding for 5a; proposed action for military training is to continue military training.
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area
D3_5K6, D3_5K6.b, D3_5K6.d, D3_5K6.e

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/13/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows 5K6 to contain many documented populations of salt cedar and one population of musk thistle. 5K6.b has a small population of salt cedar and Canada thistle. 5K6.e has a Geospatial data shows no reported populations in the other areas.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Predominantly pinyon juniper, with portions of deciduous shrub mix, grama mix, mountain mahogany. 5K6 and 5K6.b have a higher proportion of grassland than the other areas. Public comment was received that area is rich in wildlife (bear, pronghorn, coyote).

Question 1a Findings

D3_5K6 This area receives a **Low** finding, due to concentrations of salt cedar and musk thistle, non-native species are common in the area.
D3_5K6.b This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to small concentrations of salt cedar and musk thistle, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

D3_5K6.d This area receives a **High** finding, due to no non-native populations reported. D3_5K6.e This area receives a **High** finding, due to no non-native populations reported.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Team discussed that current species composition and structure of area appears substantially unnatural due to fuelwood cutting impacts on structure (appearance of stumps and evidence of cuts) in 5K6.d which are isolated and scattered. District specialists report that manipulation of structure is adjacent to roads and not in the interior where access is limited.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

D3_5K6.d This area receives a **Moderate** finding due to manipulation of fuelwood cutting along roads appearing unnatural to the average viewer (as reported in public comment) in scattered spots. The other areas receive a **High** finding, due to vegetation in areas appearing natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

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- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** D3_5K6 has some unauthorized routes located near edges of boundaries, and these are located within drainages and do not appear to be roads on the ground. One unauthorized route occurs on a ridge. There is a pipeline along the cherry-stemmed road with a windmill at the end that needs to be cherry-stemmed out; confirm its exclusion in final boundary configuration. The special use authorization reports a seismic antennae within the area, but exact location is not known; description in geospatial data is that it is small.
- D3_5K6.b contains one unauthorized route, two decommissioned routes in the northern portion one pipeline, Bear Mountain guzzler 8 and 14 are made of cement and have fences around them but District specialist reports that they are hard to find and infrastructure is not dominant (flush to ground). Number of other springs/well area within boundaries. Pipeline is above ground and contains associated drinkers.
- D3_5K6.d contains two decommissioned routes and one unauthorized. Geospatial data shows these as evident on the ground. Public comment was received that there is no development in area.
- D3_5K6.e contains North Ranch Boulder and Bird Springs fences. Geospatial data shows "pseudo drinker" which is a previously analyzed location but not existing.
- Public comment was received for these all of these areas that there is little development except for tanks along the roads, which are already excluded**.**

Question 1c Findings

D3_5K6 receives **High** finding; little or no human activity is evident. (Note: There is a pipeline along the cherry-stemmed road with a windmill at the end that needs to be cherry-stemmed out; confirm its exclusion in final boundary configuration).
D3_5K6.b receives a **Moderate** finding based on improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.
D3_5K6.d receives a **Moderate** finding based on improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.
D3_5K6.e receives a **Low** finding based on concentrations of improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas due to the small amount of acreage.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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<u>Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation</u>: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "<u>or</u>" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for <u>both</u> elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

<u>Question 2a</u>. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K6: Area contains existing military training. Ranch headquarters activities affect solitude in south. Road along eastern boundary receives heavy use. Minerals specialist reports that the upper northern portion contains active mining claims that may affect solitude due to intermittent exploration drilling.
    - D3_5K6.b has some existing military training. Area contains isolated areas for solitude. There is little road density in area. Two sides contain high use roads, so noise is evident in south section. On east side of ridge, noise is prevalent. One west side, visitor hears evidence of private ranch activities.
    - D3_5K6.d has a road along western boundary that is used for fuelwood cutting, so noise from chainsaws is evident. Military training is not pervasive in area. There are active with intermittent mining claims throughout area.
    - Public comment was received for all areas that areas are free of viable roads and contains rugged canyons. Additional public comment was received that these all of these areas contain possibility to experience solitude due to remoteness and rugged canyons.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K6: The ranch headquarters in south affect solitude, and road on eastern edge also impacts solitude.
    - D3_5K6.b West side contains a private ranch with lots of activity. There are two side bordered by roads that affect solitude due to heavy use.
    - D3_5K6.d has Three Mile Ranch in southern portion and is bordered on western edge by roads.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- D3_5K6.e has ranches on the eastern and western edges. Traffic noise is evident due to small size of area with significant traffic by residents and low screening to deflect the noise. A road follows the entire southern boundary with road traffic. Public comment received that the area contains no roads or developments.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

D3_5K6 receives a **Low** finding, due to presence of human activities being unavoidable within the area due to pervasiveness of military training. D3_5K6.b receives a **Low** finding, due to presence of human activities being unavoidable within the area in proportion to its size (military training and road noise). D3_5K6.d receives a **Moderate** finding; feeling of being alone is possible and opportunities for solitude are possible. D3_5K6.e receives a **Low** finding; little opportunity of feeling alone due to the pervasiveness of human activity in proportion to the size of the area.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** These areas provide opportunities for hiking, backpacking, horsebacking, camping, and bird watching.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There may be some mountain biking that occurs in area.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** D3_5K6: 39% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K6.b 0% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K6.d 27% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K6.e 13% SPNM ROS Class.

- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** D3_5K6: 12% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K6.b 0% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K6.d 17% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K6.e 18% SPM ROS Class.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** D3_5K6.e has a high concentration of fences within the small area, interfering with ability to experience unconfined primitive recreation due to encounters with infrastructure restricting access.

Question 2b Findings

D3_5K6, D3_5K6.b, and D3_5K6.d area receive a **High** finding, due to many opportunities for primitive recreation. D3_5K6.e receives a **Low** finding, due to the concentration of fences interfering with opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This criterion does not apply to this area.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no reported populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

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These areas receives a **Low** finding; no rare plant and animal populations are reported.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that areas contain the northernmost exposures of lower Mississippi rocks. Team discussed that this is not an outstanding feature.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6 32% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class; D3_5K6.b 38% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class; D3_5K6.d 21% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class; D3_5K6.e 0% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class.
    - Ridge provides nice views of the Sierra Ladrones, but is not considered an outstanding feature.
    - Public comment received that panoramic views from ridge are breath-taking.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; few to no outstanding features are within areas.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K6: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 29.9%.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- D3_5K6.b: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed percent surveyed 0 .1% surveyed
- D3_5K6.d and D3_5K6.e: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Unknown with percent surveyed 0%.
- Public comment received that areas in general contain strong archaeological features/sites.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D3_5K6 a finding of **Low** based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_5K6.b **High** based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_5K6.d **Moderate** based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_5K6.e **Moderate** based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There are no high quality water resources in the areas.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality watershed features occur in the areas.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K6: There is a grazing allotment overlapping the entire area (Bear Mountain Grazing Allotment); active grazing occurs but there are no improvements being maintained within the area. There is one fence on southern boundary that will need maintenance. Active mining claims occur in the northern portion with intermittent exploration drilling.
    - D3_5K6.b**:** There is a grazing allotment overlapping the entire area (Bear Mountain Grazing Allotment); there are three guzzlers within area and one drinker with a big tank. The guzzlers experience low maintenance but two of the guzzlers need new fences. Cheyenne storage/Bear Springs drinker contains a pipeline. There is an additional livestock pipeline in area that is not shown in geospatial data.
    - D3_5K6.d: There is a grazing allotment overlapping the entire area (Bear Mountain Grazing Allotment); there are pipelines and fences that require maintenance in area. Active mining claims occur in over half of the area, with intermittent exploration drilling.
    - D3_5K6.e: There is a grazing allotment overlapping the entire area (Bear Mountain Grazing Allotment); there are fences that require maintenance in area and some along boundary, and one small pipeline occurs in southern portion.

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6, D3_5K6.d: Rights to active mining claims exists, and when it occurs it is in contrast with managing for wilderness character.
    - D3_5K6.b There is a federal law for a historic bald eagle nest within area, but management to meet this law would not be in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
    - D3_5K6.e: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - Narrative: D3_5K6 Private land occurs in southern portion but access is outside of the area boundaries along existing roads.
    - D3_5K6.b Private land occurs on the western but access is outside of the area boundaries along existing roads.
    - D3_5K6.d Private land occurs in southern portion but access is outside of the area boundaries along existing roads.
    - D3_5K6.e: Area has three private land inholdings along borders with access occurring outside of the boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6: Area is completely surrounded by Forest Service land, other than one private land inholdings.
    - D3_5K6.b, D3_5K6.d: Area is completely surrounded by Forest Service land, other than one private land inholding.
    - D3_5K6.e: Area is surrounded by Forest Service land and three separate private land inholdings.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** For all areas: Cultural and traditional use in the polygon is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. There is no known conflict with tribal, cultural and traditional use with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** All areas contain 0% WUI.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6, D3_5K6.b, D3_5K6.d, D3_5K6.e There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in the areas. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. Public comment received that area is use by military for ground and air training.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6: The active permit for military training currently in the area uses mechanized transport in majority portion of the area.
    - D3_5K6.b The active permit for military training currently in the area uses mechanized transport in a small portion of the area.
    - D3_5K6.d The active permit for military training currently in the area uses mechanized transport in a small portion of the area.
    - D3_5K6.e The active permit for military training currently in the area uses mechanized transport in portions of the area.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6: Small seismic antennae may occur within area, but antennae are very small (2 ft x 2 ft box) with 8 feet antennae that needs access (extent of maintenance is unknown).
    - D3_5K6.b**:** There is a telephone line outside the boundaries with an easement outside the boundaries. Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
    - D3_5K6.d and D3_5K6.e: Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6 and D3_5K6.d: There is one cherry-stemmed road in the area boundary. D3_5K6.b and D3_5K6.e**:** None occur.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K6: Majority is within the Scott Mesa IRA, which is compatible with wilderness management.
    - D3_5K6.b**:** Portions of Scott Mesa IRA occur, which is compatible with wilderness management.
    - D3_5K6.d D3_5K6.e: Majority of the area contains Scott Mesa IRA.
    - Discussion about the military training activity environmental analysis and need for two findings due to unknown outcomes of the analysis (range of alternatives includes no action, improvements, and no more military training). D3_5K6: This area receives two findings due to military training analysis currently underway, and the range of alternatives this analysis entails. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Moderate due to active mining claims. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (also considering active mining claims). D3_5K6.b: This area receives two findings due to military training analysis currently underway, and the range of alternatives this analysis entails. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Moderate due to on-going maintenance of range improvements. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (also considering on-going maintenance of range improvements).

<u>Question 5a Findings</u>

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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D3_5K6: Area receives a finding of **Low** (considering active mining claims and military training); presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.
D3_5K6.b: Area receives a finding of **Low** (considering on-going maintenance of range improvements and military training); presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.
D3_5K6.d: Area receives a **Low** finding, due to the extent of active mining claims in area and on-going range improvement maintenance; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.
D3_5K6.e: Area receives a **Low** finding, due to the extent of on-going range improvement maintenance and extent of private land inholdings around the area that contribute to the checkerboard effect of management of adjacent lands that makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/13/16: D3_5K6: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria. D3_5K6.b: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria. D3_5K6.d: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. D3_5K6.e: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Preferred Proposal: For all areas: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses. Improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and invasive species control; particularly for 5K6 and 5K6.b. Alternatives: Public comment received recommends these areas as potential wilderness.

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Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16

D3_5K6: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria.
D3_5K6.b: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria.
D3_5K6.d: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.
D3_5K6.e: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal:
For all areas: Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and invasive species control, particularly for 5K6 and 5K6.b).

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K6 IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K6 Steering Committee Decision 2/5/16	D3_5K6.b IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K6.b Steering Committee Decision 2/05/2016	D3_5K6.d IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K6.d Steering Committee Decision 2/5/2016	D3_5K6.e IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K6.e Steering Committee Decision 2/5/2016
Criterion Question*	1a	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High	High
	1b	High	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
	1c	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low

	2a	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**Low**	**Low**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4c	Low	Low	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	5a	**M/L (due to military training analysis)**	**Low**	**M/L (due to military training analysis)**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 3H, 2-3L, 0-1M** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 3L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 2-3M, 2H, 1-2L** Supplemental: 1H, 4L	**Required: 2H, 2M, 2L** Supplemental: 4L, 1H	**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental:1M, 4L	**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 4M, 1L	**Required: 2H, 4L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 2H, 4L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Preferred Proposal		Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species (especially 5K6, 5K6.b)	Desired Conditions/ Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species (especially 5K6, 5K6.b)	Desired Conditions /Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species (especially 5K6, 5K6.b)	Desired Conditions /Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species (especially 5K6, 5K6.b)	Desired Conditions /Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species
Alternatives for Area		--	--	--	---	--	---	--	--

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

STC decided on a Low finding for D3_5K6 and D3_5K6.b on 5a; proposed action for military training is to continue military training.
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area
D3_5K7.c
D3_5K7.d
D3_5K7.f

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/13/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_5K7.c Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations. District knowledge reports salt cedar in drainages.
  - D3_5K7.d Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations. District knowledge reports salt cedar in drainages.
  - D3_5K7.f. Three identified corridors of salt cedar populations occur in this area.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_5K7.c: The vegetation in this area is majority pinyon juniper with some ponderosa mix, deciduous shrub and grama mix deciduous evergreen mix, mountain mahogany (elderleaf mix).
  - D3_5K7.d: The vegetation in this area is majority pinyon juniper with some ponderosa mix with deciduous evergreen mix.

- D3_5K7.f: The vegetation in this area is majority pinyon juniper with small amounts of grama mix, deciduous shrub mix, and mountain mahogany mix.
- All areas contain predominantly deer, elk, and cougar, with occasional pronghorn and bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some reported populations of nonnative species. D3_5K7.d: This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some reported populations of nonnative species. D3_5K7.f: This area receives a **Low** finding, due to high concentration of salt cedar in proportion to area size.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
  - **Narrative:** No vegetation restoration treatments are reported in all areas.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:**
  - **D3_5K7.c:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
  - **D3_5K7.d:** Some fuelwood cutting occurs along roads and appears substantially unnatural to the average viewer, but is not pervasive throughout the area. One small fire scar from 2000 caused by lightning occurs in the area and is not substantially unnatural to the average visitor (fire is a natural part of the ecosystem).
  - **D3_5K7.f:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **High** finding, due to vegetation appearing natural. **D3_5K7.d:** This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some isolated spots of fuelwood cutting appearing unnatural to viewers along roads. **D3_5K7.f:** This area receives a **High** finding, due to vegetation appearing natural.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

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<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
  - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
  - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
  - Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative**
    - D3_5K7.c: Area contains four decommissioned routes, three unauthorized routes, one fence (Buckhorn Boulder fence). This area contains small portions of pipelines leading from a tank and windmill (Cedar Springs), the Balata spring development, and active mining claims in the northeastern portion (and a small part of southern portion) with past heavy exploration in area and expected two-tracks and drill pads. Public comments received that there is no evidence development along the decommissioned routes in southwestern corner. Other comments were received about roads outside of the area boundaries.
    - D3_5K7.d: One tank occurs in the middle of the area (Tank 2) and one occurs along southern boundary (Tank 1). The area is bounded by fences. Scott Spring wildlife drinker occurs inside the area boundaries in the northern edge. These tanks are dirt tanks (pit tanks). District specialist reports that these are not fenced.
    - D3_5K7.f: Baca Spring occurs on west boundary (outside of area) active mining claims in the northeastern portion with past heavy exploration in area and expected two-tracks and drill

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.
[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.
[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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pad (some drill pads confirmed by District). Area contains one unauthorized route. Public comment received about improvements around Baca Spring, which is outside of the area.

- Public comment received about all of the areas that none of area should be wilderness due to huge amounts of user related roads, but specific locations were not specified.

Question 1c Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **Low** finding, due to obvious evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas. D3_5K7.d: This area receives a **High** finding, due to little to no evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness. D3_5K7.f: This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to improvements detracting from apparent naturalness insome areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_5K7.c: District specialists report that the area receives overflight noise from the military training special use permit; take-off and landing noise is evident in the northeastern corner and road noise use is evident in the middle portion. Training activities produce intermittent noise. There have been complaints voiced by the public about noise. Area has a road in southern boundary (354C, 354A) and ATV use from residents of private land with noise pervasive to the western portion of the area. There is no screening in areas to deflect noise. Mining activities are not pervasive in area at this time.
  - D3_5K7.d: District specialists report that the area receives overflight noise from the military training special use permit including take-off and landing noise. Training activities produce intermittent noise. There have been complaints voiced by the public about noise. A road below the southern boundary receives ATV use from residents of private land with noise pervasive to the area. The private land inholding to the west has about 30 active residents. Solitude impacts along the western portion from these activities. Mining activities are not pervasive in area at this

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time. District specialist said the topography lends itself to deep canyons and portion of IRA is present in area.
    - D3_5K7.f: There are no roads bordering the area but some are nearby; noise from east road is pervasive due to location on a ridge. Private land is adjacent to the east boundary with frequent access by owner; activities are not pervasive to impacting solitude in area. Mining activities are not pervasive in area at this time. There have been complaints voiced by the public about noise. Highest levels of military training noise (takeoff and landing noises) occur in this area. Training activities produce intermittent noise.
    - Public comment received that in these areas a visitor can feel alone and remote due to rugged character and size.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c: Area has a road in southern boundary (354C, 354A) and ATV use from residents of private land with noise pervasive to the western portion of the area.
    - D3_5K7.d: The private land inholding to the west has about 30 active residents.
    - D3_5K7.f: There are no roads bordering the area but some are nearby; private land is adjacent to the east boundary with frequent access by owner; activities are not pervasive to impacting solitude in area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
    - D3_5K7.d: Team discussed a Low finding, due to little opportunity of feeling along due to military noise and private land subdivision activities and Moderate due to some opportunities for solitude and signs of civilization possible (impacts are concentrated to edges).

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Question 2a Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **Low** finding, due to little opportunity of feeling along due to military noise and adjacent road activities. **D3_5K7.d:** This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some opportunities for solitude and signs of civilization possible (impacts are concentrated to edges). **D3_5K7.f:** This area receives a **Low** finding, due to little opportunity of feeling along due to military noise and nearby road activities.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** All areas receive camping, hiking, hunting.
  - Public comment received that deer, turkey, elk hunting and bird watching are popular in these areas.
  - Public comment received that D3_5K7.c outstanding opportunity for hiking and backpacking in Cedar Springs canyon (geospatial data shows portions are along the southern border with one side drainage going into the area boundaries and majority of canyon not within boundaries).
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There has been reported mountain biking along the 354 road, on the eastern edge of D3_5K7.c.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c 26% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K7.d 71% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K7.f 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c 39 % SPM ROS Class; D3_5K7.d 23% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K7.f 0% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c: There is one fence cutting across the area within the middle portion.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding, due to many opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** These areas are under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no reported rare plant or animal populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no rare plant or animal populations are reported.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area has rugged canyons, riparian areas, and countless havens for wildlife. Additional public comment received that areas contain the northernmost exposures of lower Mississippi rocks. Team discussed that this is a unique scientific occurrence but not an overwhelming feature. D3_5K7.c: excellent viewpoints with long vistas occur in this area. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c 50% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class, D3_5K7.d 32% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class, D3_5K7.f 0% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

D3_5K7.d and D3_5K7.f: These areas receive a **Low** finding; few to no outstanding features. D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **Moderate** finding due to geologic features and viewpoints.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 21.7%. D3_5K7.d: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Unknown, percent surveyed 0%. District specialists report that there are few sites, so area is a Low.
    - D3_5K7.f: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 8.3%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a **High** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_5K7.d: This area receives a **Low** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team gave area a Low finding. D3_5K7.f: This area receives a **Low** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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<u>Question 4d.</u> Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of areas are research natural areas.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4d Findings</u>

These areas receives a **<u>Low</u>** finding, due to no percentage of research natural areas.

<u>Question 4e</u>. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c contains two springs and drainages. D3_5K7.d contains some drainages. There are no high quality water resources in area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4e Findings</u>

These areas receives a **<u>Low</u>** finding; no high quality watershed features occur in the areas.

<u>Criterion 5- Management</u>: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

<u>Question 5a.</u> Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** These areas contain active grazing allotments: Alamo is in D3_5K7.f (no improvements occur within interior but fence along border receives maintenance), Bear Mountain is in D3_5K7.c with fence, tank, windmill, and pipeline maintenance, and D3_5K7.d contains Abbe Springs grazing allotment with wildlife and tanks requiring infrequent motorized maintenance. D3_5K7.c contains active mining claims in the northern and southern portions, and

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there are active mining claims throughout D3_5K7.f. These contain intermittent exploration drilling activities.

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** There are private land inholdings adjacent to all areas but access is not within the area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Areas are completely surrounded by Forest Service land, other than a few private land inholdings. The private land adjacent to D3_5K7.d is residential with variable human activities and proximity makes management potentially difficult due to Socorro County approved two separate subdivisions from southeast corner of private to the boundary of the Forest to the north (future development).
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** For all of these areas: Cultural and traditional use in the area is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. No known conflict with tribal, cultural and traditional use in wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 0% WUI in all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in area. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. D3_5K7.d: active military training does not contain on-ground mechanized use.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c and D3_5K7.f: The active permit for military training currently in areas uses mechanized transport in entire portion of D3_5K7.f and half of D3_5K7.c.
    - D3_5K7.d: active military training does not contain on-ground mechanized use.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** For all areas: Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** There is one cherry-stemmed road in the southern portion of the D3_5K7.c that will affect manageability due to isolating small portions of the area from the rest of the area.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.c and D3_5K7.d are almost entirely within the Scott Mesa IRA, which is compatible with wilderness management; D3_5K7.f contains a small portion of Scott Mesa IRA.
    - Public comment received that size and shape of Scott Mesa area assures manageability because of an 80% overlap with IRA.
    - Discussion about the military training activity environmental analysis and need for two findings due to unknown outcomes of the analysis (range of alternatives includes no action, improvements, and no more military training).
    - D3_5K7.d: Team was split on this finding. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, some of team believed area received a finding of Moderate due to illegal uses affecting manageability of area as wilderness and some of the team believed area received a High due to current permitted management direction is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low.
    - Issues of note: Illegal fuelwood cutting and ATV use occurs along and off roads coming from residential areas, and mountain bike use over fences is also a management concern; and these management issues may be amplified if area becomes a wilderness.

Question 5a Findings

D3_5K7.c: This area receives a finding of **Low**; presence and extent of other uses (due to active mining and maintenance of improvements) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas. D3_5K7.d: This area receives a finding of **Low**; presence and extent of other uses (due to current military training activities throughout area) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas. D3_5K7.f: This area receives a finding of **Low**; presence and extent of other uses (due to active mining throughout area) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Finding and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/13/16: Findings: D3_5K7.c and D3_5K7.f: The team finds that these areas do not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. D3_5K7.d: Team finds that the northeastern portion does have wilderness character, and the remaining portion of area does not. Preferred Proposal: D3_5K7.c: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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species). D3_5K7.d: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species). D3_5K7.f: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species). Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness. Issues of note: illegal fuelwood cutting and ATV use occurs along and off roads coming from residential areas, and mountain bike use over fences is also a management concern; and these management issues may be amplified if area becomes a wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16

Findings:
D3_5K7.c and D3_5K7.f: These areas do not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

D3_5K7.d: The northeastern portion does have wilderness character, and the remaining portion of area does not.
Preferred Proposal:
D3_5K7.c: Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species).
D3_5K7.d: Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species).
D3_5K7.f: Manage areas toward desired conditions and for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species).

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_5K7.c IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7.c Steering Committee Decision 2/5/16	D3_5K7.d IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7.d Steering Committee Decision 2/05/2016	D3_5K7.f IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7.f Steering Committee Decision 2/5/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**
	1b	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**
	1c	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**L**	**L**
	2a	**M**	**M**	**M**	**M**	**L**	**L**
	2b	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**M**	**M**
	3	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.
	4a	L	L	L	L	L	L
	4b	M	M	L	L	L	L
	4c	L	L	L	L	H	H
	4d	L	L	L	L	L	L
	4e	M	M	L	L	L	L
	5a	**M-L**	**Low**	**M-L**	**Low**	**L**	**L**
Summary		Required: 3H, 1-2M, 1-2L Supplemental: 3L, 2M	Required: 3H, 1M, 2L Supplemental: 3L, 2M	Required: 3H, 1-2M, 1-2L Supplemental: 5L	Required: 3H, 1M, 2L Supplemental: 5L	Required: 1H, 1M, 4L Supplemental: 1H, 4L	Required: 1H, 1M, 4L Supplemental: 1H, 4L

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13 USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. 01/13/2016

Evaluation Finding	No	No	Yes; northeastern portion	Yes; northeastern portion	No	No
Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions/multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions /multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)
Alternatives for Area	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness	--	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness	--	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness	--

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

D3_5K7.d: STC decided on a finding of Moderate for 2a and a finding of Low for 5a.
For all:
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area
D3_5K7
D3_5K7.b
D3_5K7.e

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/13/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Concentrations of salt cedars in all areas along drainages.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_5K7: The majority of the vegetation is pinyon juniper with some ponderosa mix, deciduous shrub and grama mix mountain mahogany (elderleaf mix).
  - D3_5K7.b: The majority of the vegetation is pinyon juniper with some ponderosa mix, deciduous shrub and grama mix mountain mahogany (elderleaf mix).
  - D3_5K7.e: The majority of the vegetation is pinyon juniper with some ponderosa mix, deciduous shrub and grama mix mountain mahogany (elderleaf mix).
  - All areas contain predominantly deer, elk, and cougar, with bird communities.
  - Team discussed feral horse impacts in area on rangeland in term of over-grazing on D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b.

Question 1a Findings

All areas receive a **Low**, due to high concentrations of nonnative species.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments are reported in all areas.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K7: The Rhine fire (lightning caused) from 1990, the Coffee Pot fire from 1990, and the E2 fire from 1986 occur in the area, but these do not appear substantially unnatural to the average viewer.
    - D3_5K7.b: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
    - D3_5K7.e: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

All areas receive a finding of **High**, due to vegetation appearing natural throughout the areas.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

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- Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative**
- D3_5K7: Multiple undeveloped natural springs occur in the area. Dugout Spring (has a fence around it), Fall Spring drinker, Cottonwood Spring (has a fence around it), Oak Spring, and Cement Trough Spring are all developed. A small portion of a pipeline occurs on the eastern edge. Carrizozo Spring is developed and has a fence around it, and was identified as substantially noticeable during the inventory phase.
- D3_5K7.b: There is the Stop Gap fence on the western edge. There is an unauthorized route in the western portion with stream improvements shown along an unauthorized route; the team discussed and there is not any field knowledge about what these improvements are but assumed that these are identification points notifying where water occurs for cattle to drink within drainage. Nothing was visible in aerial imagery. Five springs are showing in geospatial data, but these are natural springs and are undeveloped.
- D3_5K7.e: Area contains an unauthorized route along a pipeline, another pipeline in the area, multiple tanks, and two private land easement routes occur in the area boundaries.

Question 1c Findings

D3_5K7: This area receives a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity throughout the area.
D3_5K7.b: This area receives a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity throughout the area.
D3_5K7.e: This area receives a **Low** finding due to concentrations of improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.
[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K7: There is one cherry stemmed road coming into the northern portion of the area and along the eastern boundary. Use along this road is heavy only during the hunting season. There is a small inholding along the eastern edge that does not contain any highly developed residences. The western portion is rugged and contains side canyons off of the main ridge bordering the western edge.
    - Military training currently occurs in the area and noise from over craft flight affects the southern portion but does not affect the solitude in the northern portion of the area.
    - Public comment was received that the heart of the Bear Mountains and Hells Mesa is a perfect place for solitude due to rugged wild canyons. Access from the north is difficult due to rugged canyons.
    - Additional public comment received that the road is only accessible by ATV and the area is remote and encounters with other people are low.
    - D3_5K7.b: Military training currently occurs in the area and noise from over craft flight affects the southern portion (but is not as pervasive in other areas on the District due to a topographic feature breaking the noise) but does not affect the solitude in the northern portion.
    - D3_5K7.e: Two cherry-stemmed roads come into the area from the western side and do not experience heavy use. The subdivision private land inholding on the western edge is developed. There is some fuelwood cutting along roads where chainsaw noise is evident. There is military training that currently occurs in the area and noise from over craft flight throughout the area.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - D3_5K7.b: The northern portion and western portion are bordered by private land inholdings; but District specialists report there is not much development on these parcels.
    - D3_5K7.e: The subdivision private land inholding on the western edge is developed.

Narrative:

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

D3_5K7: Area receives a **Moderate** finding; some solitude is possible but signs of civilization are possible. D3_5K7.b: Area receives a **Moderate** finding; some solitude is possible but signs of civilization are possible. D3_5K7.e: Area receives a **Low** finding; little opportunity of feeling alone is possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** All areas receive camping, hiking, hunting.
    - Public comment received that deer, turkey, elk hunting and bird watching are popular in these areas. Additional public comment was received about Hells Mesa being a recreation destination in D3_5K7; team discussed its hiking destination. D3_5K7.b received public comment that the area is popular for rock hunting.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** District specialists report mountain biking may occur but is not prevalent. Public comment was received for D3_5K7 that the area between FR354 and CR12A is a popular mountain biking destination but mountain biking occurs on the road.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7 58% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K7.b 57% SPNM ROS Class; D3_5K7.e 32% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** D3_5K7 9% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K7.b 4% SPM ROS Class; D3_5K7.e 65% SPM ROS Class

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

D3_5K7 receives a **High** finding, due to many opportunities to engage in primitive recreation. D3_5K7.b receives a **High** finding, due to many opportunities to engage in primitive recreation. D3_5K7.e receives a **Moderate**, due to some opportunities to engage in primitive recreation and some controls inhibiting unconfined primitive recreation opportunities (roads bisecting area in the middle).

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** D3_5K7.e is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no reported populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no populations of rare plant or animals are reported.

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<u>Question 4b</u>. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the areas have rugged canyons, riparian areas, and countless havens for wildlife. Additional public comment received that areas contain the northernmost exposures of lower Mississippi rocks. Team discussed that this is a unique scientific occurrence but not an overwhelming feature. D3_5K7.b received public comment that the area is popular for rock hunting. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7 95% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class, D3_5K7.b 72% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class, D3_5K7.e 14% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class,
    - **D3_5K7:** Public comment was received that there is a rugged mountain crest in the badlands between the crest and Hells Mesa. Additional public comment that Hells Mesa is beautiful and iconic. Additional public comment received that there are stunning canyons and springs toward the southern portion of 12A.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4b Findings</u>

D3_5K7: Area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding, due to some outstanding features in the area (Hells Mesa, badlands, springs and canyons). D3_5K7.b and D3_5K7.e receive a **<u>Low</u>** finding; few to no outstanding features.

<u>Question 4c</u>. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 4.7%.
    - D3_5K7.b: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Unknown, percent surveyed less than 1 acre. There are sites that have been observed by District specialists.
    - D3_5K7.e: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed less than 1%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D3_5K7: The area receives a **Low** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_5K7.b: The area receives a **Low** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team gave area a Low finding. D3_5K7.e: The area receives a **High** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7: Area contains multiple springs and drainages, but water is not perennial in the area. Public comment received that there are springs at the southern end of 12A.
    - **D3_5K7.**b: Area contains multiple springs and some drainages. Water is not perennial in area.
    - **D3_5K7.**e: Areas contain springs and drainages. Water is not perennial in area. There are no high quality water resources in the area.

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** Discussion about the amount of springs in the area and limited presence of water on District.

Question 4e Findings

D3_5K7 receives a **Moderate**, due to some high quality watershed features (multiple springs). D3_5K7.b and D3_5K7.e receive a **Low** finding; no high quality watershed features occur in area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:**
    - **D3_5K7:** These areas contain active grazing allotments: D3_5K7 contain Alamo Springs. There are multiple developed springs that require intermittent motorized maintenance (sometimes motorized means is needed and sometimes not needed). There is a fence on the boundary between D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b that acts as the border and needs maintenance access on both sides, part of fence require motorized maintenance. There is another fence on the boundary between D3_5K7 and another area (D3_5K7.c) that acts as the border and needs maintenance access on both sides, part of fence require motorized maintenance. There is one area of an active mining claim in the southeastern corner with intermittent exploration. Public comment was received that there has been recent uranium mining exploration in this area.
    - **D3_5K7.b**: D3_5K7.b and D3_5K7.e contain Abbe Springs grazing allotment with one small pipeline with intermittent motorized maintenance (sometimes motorized means is needed and sometimes not needed). There is a fence on the boundary between D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b that acts as the border and needs maintenance access on both sides, part of fence require motorized maintenance.
    - **D3_5K7**.e: There are multiple tanks and two pipelines in the area with intermittent motorized maintenance (sometimes motorized means is needed and sometimes not needed).
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** There are private land inholdings adjacent to all areas: along western portions of D_5K7.b and D3_5K7.e and one small inholding along D3_5K7. There is some access (easement) in D3_5K7.e.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Areas are completely surrounded by Forest Service land, other than a few private land inholdings. The private land adjacent to D3_5K7.e is residential with variable human activities. D3_5K7.b and D3_5K7.e: Socorro County approved two separate subdivisions from southeast corner of private to the boundary of the Forest to the north (future development).

- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** For all of these areas: Cultural and traditional use in the area is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. There is no known conflict with tribal, cultural and traditional use but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** D3_5K7.b contains 7% WUI. The other areas contain 0% WUI.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b: There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in southern portions of area. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. Currently, the use for military training is non-mechanized on the ground so is not conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.
    - D3_5K7.e: There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in throughout area. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. Currently, the use for military training is non-mechanized on the ground so is not conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** For all areas: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** For all areas: Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:**
    - D3_5K7: There is one cherry stemmed road in northern section almost completely separating the area. This would affect manageability in this northern portion, due to creating isolated pockets around roads that would make the shape and configuration difficult to manage.
    - D3_5K7b: There is one small cherry-stemmed road along the western boundary.
    - D3_5K7.e: Roads 123B and 123BB almost separate the area completely into multiple portions. This would affect manageability due to creating isolated pockets around roads that would make the shape and configuration difficult to manage. There is also an easement that was not cherry-stemmed out of the area that would contribute to difficulty.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** All areas are almost entirely within the Scott Mesa IRAs.
    - Public comment received that size and shape of Scott Mesa area assures manageability because of an 80% overlap with IRA.
    - Discussion about the military training activity environmental analysis and need for two findings due to unknown outcomes of the analysis (range of alternatives includes no action, improvements, and no more military training). D3_5K7: If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, area receives a finding of Moderate (due to grazing improvement maintenance and cherry-stemmed road issues in area). If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (due to increased military activities, grazing improvement maintenance, and cherry-stemmed road issues in area).
    - D3_5K7.b: If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, area receives a finding of Moderate (due to grazing improvement maintenance, and WUI percentage in area). If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (due to increased military activities, grazing improvement maintenance, and WUI percentage in area).

Question 5a Findings

D3_5K7: This area receives a finding of **Low** presence and extent of other uses (due to increased military activities, grazing improvement maintenance, and cherry-stemmed road issues in area) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

D3_5K7.b: receive a finding of **Low** presence and extent of other uses (due to increased military activities, grazing improvement maintenance, and WUI percentage in area) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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D3_5K7.e: Area receives a finding of **Low** due to multiple manageability issues (cherry-stemmed roads, maintenance of improvements, and problematic shape and configuration overall).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/13/16: Findings: D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b: These two areas are adjacent, and the team finds that there is some wilderness character in the eastern portion of D3_5K7.b (Sections 36, 1, 12) and the western portion of D3_5K7 (Sections 31, 6, 7 (if considered together, these areas with wilderness character are directly adjacent to one another). The team finds that the remaining portion of this area do not have wilderness character. D3_5K7.e: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Preferred proposal: D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b: Team recommends that this area not be managed as wilderness due to isolated nature of the portions with wilderness character (eastern portion of D3_5K7.b -Sections 36, 1, 12- and the western portion of D3_5K7 -Sections 31, 6, 7) which are completely surrounded by areas that the team found did not have wilderness character. Additionally, a fence line runs between the two portions that were found to have wilderness character. Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species). D3_5K7.e: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species). Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness. Issues of note: Feral horses are an issue in D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16

Findings:
D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b: These two areas are adjacent, and there is some wilderness character in the eastern portion of D3_5K7.b (Sections 36, 1, 12) and the western portion of D3_5K7 (Sections 31, 6, 7 (if considered together, these areas with wilderness character are directly adjacent to one another). Remaining portions of these areas do not have wilderness character.

D3_5K7.e: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred proposal:
D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b: Do not manage area as wilderness due to isolated nature of the portions with wilderness character (eastern portion of D3_5K7.b -Sections 36, 1, 12- and the western portion of D3_5K7 -Sections 31, 6, 7) which are completely surrounded by areas that do not have wilderness character. Additionally, a fence line runs between the two portions that were found to have wilderness character. Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and continue to manage for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species).

D3_5K7.e: Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and continue to manage for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species).

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_5K7 IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7 Steering Committee Decision 2/5/16	D3_5K7.b IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7.b Steering Committee Decision 2/05/2016	D3_5K7.e IDT Findings 01/13/16	D3_5K7.e Steering Committee Decision 2/5/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**	**L**
	1b	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**
	1c	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**L**	**L**
	2a	**M**	**M**	**M**	**M**	**L**	**L**
	2b	**H**	**H**	**H**	**H**	**M**	**M**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	D3_5K7.e is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	D3_5K7.e is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.
	4a	L	L	L	L	L	L
	4b	M	M	L	L	L	L
	4c	L	L	L	L	H	H
	4d	L	L	L	L	L	L
	4e	M	M	L	L	L	L
	5a	**M-L**	**Low**	**M-L**	**Low**	**L**	**L**
Summary		Required: 3H, 1-2M, 1-2L Supplemental: 3L, 2M	Required: 3H, 1M, 2L Supplemental: 3L, 2M	Required: 3H, 1-2M, 1-2L Supplemental: 5L	Required: 3H, 1M, 2L Supplemental: 5L	Required: 1H, 1M, 4L Supplemental: 1H, 4L	Required: 1H, 1M, 4L Supplemental: 1H, 4L
Evaluation Finding		Yes; western portion (Sections 31, 6, 7)	Yes; western portion (Sections 31, 6, 7)	Yes; eastern portion (Sections 36, 1, 12)	Yes; eastern portion (Sections 36, 1, 12)	No	No

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Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions/ multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ other multiple uses (improve managemen t to meet IRA characteristi cs and qualities and improve managemen t of nonnative species)	Desired conditions /multiple uses (improve managem ent to meet IRA characteri stics and qualities and improve managem ent of nonnative species)	Desired conditions /other multiple uses (improve managem ent to meet IRA characteri stics and qualities and improve managem ent of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)	Desired conditions/ other multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management of nonnative species)
Alternativ es for Area	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness	--	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wildernes s	--	Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness	--

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

STC decided on a Low finding for D3_5K7 and D3_5K7.b 5a; proposed action for military training is to continue military training.
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area 8: 4696.3

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/14/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner) Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County)

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are reported populations of salt cedar throughout the area.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, grass mix, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer and elk populations, as well as bird communities. Feral horses are reported within the area.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Low** due to populations of nonnative species throughout the area.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

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Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports no restoration treatments in the area.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** District specialists report that the community of Riley has created evidence of fuelwood cutting in pinon juniper stands that may appear substantially unnatural in some places. Historic grazing has affected the landscape.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some evidence of vegetation appearing unnatural in isolated spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
    - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data area contains one small pipeline in southwestern corner, one fence line running north to south in the eastern edge with a gate, one small decommissioned road in southern portion, one small unauthorized route along eastern border, Alamito well, Alamito storage, and there are two springs (these do not have names and team discussed that they are most likely not developed).

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unobjectionable human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** District specialist reports military training occurs in portions of this area in the southeastern corner with overflight noise evident intermittently, with lower levels of noise.
  - Private land inholding near Riley in northeastern corner contains subdivision developments and noise is evident intermittently.
  - Public comment that visitor hiked for several days and only saw one permittee in area.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Area is adjacent to a private land inholding in the northeastern corner, and portions are adjacent to BLM land used primarily for grazing. The area is bordered by roads almost

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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entirely (except for the northern edge). Noise from these roads is evident in the area due to low screening from vegetation and three sides of the area bordered by roads.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; human activities or presence is unavoidable (area is bordered by roads on three sides and vegetation screening is low).

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting.
    - Public comment received that hiking occurs in area; additional public comment received that mountain biking occurs along roads around general area, but these are not within the area boundaries.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No reported information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
    - **Narrative:** 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** 21% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** Fenceline runs north along the eastern edge that limits unconfined access to some degree. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation are available, but there are also limitations due to the limited size of the area, three sides surrounded by roads, and a fenceline restricting unconfined access in some portions of the area.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** Area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no reported populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no reported rare plant or animal populations in the area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

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- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area has rugged canyons, riparian areas, and countless havens for wildlife. Additional public comment received that areas contain the northernmost exposures of lower Mississippi rocks. Team discussed that this is a unique scientific occurrence but not an overwhelming feature. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** 89% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
    - Public comment was received that there are stunning canyons and rugged arroyos in the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, there are few to no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** District specialist reports there is some evidence of sites in the area; FS archaeologist reports no information known for area, percent surveyed unknown.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to evidence observed by District specialists.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** There is two drainages in area without perennial water; these are not important watershed features. There are no high quality water resources in area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; few to no outstanding water features are in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Alamo grazing allotment is within the area, and is active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and grazing improvements in the northern corner require same type of maintenance. Pipeline in southwestern corner also requires same type of maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land inholding occurs in the northeastern corner but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** BLM land in the northern adjacent areas contain grazing activities. Private inholding contains somewhat-developed subdivision.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** Information is unknown.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in the southeastern portion of the area. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. Currently, the use for military training is some mechanized use on the ground which is in conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Currently, the use for military training is some mechanized use on the ground which is in conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Special use permit occurs in the southeastern corner which geospatial data indicates is a USGS feature. It is unknown what type of feature occurs, and whether it is the area boundaries. Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** None occur within boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Area is almost entirely within Scott Mesa IRA.
  - Team discussed two findings due to military training analysis currently underway, and the range of alternatives this analysis entails. If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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finding of Moderate (grazing improvement maintenance). If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (increased military training and grazing improvement maintenance).

Question 5a Findings

Area receives a finding of **Low**; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (increased military training and grazing improvement maintenance) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/14/16: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for multiple uses (improve management to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management for invasive species). Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16:

Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and continue to manage for other multiple uses (clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics and qualities and improve management for invasive species).

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K8 Bears IDT Findings 01/14/16	D3_5K8 Bears Steering Committee Decision 02/05/2016
Criterion Question*	1a	**Low**	**Low**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	Area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	Area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low

	4c	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Moderate**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 4M, 2L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3M, 3L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; Clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics; Improve management for Invasive species
Alternatives for Area		Public comment proposed wilderness	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

STC decided on a Low finding for 5a; proposed action for military training is to continue military training.
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Bear Mountains Area D3_ADJ9 D3_ADJ10

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/14/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner) Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are reported populations of salt cedar in portions of the areas.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, grass mix, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. There are remnants of a cottonwood gallery in areas and willows (Baca Canyon). Typical animal communities include mule deer and elk populations, occasional Desert Bighorn sheep as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** due to some populations of nonnative species throughout the areas.

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<u>Question 1b.</u> What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports no restoration treatments in the area.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** District specialists report that the community of Riley has created evidence of fuelwood cutting in pinon juniper stands that may appear substantially unnatural in some places. Historic grazing has affected the landscape.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 1b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding, due to some evidence of vegetation appearing unnatural in isolated spots.

<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

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- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that areas contain powerline along western boundary, one small unauthorized route along eastern border, and two small portions of decommissioned roads in southern boundary.

Question 1c Findings

These areas receive a **Moderate** finding, due to unobjectionable human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** A powerline borders the entire western edge of the areas, which is pervasive to the sights of the area due to the small acreage and little vegetation screening. FS specialist provides information that Sierre Ladrones WSA area has been reported to be used as a popular ATV area, and noise is pervasive from this within the small acreage of area.
  - Topography is flat and open so screening from surrounding civilization activities and developments are pervasive across areas.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Public comment received that these are remote areas with high opportunities for solitude far from sights and sounds of civilization. Additional comment that there is little human development in area.
- District specialist reports military training occurs throughout areas with overflight noise evident intermittently, with lower levels of noise compared to other areas on District.
- Areas are separated by FR354XA, which receives use by the military training traffic.
- Private land inholding near Riley in northeastern corner contains subdivision developments and noise is evident intermittently.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Areas are adjacent to Sierra Ladrones Wilderness Study Area in the eastern portion and BLM used for grazing in northern portion. Forest Service land is adjacent to western edges.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; human activities are unavoidable due to small size of the areas (powerline, noise, and surrounding noise).

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting.
  - Public comment received that hiking occurs in area; additional public comment received that mountain biking occurs along roads around general area, but these are not within the area boundaries. Additional public comment that rock collecting occurs in area.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No reported information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation

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- **Narrative:** D3_ADJ9 0% SPNM ROS Class; D3_ADJ10 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ9 0% SPM ROS Class; D3_ADJ10 0% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation within the areas.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This criteria does not apply to these areas due to adjacency to the Wilderness Study Area.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Desert bighorn sheep occur in are but they are not threatened, endangered, or rare species. Geospatial data shows no reported populations.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)

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opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no reported rare plant or animal populations in the areas.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area has rugged canyons, riparian areas, and countless havens for wildlife. Additional public comment received that areas contain the northernmost exposures of lower Mississippi rocks. Team discussed that this is a unique scientific occurrence but not an overwhelming feature. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ9: 79% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class; D3_ADJ10: 0% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
  - District specialists report that quality viewpoints occur within the area boundaries into Baca Canyon which is cherry-stemmed out of the area.
  - Public comment was received that there are stunning canyons and rugged arroyos in area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, there are some outstanding landscape features in the areas (viewpoints and geology).

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ9: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Moderate, percent surveyed 9.0%. D3_ADJ10: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 0.2%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D3_5ADJ9: Receives a **Moderate** finding; based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding. D3_ADJ10: Receives a **Low** finding; based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural areas.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** There are no high quality water resources in area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; few to no outstanding water features are in the areas.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

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<u>Question 5a.</u> Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Alamo grazing allotment is within area, and is active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs along eastern boundary and northern boundary, and maintenance access occurs in area within boundaries as well as from BLM. Powerline and pipeline occur along western boundaries; these require intermittent motorized maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Public comment reports valuable silver deposits in area and there is a historic claim in area (impacts to mining potential in areas will be discussed in analysis). No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** All adjacent lands are managed by federal agencies, other than the northeastern corner which contains private (no access for this occurs within boundaries).
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** BLM land in the northern adjacent areas contain grazing activities. The BLM Wilderness Study Area borders areas on the eastern edge. This area is managed as a Wilderness Study Area, but is not designated; Forest Service does not have any jurisdiction within this area. A fence separates Forest Service from BLM. Forest Service land borders areas on western edges.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use in the areas is unknown at this time. No known conflicts with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 0% WUI
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** There is a military training analysis underway and an active permit for military training currently in portions of areas. Depending on the outcome of the analysis, there may be impacts to wilderness character management due to mechanized equipment use. Currently, the use for military training requires some mechanized use on the ground which is in conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** Currently, the use for military training requires some mechanized on the ground which is in conflict with managing for wilderness character. Air flights do occur.

- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Special use permit occurs in the southeastern corner which geospatial data indicates is a USGS feature. It is unknown what type of feature occurs, and whether it is the area boundaries. Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Areas are bisected by 354XA, making management difficult when considering areas together; road creates isolated "pockets" of area. However, considered separately, there are no cherry-stemmed roads within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is no more military training in the area boundaries, these areas would receive a finding of Moderate (maintenance issues and WSA adjacency). If the military training environmental analysis outcome is that there is continued military training in the area boundaries, it would receive a finding of Low (increased military training, maintenance issues).

Question 5a Findings

Area receives a finding of **Low**; presence and extent of other uses (increased military training and maintenance issues) occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/14/16: Finding: D3_ADJ9: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. D3_ADJ10: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas toward desired conditions and continue to manage for other multiple uses (improve management for invasive species). Baca Canyon contains cottonwood remnants and willow populations and these should be managed for riparian desired conditions, as well as scenic resources (this applies beyond these two area boundaries to the entire Baca Canyon area). Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16:

Finding: D3_ADJ9: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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D3_ADJ10: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage areas toward Forest-wide desired conditions and for other multiple uses (improve management for invasive species). Baca Canyon contains cottonwood remnants and willow populations and these should be managed for riparian desired conditions, as well as scenic resources (this applies beyond these two area boundaries to the entire Baca Canyon area).

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ9 Bears IDT Findings 01/14/16	D3_ADJ9 Bears Steering Committee Decision 2/5/16	D3_ADJ10 Bears IDT Findings 01/14/16	D3_ADJ10 Bears Steering Committee Decision 2/05/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	3	This criteria does not apply to this area due to adjacency to Wilderness Study Area.	This criteria does not apply to this area due to adjacency to Wilderness Study Area.	This criteria does not apply to this area due to adjacency to Wilderness Study Area.	This criteria does not apply to this area due to adjacency to Wilderness Study Area.
	4a	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4b	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Low	Low
	5a	**M/L (due to military training analysis)**	**Low**	**M/L (due to military training analysis)**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 3-4M, 1-2L, 1H** Supplemental:2M, 2L	**Required: 3M, 2L, 1H** Supplemental: 2M, 2L	**Required: 3-4M, 1-2L, 1H** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3M, 2L, 1H** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No	No	No

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Preferred Proposal	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species, riparian/scenic Baca Canyon	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species, riparian/scenic Baca Canyon	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species riparian/scenic Baca Canyon	Desired Conditions/Multiple use; IRA characteristics; Invasive species, riparian/scenic Baca Canyon
Alternatives for Area	Public comment suggested potential wilderness	---	Public comment suggested potential wilderness	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/05/2016:

STC decided on a Low finding for 5a; proposed action for military training is to continue military training.
STC edited language in preferred proposal slightly.
STC concurred with all other findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Magdalena Mountains Area
D3_5K1: 14,266 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/14/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner) Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations within area boundaries.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grama and grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, sparsely vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, javelina, turkey, and elk populations, as well as bird communities. Two Mexican Spotted Owl PACs occur in the southern portions of the area, within the area.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **High**, no reported nonnative populations are present and plant and animal communities appear natural.

<u>Question 1b.</u> What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports one restoration treatment in the northeastern corner of the area. Jordan Canyon burn from 1993; District specialists and team report this does not appear substantially unnatural to the average visitor.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Areas of forest are impacted by disturbance (drought and insects) and areas of mortality appear, but these are part of the ecosystem and would not appear substantially unnatural to average viewer. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 1b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>High</u>** finding; vegetation appears natural to the average viewer.

<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data area shows a concentration of historic and active mines with mining improvements, including associated roads, fences, decommissioned roads, developed wildlife drinkers and range improvements (developed wells and a pipeline), and some system trails throughout the entire area.
- Public comment received that there is evidence of historic mining in area; District specialists confirm this is seen throughout area.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to concentration and evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in area is highly mountainous and contains deep canyons where solitude is possible due to remoteness. Springs occur within area.
  - Team discussed occurrence of some prospecting in area, but frequency and noise from these activities are not pervasive to area. Boundary of eastern edge parallels a road where noise from heavy use by residents and recreationists is evident along eastern edge. Vehicle traffic on this

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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same road to Langmuir Research Site is daily, and use is multiple times a day. Water Canyon Campground occurs along this road as well, and is the most popular campground and day use area on District. Noise from these activities is pervasive in east-west drainages along eastern boundary and along road. Sights of activities along edges are somewhat visible within interior portions of area on high points. Traffic from Highway 60 is visible from high points on northern boundary. In western portions, there are mining claims and residences with activities that impact solitude.

  - Public comment received that topography contains an abundance of opportunities for solitude. District confirmed this is true, due to isolated rugged nature of canyons.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Impacts from activities on adjacent lands mostly affect solitude along edges of area rather than interior of area. Private land occurs around the borders.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident along edges and solitude is possible within the interior of the areas.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting occur in the area. Public comment reported star-gazing and rock-climbing occur within the Magdalena mountain range; Team discussed that exact locations may occur in another area. System trails provide hiking and horseback riding opportunities.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** System trails provide opportunities for mountain biking use. Public comment received that mountain biking is popular in the Magdalena mountains, and commenters mention specific trails within area boundaries.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
    - **Narrative:** 59% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** 26% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Recreational prospecting is popular within the area, and sometimes mechanized equipment is used and sometimes use is non-mechanized.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation are available.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows Mexican Spotted Owl populations occur in the southern portion of the area.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Mexican Spotted Owl populations in the area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area contains uniquelt scenic and rugged terrain. Additional public comment received that scenery is exceptional. Team discussed that this is accurate due to vegetation diversity, topography, and landscape features in the area.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** 93% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding, there are many outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 2.5%. Team discussed that evidence of sites within area that has been observed confirms this finding.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

D3_5K1: Receives a finding of **High**. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There are multiple drainages in area with intermittent perennial water (Mill Canyon, Copper Canyon, Dark Canyon). Multiple springs also occur within area boundaries; this entire area is the Magdalena municipal watershed, with multiple watershed recharge features.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; several high quality water features.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

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<u>Question 5a.</u> Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** There are multiple grazing allotments (Baldy, Muleshoe, Kelly, and Water Canyon) throughout area that are active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Active mining claims occur throughout north and southwestern portions of area and activity is present, including mechanized use (FS Minerals specialist reports that up to 25 active mining claims per square mile are present within boundaries). A right of way for an active claim occurs in northeastern portion.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and protected activity centers; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character. The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management. Where activities are proposed on active claims, valid existing rights must be determined. The extensive number of claims would be extremely difficult to manage because a minerals exam would be needed. Where valid and existing rights exist, providing access is in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land inholdings occur along western and eastern boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private inholdings and Forest Service border the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use in the polygon is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. Prospecting may occur in area which has been traditionally used in area historically.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 7% WUI in western and eastern portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Mechanized use occurs by prospectors in area and mountain biking occurs along system trails.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Special use permits occur along southern portion and a small portion of eastern boundary. Geospatial data shows that one of the special use permits (SUPs) is a telephone line, team discussed that this most likely occurs along road and outside of area boundaries. The rest of the SUPs are identified as the Langmuir SUP within the geospatial data; these most likely occur south of the area's boundary, with the exception of two sections shown entirely within area boundaries; exact locations and activities of these SUPs are unknown.
    - Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** Two cherry-stemmed roads occur in the northeastern portion within boundaries. These are cherry stemmed very close to one another, and create an isolated "pocket" of land between the two roads near the boundary. One cherry-stemmed road also occurs along the northwestern boundary, and one small cherry-stemmed on southern boundary.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No IRAs occur within boundaries.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to the concentration and extent of other uses across most of the area that are incompatible with managing for wilderness character (active mining, mountain biking uses, grazing improvements maintenance).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/14/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas with an emphasis on desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration was a concern raised by the team. Continue to manage for multiple uses. Another topic discussed was the relationship between fire management and fuelwood products. Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16:

Finding:
Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage areas with an emphasis on Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration was a concern raised by the team.
Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions for multiple uses.
Another topic discussed was the relationship between fire management and fuelwood products.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_5K1 Mags IDT Findings 01/14/16	D3_5K1 Mags Steering Committee Decision 02/05/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Low**	**Low**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	High	High
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	High	High
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 1M, 3H, 2L** Supplemental: 1M, 3H, 1L	**Required: 1M, 3H, 2L** Supplemental: 1M, 3H, 1L
Evaluation Finding		No	No

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Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration. Continue to manage for multiple uses. Another topic discussed was the relationship between fire management and fuelwood products.	Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration. Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions for other multiple uses. Another topic discussed was the relationship between fire management and fuelwood products.
Alternatives for Area	Public comment proposed wilderness.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Notes, 2/5/16:

STC concurred with all findings; edited preferred proposal language slightly.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Magdalena Mountains Area
D3_5K2: 4,742 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/14/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner) Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), Crystal Diamond (Sierra SWCD), Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported nonnative plant and/or animal populations within the area boundaries.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative: Dominant vegetation types include** pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grama and grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, sparsely vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, javelina, turkey, and elk populations, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **High**, no reported nonnative populations are present and plant and animal communities appear natural.

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<u>Question 1b.</u> What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports no restoration treatments in the area.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 1b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>High</u>** finding; vegetation appears natural to the average viewer.

<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
    - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data area shows fences, developed wildlife drinkers and range improvements (developed wells and a pipeline), and some system trails in the eastern portion of the area. Two decommissioned routes occur in the area (geospatial aerial imagery shows one as evident on the landscape), as well as three unauthorized routes. Improvements are concentrated for the most part along edges, except for a fence running north to south in the western portion and a decommissioned route running into the area boundary from the southern edge. Topography is steep and screening is present; features are screened in portions of the area. Area seems to have high apparent naturalness in the northeastern portion and a moderate apparent naturalness in the southwestern portion; therefore the Team found the area to meet the definition of Moderate.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to concentration and evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in the area is highly mountainous and contains deep canyons where solitude is possible due to remoteness. Springs occur within the area. Road paralleling the northern boundary is heavily used by recreation users and residents on private land, but it is a rough road. Noise is evident in portions adjacent to road.
  - Improvements on the Langmuir Research Site and residences south of area are evident from high points within the area.
  - Public comment received that topography contains an abundance of opportunities for solitude. District confirmed this is true, due to isolated rugged nature of canyons.

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- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Area is adjacent to the Langmuir Research Site in the southern portion, but noise is not evident from activities. Private land occurs around the borders.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident in some areas (high points and north edge) and solitude is possible within the interior of the areas and bottom of canyons.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting occur in the area. Public comment reported star-gazing and rock-climbing occur within the Magdalena mountain range; Team discussed that exact locations may occur in another area. System trails provide hiking and horseback riding opportunities.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** System trails provide opportunities for mountain biking use. Public comment received that mountain biking is popular in the Magdalena mountains, and commenters mention specific trails within area boundaries.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** 54% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 26% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Recreational prospecting may occur within the area, and sometimes mechanized equipment is used and sometimes use is non-mechanized.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation are available.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows a small portion of reported Mexican Spotted Owl populations in the northern portion of the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Mexican Spotted Owl populations in the area.

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<u>Question 4b</u>. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area contains unique scenery and rugged terrain. Additional public comment received that scenery is exceptional. Team discussed that this is accurate due to some vegetation diversity, topography, viewpoints, and landscape features in the area. Team discussed that this area is nice but not outstanding compared to other features on the District; there is different terrain in this area with less outstanding features.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** 24% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding, there are some outstanding landscape features.

<u>Question 4c</u>. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 6%. Team discussed that evidence of sites within area that has been observed confirms this finding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4c Findings

D3_5K2: Receives a **High** finding; based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries. Mill Canyon is outside the area boundaries in the north (intermittent perennial). Bear Canyon, within the area, is ephemeral and the spring is intermittent.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)

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- **Narrative:** There is one grazing allotment, Muleshoe, throughout area that is active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and grazing improvements require same type of maintenance.

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and protected activity centers; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character. A small portion of the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land inholdings occur along all boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private inholdings and Forest Service border the area. Langmuir Research Site is adjacent to the southern border but this would not affect managing the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** Some cultural use occurs within this area, but use is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character. Prospecting may occur in the area which has been traditionally used in the area historically.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 14% WUI in northern portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Mechanized use occurs by prospectors in the area and mountain biking occurs along system trails.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** In the southwestern corner, a special use permit (SUP) is identified as a road easement outside of the area boundaries in the geospatial data. One SUP in the southeastern corner is the Langmuir SUP and most likely is outside of the area boundaries. The rest of the SUP's in the northern portion occur outside of the area boundaries.
  - Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** None occur within area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No IRAs occur within boundaries.
    - Discussion that there is not much distance between uses that are incompatible with wilderness character (grazing improvements, maintenance needs and mountain biking).

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas (range improvement maintenance and mountain biking).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/14/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does have wilderness character in the interior portion void of constructed features and system trails. Preferred Proposal: Team does not recommend that interior portion be managed as wilderness due to the fact that surrounding other uses and improvements incompatible with wilderness character isolate this portion. If features were removed from area boundaries, the remaining small size and crescent-like configuration (with high edge to interior ratio) of the interior portion would be difficult to manage as an isolated pocket of wilderness. Manage areas with an emphasis on desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration was a concern raised by the team. Continue to manage for multiple uses. Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16:

Finding: Area does have wilderness character in the interior portion void of constructed features and system trails. Preferred Proposal: Interior portion should not be managed as wilderness due to the fact that surrounding other uses and improvements incompatible with wilderness character isolate this portion. If features were removed from area boundaries, the remaining small size and crescent-like configuration (with high edge to interior ratio) of the interior portion would be difficult to manage as an isolated pocket of wilderness. Manage areas with an emphasis on Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration was a concern raised by the team. Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions for other multiple uses.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Area ID:		D3_5K2 Mags IDT Findings 01/14/16	D3_5K2 Mags Steering Committee Decision 02/05/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	This area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.	This area is under 5,000 acres, and will be evaluated for sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable using the other criteria in this evaluation.
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 3M, 3H** Supplemental: 2M, 1H, 2L	**Required: 3M, 3H** Supplemental: 2M, 1H, 2L
Evaluation Finding		Yes; in the interior portion void of constructed features and system trails.	Yes; in the interior portion void of constructed features and system trails.

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Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration. Continue to manage for multiple uses. Interior portion should not be managed as wilderness.	Desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration. Emphasis on trail maintenance for watershed restoration. Continue to manage for other multiple uses. Interior portion should not be managed as wilderness.
Alternatives for Area	Public comment proposed wilderness.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Notes, 2/5/16;

STC concurred with all findings; edited preferred proposal language slightly.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Magdalena Mountains Area
D3_5K3: 7,315 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/20/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer)
Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC)

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations within area boundaries. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grama and grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, sparsely vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, javelina, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities. One small portion of a Mexican Spotted Owl PAC occurs in the southern portion within the area.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **High**, no reported nonnative populations are present and plant and animal communities appear natural.

<u>Question 1b.</u> What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports two treatments including site preparation for natural regeneration consisting of mechanical treatment and thinning for hazardous fuels reduction; both treatments are located within the southern portion of the area.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Areas of previous burns are located within the central section of the area and the southern portions of the area; all three burn areas that occur within the area do not appear unnatural. Areas of forest are impacted by disturbance (drought and insects) and areas of mortality appear, but these are part of the ecosystem and would not appear substantially unnatural to average viewer.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 1b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in isolated or scattered spots.

<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

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- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm one designated helispot located northeast of Timber Peak. Four known abandoned mines are scattered throughout the area, two small sections of active mine claims are located within the northwestern corner of the area and the southwestern portions of the area. District staff reflects that there are more abandoned mines scattered in the landscape than have been inventoried. There are road scars located in the area; one of the most prominent road scars has already been cherry stemmed out. There is a natural barrier that runs north/south through the middle of the area to the southeastern corner of the area and other natural barriers throughout the area. A small section of a fence occurs in the southeastern portion of the area. Two substantially noticeable developed dual range and wildlife fiberglass tanks are located in the central portion of the area; needs intermittent maintenance and helicopter use. Range improvements include dirt tanks on top of the mesa (northern portion) consisting of West Canyon Mesa, Water Canyon Mesa trick tank, and Water Canyon Mesa Tank. Six mile spring is an old developed feature. Wet Weather pit tank also occurs in the northern portion of the area. Several system trails are located throughout the area including Trail 13 located throughout the northern portion of the area, Trail 12 located east/west in the northern southeastern and southwestern portion of the area, Trail 17 and Trail 14 located in the southwestern corner of the area, Trail 15 is located in the south/central portion of the area (especially used by mountain bikers). Two decommissioned routes occur on the west side as well as one unauthorized route located in the northern portion of the area.
- Staff archaeologist states that check dams and house foundations are located in the area and District staff confirms spring sites for homestead use, log cabin foundations, and check dams on the western side but is unsure if located within the area.
- Public comments have been received regarding old mining debris, old roads, prospect roads, tailings, and road cuts (locations are not specific).

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to concentration and evidence of human activity detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** Topography in the area is variable given that the northern portion is rugged once you come off the mesa and does contain canyons in the southwestern portion of the area where solitude is possible due to remoteness.
    - Large infrequent explosion noise from Tech occurs in this area which impacts solitude (Tech booms).
    - Boundary of western edge parallels a road where noise from heavy use by residents and recreationists is evident along the western edge. Vehicle traffic on this same road to the Langmuir Research Site is daily, and use is multiple times a day. Water Canyon Campground occurs along this road as well, and is the most popular campground and day use area on the District. Noise from these activities is pervasive in east-west drainages along the western boundary and along the road. Sights of activities along the edges are somewhat visible within the interior portions of the area on high points. Traffic from Highway 60 is visible from high points.
    - Public comment received that topography provides an abundance of opportunities for solitude. District confirmed this is true only located within the southwestern corner of the area, due to the isolated rugged nature of canyons (South Canyon) in this section.
    - Two public comments received on South Canyon: South Canyon is a beautiful and solitary little canyon with little evidence of human disturbance, numerous scenic views of the canyon walls and up and down the canyon.
    - Another public comment on 6 mile Canyon—Ryan Hill View trails (both trails are in and out of the southern portions of the area). We thought the area wild and saw no signs of other people. Provides wonderful opportunities for solitude.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Area is adjacent to the Langmuir Research Site along the entire southern portion of the area, but noise is not evident from Langmuir activities. There are four cherry-stemmed roads that are fairly intrusive throughout the area. Private property is located in the southwestern corner of the area and several private parcels occur along the western edge of the area.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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Intermittent use of roads by recreationists and hunters but noise is not pervasive. Water Canyon administrative site is located adjacent to the western edge. Noise from Water Canyon and Hwy 60 is evident within the area.

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Discussion regarding a Low finding due to the high variability in the area due to Tech explosions, visibility of mining activity, and noise from Hwy 60 and Water Canyon. However, there are some opportunities for quiet and solitude in the southeastern corner and southwestern corners/lobes of the area so a finding of Moderate is appropriate. The opportunity for solitude varies due to the way the polygon is shaped.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident in some areas and solitude is possible in the southeastern and southwestern lobes of the area.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting occur in the area. Public comment reported star-gazing and rock-climbing occur within the Magdalena mountain range; Team discussed that exact locations may occur in another area. System trails provide hiking and horseback riding opportunities. District staff states that most of use is day use including mountain biking and hiking.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** System trails provide opportunities for mountain biking use. Public comment received that mountain biking is popular in Magdalena mountains, and commenters mention specific trails within area boundaries including Mesa Trail (13) and Six Mile Canyon (14) . District staff confirms that Mesa Trail 13 is used frequently.
    - This is an established prospecting area. The elements that occur in the area are not that rare, however, continuing pressure from the prospectors occurs.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of

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- **Narrative:** 60% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 7% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative: N/A**

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows a small portion of Mexican Spotted Owl PAC in the southwestern lobe/corner of area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Mexican Spotted Owl populations in the area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area contains unique scenery and rugged terrain. Additional public comment received that scenery is exceptional. Team discussed that this is accurate in some areas due to scenic viewpoints. District staff states that the Water Canyon cliff walls occur within the area as well as quality viewpoints occur further into Water Canyon.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** There are two designated viewpoint areas located within the northern portion of the area. District staff and the team confirmed that these provide scenic views.
  - 71% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, there are some outstanding landscape features including the presence of two designated viewpoints within the area and Water Canyon cliff walls.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 2.5%. Team discussed that evidence of sites within area that have been observed which confirms this finding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

FS archaeologist reports a finding of **High**. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries. Two springs occur in the area including Wet Weather and Six Mile, which run intermittingly. Water Canyon, which occurs outside of the area, is intermittent.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

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Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Active mining claims occur in the northern and central portions of the area and there are six closed mining claims scattered throughout the northern and southern portions of the area. Areas that could not be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics include the areas where the active mining claims boundaries occur. Prospecting could occur along the western edge approximately a mile east of the active claim locations and this is an established prospecting area. The elements that occur in the area are not that rare, however, continuing pressure from the prospectors would be difficult to enforce. There are two grazing allotments (Water Canyon and Baldy) throughout the area that are active. Two large wildlife/range tanks occur in the area. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and grazing improvements require same type of maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and protected activity centers; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land inholdings occur along the northern and western boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private inholdings and Forest Service border the area. There is a section of State land on the eastern edge. The Langmuir Research Site is adjacent to the entire southern border but this would not affect managing the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** No known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character. Prospecting may occur in area which has been traditionally used in the area historically.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 8% WUI in northern portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** A small portion of East Mag 2 planned prescribed burn is located within the southwestern lobe of the area south of Timber Peak.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** Mechanized use occurs by prospectors in the area and mountain biking occurs along some of the system trails.

- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Two Special Use Permits (SUP) occur in the majority of the area, excluding the most southwestern lobe of the area. One SUP is the Langmuir SUP and the other SUP is for the Western NM Telephone Company (typically runs along roadways which would have been excluded). The Langmuir SUP is authorized for the following activities: Landing of rockets shall be permitted within the research site, roads limited to research activities shall be permitted, and other reasonable activities, motorized use restricted to roads within the plan, scientific research activities/equipment/and structures shall be permitted in research site. Motorized use to retrieve rockets and balloons for scientific activities. Secretary of Agriculture authorized authority by law to NM Technical Institute of Mining and Technology. There are serious questions as to whether this public law would be compatible with wilderness designation and whether it would conflict with wilderness.
  - Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Four cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** The Ryan Hill IRA occurs within the majority of the area, excluding the western edge.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (presence of mining, special uses) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/20/16: Finding: The team finds that this area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the majority of the area. The team also discussed that there is wilderness character in the southwestern lobe of the area. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas with an emphasis on desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Continue to manage for multiple uses. If the D3_LANG area is found to have wilderness character than the southwestern lobe of the area could be included as potential wilderness. Alternatives: Public comment received that suggested these areas as wilderness.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16:

Finding:
Area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Extent of improvements and other uses is incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the majority of the area.

Area contains wilderness character in the southwestern lobe of the area.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage areas with an emphasis on Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions for multiple uses.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_5K3 Mags IDT Findings 01/20/16	D3_5K3 Mags Steering Committee Decision 02/05/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Low-Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 3-4M, 1L, 1 H** Supplemental: 2M, 1H, 2L	**Required: 4M, 1L, 1 H** Supplemental: 2M, 1H, 2L
Evaluation Finding		No as a whole; there is wilderness character in the southwestern lobe of the area.	No as a whole; there is wilderness character in the southwestern lobe of the area.

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Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Continue to manage for multiple uses. If the D3_LANG area is found to have wilderness character than the southwestern lobe of the area could be included as potential wilderness.	Manage areas with an emphasis on Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a higher priority to close historic mining sites for public safety concerns. Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions for other multiple uses.
Alternatives for Area	Public comment proposed wilderness.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Notes, 2/5/16:

STC decided on a finding of Moderate for 2a. STC concurred with all findings.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Magdalena Mountains Area
D3_LANG: 33,483 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/20/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Management Assistant/Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC).

Forest Plan Revision steering committee review and decision date: 02/05/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations within the area boundaries. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, sparsely vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Arizona alder occurs in this area; largest Arizona alder recorded in the State is in Ryan Hill Canyon. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, javelina, turkey, and elk populations, pronghorn, bats, as well as bird communities. Mexican Spotted Owl PAC occurs in the three locations within the northern portion of the area.

Question 1a Findings

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This area receives a **High**, no reported nonnative populations are present and plant and animal communities appear natural.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reports two treatments including site preparation for natural regeneration consisting of mechanical treatment and thinning for hazardous fuels reduction; both treatments are located within the majority of the eastern portion of the area. District staff stated that they have prepped a 3 mile stretch of the trail system on both sides of Trail 70 (30-60 feet in width) within the last 5 years for the East Mag burn and prepped the opposite side of the trail for the Sawmill fire. This occurs within the central part of the area. Approximately 4 miles have been prepped extending beyond the end of Trail 70 southeast to the BLM boundary consisting of hand line and saw work. This was done in order to hold firebreak lines.
    - Public comment received that some forest thinning along Ryan Hill trail has occurred to restore the area to historical conditions, but has maintained the natural appearance of the area.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Areas of previous fires (at least 7 fires over 10 acres) are located within the central and eastern sections of the area; these areas that occur do not appear unnatural. Areas of the forest located in the most northern extents of the area are impacted by disturbance (drought and insects) and areas of mortality appear, but these are part of the ecosystem and would not appear substantially unnatural to average viewer.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
    - Team discussed a range from High to Moderate due to the fuel break occurring within a shaded section and a small width of the fuel break. Along Trail 70 the vegetation has been modified slightly for the fuel break but is a small percentage of the whole.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation appears natural within the majority of the area except that the vegetation does not appear natural in isolated spots along the fuel break that was prepped on either side of Trail 70.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

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<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
  - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
  - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
  - Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** District staff confirms a heliport that was constructed west of the Sawmill fire in order to access the fire, east of the Sawmill Trail 93. District staff also confirms another heliport on Hardy Ridge (that is marked as Helispot 3) which has not been maintained in a while. Many system trails occur in the area including Trail 17, Trail 70, East Fork (93), Trail 19, Trail 22, Trail 14, Trail 12, Trail 15, and Trail 13. There are many decommissioned roads located along the eastern, southern, and western edges of the area. There is the Muleshoe/Gap fence that is substantially noticeable in the area which separates the two grazing allotments (Muleshoe and Gap). Many continuous fences (approximately seven) occur throughout the area running north/south from edge to edge and east/west. District staff confirms that there are four closed mining claims with an associated mining road located within the southeastern portion of the area and an old BLM mine feature that occurs in that area.
  - There are numerous range improvements including the following features: There is concrete piping in the Sawmill Canyon area, the Muleshoe/Gap allotment fence which is substantially noticeable, the Arrowhead stream pipe, the Deer Plot Tank and Drinker which contains a complex of features such as a catchment with three troughs (all of which are substantially noticeable), Hardy Deer Plot pipeline (not substantially noticeable), a six foot high fence for a deer enclosure within Section 27 that is substantially noticeable, the Puertocito trick tank (substantially noticeable), the Chavez (substantially

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.
[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.
[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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noticeable) and Molino trick tank (substantially noticeable) with associated steel fences and pipes, two pit tanks that are earthen and a spring developed on a ridgeline (not substantially noticeable), and the Ryan Hill South trick tank (not substantially noticeable).
- The Langmuir facility and associated infrastructure is outside of the area (which is approximately 1,000 acres).
- Staff archaeologist maintains evidence of historical mine, cabin, and corral.
- Public comment received regarding historic mining activity.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to the obvious evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements which detract from apparent naturalness in most areas (numerous range improvements, fencing).

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in the area is mountainous with deep canyons, especially within the interior. There is some noise from Tech booms, only on the eastern edge. Topographic relief provides good screening especially in the canyons. There is a view of the Langmuir facility/telescope from high ridges and peaks, especially from Trail 70. Quiet and free from motorized noise, except along the edges of the area where edge noise occurs.
  - Public comment received that the topography provides an abundance of opportunities for solitude. Additional comment that the area appears to be far from the sight and sound of civilization.
  - Another public comment on Ryan Hill View trail: We thought the area wild and saw no signs of other people. Provides wonderful opportunities for solitude.

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- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Area is adjacent to the Langmuir facility (that was excluded) along the entire northern portion of the area. There are five cherry-stemmed roads in the area. The BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA) occurs adjacent to the most southern edge of the area. BLM and State lands occur along the eastern and western boundaries. Private inholdings occur along the northwestern and southern boundaries of the area. Puertocito is a homestead (and not a mine claim) that occurs within the southern portion of the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting occur in the area. Public comment reported star-gazing and rock-climbing occur within the Magdalena mountain range; Team discussed that exact locations may occur in another area. System trails provide hiking and horseback riding opportunities.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** System trails provide opportunities for mountain biking use. Public comment received that mountain biking is popular in the Magdalena mountains, and commenters mention specific trails within the area boundaries including Mesa Trail (13) and Six Mile Canyon (14). District staff confirms that Trail 70 is used for mountain biking.
    - Prospecting occurs in this area including rock hounding in the northeastern portion of the area.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly

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- **Narrative:** 78% SPNM ROS Class

- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 17% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative: N/A**

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows three portions of Mexican Spotted Owl PAC throughout the northern area. The San Mateo penstemon (considered rare by the NM Rare Plants Technical Council) occurs within open alpine meadows.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)

natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Mexican Spotted Owl populations and the San Mateo penstemon in the area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative**: Rock outcropping occurs in the area, rock climbing occurs; District staff confirmed that they are not outstanding. Several waterfalls are within the western east fork of Sawmill. Team discussed scenic viewpoints in this area and some of the highest peaks occur within this mountain range.
  - Public comment received that the area contains unique scenery and rugged terrain. Additional public comment received that scenery is exceptional.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
  - 83% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding, there are several outstanding landscape features including scenic viewpoints within the area.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 2.3%. District staff reports historical cabins in the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **Moderate** due to some historic and cultural resource sites in the area.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Ryan Hill Canyon, east fork of Sawmill, and Sawmill are perennial streams. West fork of Sawmill is intermittent perennial. Geospatial data shows several natural springs occur in the eastern and southern portions of the area. District staff states that there are additional springs not currently mapped.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

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This area receives a **High** finding; several high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** No active mining claims occur in in the area. There are seven grazing allotments including Muleshoe, Baldy, Madera, Ryan Hill, Sawmill, Gap, and Water Canyon throughout the area that are active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and multiple grazing improvements that occur in this area require same type of maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat and protected activity centers; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character. A small portion of the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
    - Several public comments have been received that wilderness designation is not in conflict with what is happening at Langmuir. Public comment received that the atmospheric studies are exceptional and that wilderness designation is not in conflict with Langmuir.
    - Public Law 96-550 Title II pertaining to the Langmuir Research Site which was passed by Congress on December 19, 1980 applies to this area. Landing of rockets shall be permitted within the research site, roads limited to research activities shall be permitted, and other reasonable activities, motorized use restricted to roads within the plan, scientific research activities/equipment/and structures shall be permitted in the research site. Motorized use to retrieve rockets and balloons for scientific activities. Secretary of Agriculture authorized authority by law to NM Technical Institute of Mining and Technology. There are serious questions as to whether this public law would be compatible with wilderness designation and whether it would conflict with wilderness. Further, the NM Wilderness Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-209) also states the aforementioned language about the Langmuir permissive uses. TITLE II of the Public Law 96-550 passed by the 96th Congress to establish the Langmuir Research Site is transcribed below (other sections of the law not pertinent to the Langmuir are not transcribed below).

DRAFT

PUBLIC LAW 96-550
94 STAT. 3221
December 19, 1980

An Act

To designate certain National Forest System lands in the State of New Mexico for inclusion in the national Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE II–TO ESTABLISH THE LANGMUIR RESEARCH SITE IN THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

SEC. 201. That in order to encourage scientific research into atmospheric processes and astronomical phenomena, and to preserve conditions necessary for that research, there is hereby established the Langmuir Research Site (hereinafter referred to as the "research site") in the Cibola National Forest in the State of New Mexico.

SEC. 202. The Congress finds that the high altitude and freedom from air pollution and night luminosity caused by human activity, make the research site uniquely suited to the conduct of research probes into thunder clouds and for other atmospheric and astronomical research purposes.

SEC. 203. The Secretary of Agriculture shall administer, protect, and regulate use of the research site in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations applicable to National Forest System lands, and in such manner as will best contribute to purposes of this Act.

SEC. 204. The Secretary of Agriculture in furtherance of the purposes of this Act, is hereby authorized, and directed, to enter into an appropriate land use agreement with New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology for the Langmuir Research Site for the purpose of establishing conditions for use of the national forest land, and to set forth working relationships during such period of use.

SEC. 205. (a) The research site shall consist of approximately thirty-one thousand acres, including a principle research facility of approximately one thousand acres. The boundaries are depicted on a map entitled "Langmuir Research Site," dated August 1980, which is on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Chief, Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

(b) As soon as practicable, after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop a comprehensive management plan for the research site consistent with requirements of the national Forest Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-588) (16 U.S.C. 1604), which shall be incorporated into the initial Cibola National Forest land and resource management plan as provided for under that Act.

(c) Following timely notice in writing to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate of his intention to do so, the Secretary may make minor adjustments in the boundaries of the research site to provide for more effective

DRAFT

management or to encourage further research activity. For the purposes of this subsection, minor boundary adjustments shall not increase or decrease the amount of land within the research site by more than seven thousand acres.

(d) In developing the plan, the Secretary shall consult with the National Science Foundation, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, the New Mexico Academy of Science and appropriate conservation, wilderness, wildlife, industry, and other public interest groups.

(e) The plan shall prescribe specific research and management objectives necessary for the protection, management, and regulation of the research site as outlined in the subsection (f) of this section.

(f) The research site shall be managed in accordance with the following objectives:

(1) The principal research facility shall be managed primarily for scientific research purposes. Dispersed recreation, grazing, and other uses which the Secretary determines to be compatible with scientific research may be permitted.

(2) The research site shall be managed to enhance scientific research objectives. Scientific research activities and associated research equipment and structures shall be permitted within the research site in accordance with the plan.

(3) Roads shall be limited to those necessary for scientific research activities and other reasonable activities as determined by the Secretary. Motor vehicle use shall be restricted to roads designated in the plan.

(4) The landing of small instrumented research rockets shall be permitted to continue in portions of the research site designated for such purposes in the plan.

- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land inholdings occur along the southern and western boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** BLM Devil's Backbone and Devil's Reach Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) are located adjacent to the most southern boundary of the area. State and BLM land is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the area. Private inholdings on the west/south and Forest Service on the north border the area. The Langmuir facility that was excluded is adjacent to the northern boundary.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

DRAFT

- **Narrative:** No known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character. One location of cultural significance in the area.

- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 3% WUI in small section of the northern portion.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** East Mag 2 planned prescribed burn and Baldy Allotment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Mountain biking occurs along some of the system trails.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** The Langmuir Special Use Permit (SUP) occurs within the entire area and the other SUP is for the Western NM Telephone Company (typically runs along roadways which would have been excluded). An easement that was excluded occurs along the northwestern portion of the area.
  - Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Five cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** The Ryan Hill IRA occurs within the majority of the area, excluding small sections in the north and southwestern edges.
  - Illegal activity that impacts this area includes user created roads in the western side, ATV use on ridgetops, and evidence of unauthorized cattle on Sawmill.
  - District staff also discussed that this is already managed as a special area.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (Public Law 96-550 Title 2 pertaining to Langmuir Research Site) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Finding and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/20/16: Finding: The team finds that this area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings, especially due to the manageability issue of the Langmuir Research Site and its congressional boundary (Public Law 96-550 Title 2 and Public Law 96-209). The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of range improvements and the Langmuir Research Site uses that are incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the majority of the area. The area within the most southwestern corner between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

DRAFT

WSA's, east of 247A, does have wilderness character. Preferred Proposal: Manage area with an emphasis on desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a high priority to continue managing the Langmuir Research Site as per its Management Area designation within the existing Forest Plan. Continue to carry forward the 1985 Forest Plan guidance for the congressionally designated Langmuir Research Site and adjust as needed to meet desired conditions. One alternative is to manage the area with wilderness character east of 247A between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM WSA's for desired conditions with an emphasis on primitive recreation. Public comment received that suggested these areas be managed as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/5/16

Finding:
Area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings, especially due to the manageability issue of the Langmuir Research Site and its congressional boundary due to the authorized activities for this site outlined in Public Law 96-550 Title 2 and Public Law 96-209. This finding is due to the extent of range improvements and the Langmuir Research Site uses that are incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the majority of the area.

Preferred Proposal:
Manage area with an emphasis on Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a high priority to continue managing the Langmuir Research Site as per its Management Area designation within the existing Forest Plan. Continue to carry forward the 1985 Forest Plan guidance for the congressionally designated Langmuir Research Site and adjust as needed to meet desired conditions. Manage the area east of 247A between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM WSA's for desired conditions with an emphasis on primitive recreation.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_LANG Mags IDT Findings 01/20/16	D3_LANG Mags Steering Committee Decision 02/05/2016
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**Moderate-High**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Low**	**Low**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	High	High
	4c	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	High	High
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 1-2M, 2L, 2-3 H** Supplemental: 2M, 1L, 2H	**Required: 2M, 2L, 2H** Supplemental: 2M, 1L, 2H
Evaluation Finding		No as a whole; Yes for the area within the most southwestern corner between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM WSA's, east of 247A	No

DRAFT

Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration and a high priority to continue managing the Langmuir Research Site as per its Management Area designation within the existing Forest Plan. Continue to carry forward the 1985 Forest Plan guidance for the congressionally designated Langmuir Research Site and adjust as needed to meet desired conditions.	Forest-wide desired conditions for wildlife habitat, riparian areas, watershed restoration, and a high priority to continue managing the Langmuir Research Site as per its Management Area designation within the existing Forest Plan. Continue to carry forward the 1985 Forest Plan guidance for the congressionally designated Langmuir Research Site and adjust as needed to meet desired conditions. Manage the area east of 247A between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM WSA's for desired conditions with an emphasis on primitive recreation.
Alternatives for Area	Manage the area with wilderness character east of 247A between the Langmuir congressional boundary and the adjacent BLM WSA's for desired conditions with an emphasis on primitive recreation. Public comment proposed wilderness.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Notes, 2/5/16:

STC decided on a finding of Moderate for 1b and Moderate for 4c.

STC considered the suggestion that the southwestern corner could be in an alternative as potential wilderness. However, when Langmuir law was reviewed and Special Uses data was reviewed, Langmuir has Special Use Permits overlapping this area that allow for the aforementioned permissive uses in conflict with wilderness character (see transcribed Public Law 96-550); therefore, the STC decided the area does not have wilderness character.

DRAFT

Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area
D3_5K10: T1S R9W; T1N R9W; T1S R10W; 14,052 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/29/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Review and Decision Date: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data does not show any populations of nonnative species.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen tree mix, douglas fir, grass mix, pinyon juniper, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, and sparsely vegetated. Typical animal communities include elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and bird communities.
  - Public comment received that Wildlife seen include elk, mule deer, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas

- **Narrative:** Geospatial data does not show any vegetation restoration treatments. Large area of moderate pinyon is in the eastern portion. Other scattered smaller areas of light insect/disease mortality occur throughout the rest of the area.

- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows Government Fire (lightning) and Main Fire (lightning), both small fires, district staff reports that the burns appear natural. District staff suspect that small areas of rabbitbrush encroaching in the grassy areas of the area as in other areas of the Datils.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
  - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
  - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data does not indicate any abandoned mines or active mining claims within the area. Geospatial data reflects twelve decommissioned roads located along the edges of the area. Geospatial data reflects that there are seven documented unauthorized routes; also along the edges of the area. National Forest System Road (NFSR) 14*A is currently in the western portion of the area and accesses a piece of private land and the Chavez Spring. This road is a maintenance level 2, admin use only road. The area boundary should be redrawn to exclude this if area is considered as potential wilderness. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. Geospatial data shows that the Antelope Division Fence extends less than a mile in to the area and then joins a natural boundary. Three NEPA approved tanks are scattered along the edges of the area.
- Team discussed a range from Moderate to High finding, due to the presence of decommissioned and unauthorized routes along the margins that detract from apparent naturalness in those areas but the rest of the area has unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to the presence of decommissioned and unauthorized routes along the margins that detract from apparent naturalness in those areas but the rest of the area has unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in the western area is hilly with a main ridge and deeper canyons while the rest of the area is sloping with smaller drainages. The areas with higher elevation in the western portion are densely vegetated with sparser vegetation to the east.
  - Team and District staff reflect that there is some intermittent traffic noise from NFSR 14 that increases during hunting season. Heavier traffic on Highway 60 to the south may be audible from the very southern tip but not the rest of the area.
  - Military Operation Area occurs within the northern third of the area; team is unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. There is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in the northern two-thirds of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.

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- Public comment received that the area offers solitude and there are no developed facilities or trails in the area.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the southwestern boundary, the northeastern boundary, and the southeastern boundary (including some state land). The total is estimated to be at least 60% of the area boundary. There are five cherry stemmed roads.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that this is a remote and untrammeled region of New Mexico. District staff report that outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there is significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, and wildlife watching exist.
  - Public comment received that this area contains many open meadows for exploring.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 45% SPNM ROS Class

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** 24% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres, so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant and animal communities within area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.

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- **Narrative:** Public comment received that the Datil Mountains are on the northern edge of the Datil-Mogollon Volcanic Field, with dramatic geology that includes free-standing pillars and jagged rock formations.

- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the scenery found throughout the area is alluring, with significant geological features, numerous open meadows to explore, and dramatic ridgelines that offer exceptional views.
  - 21% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, there are some outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative:** Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed <0.1%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

This area receives a finding of **Low**, with few to no cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects that there are no known abandoned mines or active mining claims in the area. There is the Whitehouse grazing allotment throughout the area that is active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Geospatial data indicates that there are no easements in the area.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within the southern portion of this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** Private land and state land occurs along most boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries.

- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land, state land and Forest Service border the area. Much of D3_5K10 is within the Datil Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA).
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: District staff reports that cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area and there is no known conflict with managing for wilderness character. District staff reports that there is potential for traditional use along the western edge that may be in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI in the area.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area. There is a current EQIP contract and future application in this area. District ranger reports these EQIP projects would most likely occur along northwest edge of area, and along the cherry-stemmed roads in east and south, within the road buffer.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Motorized and mechanized use occurs in association with range management activities.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Military Operation Area occurs within the northern third of the area. Unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. There is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in the northern two-thirds of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.
  - Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Seven cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the majority of the area is isolated from areas of activity, with limited access and very few encumbrances. The area does not have motorized activity occurring within its proposed boundaries.
  - The Datil IRA is located within D3_5K10.

<u>Question 5a Findings</u>

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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This area receives a **High** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in isolated spots and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristic high throughout the area

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/29/16: Finding: The team finds that this area as a whole has wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria. The team discussed that this finding is due to the lack of improvements or other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across much of the area. The team discussed redrawing the boundaries to more closely follow the IRA boundaries in order to exclude those few features (decommissioned roads in the northern portion and southeastern corner). The team also noted that most of the southeastern, eastern, and northeastern border private land. This land is currently maintained as ranch land and would not be in conflict with managing for wilderness character. It is also necessary to redraw the boundary to exclude 14*A, this area should not have been included in the polygon initially.
Preferred Proposal: Redraw boundaries to approximately align with Datil IRA and recommend for wilderness designation.
Alternatives: Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: The area as a whole has wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria. This finding is due to the area is relatively free of improvements and disturbance, and current uses in area are compatible with managing for wilderness character across much of the area.

Preferred Proposal: Redraw boundaries to approximately align with Datil IRA and recommend as potential wilderness. Exclude those few features (decommissioned roads in the northern portion and southeastern corner). It is also necessary to redraw the boundary to exclude NFSR 14*A, it is a private property access and should not have been included in the area initially.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K10 Datils IDT Findings 01/29/16	D3_5K10 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate/High**	**Moderate**
	2a	**High**	**High**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**High**	**High**
Summary		Required: 5H, 1M/H Supplemental: 4L, 1M	Required: 5H, 1M Supplemental: 4L, 1M

Evaluation Finding	Yes; redraw boundaries to follow Datil IRA and to exclude NFSR 14*A	Yes; redraw boundaries to follow Datil IRA and to exclude NFSR 14*A
Preferred Proposal	Redraw boundaries to approximately align with Datil IRA and recommend for wilderness designation.	Redraw boundaries to approximately align with Datil IRA and recommend for wilderness designation.
Alternatives for Area	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

STC decided on a finding of Moderate for 1c.
District Ranger updated STC on EQIP contracts in 5a; STC edited notes to reflect this information.
STC edited language in finding and preferred proposal; concurred with all other findings and proposal.
STC considered alternative, and it is the same as the preferred proposal, so no alternative is needed.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area D3_5K11: T1N R9W, T2N R8W, T1S R10W, T2N R9W, T1N R10W, T2N R10W; 36, 541 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/29/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Landscape Team members: Eloy Armijo (Sierra County), Lacy Levine (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision Meeting 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows populations of saltcedar located in the northern portion of the area. Public comment stated that there is possibly cheatgrass in southeastern portion.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen tree mix, douglas fir, grass mix, pinyon juniper, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, and sparsely vegetated. Typical animal communities include elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and bird communities.
  - Public comment received that wildlife seen includes elk, mule deer, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate**, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas

- **Narrative:** Very small areas of insect/disease impacts occur scattered throughout the southern portion of the area. Geospatial data shows no other vegetation restoration treatments.
- District staff and team members report minimal personal fuelwood activity along roads in the northeast and southern portions of the area.

- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows a Habitat Stamp Project, the Thompson Canyon burn in 2007; district staff reports that the burn appears natural. Geospatial data shows four small, low intensity burns, lightning-started in the southern and central portions of the area. District staff confirmed small areas of rabbitbrush encroaching in the grassy areas of the southern part of the area.
  - Public comment received that the impacts from man are substantially unnoticeable.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered and isolated spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
  - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
  - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data does not indicate any abandoned mines or active mining claims within the area. Specialists in the room had no information regarding closed mines, but think that there may be some previous activity. Geospatial data reflects forty-nine decommissioned roads located in the southern portion of the area and in a band along the central portion of the area. Geospatial data reflects that there are documented unauthorized routes; one parallel to National Forest System Road (NFSR) 441D in the northern area, and another unauthorized route in the southern part. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. Geospatial data and District staff report that there are Davenport/East Division, Webster/Davenport Division, and Grapevine/Webster Division fences. The Calship pipeline is located in the central-eastern portion (Township 1 N 9 W, Sections 5 and 8). Three NEPA approved tanks are scattered along the edges of the area. The Thompson Canyon trick tank in the southwestern area (same section as Davenport Lookout) is SN, but there is no established access to it. District Ranger reports there is some evidence of previous mining activity; holes and stakes.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** Topography in the central area is highly mountainous, contains Madre Mountain and is densely vegetated. The southern and northern portions are flatter and contain numerous drainages and sparser vegetation. Blue Mesa is located in the extreme northeast area and has more vegetative and topographic screening than adjacent areas.

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- Team and District staff reflects that there is some traffic noise from Catron County Rd A076 to the north. Heavier traffic on Highway 60 is immediately to the south and there is little vegetative screening in this area.
- Military Operation Area occurs within portions of the area. Unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. There is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in most of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.
- Public comment received that the feeling of solitude is dominant in the area.
- Public comment received that the area offers solitude and there are no developed facilities or trails in the area.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the entire northeastern corner, along the western boundary, and the southwestern and southeastern corners. There are eleven cherry stemmed roads. There is a portion of state land along the northern border.
  - Public comment received that rock climbing is popular in Thompson Canyon, along the southwestern boundary, and use varies seasonally.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** District staff report that outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident but feeling of being alone is possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, rock climbing, horseback riding, wildlife watching exist.
  - Thompson Canyon is a special draw for rock climbers.
  - Public comment received that this area gives us and our rock hound friends access.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 42% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 46% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000, therefore this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information or public comment.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- District staff reports historic Mexican Spotted Owl observations but nothing has been confirmed. Zuni fleabane has been documented in the area.

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Team discussed that this area receives a Low-Moderate finding, due to unconfirmed Mexican Spotted Owls within area. Populations of Zuni fleabane are documented, however.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to documented Zuni fleabane populations.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Madre Mountain is located in the middle of this area and is a prominent and striking landscape feature.
  - District staff report that Maverick Canyon in the central area and Blue Mesa in the northern area are both scenic.
  - Public comment received that the Datil Mountains are on the northern edge of the Datil-Mogollon Volcanic Field, dramatic geology that includes free-standing pillars and jagged rock formations.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area has outstanding geology, scenic vistas, and natural habitats. Panoramic views from atop Madre Mountain are breathtaking, as are the sights as one walks through the numerous ponderosa meadows. The dark skies are mesmerizing.
  - 63% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding, there are several or many outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative**: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 1.4%. Area overlaps with Traditional Cultural Property (TCP).
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **High** due to several historic resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** The northern portion contains ephemeral headwaters that supply water for the Alamo Navajo.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

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Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects that there are no known abandoned mines or active mining claims in the area. There is the Whitehouse grazing allotment throughout the area that is active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Thompson Canyon and Davenport trick tanks require maintenance as well. Geospatial data indicates that there is one easement along the extreme northwest boundary of the area. There is one pipeline and three fencelines within the southern portion of the area.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** U.S. mining laws govern management of the known mineral resources that currently exist within the area.
  - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within the southern portion of this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land and state land occurs adjacent to the northwestern boundary, southeastern, and northeastern corners of the area, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land, state land, and Forest Service border the area. Much of D3_5K11 is within the Madre Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA).
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** District staff report that cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area and there may be conflicts with managing for wilderness character. District staff report that there is one area of cultural importance within the area.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 2% WUI in south and western (near Davenport Lookout) portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area. There is a current EQIP contract and future application.

- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Motorized and mechanized use occurs in association with range management and for mineral exploration activities.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Public comments received that bolts and other infrastructure in the Thompson Canyon climbing area require periodic maintenance which may include mechanized or motorized equipment.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Military Operation Area occurs within a large portion of the area. Team is unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. As well, there is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in in the central portion of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.
  - Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Eleven cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** The Madre Mountain IRA is located within D3_5K11.
  - Area is so rugged minerals may not be able to be accessed. Mineral Specialist confirms that the projected trend for the uranium price is to rise; since one of the FS mission statements is the need to make mineral resources available to the public; therefore, the extent of uranium mineral resources that occur in this area and the amount of mineral potential is in direct conflict in managing for wilderness character. Steering committee decided this issue would be appropriate for analysis, not evaluation, if area moved forward as a recommendation of potential wilderness.
  - Team discussed if the projected uranium trend for mining rises and if there are additional active mining claims as per the geospatial data than the rating would be Low. If the projected uranium trend for mining does not rise and there aren't additional active mining claims than the rating would be Moderate: the extent of other uses (range) occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. Steering committee decided this issue would be appropriate for analysis, not evaluation, if area moved forward as a recommendation of potential wilderness.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses (range) occurs in scattered areas and would make management to preserve the area's wilderness character possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/29/16: Finding: The team finds that this area as a whole does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. However, the northeastern portion (Blue Mesa) does have wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Manage the majority of the area as open for mineral development and for protection of scenic resources with an emphasis on desired conditions for reclamation of any mining related features and disturbance, scenic resources, wildlife habitat, existing IRA, and continue to manage for multiple uses. The Blue

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Mesa area in the northeastern corner (approximately 5,200 acres) does have wilderness character and low conflict with existing improvements and management and is recommended for wilderness designation. Mapped in geospatial data.

Alternative: The team felt that the Madre Mountain area in the central portion may have wilderness character, however the potential for uranium development is high here.

Alternative: Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area from Blue Mesa (east of NFSR 440/Chamisa Canyon) to Madre Mountain has wilderness character. Remaining portions of the area does not have wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Recommend the Blue Mesa area in the northeastern corner (east of NFSR 440/Chamisa Canyon) down to the Madre Mountain area in the central portion as potential wilderness. Manage the remaining portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions, other multiple uses, and as open for mineral development with an emphasis on reclamation of any historic mining related features and disturbance, wildlife habitat, and existing Inventoried Roadless Area.

Alternatives: Recommend Blue Mesa area in northeastern corner (approximately 5,200 acres) as potential wilderness. Manage Madre Mountain and Maverick Canyon areas with an emphasis on scenery. Manage the remaining area as open for mineral development with an emphasis on reclamation of any historic mining related features and disturbance, wildlife habitat, and clarify management direction to meet IRA characteristics.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K11 Datils IDT Findings 01/29/16	D3_5K11 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low/Moderate	Moderate
	4b	High	High
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Moderate	Moderate
	5a	**Low/Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 1H, 4M, 1L/M** Supplemental: 2H, 1M, 1L/M, 1L	Required: 1H, 5M Supplemental: 2H, 2M, 1L
Evaluation Finding		No as a whole Yes for NE portion-Blue Mesa	Yes, for area from Blue Mesa to Madre Mountain

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Preferred Proposal	Open for mineral development Protection of scenic resources, wildlife habitat, existing IRA Reclamation of mining related features/disturbance Manage for multiple uses Blue Mesa area recommended for wilderness designation	Blue Mesa to Madre Mountain as potential wilderness; remaining portions with mineral emphasis, Forest-wide desired conditions, IRA, wildlife habitat
Alternatives for Area	Madre Mountain area may have wilderness character; however, uranium development potential is high Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.	Blue Mesa as potential wilderness; Madre Mountain and Maverick Canyon emphasis on scenery; remaining portions with mineral emphasis, Forest-wide desired conditions, IRA, wildlife habitat

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

Steering committee decided on a Moderate for 4a and 5a; and clarified notes.
Steering committee concurred with all other findings for criteria.
Steering committee edited preferred proposal and alternatives language.
Discussion by steering committee: the two areas that were found by the team to have wilderness character initially were separated (Madre Mountain and Blue Mesa), and the steering committee reviewed the area in between the two separate areas and decided that the detractions from apparent naturalness were not enough to affect wilderness character in that area and that the two areas (Madre Mountain and Blue Mesa) should be connected for a wilderness character finding. The reason the area in between the two portions (Madre Mountain and Blue Mesa) was not included initially as having wilderness character was due to potential for uranium mining, and the steering committee decided this issue of 'potential' is appropriate for analysis and not evaluation, if the area were to move forward as a recommended potential wilderness.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area D3_5K12: T2N R11W, T1N R11W, T1N, R10W, T2N R10W; 9,640 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/21/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC)
Steering Committee Decision Meeting: 2/11/2016

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows populations of salt cedars located in the northern portion of the area and a small population located in the southeastern portion of the area.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grama and grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, absence of non-vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. District staff confirms the presence of and traditional use of yucca in this area. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, turkey, pronghorn, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.
  - Public comment received that wildlife seen includes elk, mule deer, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate**, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments. Very small areas of insect/disease impacts occur scattered throughout the eastern portion of the area.
    - District staff and team members report personal fuelwood activity off of Road 199 and Road 6. As well, at Hay Canyon there are viga/latilla cuttings.
    - District Ranger submitted the following documentation on 6/29/16 regarding improvements identified for field verification during Phase 2 Inventory: Based on personal knowledge of area D3_5K12 past product harvest has occurred. It is apparent that logs were cut in both, in the past, and firewood harvest has occurred in both probably since the creation of the National Forest. Probably not substantially noticeable in the steeper terrain, but apparent along the existing road access.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows one low intensity under burn in the southern portion of the area. District staff confirmed small areas of rabbitbrush that occur within the bottom of the drainages along the western boundary.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered and isolated spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

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- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects that there is one abandoned mine and active mining claims within the northern portion of the area and inactive mining claims along the northwestern edge of the area. The mineral trend extends across the northern/upper central portion of the area. Evidence of exploration activities from the 1970s are currently screened by vegetation. Geospatial data reflects eighteen decommissioned roads located along all of the area edges. Road 366 is an unauthorized road to be added to the system and open to all vehicles which is located in the northeastern corner of the area; the area boundary needs to be adjusted to exclude this road. Geospatial data reflects that there are no documented unauthorized routes. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. There is the Webster/Davenport Division fence running from edge to edge of the area within the central/southeastern portion (half constructed feature, half natural barrier). Four NEPA approved tanks are scattered throughout the area. Inventory Phase 3 notes describe an open fence with low vegetated/screening that is substantially noticeable within the northern portion of the area; this is not reflected in the geospatial data. The White Deer Canyon storage tank, White Deer Canyon drinker, and White Deer Canyon windmill located in the north/central portion of the area are all substantially noticeable, but there is no established access to these features. Staff archaeologist confirms historic mine in this area.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a range from **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** Topography in area is highly mountainous and rugged throughout the area.
    - Team and District staff reflects that there is infrequent traffic noise from Road 199 to the east and little traffic noise from Road 6 on the western boundary. There is heavier traffic on Road 6 to the turnoff/lookout and private properties, especially during the summer and hunting season and then the road becomes difficult to traverse.
    - Military Operation Area occurs within the southern portion of the area. Team is unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. As well, there is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in the northeastern portion of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.
    - Public comment received that these are vast and remote areas.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the northwestern boundary, southeastern and northeastern corners of the area. There are three cherry stemmed roads.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that area offers solitude and there are no developed facilities or trails in the area.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident but feeling of being alone is possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting, rock climbing, with opportunities for star gazing all occur.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- Public comment received that this area gives us and our rock hound friends access.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 75% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres, so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** District staff confirms that Zuni fleabane occurs within the very northern portion of the area.

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to Zuni fleabane populations within area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** District staff states that prominent cliffs and bluffs occur, especially within the southern area.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
  - 54% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, there are some outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative**: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 3.9%.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **High** due to several cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects that there is one abandoned mine within the northern portion of the area, active mining claims in the north, and inactive mining claims along the northwestern edge of the area. There is the Whitehouse grazing allotment throughout the area that is active.

DRAFT

Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Geospatial data reflects no easements within the area. There is one fenceline within the central/southeastern portion of the area (half constructed/half natural barrier).

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of the listed Zuni fleabane; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character.
    - U.S. mining laws govern management of the known mineral resources that currently exist within the area.
    - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within the southern tip of this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the northwestern boundary, southeastern, and northeastern corners of the area, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private land and Forest Service borders the area. Adjacent Forest Service land to the east is the Madre Mountain IRA in D3_5K11.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: District staff state that traditional uses may be in conflict in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 5% WUI in northern portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area. There is a current EQIP contract and future application in this area.
    - Exploration mineral activities occur in the area.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Motorized and mechanized use occurs in association for mineral exploration activities.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Military Operation Area occurs within the southern portion of the area. Unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area. As well, there is a prohibited/restricted military zone located in the northeastern portion of the area where the booster rocket launch occurs from Fort Wingate to White Sands. District staff confirms that this use is infrequent.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.

- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Three cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) within the area boundaries; however, there is the Madre Mountain IRA located adjacent to this area in D3_5K11.
  - Mineral Specialist states that T1NR11W Sections 36 and 1 should be removed from consideration since they would be in conflict in managing for wilderness character and T1NR11W Sections 12 and 13 have several inactive claims but would not need to be removed since the area is so rugged you can't access the minerals. Mineral Specialist confirms that the projected trend for the uranium price is to rise; one of the Forest Service mission statements is the need to make mineral resources available to the public; therefore, the extent of uranium mineral resources that occur in this area and the amount of mineral potential is in direct conflict in managing for wilderness character. Steering committee decided this issue would be appropriate for analysis, not evaluation, if area moved forward as a recommendation of potential wilderness.
  - Team discussed a finding range from Low to Moderate; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (mining claims and mineral potential) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas. If the projected uranium trend for mining rises and if there are additional active mining claims as per the geospatial data than the rating would be Low. If the projected uranium trend for mining does not rise and there aren't additional active mining claims than the rating would be Moderate: the extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. Steering committee decided this issue would be appropriate for analysis, not evaluation, if area moved forward as a recommendation of potential wilderness.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (mining claims) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/21/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. Team discussed that this area could potentially be looked at in a NEPA analysis as a relocation for the Continental Divide Trail. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas as open for mineral development and for protection of scenic resources with an emphasis on desired conditions for reclamation of any mining related features and

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

DRAFT

disturbance, scenic resources, wildlife habitat, and continue to manage for multiple uses. Alternatives: The team did not have any proposed alternatives for this area.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. Extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area.

Preferred Proposal: Manage center of area with an emphasis on scenic resources (exposed rock Sawtooth character). Manage the remaining portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions, other multiple uses, and as open for mineral development with an emphasis on reclamation of any historic mining related features and disturbance and wildlife habitat.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K12 Datils IDT Findings 01/21/16	D3_5K12 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low/Moderate**	**Low/Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 1H, 4M, 1L/M** Supplemental:1H, 2M, 2L	**Required: 1H, 4M, 1L/M** Supplemental:1H, 2M, 2L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Open for mineral development Protection of scenic resources, CDT, wildlife habitat Reclamation of mining related features/disturbance Manage for multiple uses	Manage center portion for scenery; other portions for mineral development; wildlife habitat Exposed raw Sawtooth character scenic resources

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Alternatives for Area	--	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes, 02/11/2016:

Steering committee concurred with all findings, and edited preferred proposal language. Steering committee added emphasis on exposed raw Sawtooth scenic character to the preferred proposal.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area
D3_5K13: T2N R11W, T1S R11W, T1N R11W; 8,522 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/21/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported populations within area boundaries. Several salt cedars are located near Monument Tank.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous shrub mix, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, grama and grass mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa and douglas fir mix, sparsely vegetated, and alder leaf mountain mahogany mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, turkey, pronghorn, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.
  - Public comment received that bobcats, coyotes, foxes and quail occur in this area.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate**, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows that there are no reported restoration treatments or timber harvest areas within the area boundaries.
    - District staff reports pinyon juniper thinning work to the northwest of Monument Rock, logging activity along the eastern edge up until the early 1970s. Personal use fuelwood along road corridor are continuous as of today. Active pine pole viga area located along Road 158/Hay Canyon extending beyond the buffer within the central portion of the area.
    - District Ranger submitted the following documentation on 6/29/16 regarding improvements identified for field verification during Phase 2 Inventory: Based on personal knowledge of area D3_5K13 past product harvest has occurred. It is apparent that logs were cut in both, in the past, and firewood harvest has occurred in both probably since the creation of the National Forest. Probably not substantially noticeable in the steeper terrain, but apparent along the existing road access.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects one previous fire towards the southern portion of the area consisting of 16 acres in 1970. Geospatial data also reflects that in last three years minor drought/insect infestations have occurred within the central portion of the area.
    - District staff confirmed areas of rabbitbrush that occur within the drainages along the western boundary.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned,

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.
[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.
[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects that there are no active mining claims within the area boundaries but that the northern two thirds of the area contain a large amount of inactive mining claims. Minerals Specialist confirms that the active claim is located outside of the area but that mining activity for uranium has occurred throughout this area and continues to trend further to the east. Highest potential overlaps with the highest number of inactive claims along the western portion of the area. Section 11 was discussed as an inactive mining area/area with prospect pits during Inventory Phase 3. Geospatial data reflects thirteen decommissioned roads located along the edges and within the northern and central portion of the area. There are a couple unauthorized routes located near Monument Rock. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. There are two fences located in the area; Sawtooth/Whitehouse Division fence runs north/south from edge to edge down the middle of the area and Webster/Davenport Division fence that runs east/west from edge to edge towards the northern portion of the area. Hay Canyon drip tanks are substantially noticeable, pit tank (not substantially noticeable) on north tank, Silver Tank pit tank screened by veg, North Sawtooth pipeline not substantially noticeable /screened by veg, Monument Tank earthen tank that is substantially noticeable with tall berms/soil disturbance, Sawtooth/Whitehouse division fence is not substantially noticeable. Another pipeline occurs near Monument Rock. The East Sawtooth storage tank is substantially noticeable and is metal with concrete bottom located along the western boundary towards the southern portion of the area. A majority of the tanks have been already been excluded from area boundaries during inventory as substantially noticeable.
- Team discussed a range from Low to Moderate finding, due to obvious evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detracting from apparent naturalness in most areas, but Moderate finding due to identification of some of the improvements as not substantially noticeable and the substantially noticeable tanks have been cherry stemmed out during the Inventory Phase 3.

Question 1c Findings

Area receives a **Moderate** finding due to identification of some of the improvements within the area detracting from apparent naturalness in some areas.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

DRAFT

<u>Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation</u>: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "<u>or</u>" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for <u>both</u> elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

<u>Question 2a</u>. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** Topography in area is highly mountainous throughout the area.
    - Team and District staff reflect that traffic is high on US60 on south side of the area, traffic on 6a on western edge by recreationists, hunters, and pinon pickers/higher traffic on 6a during hunting season and traffic on Road 199 in the east side is less frequent but more traffic during hunting season. Noise from these activities is pervasive on 6a road due to higher level of traffic and prevailing winds and along road corridors.
    - Public comment received that these are vast and remote areas.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Some rock climbing activity occurs within this area. Dispersed camping by RVs is seasonal and high during hunting season with a pull-off spot off 6a that is popular. There are five cherry stemmed roads within the area. There is private land located adjacent to the southwestern edge of the area/Double Circle Ranch with associated infrastructure including a house. There is also private land adjacent to the southeastern corner of the area. Private land is located along the northern boundary of the area; according to geospatial data there is a landing strip located within 1.5 miles north of the boundary.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 2a Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding; human activities/presence is evident but feeling of being alone is possible.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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<u>Question 2b</u>. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Activities include hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting, rock climbing, with opportunities for star gazing.
  - Public comment received that the inventory boundary would need a more substantial adjustment to exclude the developed, bolt-dependent climbing area. Team discussed that we do not know the exact location of this area.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** District staff confirms that some mountain biking use occurs along 6a but is not frequent; 6a is cherry stemmed out.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 51% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 2b Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>High</u>** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

<u>Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent</u> to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

<u>Note:</u> If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **<u>Narrative:</u>** Area is over 5,000 acres, so this criterion does not apply.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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<u>Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities</u>: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

<u>Question 4a.</u> Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** District staff confirms that Zuni fleabane occurs within the northern portion of the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4a Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding, due to Zuni fleabane populations within area.

<u>Question 4b</u>. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** District staff states that prominent cliffs, bluffs, and Monument Rock occur within the area. Minerals Specialist notes that Sawtooth Mountains, which are an outstanding feature that occurs outside of the area, can be seen from within the area. Volcanic dike enters area boundaries.
    - Public comment received that the Sawtooth Mountains are a spectacular area (these occur outside of the area).
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- **Narrative:** 76% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 2.2%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **High** due to several cultural resources sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)

DRAFT

- **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects that there are no active mining claims within the area boundaries but that the northern two thirds of the area contain a largely significant amount of inactive mining claims. Minerals Specialist confirms that the active claim is located outside of the area but that mining activity for uranium has occurred throughout this area and continues to trend further to the east. Highest mineral potential overlaps with the highest number of inactive claims along the western portion of the area. Where exploration has occurred in the 1970s there is still uranium intact in the mountains. There are two grazing allotments (Sawtooth and Whitehouse) throughout the area that are active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and grazing improvements including two allotment division fences running north/south and east/west, along with tanks require same type of maintenance. Geospatial data reflects no easements within the area.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** Endangered Species Act governs management of the listed Zuni fleabane; none of this management is in conflict with managing wilderness character.
  - U.S. mining laws govern management of the known mineral resources that currently exist within the area.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the northern and southwestern boundaries and to the southeastern corner, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land and Forest Service border the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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Narrative: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character. Pinon picking occurs in this area.

- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 3% WUI in northern portions.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Some mountain biking and bolt-dependent climbing occurs in the area.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Military Operation Area occurs within the southern portion of the area. Team is unsure as to exact operations that occur in this area.
    - Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** Five cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No IRAs occur within the area boundaries.
    - Mineral Specialist confirms that the projected trend for the uranium price is to rise; one of the Forest Service mission statements is the need to make mineral resources available to the public; therefore, the extent of uranium mineral resources that occur in this area and the amount of mineral potential is in direct conflict in managing for wilderness character. Team discussed a range from Low to Moderate finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (range improvement maintenance, mountain biking, active claim) is rationale for a Moderate finding. If the projected uranium trend for mining rises than the rating would be Low. If the projected uranium trend for mining does not rise than the rating would be Moderate: the extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. Steering committee decided this issue would be appropriate for analysis, not evaluation, if area moved forward as a recommendation of potential wilderness.

Question 5a Findings

Area receives a **Moderate** finding, presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas of the area (range improvement maintenance, mountain biking, active claim).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/21/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. Team discussed that this area could potentially be looked at in a NEPA analysis as a relocation for the Continental Divide Trail. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas as open for mineral development and for protection of scenic resources with an emphasis on desired conditions for reclamation of any mining related features and disturbance, scenic resources, wildlife habitat, and continue to manage for multiple uses. Alternatives: The team did not have any proposed alternatives for this area.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character, due to findings from individual criteria.

Preferred Proposal: Manage center of area with an emphasis on scenic resources (exposed rock Sawtooth character). Manage the remaining portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions, as open for mineral development with an emphasis on reclamation of any historic mining related features and disturbance and wildlife habitat.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K13 Datils IDT Findings 01/21/16	D3_5K13 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Low/Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low/Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 1H, 3M, 2 L/M** Supplemental:1H, 2M, 2L	**Required: 1H, 5M** Supplemental:1H, 2M, 2L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Open for mineral development protection of scenic resources, CDT, wildlife habitat, multiple uses reclamation of mining related features	Manage center portion for scenery; other portions for mineral development; wildlife habitat Exposed raw Sawtooth scenic character
Alternatives for Area		--	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes, 02/11/2016:

Steering Committee decided on a finding of Moderate for 1c and 5a. Steering Committee edited preferred proposal language and concurred with all other findings. Steering Committee added exposed raw Sawtooth scenic character to preferred proposal.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area
D3_5K14: T1S R11W, T1S R10W; 5,689 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/21/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Diane Tafoya (Zone Geologist Cibola and Kaibab National Forests), Dennis Aldridge (Magdalena District Ranger), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Manuel Martinez (District Fire Management Officer) Landscape Team members: Marshal Wilson (NMDA), Merry Jo Fahl (Sierra SWCD, POC), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD, POC)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no nonnative populations.
  - Public comment received that invasive plants occur including juniper, rabbitbrush, kochia, snakeweed, and thistle.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include pinyon juniper, deciduous evergreen mix, ponderosa pine, and ponderosa and douglas fir mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

- This area receives a **Moderate**, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

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- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
    - Public comment received that several restoration treatment area include timber harvesting and timber thinning due to past management strategies. These areas are evident by the abundance of stump remnants and down trees which is not characteristic of wilderness. Lack of old growth timber due to thinning in the mid 1900s/logging operation also created a system of old roads. District staff confirms these areas were pick and pluck activities/skidded pine logs down to the roads near Road 508 to the west, Road 62 to the south, and US-60 to the east.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** District staff confirms that the treatment areas do not appear natural.
    - Rabbitbrush occurs in this area, especially adjacent to Road 62 and US-60.
    - Historic cattle drives occurred along US-60 due to homesteads in these areas; therefore rabbitbrush dominates and affected the natural plant composition along the eastern edge of the area.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects no active or inactive mining claims in the area. Minerals Specialist confirms that there isn't any mining activity in the area. Geospatial data reflects nine decommissioned roads scattered throughout the area. Slaughter Canyon decommissioned road is still there and noticeable. Geospatial data reflects that there are no documented unauthorized routes. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. There are two fences; the Crosby fence that runs from the northern edge to southern edge of the area and a small section of the Drive Flying Division fence located in the northern portion of the area. Slaughter Tank and spring occurs in the north, Turkey Springs tank, Flying V #2 Waterlot Drinker, and the V2 Tank are clustered along the western portion of the area. One windmill occurs in the southeastern corner. Big berm water bars are located in Slaughter Canyon from historic logging roads.
- Public comment received that there is a metered electric well near 570 and 569A. This area also contains a metal drink and cattle working pens constructed of unnatural reflective materials with little or no vegetative screening. The team discussed that these features have already been excluded from the area.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to obvious evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in most areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** Topography in area consists of rolling hills throughout the area.
    - Team and District staff state that there is heavy traffic and high motorized noise from US-60 that is adjacent to the entire eastern boundary of the area and some traffic noise from National Forest System Road 62 to the south and National Forest System Road 508 on the western boundary during hunting season.
    - Public comment received that US-60 is a major thoroughfare for local traffic, emergency vehicles, tourists, truckers, motorcycles, bicyclists, hunters, and recreation vehicles. Most parcels of private land currently contain dwellings. This will eliminate the feeling of solitude within the area. There are two microwave towers visible from many vantage points within the polygon.
    - Public comment received that there is very little human impact away from the roads.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to eastern and southern boundaries. There is one cherry stemmed road.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence is evident, especially along the US-60 road corridor on the eastern boundary, but feeling of being alone is possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Activities include hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, hunting.
    - Public comment received to add enjoying nature as one of the primitive recreation activities.
    - National Forest System Roads 62 and 508 are designated camping corridors.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 58% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres, so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant and animal communities within area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
  - 0% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, there are no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative:** Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Moderate, percent surveyed 8.9%.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **Moderate** due to some cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries. Turkey Spring and Slaughter Spring occur in the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects no known active or inactive mining claims in the area. There is the Flying V grazing allotment throughout the area that is active. Intermittent mechanized fence

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maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Geospatial data reflects no easements within the area. There are two fences within the area.

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within the southern tip of this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the eastern and southern boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries. US-60 occurs within the private land along the entire eastern boundary of the area.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private land and Forest Service border the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 27% WUI along entire eastern boundary. Where the WUI is located the homes are located adjacent to US-60 and along the eastern boundary which would require maintenance; this would be in conflict in managing for wilderness character.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area.
    - Exploration mineral activities occur in the area.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guide use may occur, but is not in conflict with wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** One cherry stemmed road occurs within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No Inventoried Roadless Areas within the area boundaries.

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[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

- Hunter access into Forest land from adjacent private land located along the eastern boundary/US-60 occurs. Team discussed a Low finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (27% WUI along entire eastern boundary and grazing improvement maintenance) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas (27%WUI along entire eastern boundary and grazing improvement maintenance).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/21/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple use. Alternatives: The team did not have any proposed alternatives for this area.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K14 Datils IDT Findings 01/21/16	D3_5K14 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Low**	**Low**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low
	4c	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 4M, 2L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 5M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Desired conditions and continue managing for multiple use	Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses

Alternatives for Area	--	--

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes, 02/11/2016:

Steering committee decided on a Moderate for 5a; concurred with other findings.
Steering committee edited preferred proposal language.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Datils Mountain Area
D3_5K15: T2S R11W, T1S R11W, T1S R10W, T2S R10W; 15,040 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 01/29/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Tina Cason (District Range Management Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows cheatgrass in one drainage in the southern portion.
  - Public comment received that invasive plants occur including juniper, rabbitbrush, kochia, snakeweed, and thistle.
  - Public comment received that cheatgrass area was 400 acres, but this included areas outside of the inventoried area. Actual amount of cheatgrass in inventoried area is approximately 40 acres.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, grass mix, pinyon juniper, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, ponderosa pine mix, and ponderosa and douglas fir mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate**, non-native species are evident in isolated spots.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
    - Public comment received that several restoration treatment areas include timber harvesting and timber thinning due to past management strategies. These areas are evident by the abundance of stump remnants and down trees which is not characteristic of wilderness. Lack of old growth timber due to thinning in the mid-1900s/logging operation also created system of old roads. District staff confirms that areas in northern portion were pick and pluck activities/skidded pine logs down to the roads near Road 508 to the west, Road 62 to the north, and US-60 to the east.
    - Geospatial indicates data scattered areas of western bark beetle mortality and a large area of pinyon mortality but team agreed that this would not appear unnatural.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows 5 small fires (4 were started by lightning, 1 started by human activity) and all were before 2005. District staff confirms that the treatment areas do not appear natural.
    - Rabbitbrush occurs in this area, especially adjacent to Road 62.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects no active or inactive mining claims in the area. Minerals Specialist confirms that there isn't any mining activity in the area. Geospatial data reflects fifty-eight decommissioned roads, concentrated mostly in the northern portion of the area. Geospatial data reflects that there are two documented unauthorized routes. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. There are numerous fences; Flying V/Sugarloaf allotment boundary, Heifer division, Rock Hill/Flying V allotment boundary, Rock Hill/Sugarloaf allotment boundary, Anderson/Pine division, Anderson/Crosby division, Crosby, and Pine Gap. Geospatial data shows Crosby Mesa trick tank, Crosby Mountain trick tank (both of which were found to be substantially noticeable).
- Public comment received about a metered electric well along National Forest System Road (NFSR) 66, but it's not clear where the well is from the comment. Team identified two other wells in the vicinity that had been previously excluded.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to obvious evidence of human activity (decommissioned roads and some fences) and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** The Crosby Mountains are located in the central portion of this area and are rugged with deep canyons and high peaks. The mountainous area is heavily vegetated.
    - Team and District staff state that there is low to moderate traffic on NM Rd 12. Forest roads that access residences are used frequently. During hunting season, boundary roads receive more use. NFSR 580 is cherry-stemmed in the northern area and is a camping corridor.
    - Public comment received that there is very little human impact away from the roads.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to western, eastern, northeastern, and southern boundaries. State land borders the southeastern boundary. Southern boundary borders the Sugarloaf and Wildwood Subdivision with 100 houses currently. There are four cherry stemmed roads.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; human activities/presence are evident, especially along the perimeter, but feeling of being alone is possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Activities include hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, camping, backpacking, and hunting.
    - Public comment received to add enjoying nature as one of the primitive recreation activities.
    - NFSR Roads 62 and 580 are designated camping corridors.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation

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- **Narrative:** 21% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 44% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres, therefore this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant and animal communities within area.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** Sugarloaf Mountain is a prominent landmark in the southern portion of this area. The Crosby Mountains are also distinctive.
  - 0% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, there are a few distinctive landmarks but no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative**: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 0.2%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4c Findings

Area receives a finding of **High** due to several cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur in the area boundaries. Hidden Spring, Flying V Spring, and Sugarloaf Spring occur in the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features in the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects no known active or inactive mining claims in the area. There are three active grazing allotments: Flying V, Sugarloaf and Rock Hill. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. The two wildlife trick tanks also require maintenance. Geospatial data indicates an easement for a road to Turkey Park Springs in the southwestern portion. There are eight fences within the area.

DRAFT

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within the southern tip of this area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to most boundaries, but access is outside of area boundaries. State land occurs adjacent to the east of the area; access is also outside of the area.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Private land, including at least one subdivision, state land, and Forest Service border the area.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 10% WUI along eastern central boundary adjacent to private land with at least a dwelling. Where the WUI is located would require maintenance; this would be in conflict in managing for wilderness character.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within the area.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Numerous fencelines would require maintenance.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** Four cherry stemmed roads occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No Inventoried Roadless Areas within the area boundaries.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area (10% WUI and mechanized maintenance of numerous fences and wildlife improvements distributed throughout the area) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 1/29/16: Finding: The team finds that this area does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that this finding is due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple use. Alternatives: Consider future restoration projects for WUI treatment.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character, based on information provided in individual criteria findings.

Preferred Proposal: Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses with emphasis on addressing adequate fire protection near private lands.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K15 Datils IDT Findings 01/29/16	D3_5K15 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 4M, 1L** Supplemental: 1H, 4L	**Required: 4M, 1L** Supplemental: 1H, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Manage for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple use	Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses
Alternatives for Area		Consider future restoration projects for WUI treatment	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

Steering committee concurred with all findings.
Steering committee edited proposal language; District Ranger updated notes regarding Sugarloaf subdivision.
Steering committee considered team's alternative to "consider future restoration projects for WUI treatments" and discussed this was more of a theme rather than a separate alternative.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: North San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_ADJ1: T4S R6W; 1236 acres
D3_ADJ1.b: T4S R6W; 105 acres
D3_ADJ4: T4S R5W, T4S R6W; 1125 acres
D3_ADJ5: T4SR5W, T5S R5W, T4S R6W; 134 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/01/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision Meeting Date: 2/19/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the four areas.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Dominant vegetation types include the following per each area:
  - **ADJ1:** Alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, grass mix, pinyon juniper, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, ponderosa pine mix, and ponderosa and douglas fir mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.
  - **ADJ1.b:** Grass grama mix, pinyon juniper, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas fir, ponderosa pine mix, and ponderosa and douglas fir mix. Typical animal communities include mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.
  - **ADJ4:** Alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, grass mix, pinyon juniper. Typical animal communities include mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.

- **ADJ5:** Alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, grass mix, pinyon juniper. Typical animal communities include mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows one large fire in D3_ADJ1 (Al fire started by lightning in 2011) and ips engraver beetles post fire related damage in D3_ADJ1 (2013). District staff confirms that these areas appear natural.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned,

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects no active or inactive mining claims in the area. Minerals Specialist confirms that there isn't any mining activity in these areas. Geospatial data reflects ADJ_4 has five decommissioned roads and two unauthorized routes, ADJ1.b has one unauthorized route. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails are located in the area. There are several fences; ADJ1.b has none (buffered out boundary tank fence), ADJ1 has two fences including Big Rosa/Monica Divide fence and Big Rosa Allotment fence, ADJ4 and ADJ5 have no fences. Geospatial data shows McDonald Spring in the southeastern corner of ADJ4; Team and District staff cannot confirm development of this spring. Telephone line easement is located outside of ADJ1.b area (likely along roads). All range improvements have been buffered out during inventory phase. Drainage/road has been buffered out between ADJ1.b and ADJ1. Division tank fence runs into existing wilderness with good screening (not substantially noticeable) note from Phase 3 Inventory (already discussed fence within ADJ1).

Question 1c Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements do not detract from apparent naturalness.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** ADJ1.b has some flat areas with increasing elevation to higher areas with limited screening along National Forest System Road (NFSR) 1088 and NFSR spur 1089 within drainage; District specialist confirms that this road is used during hunting season and illegal access occurs into the wilderness from ATV use. There is an unauthorized route along the fence line within ADJ1.b. As well, all of ADJ1.b is within FAA advisory request for flying high due to existing wilderness adjacent to this area. ADJ1 contains NFSR 1089 which splits the area and is also bordered on the north side by NFSR 52. There is some topographic screening for sound from the roads in ADJ1 because of mountainous terrain and drainages; the overall area is highly mountainous with high peaks. ADJ4 has rolling terrain with some lower drainages and ADJ5 does contain one hill but more flat than ADJ4 with limited screening.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** ADJ1 contains NFSR 1089 which splits the area and is also bordered on the north side by NFSR 52 with one cherry stemmed road. ADJ1.b does not contain any cherry stemmed roads. ADJ4 contains four cherry stemmed roads; the northeastern tip of this area needs further investigation because permittees don't go around the area but go straight across/unauthorized routes. ADJ5 contains no cherry stemmed roads but is surrounded by roads NFSR 1084, NFSR 1080, NFSR 52 which is a rough road but gets heavily used during hunting season and by recreationists.
    - Private land used to be located between ADJ1 and ADJ4 but within the past year this land has been acquired by USFS. Adjacency to existing Withington wilderness along all southern borders of these areas. Private land is located adjacent to the western boundary of ADJ1.b. The rest of the boundaries are surrounded by Forest Service land.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season. District specialist confirms sighting of a helicopter in this area and that this would occur within these areas.
    - Team discussed a split finding for D3_ADJ5: This area receives a split finding: Low finding due to flat terrain and no screening; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable or Moderate finding due to human activities/presence is evident, especially along the perimeter, but feeling of being alone is possible.

Question 2a Findings

D3_ADJ1: This area receives a **Moderate** finding because there is more vegetative screening and the NFSR 52 is used seasonally (during hunting season); feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible.
D3_ADJ1.b: This area receives a **Low** finding due to the proximity of roads and low screening throughout the area; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

DRAFT

D3_ADJ4: This area receives a **Low** finding due to limited screening and the further north there is less screening and unauthorized routes in the northeastern corner; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable .
D3_ADJ5: This area receives a finding of **Low** due to flat terrain and no screening; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows small amount of dispersed camping is located in ADJ1.b. Hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting.
  - Public comment received that hunting and wildlife watching occur in this area.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Some mountain biking use may occur; ATV use occurs in these areas/occurs a lot seasonally.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** ADJ1: 50% SPNM ROS Class, ADJ1.b: 0% SPNM ROS Class, ADJ4: 0% SPNM ROS Class, ADJ5: 0% SPNM ROS Class.
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** ADJ1: 49% SPM ROS Class, ADJ1.b: 36% SPM ROS Class, ADJ4: 99% SPM ROS Class, ADJ5: 71% SPM ROS Class.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

ADJ1.b and ADJ5 receive a **Low** finding; there are few opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.
ADJ1 receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
ADJ4 receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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<u>Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent</u> to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

<u>Note:</u> If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **<u>Narrative:</u>** Areas are adjacent to existing wilderness so this criterion does not apply.

<u>Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities</u>: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

<u>Question 4a.</u> Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4a Findings</u>

These areas receive a **<u>Low</u>** finding, due to no rare plant and animal communities within the areas.

<u>Question 4b</u>. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial

DRAFT

- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- 41% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class in ADJ1, ADJ1.b 25%, ADJ4 8%, and ADJ5 96%.

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding, there are no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Low for ADJ1, percent surveyed 0.4%. ADJ 1.b 0.9% surveyed and unknown finding, ADJ4 1.9% surveyed and Low finding, ADJ5 5.3% surveyed and Low finding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Areas receive a **Low** finding due to few cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur within any of the area boundaries. McDonald Spring is located in ADJ4 but is seasonal and is not outstanding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within any of these areas.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects no known active or inactive mining claims in the area. ADJ1.b contains the Monica allotment, ADJ1 also contains the Monica allotment and Big Rosa allotment, and ADJ4 and ADJ5 contain the Big Rosa allotment. Both of these allotments are active. Intermittent mechanized fence maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Geospatial data indicates a telephone easement outside of the area for ADJ1.b. There are two fences within ADJ1. No active or inactive mining occurs in these areas. There is unauthorized access across the northeastern tip of ADJ4 along NFSR 52G.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Critical habitat occurs for Mexican spotted owl within the southern section of ADJ1.b and within all of ADJ1 but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management. The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) is within all four of these areas but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
    - No active or inactive mining claims occur within these areas; however no indication of past interest and US mining laws still pertain to these areas.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

DRAFT

- **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the western boundary of ADJ1.b, but access is outside of area boundaries.

- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land along western boundary of ADJ1.b, existing Withington wilderness along all southern boundaries, and Forest Service land borders the rest of the area boundaries.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: ADJ1.b, ADJ1, ADJ4 and ADJ5: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Two fence lines would require maintenance.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** ADJ1 contains one cherry stemmed road, ADJ1.b does not contain any cherry stemmed roads, and ADJ5 does not contain any cherry stemmed roads. ADJ4 contains four cherry stemmed roads; the northeastern tip of this area needs further investigation because permittees don't go around the area but go straight across/unauthorized routes.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Some personal fuelwood harvest adjacent to roads occurs within these areas.
  - No IRAs within the area boundaries.
  - Team found that ADJ1 receives a range from Low to Moderate finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas (cherry stemmed road, NFSR 1088 and NFSR 1089, deadfall across the Big Rosa division fence would require chainsaw use) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. Discussion among the team that uses occurs either in scattered areas or across most of the area, therefore receives a range finding. Shape and configuration of the area is such that a 'peninsula' shape containing a road separates the area from existing wilderness, which would present difficulties in managing a defensible wilderness boundary.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

DRAFT

Question 5a Findings

ADJ1.b, ADJ5, ADJ4 receive a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas. ADJ4 has a large extent of cherry stemmed roads and unauthorized use in the northeastern tip of the area relative to its overall size. As well, the extent of uses to the small sizes of ADJ1.b and ADJ5 makes management for wilderness character low.
ADJ1 receives a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas (cherry stemmed road, NFSR 1088 and NFSR 1089, fence requires intermittent motorized maintenance, and shape and configuration is hard to manage) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/1/16 Finding: The team finds that these areas do not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that these findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire areas. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses. Alternatives: Public comment received recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements; these areas are within the Zone 2 designation for backcountry management.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

Finding: Areas do not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. These findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire areas.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses.

Alternatives: Manage entire areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ1 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ1 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16	D3_ADJ1.b IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ1.b Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16	D3_ADJ4 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ4 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16	D3_ADJ5 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ5 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	1a	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
	1b	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
	1c	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
	2a	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low-Moderate	Low

DRAFT

	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4c	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	5a	**Low to Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 3H, 2-3M, 0-1L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental:5L	**Required: 3H, 3L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 3L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 1M, 2L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 1M, 2L** Supplemental:5L	**Required: 3H, 2-3L, 0-1M** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 3L** Supplemental:5L
Evaluation Finding		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Preferred Proposal		Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses.
Alternatives for Area		Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

DRAFT

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/19/2016:

Steering Committee decided on a Low for 5a for D3_ADJ1
Steering Committee decided on a Low for 2a for D3_ADJ5
Steering Committee considered alternative from public to manage areas with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. Steering Committee accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; Steering Committee decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: North San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_ADJ3: T5S R6W, T4S R7W, T4S R6W, T5S R7W; 117.5 acres
D3_ADJ3.b: T5S R6W, T5S R7W; 80.8 acres
D3_ADJ3.c: T5S R6W; 48.4 acres
D3_ADJ3.d: T5S R6W; 54.8 acres
D3_ADJ3.f: T5S R6W; 20.4 acres
D3_ADJ3.g: T5S R6W; 13.1 acres
D3_ADJ3.h: T5S R6W; 6.3 acres
D3_ADJ3.i: T5S R6W; 4.9 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/01/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Decision: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no invasive species in these areas.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_ADJ3.d , D3_ADJ3.f , D3_ADJ3.h , D3_ADJ3.i: Public comment received that the area healthy populations of mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer in the mountain range. In our field visits, we observed and saw signs of wildlife including mountain lion, bear, elk, mule deer, coyote, turkey, and quail.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: D3_ADJ3: deciduous-evergreen tree mix, douglas-fir, ponderosa pine-douglas-fir mix, ponderosa pine mix; D3_ADJ3.b deciduous-evergreen tree mix, douglas-fir, ponderosa pine-douglas-fir mix, ponderosa pine mix; D3_ADJ3.c douglas fir; D3_ADJ3.d: alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous-evergreen tree mix, douglas-fir, juniper, pinyon, pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine-douglas-fir mix; D3_ADJ3.f douglas-

fir, juniper, pinyon, pinyon-juniper; D3_ADJ3.g: douglas-fir; D3_ADJ3.h: deciduous-evergreen tree mix, douglas-fir, ponderosa pine-douglas-fir mix; D3_ADJ3. I: douglas-fir.

- Typical animal communities in these areas include quail, mule deer, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, bats, as well as bird communities.

Question 1a Findings

These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments. District staff reports daylighting along National Forest System Road (NFSR) 138; this occurs in the road buffer so does not impact the areas.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data does not show any fires in the areas.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports.
    - D3_ADJ3: Geospatial data and District staff confirm Switch Spring development including drinker within the area. National Forest System Trail 91 runs through the Spring area north/south on the eastern portion.
    - D3_ADJ3.b: Trail and fenceline within the area; obvious evidence of human activity within small acreage.
    - D3_ADJ3.c: Trail in the area crosses in one area; little evidence of human activity within small acreage.
    - D3_ADJ3.d: Trail in the area crosses in one area; little evidence of human activity within small acreage.
    - D3_ADJ3.f: Trail in the area crosses in one area; little evidence of human activity within small acreage.
    - D3_ADJ3.g: Heliport is located within the area; obvious evidence of human activity within small acreage.
    - D3_ADJ3.h: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
    - D3_ADJ3.i: No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1c Findings

ADJ3.c, ADJ3.d, ADJ3.f, ADJ3.h, ADJ3.i receive a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements do not detract from apparent naturalness. ADJ3, AD3.b, receive a **Moderate** finding due to appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. ADJ3.g receives a **Low** finding due to obvious evidence of human activity (heliport/landing zone).

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** All of these areas are located adjacent to roads including NFSR 138 and NFSR 549. Topography within ADJ3 is located at a higher elevation/more mountainous, ADJ3.b straddles a ridge/rolling hills, ADJ3.f is on side of hill/adjacent to heliport which is outside of area, ADJ3.i is located adjacent to an old powerline or telephone scar on side of hill, ADJ3.d is located along a ridge/dropping down bit in elevation, ADJ3.h is backside of ridge/straddles ridge, ADJ3.g is going down side of hill, ADJ3.c has road and trailhead on backside of area.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** All of these areas are located adjacent to NFSR 138 and ADJ3 is adjacent to NFSR 549 and NFSR 138.
    - Adjacency to existing Withington wilderness along eastern borders of all areas.
    - Public comment received that there are opportunities for solitude within these areas.
    - D3_ADJ3.d , D3_ADJ3.f , D3_ADJ3.h , D3_ADJ3.i: Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Withington Wilderness creates an elevated feeling of isolation and solitude.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.

Question 2a Findings

D3_ADJ3 and ADJ3.c: This area receives a **Moderate** finding; feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible. The remaining areas receive a **Low** finding; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting occur throughout all areas.
  - Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, horseback-riding, and stargazing.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Mountain biking occurs but would occur within the cherry stemmed roads adjacent to all areas.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_ADJ3: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.b: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.c: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.d: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.f: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.g: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.h: 0% SPNM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.i: 0% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_ADJ3: 10% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.b: 73% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.c: 100% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.d: 100% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.f: 100% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.g: 100% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.h: 100% SPM ROS Class
  - D3_ADJ3.i: 100% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** Team discussed all areas are majority semi-primitive motorized ROS class and basically all slopes leading down to a road- configuration, size, and topography of the area do not provide high quality primitive recreation opportunities.

Question 2b Findings

All areas receive a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** Areas are adjacent to existing wilderness so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_ADJ3: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.b: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.c: No rare species occur in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.d: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.f: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.g: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ.h: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
  - D3_ADJ3.i: MSO PAC occurs in the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

All areas except for ADJ3.c receive a **Moderate** finding, due to the presence of MSO PACs within the areas. ADJ3.c receives a **Low** finding; no rare plant and animal communities.

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Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** Opportunity for scenic views into the wilderness from high points. No additional information provided by District staff and specialists.
  - Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class percentages:
    - D3_ADJ3: 93%
    - D3_ADJ3.b: 100%
    - D3_ADJ3.c: 100%
    - D3_ADJ3.d: 100%
    - D3_ADJ3.f: 100%
    - D3_ADJ3.g: 100%
    - D3_ADJ.h: 100%
    - D3_ADJ3.i: 100%
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; there are few to no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Low to unknown for all areas, percent surveyed range from 0% to 2.5%.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Areas receives a **Low** finding due to few cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur within any of the area boundaries. Switch Spring occurs in ADJ3 but is not perennial and is not outstanding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within these areas.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)

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- **Narrative:** No active mining claims occur in these areas. Grazing allotments occur throughout small portions of each area:
  - D3_ADJ3: Monica allotment occurs in the southeastern tip (active) with a spring that needs intermittent mechanized maintenance.
  - D3_ADJ3.b: Monica allotment, Big Rosa, and Bear Trap allotments. All are active.
  - D3_ADJ3.c: Big Rosa allotment
  - D3_ADJ3.d: Big Rosa and Bear Trap allotments
  - D3_ADJ3.f: Big Rosa and Bear Trap allotments
  - D3_ADJ3.g: Big Rosa, Bear, and Bear Trap allotments
  - D3_ADJ.h: Big Rosa and Bear Trap allotments
  - D3_ADJ3.i: Big Rosa and Bear Trap allotments

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** Critical habitat occurs for Mexican spotted owl within all of these areas but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
  - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within all of these areas but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
  - No active mining claims occur within these areas; US mining laws are applicable.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs along the northern boundary of ADJ3.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land along northern border of ADJ3. Existing Withington wilderness is adjacent to all eastern boundaries, and Forest Service land borders the rest of the area boundaries. ADJ3.c is surrounded on three sides by roads and the high edge to interior ratio of the configuration would make it difficult to manage.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: All areas: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** ADJ3 has mountain bike use. ADJ3.g has a heliport in use.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** ADJ3 has a cherry-stemmed road just outside the boundary that almost completely bisects the area into two separate parcels. No cherry stemmed roads occur in these areas.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No IRAs occur in these areas.
    - Public comment received that this area is isolated from areas of human activity, with limited access and very few encumbrances. The area does not have motorized activity occurring within its proposed boundaries.

Question 5a Findings

ADJ3 and ADJ3.g receive a **Low** finding; presence and extent of other uses (spring development, mountain bike use, cherry-stemmed roads, heliport) occurs across most of the areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics low in most areas.
ADJ3.c receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.
ADJ3.b, ADJ3.d, ADJ3.f, ADJ3.h, ADJ3.i receive a **High** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in isolated spots and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics high throughout the areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/1/16: Finding:The team finds that ADJ3, ADJ3.g, ADJ3.c, ADJ3.b, ADJ3.d, ADJ3.f, ADJ3.h, and ADJ3.i do not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that these findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across all of the areas. Overall these areas are lacking in solitude; the extent of improvements requiring maintenance such as the spring development, allotment improvements, and heliport along with the high use of the adjacent roads are significant relative to all of these areas' small size. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses. Alternatives: Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: ADJ3, ADJ3.b, ADJ3.g do not have wilderness character due to individual criteria findings.
ADJ3.c, ADJ3.d, ADJ3.f, ADJ3.h, ADJ3.i do have wilderness character, due to individual finding criteria.

Preferred Proposal: Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Area ID:		D3_ADJ3 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.b IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.b Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.c IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.c Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.d IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.d Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4c	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	5a	**Low**	**Low**	**High**	**High**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**
Summary		**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 4L, 1M	**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 4L, 1M	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 4L, 1M	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 4L, 1M	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding		No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Preferred Proposal		Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses.

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Alternatives for Area	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement.	--	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	--	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	--	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	--

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Findings and Summary Table continued

Area ID:		D3_ADJ3.f IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.f Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.g IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.g Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.h IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.h Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ3.i IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ3.i Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	2a	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4c	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	5a	**High**	**High**	**Low**	**Low**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**

Summary	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 2H, 1M, 3L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 2H, 1M, 3L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3H, 1M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 3H, 1M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 4H, 1M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L	**Required: 4H, 1M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M, 4L
Evaluation Finding	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Preferred Proposal	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions other multiple use	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions other multiple use	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions other multiple use	Manage for desired conditions multiple use	Manage for Forest-wide desired conditions other multiple use
Alternatives for Area	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	---	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	---	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	---	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness Public comment received recommends emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	---

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

Steering Committee considered public comment suggesting these areas as wilderness. Steering Committee reviewed the topography of the areas and where these areas were adjacent to existing wilderness. Steering Committee decided that the existing wilderness boundary follows a ridgeline and this current wilderness boundary is more logical and manageable to protect wilderness character, and adding these additional areas would make manageability of the wilderness boundary more difficult.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: North San Mateos Mountain Area D3_ADJ6: 36 acres D3_ADJ7: 10,052 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/01/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Review and Decision Date: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the four areas.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that observed and saw signs of wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, coyote, turkey, and quail.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following for ADJ6: Alderleaf mountain mohagony mix, deciduous shrub, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, ponderosa pine. Dominant vegetation types include the following for ADJ7: Alderleaf mountain mohagony mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen tree, douglas-fir, grass mix, pinyon juniper, ponderosa pine, ponderosa pine/douglas-fir mix. Typical animal communities in ADJ7 include quail, mule deer, pronghorn, bear, lion, turkey, and elk populations, javelina, bats, as well as bird communities. Same animal communities for ADJ6 except for pronghorn and quail.

Question 1a Findings

These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

<u>Question 1b.</u> What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows one fire in ADJ7 (Chavez fire started by lightening in 2002) and the Chavez Canyon prescribed burn in 1996 which occurs within the northern extent of ADJ7. Light and very light Western pine beetle, Douglas-fir beetle (light and moderate) mortality, and White fir (light) mortality are scattered throughout the central and southern sections of ADJ7. District staff confirms that these areas appear natural.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 1b Findings</u>

These areas receive a **<u>High</u>** finding; vegetation appears natural.

<u>Question 1c.</u> What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

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- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data reflects closed mines within the majority of the central and southern portion of ADJ7. Minerals Specialist confirms that there are old mining claims including prospecting pits and old mines with dumps in front of them within ADJ7 occurring in the central and southern section of ADJ7. The northern part of the reclaimed Rosedale Mine straddles the southern boundary of ADJ7. Geospatial data reflects no decommissioned roads or unauthorized routes in ADJ6 or ADJ7. FR 56 is adjacent to the eastern boundary of ADJ6. Geospatial data and District staff confirm two system trails (Trails 92 and 36) located in ADJ7. ADJ6 has no fences and ADJ7 has three fences including Horse Mountain range allotment boundary fence, Big Rosa range allotment boundary fence. Geospatial data shows the following range improvements in ADJ7: Big Rosa drinker within the eastern section, Fowler Spring and Dry Spring located along the western boundary (unknown if within ADJ7 or not).
- Public comment received about an airport; individual was unsure whether location of pending airport was in the area (Lat -107.408686 Long 33.807164); geospatial data shows Lat/Long outside of the area boundaries.
- No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1c Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements do not detract from apparent naturalness.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** ADJ6: Majority of the topography is a hillside through a canyon adjacent to FR56. FR 56 is adjacent to the eastern boundary of ADJ6; this road is used substantially and there is no screening throughout the area. ADJ7 has some sparser vegetation to the north but contains rolling hills with topographic screening for sound because of mountainous terrain and drainages.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** Adjacency to existing Withington wilderness along western borders of these two areas. ADJ7 contains two cherry stemmed roads in the central portion of the area which are used frequently during hunting season. FR 56 is adjacent to the eastern boundary of ADJ6; dispersed camping occurs within this corridor and is heavily used during hunting season. Frequent ATV use within ADJ6.
    - Private land/patented claims occur adjacent to the southern border of ADJ7, private land and State land is adjacent to the northeastern boundary of ADJ7. Some shafts and other evidence of previous mining activity occur within ADJ7. FR330 is a heavily used route which occurs along the southern boundary of ADJ7. As well, NM-107 occurs to the east of ADJ7 which could be visible from some higher areas within ADJ7. There are many roads located just outside of ADJ7 to the southeast.
    - Public comment that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Withington Wilderness provide for isolation and solitude.
    - Other public comments received that there are multiple opportunities for solitude within these areas.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
    - Team discussed a range from Low to Moderate finding for ADJ6, due to the proximity of FR56 and low screening from associated noise throughout the area; little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities are unavoidable. There is a motorized camping corridor along the road and the area is a very narrow corridor. However, there is opportunity for being alone along the western border due to the Withington wilderness adjacent to ADJ6.

Question 2a Findings

D3_ADJ7: This area receives a **Moderate** finding because of the two cherry stemmed roads and the road use is persistent in this area; feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible. D3_ADJ6: This area receives a **Low** finding due to the proximity of FR56 and low screening from associated noise throughout the area.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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<u>Question 2b</u>. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm dispersed camping in ADJ6. Hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting occur throughout both areas.
    - Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, horseback-riding, and other forms of primitive recreation are excellent in the area.
    - Other public comments received that primitive forms of recreation occurs within these areas.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** ATV use occurs heavily in the corridor of ADJ6, especially during hunting season. Pullouts are used off the road within ADJ6.
    - ADJ7: Public comment received that mountain bikers use Big Rosa Canyon/FR56. They bike south down Big Rosa Canyon and then go east on FR330 continuing past the gate on the trail in Big Rosa Canyon; this gate would not be consistent in managing for wilderness character. Team discussed that mountain biking occurs along Big Rosa Canyon (NFSR 56), NFSTrail 36, and NFSTrail 92 and throughout the southern portion of the area. Mountain bikers travel down Big Rosa Canyon (NFSR 56) into the southern portion of the area; this road separates the area from the existing wilderness.
    - Prospecting pressure of activities occur within ADJ7; incompatible for managing for wilderness character.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
    - **Narrative:** ADJ6: 0% SPNM ROS Class, ADJ7: 61% SPNM ROS Class.
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** ADJ6: 100% SPM ROS Class, ADJ7: 38% SPNM ROS Class.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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Question 2b Findings

ADJ6 receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities to engage in primitive recreation (along western border adjacent to Withington wilderness). There are pullouts, ATV use, camping, and mountain biking use that occurs in ADJ6 within the corridor. ADJ7 receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** N/A

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** MSO PACs occur in the southern tips of ADJ7 and ADJ6.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

These areas receive a **Moderate** finding, due to the presence of MSO PACs within the areas.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information.

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- Public comment received that the area is characterized by deeply incised canyons resulting from the uplift, faulting and weathering of an ancient volcanic cauldron; these canyons are both beautiful and geologically interesting. Team discussed that this likely occurs within ADJ7, especially the rim of the cauldron. Minerals Specialist confirms that; as described these features are unique and confirms the volcanic cauldron rim. There is a volcanic cauldron rim within ADJ7.

- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by District staff and specialists.
  - Public comment received that the panoramic views from atop the canyon rims are spectacular, as are the sights as one walks through the secluded canyons bottoms.
  - 40% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class in ADJ6 and 91% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class in ADJ7.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; there are few outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low for ADJ6, percent surveyed 4.4%. ADJ7 7.4% surveyed and Moderate finding.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4c Findings

D3_ADJ6: Receives a **Low** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with these findings. D3_ADJ7: Receives a **Moderate** finding. Based on information that could be shared in the geospatial information, team concurred with these findings.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur within any of the area boundaries. The canyon drainage adjacent to ADJ6 has been buffered out due to FR56.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within these areas.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)

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- **Narrative:** Geospatial data reflects no active mining claims in the area. ADJ6 and ADJ7 contain the Big Rosa allotment, and Horse Mountain allotment is within ADJ7; both of these are active. Infrequent mechanized fence/spring tanker maintenance occurs, and associated grazing improvements require same type of maintenance. Big Rosa drinker and associated pipeline occurs within the northeastern portion of ADJ7. There are three fences within ADJ7. Prospecting pressure of activities occur within ADJ7; incompatible for managing for wilderness character. Manageability is an issue because pressure exists and mechanized use occurs in association with prospecting.

- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** Critical habitat occurs for Mexican spotted owl within the southern portion of ADJ6 and western portion of ADJ7 but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
  - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) is within the entirety of these areas but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
  - No active mining claims occur within these areas; however there is a high concentration of closed mines within the southern section of ADJ7.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land and State land occurs adjacent to the northeastern border of ADJ7, but access is outside of area boundaries.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Private land along northeastern border and southern boundary of ADJ7, existing Withington wilderness occurs along all western boundaries, and Forest Service land borders the rest of the area boundaries.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

  Narrative: ADJ6 and ADJ7: Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** Incidental personal fuelwood harvest occurs along the southern portion of ADJ7 near Rosedale.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Three fence lines would require maintenance. ADJ7: Mechanized mountain bike use along Big Rosa Canyon (NFSR 56), NFSTrail 36, and NFSTrail 92 and throughout the southern portion of the area. Mountain bikers travel down Big Rosa Canyon (NFSR 56) into

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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the southern portion of the area; this road separates the area from the existing wilderness. Mechanized use associated with mineral prospecting.

- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
- **Narrative:** ADJ7 contains two cherry stemmed roads.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Whitecap IRA covers the majority of ADJ7. No IRA in ADJ6. ADJ6 is very narrow and motorized camping occurs throughout much of the corridor. This use is in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
    - Public comment received that the majority of the area is isolated from areas of human activity, with limited access. The area does not have motorized activity occurring within its proposed boundaries.
    - There is mineral potential for ADJ7. US mining laws are presently applicable; claims could be staked within both areas. STC decided this is an issue to consider in analysis if this area were to move forward in an alternative as potential wilderness.
    - Team discussed that ADJ7 receives a range from Moderate to High finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. The northern portion of ADJ7 would be High due to other uses occurring in isolated spots and the southern portion would be Moderate due to the presence of other uses occurring in scattered areas.

Question 5a Findings

D3_ADJ6 receives a **Moderate** finding; presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas. D3_ADJ7 receives a **Moderate** finding due to the presence of other uses occurring in scattered areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/1/16: Finding: The team finds that ADJ6 does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that these findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area (especially due to adjacent use along FR56). The team finds that ADJ7 does have wilderness character within the northern portion of the area but does not have wilderness character within the southern portion of the area based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. The team discussed that these findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the southern area such as the density of the roads, recreational access including mountain biking, range improvement fences, cherry stemmed roads, and mineral prospecting.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses. Emphasis on habitat conservation and on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas. Alternatives: Team discussed one alternative to propose the northern portion of ADJ7 as wilderness from the trailhead for Trail 37 southeast across the Section line to Big Rosa Spring and then continuing north up from this line. This would be approximately 3600 acres.

Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness.

Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements; these areas are within the Zone 2 designation for backcountry management.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

D3_ADJ6:
Finding: ADJ6 does not have wilderness character based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. These findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the entire area (especially due to adjacent use along FR56 and majority of area containing a motorized dispersed camping corridor).

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses. Emphasis on habitat conservation and on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas.

D3_ADJ7:
Finding: ADJ7 does have wilderness character within the northern portion of the area but does not have wilderness character within the southern portion of the area based on the findings from the individual criteria findings. These findings are due to the extent of improvements and other uses incompatible with managing for wilderness character across the southern area such as the density of the roads, recreational access including mountain biking, range improvement fences, cherry stemmed roads, and mineral prospecting.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses. Emphasis on habitat conservation and on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas.

Alternative: Manage areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi primitive non-motorized, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ6 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ6 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ7 IDT Findings 2/1/16	D3_ADJ7 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	1a	High	High	High	High
	1b	High	High	High	High
	1c	High	High	High	High
	2a	Low-Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate

	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A; under 5,000 acres but adjacent to Withington wilderness on western boundary	N/A; under 5,000 acres but adjacent to Withington wilderness on western boundary	N/A	N/A
	4a	M	M	M	M
	4b	L	L	L	L
	4c	L	L	M	M
	4d	L	L	L	L
	4e	L	L	L	L
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate-High**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required:** 3H, 2-3M, 0-1L **Supplemental:** 1M, 4L	**Required:** 3H, 2M, 1L **Supplemental:** 1M, 4L	**Required:** 4-5H, 1-2M **Supplemental:** 2M, 3L	**Required:** 4H, 2M **Supplemental:** 2M, 3L
Evaluation Finding		No	No	Yes in the north, No in the south	Yes in the north, No in the south
Preferred Proposal		Desired conditions, multiple use Emphasis on habitat conservation, IRA mgmt	Desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses. Emphasis on habitat conservation and on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas.	Desired conditions, multiple use Emphasis on habitat conservation, IRA mgmt	Desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses. Emphasis on habitat conservation and on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas.
Alternatives for Area		Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	--	Propose the northern portion as wilderness from Trail 37 trailhead SE across Section line to Big Rosa Spring, continue north from Section line. Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	Emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi primitive non-motorized, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

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D3_ADJ6:
STC decided on a Low for 2a.
STC considered public comment for area to be managed with a focus on wildlife improvements and public comment suggesting these areas as wilderness. STC decided these were not viable alternatives because since this area Is essentially a narrow corridor with motorized dispersed camping occurring throughout.

D3_ADJ7:
STC decided on a Moderate for 5a.
STC considered team's alternative and public comment suggested alternative to consider northern portion as potential wilderness. The proposed area with wilderness character, if considered in an alternative, would exclude NFSR 56 and where NFSR 56 turns into NFST 36, due to current heavy mountain biking use, and this would then cause the area to lose adjacency to existing wilderness. The remaining standalone portion would be approximately 3600 acres, and is not of sufficient size to manage as a wilderness. Additionally, having two distinct wilderness areas separated by a road would be a manageability issue.

STC considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. STC accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; STC decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Northwest San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_5K16: 27, 598 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/02/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist for FPR), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne DeRosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), Marshal Wilson (NMDA), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD), Eloy Armijo (Sierra County), Tracey Hamilton (Socorro County).

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Review and Decision Date: 2/11/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the area.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:**
  - Typical wildlife includes mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, and quail.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: Alderleaf mountain mahagony mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous trees mix, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, grass, ponderosa pine, ponderos doug fir mix, sparsely vegetated. Some cottonwood localized to drainages.
  - Public comment received that the area has unnoticed invasive plants and animals.
  - Public comment received that the area contains healthy populations of mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer in the mountain range. Commenter reported signs of wildlife including mountain lion, bear, elk, mule deer, coyote, turkey, and quail.

Question 1a Findings

These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** Area in small northwestern corner has old timber evidence, some scattered stumps, but harvest activity is very old and affects apparent naturalness to some degree in the immediate area (Geospatial data shows name of area was 16.b). Some scattered spot fires throughout the area.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that there are no noticeable vegetation treatments. Public comment received that Upper Panther Canyon has old growth pines; additional comment that Panther Canyon has some stumps visible from old harvest. Public comment received about old growth in area, few signs of human impacts, wildlife.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

- Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:**
- Geospatial data shows decommissioned roads in the northwestern edge (area known in Phase 2 inventory as 16.b). There is one decommissioned road running across the area in the middle section. A series of maintenance Level 1 roads occur throughout the area. Two system trails occur in the area boundaries. One small unauthorized route is within area boundaries. Public comment received that there are no visible unauthorized routes, range or wildlife improvements, or other impacts. District specialists report roads within area are most likely visible in some areas (top of ridge and bottom of canyon) but not in other areas, and that they are visible when walking along them. Public comment received that commenter encountered traces of overgrown two-track roads reduced to foot paths by natural vegetation.
- Geospatial data shows ten springs, two wildlife drinkers (one of which is substantially noticeable, Hughes Guzzler and some of which are not developed), and multiple fences crossing the area in multiple places (some of which are substantially noticeable). One small pipeline enters in the area boundaries in the southern corner.
- Geospatial data shows there are two old mining claim sections in the area, but no reported mining evidence.
- No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas (substantially noticeable improvements and roads visible in some areas).

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.
[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** General topography within the area is rugged, highly mountainous, lots of drainages and canyons. Screening is possible throughout some parts of the area.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative:** There are many roads outside of the area boundaries with high uses on the west side and northeastern roads (NFSR138 and NFSR549). Remaining areas are lower use and are used during hunting season; roads are hard to access. Two small developed campgrounds are outside the area boundaries on the edges. Area is separated from adjacent wilderness by a road in the northeastern corner. There is a private land inholding along a cherry-stemmed road in the southern portion with landowner access occurring. Another private land inholding along the southwestern edge has intermittent residential access.
    - Multiple public comments received that the area does have opportunities for solitude; one commenter described area as outstanding solitude.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
    - Public comment received for Panther Canyon that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Withington Wilderness creates an elevated feeling of isolation and solitude.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; feeling of being alone or remote from civilization possible in drainages and canyons but impacts from civilization are possible in some areas.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, wildlife watching occur throughout the areas.
  - Public comment received that activities above occur, as well as wilderness camping and horse-back riding.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Mountain biking occurs along NFSR73, NFSR219, and NFSR95 (a loop opportunity), which partially is within the area boundaries. Cherry-stemmed road is along the middle of the southern edge that contains a big game retrieval dispersed camping corridor.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 34% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 54% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Fences throughout the area may impact a visitor's ability to recreate unconfined, as improvements restrict access in some places.
  - Public comment received for Panther Canyon that the area has outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, horseback-riding, and stargazing.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

Area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** N/A

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** Multiple Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers occur within the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to the Mexican Spotted Owl populations.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Chimney Canyon is a unique geologic feature within the area boundaries (tuff rock formations).
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

DRAFT

- **Narrative:** Scenic views are possible. Aspen groves in area are popular for fall color viewing.
- 44% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Public comment received that there are pleasing views from natural ridgetops of natural terrain. Additional comment received that the area is scenic with isolated canyons and vistas of large swaths of untrammeled country from tops of ridges.

- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received for Panther Canyon that the area is within a volcanic caldron and underlain by ash flow tuffs and lavas dating back to about 28 to 24 million years ago. The most spectacular of these deposits is the Vick's Peak tuff, the 1,000-foot high cliffs forming the southernmost escarpment of the range. Uplift, faulting and weathering of these rocks during the past 20 million years has resulted in the incision of deep canyons along the flanks of the range. Team discussed Vick's Peak is outside of area's boundaries.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

These areas receive a **Moderate** finding; there are some outstanding landscape features due to the presence of unique rock formations, fall color, and scenic views.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - Narrative: FS archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 2.6%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a **Low** finding; area has few resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.

DRAFT

- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Bear Canyon has intermittent perennial water. No outstanding water features occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Bear Trap, Bear, and a small portion of West Red grazing allotments overlap into the area boundaries. Multiple springs and fences occur throughout the area boundaries, and two wildlife improvements (one of which is a substantially noticeable guzzler); intermittent motorized maintenance occurs for these improvements.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Portions of the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) are in the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.

DRAFT

- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Small private inholding that occurs along the southern edge has a large portion of access route cherry-stemmed within the area boundaries. Another small private land inholding occurs along the southwestern edge. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Small private inholding along the southern edge has a large portion of access route cherry-stemmed within the area boundaries. Another small private land inholding occurs along the southwestern edge. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service; in the northeastern edge, wilderness is across NFSR138.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** No known information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
    - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Two of the allotments have Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) projects with pipelines, troughs, drinkers, erosion control structures. Pipeline and drinker improvement projects are within area boundaries. There is WUI on adjacent lands.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Mountain biking loop opportunities occur in the southwestern portion. Public comment received that NFST 64 and NFST 65 are popular mountain biking area loops.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season. Hunting and horseback riding occurs in area.
    - Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** Area contains multiple cherry stemmed roads, including two completely removed areas isolated within the area (for Level 2 roads). The shape of the area is very fragmented due to multiple cherry-stemmed road configurations.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Very small portion is Apache Kid Inventoried Roadless Area (approximately less than 1%) in southeastern edge.

DRAFT

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.
[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

- Public comment received for Panther Canyon that the majority of the area is isolated from areas of human activity, with limited access and very few encumbrances. The area does not have motorized activity occurring within its proposed boundaries.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; other uses occur in scattered areas and makes management to preserve wilderness characteristics low in most areas (improvement maintenance, cherry-stemmed roads fragmenting area, mountain biking, and planned EQIP projects throughout area).

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/2/16: Finding: The team finds that 5K19 does not have wilderness character. Small isolated pockets of the area meet some criteria (but not all) for wilderness character, but are not substantial enough to consider as a standalone area.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health and riparian health. Emphasis on maintaining scenic integrity of Chimney Canyon area and Panther Canyon.

Alternative: Public comment received recommending this area as wilderness.

Alternative: Public comment received recommends areas should have an emphasis on backcountry management. Public comment continues that the focus should be on prescribed fire, wildlife habitat improvement, habitat conservation, no new roads or motorized trails, primitive recreation, maintain existing recreation improvements, honor existing permitted grazing, and maintain existing range improvements. Public comment also continued that mining should be prohibited.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: Area does not have wilderness character. Small isolated pockets of the area meet some criteria (but not all) for wilderness character, but are not substantial enough to consider as a standalone area.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health and riparian health. Emphasis on maintaining scenic integrity of Chimney Canyon area and Panther Canyon.

Alternative: Manage areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi primitive non-motorized, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

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Area ID:		D3_5K16 IDT Findings 2/2/16	D3_5K16 Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	M	M
	4b	M	M
	4c	L	L
	4d	L	L
	4e	L	L
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required**: 2H, 3M, 1L **Supplemental**: 2M, 3L	**Required**: 2H, 3M, 1L **Supplemental**: 2M, 3L
Evaluation Finding		No	No
Preferred Proposal		Desired conditions, multiple use Emphasis on watershed health, riparian health, maintaining scenic integrity of Chimney Canyon area and Panther Canyon.	Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health and riparian health. Emphasis on maintaining scenic integrity of Chimney Canyon area and Panther Canyon.
Alternatives for Area		Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	Emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi primitive non-motorized, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

DRAFT

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/11/2016:

STC concurred with all findings, and edited language in preferred proposal.

STC considered alternative from public comment to put forward area as potential wilderness, but when individual notes for each criteria were reviewed, decided area did not have wilderness character other than in two small isolated pockets that would not be large enough to manage as a wilderness.

STC considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. STC accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; STC decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Southern San Mateos Mountain Area D3_ADJ8.d: T9S R6W; T10S R6W; 5746 acres D3_ADJ8.e: T9S R5W, T8S R5W, T8S R6W; 4214 acres D3_ADJ8.r: T9S R6W, T8S R6W; 181 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/02/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Jessica Dunn (Scenery, Rec, Designated Areas specialist), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Toby Boone (Sierra SWCD), Marshall Wilson (NMDA), RuthAnn Harriet (Salado SWCD)

Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee meeting date: 2/11/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:**
  - D3_ADJ8.d: Geospatial data shows salt cedar in four drainages.
  - D3_ADJ8.e: Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the area.
  - D3_ADJ8.r: Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the area.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:**
  - Areas contain typical wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, white tail deer, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, and quail.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: Alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous shrub mix, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, grass, grama, ponderosa pine, ponderosa douglas fir mix
  - Public comment received that area has unnoticed invasive plants and animals.
  - D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r Public comment received that the area contains wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, coyote, turkey, quail, great horned owl,

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and Mexican spotted owl. D3_ADJ8.e has populations of mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, great horned owl, and Mexican spotted owl.

Question 1a Findings

D3_ADJ8.d: Area receives a **Moderate** finding due to salt cedar in four drainages. D3_ADJ8.e and D3_ADJ8.r: These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.e: Fire from June of 1970 is within the area and is not likely to be evident or affect apparent naturalness in area.
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

DRAFT

- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows there are old mining claim sections throughout the area, and past evidence of mining activities is evident in areas.
- D3_ADJ8.d: Public comment received that area is bordered by ranch fence on the north side of the area and the south side of Apache Kid Wilderness. Landscape team member reports improvements are shown within area. Pipeline, four springs, and Alamo tank (dirt tank) are in area boundaries. One small unauthorized route occurs along western edge. One historic mine shows in geospatial data in D3_ADJ8.d. Shafts are visible in aerial imagery on three of the historic mines in area. One trough was visible in area in aerial imagery.
- D3_ADJ8.e: Public comment received that area is free of human involvement. Geospatial data shows two system trails in area boundaries. Adits, frames and old roads around Panky Mine are evident. Pipeline crosses area around Springtime Recreation Area.
- D3_ADJ8.r: No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Comment received that area is roadless and free of human involvement.

Question 1c Findings

D3_ADJ8.d: This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas (historic mines and other improvements).
D3_ADJ8.e: This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas (historic mines and other improvements).
D3_ADJ8.r: This area receives a **High** finding, due to little or no evidence of human activity.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d has some main canyons. Area does not have much vegetative screening. Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness ensures solitude. Commenter continued that once visitors leave the boundary roads, they experience seclusion and know that they are within a wild place untrammeled by humans and primeval in character. Landscape team member reports that evidence of human habitation outside of the area is visible from all ridge tops within the entirety of the area (community of Monticello and one hay barn).
    - D3_ADJ8.e contains one ridge and mountainous areas. Area does not have much vegetative screening, except for west of Springtime Canyon. Public comment received that due to its size, roadless characteristics, topography, vegetation, and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness, the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude
    - D3_ADJ8.r is a side of a hill. Screening is possible throughout some parts of the area. Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness ensures solitude. Commenter continued that once visitors leave the boundary roads, they experience seclusion and know that they are within a wild place untrammeled by humans and primeval in character.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative** D3_ADJ8.d: private land inholdings along northeastern edge; there are no impacts to solitude from these, due to no development. There are a few pens and improvements in a private land inholding along the eastern boundary. Burma Road along western edge has moderate use year-round and noise from use is not screened by vegetation.
    - D3_ADJ8.e received public comment that area has natural beauty and high solitude. Springtime Recreation Area road receives year-round moderate use; this road borders area to the west and south.
    - D3_ADJ8.r: Springtime Recreation Area road receives year-round moderate use; this road borders area to the north and east.
    - All areas are adjacent to Apache Kid Wilderness in northern portions.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
    - Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness creates an elevated feeling of isolation and solitude.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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Question 2a Findings

D3_ADJ8.d: This area receives a **Moderate** due to little screening to alleviate noise impacts from road on western edge. Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible. D3_ADJ8.e: This area receives a **Moderate** due to impacts from road accessing Springtime. Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible. D3_ADJ8.r: This area receives a **Low** finding - human presence is unavoidable in the linear configuration and small size of the area.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r Public comment received that areas provide exceptional backcountry opportunities for hikers, hunters, backpackers, campers, stargazing, and horseback riders.
  - D3_ADJ8.r is a side slope with small amounts of semi-primitive non-motorized Recreation Opportunity Class. Area is basically a slope leading to a road- configuration, size, and topography of the area do not provide high quality primitive recreation opportunities.
  - D3_ADJ8.e Geospatial data shows one system trail going into wilderness. Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for unconfined and primitive forms of recreation including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, stargazing, and horseback-riding. The configuration of the area creates two fragmented portions, due to cherry-stemmed areas around Springtime so ability to recreate unconfined is somewhat hindered.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d: 70% SPNM ROS Class**;** D3_ADJ8**.**e: 29% SPNM ROS Class; D3_ADJ8.r: 1% SPNM ROS Class.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d: 22% SPM ROS Class; D3_ADJ8.e: 22% SPM ROS Class; D3_ADJ8.r: 0% SPM ROS Class.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

D3_ADJ8.d receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation. D3_ADJ8.e receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation. D3_ADJ8.r receives a **Low** finding, due to limitations to recreate in an unconfined manner (small size, steepness of slope leading into a road).

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** These areas are adjacent to existing wilderness, therefore this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.e: Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Center occurs within the area;
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

D3_ADJ8.e receives a **Moderate** finding, due to one rare plant or animal communities. D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant or animal communities.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

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Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.e: 64%; D3_ADJ8.d: 6% ; D3_ADJ8.r: 96% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class.
    - D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r: Public comment received that Cañon de Quirino and Uvas Canyon are exceptionally enticing to hikers and backpackers who want to explore the heart of the area; Cañon de Quirino is one of the most attractive canyons in the unit; the canyon contains scenic rock formations and views of the high country around Vicks Peak, as well as unobstructed views to the south of the Chihuahuan Desert floor. Team discussed that this is true for D3_ADJ8.d: there are views of Vicks Peak.
    - **D3_ADJ8.e** Cold Spring Canyon is one of the most visually appealing trails in the San Mateo Mountains. The canyon contains scenic rock formations and views of the high country around Blue Mountain and Apache Kid Peak. From atop the canyon rims, views to the east are immense and breathtaking. The Magdalena Mountains can be seen rising dramatically from the basin floor, while to the south and west, the Apache Kid Wilderness dominates the landscape, with Blue Mountain and Apache Kid Peak prominently featured. The various gorges throughout the area also afford remarkable views of high canyon walls and open valley bottoms. Team discussed that Cold Spring Canyon is not within area boundaries, and features mentioned are outside of area boundaries.
    - Public comment received that area is a flat hanging shelf of a meadow in a sea of vertical cliffs.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that area is within a volcanic caldron and underlain by ash flow tuffs and lavas dating back to about 28 to 24 million years ago. The most spectacular of these deposits is the Vick's Peak tuff, the 1,000-foot high cliffs forming the southernmost escarpment of the range. Uplift, faulting and weathering of these rocks during the past 20 million years has resulted in the incision of deep canyons along the flanks of the range. Team discussed Vick's Peak is outside of area's boundaries but views are possible from D3_ADJ8.d

Question 4b Findings

Areas receive **Low** finding; there are few outstanding landscape features.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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<u>Question 4c</u>. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative**: D3_ADJ8.d: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 2.2%. Team discussed that some of the resource sites may have already been removed from the area boundaries.
    - D3_ADJ8.e: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Moderate, percent surveyed 4.3%.
    - D3_ADJ8.r: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Low, percent surveyed 19.9%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r is full of historic lore including ties to infamous Apaches who lead the resistance against America's westward expansion and notorious outlaws Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

<u>Question 4c Findings</u>

D3_ADJ8.d receives a finding of **<u>High</u>**, due to several resources sites. D3_ADJ8.e receives a finding of **<u>Moderate,</u>** due to some resources sites. D3_ADJ8.r receives a finding of **<u>Low</u>**, due to few resources sites.

<u>Question 4d.</u> Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4d Findings</u>

Areas receive a **<u>Low</u>** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

<u>Question 4e</u>. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d Stanley Springs is the headwaters of the watershed for Monticello. No outstanding water features occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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Question 4e Findings

D3_ADJ8.d: Area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to some high quality watershed features. D3_ADJ8.e and ADJ8.r receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d: West Monticello and Penasco grazing allotments; improvements require intermittent motorized maintenance occurs for these improvements.
    - D3_ADJ8.e: Nogal grazing allotments; public comment that area has extensive cattle grazing. One spring needs intermittent motorized maintenance. Area receives active prospecting for gold.
    - D3_ADJ8.r: Penasco and Nogal grazing allotments; no improvements in area need maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** For all areas: U.S. mining laws govern management of the known mineral resources that currently exist within the area. There are no active mining claims. Portions of the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) are in the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management. All areas contain portions of critical habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl but this is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d: Small private inholdings along east and west edges; no access to these is within area boundaries. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
    - D3_ADJ8.e: Small private inholdings along north and east edges; no access to these is within area boundaries, however the access to private inholdings along northern edge creates a pocket of land between the existing wilderness and this area, affecting adjacency. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
    - D3_ADJ8.r: All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Wilderness is adjacent to portions of all areas. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service. Some private land inholdings occur. Public comment received that mining and ranching occur on adjacent lands.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use in the polygon is unknown at this time. No information has been provided. Prospecting may occur in area which has been traditionally used in area historically.

- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.e: Mechanized use occurs by prospectors in area. Some wood-cutting occurs near Springtime.
  - D3_ADJ8.d: Some mechanized maintenance occurs on the existing Apache Kid Wilderness boundary fence. This occurs between the northern border and southern extent of the Apache Kid Wilderness.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season. D3_ADJ8.e has a permit for national endurance ride; this event uses National Forest System Road 225 and cannot use existing wilderness; event sites are outside of the area boundaries.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d and D3_ADJ8.r each have one cherry-stemmed road within boundaries. D3_ADJ8.r's cherry-stemmed road almost completely bisects it into two separate parcels, which would affect manageability due to creating isolated pockets. D3_ADJ.d is very open terrain.
  - D3_ADJ8.e has a cherry-stemmed road almost completely bisecting it into two separate parcels, which would affect manageability due to creating isolated pockets. Additionally, there is one cherry-stemmed road stemming from southern edge.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** D3_ADJ8.d: Area is almost entirely within Apache Kid Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA)
  - D3_ADJ8.e: Area is almost entirely within Apache Kid IRA
  - D3_ADJ8.r: Small portion of area is San Jose IRA
  - D3_ADJ8.d: District reports unauthorized ATV use off of road in southwestern portion.
  - Public comment received that areas are isolated from human activity with limited access.

<u>Question 5a Findings</u>

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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D3_ADJ8.d: This area receives a **Moderate** finding; management to preserve wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.
D3_ADJ8.e: This area receives a **Moderate** finding overall; other uses occur in isolated spots (around Springtime to northwest, one cherry-stemmed road, and private land access issues in north)
D3_ADJ8.r: This area receives a **High** finding; management to preserve wilderness characteristics high throughout the area.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/2/16: Finding: D3_ADJ8.d has wilderness character north of Garcia canyon, within the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries. The remainder of the area does not have wilderness character. D3_ADJ8.e has wilderness character within the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries and the small portion north of the inventoried roadless area boundary. The remainder of the area does not have wilderness character. D3_ADJ8.r does not have wilderness character, due to the low opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in this small area. Preferred Proposal:D3_ADJ8.d: Team was split on preferred proposal for this area. Recommend northern part of area (north of Garcia canyon, within the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries) as potential wilderness. Manage the remaining area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Rationale: Garcia Canyon is wild and wilderness character is present within the IRA. Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area. Rationale: private land adjacencies and seeing some developments from some places within area. D3_ADJ8.e: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area. Team considered the portion that had wilderness character as potential wilderness, but decided that the private lands and access in the north, separating the area from the existing wilderness, would cause a manageability issue because this would mostly separate the area from the existing wilderness. D3_ADJ8.r: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Alternative: Public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements; these areas are within their Zone 2 designation for backcountry management. Alternative: D3_ADJ8.d Public comment received recommends this area as wilderness. D3_ADJ8.e Public comment recommends this area as wilderness. D3_ADJ8.r Public comment recommends this area as wilderness.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

D3_ADJ8.d
Finding: Area has wilderness character north of Garcia canyon, within the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries. The remainder of the area does not have wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas outside the Inventoried Roadless Area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area. Emphasis on scenic integrity in Garcia Canyon.

Alternatives: Manage entire areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range

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improvements.

D3_ADJ8.e
Finding: Area has wilderness character within the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries and the small portion north of the inventoried roadless area boundary. The remainder of the area does not have wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas outside the Inventoried Roadless Area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health. Emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area.

Alternatives: Manage entire areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

D3_ADJ8.r
Finding: Area does not have wilderness character, due to the low opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in this small area.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on watershed health.

Alternatives: Manage entire areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ8.e IDT Findings 2/2/16	D3_ADJ8.e Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ8.d IDT Findings 2/2/16	D3_ADJ8.d Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16	D3_ADJ8.r IDT Findings 2/2/16	D3_ADJ8.r Steering Committee Decision 2/11/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Low**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**	**Low**	**Low**
	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4b	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4c	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**High**	**High**

Summary	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 2M, 3L	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 2M, 3L	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 1H, 1M, 3L	**Required: 2H, 4M** Supplemental: 1H, 1M, 3L	**Required: 4H, 2L** Supplemental: 5L	**Required: 4H, 2L** Supplemental: 5L
Evaluation Finding	Yes; IRA and small portion north of IRA	Yes; IRA and small portion north of IRA	Yes; North of Garcia Canyon within IRA	Yes; North of Garcia Canyon within IRA	No	No
Preferred Proposal	Desired conditions, multiple use watershed health, maintaining characteristics of IRA	Forest-wide desired conditions, other multiple uses, watershed health. maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area.	Split finding: 1) Recommend northern part of area (north of Garcia canyon, within IRA) as potential wilderness. Manage remaining area for Forest-wide desired conditions, multiple uses watershed health. 2) Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions, multiple uses watershed health, maintaining characteristics of IRA.	Forest-wide desired conditions, other multiple uses, watershed health. maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area. scenic integrity in Garcia Canyon.	Desired conditions, multiple use with emphasis on watershed health.	Forest-wide desired conditions, other multiple uses, watershed health.

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Alternatives for Area	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements	Manage entire areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.	Public comment submitted has suggested these areas as wilderness. Additional public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

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Steering Committee Review Notes, 02/11/2016:

D3_ADJ8.d
Steering Committee added to 5a notes when considering openness of terrain.

Steering Committee considered alternative to manage the area with wilderness character as potential wilderness but STC decided topography of area was too open and a defensible boundary for wilderness would be difficult to manage.

The IDT was split on a preferred proposal for this area, and the Steering Committee decided on a preferred proposal.

D3_ADJ8.e Steering Committee considered public comment suggesting the area for potential wilderness, but the area that has wilderness character is separated from existing wilderness by a section of private lands and access in the north, and this would be difficult to manage (a section of non-wilderness between one existing and one potential wilderness).

Steering Committee considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife

improvements, with no mining. Steering Committee accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; Steering Committee decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

D3_ADj8.r Steering Committee considered the public comment suggestion that these areas be managed as wilderness. After reviewing the notes and findings for the individual criteria, the Steering Committee noted that the area received a Low for solitude and primitive recreation, due to the adjacency to the road, the small size, and the configuration of the area with steep slopes.

Steering Committee considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. Steering Committee accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; STC decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: South San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_5K19: T9S R6W, T9S R5W; 6,198 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/01/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Lead on FPR Core Team), Daniel LeVrier (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist).
Landscape Team members: Lacy Levine (NMDA)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Meeting date: 2/19/16

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no invasive species in the four areas.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that observed and saw signs of wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, and quail.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: Alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen tree mix, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, ponderosa pine, grama, grass mix.

Question 1a Findings

These areas receives a **High**, non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas

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- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.

- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows some scattered spot fires throughout the area.
- Other:
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
  - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
  - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
  - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
  - Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
  - Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data and District staff confirm no known heliports or airports. Geospatial data show one abandoned mine in the northern portion of the area, two sections of active claims within the southern portion of the area, and closed mines along the perimeter of the entire area. Minerals

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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Specialist reports that there was old mining activity in this area and that prospecting will continue in the area. San Jose Spring rock header captures water; there will need to be mechanized use for maintenance. There is a pipeline in the southeastern portion of the area; could be on ridge between Lumber Canyon and Deer Canyon. Geospatial data reflects no decommissioned roads or unauthorized routes; this entire area is rugged and highly mountainous. There are roads located adjacent to the eastern and southern perimeters of the area. Minerals Specialist confirms some roads within the area that are used by prospectors. Geospatial data and District staff confirm no system trails. No fences occur within the area.

- Public comment received about different wells and access to wells (such as 941); these were cherry stemmed out (La Madera) as well as other wells along the perimeter. Additional comments regarding the Penasco Allotment have already been addressed within the Inventory phase.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas.

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
  - **Narrative:** General topography within the area is rugged, highly mountainous, lots of drainages. Screening is possible throughout the entire area.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the southern tip of the area. One cherry stemmed road occurs in the southern portion of the area. Two active mining claims occur in the southern tip of the area. Minerals Specialist confirms some mechanized use for mineral prospecting occurs in the area along with associated roads.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides may use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
  - Public comment received that area offers feeling of remoteness and opportunities for solitude.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Activities include hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, and wildlife watching throughout the areas.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received about recreational mining activity in the Aragon Hill area (out of the area but the active mining claims are in that area).
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 62% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 38% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

Area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** This area is over 5,000 acres, therefore criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant or animal communities.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** District staff confirms that Casa Grande is located in the northwestern corner of the area. There are unique rock formations throughout the area.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
  - **Narrative:** Scenic views are possible. 39% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4b Findings

These areas receive a **Moderate** finding; there are some outstanding landscape features due to the presence of Casa Grande, unique rock formations, and scenic views.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative**: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of unknown, percent surveyed 0%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

Area receives a **Low** finding due to no reported cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No outstanding water features occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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Question 4e Findings

These areas receive a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** There are 8 active mining claims in the southern portion of the area boundaries. Prospecting pressure of activities occur; incompatible for managing for wilderness character. Manageability is an issue because pressure exists and mechanized use occurs in association with prospecting. Public comment received about active mining claims being used for recreational mining. Public comment received that area contains Penasco allotment – with a working cow ranch with 440 deeded acres with a maintained road; at Turkey spring there is a cabin and concrete water storage and mine shaft. These improvements are outside of the area boundaries, except for four springs (two of which are not developed) and one pipeline still within area boundaries (shown in geospatial data). One spring is a rock header. The improvements still within the area boundaries require intermittent motorized/mechanized maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** Portions of the USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (final in summer 2015) are in the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management. U.S. mining laws govern management of the known mineral resources that currently exist within the area.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Small private inholding at southern edge with no access within the area boundaries. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Small private inholding at southern edge with no access within the area boundaries. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional uses do occur in this area but no known conflicts with cultural and traditional uses of the area in managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.

- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season. Hunting and horseback riding may occur in area. Public comment received that Apache Kid Trail/Indian Springs Endurance rides occur along trails in this area; group sizes on these events may exceed what is consistent with managing for wilderness character (group size impacts on solitude). Team discussed that this event is outside of area boundaries (to the north of the area) and trail maintenance for this event could occur without mechanized equipment if it was within the area boundaries.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** Area contains one cherry stemmed road in the southern portion.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Majority of area is San Jose Inventoried Roadless Area.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; other uses occur in scattered areas and makes management to preserve wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/2/16: Finding: The team finds that 5K19 does have wilderness character north of the cherry-stemmed road (including entire area north of southern edge of sections 24, 19, 20, and 21), particularly in the Casa Grande area. Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses. Emphasis on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas. Emphasis on maintaining scenic integrity of Casa Grande area. Possible Alternative for Steering Committee Review: Consider as potential wilderness if Steering Committee finds that size is manageable. Once areas with active claims are removed, area is approximately 3,700 acres. Alternatives: Public comment received recommends areas should have an emphasis on backcountry management. Public comment continues that the focus should be on prescribed fire, wildlife habitat improvement, habitat conservation, no new roads or motorized trails, primitive recreation, maintain existing recreation improvements, honor existing permitted grazing, and maintain existing range improvements. Public comment also continued that mining should be

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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prohibited. Issue of note: In the northern portion, there are a number of closed mining claims, ranging from 23-160 per section, so there is high mineral potential in this area. Some closed mining claims overlap the area boundaries on the western edge. Public comment received that wilderness would limit claim expansion.

Steering Committee Decision, 2/11/16

Finding: 5K19 has wilderness character north of the cherry-stemmed road (including entire area north of southern edge of sections 24, 19, 20, and 21), particularly in the Casa Grande area.

Preferred Proposal: Manage areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses. Emphasis on management of lands that are inventoried roadless areas. Emphasis on maintaining scenic integrity of Casa Grande area.

Alternatives: Manage areas with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, which would include allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_5K19 IDT Findings 2/2/16	D3_5K19 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	Low	Low
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Low**	**Low**
Summary		**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 2M, 3L	**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 2M, 3L
Evaluation Finding		Yes; north of cherry-stemmed road (including entire area north of southern edge of sections 24, 19, 20, and 21), particularly in the Casa Grande area.	Yes; north of cherry-stemmed road (including entire area north of southern edge of sections 24, 19, 20, and 21), particularly in the Casa Grande area.
Preferred Proposal		Desired conditions, multiple use Emphasis on IRA mgmt, maintaining scenic integrity of Casa Grande area.	Desired conditions, multiple use Emphasis on IRA mgmt, maintaining scenic integrity of Casa Grande area.

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Alternatives for Area	Consider as potential wilderness if Steering committee finds that size is manageable. Once areas with active claims are removed, area is approximately 3,700 acres. Public comment recommends desired conditions with an emphasis on wildlife habitat improvements.	emphasis on wildlife habitat improvement, allowing and encouraging prescribed fire, habitat conservation, semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, maintaining existing recreation improvements and opportunities, existing permitted grazing, and existing range improvements.

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes, 02/19/2016:

Steering committee considered potential alternative suggestion to consider the approximately 3700 acres in an alternative as potential wilderness. Steering committee decided that the remaining small size would be difficult to manage as an isolated pocket of wilderness.

Steering committee considered alternative from public to manage area with management focused on wildlife improvements, with no mining. Steering committee accepted alternative with the exception of the 'no mining' suggestion; STC decided that standards, guidelines, and plan components cannot be in conflict with existing laws (1872 Mining Act).

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Northwest San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_ADJ8.b: T8S R4W, T6S R5W, T8S R5W, T7S R5W, T7S R6W, T7S R4W, T6S R6W; 22,244 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/03/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Biologist on FPR Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Toby (Sierra SWCD), Lacy Levine (NMDA)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee: 2/19/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Areas contain typical wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, white tail deer, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, and quail, pronghorn, bird and bat communities.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, grass grama mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa douglas fir mix, alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, sparsely vegetated.
  - Public comment received that the area contains wildlife including populations of mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, great horned owl, and Mexican spotted owl.

Question 1a Findings

Area receives a **High** finding; non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation treatments. No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** District staff and Landscape team confirm HSP prescribed burns were located in the central and southern portions: San Juan Burn 2001 and Longspring Burn 2000. The Milligan fire in 1995 and the Cigarette fire in 1992 (lightning) occurred in the northern portion, Deep Fire in 1977 occurred in the central portion, as well as the Basin fire in 1981, Wasp fire in 2007, and Gorge Fire in 2000 within southern portion of the area. Additional fires: San Juan and Pine fires from 2000.
    - Insect and disease mortality areas are isolated throughout more of the central and southern portions of the area. (insect and disease mortality).
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

Area receives a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
    - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no airports or heliports in the area and no active mining claims. Minerals Specialist and geospatial data confirms several closed mines including Stral Mine in the south/central portion and Steel Hill mine in the southern portion. Mining interest in area. Inactive mining claims occur within the central section and continuing prospecting would occur in areas of closed mines. Prime fence occurs within the central and southern portion, a natural barrier occurs in the central section, and a range allotment boundary fence is in the northern portion near Horse Mountain (not substantially noticeable);there is a pipeline in the southern section near National Forest System Road (NFSR) 980 and Black Mountain spring and pipeline, as well as Wasp Tank (substantially noticeable), numerous springs including Wood Canyon rockheader, Rincon well drinker, Cold Spring, Dick Spring, Pine Tree Spring. There are closed roads to the Bandera Hill in the northern portion and one small unauthorized route in the southern and central sections. There are six cherry-stemmed roads in the area.
- Public comment received that Rincon well drinker goes to the fiberglass storage tank, float box, drinking trough; this road to the Rincon improvements is the only access to this area for maintenance and repair to provide water to livestock and wildlife.
- Public comment received that Deep Canyon allotment has a pipeline, 3 drinkers, and 2 storage tanks that need access for maintenance and repair to provide water to livestock and wildlife. The structures inhibit the integrity of wilderness aspect.
- Additional public comment received about the Horse Mountain range allotment and Deep Canyon.
- Public comment received about San Juan allotment, that there are numerous man-made storage tanks, corrals, miles of fences, flying area used by aircraft, wood cutting.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to obvious evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in most areas (large extent of range improvements relative to size and shape of area).

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

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Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** The general topography of the area is mountainous; canyons run west to east, large amount of pinyon juniper habitat, and a couple deep canyons. District staff and landscape team member concur that there are opportunities for solitude within the deep canyons. NFSR 331A is a rough road but gets higher traffic during hunting season.
    - Landscape team member notes that the distance from Black Mountain Peak to I-25 is approximately 11 miles; states that the view to the east is bisected by I-25 and that noise is audible.
    - Public comment received that due to its size, roadless characteristics, topography, vegetation, and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness, the proposed Apache Kid Eastern Wilderness Expansion provides outstanding opportunities for solitude.
    - Several other public comments received that there are many opportunities for solitude.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative**: Private land is adjacent to the northern, central, and southern boundaries (five different private parcels).
    - Area is adjacent to the Apache Kid Wilderness along entire western boundary. Forest Service land is adjacent to the other boundaries.
    - There are six cherry-stemmed roads within the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season- Sept. Jan.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Area offers backcountry opportunities for hikers, hunters, backpackers, campers, stargazing, horseback riders, rock climbing.
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- **Narrative:** There is ATV use that should be occurring within authorized routes that have been cherry-stemmed out; heavier use during hunting season.
- No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 60% SPNM ROS Class.
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 37% SPM ROS Class.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is adjacent to existing wilderness, therefore this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding, due to no rare plant or animal communities.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** District staff confirms unique geologic features/rock outcropping at Skeleton ridge, Cold Spring Canyon, the Gorge, and Deep Canyon (1/2 mile long slot canyon).
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** Exceptional viewpoints from high points are available in the area.
    - 61% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that Cold Spring Canyon is one of the most visually appealing trails in the San Mateo Mountains. The canyon contains scenic rock formations and views of the high country around Blue Mountain and Apache Kid Peak. From atop the canyon rims, views to the east are immense and breathtaking. The Magdalena Mountains can be seen rising dramatically from the basin floor, while to the south and west, the Apache Kid Wilderness dominates the landscape, with Blue Mountain and Apache Kid Peak prominently featured. The various gorges throughout the area also afford remarkable views of high canyon walls and open valley bottoms. The Forest Service notes in its hiking guide for the San Mateos that Drift Fence Trail (National Forest System Trail #28), which starts within the proposal area and enters the Apache Kid Wilderness, "certainly offer[s] solitude, as the only users are ranchers hauling salt for cattle by horseback about once a year." The hiking guide

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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also notes that Cold Spring Trail, which starts in the proposal area and eventually leads into the Apache Kid Wilderness, is one of the most scenic trails in the San Mateo Mountains.

- Team discussed a split finding from Moderate to High finding; there are some to several outstanding landscape features.

Question 4b Findings

Area receives a **Moderate** finding; there are some outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
  - **Narrative:** Forest Service Archaeologist reports a finding of Moderate, percent surveyed 1.5%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

This area receives a finding of **Moderate** some cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
  - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

Areas receive a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Intermittent perennial for Cold Spring Canyon; five springs occur in the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

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Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; some high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data and Mineral Specialist confirms no active mining claims are in the area; there are areas of prospecting that occur along the northeastern boundary and central portion of the area. Mechanized use in association with the prospecting would occur.
    - Horse Mountain, Deep Canyon, Nogal, and San Juan grazing allotments occur in the area; there are fencing, water, and pipeline improvements that require intermittent motorized maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** U.S. mining laws govern management; there are no active mining claims but prospecting does occur.
    - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) occurs in portions of the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
    - Area contains portions of critical habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl along the western/central portions of the area but this is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
    - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the northeastern, eastern, and southern boundaries.
    - All other adjacent lands are Forest Service and the Apache Kid Wilderness is adjacent to the western boundary.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
    - **Narrative:** Wilderness is adjacent to the western boundary. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service. Some private land occurs on the eastern/southern boundaries.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
    - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use occurs in the polygon; but no known conflicts.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.

- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** Mechanized use associated with prospecting occurs in the area. ATV use during hunting season; these uses occur on the roads which have been cherry stemmed out.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
  - Special use--Section 12 road easement—not applicable because access outside of area.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** There are approximately six cherry-stemmed roads within the area.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Apache Kid Contiguous Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) occurs in the majority of the entire area (approximately 95%).
  - Public comment received that the majority of the area is isolated from human activity with limited access.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence of other uses occurs in scattered areas (extent of range improvements, cherry stemmed roads, prospecting) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/3/16: Finding: There is wilderness character located within the northwestern portion of the area; excluding the northeastern corner and northwestern corners, south of the range allotment boundary fence (going east/west) extending south of Cold Spring Canyon (approximately 4,500 acres). Natural barrier is to the south/not constructed feature as a boundary. Team did not draw area in GIS but described it. Preferred Proposal: Recommend area (approximately 4,500 acres) delineated with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed and riparian health, and scenery plan components for specific areas. Alternative: Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed and riparian health, and scenery plan components for specific areas. Alternative: Public comment received recommends this area as Apache Kid Eastern Wilderness Expansion (and part of the Northern Wilderness Expansion) (as wilderness).

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

Finding: Area has wilderness character within the northwestern portion of the area; south of the range allotment boundary fence and extending just south of Cold Spring Canyon (approximately 4,500 acres). The remaining portion does not have wilderness character.

Preferred Proposal: Manage area with wilderness character (approximately 4,500 acres) as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage remaining portion of area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed and riparian health, and scenery plan components for specific areas—Gorge and Skeleton Ridge.

Alternatives: Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed and riparian health, and scenery plan components for specific areas—Gorge and Skeleton Ridge.

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ8.b IDT Findings 2/3/16	D3_ADJ8.b Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Low**	**Low**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Low	Low
	4b	Moderate to High	Moderate
	4c	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Moderate	Moderate
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 1M/H, 2M, 2L	**Required: 3H, 2M, 1L** Supplemental: 3M, 2L
Evaluation Finding		Yes in NW portion, south of E/W range fence, extending south of Cold Spring Canyon	Yes in NW portion, south of E/W range fence, extending south of Cold Spring Canyon
Preferred Proposal		Recommend area (approximately 4,500 acres) delineated with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other areas for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics, watershed/riparian health, scenery	Recommend area (approximately 4,500 acres) delineated with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other areas for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics, watershed/riparian health, scenery (Gorge and Skeleton Ridge)
Alternatives for Area		Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics, watershed/riparian health, scenery. Public comment recommends as potential wilderness.	Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics, watershed/riparian health, scenery (Gorge and Skeleton Ridge)

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/19/2016:

Steering Committee decided on a Moderate for 4b.
Steering Committee concurred with all other findings, preferred proposal, and alternatives.
Steering Committee decided on which portions have wilderness character.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Northwest San Mateos Mountain Area D3_ADJ8.c: T9S R6W, T8S R7W, T7S R6W, T8S R6W, T7S R7W, T9S R7W; 12,878 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/03/16

Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Biologist on FPR Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Toby (Sierra SWCD), Lacy Levine (NMDA)

Forest Plan Revision Steering committee Decision:

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows salt cedar occurs along a thin drainage corridor within the central portion. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Areas contain typical wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, white tail deer, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, and quail, bird and bat communities.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen mix, douglas-fir, pinyon juniper, grass grama mix, ponderosa pine, ponderosa douglas fir mix.
  - Public comment received that the area contains wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, coyote, turkey, quail, great horned owl, and Mexican spotted owl.

Question 1a Findings

Area receives a **Moderate** finding due to non-native species are evident in isolated spots (salt cedar).

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation treatments. No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - **Narrative:** There are several fires scattered throughout the area: within the northern portion is the Coffee Pot fire in 1994, Holdup fire in 2012, unknown in 1971, Mateo fire in 2000, Cook fire in 1996, Blue Mountain fire in 2003, and Wildhorse fire in 1997.
    - Insect and disease mortality areas are scattered throughout much of the area (insect and disease mortality).
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **High** finding; vegetation appears natural.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
    - Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
    - Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
    - Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.

[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no airports or heliports in the area; just a helipad located in the buffer to the north. No active mining claims. Minerals Specialist and geospatial data confirms closed claims south of Wild Horse Canyon, extending to the southern boundary and small section of closed claims along the northwestern boundary. Prospecting currently occurs in this area, especially within the areas of closed claims and would include mechanized use. System trails occur in the area. Natural barrier runs north/south through north central portion, small section of fence in southern portion, small section of fence near solar well tank and wilderness boundary fence (constructed feature) along the bottom third of the eastern boundary; Range improvements include for the San Mateo and Ojo Caliente range allotments: pipeline and drinker within the southern portion, pipeline located near Flats tank/Upper well in the south, Solar Well to the north, Holdup has a 4 wheeler trail (used to be 2 track road) pit tanks, and a trick tank, Whitetail tank, Rock Spring Tank in the north, Oak Springs, Cooks well; corral, cabin, windmill, and tank at Cooks Cabin (falls within historic improvements category).
- Team discussed a split finding of Low to Moderate, due to unnoticeable human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas (large extent of range improvements). Discussion among landscape team for Low rationale that range improvements such as trick tanks, fiberglass tanks, and pipelines are noticeable and detract from apparent naturalness in most areas.

Question 1c Findings

This area receives a finding of **Low**, due to obvious evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness throughout (large extent of range improvements).

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?

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- **Narrative:** The general topography contains a lot of canyons and is at lower range of elevation; canyons run northeast to southwest; deep canyons and side draws. District Ranger confirms that the further north you go the more remote/quiet it gets, as the further south you get there are more signs of civilization. District staff confirms that the northwestern area near FR 511 gets more moderate use during hunting season. Large amount of Forest Service roads are located outside of the area's western boundary. Landscape team member states that you can hear traffic from adjacent roads from within the area and can see the roads from high vantage points.
- Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness ensures solitude. Once visitors leave the boundary roads, they experience seclusion and know that they are within a wild place untrammeled by humans and primeval in character.
- Several other public comments received that there are many opportunities for solitude.

- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
  - **Narrative**: Private land is adjacent to the southern boundary between ADJ8.c and ADJ8.d.
  - Area is adjacent to the Apache Kid Wilderness along entire eastern boundary. Forest Service land is adjacent to all of the other boundaries.
  - There are four cherry-stemmed roads within the area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season- September through January.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding due to feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Area provide backcountry opportunities for hikers, hunters, backpackers, campers, stargazing, horseback riders.
  - Public comment received that outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined or primitive forms of recreation including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, stargazing, and horseback-riding. The Forest Service notes in its hiking guide that the San Mateo Trail, which starts in the

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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proposal area and enters into the Apache Kid Wilderness, is very remote, very rough, and primitive, and that solitude is the trail's most attractive feature. The hiking guide also notes that the Maverick Trail, which starts in the proposal area and enters into the Apache Kid Wilderness, is seldom used and also offers a great deal of solitude.

- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
    - **Narrative:** There is ATV use that should be occurring within authorized routes that have been cherry stemmed out; heavier use during hunting season.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
    - **Narrative:** 66% SPNM ROS Class.
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
    - **Narrative:** 32% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is adjacent to existing wilderness, so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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<u>Question 4a.</u> Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?
Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
    - **Narrative:** One Mexican Spotted Owl PAC is located in the central portion of the area.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

<u>Question 4a Findings</u>

This area receives a **<u>Moderate</u>** finding, due to the presence of MSO.

<u>Question 4b</u>. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** Multiple public comments received that this area is scenic.
    - 32% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that there are many special features and values within the proposed Apache Kid Western Wilderness Expansion, starting with the rugged canyons, striking rock formations and high ridges that contrast so dramatically with the surrounding plains. Panoramic views from atop the canyon rims are terrific, as are the sights as one explores the numerous canyons
    - No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Question 4b Findings

Area receives a **Low** finding; there are no outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - Narrative: Forest Service archaeologist reports a finding of Moderate; percent surveyed 0.3%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the area is full of historic lore. Notorious Apaches leaders Cochise, Geronimo, and Victorio who lead resistance against America's westward expansion and renegade outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch have ties to the area.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

This area receives a finding of **Moderate** (0.3% surveyed). Due to information that could be shared the Team concurred with this finding.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

Areas receive a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Intermittent perennial in San Mateo Canyon, Whitetail spring occurs in the southern portion of the area. Headwaters to the Alamosa outlet watershed, supplies water to the Monticello acequia, and supplies water to Ojo Caliente.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; some high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
  - **Narrative:** Geospatial data and Mineral Specialist confirms no active mining claims in the area; there are areas of prospecting that occurs along the areas of closed claims within the southern portion of the area (south of Wild Horse Canyon) and the northwestern corner. Mechanized use in association with the prospecting would occur.
  - San Mateo, and Ojo Caliente grazing allotments occur in the area; there are fencing, water, and pipeline improvements that require intermittent motorized maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
  - **Narrative:** U.S. mining laws govern management; there are no active mining claims but prospecting does occur.
  - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) occurs throughout the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.
  - Contains portions of critical habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl but this is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character.
- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the southern boundary of the area.
  - All other adjacent lands are Forest Service and the Apache Kid Wilderness is adjacent to the eastern boundary.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Wilderness is adjacent to the eastern boundary. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service. Some private land occurs adjacent to the southern boundary.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use occurs in the polygon; but no known conflicts.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

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- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
    - **Narrative:** Mechanized maintenance for EQIP projects occurs within the area.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
    - **Narrative:** Mechanized use associated with prospecting occurs in the area. ATV use during hunting season; these uses occur on the roads which have been cherry stemmed out.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
    - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
    - **Narrative:** There are four cherry stemmed roads within the area.
- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** Apache Kid Contiguous IRA occurs in the majority of the entire area (approximately 90%).
    - Public comment received that the majority of the area is isolated from areas of human activity, with limited access and very few encumbrances.

Question 5a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence of other uses occurs in scattered areas (extent of range improvements, EQIP maintenance, prospecting) and makes management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/3/16: Finding: There is wilderness character located within the northern area (north of Holdup tanks), excluding the Holdup range improvement area, the Cooks Cabin area, and the closed mining claims/prospecting sections. South of Cooks Cabin to the southern boundary does not have wilderness character (including the bottom of San Mateo Canyon due to invasive species).
Preferred Proposal: Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed health, and invasive species management. Alternative: Manage area for potential wilderness with continuance of permitted and authorized uses (approximately 3,000 acres located north of Holdup tanks in area with wilderness character). Landscape team discussed that this would not be preferable due to the manageability issues of this potential designation, lack of outstanding features, and lack of outstanding opportunity for solitude in this area.
Alternative: Public comment received recommends this area as Apache Kid Western Wilderness Expansion (and part of the Southern Wilderness Expansion) (potential wilderness).

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

Finding: There is wilderness character located within the northern area (north of Holdup tanks), excluding the Holdup range improvement area, the Cooks Cabin area, and the closed mining claims/prospecting sections. South of Cooks Cabin to the southern boundary does not have wilderness character (including the bottom of San Mateo Canyon due to invasive species).

Preferred Proposal: Manage area that was found to have wilderness character as potential wilderness and manage the remaining portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed health, and invasive species management.

Alternatives: Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed health, and invasive species management.

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ8.c IDT Findings 2/3/16	D3_ADJ8.c Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1b	**High**	**High**
	1c	**Low-Moderate**	**Low**
	2a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Low	Low
	4c	Moderate	Moderate
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Moderate	Moderate
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L/M** Supplemental: 3M, 2L	**Required: 2H, 3M, 1L** Supplemental: 3M, 2L
Evaluation Finding		Yes; in northern area (north of Holdup tanks), excluding the Holdup range improvement area, the Cooks Cabin area, and closed mining claims/prospecting sections. South of Cooks Cabin to southern boundary does not have wilderness character	Yes; in northern area (north of Holdup tanks), excluding the Holdup range improvement area, the Cooks Cabin area, and closed mining claims/prospecting sections. South of Cooks Cabin to southern boundary does not have wilderness character
Preferred Proposal		Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics watershed health, and invasive species management	Manage area for potential wilderness with continuance of permitted and authorized uses (approximately 3,000 acres located north of Holdup tanks in area with wilderness character). Manage remainder for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics watershed health, and invasive species management
Alternatives for Area		Manage area for potential wilderness with continuance of permitted and authorized uses (approximately 3,000 acres located north of Holdup tanks in area with wilderness character) Public comment recommends as potential wilderness.	Manage area for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics watershed health, and invasive species management

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

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Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/19/2016:

Steering Committee decided on a Low for 1c. Steering Committee considered team's preferred proposal and alternatives. Steering Committee decided that since the area that was found to have wilderness character excluded any detractions from wilderness character (no improvements, no manageability issues), the preferred proposal should be to consider area with wilderness character as potential wilderness and manage the remaining portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Area, watershed health, and invasive species management. Steering Committee decided on a preferred proposal and alternatives.

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Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Wilderness Character Evaluation Criteria Matrix

AREA ID/NAME:

Magdalena Ranger District: Northwest San Mateos Mountain Area
D3_ADJ8: T6S R5W, T7S R5W, T7S R6W, T5S R6W, T7S R7W, T6S R7W, T6S R6W; 32,819 acres

Evaluation interdisciplinary team meeting date: 02/03/16
Interdisciplinary evaluation team: Forest Service personnel: Champe Green (Forest Planner), Sarah Browne (Assistant Planner), Sarah Beck (Wildlife Biologist on FPR Team), Rob Arlowe (GIS Specialist), Jeanne Dawson (Timber Specialist), Suzanne Derosier (District Wildlife Biologist), Dennis Aldridge (District Ranger), and Diane Tafoya (Minerals Specialist). Landscape Team members: Toby (Sierra SWCD), Lacy Levine (NMDA)
Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee Meeting Date: 2/19/16

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Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural**.**

Considerations for 1a:

- How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the land?
  - **Narrative:** District staff and landscape team member note tamarisk is on the eastern side of the area; do not know exact location.
  - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Other (Describe the dominant vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities. Include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Areas contain typical wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, white tail deer, mule deer, javelina, coyote, turkey, quail, and bird and bat communities.
  - Dominant vegetation types include the following: spruce, mountain mahogany mix, aspen, deciduous shrub, deciduous evergreen mix, alderleaf mountain mahogany mix, douglas fir, grama mix, ponderosa pine mix.
  - Public comment received that the area contains wildlife including mountain lion, black bear, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, coyote, turkey, quail, great horned owl, and Mexican spotted owl.
  - Public comment received that there were hundreds of bats observed in the park.

- **Question 1a Findings**

Area receives a **High** finding due to non-native species are not evident.

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations for 1b:

- Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no vegetation restoration treatments.
    - No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.
- Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation species composition and structure,[1] wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?
    - Narrative: District staff and Landscape team confirm big Red Canyon is within the majority of the central and northern portion of the area consisting of approximately 17,900 acres (mixed severity). This was a lightning caused fire, turned into resource objectives/assisted by planned ignition. District wildlife biologist considers the scar to appear unnatural because the pattern of burn was ping pong lit/fire started with lightening. To the average viewer they would see a mosaic burn scar and it would appear natural. Additional fire, Coffee Pot fire, occurred in 1994 and is within the southern portion of the area; Team and District staff confirm that you can still see the fire scar on the land since it was so hot; it didn't rehab some of the line. Landscape team member and geospatial data confirm additional small lightening caused fires within the area (approximately 10 fires including Box Fire '99, Box Draw '93, Indian Creek 2000, Tool '2003, a lot overlap with Red Canyon).
    - Insect and disease mortality areas are scattered throughout the area (insect and disease mortality).
- Other:
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 1b Findings

These areas receive a **Moderate** finding; vegetation does not appear natural in scattered spots due to the pattern of the planned ignition to the Red Canyon lightening caused fire.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements[2] included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations for 1c:

- Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the presence and concentrations of all improvements listed below:
    - Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

[1] Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

[2] The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

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- Appearance and concentration of linear travelways, including maintenance level 1 roads,[3] system non-motorized and motorized trails, and known unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created). Consider length and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated).
- Appearance and concentration of fences and pipelines. Include miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.
- Appearance and concentrations of areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting, that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory.[4] Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 3 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).
- Appearance and concentration of other improvements (including but not limited to water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
- **Narrative:** Geospatial data shows no airports or heliports in the area and no active or inactive mining claims. A helipad is located just outside of the area in between ADJ8 and ADJ8.c within the buffer. There is an unauthorized route in the eastern portion at Horse Mountain and a closed road in the southern portion that is now part of the trail system; two natural barriers in the central portion of the area, drift fence which is a constructed feature runs north/south down middle of the area, range allotment boundary fences in the eastern and southern portion, Mountain Pasture Division fence in the southern portion, drift fence along eastern portion near Horse Mountain; several trails as part of the designated trail system including Grand Enchantment Trail; small piece of pipeline near Horse Mountain associated with range allotment; there are several spring drinkers (majority have been cherry stemmed out) but there are still some along Indian Spring Creek such as Indian Spring and Tool Box Spring. Pothole spring well development (not substantially noticeable) located right along southeastern border south of Hidden Spring. Wurdy Trick Tank occurs along end of 892 (not substantially noticeable) that could be cherry stemmed out. Landscape team member and geospatial data confirms new fence going from TH 90 with gate to TH, drops into canyon drainages/ties into border fence ¾ NE of Red Road Tank along with new trick tank near TH 90 that have been constructed last summer 2015 within the southeast portion on the Ojo Caliente ranch. There is an additional new trick tank proposed that is NEPA confirmed range improvements. There are approximately 15-17 cherry stemmed roads (multiple spurs), three major cherry stemmed roads, within the area.
- Public comment received that Tool box spring has a pipeline from the spring to a tub to a habitat improvement structure which runs about 2/10 miles. Geospatial data confirms that Tool box spring pipeline has been cherry-stemmed out.
- Additional public comment received that there is the Horse Mountain Range Allotment Range pipeline and 7 drinkers and 1 storage tank that needs to be accessed for regular maintenance and repair to provide for wildlife and livestock. Geospatial data confirms that small piece of the pipeline is still within the area but the drinkers along the pipeline and the tank have been cherry-stemmed out.

<u>Question 1c Findings</u>

[3] For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol, II*, page 258.
[4] See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 3 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 3 Inventory.

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This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to unnoticeable evidence of human activity and appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas (range improvements).

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations for 2a:

- Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?
    - **Narrative:** The general topography of the area is highly mountainous with high peaks, sloping rolling hills and canyons on either side of the area. National Forest System Road (NFSR) 96 along western border, NFSR 138 in northern portion (cherry stemmed out), NFSR 478 (cherry stemmed out in southern portion), and NFSR 330 along northern border have higher traffic during hunting season. Generator noise may affect area at junction of NFSR 478 and NFSR 96; generator would be outside of area boundary but noise would carry into the area. District Ranger confirms there is pervasive noise from roads along edges of area and cherry-stemmed road, but not in interior portion.
    - Public comment received that the area's remoteness and proximity to the Apache Kid Wilderness ensures solitude. Once visitors leave the boundary roads, they experience seclusion and know that they are within a wild place untrammeled by humans and primeval in character.
    - Several other public comments received that there are many opportunities for solitude.
- Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area's adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads.[5]
    - **Narrative**: Some private land occurs outside of the area's northeastern edge but not adjacent to the area. Private land is adjacent to the eastern boundary near NFSR 378 where there are a couple residences. Proposed airstrip and RV Park located outside and north of the eastern boundary.
    - Area is adjacent to Apache Kid Wilderness in southern portion.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[5] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

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- **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season- September through January.
- Team discussed a split finding from Moderate to High due to a significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization. Discussion among team for split finding that west or east of main trails there are signs of civilization but in the central core of the area it would be High.

Question 2a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding due to significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization in some places but signs of civilization are evident from some places.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations for 2b:

- Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** Public comment received that areas provide exceptional backcountry opportunities for hikers, hunters, backpackers, campers, stargazing, and horseback riders. District staff also added birding to these activities due to riparian areas (in buffers).
- Describe other types of nonprimitive recreation activities in the area.
  - **Narrative:** There is ATV use that should be occurring within authorized routes that have been cherry stemmed out; heavier use during hunting season. Several camp trailers near Rock Spring due to outfitter guide use.
  - Fences which would take away from primitive experience: Fence going north/south through middle of area, fence along eastern portion, and in southern portion.
- Percent of area with semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class. [6]
  - **Narrative:** 64% SPNM ROS Class
- Percent of area with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class.
  - **Narrative:** 33% SPM ROS Class
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

[6] The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) and semi-primitive motorized (SPM) ROS classes are being used as measures. SPNM ROS settings are areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment, low interaction between users. Primitive activities occur in this setting, and include the following: viewing scenery, hiking, walking, horseback riding, camping, hunting, nature study, mountain climbing, swimming, fishing, etc. Motorized use is not permitted in SPNM ROS settings. SPM ROS class areas provide the same experience and setting as SPNM, but motorized use occurs in addition to primitive-types of recreation. Primitive ROS classes only exist on the Forest in the ROS Inventory Existing Condition within existing wilderness, so are not being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

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- **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 2b Findings

This area receives a **High** finding; there are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Note: If an area on the Phase 3 Inventory maps is under 5,000 acres, it will be evaluated using the other Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, there are no separate considerations for Criterion 3.

- **Narrative:** This area is adjacent to existing wilderness, so this criterion does not apply.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations for 4a:

- Presence of threatened, endangered, or rare species (from Natural Heritage database and other data sets as available).
  - **Narrative:** Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Center occurs within the northern and central/southern portions of the area.
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4a Findings

This area receives a **Moderate** finding, due to the presence of MSO.

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations for 4b:

- Description of any unique geologic features in the area.
  - **Narrative:** District staff notes unique geologic features/rock outcroppings in the northern portion of the area.

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- Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class.[7]
    - **Narrative:** Exceptional viewpoints from high points are available in the area.
    - Public comment that the area is scenic.
    - 73% Distinctive Scenic Attractiveness Class
- Other (include any additional information related to the question above):
    - **Narrative:** Public comment received that the scenery found throughout the area is exceptional with numerous open canyons to explore, high ridge lines with dramatic views, an excellent chance to view wildlife, and plentiful opportunities for those seeking quietude, solitude and wildness. The rugged rock formations and steep canyons that rise from flat plains are themselves spectacular and unusual, but the panoramic views from atop the canyon rims are breathtaking. From atop the canyon rims, views to the east are immense and awe-inspiring. The Magdalena Mountains rise dramatically from the basin floor, while to the west the Plains of San Agustin unfold off the northern reaches of the Gila National Forest. The area's gorges offer remarkable views of high canyon walls and open valley bottoms.

Question 4b Findings

Areas receive **Moderate** finding; there are some outstanding landscape features.

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations for 4c:

- Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion 1, Question 1b.
    - **Narrative:** Forest Service Archaeologist reports a finding of High, percent surveyed 0.3%.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4c Findings

This area receives a finding of **High** due to several cultural resource sites.

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

[7] The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

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Considerations for 4d:

- Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.
    - **Narrative:** 0% of area is research natural area.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)
    - **Narrative:** No additional information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4d Findings

Areas receive a **Low** finding, due to no percentage of research natural area.

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations for 4e:

- Presence and extent of high quality water resources in the area.
    - **Narrative:** Intermittent perennial springs occur within the area; however, the majority of these occur in the buffered out areas. No outstanding water features occur within the area boundaries.
- Other (Include any additional information related to the question above, including whether the water resource meets state water quality standards)
    - **Narrative:** No information provided by geospatial information, District staff and specialists, or public comment.

Question 4e Findings

This area receives a **Low** finding; no high quality water features occur within the area.

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations for 5a:

- Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area. (e.g. active mining claims, grazing allotments, easements, water rights, acequias)
    - **Narrative:** Geospatial data and Mineral Specialist confirms no active mining claims in the area. Bear, Horse Mountain, West Red, and Ojo Caliente grazing allotments occur in the area; there are fencing, water, and pipeline improvements that require intermittent motorized maintenance.
- Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to designated or proposed critical habitat).
    - **Narrative:** U.S. mining laws govern management; there are no active mining claims.
    - The USFWS Mexican Wolf occupied range (2015 final summer 2015) occurs in the majority of the western portion of the area but is not in conflict with managing for wilderness management.

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- Area contains portions of critical habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl but this is not in conflict with managing for wilderness character.

- Presence and extent of non-Federal land and access in the area[8]
  - **Narrative:** Private land occurs adjacent to the eastern boundary.
  - All other adjacent lands are Forest Service and the Apache Kid Wilderness is adjacent to the southern boundary.
- Describe management of adjacent lands.
  - **Narrative:** Wilderness is adjacent to the southern boundary. All other adjacent lands are Forest Service. Some private land occurs on the eastern boundary.
- Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)
  - **Narrative:** Cultural and traditional use occurs in the polygon; but no known conflicts.
- Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.
  - **Narrative:** 0% WUI within all areas.
- Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).
  - **Narrative:** Several constructed features in Ojo Caliente Ranch area that are approved for installation.
- Describe existence and extent of motorized and mechanized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).
  - **Narrative:** ATV use during hunting season; these uses occur on the roads which have been cherry stemmed out.
- Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.
  - **Narrative:** Outfitter and guides do use aircraft to scout wildlife during hunting season.
- Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed"[9] roads or other linear features.
  - **Narrative:** There are approximately 15-17 cherry stemmed roads (multiple spurs)/three major cherry stemmed roads within the area.

- Other (Include presence of Inventoried Roadless Areas and any additional information related to the question above)
  - **Narrative:** Apache Kid Contiguous IRA occurs in the central/eastern/southern portions of the area (approximately 50%).
  - Special use identified is by Wesley Henderson—doesn't apply to this area.
  - Public comment received that because of limited access, the majority of the area is isolated from areas of human activity.

<u>Question 5a Findings</u>

[8] This consideration, in addition to "Describe management of adjacent lands" and "Presence and extent of 'cherry stemmed' roads or other linear features" informs the consideration of shape and configuration as outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70.

[9] The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.

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This area receives a **Moderate** finding; presence of other uses occurs in scattered areas (major cherry stemmed roads, range improvements including fencing/water/pipeline) and makes management to preserve wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.

IDT Findings and Preferred Proposal Discussion (How should this area be managed? Include any suggested alternatives), 2/3/16: Finding: There is wilderness character located along the southern portion immediately adjacent to the existing Apache Kid Wilderness excluding the southern tip due to multiple range improvements within that area; as well as a narrow corridor going from Apache Kid to Grassy Flat lookout does have wilderness character (see GIS for area delineated with wilderness character—take closer look at topographic and constructed features such as fence lines and trails). The portion from east of NFSR 331 (from where it terminates at Turkey Spring) to the eastern boundary as well as the western portion do not have wilderness character due to the extent of range improvements and human presence. Preferred Proposal: Recommend area delineated with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other areas for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas. Outside of the area: manage for desired conditions for riparian areas/aspen/Engelmann spruce and watershed health. Alternative: Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas. Alternative: Public comment received recommends this area as Apache Kid Northern Wilderness Expansion (and part of the Western Wilderness Expansion) (potential wilderness).

Steering Committee Decision, 2/19/16

Finding: Area along the southern portion immediately adjacent to the existing Apache Kid Wilderness (excluding the southern tip due to multiple range improvements within that area) and continuing north to Grassy Flat Lookout has wilderness character. The portions east of NFSR 331 (from where it terminates at Turkey Spring) to the eastern boundary as well as the western portion do not have wilderness character due to the extent of range improvements and human presence.

Preferred Proposal: Manage area with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas. Outside of the area recommended for potential wilderness: manage for desired conditions for riparian areas/aspen/Engelmann spruce and watershed health.

Alternatives: Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

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Wilderness Evaluation Findings and Summary Table

Area ID:		D3_ADJ8 IDT Findings 2/3/16	D3_ADJ8 Steering Committee Decision 2/19/16
Criterion Question*	**1a**	**High**	**High**
	1b	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	1c	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
	2a	**Moderate to High**	**Moderate**
	2b	**High**	**High**
	3	N/A	N/A
	4a	Moderate	Moderate
	4b	Moderate	Moderate
	4c	High	High
	4d	Low	Low
	4e	Low	Low
	5a	**Moderate**	**Moderate**
Summary		**Required: 2H, 1M/H, 3M** Supplemental: 1H, 2M, 2L	**Required: 2H, 1M/H, 3M** Supplemental: 1H, 2M, 2L
Evaluation Finding		Yes (see GIS for area delineated with wilderness character)	Yes, along the southern portion immediately adjacent to the existing Apache Kid Wilderness (excluding the southern tip due to multiple range improvements within that area) and continuing north to Grassy Flat Lookout
Preferred Proposal		Recommend area delineated with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continued permitted uses. Manage other areas for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the IRA, and protection of riparian areas/aspen/Engelmann spruce and watershed health.	Manage area with wilderness character as potential wilderness with continuance of authorized and permitted uses. Manage other portions of the area for Forest-wide desired conditions and other multiple uses, maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas. Outside of the area recommended for potential wilderness: manage for desired conditions for riparian areas/aspen/Engelmann spruce and watershed health.
Alternatives for Area		Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions with emphasis on maintaining IRA characteristics. Public comment recommends as potential wilderness.	Manage entire area for Forest-wide desired conditions and continue managing for other multiple uses with emphasis on maintaining characteristics of the Inventoried Roadless Areas.

* Required criteria are bold—Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness, Criterion 2: Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Type of Recreation, and Criterion 3: Manageability. Criterion 3: Areas under 5,000 acres does not have separate considerations, and is evaluated using the other criteria. Criterion 4: Unique and outstanding values is an optional/supplemental criteria that is not required to be present in an area.

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Steering Committee Review Notes and Decisions, 02/19/2016:

STC decided on a Moderate finding for 2a Concurred with all other findings, preferred proposal, and alternatives.

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