

White Mountains Addition (East) Potential Recommended Wilderness Area Inyo National Forest

This recommendation was derived from Wilderness Evaluation Polygon #1281

Number of Acres

Approximately 2,505 acres.

Location and Description of Recommended Boundary

The recommended boundary encompasses a portion of the Boundary Peak Inventoried Roadless Area within the White Mountains. The boundary uses a combination of the White Mountains Wilderness boundary, the Inyo National Forest boundary, natural features and offset from motorized trails to delineate the recommended area. The boundary is set back 75 feet from motorized trails to be consistent with other wilderness boundary setbacks on the forest.

The northern boundary of the potential recommended area is formed by the south boundary of the White Mountains Wilderness. The eastern boundary is formed by the Inyo National Forest boundary. The southern boundary uses a natural feature, a prominent ridgeline, which visitors could locate on a map or on the ground. The western boundary uses an offset from the Dead Horse Meadow Motorized Trail (35E301) and one of its spurs (35E301D), which visitors could locate on a map and on the ground. The recommended boundary also includes one cherry stem, an area where the boundary skirts around an approximately .4 miles long section of motorized trail (35E301E) into Dead Horse Meadow.

The boundary supports management of the area as potential wilderness because of the following:

- The northern boundary is contiguous with the White Mountains Wilderness boundary, and uses the township line between townships 5 North and 6 North.
- The eastern boundary uses the legally established Inyo National Forest boundary.
- The boundary minimizes the potential for motorized incursions into the potential recommended wilderness because the boundary is offset from motorized trails the public can locate both on maps and on the ground.
- The boundary excludes all motorized trails in the Boundary Peak Inventoried Roadless Area.
- The boundary excludes known historic mining sites and structures.
- All lands adjacent to the potential recommended wilderness are managed by the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management.

General Geography, Topography and Vegetation

The White Mountain Addition (East) is located on the southeastern slopes of White Mountains. The majority of the area is within the south rim of the Cottonwood Creek watershed, with Black Birch Canyon the most notable geographic feature. The Cottonwood Creek wild and scenic river corridor overlays the extreme northeast corner of the potential recommended area. Elevations range from 8,500 feet along the southern boundary, to 6,800 feet along Cottonwood Creek.

Vegetation communities in the area include the pinyon juniper forest assessment type¹. This area's vegetation also provides contiguous habitat and connectivity for wildlife.

Current Uses

Livestock grazing occurs on the portions of the Crooked Creek Grazing Allotment within the recommended area. There is no permanent range improvement associated with the allotments, but a permittee establishes a seasonal camp in Deadhorse Meadow that may be within the potential recommended wilderness. Portions of the Cottonwood Creek Allotment are also within the recommended area. This allotment is currently vacant and no grazing is authorized at this time.

The area receives low amounts of recreation use that likely includes hiking and hunting. There is no known existing motorized use by the public in the area.

There are no other known improvements in the area that would represent a departure from apparent naturalness. Mining sites and structures in this portion of the White Mountains have been excluded from the recommended wilderness area.

Wilderness Characteristics and the Ability to Protect and Manage the Area so as to Preserve Wilderness Characteristics

The potential recommended area has good ecological integrity, and generally appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention. There are no known invasive plant species in the area, but there may be some cheat grass because the entire area is comprised of pinyon-juniper forests.

The area provides good opportunities for solitude, primitive types of recreation and unconfined recreation. Portions of the Cottonwood Creek stock trail may be evident through the potential recommended area, but there are no other known trails. The steep terrain and absence of trails would facilitate the current low number of visitors' experience of remoteness from the sights and sounds of people inside the potential wilderness. Visitors' sense of remoteness from occupied and modified areas outside the wilderness may be diminished along the area's periphery by motorized vehicle use on

¹ The Forest Service assessment of terrestrial ecosystems for the forest plan revision process are derived from the Forest Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory ecological types, with several ecological types combined into each of the assessment types. Please refer to Inyo National Forest Assessment Topic Paper Chapter 1 (November 2013).

motorized trails along the western boundary or the livestock permittee's camp. The area is generally distant from occupied and modified areas.

This area's other features of value include: a small portion of the area within the Cottonwood Creek wild and scenic river corridor, which has outstandingly remarkable fishery values and is the only stream in the Great Basin protected from its headwaters to its terminus; the rare plant Booth's evening primrose and White Mountains horkelia.

The Inyo National Forest has the ability to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics primarily through the recommended boundary for the area. The location of the boundary is intended to minimize the potential for incursions by motorized vehicles. There are no unauthorized routes in the recommended area. The resource protections offered through the Cottonwood Creek wild and scenic river corridor would also preserve the area's wilderness characteristics.

Summary of Factors Considered in the Selection of this Area

The Inyo National Forest recommends the White Mountains Wilderness Addition (East) as potential wilderness because of the following ecological and social characteristics:

- The intact condition of the ecosystem types.
- The area is adjacent to the White Mountains Wilderness.
- The area contains the Cottonwood Creek wild and scenic river.
- There are good opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation in the area.
- The area represents a good opportunity to add underrepresented ecosystems to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Nearly the entire area is comprised of pinyon-juniper forest, an ecological group that may be considered underrepresented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.