

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Wilderness Evaluation Report

Escudilla Potential Wilderness Areas

PW-03-01-070 - Escudilla North

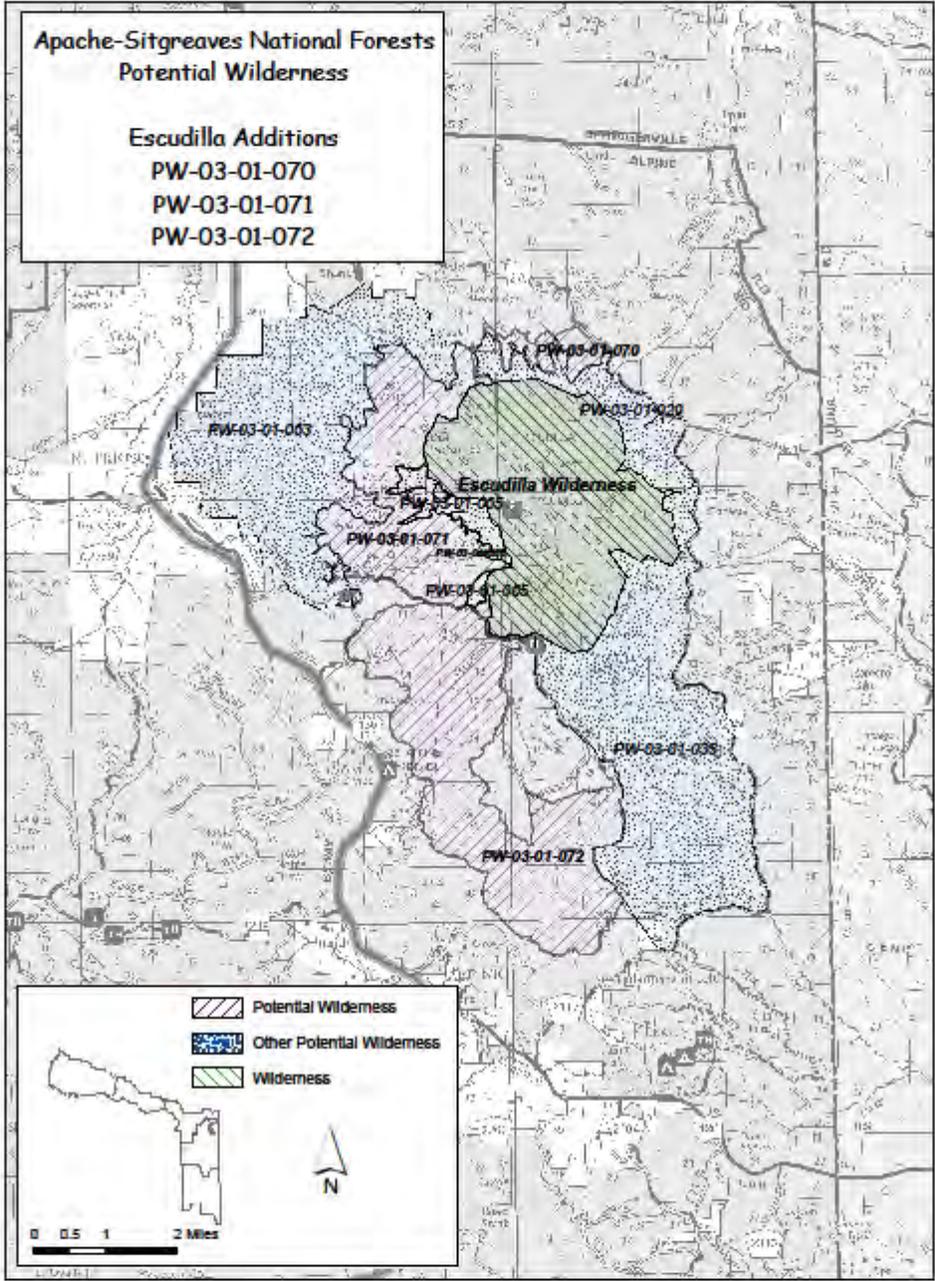
PW-03-01-071 - Hulsey

PW-03-01-072 - South Escudilla Mountain

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Introduction

As part of the Forest Plan Revision process for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (Apache-Sitgreaves NFs), the Forest Service has prepared this Wilderness Evaluation Report for the Escudilla North, Hulsey, and South Escudilla Mountain potential wilderness areas.

Purpose

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

The Process

The wilderness evaluation process began with an inventory of potential wilderness, which includes areas of federal land over 5,000 contiguous acres and other areas that meet the criteria in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70, Section 71, and then determined if those areas meet the definition of wilderness. Once a list of potential wilderness areas was created, each area was evaluated for capability, availability, and need. These evaluation factors are described in the introduction to each evaluation step and in Appendix A. This report summarizes the wilderness capability, availability, and need evaluations based on the best available information. This report also presents the potential effects of a wilderness or nonwilderness recommendation.

The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs will use this report to determine whether or not to make a preliminary administrative recommendations for wilderness designation for the Escudilla North, Hulsey, and South Escudilla Mountain potential wilderness areas. The Responsible Official's (Regional Forester) recommendation will be documented in the final revised Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision. Public comments on this report will be accepted and considered throughout the plan revision process. If a potential wilderness is recommended for wilderness, the recommendation will receive further review by the Chief of the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture. If the Chief of the Forest Service intends to move forward with a wilderness recommendation, the Forest Service will complete a detailed analysis of the trade-offs and impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, including further public review and comment. Ultimately, only Congress has the authority to designate wilderness.

ESCUDILLA NORTH

Background

Name	Escudilla North
Number	PW-03-01-070
Acres	377
Ranger District	Alpine
History (if applicable)	This area is included in a wilderness proposal submitted by the public. Escudilla Wilderness (5,200 acres), south of the potential wilderness, was designated by Congress in 1984.
Location, Vicinity, and Access	Located approximately 15 miles southeast of Springerville, Arizona, in Apache County. It is located on the north slope of Escudilla Mountain in the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs in eastern Arizona. The potential wilderness is also east of Nutrioso and north of Alpine. The area can be accessed from U.S. Highways 180/191 and Forest Road (FR) 275.
Geography and Topography	Located on the lower north slopes of Escudilla Mountain. The area is characterized by moderately steep to gentle conifer and aspen-covered slopes. Elevations range from 8,580 feet along Davis Creek to almost 9,300 feet.
Surroundings	The north boundary generally follows forest roads ¹ and terrain features. The northeast boundary follows FR 275, while the south boundary is defined by the north boundary of an adjacent potential wilderness, Escudilla Wilderness Addition Northeast (PW-03-01-029). There are 1.8 miles of operational maintenance level 1 ² roads and 0.4 miles of decommissioned roads in the evaluation area ³ . There are no private lands within or adjacent to the potential wilderness.
Special Designations	There are no special designations in the potential wilderness.
Vegetation	A number of vegetation communities are found within this potential wilderness. Vegetation varies with elevation and slope and includes ponderosa pine, dry mixed conifer, and wet mixed conifer forests. Aspen is found throughout the area. Old trees may be found in the dry mixed conifer and ponderosa pine forests. A short section of cottonwood-willow riparian forest is found along Davis Creek.

¹ Roads may be bounded on one or both sides by the potential wilderness. Where a road is bounded on both sides, a non-potential wilderness corridor or “cherrystem” may surround the road. Forest roads along the north boundary include 8436, 8448, and 8448A. Roads that end at the potential wilderness boundary are not listed.

² These are roads that have been placed in storage for at least 1 year, but may be reopened for intermittent use. Emphasis is on maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Level 1 roads are closed to motorized traffic but may be available for non-motorized uses.

³ Maintenance level 1 or decommissioned roads all or partially within the evaluation area include 8436, 8448, 8448A, and 275Y1.

Appearance and Key Attractions The potential wilderness is part of a very prominent landmark, Escudilla Mountain. It is visible for many miles and dominates the landscape for travelers along U.S. Highways 180/191 between Springerville and Alpine and along U.S. Highway 60 between Springerville and New Mexico. Aldo Leopold described Escudilla Mountain's prominence in the landscape in his essay entitled *Escudilla*. These steep slopes are either rock-covered or forested. Extensive aspen stands attract fall visitors.

CURRENT USES

Recreation The majority of recreation use involves hunting, photography, viewing scenery and wildlife, and ATV use. Use is generally light. There are no developed trails or recreation sites within the potential wilderness. Most of the area has a recreation emphasis of Semi-Primitive Motorized, with the remainder Roaded Natural.

Wildlife Large wildlife species found in the area include elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. Small animals and birds also inhabit the area. A northern goshawk (sensitive species) post-fledging family area is found east of the potential wilderness. A Mexican spotted owl (threatened) protected activity center is found southwest of the area. Threatened Apache trout are found in Lily Creek, just east of the area. The potential wilderness is within the secondary Mexican wolf recovery zone.

Range The potential wilderness is within the South Escudilla and ELC Allotments. There are 0.5 miles of allotment boundary fence.

Forest Products Approximately 265 acres (70 percent) of this area have been treated for forest management. Commercial thinning has occurred on 155 acres, while another 66 acres are assumed to have been thinned (activity fuels were piled and burned). An additional 44 acres were planted after the site was prepared.

Water The area includes a perennial section of a Davis Creek tributary and an intermittent section of Davis Creek. There are no springs or stock tanks.

Minerals As of 4/18/2009, there are no mining claims, mineral districts, mineral withdrawals, or coal, oil, gas, or geothermal leases in the potential wilderness.

Cultural Resources There are no known historic or prehistoric resources.

Fire The Wallow Fire burned through the area in 2011. A large fire also burned through the area in 1951. No small fires have occurred in the area.

Capability Evaluation

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

Summary

Natural

High

The potential wilderness is primarily natural and would supplement the existing biological diversity and naturalness of the adjacent potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness. Additional areas of ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, and dry mixed conifer forests and a small area of cottonwood-willow riparian forest would increase the vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity. There are no known non-native species, but surveys have not been conducted in the area. Perennial streams are free-flowing. The night sky is not affected by light from nearby, small communities. The Wallow Fire did not affect the area's wilderness character because wildfire is considered a natural ecological process.

Undeveloped

Low

Evidence of human activity throughout the area is obvious including road prisms and a fence. Approximately 70 percent of the area has received some form of timber treatment, primarily thinning. There are 2.2 miles of known engineered roads that are noticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Medium

When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the potential wilderness could supplement recreation opportunities, but they are not challenging. The area would contribute to opportunities for solitude, but signs of civilization would be common. The potential wilderness recreation opportunities would complement those in the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness.

Special Features and Values

Low

The potential wilderness does not contain any outstanding features, have potential for scientific research, or contain unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Manageability

Low

The area would be difficult to manage as wilderness. Motorized vehicle use occurs on closed roads, including two partially within the potential wilderness, and cross-country on the gentler slopes from FR 275. A more manageable wilderness boundary in some locations would be a positive result, while management would be more difficult in other locations. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts.

OVERALL CAPABILITY

Medium

Potential Boundary Changes

Boundaries could be moved to NFS roads to improve boundary identification.

Availability Evaluation

Availability criteria indicate the availability of a potential wilderness for wilderness designation by describing other resource and land use potentials for the area. Availability examines the potential impact of designating an area as wilderness to both the current and future land uses and activities. In essence, it is a summary of the trade-offs between wilderness and other uses. The following summarizes the availability information found in Appendix B. The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Summary

Water Yield (c)

High

The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

Habitat Management (b)

High

Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

Aquatic Restoration (b)

High

Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

Vegetation Restoration (e, h, i)

High

Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because burnouts, which reduced fuels, were set from FR 275 during the 2011 Wallow Fire.

Public Access Needed (a, g)

High

There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access. Forest roads parallel most of the boundary.

Land Use Authorizations (d, h, i)

High

Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. There are no contracts or agreements.

Adjacent Non-FS Lands (i)

High

There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness. There is one Special Use Permit for water in Woods Creek, northwest of and outside the potential wilderness.

Cultural Resources (g)

High

There are no known sites needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

Minerals (f)

High

There is a low potential for future mineral uses.

OVERALL AVAILABILITY

High

Need Evaluation

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

Summary

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

Low

There are significant wilderness lands (over 2.5 million acres) on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of Escudilla North potential wilderness and the forests. There are no population centers within a 100-mile radius of this potential wilderness.

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

Medium

The potential wilderness would respond to a need for additional wilderness based on projected population increases, high use in two of the three Wilderness areas on the forests, and underrepresentation of northeast Arizona in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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

Low

There are significant nonwilderness lands (over 5.4 million acres) available for unconfined outdoor recreation outside of designated Wilderness and the Blue Range Primitive Area on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of the forests.

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

Medium

There are one Forest Planning Species (FPS) and habitat for two FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

Medium

Of the three wilderness areas on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs, only Bear Wallow Wilderness could accommodate some increased use without affecting wilderness resources.

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

Low

Three underrepresented ecosystems (cottonwood-willow riparian forest, dry mixed conifer forest, and wet mixed conifer forest) occur across 33 percent of the potential wilderness. There are no underrepresented landforms.

OVERALL NEED

Low

HULSEY

Background

Name	Hulsey
Number	PW-03-01-071
Acres	2,926
Ranger District	Alpine
History (if applicable)	This area is included in a wilderness proposal submitted by the public. Escudilla Wilderness (5,200 acres), east of the potential wilderness, was designated by Congress in 1984.
Location, Vicinity, and Access	Located approximately 15 miles southeast of Springerville, Arizona, in Apache County. It is located on Hulsey Bench and the northwest slopes of Escudilla Mountain in the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs in eastern Arizona. The potential wilderness is also east of Nutrioso and north of Alpine. The area can be accessed from U.S. Highways 180/191 and Forest Road (FR) 8056.
Geography and Topography	Located along the west and northwest sides of Escudilla Mountain. The area is characterized by rolling terrain and steep-sided canyons. Elevations range from 8,360 feet on the northwest boundary to over 9,640 feet along the wilderness boundary at Hulsey Creek.
Surroundings	Escudilla Wilderness and Escudilla Wilderness Addition West potential wilderness (PW-03-01-065) form the east boundary. The south boundary follows FR 8056, while the west boundary is defined by Milk Creek potential wilderness (PW-03-01-063). There are 18.9 miles of operational maintenance level 1 ⁴ roads within the evaluation area ⁵ . There are no private lands within or adjacent to the potential wilderness.
Special Designations	The potential wilderness includes much of the Hulsey Bench wildlife habitat area.
Vegetation	A number of vegetation communities are found within this potential wilderness. Vegetation varies with elevation and slope and is primarily ponderosa pine forest with wet and dry mixed conifer forests, piñon-juniper woodland, spruce-fir forest, and montane/subalpine grasslands. Old trees may be found all forest types. Montane willow riparian forest is found along Hulsey Creek.

⁴ These are roads that have been placed in storage for at least 1 year, but may be reopened for intermittent use. Emphasis is on maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Level 1 roads are closed to motorized traffic but may be available for non-motorized uses.

⁵ Maintenance level 1 roads within the evaluation area include 8056A, 8056B, 8056C, 8056D, 8056E, 8056F, 8056G, 8056H, 8056J, 8056K, 8056L, 8056M, 8056N, 8056O, 8056P, 8056Q, 8056R, 8056S, 8056U, 8056V, 8056W, 8056X, 8056Y, 8056Z, 8057A, 8057D, 8057E, and 8057F.

Appearance and Key Attractions The potential wilderness is part of a very prominent landmark, Escudilla Mountain. It is visible for many miles and dominates the landscape for travelers along U.S. Highways 180/191 between Springerville and Alpine and along U.S. Highway 60 between Springerville and New Mexico. Aldo Leopold described Escudilla Mountain's prominence in the landscape in his essay entitled *Escudilla*. These steep slopes are either rock-covered or forested. Extensive aspen stands attract fall visitors.

CURRENT USES

Recreation The majority of recreation use involves hunting, hiking, mountain biking, photography, and viewing scenery and wildlife. Use is generally light. The Government Trail passes through the southeast portion of the area (1.6 miles). Many of the closed roads in the area are used for hiking and mountain biking. Hulsey Lake, a developed fishing area, adjoins the southwest corner. Most of the area has a recreation emphasis of Semi-Primitive Motorized, with the remainder Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized and Roaded Natural.

Wildlife Large wildlife species found in the area include elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. The potential wilderness includes high quality black bear habitat. Small animals and birds also inhabit the area. A Mexican spotted owl (threatened) protected activity center is partially located in the central portion of the area. A northern goshawk (sensitive species) post-fledging family area is found south of the potential wilderness. The potential wilderness is within the secondary Mexican wolf recovery zone.

Range The potential wilderness is within the South Escudilla Allotment. There are no fences.

Forest Products Approximately 2,076 acres (71 percent) of this area have been treated for forest management. Commercial thinning has occurred on 1,344 acres, while another 615 acres are assumed to have been thinned (activity fuels were piled and burned or lopped and scattered). An additional 117 acres were treated with shelterwood or shelterwood preparation cuts.

Water The area includes sections of Milk and Hulsey Creeks and the headwaters of Watts Creek. Only Hulsey Creek is perennial; the others are intermittent. There are two springs in the potential wilderness; one is developed and has a water right on it. There are also five stock tanks in the area.

Minerals As of 4/18/2009, there are no mining claims, mineral districts, mineral withdrawals, or coal, oil, gas, or geothermal leases in the potential wilderness.

Cultural Resources There are no known historic or prehistoric resources.

Fire The Wallow Fire burned through the area in 2011. A large fire burned through the area in 1951. Eight small fires (five smaller than ¼ acre, one 1/3 acre, and two approximately 1 acre each) occurred between 1971 and 2011 in the potential wilderness. The majority were caused by lightning.

Capability Evaluation

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

Summary

Natural

Medium

The potential wilderness is basically natural and would supplement the existing biological diversity and naturalness of Escudilla Wilderness and adjoining potential wildernesses. Additional areas of ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, dry mixed conifer, and spruce-fir forests; piñon-juniper woodland; and small amounts of montane/subalpine grasslands and montane willow riparian forest supplement the vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity. Mexican spotted owls are found in the area. Mullein and cheatgrass, non-native plants, have been found along the south boundary roads. Musk thistle and jointed goatgrass were found along an interior road. Other non-native species may be present in unsurveyed areas. The only perennial stream is free-flowing. The night sky is not affected by light from nearby, small communities. The Wallow Fire did not affect the area's wilderness character because wildfire is considered a natural ecological process.

Undeveloped

Low

Evidence of human activity within the area is obvious including road prisms from timber management activities. There is one developed trail in the potential wilderness. Approximately 18.9 miles of known engineered roads are in the area. In addition, 71 percent of the area has been commercially thinned for timber management or has been part of shelterwood cuts.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Medium

When considered with the adjoining Escudilla Wilderness and other potential wildernesses, the potential wilderness could supplement the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, but they would not be challenging. The area could contribute to opportunities for solitude, but signs of civilization would be common. The potential wilderness recreation opportunities would complement those in Escudilla Wilderness and adjoining potential wildernesses.

Special Features and Values

Medium

There are no distinct features associated with the potential wilderness. There are opportunities for a variety of scientific research. Mexican spotted owls are found in the area, while northern goshawks are found nearby.

Manageability

Medium

The area is closed to public motorized vehicle use through a wildlife habitat area special closure order. However, motorized administrative use does occur occasionally. Non-motorized access for hiking and mountain biking is available from FR 8056. Hulsey Lake, a popular fishing site, is adjacent to the southwest boundary. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts.

OVERALL CAPABILITY

Medium

Potential Boundary Changes

None

Availability Evaluation

Availability criteria indicate the availability of a potential wilderness for wilderness designation by describing other resource and land use potentials for the area. Availability examines the potential impact of designating an area as wilderness to both the current and future land uses and activities. In essence, it is a summary of the trade-offs between wilderness and other uses. The following summarizes the availability information found in Appendix C. The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Summary

Water Yield (c)

High

The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

Habitat Management (b)

High

Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

Aquatic Restoration (b)

High

Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

Vegetation Restoration (e, h, i)

High

Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because the area burned during the 2011 Wallow Fire.

Public Access Needed (a, g)

High

There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access.

Land Use Authorizations (d, h, i)

Medium

Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. A developed spring with a water right is in the area. There are no contracts or agreements.

Adjacent Non-FS Lands (i)

High

There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness.

Cultural Resources (g)

High

There are no known sites needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

Minerals (f)

High

There is a low potential for future mineral uses.

OVERALL AVAILABILITY

High

Need Evaluation

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

Summary

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

Low

There are significant wilderness lands (over 2.5 million acres) on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of Hulsey potential wilderness and the forests. There are no population centers within a 100-mile radius of this potential wilderness.

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

Medium

The potential wilderness would respond to a need for additional wilderness based on projected population increases, high use in two of the three Wilderness areas on the forests, and underrepresentation of northeast Arizona in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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

Low

There are significant nonwilderness lands (over 5.4 million acres) available for unconfined outdoor recreation outside of designated Wilderness and the Blue Range Primitive Area on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of the forests.

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

Medium

There are one Forest Planning Species (FPS) and habitat for four additional FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

Medium

Of the three wilderness areas on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs, only Bear Wallow Wilderness could accommodate some increased use without affecting wilderness resources.

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

Medium

Five underrepresented ecosystems (dry mixed conifer forest, montane willow riparian forest, montane/subalpine grasslands, spruce-fir forest, and wet mixed conifer forest) occur across 38 percent of the potential wilderness. There are no underrepresented landforms.

OVERALL NEED

Medium, and is adjacent to a Wilderness area

SOUTH ESCUDILLA MOUNTAIN

Background

Name	South Escudilla Mountain
Number	PW-03-01-072
Acres	5,167
Ranger District	Alpine
History (if applicable)	This area is included in a wilderness proposal submitted by the public. Escudilla Wilderness (5,200 acres), northeast of the potential wilderness, was designated by Congress in 1984.
Location, Vicinity, and Access	Located approximately 15 miles southeast of Springerville, Arizona, in Apache County. It is located on the west and southwest slopes of Escudilla Mountain in the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs in eastern Arizona. The potential wilderness is also east of Nutrioso and north of Alpine. The area can be accessed from U.S. Highways 180/191 and Forest Roads (FR) 8056 and 275.
Geography and Topography	Located along the west and southwest sides of Escudilla Mountain. The area is characterized by steep conifer and aspen-covered slopes. Elevations range from 8,300 feet on Paddy Creek to over 10,000 feet west of Terry Flat. Terry Flat adjoins the evaluation area to the east.
Surroundings	Forest Road 8056 forms most of the north and a portion of the east boundaries. The remaining boundaries are partially defined by forest roads ⁶ . The FR 8056 road corridor separates this evaluation area from Hulse potential wilderness (PW-03-01-071) and Escudilla Wilderness Addition West potential wilderness (PW-03-01-065) to the north. Escudilla Wilderness Addition Southeast potential wilderness (PW-03-01-035) adjoins this area along Little Creek. There are 14.1 miles of operational maintenance level 1 ⁷ roads in the evaluation area ⁸ . There are no private lands within or adjacent to the potential wilderness.
Special Designations	There are no special designations in the potential wilderness.
Vegetation	A number of vegetation communities are found within this potential wilderness. Vegetation varies with elevation and slope and includes montane/subalpine grasslands, montane willow riparian forest, and spruce-fir, wet mixed conifer, dry mixed conifer, and ponderosa pine forests. Old trees may be found in any of the forest types. Montane willow riparian forest is found along Paddy Creek.

⁶ Roads may be bounded on one or both sides by the potential wilderness. Where a road is bounded on both sides, a non-potential wilderness corridor or “cherrystem” surrounds the road. Forest roads along the west, south, and east boundaries include 8067, 8067B, 8200S, 275C, 8057P, 8057T, 8057U, and 8057V.

⁷ These are roads that have been placed in storage for at least 1 year, but may be reopened for intermittent use. Emphasis is on maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Level 1 roads are closed to motorized traffic but may be available for non-motorized uses.

⁸ Maintenance level 1 roads all or partially within the evaluation area include 8065, 8066, 8066H, 8067A, 8067B1, 8067E, 8067E1, 8200S, 275E, 275I, 275I1, 275L, 8055, 8055A, 8055B, 8057U, 8057N, 8057M, 8057L, and 8057H.

Appearance and Key Attractions The potential wilderness is part of a very prominent landmark, Escudilla Mountain. It is visible for many miles and dominates the landscape for travelers along U.S. Highways 180/191 between Springerville and Alpine and along U.S. Highway 60 between Springerville and New Mexico. Aldo Leopold described Escudilla Mountain's prominence in the landscape in his essay entitled *Escudilla*. These steep slopes are either rock-covered or forested. Extensive aspen stands attract fall visitors.

CURRENT USES

- Recreation** The majority of recreation use involves hunting, photography, viewing scenery and wildlife, and ATV use on boundary roads and maintenance level 1 roads within the area. Use is generally light. There are no developed trails or recreation sites within the potential wilderness. Alpine Divide Campground is less than ½ mile west of the area. Under a special use permit, the Arizona Outlaw ATV Jamboree had operated annually on several level 1 roads in the area for at least 6 years. Most of the area has a recreation emphasis of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, with the remainder Roded Natural, Rural, and Semi-Primitive Motorized.
- Wildlife** Large wildlife species found in the area include elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. Small animals and birds also inhabit the area. Most of a northern goshawk (sensitive species) post-fledging family area is found in the area. Mexican spotted owl (threatened) protected activity centers are found north and southeast of the area. The potential wilderness is within the secondary Mexican wolf recovery zone.
- Range** The potential wilderness is within the South Escudilla, Williams Valley, Stone Creek, and Alpine Allotments. There are no fences in the evaluation area.
- Forest Products** Approximately 928 acres (18 percent) of this area have been treated for forest management. Commercial thinning has occurred on 606 acres, while another 29 acres are assumed to have been thinned (activity fuels were piled and burned). An additional 148 acres were treated with shelterwood preparation, shelterwood, or shelterwood final cuts. There are 12 acres of fuel breaks and 132 acres of wildland-urban interface (WUI) treatments.
- Water** The area includes sections of Little Creek, Paddy Creek, and Toolbox Draw. Paddy Creek and Toolbox Draw are perennial, while Little Creek is intermittent and ephemeral. All other drainages in the evaluation area are intermittent or ephemeral. One spring is on the boundary with Terry Flat. There are several other springs outside, but close to, the west and south boundaries. There are two stock tanks in the Little Creek drainage and one in the Paddy Creek drainage.
- Minerals** As of 4/18/2009, there are no mining claims, mineral districts, mineral withdrawals, or coal, oil, gas, or geothermal leases in the potential wilderness.
- Cultural Resources** There are no known historic or prehistoric resources.
- Fire** The Wallow Fire burned through the area in 2011. A large fire also burned through the area in 1951. Thirty-three fires (most less than ¼ acre and the largest 12 acres) occurred between 1971 and 2010 in the potential wilderness. The majority were caused by lightning.

Capability Evaluation

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

Summary

Natural

Medium

The potential wilderness is basically natural and would supplement the existing biological diversity and naturalness of the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness. Additional areas of montane/subalpine grasslands, montane willow riparian forest, and spruce-fir, ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, and dry mixed conifer forests would increase vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity. Northern goshawks are found in the area, while Mexican spotted owls are found nearby. Mullein and patches of cheatgrass and bull thistle, non-native plants, are found along the north boundary, but there are no records of the plants in the area. Other non-native species may be present, but no surveys have specifically been conducted in the area. Two perennial streams are free-flowing. The night sky is not affected by light from nearby, small communities. The Wallow Fire did not affect the area's wilderness character because wildfire is considered a natural ecological process.

Undeveloped

Low

Evidence of human activity within parts of the area is obvious including roads constructed for timber management activities. There are no developed trails in the potential wilderness. In addition, 18 percent of the area has been commercially thinned for timber management or has been part of shelterwood cuts or WUI treatments.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Medium

When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the potential wilderness could supplement the existing challenging recreation opportunities. The potential wilderness could contribute to opportunities for solitude, but signs of civilization (14.1 miles of engineered roads) would be common. There are opportunities for hunting, cross-county hiking, and viewing scenery and wildlife that would complement those nearby.

Special Features and Values

Medium

The potential wilderness includes highly scenic, steep slopes on the west and southwest sides of Escudilla Mountain. There are also panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from these slopes. The potential wilderness has opportunities for a variety of scientific research. Northern goshawks are found in the area. Mexican spotted owls are found nearby.

Manageability

Low

Access to the potential wilderness is relatively easy from FRs 8056 and 275. Terry Flat, which adjoins the northeast boundary, receives moderate recreation use. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts. ATV use regularly occurs on maintenance level 1 roads throughout the area.

OVERALL CAPABILITY

Medium

Potential Boundary Changes

The need to maintain WUI treatments areas east of Tal-Wi-Wi would not be compatible with wilderness management. The potential wilderness boundary could be moved to exclude the WUI area.

Availability Evaluation

Availability criteria indicate the availability of a potential wilderness for wilderness designation by describing other resource and land use potentials for the area. Availability examines the potential impact of designating an area as wilderness to both the current and future land uses and activities. In essence, it is a summary of the trade-offs between wilderness and other uses. The following summarizes the availability information found in Appendix D. The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Summary

Water Yield (c)

High

The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

Habitat Management (b)

High

Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

Aquatic Restoration (b)

High

Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

Vegetation Restoration (e, h, i)

High

Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because the area burned during the 2011 Wallow Fire.

Public Access Needed (a, g)

High

There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access. Forest roads parallel some of the boundary.

Land Use Authorizations (d, h, i)

High

Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. There are no contracts or agreements.

Adjacent Non-FS Lands (i)

High

There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness.

Cultural Resources (g)

High

There are no known sites needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

Minerals (f)

High

There is a low potential for future mineral uses.

OVERALL AVAILABILITY

High

Need Evaluation

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

Summary

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

Low

There are significant wilderness lands (over 2.5 million acres) on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of South Escudilla Mountain potential wilderness and the forests. There are no population centers within a 100-mile radius of this potential wilderness.

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

Medium

The potential wilderness would respond to a need for additional wilderness based on projected population increases, high use in two of the three Wilderness areas on the forests, and underrepresentation of northeast Arizona in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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

Low

There are significant nonwilderness lands (over 5.4 million acres) available for unconfined outdoor recreation outside of designated Wilderness and the Blue Range Primitive Area on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of the forests.

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

Medium

There are one Forest Planning Species (FPS) and habitat for four additional FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

Medium

Of the three wilderness areas on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs, only Bear Wallow Wilderness could accommodate some increased use without affecting wilderness resources.

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

High

Five underrepresented ecosystems (dry mixed conifer forest, montane willow riparian forest, montane/subalpine grasslands, spruce-fir forest, and wet mixed conifer forest) occur across 90 percent of the area. There are no underrepresented landforms.

OVERALL NEED

Medium

Effects of Recommendations

The effects of recommending the potential wilderness areas evaluated in this document would be the same for each area. Therefore, only one effects section is included.

	RECOMMENDATION	
	WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values
Wilderness Characteristics	EFFECTS ON WILDERNESS RESOURCES AND VALUES	
Natural Undeveloped Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation Special Features and Values	Wilderness characteristics would be maintained and protected. The area would remain natural and generally undeveloped. Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation would continue to be present. Any existing special features and values would be protected.	Wilderness characteristics would be diminished by management activities. Obvious signs of activities would cause the area to be removed from potential wilderness.
Resource/Use	EFFECTS ON OTHER RESOURCES AND USES	
Soils	Long-term soil productivity may increase because the acreage is generally not available for management activities. Shorter-term risks to soil productivity may be increased until fire-adapted ecosystems (especially ponderosa pine) are restored. Soil erosion risk would be reduced.	The natural functions of watersheds could be affected by activities. The threat of soil erosion from associated motorized uses and land-disturbing activities would increase with the degree of use. However, mitigation would be required. Compaction from recreation uses in popular areas would likely continue. Treatments may reduce soil loss by reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire.

	RECOMMENDATION	
	WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values
Water Quality and Quantity	The natural functions of watershed systems would be maintained. The risk of human-caused alterations, other than fire, affecting the watershed condition would be primarily limited to localized recreation activities. There could be short-term risks to watersheds until fire-adapted ecosystems (especially ponderosa pine) are restored. Water quality would more likely be affected by management outside of wilderness.	Water quality could be affected by management activities. However, mitigation would be required to reduce effects to water quality. Management activities could be conducted to increase water yield. Treatments may reduce sedimentation by reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire.
Air Quality	There would be no direct effects to air quality specifically from wilderness designation. Wilderness designation would not preclude the use of planned or unplanned ignitions to accomplish specific resource objectives, which may result in short-term air quality impacts.	There may be some short-term direct effects to air quality from fugitive dust from product removal and smoke from slash disposal. Planned or unplanned ignitions could result in short-term air quality degradation.
Wildlife Habitat	Wilderness designation would provide greater protection for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wildlife would not be harassed by motorized uses and habitat fragmentation would be minimized. Repair and replacement of existing wildlife improvements may be allowed, but new improvements and habitat enhancements would be rare and would be authorized only to protect and improve management of the wilderness resource.	Vegetation treatments may result in a greater mosaic of habitat types and associated species diversity. Opportunities to restore and/or manipulate habitat would be available. There could be some wildlife harassment from motorized use. Fragmentation and loss of habitat from road construction may occur with increased activities.
Aquatic Restoration	Natural processes would primarily affect aquatic species and their habitat. Motorized and mechanized travel and many management activities would not be allowed. Natural events and climatic variation would influence sedimentation, riparian vegetation, and nutrient cycles. Opportunities to do riparian area restoration may be precluded.	Natural processes that affect aquatic habitats would be interrupted to a degree commensurate with activities. Motorized uses, road construction, and other land-disturbing activities may increase sedimentation and potentially adversely affect riparian habitat and nutrient cycles. However, the use of BMPs would mitigate most effects.

	RECOMMENDATION	
	WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values
Vegetation	Natural ecological succession would be allowed to continue and, over time, restore ecological conditions. Levels of insect infestation and disease could reach endemic levels as ecological systems move toward their historic ranges of variability. Dispersal of non-native plants would generally be limited to trail systems and river corridors. Plant diversity would be slow to change, but would move towards a dominance of mature trees and late successional habitats.	Natural ecological succession could be interrupted by activities associated with other resource management objectives. Incidents of insects and disease would still occur, but would be more aggressively prevented or managed through vegetation treatment practices. The ability to detect and treat infestations would be greater than in wilderness and thus infestations could be prevented or contained earlier. Plant diversity would depend on the management objectives for the area.
Insects and Disease	Forest stands would be more likely to be over-mature and provide areas suitable for insect and disease outbreaks. Insect or disease control would not be permitted unless necessary to prevent unacceptable damage to resources on adjacent lands or unnatural loss to the wilderness resource from exotic pests. When necessary, control measures would have the least adverse effect on wilderness.	Response to insect and disease outbreaks would be more direct and rapid. A range of control and treatment options would allow more flexibility in containing outbreaks.
Non-Native Species	Non-native plants may be treated by grubbing or with chemicals when they threaten lands outside wilderness or when they are spreading within the wilderness, provided there are no serious adverse impacts on wilderness values.	All options to address non-native plants would be available, including no treatment, hand pulling, herbicides, and biological control. Motorized and mechanized equipment can be used.

		RECOMMENDATION	
		WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values	
Recreation	Recreation use is managed to minimize the evidence of human use and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Only primitive, non-mechanized access and recreation activities are permitted. Only those facilities required for the safety of users and protection of wilderness resources are provided. The use of mechanized tools for trail construction and maintenance would be restricted. In many cases, wilderness designation has elevated an area's visibility to the public, increasing its popularity and recreation use. Increased use can result in increased damage to trails and other resources, as well as reduced opportunities for solitude and other wilderness values.	Activities can reduce the primitive or semi-primitive recreational character through altered recreation settings, experiences, and access. The sights and sounds of human presence are usually increased by activities. Recreationists seeking a primitive or semi-primitive experience would choose not to visit such an area. Activities may also provide greater recreational access and more motorized and mechanized recreation experiences would be available.	
Visual Quality	Visual quality would be protected because ground-disturbing activities would be extremely limited. The Scenic Integrity Objective would be Very High. The long-term scenic characteristics would be representative of how the landscape would appear if relatively unaffected by human activity.	The Scenic Integrity Objective would range from Low to High. There would be a greater potential for landscapes to show obvious signs of human activities. Scenic Integrity Objectives would constrain or modify activities to mitigate adverse effects to scenic resources, especially in areas seen from major recreation facilities and Scenic Byways.	
Cultural Resources	Cultural resources are already protected by law. Exclusion of ground-disturbing activities lessens threats to known and unidentified cultural resources. Fewer sites or resources may be identified.	Cultural resources are already protected by law. Project-level inventories associated with ground disturbing and other activities may increase identification of previously unknown sites or resources. Mitigation measures would be applied at the project level.	

	RECOMMENDATION	
	WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values
Special Use Authorizations	Structures and other developments would be limited to those actually needed for management, protection, and use of the wilderness for the purposes for which the wilderness was established.	Special use authorizations would be allowed, subject to suitability.
Range	Grazing allotments and developments would be managed under the Congressional Grazing Guidelines and allotment management plans.	Grazing allotments would continue to be managed under current allotment management plans, laws, policies, and regulations.
Forest Products	Wilderness would be removed from the suitable timber base. No timber sales or fuelwood cutting would be permitted. Only fuelwood collection incidental to recreation would be allowed.	Timber production may be allowed, subject to suitability, law, policy, and regulation. Forest products, commercial and non-commercial, could be a byproduct of the restoration treatments.
Minerals	The area would be withdrawn from further mineral entry and leasing. Mineral development is possible in areas with valid existing rights. Consistent with the valid existing rights, operating plans would incorporate reasonable terms and conditions for the protection of the wilderness character, and provide for restoration as near as practicable of the disturbed lands promptly upon abandonment of operations.	These lands would be open to oil, gas, geothermal, and mineral development except where specifically withdrawn or restricted for other purposes. Although a full range of activities and methods may be allowed and employed, developments and activities would be mitigated to reduce adverse impacts to other resources.
Special Designations	Wilderness designation would increase the number and diversity of areas within the Southwestern Region and the National Wilderness Preservation System. There would be no effects to other special designations - the most restrictive management would apply.	The opportunity to recommend additional wilderness within the Southwestern Region would be foregone at this time. There would be no effects to other special designations. Any restrictions associated with other special designations could affect management activities.

		RECOMMENDATION	
		WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics	Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values	
Fire	Wilderness designation does not preclude the use of planned or unplanned ignitions to accomplish specific resource objectives. Mechanical treatments and timber harvest would not be allowed, which may increase the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires. Suppression actions would be guided by Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST).	The risk of uncharacteristic wildfires would be reduced because of the opportunities to treat mechanically and harvest timber. The full range of suppression tactics and management approaches would be available for use.	
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS			
	Local population numbers, income, or employment would generally not be affected.	Local population numbers, income, or employment would not be affected unless major mineral activity occurs.	
	Costs related to the maintenance of range facilities could increase because of limitations on methods.	There would be no increased costs associated with the construction and maintenance of range facilities.	
	Timber production revenues could be foregone, if any commercial stands are suitable and harvestable.	Revenues and jobs from timber production could increase, if any commercial stands are suitable and harvestable.	
	Local lifestyles would not be affected unless major mineral activity occurs.	Local lifestyles would not be affected unless major mineral activity occurs.	
	Revenues associated with mineral development would be foregone, because the lands would be withdrawn from mineral entry.	Revenues could be generated, if minerals are found and developed.	
	Wilderness is recognized as contributing to healthy economies and healthy lifestyles. Direct benefits are derived from primitive recreation and as a “quality-of-life” factor to attract new businesses and residents. The wilderness characteristics/values that attract visitors to the area would be maintained.	Management activities would contribute to local lifestyles and healthy economies. The wilderness characteristics/values that attract visitors to wilderness would be affected.	

			RECOMMENDATION	
			WILDERNESS	NONWILDERNESS
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	Manage to protect and maintain wilderness characteristics		Manage for multiple use, ecosystem restoration, and social and economic values	
	Ecosystem services (natural processes such as the air and water purification functions of undisturbed lands) would be protected and maintained.		Ecosystem services could be decreased with increased activities.	
	Opportunities for primitive recreation and public awareness of the values associated with wilderness, including spiritual and natural qualities, would be increased.		Opportunities for primitive recreation would decrease. Opportunities for semi-primitive and more developed recreation could increase.	

Appendix A: Wilderness Evaluation Process

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

Inventory of Potential Wilderness Areas

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

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

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

Inventory Criteria

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

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

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

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

Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas

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

Capability

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

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

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

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

Availability

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

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

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

Need

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

A set of GIS models, information papers, and analyses were provided by the Southwestern Regional Office. This information was synthesized at the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs Supervisors

Office and reviewed by District personnel. Any changes were incorporated into the need evaluation.

Documentation of Potential Wilderness Areas

Draft wilderness evaluation reports were developed for each potential wilderness; each report includes summaries of the capability, availability, and need assessments. The draft reports were made available for public comment in June 2009. Public comments were incorporated and information on the potential effects of wilderness and nonwilderness recommendations was added to the final evaluation reports. The effects of nonwilderness recommendation may be split to reflect nonwilderness, lands with roadless character, or primitive area categories.

Appendix B: Escudilla North Worksheets

Capability Evaluation

Capability Characteristics

Natural

1. Presence of non-native species.

High - Non-native species are not evident.

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

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

Rating: High - Mullein, a non-native plant, is found along FR 275 outside the area; there are no GIS records of the plant within the potential wilderness. Other non-native species may be present, but no surveys have specifically been conducted in the area.

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

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

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

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

Rating: High - The only perennial stream is a tributary of Davis Creek. The remaining drainages are either intermittent or ephemeral. There are no known impoundments on any of the drainages.

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

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

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

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

Rating: High - There are no nearby population centers and the lights from Alpine and Nutrioso are not visible from the area.

4. Presence of pollutants that degrade water.

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - None of the streams have been sampled. There are no known water quality issues.

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

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

Medium - Has a mix of habitats and ecological conditions.

Low - Has limited ecological conditions and habitats.

Rating: Medium - The area would supplement the existing biological diversity of the adjacent potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness with additional areas of ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, and dry mixed conifer forests and a small amount of cottonwood-willow riparian forest. No T&E or sensitive species are found in the area, but three are found nearby. The threatened Apache trout is found in Lily Creek, just east of the area. Threatened Mexican spotted owls and sensitive northern goshawks are found nearby.

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

High - Diverse amount of natural resources.

Medium - Mixed amount of natural resources.

Low - Limited amount of natural resource diversity.

Rating: Medium - The area supplements the existing variety of natural resources found in the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness. The cottonwood-willow riparian forest would add to vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity.

Undeveloped

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

High - Little or no evidence of human activity.

Medium - Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human activity.

Low - Obvious evidence of human activity.

Rating: Low - Evidence of human activity is obvious throughout the area including road prisms and a fence. There are no developed trails. Approximately 70 percent of the area has received some form of timber treatment, primarily thinning. There are 2.2 miles of maintenance level 1 and decommissioned engineered roads that are noticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

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

High - Most of the area provides challenging recreation opportunities.

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

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

Rating: Medium - When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the area could supplement the recreation opportunities in the wilderness. However, the area itself does not have any challenging recreation opportunities.

9. Opportunity to experience solitude and isolation from human activities while recreating in the area.
High - Significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.
Medium - Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are likely.
Low - Little opportunity of feeling alone.

Rating: Medium - When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the area could contribute to opportunities for solitude but signs of civilization would be common.

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

High - There are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Medium - There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Low - There are few to no opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Rating: Medium - There are opportunities for hunting, hiking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. These opportunities would complement the existing opportunities in the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness.

Special Features and Values

11. Area contains outstanding or distinct features like rock formations, panoramic views, etc.
High - Many distinct features or few but exceptional features.
Medium - Some distinct features.
Low - One or no distinct features.

Rating: Low - The potential wilderness includes the lower slopes on the north side of Escudilla Mountain. There are views of the surrounding countryside and the upper slopes of Escudilla Mountain.

12. Area has potential for scientific research, environmental education, or historic/cultural opportunities.
High - Good potential for two or more types of these opportunities.
Medium - Potential for one type of opportunity.
Low - Little or no potential for this type of opportunity.

Rating: Low - There is little or no potential for research, environmental education, or cultural resources viewing opportunities.

13. Area contains unique or rare species of plants and/or animals.
High - Area has several unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Medium - Area has a few unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Low - Area has no unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Rating: Low - The area does not have any unique or rare plants or animals. The threatened Apache trout is found outside the potential wilderness. Threatened Mexican spotted owls and sensitive northern goshawks are found nearby.

Manageability

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

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - While access to the potential wilderness is relatively easy from FR 275, a more manageable wilderness boundary in some locations would be a positive result. Two areas north of FRs 8436 and 8448 would be difficult to manage because of their proximity to roads and indistinct northern boundaries. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts.

15. Motorized use within the area.

Yes - Has motorized vehicle use.

No - Does not have any motorized vehicle use.

Rating: Yes - Motorized vehicle use occurs on management level 1 roads and cross-country motorized use probably occurs on the gentler slopes.

Overall Capability: Medium

Availability Evaluation

The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Availability Characteristics

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

High - No impoundment needed.

Medium - Minor improvements will have an effect.

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

Rating: **High** - The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

2. Areas needing management for wildlife or aquatic animals that MIGHT conflict with wilderness management. (**b**)

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

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

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

Rating: **High** - Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

3. Area needing active aquatic restoration activities. (**b**)

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

Medium - Site-specific improvements needed.

Low - The majority of watershed needs attention.

Rating: **High** - Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

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

High - The area needs little vegetative restoration.

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

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

Rating: **High** - Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because back burns, which reduced fuels, were set from FR 275 during the Wallow Fire in 2011.

5. Areas having such unique characteristics or natural phenomena that general public access should be developed to facilitate public use and enjoyment. **(a, g)**

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

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

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

Rating: High - There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access. Forest roads parallel most of the boundary.

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

High - Current authorizations do not conflict with potential wilderness.

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

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

Rating: High - Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. There are no contracts or agreements.

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

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

Medium - No inholdings but adjacent lands may be private.

Low - Inholdings exist.

Rating: High - There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness. There is one Special Use Permit for water in Woods Creek, northwest of and outside of the potential wilderness.

8. Cultural resource sites that may need stabilization are present. Motorized vehicle access to Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) or scared sites is needed. **(g)**

High - No cultural resources stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Medium - Minor stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Low - Extensive stabilization of cultural resources needed or motorized vehicle access required.

Rating: High - There are no known sites in the area needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

9. Mineral potential was evaluated using the *R3 Plan Revision Guidance: Minerals Information Related to the Evaluation of Potential Wilderness and Research Natural Areas*. This guidance uses several databases to consider the presence and status of mining claims, mineral leases, and mineral districts. Based on the information contained in the above databases, and as described in the Background section, there is low mineral potential for this potential wilderness. **(f)**

Rating: High

Overall Availability: High

Need Evaluation

Additional information for Factors 1, 3, 4, and 6 can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

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

There are 15 Wilderness areas and 1 primitive area⁹ within a 100-mile radius of PW-03-01-070¹⁰. The total acreage of these areas is 1,302,920 acres. The Forest Service (FS) manages 12 of these areas, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 4, and the National Park Service (NPS) manages 1.

Potential Wilderness	Wilderness Area within a 100-mile Radius	Wilderness Acreage	Distance from PW	Managing Agency
PW-03-01-029	Santa Teresa	28,769	98	FS
	North Santa Teresa	5,733	94	BLM
	Fishhooks	11,400	74	BLM
	Gila	558,549	66	FS
	Aldo Leopold	206,700	89	FS
	Blue Range Primitive Area	179,819	31	FS
	Blue Range	35,815	31	FS
	Bear Wallow	11,113	33	FS
	Apache Kid	44,835	99	FS
	Salt River Canyon	32,035	97	FS
	Withington	18,973	95	FS
	Mount Baldy	7,627	24	FS
	Escudilla	5,210	2	FS
	Cebolla	66,445	84	BLM
	West Malpais	37,839	80	BLM
Petrified Forest	52,058	70	NPS	
TOTAL		1,302,920		

Existing Wilderness and Primitive Areas on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Wilderness Lands on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs		
Type	Number	Acres*
Wilderness	3	23,233
Primitive Area	1	180,007
TOTAL	4	203,240
* from DEIS for the ASNFs Land Management Plan.		

⁹ The Blue Range Primitive Area is the last remaining such area in the United States. It is managed almost like wilderness in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2320.3(11).

¹⁰ The wilderness need evaluation for PW-03-01-029 was used as a proxy for these potential wilderness areas.

The following table summarizes information found in the Wilderness Need Assessment Tables document. Only acres within the listed radius are shown; actual areas may be larger.

Wilderness within a 100-mile Radius of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs	
Number	Acres
46	2,355,715

There are no population centers¹¹ within a 100-mile radius of this potential wilderness.

Rating criteria:

There are significant wilderness lands (over 2.5 million acres) on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of this potential wilderness and the forests. Because demand for wilderness is generally greater near population centers, potential wilderness within a 100- or 130-mile radius of a population center where there are less than 1 million acres of Wilderness within that radius is rated as **Medium**. Potential wilderness within a 100- or 130-mile radius of a population center where there are more than 1 million acres of Wilderness in that radius is rated as **Low**. Potential wilderness more than 100 or 130 air miles from a population center is rated as **Low**.

Rating: **Low**

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

Item 1

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

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

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

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

¹¹ Southwestern Region population centers are defined in Factor 2 as Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque.

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

Item 2

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

Surrounding national forests (Coconino, Coronado, Gila, and Tonto NFs) all have much higher numbers of wilderness visits than the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs. Use on the Coconino, Coronado, and Gila NFs is high, while use on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and Tonto NF is medium.¹²

Regional Demand for Wilderness

1. Increased demand for additional wilderness in both Arizona and New Mexico should be anticipated based on population growth during the period of 1990 to 2000, which exceeded the national growth rate.
2. Assuming Arizona continues to grow at a rate greatly outpacing the national rate (predicted to be about 3 times the national rate), the number of visits to existing wilderness will continue to increase, and Arizona in particular could benefit from additional wilderness.
3. Demographics related to visitor race and ethnicity will affect the rate of increase in wilderness visits in the Southwestern Region. Even though the faster growing racial/ethnic groups have relatively low participation rates, wilderness use is still expected to increase because of the overall population growth rate.
4. Public demand increases with proximity to six population centers: Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque. Consider wilderness recommendations within a 100-mile radius of those cities to provide for that demand.
5. Some additional public demand for wilderness in the Southwestern Region will occur from the influx of people moving to communities in the vicinity of the national forests.
6. In terms of geographic distribution of wilderness, the Southwestern Region is underrepresented with five percent fewer wilderness acres as compared with the representation nationally. Additionally, all quadrants in Arizona and New Mexico are underrepresented with the exception of the southwest and southeast quadrants in Arizona. The most underrepresented quadrants are southeast and northwest New Mexico and northeast Arizona, which are at 6 percent or less in the number of wilderness acres (compared with total federal wilderness acres).
7. Desirability of the scenic mountainous settings available in the rural communities within and adjacent to national forests in the Southwestern Region will attract new retirees and others, further contributing to a growth in wilderness visitation.

¹² This is based on use categories developed by the Forest Service Wilderness Advisory Group, with low use defined as 0-10,000 visits, medium as 10,001 – 30,000 visits, and high being greater than 30,000 visits. Total wilderness use for a forest from NVUM was divided by the number of wilderness areas the forest is lead for, to get an average amount of use per wilderness.

Rating criteria:

Based on projected population increases, high use in two of the three wilderness areas on the forests, and the underrepresentation of northeast Arizona in the National Wilderness Preservation System, those potential wilderness areas within a 100- or 130-mile radius of a population center are rated as **High**. All other potential wilderness areas are rated as **Medium**.

Rating: Medium

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

The following tables summarize information found in the Wilderness Need Assessment Tables document. Only acres within the listed radius are shown; actual areas may be larger. The Recreation Opportunity System (ROS) acres are for National Forest System lands only. No ROS information is available for the Gila NF. Many of the ROS acres overlap designated Wilderness, the Blue Range Primitive Area, and IRAs.

Like Wilderness Lands on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs		
Type	Number	Acres
Inventoried Roadless Area	17	321,949
ROS-Primitive		228,954
ROS-Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized		452,486
TOTAL ACRES		1,003,389

Like Wilderness Lands within a 100-mile Radius of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs		
Type	Number	Acres
Inventoried Roadless Area	85	1,571,867
BLM Wilderness Study Area	17	279,320
NPS proposed wilderness	1	116,769
ROS-Primitive		833,442
ROS-Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized		1,697,112
TOTAL ACRES		4,498,510

Rating criteria:

There are significant opportunities (over 5.4 million acres) for unconfined outdoor recreation outside of designated Wilderness and the Blue Range Primitive Area both on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and within a 100-mile radius of the forests. Therefore, the potential wilderness is rated as **Low**.

Rating: Low

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

Forest Planning Species (FPS), as determined for Forest Plan Revision, were reviewed to determine if there were species on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs that require primitive surroundings (natural conditions and low human disturbance) to survive. The Forest Planning Species list includes 30 mammals, 22 birds,

6 reptiles and amphibians, 13 fish, 12 invertebrates, and 25 plants. This list includes Endangered Species Act endangered, threatened, and candidate species; Southwestern Region sensitive species; and other species of interest. Only the endangered, threatened, candidate, and sensitive species are considered in this evaluation.

Through coordination with the planning wildlife and fisheries staff, it was determined that there are no endangered, threatened, candidate, or sensitive species that require primitive surroundings. However, there are 2 mammals, 7 birds, 6 reptiles and amphibians, 13 fish, 2 invertebrates, and 1 plant that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

Additional information on species that would benefit from primitive surroundings can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating criteria:

High - Species or habitat for species that require primitive surroundings are present.

Medium - Species or habitat for species that would benefit from primitive surroundings are present.

Low - Neither species or habitat for species that require or would benefit from primitive surroundings are present.

There are no FPS on the forests that require primitive surroundings. Each potential wilderness has at least one FPS or has habitat for at least one FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings. Therefore, all areas receive a **Medium** rating.

Rating: **Medium** - There are one FPS and habitat for two additional FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

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

Rating criteria:

High - Management of all wilderness areas on the forests could not increase capacity without further affecting the wilderness resource.

Medium - Management of one or more wilderness areas on the forests could increase capacity without further affecting the wilderness resource.

Low - Management of all wilderness areas on the forests could increase capacity without affecting the wilderness resource.

Because use in Bear Wallow Wilderness is relatively low, this wilderness could accommodate some increased use without affecting wilderness resources. Therefore, all potential wilderness areas are rated as **Medium**.

Rating: **Medium**

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

The Southwestern Regional Office used the process outlined in Loomis and Echohawk (1999)¹³ to determine the underrepresented landforms and ecosystem types in Wilderness within Region 3.

The following underrepresented landforms (ecoregion subsection) are found on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs: Burro Mountains oak-juniper woodland, Coconino Plateau woodland, and White Mountains scarp woodland-coniferous forest.

The following underrepresented ecosystems (PNVTs) are found on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs: cottonwood-willow riparian forest (CWRF), dry mixed conifer forest (DMCF), interior chaparral (IC), Madrea pine-oak woodland (MPOW), mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian forest (MBDRF), montane willow riparian forest (MWRF), montane/subalpine grasslands (MSG), spruce-fir forest (SFF), wet mixed conifer forest (WMCF), and wetland/cienega riparian areas (WCRA). The wet mixed conifer forest PNVT is used as a proxy for the aspen forest/woodland ecosystem because most of the aspen on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs is found in this PNVT.

Tables detailing the acres of underrepresented landforms and ecosystems can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating criteria:

- High - Underrepresented ecosystems and landforms occur across 67 percent or more of the potential wilderness.
- Medium - Underrepresented ecosystems and landforms occur across 34 to 66 percent of the potential wilderness.
- Low - Underrepresented ecosystems and landforms occur across 33 percent or less of the potential wilderness.

Rating: Low - Underrepresented ecosystems occur across 33 percent of the potential wilderness. This potential wilderness contains three underrepresented ecosystems: cottonwood-willow riparian forest, dry mixed conifer forest, and wet mixed conifer forest. There are no underrepresented landforms.

Overall Need: Low

¹³ Loomis, John and Echohawk, J. Chris. 1999. Using GIS to identify under-represented ecosystems in the National Wilderness Preservation System in the USA. *Environmental Conservation*. 26 (1): 53-58.

Appendix C: Hulsey Worksheets

Capability Evaluation

Capability Characteristics

Natural

1. Presence of non-native species.

High - Non-native species are not evident.

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

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

Rating: Medium - Mullein, a non-native plant, is found along roads south of the area, but there are no GIS records of the plant within the potential wilderness. Weed surveys in summer 2012 found cheatgrass, musk thistle, and jointed goatgrass in the area. Three patches of cheatgrass were found along the south boundary (FR 8056). One patch each of musk thistle and jointed goatgrass were found along FR 8056A in the interior of the area. Non-native species may be present in unsurveyed areas.

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

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - Perennial streams include Hulsey Creek. The remaining drainages are either intermittent or ephemeral. Two stock ponds on an ephemeral section of Milk Creek tributary probably affect its free-flowing character.

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

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

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

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

Rating: High - There are no nearby population centers and the lights from Alpine and Nutrioso are not visible from the area.

4. Presence of pollutants that degrade water.

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - Milk Creek has been sampled; there are no known water quality issues with these waters.

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

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

Medium - Has a mix of habitats and ecological conditions.

Low - Has limited ecological conditions and habitats.

Rating: Medium - The potential wilderness would supplement the existing biological diversity and naturalness of the adjoining potential wilderness areas and Escudilla Wilderness with additional areas of ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, and dry mixed conifer forests and a small amount of montane willow riparian forest. Threatened Mexican spotted owls are found in the southern portion of the area.

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

High - Diverse amount of natural resources.

Medium - Mixed amount of natural resources.

Low - Limited amount of natural resource diversity.

Rating: Medium - The area supplements the existing variety of natural resources found in the adjoining potential wilderness areas and Escudilla Wilderness. The montane willow riparian forest would add to vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity. Additional recreation opportunities would be available that could reduce pressure on the existing wilderness trails.

Undeveloped

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

High - Little or no evidence of human activity.

Medium - Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human activity.

Low - Obvious evidence of human activity.

Rating: Low - Evidence of human activity is obvious within the area including road prisms from timber management activities. There is one developed trail in the potential wilderness. There are approximately 18.9 miles of engineered roads in the area. In addition, 71 percent of the area has been commercially thinned for timber management or has been part of shelterwood cuts.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

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

High - Most of the area provides challenging recreation opportunities.

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

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

Rating: Low - When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness areas and Escudilla Wilderness, the potential wilderness could supplement the recreation opportunities in the wilderness. However, the area itself does not have any challenging recreation opportunities.

9. Opportunity to experience solitude and isolation from human activities while recreating in the area.
High - Significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.
Medium - Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are likely.
Low - Little opportunity of feeling alone.

Rating: Medium - There are approximately 18.9 miles of roads in the area. When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness areas and Escudilla Wilderness, the area could contribute to opportunities for solitude, but signs of civilization would be common.

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

High - There are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Medium - There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Low - There are few to no opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Rating: Medium - There are some opportunities for hunting, hiking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. These opportunities would complement the existing opportunities in the adjacent potential wilderness areas and Escudilla Wilderness.

Special Features and Values

11. Area contains outstanding or distinct features like rock formations, panoramic views, etc.
High - Many distinct features or few but exceptional features.
Medium - Some distinct features.
Low - One or no distinct features.

Rating: Low - The potential wilderness includes a bench on the west side and canyons on the northwest side of Escudilla Mountain. There are views of the west slopes of Escudilla Mountain from the area.

12. Area has potential for scientific research, environmental education, or historic/cultural opportunities.
High - Good potential for two or more types of these opportunities.
Medium - Potential for one type of opportunity.
Low - Little or no potential for this type of opportunity.

Rating: Medium - The potential wilderness has opportunities for a variety of scientific research.

13. Area contains unique or rare species of plants and/or animals.
High - Area has several unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Medium - Area has a few unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Low - Area has no unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Rating: Medium - Threatened Mexican spotted owls are found in the area. Northern goshawks are found nearby.

Manageability

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

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - While public motorized access to the area is limited through a wildlife habitat area special closure order, non-motorized access is available from FR 8056. Hulsey Lake, a popular fishing site, is adjacent to the southwest boundary. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts.

15. Motorized use within the area.

Yes - Has motorized vehicle use.

No - Does not have any motorized vehicle use.

Rating: No and Yes - The area is closed to public motorized vehicle use through a wildlife habitat area special closure order. However, motorized administrative use does occur occasionally.

Overall Capability: Medium

Availability Evaluation

The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Availability Characteristics

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

High - No impoundment needed.

Medium - Minor improvements will have an effect.

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

Rating: **High** - The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

2. Areas needing management for wildlife or aquatic animals that MIGHT conflict with wilderness management. (**b**)

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

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

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

Rating: **High** - Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

3. Area needing active aquatic restoration activities. (**b**)

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

Medium - Site-specific improvements needed.

Low - The majority of watershed needs attention.

Rating: **High** - Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

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

High - The area needs little vegetative restoration.

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

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

Rating: **High** - Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because the area burned during the 2011 Wallow Fire.

5. Areas having such unique characteristics or natural phenomena that general public access should be developed to facilitate public use and enjoyment. **(a, g)**

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

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

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

Rating: **High** - There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access.

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

High - Current authorizations do not conflict with potential wilderness.

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

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

Rating: **Medium** - Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. A developed spring with a water right is in the area. There are no contracts or agreements.

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

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

Medium - No inholdings but adjacent lands may be private.

Low - Inholdings exist.

Rating: **High** - There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness.

8. Cultural resource sites that may need stabilization are present. Motorized vehicle access to Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) or scared sites is needed. **(g)**

High - No cultural resources stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Medium - Minor stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Low - Extensive stabilization of cultural resources needed or motorized vehicle access required.

Rating: **High** - There are no known sites in the area needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

9. Mineral potential was evaluated using the *R3 Plan Revision Guidance: Minerals Information Related to the Evaluation of Potential Wilderness and Research Natural Areas*. This guidance uses several databases to consider the presence and status of mining claims, mineral leases, and mineral districts. Based on the information contained in the above databases, and as described in the Background section, there is low mineral potential for this potential wilderness. **(f)**

Rating: **High**

Overall Availability: High

Need Evaluation

Ratings for Factors 1, 2, 3, and 5 are the same for all three areas. Ratings for Factors 4 and 6 are different.

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

Additional information on species that would benefit from primitive surroundings can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating: **Medium** - There are one FPS and habitat for four additional FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

Tables detailing the acres of underrepresented landforms and ecosystems can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating: **Medium** - Underrepresented ecosystems occur across 38 percent of the potential wilderness. The potential wilderness contains five underrepresented ecosystems: dry mixed conifer forest, montane willow riparian forest, montane/subalpine grasslands, spruce-fir forest, and wet mixed conifer forest. There are no underrepresented landforms.

Overall Need: **Medium**, and adjacent to Escudilla Wilderness

Appendix D: South Escudilla Mountain Worksheets

Capability Evaluation

Capability Characteristics

Natural

1. Presence of non-native species.

High - Non-native species are not evident.

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

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

Rating: Medium - Mullein, a non-native plant, is found along FR 8056, but there are no GIS records of the plant within the potential wilderness. Weed surveys in summer 2012 found two patches of cheatgrass and one of bull thistle along the northern edge of the evaluation area (FR 8056). Non-native species may be present in unsurveyed areas.

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

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - Perennial streams include Paddy Creek. The remaining drainages are either intermittent or ephemeral. There are one stock tank on a Paddy Creek tributary and two stock tanks on Little Creek, one on a tributary and one on the creek.

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

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

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

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

Rating: High - There are no nearby population centers and the lights from Alpine and Nutrioso are not visible from the area.

4. Presence of pollutants that degrade water.

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

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

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

Rating: Medium - Paddy Creek has been sampled; there are no known water quality issues.

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

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

Medium - Has a mix of habitats and ecological conditions.

Low - Has limited ecological conditions and habitats.

Rating: Medium - The potential wilderness would supplement the existing biological diversity and naturalness of the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness with additional areas of spruce-fir, ponderosa pine, wet mixed conifer, and dry mixed conifer forests; piñon-juniper woodland; montane/subalpine grasslands; and montane willow riparian forest. Sensitive northern goshawks are also found in the area, while threatened Mexican spotted owls are found nearby.

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

High - Diverse amount of natural resources.

Medium - Mixed amount of natural resources.

Low - Limited amount of natural resource diversity.

Rating: Medium - The area supplements the existing variety of natural resources found in the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness. The montane willow riparian forest would add to vegetation and wildlife habitat diversity. Additional recreation opportunities would be available that could reduce pressure on the existing wilderness trails.

Undeveloped

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

High - Little or no evidence of human activity.

Medium - Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human activity.

Low - Obvious evidence of human activity.

Rating: Low - Evidence of human activity is obvious within parts of the area including engineered roads from timber management activities. There are no developed trails in the potential wilderness. In addition, 18 percent of the area has been commercially thinned for timber management or has been part of shelterwood cuts or WUI treatments.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

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

High - Most of the area provides challenging recreation opportunities.

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

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

Rating: Medium - When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the potential wilderness could supplement the challenging recreation opportunities.

9. Opportunity to experience solitude and isolation from human activities while recreating in the area.
High - Significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization.
Medium - Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are likely.
Low - Little opportunity of feeling alone.

Rating: Medium - There are 14.1 miles of known engineered roads in the area. When considered with the adjoining potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness, the potential wilderness could contribute to opportunities for solitude, but signs of civilization would be common.

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

High - There are many opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Medium - There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive recreation.
Low - There are few to no opportunities to engage in primitive recreation.

Rating: Medium - There are opportunities for hunting, cross-county hiking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. These opportunities would complement the existing opportunities in the adjacent potential wilderness and nearby Escudilla Wilderness.

Special Features and Values

11. Area contains outstanding or distinct features like rock formations, panoramic views, etc.
High - Many distinct features or few but exceptional features.
Medium - Some distinct features.
Low - One or no distinct features.

Rating: Medium - The potential wilderness includes the steep slopes on the west and southwest sides of Escudilla Mountain, which are highly scenic. There are also panoramic views of the surrounding countryside from these slopes.

12. Area has potential for scientific research, environmental education, or historic/cultural opportunities.
High - Good potential for two or more types of these opportunities.
Medium - Potential for one type of opportunity.
Low - Little or no potential for this type of opportunity.

Rating: Medium - The potential wilderness has opportunities for a variety of scientific research.

13. Area contains unique or rare species of plants and/or animals.
High - Area has several unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Medium - Area has a few unique or rare plants and/or animals.
Low - Area has no unique or rare plants and/or animals.

Rating: Medium - Northern goshawks are found in the area. Threatened Mexican spotted owls are found nearby.

Manageability

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

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

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

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

Rating: **Medium** - Access to the potential wilderness is relatively easy from FRs 8056 and 275. The area is near one developed campground and adjoins an area (Terry Flat) that receives moderate recreation use. There are no known encumbrances or conflicts.

15. Motorized use within the area.

Yes - Has motorized vehicle use.

No - Does not have any motorized vehicle use.

Rating: **Yes** - ATV use regularly occurs on maintenance level 1 roads throughout the area.

Overall Capability: Medium

Availability Evaluation

The letters below in parenthesis refer to the following required considerations: **a.** recreation, including tourism; **b.** wildlife species, populations, and management needs; **c.** water availability and use; **d.** livestock operations; **e.** timber; **f.** minerals; **g.** cultural resources; **h.** authorized and potential uses; and **i.** management considerations including fire, insects, disease, and presence of non-Federal lands.

Availability Characteristics

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

High - No impoundment needed.

Medium - Minor improvements will have an effect.

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

Rating: **High** - The area is of value for water yield. However, no impoundments are needed.

2. Areas needing management for wildlife or aquatic animals that MIGHT conflict with wilderness management. (**b**)

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

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

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

Rating: **High** - Habitat management needs for wildlife or aquatic animals are minimal.

3. Area needing active aquatic restoration activities. (**b**)

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

Medium - Site-specific improvements needed.

Low - The majority of watershed needs attention.

Rating: **High** - Aquatic restoration activities are not needed in the potential wilderness.

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

High - The area needs little vegetative restoration.

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

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

Rating: **High** - Vegetation restoration activities are not needed because the area burned during the 2011 Wallow Fire.

5. Areas having such unique characteristics or natural phenomena that general public access should be developed to facilitate public use and enjoyment. **(a, g)**

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

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

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

Rating: **High** - There are no unique characteristics that would require developed public access. Forest roads parallel some of the boundary.

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

High - Current authorizations do not conflict with potential wilderness.

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

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

Rating: **High** - Current authorizations, primarily grazing permits, do not conflict with potential wilderness. There are no contracts or agreements.

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

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

Medium - No inholdings but adjacent lands may be private.

Low - Inholdings exist.

Rating: **High** - There are no inholdings or non-federal lands adjacent to the potential wilderness.

8. Cultural resource sites that may need stabilization are present. Motorized vehicle access to Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) or scared sites is needed. **(g)**

High - No cultural resources stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Medium - Minor stabilization and/or motorized vehicle access needed.

Low - Extensive stabilization of cultural resources needed or motorized vehicle access required.

Rating: **High** - There are no known sites in the area needing stabilization. Motorized vehicle access to any TCPs or sacred sites is not needed.

9. Mineral potential was evaluated using the *R3 Plan Revision Guidance: Minerals Information Related to the Evaluation of Potential Wilderness and Research Natural Areas*. This guidance uses several databases to consider the presence and status of mining claims, mineral leases, and mineral districts. Based on the information contained in the above databases, and as described in the Background section, there is low mineral potential for this potential wilderness. **(f)**

Rating: **High**

Overall Availability: High

Need Evaluation

Ratings for Factors 1, 2, 3, and 5 are the same for all three areas. Ratings for Factors 4 and 6 are different.

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

Additional information on species that would benefit from primitive surroundings can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating: **Medium** - There are one FPS and habitat for four additional FPS that would benefit from primitive surroundings.

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

Tables detailing the acres of underrepresented landforms and ecosystems can be found in the Wilderness Need Evaluation Tables document.

Rating: **High** - Underrepresented ecosystems occur across 90 percent of the potential wilderness. This potential wilderness contains six underrepresented ecosystems: dry mixed conifer forest, montane willow riparian forest, montane/subalpine grasslands, spruce-fir forest, and wet mixed conifer forest. There are no underrepresented landforms.

Overall Need: Medium