

ARAVAIPA CANYON WILDERNESS ADDITIONS

WILDERNESS SUITABILITY REPORT

Introduction

Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness was included in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) on August 28, 1984. The area contains 6,699 acres of public land surrounding an eleven mile stretch of the perennially flowing Aravaipa Creek. Nine major side canyons of varying length enter Aravaipa Creek along its course through the wilderness. The upper portions of those side canyons were on state land at the time of wilderness designation and thus were not included in Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness (ACW).

In a land exchange completed in April 1986 with the State of Arizona, BLM acquired approximately 51,000 acres north and south of the wilderness. Following that exchange and at the beginning of the Safford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) preparation, the issue of considering additions to ACW was raised by conservation groups and the public. That issue is being addressed through this report and the RMP.

The Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions Wilderness Inventory Report identified about 17,240 acres of public land having wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577). This report evaluates the wilderness values of the area, the ability to manage it as wilderness, other resource values present in the area and the effects wilderness designation would have on other resources.

Evaluation of Wilderness Values

1. Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

a. Size - The study area contains 17,240 acres of public land. Two private land inholdings totaling 720 acres are within the study area. An 80 acre parcel is on a center portion of Paisano Canyon north of Aravaipa Canyon in the eastern part of the study area. A 640 acre parcel is in the southwest part of the study area south of Aravaipa Canyon and the mouth of Virgus Canyon. These private lands are shown on the report map. The study area meets the size requirement.

b. Naturalness - The imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable in the study area. Developments that are present in the area are mainly range improvements and ways that are associated with livestock grazing. The ways also receive some recreation use during hunting seasons. Following is a summary of the imprints of man's work found in the study area:

- 9.4 miles of ways
- 15 dirt tanks
- 5 cement dams
- 2 developed springs
- 1 corral
- 15.3 miles of fences
- RAWS station (weather monitoring)

275

Legal descriptions of imprints are listed in Table 2 of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions Wilderness Inventory Report.

Much of the way mileage is low grade, requiring four-wheel drive, high clearance vehicles for passage. The ways are narrow with some vegetation growing in the center and their visibility is not prominent.

Many of the dirt tanks and cement dams are not generally seen as their location in canyons and drainage bottoms tends to restrict the amount of area from which they can be noticed. The surface area of the water impounded varies from as little as about 30 feet in diameter to an acre for the larger tanks. Nearly all of them were constructed years ago and have vegetation well established on the earthen dams and near the margins surrounding the waterline. This significantly reduces the man-made appearance of the dams. The spring developments are small and inobtrusive.

The nature of the fences found throughout the study area - low profile, separate strands of wire, fencelines that are not cleared and bladed - makes them largely unnoticeable. The corral is made of mostly natural-appearing materials minimizing the effect of its presence on the landscape.

The Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) is on a gently sloping flat and rises slightly higher than the surrounding vegetation. The aspect of the slope generally makes the station less visible from nearby viewpoints than from a distance. At a distance the station is only visible when sunlight is being reflected at low angles. The RAWS station is substantially unnoticeable in the study area.

The 17,240 acres of public land in the study area appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

c. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation - An outstanding opportunity for solitude is available throughout the study area. The upper ends of all the side canyons of Aravaipa Canyon are contained within the study area. These canyons are often deep, twisting and heavily vegetated, providing a superior level of screening and possibilities for isolating individuals and groups from one another. The upper side canyons are also less frequently visited than Aravaipa Canyon. The rugged nature and lack of trails in the side canyons tend to limit use to more motivated or experienced individuals. Most of the side canyons are not easily accessible from the uplands surrounding them.

The uplands of the study area also offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. These areas between the canyons are varied in topography consisting of rolling hills, bluffs and buttes, steep-sloped ridges and relatively flat areas dissected by rocky draws. Though more open in character than the canyons, the uplands provide ample possibilities to find seclusion and isolation from others. Portions of the uplands are more heavily vegetated with pinyon, juniper and oaks which further lends

to screening and separating persons from one another. Visitation to the uplands is also slight and is mostly seasonal.

Overall, the size, topography and vegetation of the canyons and the uplands contributes to an outstanding opportunity for solitude in the study area.

The study area offers outstanding opportunities for such primitive and unconfined types of recreation as hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, hunting, sightseeing, photography and wildlife observation. Opportunities for these activities are undeveloped and dispersed throughout the area. Some of these activities are an extension of the outstanding recreational opportunities found in Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness as well as standing on their own merits within the study area.

The Aravaipa area is becoming world renowned for its trophy desert bighorn sheep hunting. Such opportunities are limited and highly valued.

The area's remoteness and naturalness enhance the outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation found in the study area. These opportunities are considered outstanding both in the diversity of activities available and the quality of each opportunity.

2. Special Features

The study area contains several ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value. Some of the side canyons have perennial water extremely important to wildlife in a desert environment. They also provide habitat to native fish. The riparian environments supported by this water are also critical to wildlife. Much of the upland is ideal habitat for desert bighorn sheep. The herd reestablished in the 1950's and early 1970's has prospered, providing a substantial attraction for visitors to the area. These features provide excellent opportunities for educational experiences and scientific study of desert wildlife and ecological interactions.

The scenic values of the portions of Hell Hole, Parsons Canyon, Virgus Canyon, Hells Half Acre, Painted Cave Canyon, Horse Camp Canyon and Booger Canyon in the study area are outstanding. The geology of the deep canyons and clifflines is varied in color and composition offering many scenic vistas. The lush green of the riparian growth in the canyon bottoms also makes a striking and scenic contrast to the drier desert vegetation of the canyon slopes and uplands.

Archaeological and historical sites are found throughout the study area and could provide significant information concerning the former inhabitants of the Aravaipa area. Though archaeological sites are known to exist there, only a small portion of the area has been inventoried and sites recorded. Some historic sites are present in the area, remnants of homesteading efforts. A grave at the north end of Horse Camp Canyon just inside the study area attests to the difficulty and hazards of life in this remote place.

3. Multiple Resource Benefits

The lands contained in the study area have multiple resource benefits that lead to their acquisition in 1986. Interim guidelines for management of the Aravaipa lands were developed following the acquisition.

Watershed management opportunities included blocking up the lower Aravaipa watershed to protect the quantity and quality of water in the creek, managing eight major side canyons with riparian vegetation and stabilizing soil and small side washes through better rangeland management. Wildlife benefits included obtaining and enhancing habitat for threatened and endangered species, big game and other species of high interest to the public. Range management identified opportunities to improve heavily grazed areas and compare different grazing systems being used in the area. Recreation benefits included enhancing management of existing recreation to minimize impacts on other resources while improving experiences and access for such activities as hunting, camping, hiking and backpacking. Cultural resource opportunities were to manage significant archaeological sites, conduct scientific research on well preserved sites and the little studied Apache culture and to protect areas of value to Native Americans.

The relative permanency of a wilderness designation would extend protection and provide multiple resource benefits to resources in the study area not specifically addressed in the interim guidelines. Wilderness designation would preserve and protect natural ecosystem and plant communities, soils and watershed throughout the area. The closure of the area to ORVs, mineral leasing and mining, subject to valid existing rights, could reduce disturbance of wildlife and cultural resources more than would be possible otherwise.

4. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

The Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area is located in the Mexican-Highlands Shrub Steppe/Oak-juniper woodland (3140-27) and Mexican-Highlands Shrub Steppe/Grama-tobosa shrubsteppe (3140-52) ecosystems as defined by Bailey and Kuchler.

The Oak-juniper woodland ecosystem is currently represented in the NWPS by seven wilderness areas in Arizona. Six of the wilderness areas in this ecosystem are administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and one by the National Park Service (NPS). The Grama-tobosa shrubsteppe ecosystem is currently represented in the NWPS by only one wilderness, Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness, administered by BLM. The Oak-juniper woodland ecosystem has ten areas under study for wilderness designation administered by BLM and USFS in Arizona and New Mexico. The Grama-tobosa shrubsteppe ecosystem has 17 areas under study administered by BLM and USFS in Arizona and New Mexico.

Though not many existing wilderness areas are present in these two ecosystems, a number of potential additions to the NWPS could represent the ecosystems. The study area is one of several opportunities to expand the diversity of natural systems and features in the NWPS.

278

The study area is within a day's drive (250 miles) of two major metropolitan centers, Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation are available within a day's drive of Tucson in:

- 43 designated wildernesses in Arizona and New Mexico administered by USFS, NPS and BLM, and
- 85 areas under wilderness study by USFS, BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

These opportunities are within a day's drive of Phoenix in:

- 51 designated wildernesses in Arizona, New Mexico and California administered by USFS, NPS and BLM,
- 4 areas administratively endorsed for wilderness in Arizona and California administered by FWS, and
- 124 areas under wilderness study in Arizona, New Mexico and California administered by USFS, NPS and BLM.

Considering the number of existing, endorsed and study areas already present, wilderness designation of the study area would not appreciably add to the opportunities already available in the NWPS for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time of the two cities.

The geographic distribution of existing, endorsed and potential wilderness areas in Arizona and New Mexico is evenly spread throughout Arizona except for the Navajo Indian Reservation in the northeast part of the state and is distributed evenly north to south in New Mexico but concentrated in the central to western part of the state. Arizona has 45 existing wilderness areas administered by the USFS, NPS and BLM, and 56 areas, most managed by BLM, under study for wilderness designation. New Mexico has 22 existing wildernesses administered by the USFS, BLM and FWS, and 53 areas, most administered by BLM, under study for wilderness designation.

The Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area would not add significantly to the geographic distribution of the NWPS.

Manageability

The study area is a manageable unit which could preserve the wilderness character of the land in the long term. Both surface and subsurface in the study area is administered by the BLM.

Access to this remote, rugged area is by foot or four-wheel drive vehicle on the boundary roads. There are no mining claims, oil and gas leases, or geothermal leases or applications pending in the study area. Although the study area is under grazing lease, it appears that would not conflict with preservation of the area as wilderness in the long term.

Impacts on Other Resources

1. Energy and Minerals

Under the Wilderness Act, the lands designated as wilderness are withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and are withdrawn from

leasing under the mineral leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. Generally, some prospecting and exploration work could take place under the mining laws, but no new claims could be filed. No new mineral leasing would be allowed. This provision has the potential to impact the removal of energy and mineral resources not covered under valid existing rights as of the date of designation.

The Bureau of Mines conducted a mineral investigation of about 75,000 acres of the Aravaipa area in 1988. The resulting report, Mineral Resources of the Aravaipa Study Area, Graham and Pinal Counties, Arizona, concluded that approximately 85% of the study area is covered by thick accumulations of volcanic rocks which are devoid of near-surface mineral occurrences. Erosion in the vicinity of the Table Mountain Mine has exposed irregularly distributed gold and other metal concentrations. Geologic conditions suggest that similar mineral resources may exist beneath the Galiuro Volcanics in a 3,000 acre area surrounding the mine. This area is outside of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area. No anomalously high concentrations of any element were found in the stream-sediment samples pointing to unknown areas of mineralization.

Sand and gravel resources are present in the drainages throughout the study area but are far removed from market, making the resources commercially unattractive.

The entire study area has geologic characteristics unfavorable for the formation and accumulation of petroleum and natural gas. No geothermal resources are known to be present in the study area.

Designation of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area as wilderness would have little impact on energy and minerals. This is due to the area's low potential for mineral, oil and gas, and geothermal resources.

2. Livestock and Range Management

Portions of four allotments exist within the study area. All are classified Intensive for range management purposes. The following table summarizes the grazing preference of each allotment.

	<u>Animal Unit Months (AUM)</u>	<u>Cattle Year Long (CYL)</u>
Painted Cave	1,560	130
	786 (6 months)	131 (6 months)
Dry Camp	2,796	233
Hell Hole	168	14
South Rim	5,796	483

Several range management facilities exist within the study area. These are described in the Naturalness section of this report.

Livestock grazing is permitted in designated wilderness areas where it was established prior to designation. Associated with livestock grazing are various required facilities. Existing facilities may continue to be maintained. If those facilities are found to be no longer necessary through

280

environmental analysis, they may be phased out and removed. New facilities may be constructed if it is determined they are necessary for the purpose of resource protection (both rangeland and wilderness) and effective management rather than to accommodate increased numbers of livestock.

Methods of construction or maintenance, materials used, necessary equipment and access requirements will be addressed through environmental analysis. The analysis will give consideration to construction or maintenance standards and techniques that will achieve the most practical and reasonable approach considering the wilderness resource. This may also include use of motorized equipment and vehicles.

Intensive management of livestock grazing would occur on the upper Horse Camp Canyon portion of the study area. Wilderness designation of that portion of the study area would restrict some actions needed for intensive livestock grazing management.

Prescribed fire is proposed to restore the productivity of a portion of the range within the study area. Prescribed fires may be allowed in a wilderness when done in accordance with an approved Fire Management Plan and to restore or benefit wilderness values. A discussion of prescribed burning is included in the Fire section of this report.

Impacts upon the rangeland resource will be minimal. Maintenance of existing facilities may continue and new ones may be constructed. However, protection of the wilderness resource is the important consideration that must be evaluated.

3. Wildlife

Wilderness management seeks a natural distribution, number and interaction of indigenous species of wildlife. Natural processes will be allowed to occur in wilderness ecosystems, which include wildlife populations, as far as possible, without human influences. Management will protect the conditions that allow natural processes a maximum degree of freedom.

To the extent possible, wildlife species in BLM wilderness should be allowed to maintain a natural balance with their habitat and with each other. Wildlife may be harvested under State regulations and direct wildlife control measures will be applied only upon a showing of need.

The basic responsibilities of the BLM and other cooperating State and Federal agencies in the management of wildlife are not altered by the Wilderness Act. However, the constraints of the Act and the intent of Congress articulated in the Act and in subsequent legislation will guide the management of wildlife in wilderness. A Wilderness Management Plan and Habitat Management Plans would specify wildlife habitat conditions to be maintained.

A wilderness designation could affect wildlife by attracting more use including hunting and non-consumptive wildlife viewing. Increased visitation could also put more pressure on riparian areas which provide important wildlife habitat and nesting sites. Animals that are listed as T&E or are

281

proposed for listing may also be sensitive to more people using the area. The degree of these impacts would generally correspond with the number of people visiting the area and, in most cases, is expected to be minor.

The preservation of sensitive, rare, threatened and endangered species dependent on wilderness condition will be favored.

Wilderness designation will have very little impact on management of wildlife in the study area. Based upon current management practices, future management anticipated, laws and policies, very little impact is anticipated.

4. Timber

There is no present use of forest products in the study area. Current planning documents do not authorize harvesting of forest products nor, historically, has there been a demand to do so. No impact would be created by a wilderness designation.

5. Recreation

Wilderness allows a variety of uses including, but not limited to, recreational, scenic, scientific, education, conservation and historical.

The wilderness resource will be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between preservation of wilderness character and visitor use. There are places and times within wilderness where unique values may require that recreation and visitor use activities be restricted or entirely prohibited in order to preserve an enduring resource of wilderness. The highest priority among various kinds of visitor use will be accorded those activities which, (1) are most dependent upon the wilderness environment and cannot be reasonably accommodated outside the wilderness, and (2) least affect the wilderness environment.

Consideration must be given to the ability of the wilderness resource to sustain visitor use without loss or degradation of the wilderness resource itself. The social, biological and physical limits of acceptable change may vary widely within and between wilderness areas due to variations in types and amounts of uses, resource characteristics and the capabilities of the resources to sustain different types and amounts of uses. The leading management tool and document to consider these factors and set guidelines for managing visitor use will be the Wilderness Management Plan. These plans will describe the level at which an area is able to absorb use and impacts and will describe measures needed to protect wilderness values.

Designation of the area as wilderness could increase recreation use and have some minor impacts on other resources. A major impact would occur to ORV and motorized recreation as it would be discontinued off of existing roads. Little ORV use occurs in the area, however, and mainly takes place on existing roads.

282

Both the surface and subsurface within the study area is federally owned. The only permitted land use in the study area is for grazing of livestock (refer to the Livestock and Range Management Section for a discussion of that resource). There are no utility corridors or rights-of-way existing or proposed in the study area.

7. Soil and Vegetation

Increased visitor use could cause some soil compaction and erosion, particularly along travel routes or at campsites. These impacts would mainly be confined to such locations and would have only a small effect on the soil resource of the study area.

Some removal or loss of vegetation could be expected at and around campsites as a result of increased visitation. These impacts would be localized and probably light. There would be no impacts to vegetation in the remainder of the study area.

8. Cultural Resources

Archaeological and historical sites and values are a unique and nonrenewable part of wilderness. To the extent consistent with the concept of wilderness preservation and the intent of the Wilderness Act and objectives for cultural resource management, these resources are available for recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical uses (including ceremonial or religious use by Native Americans).

Cultural resources, in most instances, will be subject to the forces of nature in the same manner as other wilderness resources. Study or management will normally not include any excavation, stabilization or interpretation activities. Salvage, rehabilitation, stabilization, reconstruction and restoration work on archaeological and historic sites, excavation and intensive inventories may be permitted on a case-by-case basis where the project will not degrade the overall wilderness character of the area and such activity is needed to preserve the particular resource.

Adverse impacts upon cultural resource values are expected to be slight. Site specific impacts created by increased visitor use may occur, although the limited resource development and restricted vehicle use resulting from a wilderness designation would benefit cultural values.

9. Fire

All fires will be controlled to prevent loss of human life or property within wilderness or to prevent the spread of fire to areas outside of the wilderness where life, resources, or property may be threatened. Wildfires will be prevented or controlled unless the fire meets wilderness fire management objectives.

Natural fire (i.e., lightning-caused) is normally a part of the ecology of wilderness, and human efforts to ban this agent may have resulted in

significant ecological changes in flora and fauna of some areas. In order to return some wilderness ecosystems to a more natural state, it may be appropriate to allow natural fire to burn, but only in conformance with an approved Fire Management Plan.

Where natural fire under prescription does not meet wilderness fire management objectives, prescribed burning with ignition by Bureau personnel may be allowed on a case-by-case basis for the following purposes:

- (1) To reintroduce or maintain the natural condition of a fire-dependent ecosystem.
- (2) To restore fire where past strict fire control measures had interfered with natural, ecological processes,
- (3) Where a primary value of a given wilderness will be perpetuated as a result of the burning, or
- (4) Where it will perpetuate a threatened or endangered species.

Prescribed fires will be allowed only in conformance with an approved Fire Management Plan. State Director approval is required.

Temporary fire camps, helispots and other sites used for fire suppression or control activities shall be removed upon completion of use and the site rehabilitated to as natural a state as possible.

10. Water

Increased visitor use resulting from a wilderness designation could reduce water quality at some springs along streams or other natural water sources. These impacts would be due largely to improper sanitation, possible soil compaction and reduced vegetation near the water source. Firewood gathering and increased horseback use could also have some effect on water quality. Overall, most impacts to water are anticipated to be minimal. Other than prescribed burning previously discussed, there are no proposed watershed restoration or water improvement projects in the area, so no impacts from a wilderness designation are anticipated.

11. Air

Air quality could receive some benefit under wilderness designation. Those activities that contribute to wind generated dust, such as soil disturbance created by road construction or vehicular travel, would be reduced or precluded. The current Class II air quality management standards would be continued if the area were to become wilderness. Air quality classifications are the responsibility of the state.

12. Visual Resources

A wilderness designation would be accompanied by a VRM Class I designation. A Class I designation provides that changes to the visual resource are primarily through natural ecological processes. Very limited

284

management activity is not precluded. No changes to the visual resource of the area are anticipated if the area becomes wilderness.

Impact of Non-Designation on Wilderness

The study area has remained in a natural condition over time without the benefit of a wilderness designation. In the event that the study area is not designated as wilderness, there is not a great likelihood that the area's wilderness values would be impacted or lost.

Energy and mineral resource potential is not rated as favorable in the study area and no projects or developments that would impact lands in the study area are anticipated. If the area were not designated wilderness, the public lands in the study area would have VRM Class II and IV ratings. Small scale, localized activities and projects could occur in the area and create minor impacts to wilderness values or other resources.

Public Comment

Public comment on the study area and wilderness designation alternatives will be sought during the draft RMP comment period.

Local Social and Economic Effects

The social effects of a wilderness designation are not anticipated to be significant overall. Local preferences for recreational activities should be unaffected by a wilderness designation since opportunities for hunting, ORV use along roads and picnicking will still be available. Some people will obviously be concerned or upset with a wilderness designation. Those favoring wilderness may be pleased with a designation.

The economic effects of a wilderness designation for this study area are not expected to be significant. Impacts to mining and ranching were discussed earlier and considered not significant. However, some local people will probably remain skeptical as to the effects of a wilderness designation.

If the area were designated wilderness, visitor use could be expected to increase to the area. That would result in some increased spending for goods and services. Because the area is within a day's travel of Tucson and Phoenix, those expenditures could be made there resulting in no economic benefit to the local communities. Overall, economic benefits are not expected to be great.

Consistency With Other Plans

The Graham County Planning Ordinance (amended 1970) identifies current uses in the study area as ranching, grazing and mining. The General Land Use Plan identifies the area as "general: grazing, mining, recreation and hunting." Pinal County is preparing a comprehensive plan that would identify public lands under a "resource management" classification, leaving decisions on these areas to be made by the land managing agency. The current county zone map has the Aravaipa area under "General Rule", an all encompassing category that includes "public uses". Wilderness designation would not be inconsistent with either plan.

285

Analysis Summary

The Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area has the characteristics required for wilderness designation. The 17,240 acres of public land meet the size requirement. The study area is natural in character with the imprints of man limited to 9.4 miles of ways, 15 dirt tanks, five cement dams, two developed springs, one corral, 15.3 miles of fences and a RAWS weather station. These imprints are found scattered throughout the study area. They have only a minimal effect on naturalness.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation are also found in the study area. Special features of the area include riparian habitat and perennial streams, threatened and endangered species including two species of native fish, important wildlife habitat, scenic geologic features and cultural resources. Multiple resource benefits, including the preservation of natural ecosystems, could be obtained by the designation of wilderness.

The study area is one of several potential additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System with the opportunity to expand the diversity of natural systems and features in the NWPS. The study area would not appreciably add to the opportunities already available in the NWPS for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time from major population centers nor would it add significantly to the geographic distribution of the NWPS.

Preservation of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Additions study area's wilderness character would be manageable in the long term.

No surface evidence exists for the presence of base- and precious-metal occurrences in the study area though these minerals may lie at depth beneath surface volcanics. The geologic environment of the study area is not favorable for the accumulation of oil and gas resources. Geothermal resources are not known to exist in the study area.

Impacts to range, wildlife, timber, recreation, lands, soils, vegetation, cultural resources, fire, water, air and visual resources are not expected. If the study area were not designated as wilderness, it is not likely that the area's wilderness values would be lost.

The social and economic effects on local communities that could result from designating the area wilderness are expected to be minor. Wilderness is not inconsistent with the Graham County Planning Ordinance or on-going planning of Pinal County and its current zone map.

Formulation of Alternatives

From the evaluation of this study area, four alternatives were developed: all wilderness, no wilderness and two alternatives considering partial wilderness.

286

1. Alternative A - No Wilderness (No Action)

No acreage would be recommended for designation as wilderness. Management would be guided by the Aravaipa interim guidelines and the management prescriptions developed in the Safford District Resource Management Plan when it becomes final.

2. Alternative B - Partial Wilderness

About 6,684 acres of public land adjacent to the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness (BLM) would be recommended for designation as wilderness. The alternative includes portions of nine side canyons that enter the wilderness. No state or private land inholdings would be within the recommended area.

The portions of the nine side canyons would be contained in eight separate blocks adjacent to ACW. The Painted Cave/Javelina addition would have a road on the north and east, ACW on the south and legal subdivision lines on the west as boundaries. The Horse Camp addition would be bounded by ridge lines, a way and legal subdivision lines on the north, a legal subdivision line, roads and ridge lines on the east, ACW on the south and a ridge line and a road on the west. The boundaries of the Booger Canyon addition would follow ridge lines on the north and east, ACW on the south and a ridge line and road on the west. The Hell Hole addition would be bounded by ridge lines on the north and east, a road, ridge line and ACW on the south and a ridge line and road on the west.

On the south side of ACW, the Wire Corral addition is bounded on the north by ACW and on the east, south and west by ridge lines. The boundaries on the Parsons addition are ACW on the north, ACW and a ridge line on the east, a legal subdivision line and private land on the south and a road on the west. The Virgus addition is bounded by ACW on the north and ridge lines on the east, south and west. The boundaries of the Hells Half Acre addition are ACW on the north, private land on the east, a legal subdivision line and a road on the south and private land on the west.

This alternative would designate wilderness that is a logical extension of the existing Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness and provide manageable additions of the side canyons that enter the wilderness. Those portions of the study area not recommended for wilderness designation in this alternative would be managed according to the Aravaipa interim guidelines and the management prescriptions developed in the Safford District Resource Management Plan when it becomes final.

3. Alternative C - Partial Wilderness

About 14,020 acres of public land adjacent to Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness would be recommended for designation as wilderness. The alternative would also include 720 acres of private land in two parcels. Three separate additions, two on the north and one on the south, would be made to ACW.

The Painted Cave/Javelina addition would have a road on the north and east, ACW on the south and legal subdivision lines on the west as boundaries. The Horse Camp/Booger/Hell Hole addition would be bounded on the north by a

way, legal subdivision lines and roads, on the east by ridge lines and a road, on the south by ACW and on the west by a road. The South addition would have ACW on the north and roads and private land on the east, south and west as boundaries. Four cherry-stem roads would enter into the area.

The alternative would add to the existing Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness while reducing potential conflicts with an area of intensive grazing management in the northern Horse Camp Canyon area. The area proposed for wilderness designation in this alternative would not include 725 acres of public land west of Painted Cave Canyon and 2,495 acres of public land in north Horse Camp Canyon in the study area. The South addition is identical to the study area boundaries.

Those portions of the study area not recommended for wilderness designation in this alternative would be managed according to the Aravaipa interim guidelines and the management prescriptions developed in the Safford District Resource Management Plan when it becomes final.

4. Alternative D - All Wilderness

All 17,240 acres of public land in the study area would be recommended for designation as wilderness. Two private inholdings totaling 720 acres would be included in this alternative. Conflicts with other resource uses including intensive range management could result. Management would be guided by BLM's Wilderness Management Policy and manuals.