

Domeland Wilderness Additions

Potential Recommended Wilderness Areas

Sequoia National Forest

This recommendation was derived from Wilderness Evaluation Polygon #1394

Number of Acres:

Approximately 7,420 acres.

Location and Description of Recommended Boundary

This potential recommended wilderness that is being considered for further analysis consists of two areas located on the Kern Plateau that are contiguous with the western boundary of the existing Domeland Wilderness, and primarily consist of areas that are in inventoried roadless areas. The potential additions include:

- An area located east of Snow Creek in the northwest section of the original evaluation polygon. The eastern and southern boundary is contiguous with the existing Domeland Wilderness and the western boundary is setback from trail 34E12 and then follows south of the Twisselman Botanical Area along the 8,000 foot elevation contour line to the Manter Meadow North Trailhead and then east along that trail to the existing wilderness boundary.
- An area located on the southwestern boundary of the existing Domeland Wilderness that extends west and south of the Church Dome Research Natural Area. The north and eastern boundaries are contiguous with the existing Domeland Wilderness. From the north end, the western and southern boundary follows a ridgeline to a setback from Forest Service Road 24S30A to a setback from trail 34E17 and then it follows the 7,200 foot elevation contour to section 11. From there it follows the 7,600 foot elevation contour to a south flowing tributary to Taylor Creek. The remaining western boundary is defined by a combination of a ridgeline over to the next drainage to the 6,960 foot elevation contour which it follows until it adjoins the existing wilderness at the south end of the area.

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

- Visitors would be able to locate the boundary on both a map and on the ground. Additions will replace cadastral lines with identifiable landmarks which the public can easily locate from the ground.
- The boundary minimizes the potential for motorized incursions into wilderness because the boundary is offset from roads and motorized trails that the public can locate both on maps and on the ground.
- All lands adjacent to the potential recommended wilderness are managed by the Forest Service.
- Additions are adjacent to special designated areas, the Twisselman Botanical Area and the Church Dome Research Natural Area.

General Geography, Topography and Vegetation

Elevations range from 7,000 to above 9,000 feet above sea level. Cover type is predominately conifer (75%) mostly Jeffrey pine, mix fir and red fir, with the remaining 25% intermixed with shrub (montane mixed chaparral) and areas of exposed bed rock. The areas are mostly undeveloped, steeper slopes with streams feeding the many wet meadows in the surrounding areas. The northern most area is in the Trout Creek South Fork Kern critical aquatic refuge.

Current Uses

There are no existing motorized trails within the areas or developed recreation facilities within the potential additions. The potential wilderness additions exclude recreation improvements and undeveloped campsites along the roads and at the trailheads that were part of the original evaluation polygon. Also excluded from the potential recommendation is the Big Meadows area, popular with equestrians, and motorized opportunities that are prevalent in areas to the north and south of Big Meadows. Non-system roads and trails are evident in some areas within the area. The area is also affected by past grazing and salvage logging.

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

Although the area general retains a natural appearance, it has been affected by the Fay Fire in 1995, the Manter Fire in 2000 and the McNally Fire in 2002 on the north portions. It has also had past impacts at mid-elevations from clear cuts to control of dwarf mistletoe. The area is also affected by past grazing and salvage logging.

Public comments indicate that this area has astonishing botanical diversity. This polygon presents a moderate opportunity to protect ecological groups that may be minimally represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Most creeks in the area appear to have California golden/rainbow hybrids and the northern portion is in the Trout Creek South Fork Kern River critical aquatic refuge. There is historic presence of mountain yellow-legged frog. There is an occasional detection of fisher, spotted owl and goshawk.

Roads and off highway vehicle use in surrounding areas reduce opportunities for solitude in portions of the areas; however, the steep topography and elevation, and the proximity to the extensive existing wilderness, provide opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Other features of value that contribute to the wilderness character of the area include interesting vistas of dome lands and historic and prehistoric sites within the area. The general area was part of the historical ecological survey and collections of multiple species led by Grinnell at Taylor Meadow.

The boundary supports management of the area as potential wilderness additions to the Domeland Wilderness. These potential additions are adjacent to the Twisselmann Botanical Area and the Church Dome Research Natural Area.

Summary of Factors Considered in the Selection of this Area

Forest staff considered the presence and extent of wilderness qualities, manageability and the significance of the area in the context of the entire Sequoia National Forest in selecting this area to analyze as a potential recommendation as wilderness.

- It is located adjacent to the Domeland Wilderness along a large portion of its boundary. It is within the Woodpecker Inventoried Roadless Area in the north and Domeland Inventoried Roadless Area in the south.
- The potential recommended additions, if designated, would extend the existing wilderness boundary to the west, making the boundary more identifiable on the ground by using landscape features replacing cadastral lines in two of the three areas.
- This polygon presents a moderate opportunity to protect ecological groups that may be minimally represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- The steep topography and elevation, and the proximity to the extensive existing wilderness, provide opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.
- Other features of value that contribute to the wilderness character of the area include interesting vistas of dome lands and historic and prehistoric sites within the area.