Wilderness Resource:

The criteria in section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act 1964 was used to determine and identify wilderness values on public lands. The characteristics which were assessed are: size, naturalness, Solitude, Primitive and Unconfined types of Recreation and Supplemental values.

Aravaipa Canyon Primitive Area (including adjacent public lands)

Aravaipa Canyon Primitive Area was established January 10, 1969 by Secretarial Order published in the Federal Register Vol. 34, No. 11 — Thursday, January 16, 1969. The primitive area has been intensly managed since that time to protect and preserve the outstanding scenic, recreational, archaeological, and wilderness values. For complete details of management objectives and policies refer to the Recreation Activity Plan and Management Plan for Aravaipa Canyon. (Central Files 8352).

The intensive inventory of wilderness characteristics of the primitive area and adjacent public lands is documented in a permanent file (Central Files 8500) and summarized briefly as follows:

The primitive area generally appears to have been affected predominantly by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticable. There are several visible signs of man's work within the area; but their cumulative effect on the area's degree of naturalness is slight. They are identified as short spans of range fences, ¾ mile pipeline, abandoned pump apparatus, abandoned roads, etc. (see Intensive Wilderness Inventory Narrative).

The area has outstanding opportunities for solitude. Topography and vegetation provide natural screening of sights and sounds of visitors from each other. The opportunity for finding secluded spots is readily available to anyone who wishes solitude.

The opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation is determined to be outstanding compared to the remainder of the planning unit and probably in the entire region of southwest Arizona. [Examples of the types of primitive and unconfined recreation which occur in the area are: hiking, backpacking, hunting (outside C horseback riding, mountain climbing (dangerous due to unstable natu

The area offers a high degree of mental and physical challenge to hikers and backpackers. Other unaccompanied recreational activities are enhanced by the ruggedness of the terrain and the beauty of the scenery, but especially by the continual presence of the perennial streams.

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of rock structures), birdwatching, photography, and sightseeing for geological, botanical, and zoological features. The quality of several of these recreation activities are considered to be outstanding.

The presence of supplemental values within the primitive area enhance the wilderness character. There are several supplemental values identified as present in the area.

The geological features of Aravaipa Canyon are not only scenic but represent an important scientific and educational resource. Within the canyon, there is opportunity to study a cross section of earth's history representing nearly 2.6 million years.

The ecological resources of the canyon are also considered outstanding. The area provides habitat for several Threatened and Endangered Species; it supports a substantial herd of Desert Bighorn Sheep; families of Coati mondi; and numerous other species of wildlife. Three different vegetative communities can be found within the area; the riparian community is generally the most heavily used by visitors.

The visual resource is considered to be Class I by Bureau standards as the canyon is comprised of rugged, deep gorges with a variety of vegetation and rich colors, and offers outstanding sightseeing and photography opportunities.

Aravaipa Canyon and the adjacent area contain numerous archaeological and historical sites. Several possess high recreational and educational and scientific values. The Turkey Creek Cliff Dwelling is a unique archaeological site, and the Salazar homesite has been nominated to the National Register of Historical Sites.

The use of the area for primitive and unconfined recreation activities has been increasing during the past several years. Complete analysis of existing types and degree of use can be found in the Recreation Activity Plan for Aravaipa Canyon (Central File 8351)

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Wilderness Resource:

1 Owyhee Canyon Primitive Area (See overlay).

The wilderness values identified in Step III are considered to be significant enough to recommend that the primitive area and adjoining public lands be proposed for wilderness designation. It is also recognized that ~~the~~ three maybe wilderness values present on private or state lands adjacent to the area ~~they~~ which could improve the quality and quality of the wilderness resource of the area. The recreation activity plan and the Owyhee Composite have identified lands for future acquisition. The lands identified in these two plans should be inventoried for their wilderness potential before acquiring them for that purpose.

The area should be left in its natural condition with no new developments (range, rec. or other) constructed or proposed until a final determination by Congress on the wilderness designations.

Some of the slight impairment of the wilderness of the area have the possibility of being restored to a natural condition. The pipeline could be removed with virtually no evidence of its presence remaining. The portable toilets can be removed without any disturbance to the landscape.

The quality of the wilderness experience could be improved by reducing the level of waste use. This would enhance the opportunity of solitude and loneliness for

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cool water. Also the physical impacts and visible signs of waste disposal on the land would be reduced.

MFP Step 1 Recommendation

Heidemann
12-18-78

Recommendation:

The intensive inventory of Aravaipa Canyon Primitive Area and adjacent public lands has identified outstanding wilderness resource values. It is recommended that the District propose the primitive area and suitable adjacent public lands for designation to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Rational:

Since the primitive area is presently identified as an instant study area, and the area has public lands which meet the wilderness criteria both within and outside the present primitive area boundary, these lands suitable should be proposed for wilderness designation. The area has been managed for its primitive and natural values for the last eight years. The advantage of proposing it for wilderness would be a more permanent and lasting designation. The management after designation would remain essentially the same as it is.

Recommendation:

The public lands contained within the proposed wilderness ~~study~~ area boundary should continue to be managed in a manner which will protect and preserve the wilderness values present.

Rational:

Until Congress acts on a wilderness designation recommendation the identified wilderness values which are present must be

be prepared in the permit condition and not imposed. The objectives and policy established in the Recreation Activity Plan for Aravaipa Canyon will provide the necessary protection and are consistent with the interim management guidelines established to protect Wilderness Study Area.

Livestock use shall be allowed to continue with the understanding that is not a direct conflict or adverse impact on resource values or the wilderness experience of visitors.

Air quality should be maintained at the present status and the class II designation should be retained.

Recreation use and activities should be allowed which are acceptable within a wilderness area. Levels of use and intensity should be continually monitored to protect the resource. Resource and sociological carrying capacities should be determined for the area as soon as possible.

Adequate support facilities (identified in Rec Act Plan) and permanent access should be provided to the east end of the Canyon. This need can best be met through acquisition of non-federal lands as outlined in the Aravaipa Canyon Consult Plan. (Central File 8350)

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