



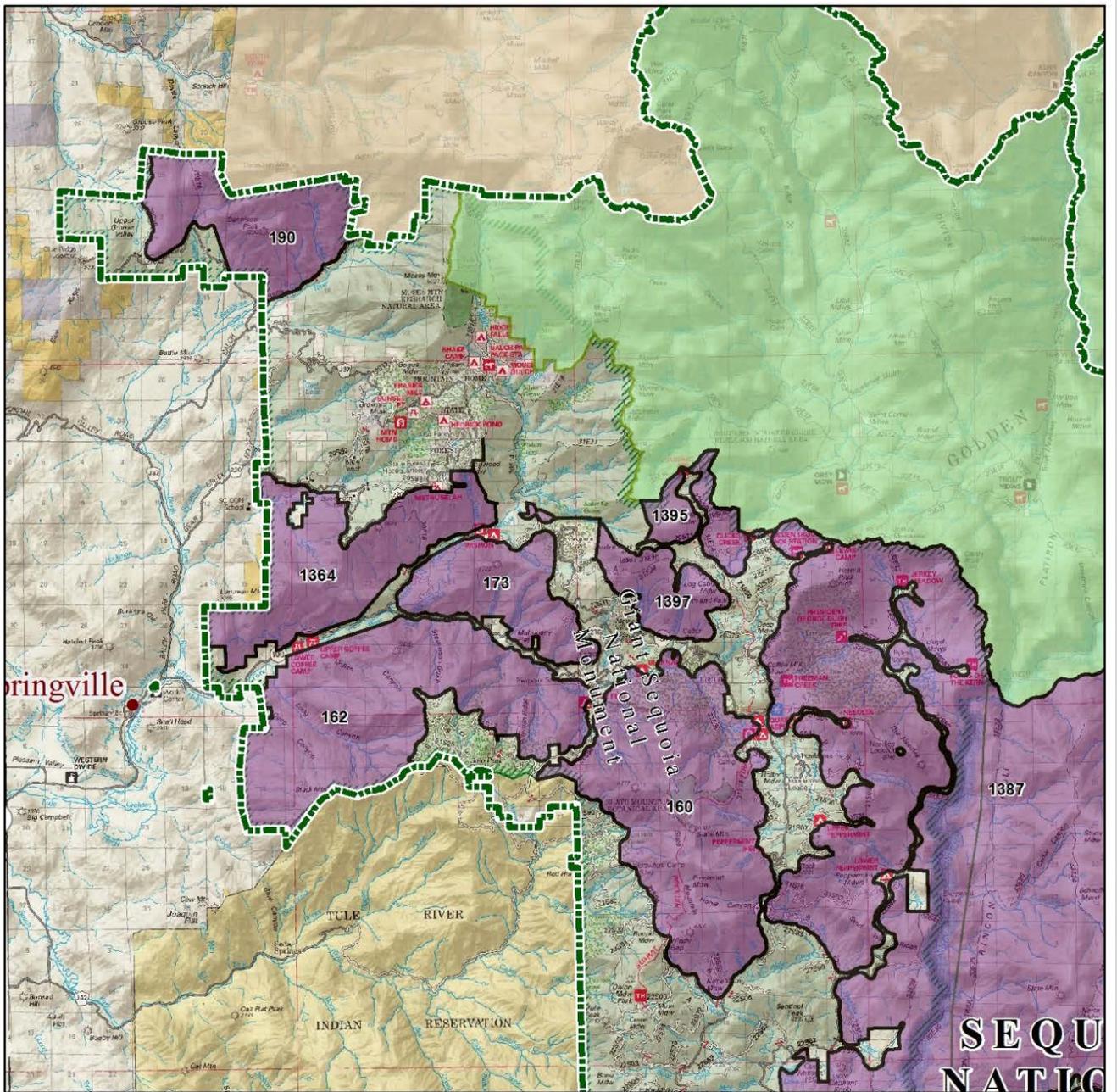
Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region



December 2015

Draft Results of the Wilderness Evaluation for Public Feedback on Revision of the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests Land Management Plans

Sequoia National Forest Evaluation Map C



Lands evaluated for their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

Administrative Forest Boundary
 USFS Wilderness
 National Parks



0 2.25 4.5 6.75 9 Miles

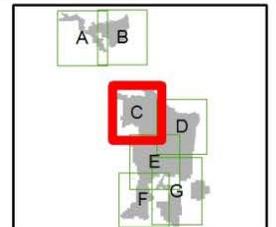


Figure 14. Sequoia National Forest evaluation map C

terrain. Traffic noise originating from the highway corridor and associated recreation facilities can be heard from the interior of the unit.

Other Features of Value

There are likely prehistoric sites and trails in the area as it is adjacent to the Tule River Indian Reservation. A small portion of the Black Mountain Giant Sequoia Grove is within the southern tip of the unit. There are marble outcrops and travertine formations in the area. The area contains a number of rare and important species such as Western Pond Turtle, Delphinium, and Kaweah *Brodiaea*.

Manageability

Reintroducing ecological condition that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention would require the use of fire. This could be accomplished at higher elevations, but would be risky at lower elevations where the polygon boundary is shared with private land uses. Controlling motorized use within the unit would be difficult where the unit is adjacent to roads, due to the number of access points and the difficulty in patrolling.

The manageability concerns are the 2 special use road permits to adjacent private property owners and the permit for the oil and gas pipeline. Being adjacent to the Tule River Indian Reservation could cause concerns in implementing fuels treatments designed to limit fire spread from National Forest System lands onto the reservation.

Eleven percent of the area is within a Wild Urban Interface Defense Zone and 31 percent is within a Threat Zone. Achieving the desired vegetative modification goals would be difficult, if actions to achieve these goals are limited to natural fire.

Summary of Potential Suitability for Inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

The Potential for suitability for inclusion is low. This is because of the effects of human intervention, and manageability problems. It is however within the Giant Sequoia National Monument as well as an inventoried roadless area.

This polygon presents a moderate opportunity to protect ecological groups that may be minimally represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Ecological groups with less than 5 percent of their national extent in the National Wilderness Preservation System comprise a low number of acres. Ecological groups with between 10 and 20 percent of their national extent in the National Wilderness Preservation System, however, comprise 6,059 acres. (For map see Exhibit B – Sequoia National Forest Evaluation Maps – Evaluation Map C.)

Polygon 173 (South of Wishon)

General Description

Polygon 173 is a lower to mid-elevation mountainous area composed primarily of chaparral, oak woodlands and mixed conifers east of the Pacific Gas and Electric Powerhouse on Highway 190. The polygon is north of Highway 190, the major access road to the southern portion of the Giant Sequoia National Monument, east of Forest Service Road 20S91, and south and west of County Road 208. There are numerous Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensed facilities that require access and mechanical maintenance in the unit for both Pacific Gas and Electric and Southern California Edison. The unit is 5,307 acres of land that is a deformed oblong shape and narrow on the eastern side. The polygon is within the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

National Vegetation Classification System data indicates none of the area of the polygon consists of ecological groups that have less than 5 percent of their national extent protected in the National Wilderness Preservation System. This polygon also contains 6 ecological groups with a total area of 2,045 acres which have less than 20 percent of their national extent protected in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The most prevalent is Mediterranean California mixed oak woodland.

Wilderness Characteristics

Degree the Area Generally Appears to be Affected Primarily by the Forces of Nature

The unit has been affected by human intervention. Fire suppression activities have led to denser stands of shade tolerant species. The forested stand average age is lower than it would have been before fire suppression, while the brush field average age is higher. About 5 percent of the area has been logged and some associated road beds and plantations exist.

The area is just over 5,000 acres and surrounded by roads. The western portion is developed with special use permitted activity. The developments within the area include power lines, flumes, aqueduct, penstocks, tunnels, dam, water weir and access roads. There is motorized use in the unit for access and maintenance of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission special use permits, including helicopter flights. There is an aqueduct that runs through the western portion of the unit. Only the center portion of the unit is undeveloped. The areas adjacent to the unit in the east and south are mountain communities.

The overall character of the area doesn't appear natural. There are no mines in the area. Some nonnative species are Malta star thistle, cheatgrass, and yellow star thistle.

Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

There are very limited opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the area. It is difficult to escape the noise associated with the activities described above in an area of only just over 5,000 acres. Opportunity for primitive recreation activities exist away from existing roads and other infrastructure. Currently there is very little established primitive activity use, such as overnight camping away from routes. As the visitor moves away from the roads that encircle this polygon, the steep terrain and undeveloped character of the landscape offers a high degree of challenge and risk while using outdoor skills. Private property, recreation and residential development at the perimeter, and dispersed recreation use along streams limit the experience of adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative or self-reliance in portions of the area.

Other Features of Value

There is likely a prehistoric trail in the area. A portion of the Alder Creek Giant Sequoia Grove is within the eastern edge of the unit. The area contains western pond turtle, Springville clarkia, Pierpoint Springs' dudleya, Meadow star-tulip and a portion of a Giant Sequoia Grove.

Manageability

The manageability concerns are the numerous access and mechanical maintenance needs associated with the special use permits in the unit. Thirty percent of the area is within a Wild Urban Interface Defense Zone and 63 percent is within a Threat Zone. Achieving the desired vegetative modification goals would be difficult, if actions to achieve these goals are limited to natural fire.

Summary of Potential Suitability for Inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

The potential for suitability for inclusion is low. This is because of the effects of human intervention, limited primitive opportunity and solitude, as well as manageability problems. The area's wilderness characteristics are impacted by many developments associated with the currently permitted uses. Opportunities for solitude are very limited. Although the area appears natural to the casual visitor it has been impacted by grazing, fire suppression and nonnative invasive species.

This polygon presents a limited opportunity to protect ecological groups that may be minimally represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are no ecological groups with less than 5 percent of their national extent in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Ecological groups with between 10 and 20 percent of their national extent in the National Wilderness Preservation System comprise 2,045 acres. (For map see Exhibit B – Sequoia National Forest Evaluation Maps – Evaluation Map C.)

Polygon 190 (Dennison Peak)

General Description

Polygon 190 is a mid-elevation mountainous area composed primarily of chaparral, oak woodlands and mixed conifers in the Dennison Peak area. The polygon is north of Tulare County Road 276, which is a paved road. Due to the width of the road, scenic overlook pullouts are limited. Much of the unit is visible from the county road and foothill and valley communities. The unit is 7,100 acres of land that is a deformed, oblong shape. The polygon is within an inventoried roadless area, the Giant Sequoia National Monument, adjacent to Sequoia National Park and adjacent to an area of Forest Service recommended wilderness.

National Vegetation Classification System data indicates less than 1 percent of the area of the polygon (14 acres) consists of ecological groups that have less than 5 percent of their national extent protected in the National Wilderness Preservation System. This polygon also contains 7 ecological groups with a total area of 2,530 acres which have less than 20 percent of their national extent protected in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The most prevalent are Mediterranean California mesic mixed conifer forest and woodland and Mediterranean California mixed oak woodland.

Wilderness Characteristics

Degree the Area Generally Appears to be Affected Primarily by the Forces of Nature

The unit has been affected by human intervention. Fire suppression activities have led to denser stands of shade tolerant species and denser understory throughout the entire unit. The forested stand average age is lower than it would have been before fire suppression, while the brush field average age is higher.

There is one noticeable mine in the area and possibly others that are not noticeable (Good Hope Mines). There are two minor structures associated with the mine but they are not maintained. There is no motorized use in the unit. Portions of Forest Service Trail 29E16 cross the west side of the unit and Forest Service Trail 19S09 is along the southern edge. There are two special use permitted water lines within the unit. Immediately adjacent to this unit is a Forest Service recommended wilderness, National Park Service lands and developed private property. Approximately half of the unit is part of a grazing allotment, with some associated water troughs