

PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

PROPOSALS FOR THIRTY-SEVEN ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM AND DEFERRAL OF ACTION ON FIVE AREAS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE SYSTEM, AND RECOMMENDATIONS AGAINST THE INCLUSION OF FOUR OTHER AREAS STUDIED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 3 OF THE WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964 [16 USC 1132]

PART 35 DEFERRED AREAS

KOFA GAME RANGE
ARIZONA

Taken out of this document.
~~CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE RANGE~~
MONTANA

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
NEVADA AND ARIZONA

~~NUNIVAK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE~~
ALASKA



DECEMBER 4, 1974.—Referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and ordered to be printed with illustrations.

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WASHINGTON : 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1974

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, I am pleased to transmit herewith proposals for thirty-seven additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

As described in the Wilderness Message that I am concurrently sending to the Congress today, the proposed new wilderness areas cover a total of over nine million primeval acres. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior has recommended that Congressional action on five other areas which include surface lands suitable for wilderness be deferred for the reasons set forth below:

A. Three areas which are open to mining might be needed in the future to provide vital minerals for the Nation, but these areas have not been adequately surveyed for mineral deposits. The areas are the Kofa Game Range, Arizona; Charles Sheldon Antelope Range, Nevada and Oregon; and, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range, Montana.

B. One area is subject to withdrawals for power purposes and additional study is needed of the West's potential energy needs before a wilderness decision can be made. This is Lake Mead National Recreation Area, located in Arizona and Nevada.

C. Certain parts of one area are subject to selection by the village of Mekoryuk under the terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and a wilderness recommendation should be made only after the completion of the Native selection process. The area in question is the Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Four other possibilities considered by the Secretary of the Interior in his review of roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more were found to be unsuitable for inclusion in the Wilderness System: Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon and Idaho; Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Maryland; Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky; and, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. I concur in this finding and in the other recommendations of the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, all of which are transmitted herewith.

Wilderness designation of both of these new wilderness areas and those already submitted that are pending before the Congress would dramatically demonstrate our commitment to preserve America's irreplaceable heritage, and I urge the Congress to act promptly in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald R. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "F" and "D".

The Honorable Carl Albert
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

SEP 6 1974

Dear Mr. President:

The Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890) directs the Department of the Interior to recommend to the President areas within its jurisdiction which are suitable for designation as wilderness. Based upon our review of Kofa Game Range, a portion of its surface lands is suitable for wilderness designation. However, the game range is open to mining, and our knowledge of the minerals which may underlie the proposed area is conjectural. Until we have the benefit of additional mineral survey data on the area, we will be unable to balance its wilderness values and mineral resources. For this reason, we recommend that the Congress defer action on this proposal until such a survey is completed.

Established by Executive Order in 1939, the Kofa Game Range is located in the Sonoran Desert of southwestern Arizona, approximately 43 miles from the United States-Mexico border and 20 miles from the Arizona-California border. The name of the range is an acronym of "King of Arizona," a mine in the area. The dry, isolated landscape of the range consists primarily of alluvial valleys and abruptly-rising peaks. Periods of prolonged drought are common in the range, which receives only about five inches of precipitation per year. Desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, and feral burros are the dominant animals in the range; mountain lions and collared peccaries are occasional visitors. The giant saguaro cactus, which can grow up to 50 feet high and weigh as much as 12 tons, and the California palm stand out among the area's exotic plants. The range contains such evidence of ancient man's habitation as petroglyphs, mescal pits, and pottery.

The proposal omits areas within the range where mining activities and off-road vehicle use have scarred the terrain and areas needed for management objectives. Approximately 520,600 of the range's 660,000 surface acres are suitable for designation as wilderness. In addition, this Department has under consideration an application by the Fish and Wildlife Service to add 87,500 acres of public domain lands to the range: if added, these lands would also be suitable for wilderness designation. However, the Geological Survey has not surveyed either the range or the proposed addition, and we recommend that no action be taken on this proposal until such a survey has been made. At that time we shall submit a final recommendation on the proposal to the Congress.

In accordance with the requirements of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing on the proposal was held at Yuma, Arizona, on April 25, 1974, and concluded at Phoenix, Arizona, on April 27, 1974. Complete records have been compiled and are available for inspection by the public.

Sincerely yours,

Curtis Bokken

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

PUBLIC HEARING ANALYSIS

A public hearing to receive public comment upon the Kofa Wilderness Proposal was held in Yuma, Arizona on April 25 and continued in Phoenix, Arizona on April 27. The Phoenix portion of the hearing included an evening session to insure an opportunity for interested persons who could not be presented during the work day to present their views.

Statements for inclusion in the official hearing record were submitted by Senator Paul Fannin, Governor Jack Williams, State Senator Elwood Bradford, State Senator Jones Osborn, Sheriff Travis Yancy, 16 State agencies, the Yuma County Board of Supervisors, 9 Federal agencies, 51 organizations and 944 individuals.

Governor Williams, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Bureau of Mines recommended that action on the wilderness proposal be deferred until additional information could be collected.

Senator Fannin, State Senators Bradford and Osborn, Sheriff Yancy, the State Land Department, the State Department of Mineral Resources, the State Bureau of Mines, the Yuma County Board of Supervisors, 7 organizations and 84 individuals opposed wilderness designation.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department, the State Department of Law - Civil Rights Division, the State Department of Anthropology, 40 organizations and 801 individuals supported wilderness designation.

Ten State agencies, 7 Federal agencies, 4 organizations and 59 individuals presented no position on the wilderness proposal.

Oral Presentations at the Public Hearing

A total of 78 persons made statements during the public hearing. Seven speakers in Yuma also made presentation in Phoenix. The Yuma Women's Reel and Rifle Club was represented by 2 speakers in Yuma (Beryl J. Strong, and Nellie Hammon) and by 1 (Beryl J. Strong) in Phoenix. Ms. Hammon also made a personal statement. The other speakers who made a second presentation in Phoenix were Mr. Robert E. Crowder, representing the Crowder-Weisser Cattle Company; Mr. Harry Crandell, representing the Wilderness Society; Mr. Ray Hovatter; Mr. Wes Rittel; Mrs. Elizabeth Russel; and Mr. Jim Russel.

Thirty-six speakers opposed wilderness designation, 34 supported wilderness designation and one speaker took no position on the wilderness proposal.

The statements which opposed wilderness took four major positions:

(1) eleven statements which advocated multiple use as the best management program, (2) eleven statements which objected to closing the refuge to mining and mineral entry, (3) three statements which objected to the restriction of public use within the wilderness, specifically the preclusion of vehicular travel, and (4) eleven statements which objected for a multiplicity of reasons.

Of the 34 statements supporting wilderness designation, ten supported the Fish and Wildlife Service proposal and 24 supported an enlarged wilderness which would encompass non-refuge lands.

Public Officials

During the conduct of the public hearing, no statements were made by Governor Williams, Senator Goldwater, or Representative Rhodes, Steiger, or Udall. Senator Famin was represented by Margaret L. Lane, who presented a statement supporting multiple use of the refuge and questioning whether the Kofa proposal meets Congressional criteria for wilderness because of past and present mining activities.

The Service proposal does not include patented mining claims nor areas of extensive mining activity and the proposal is believed to meet all requirements of the Wilderness Act for wilderness designation.

State Departments and Agencies

Robert D. Curtis, representing the Arizona Game and Fish Department, made a statement endorsing the wilderness proposal, with the stipulations that the Kofa Wilderness be forever open to hunting and other compatible uses; that joint BLM and BSWF management continue; and the right of the State to manage resident game be formally recognized in the designation of the Kofa Wilderness area.

None of these stipulations are included in the Fish and Wildlife Service proposal. An unqualified assurance of public uses would place a constraint upon management programs that could result in serious degradation of wildlife values and preclude achievement of refuge

objectives. Joint management of the Kofa has proven unsatisfactory for 35 years and perpetuation of this system cannot be justified in view of objectives of the Kofa Refuge. The right of the State to manage resident wildlife species has been publicly recognized by the Department of the Interior on numerous occasions and it is believed that evaluation of the Kofa Wilderness Proposal is not the appropriate or reasonable place to address this issue.

Local Officials and Agencies

The Yuma County Board of Supervisors submitted a statement opposing wilderness because (1) there is too much Federally owned land within Yuma County (2) a wilderness area would not produce payments in lieu of taxes (3) vehicle restrictions in the wilderness would result in a complete loss of the bighorn sheep population (4) the proposal encompasses potentially arable farmland (5) the area should be left open to mining development and use by all people and (6) the lack of mechanical transportation would endanger human life. The Board of Supervisors also submitted a map which depicts rights-of-way within the Refuge claimed by the County. Attached to the Board of Supervisors statement was a statement by the Yuma County Chamber of Commerce expressing its opposition to establishment of the Kofa Wilderness, but specifying no reason for its opposition.

The statement by the Yuma County Board of Supervisors indicates either a lack of information or a misunderstanding of the wilderness proposal. The proposed wilderness will encompass only lands within the boundaries of the Kofa Range and will not change any land ownership

outside of the refuge. While wilderness designation will not generate in lieu payments, no such payments are currently being made nor would they be made should the area not be designated as wilderness. The statement that vehicle restrictions would result in a complete loss of the desert bighorn population was apparently based upon the assumption that Service personnel would not be permitted access to achieve the objectives of the Kofa Refuge. The Wilderness Act provides specifically for such access. Even should management access be terminated there is no data to support the assumption that the sheep population would be totally lost. While portions of the Kofa could be considered arable, the lack of irrigation water and the presence of extensive areas that are less remote and more suitable to cultivation makes the likelihood of farming operations in the foreseeable future highly unlikely. The statement that restriction of mechanical access would endanger human life is difficult to assess; however, it would seem reasonable to believe that such a restriction would discourage the casual visitor from attempting to penetrate the more remote areas and actually lessen the threat to human life associated with mechanical failures and persons stranded when their vehicle becomes "stuck" in impassable terrain. The validity of County rights-of-way claims is unknown. Three corridors were added to the proposal which encompass existing vehicle trails, utilized by the public, which are claimed by the County. Approximately 22 miles of additional rights-of-way are claimed by the County within the wilderness proposal; however, the majority of these do not follow well defined trails with established vehicle use.

Federal Departments and Agencies

There were no statements by Federal agencies presented at the public hearing.

Organizations and Individuals

Wilderness designation was opposed by the Arizona Mining Association, Arizona Association of Earth Science Clubs, World of Rockhounds Association, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club, Yuma Women's Reel and Rifle Club, 4 mining companies, one cattle company, and 24 individuals.

Opposition by the Arizona Mining Association, three mining companies and seven individuals is directed at closure of the wilderness to mining and mineral entry. Comments centered on two main points. The presence of patented and unpatented mining claims is proof of mineral deposits and second an intense mineral survey should be completed prior to any decision on wilderness designation.

Opposition by the World of Rockhounds Association and two individuals is directed at restrictions of public use on the Kofa Refuge. The primary concern expressed was restriction of vehicle access and camping.

The Arizona Association of Earth Sciences, the Yuma Women's Reel and Rifle Club and seven individuals advocated multiple use management of the Refuge with continuation of existing uses for the Kofa area.

The Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club, one mining company, one cattle company, and eight individuals opposed wilderness for a multiplicity of the above persons.

Of the 33 statements supporting wilderness designation, nine endorsed the proposal by the Fish and Wildlife Service and 24 supported a larger wilderness.

The Fish and Wildlife Service proposal was supported by Tucson Wildlife Limited, the Southern Arizona Hiking Club, and 7 individuals.

The Wilderness Society prepared a mailer on the Kofa Wilderness Proposal which recommended designation of 778,790 acres of refuge and adjacent public domain lands as wilderness. This proposal includes 54,700 acres in the Little Horn Mountains and an additional 34,100 acres in the Plomosa Mountains, elimination of the Neversweat and Palm Canyon Exclusions, reduction of all other exclusions, inclusion of lands between the west boundary of the refuge and the pipeline which roughly parallels U.S. Highway 95, elimination of administrative trails, and elimination of the Big Eye Mine corridor.

The Wilderness Society proposal was endorsed by the Wilderness Society, the Arizona Conservation Council, the Desert Protective Council, the Sierra Club, the Western Region of the National Audubon Society, the Ecology Center of Southern California, Arizonans for Quality Environment, Friends of the Earth, Arizona Sierra Club, Phoenix College Ecology Group, Mearns Wildlife Society, Arizona Habitat Association, Arizona Student Chapter - The Wildlife Society, Saguaro Ecology Club, Maricopa Audubon Society, Conservation Call, and nine individuals.

The Fish and Wildlife proposal was modified to reflect some of these suggestions. Wilderness boundaries were modified to follow existing

roads and trails or topographic features insofar as was possible, the Neversweat Exclusion was included in the Castle Dome Mountain Wilderness Unit, the Palm Canyon Exclusion was reduced to a corridor and the fourteen administrative trails were deleted.

The use of features readily visible on the ground will permit the refuge visitors to identify the wilderness area more easily and will aid refuge personnel in enforcing regulations designed to protect wilderness values. Testimony at the public hearing and written statements presented the position that surface disturbance in the Palm Canyon and Neversweat Exclusions was not extensive enough to disqualify them from wilderness designation. The Fish and Wildlife Service recognized that these areas were the least disturbed exclusions in the Draft Environmental Statement and since inclusion of these areas will not impact upon refuge programs, they have been added to the wilderness proposal.

Suggestions which were not included in the proposal include the following.

1. Extend the wilderness boundary from the present western boundary of the refuge to the pipeline which roughly parallels U.S. Highway 95.
2. Extend the eastern boundary from the present boundary of the refuge to include approximately 54,700 acres of the Little Horn Mountains.

These suggestions were not incorporated in the wilderness proposal because addition of these lands to the refuge would

make no significant contribution to refuge programs nor achievement of refuge objectives. In addition, these suggestions encompass 520 additional acres of State owned lands and 1,600 additional acres of lands on which the State has reserved mineral interests.

3. Elimination of McPherson Pass and Big Eye Mine Road Corridors.
4. Reduction of corridors to 100-foot width.

Implementation of these suggestions would preclude achievement of refuge objectives for interpretative and educational uses of the refuge. These roads provide access to patented lands and unpatented mining claims and provide public access for hunting, photography, and hiking. The width of the corridors was established to provide opportunities for interpretive facilities and vehicle camping associated with wildlife-wildlands oriented uses of the refuge.

5. Further reduction of the Crystal Hill - Coyote Peak, King Valley Engresser Pass and Plomosa Mountains Exclusions.

These suggestions would encompass approximately 700 acres of patented mining claims, numerous unpatented mining claims, an additional 100 acres of State owned lands, areas of extensive surface disturbance from mining activity and vehicle use, and essentially all of the areas that may have mineral potential.

Correspondence

Communications from Elected Public Officials

Governor Williams addressed a letter to Secretary Morton in which he

urged that wilderness designation be held in abeyance until Arizona's and the Nation's land use plans and reserve information assure us that the economic potential of proposal lands can be safely abandoned.

Provisions of the Wilderness Act require the Secretary of the Interior to submit his recommendations to Congress by September 3, 1974. Fulfillment of this legal commitment does not permit acceptance of this course of action; however, the Service proposal recommends a mineral survey prior to wilderness designation.

Arizona State Senator Elwood Bradford submitted a statement urging continuation of joint management and expressing a belief that wilderness management will restrict the usage of proposal lands for many people who should be permitted therein.

Arizona State Senator Jones Osborn submitted a written statement questioning several points of the proposed Public Land Order and stating "... a need for wilderness classification has not been adequately proven."

Yuma County Sheriff Travis Yancy submitted a statement expressing his belief that complete control by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a wilderness where the citizens of Yuma County are unable to hunt and camp should not occur.

The Service proposal would prevent neither hunting or camping on the Kofa Refuge. The only restrictions on these activities would be the preclusion of vehicle use within the designated wilderness.

Communications from State and Local Officials, State Departments and

Agencies

The following State agencies acknowledged receipt of the public hearing package, but made no comments upon the wilderness proposal.

Department of Health
Office of Economic Planning and Development
Department of Health Service
Arizona Power Authority
State Water Commission
State Parks Board
State Liaison Officer AORCC
Department of Economic Security
Department of Highways
Real Estate Department

The Arizona Game and Fish Department submitted a written statement at the public hearing which endorsed the Bureau wilderness proposal with the stipulation that the Kofa wilderness be forever open to hunting and other compatible uses; that joint BLM and BSWF management continue; and the right of the State to manage the resident game be formally recognized in the designation of the Kofa wilderness area. These comments are addressed under the analysis of the public hearing.

The Arizona State Land Department submitted a statement opposing wilderness designation on the belief that the current status and size of the Game Range is sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the Executive Order establishing the Range.

The State Department of Mineral Resources submitted a statement objecting to any closure of the proposal lands to mineral entry, and stated that multiple use should be continued.

The Arizona Bureau of Mines submitted a statement strongly urging that lands in the region of the Kofa Mountains not be placed in a national wilderness preservation system until such time when a comprehensive geological survey of the area has been made and it has been determined that the area has no value to the nation as a mineral reserve.

Communications from Federal Officials, Departments and Agencies

Acknowledgement of the wilderness package was made by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation, the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and the Corps of Engineers. None of these agencies stated a position on the wilderness proposal. The United States Geological Survey presented a statement providing geological information on the Kofa Game Range Area. The Bureau of Mines submitted a statement indicating that a thorough mineral resource evaluation of the Game Range and its proposed additions should be made by competent examiners prior to any wilderness designation. The Department of Commerce submitted a statement recommending that no action be taken on the wilderness proposal until a mineral survey was completed.

Communications from Organizations

Thirty-two organizations submitted statements prior to or following the hearing. All but the American Mining Congress, the World of Rockhounds Association, the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club, and the Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society supported wilderness designation. The position of the first three organizations is discussed under the comments concerning the public hearing.

The Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society opposed wilderness designation based upon two considerations. First, that the limitation of access could seriously hamper management of highhorn sheep and their habitat, and second, that wilderness designation would increase public interest and use of the Kofa Refuge to the detriment of sheep populations.

The Wilderness Act provides for administrative access to achieve refuge objectives, one of which is the preservation and enhancement of the sheep population and its habitat. Refuge authorities provide adequate control of public use and refuge management programs and regulations will be designed to safeguard wildlife populations and their habitat. Of the remaining 28 organizations, six supported the Service proposal and 22 supported the Wilderness Society proposal discussed under analysis of the public hearing testimony.

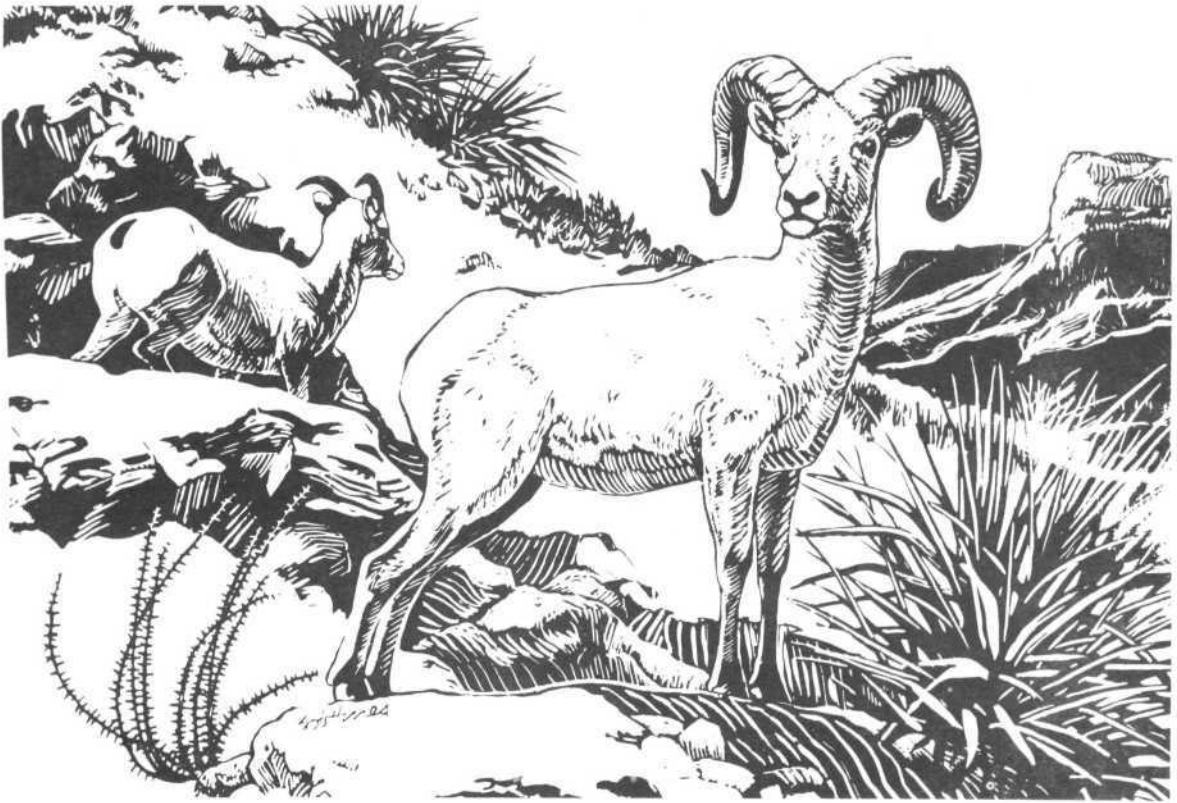
Communications from Citizens

Thirteen statements representing 60 signatures were received which opposed wilderness designation; three because of restrictions to mining activity, four because of restrictions to public use, and 53 supported multiple use management.

Seven hundred and thirteen statements representing 786 signatures were received supporting wilderness designation. Of these signatures, 61 supported the Service's proposal, 723 supported a larger wilderness and two supported a reduced wilderness. These latter two individuals both suggested additional corridors, including those now in the Service proposal.

Fifty-eight statements representing 58 individuals presented no position on wilderness.

KOFA WILDERNESS STUDY SUMMARY



YUMA COUNTY, ARIZONA



Castle Dome Peak, elevation 3,788 feet.

This report was prepared pursuant to the Wilderness Act, Public Law 88-577. Publication of the findings and recommendations herein should not be construed as representing either the approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of this report is to provide information and alternatives for further consideration by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Secretary of Interior, and other Federal agencies.

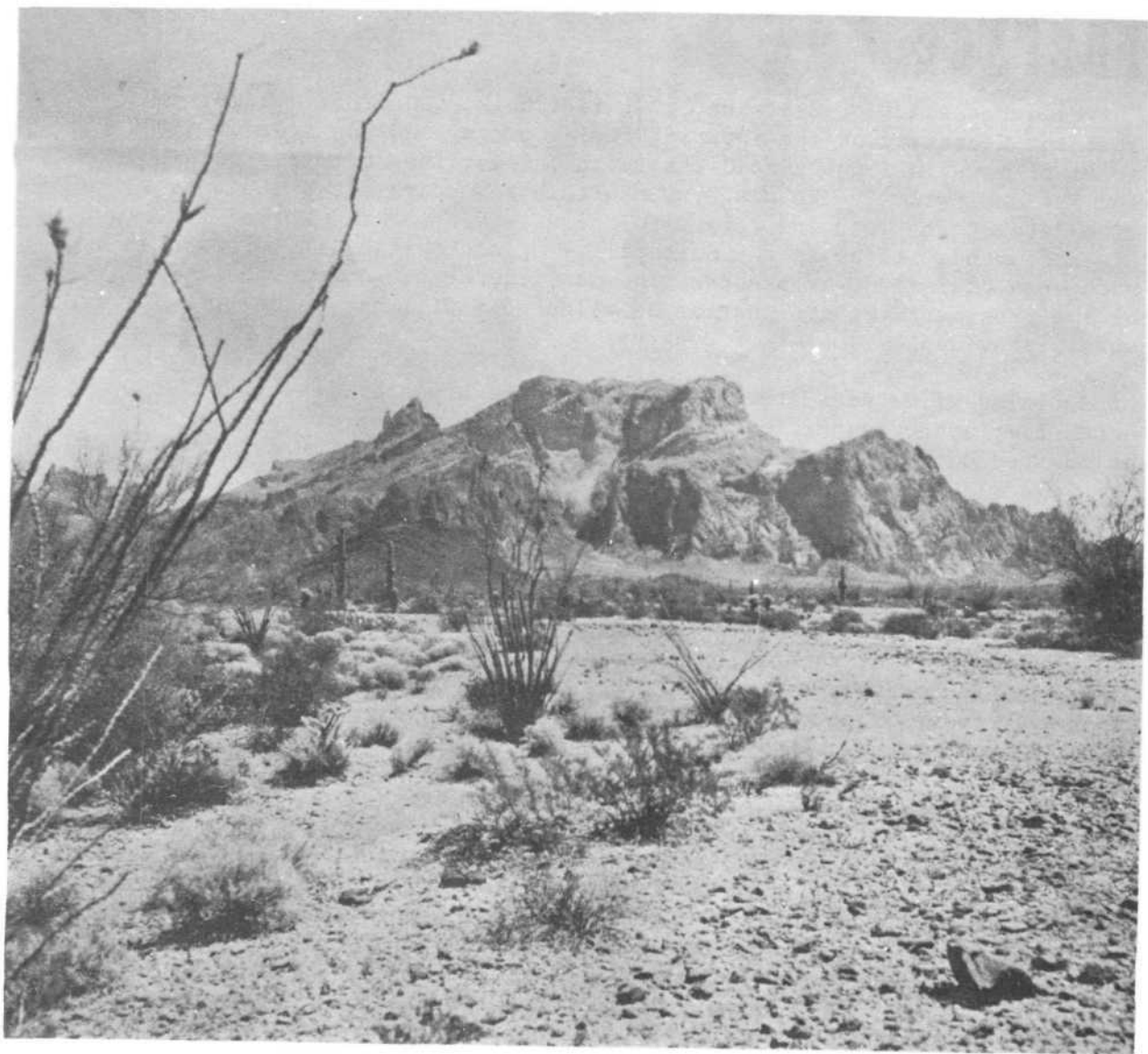
PREFACE

The Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (Public Law 88-577) requires that the Secretary of the Interior review every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more, and every roadless island, regardless of size, within the National Wildlife Refuge System within ten years after the effective date of the Act, and report to the President of the United States his recommendation as to the suitability or non-suitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness. A recommendation of the President for designation as wilderness will not become effective unless provided by an Act of Congress.

In defining wilderness, the Act also included areas of less than 5,000 acres that are of sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Sections 4(a) and (b) of the Wilderness Act provided that: (1) The Act is to be within and supplemental to the purposes for which units of the National Wildlife Refuge System are established; and (2) wilderness areas shall be administered so as to preserve their wilderness character and shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use, insofar as primary Game Range purposes permit. Wilderness designation does not remove or alter an area's status as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This summary describes the Kofa Game Range which has been studied by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife at the direction of the Secretary of the Interior to determine its potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The study also encompasses 83,500 acres of adjacent public domain lands which the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife proposes to add to the Game Range. The Bureau further proposes that the name be changed to the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge and that the Secretary of the Interior withdraw all lands of the Refuge, totaling approximately 747,200 acres, from all forms of entry under the public land laws, including the mining and mineral leasing laws.



Signal Peak, highest point on the Game Range, elevation 4,877 feet.

INTRODUCTION

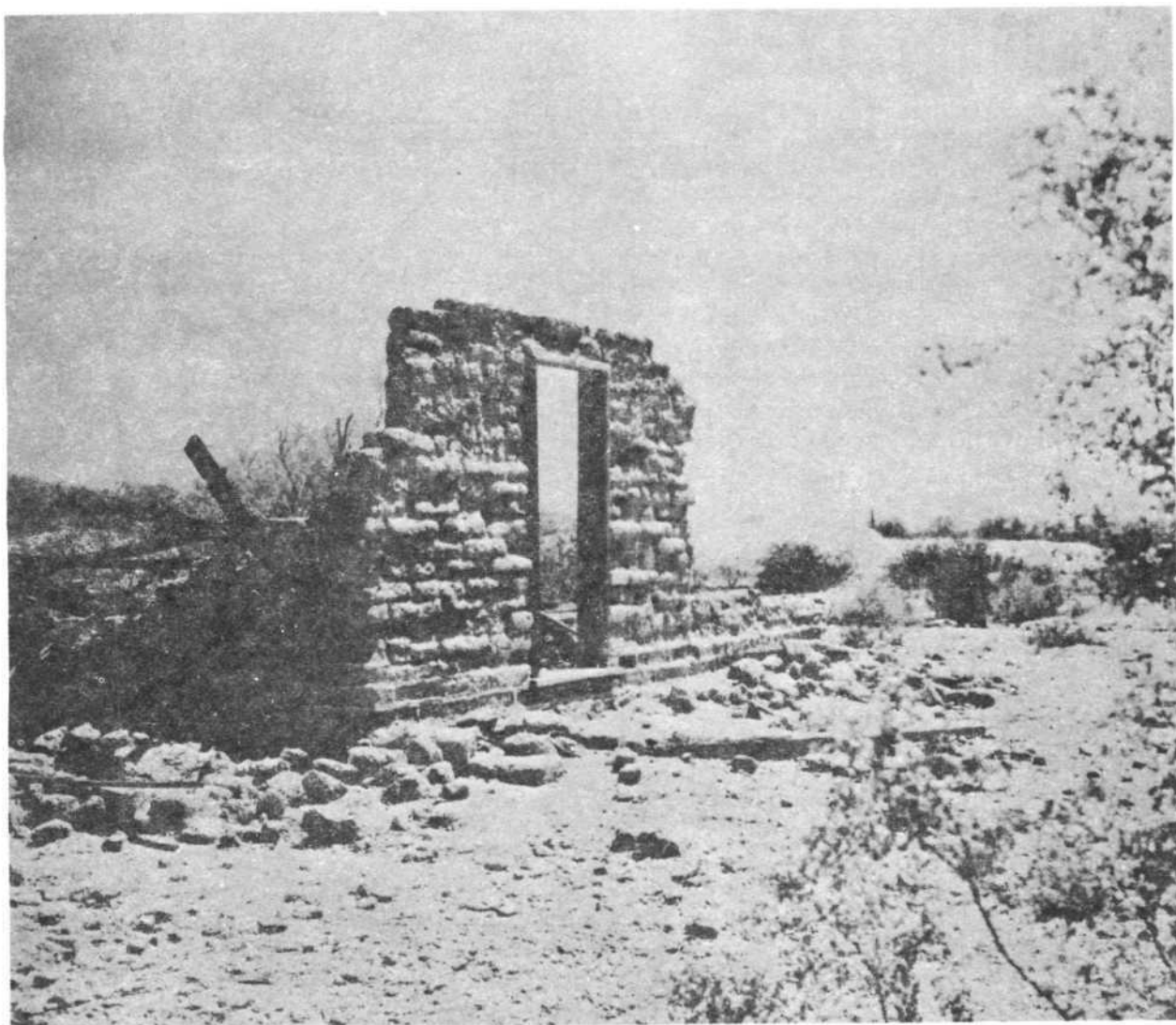
The Kofa Game Range is located in the Sonoran Desert of southwestern Arizona, just east of U. S. Highway 95 between the city of Yuma and the town of Quartzsite. The Game Range has a north-south length of 41 miles and is 24 miles wide. The Colorado River, 20 miles west of the Game Range, forms the Arizona-California border. The southwestern corner of the Game Range is approximately 43 miles north of the United States-Mexico border.



The Kofa Game Range was established by Executive Order 8039 in 1939. This unique 663,700 acres area was withdrawn from public domain to be set apart for the conservation and development of wildlife and grazing resources. It is one of five units of the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife from the Southwest Desert Refuge Complex office in Yuma.

The Game Range is used by migratory birds and indigenous wildlife species. Special management emphasis is placed on the preservation and maintenance of the magnificent desert bighorn sheep and the frail desert habitat.

Presently, many forms of recreation including hiking, photography, hunting, and wildlife observation, are encouraged. Other activities such as camping and rock hounding are permitted.



The remains of the Kofa Deep Well Pump House.

HISTORY

Three different cultures of ancient man occupied the Kofa Game Range. The San Dieguito culture began around 9000 B.C. and ended about 5000 B.C. The Amargosan culture began sometime after 5000 B.C. and ended about 1 A.D. The Yuman cultures began about 600 A.D. and today are represented by the Quechan Indians, a tribe belonging to the Yuman linguistic group. This tribe occupied the Colorado River Valley when the Spanish first explored the area. Like their prehistoric ancestors, the Quechans were primarily a hunting and collecting society. They spent most of the year on the river bottomlands and made only seasonal migrations into the desert to hunt game and gather plant foods. One of the principal Quechan trade and war party routes crossed the Kofa Game Range.

The Spaniards first entered the Lower Colorado River area in southwestern Arizona in 1540, when the party of Hernando de Alarcon ascended the River by boats. Later in the same year, Melchoir Diaz marched from Sonora to the Colorado River, becoming the first European known to enter the region by land. During Spain's 281-year expansion period, many other famous conquistadors and missionaries were in the region. Spanish activities had little direct influence on the isolated Game Range area.

In 1821, the Mexicans won independence from Spain and inherited the territories that later became the Game Range. In the next 27 years, Mexico experienced a great deal of internal political strife plus Indian wars throughout their northern territories. The Colorado and Gila River areas were again under Indian control, thus Mexico was able to keep the Yuma Crossing on the Colorado open for only short periods.

After the "Mexican War" (1846-48), the Republic of Mexico ceded vast territories to the United States, including the lands of the Kofa Game Range. During the gold rush of 1849-50, thousands of emigrants used the Yuma Crossing. After Arizona became a territory in 1863, development of the region progressed rapidly. Historic mining also began in 1863 on what is now the Kofa Game Range when an Anglo-American prospector discovered ancient workings in the Castle Dome Mountains. Relatively small deposits of gold, silver, copper, lead, manganese, tungsten, and fluorspar were located and sporadically mined. The gross value of all the minerals mined from 1863 to the present, is six million dollars. In spite of some profits from mining, investors lost money on most of these ventures. For example, the King of Arizona mine accumulated a deficit of 1.5 million dollars. Most production was prior to 1929 with approximately 80 percent of the gross value coming from gold and silver. The name "Kofa" was coined during these early days by shortening "King of Arizona."



Summit Peak, in the Kofa Mountains.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This isolated and starkly beautiful desert area is made up of broad alluvial-floored valleys, bounded by rugged mountains, canyons and eroded hills. The mountains, canyons and hills make up approximately two-thirds of the area. Though not high, many of the ranges and peaks rise abruptly from the valleys as exemplified by precipitous Summit Peak in the Kofa Mountains and 3,788 foot high Castle Dome Peak in the Castle Dome Mountains. The mountains and foothills are made up of sedimentary and volcanic formations. The flat appearing alluvial areas comprise approximately one-third of the Game Range. These relatively low desert valleys vary from 800 to 2,400 feet above mean sea level.

This southwestern section of Arizona provides a delightful winter season, being located in a zone of maximum sunshine and minimum relative humidity. The average January temperature is 52 degrees. However, the summer season is usually long and hot. The average July temperature is 92 degrees and afternoon temperatures of over 110 degrees are not uncommon. The number of consecutive days without a killing frost is about 300.

The Game Range receives about five inches of precipitation per year. Summer rainfall is usually associated with scattered thunder storms which often cause local flash floods. The midwinter storms are usually associated with large storms of Pacific origin. Periods of prolonged droughts are common. There are no permanent streams or lakes within the Game Range. The only natural surface water impoundments are the small, widely distributed rock tanks or potholes which have been formed by geologic erosion. These tanks may contain water throughout the year.

The area is characterized by varied desert vegetation that may be grouped into three different categories: (1) Drought-escaping plants, which are annuals that develop rapidly, flower, and produce seeds which lie dormant in the soil during unfavorable periods, thus escaping the seasons of heat and drought (goldpoppy, six-weeks fescue and chinchweed); (2) Drought-evading plants, which drop their leaves and remain dormant until temperature and moisture conditions are suitable for renewed growth (ocotillo, paloverde, and bursage); and (3) Drought resisting plants, which have various specialized structures enabling them to survive conditions of severe heat, low humidity and extreme drought, such as the cacti.



Desert sheep such as this ram attract many visitors.

RESOURCES

The Kofa's diversity of topography and plant life provide the variety of desert habitat necessary to support not only the indigenous wildlife, but migratory birds of the arid Southwest as well. The desert bighorn sheep herd has thrived here, doubling since the establishment of the Game Range. Among these rare visitors are the mountain lion and collared peccary. Conversely, mule deer and feral burros are very successful and have increased to compete with other animals for habitat, making their periodic reduction necessary for balanced populations. In all, 30 species of mammals, 46 herpetiles, and 161 species of birds use the Kofa.

The Game Range ranks high in its vegetative uniqueness and diversity, exhibiting 188 species from 53 family groups. The saguaro, largest U. S. cactus, is a striking species here. Mature saguaros can grow 50 feet in height and weigh 12 tons. This giant is the state flower and an indicator of the Sonoran Desert. Its fruit is sought by white-winged doves and rodents as a preferred food. A Kofa plant oddity is the California palm. This self-pruning variety of native palm is found in Arizona in only a few canyons of the Kofa Mountains. These Kofa palm groves attract scientists and photographers to the Kofa from every corner of the United States.

The area is well supplied with evidence of early man. Artifacts include numerous petroglyphs, metates, campsites, "mescal" pits, and pottery. The 30-odd surface sites discovered to date are scattered over the entire Range, indicating an extended occupation by ancient man. Recent accessibility afforded by jeeps and trail bikes has done much to hasten the depletion of this valuable resource.

For over a hundred years, minerals on the Game Range have been sought by Indians, Spaniards, and geologists. An investigation in 1972 by a mining engineer into the status of recent Kofa mining claims revealed 46 patented and 1,073 unpatented claims near older mines. It was concluded from the investigation of location notices and annual labor affidavits that few if any of the known claims could pass a test of validity. The likelihood of valid claims or of a precious or base metal deposit of commercial value are remote, except in the old mining areas. Patented claims totaling approximately 700 acres and numerous unpatented claims are located on lands proposed for addition to the Game Range.

Being typical of the Sonoran Desert, the Game Range lacks a perennial stream or river. The only natural water is in the numerous rock pot-holes or "tanks" and a few seeps. Supplemental water for man, livestock, and wildlife has been developed by drilling wells, rock tanks, and building earthen charcos (dug-outs). Approximately 80 moderately reliable water sources now exist. Still, the most limiting factor in this ecosystem is the scarcity of water.



Desert camping on the Game Range.

PUBLIC USE

Mild winters, rugged desert scenery, and wildlife, annually attract over 30,000 visitors to the Game Range. Public use on the Plomosa Mountains area, proposed for addition to the Game Range, is estimated at 180,000 use days annually. The free, 32 unit Bureau of Land Management campground in the northwest corner of the Game Range also draws many visitors. At least ninety percent of this use comes during the cooler months, October through March. Camping is the leading activity, accounting for 51 percent of the visits. Wildlife observation ranks second in popularity with 16 percent, followed closely by sight-seeing (15 percent), hunting (12 percent), and picnicking (6 percent). Photographers, rockhounds, and other recreationists comprise the remainder of the Game Range visitors. Quality experiences are stressed to encourage compatible public use on this fragile desert landscape. Unauthorized off-road travel is a major public use problem, stimulated by the popularity of trail bikes, and other all-terrain vehicles.

Campers are mostly retirees, seeking a convenient location for leisurely pastimes such as walking, rockhounding, and relaxing. Camping is also an important part of other activities such as hunting and hiking. Bighorn rams, mule deer, Gambel's quail, dove, and some predators are hunted on the area. The Kofa is well-known as a trophy hunting area, both for mule deer and desert bighorn sheep. The upland bird shooting is variable, with many local hunters using the area when birds are plentiful and practically none afield when bird populations are low.

Two established Research Natural Areas are located in the Kofa Mountains. Four additional areas are proposed in other parts of the Game Range. All are compatible with wilderness designation.

Wilderness status for portions of the Game Range will assure the defacto wilderness areas are preserved as well as promoting a high quality recreation. Given the access as described in this proposal, no significant curtailment of public use is expected.



A typical water catchment in the Kofa Mountains.

MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

The primary objective of the Game Range is to preserve its natural wildlife resources and their fragile desert habitat. To accomplish this, many types of continuing observations and projects are required. Management will require, as it has in the past, the use of trucks, aircraft, and foot travel over parts of the area.

The water developments require motorized access into the proposed wilderness at fourteen locations for maintenance, supply, and development of essential watering facilities. Wilderness character will not be significantly affected because the access routes are primarily in washes where tracks left by the infrequent visits are soon obliterated by runoff or in corridors outside the proposal area.

The use of aircraft over the Game Range will be continued by the military as well as natural resource management agencies. Military overflight will continue at 1,500 to 80,000 feet with no landing, except in emergencies. Yearly trend counts of wildlife from fixed-wing aircraft or helicopter necessitate low level flight; however, no landings are expected. The remainder of the management program of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife can be facilitated with the access as outlined on page 19.

The grazing program on the Game Range includes 55 percent of the area with a total return of less than \$1,400. Even this minor amount of grazing by cattle can be detrimental due to the lack of forage, concentration of grazing around the few watering places, and the cattle-wildlife competition for water. Grazing use will be managed to preserve wildlife and wilderness values. Wilderness, as proposed, will have little effect on grazing.

Major developments on the Range are concentrated in less than a dozen areas. Minor man-made objects that are compatible with wilderness exist in a few additional areas. The incompatible works of man are concentrated near the pipeline road, the King of Arizona Mine, the Castle Dome Mine, the Palm Canyon Road, and in the Sheep Tank, Neversweat, and Engesser Pass areas.

Excluded from wilderness are primary roads, patented mining claims, private dwellings, a 32 unit campground, an electrical transmission line, a microwave tower, natural gas pipelines, mining debris, mineral prospect holes, numerous areas of excessive four-wheel drive trails, and areas where incompatible interpretative facilities will be built.



A typical wash-bottom trail.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed wilderness designation will not have any adverse long-range socio-economic impact, either nationally or locally.

Due to the history of prospecting on the Game Range, including modern investigations which have failed to result in any sustained mining, it is not likely that significant mineral deposits lie anywhere beneath the Game Range.

The grazing program similarly will be unaffected by the wilderness designation for parts of the Game Range.

Non-wilderness recreation activities such as trailer camping at the Crystal Hill Campground and auto tours to the historic mining areas will continue on the Game Range in the excluded areas not suitable for wilderness.

The net effect from wilderness designation will be to stabilize and preserve this fragile desert ecosystem by added protection, thus assuring a continuous, long-term output of high quality outdoor recreations. Benefits will include better support of a local economy by providing a nationally recognized recreation area, plus, affording an outdoor laboratory for scientific and educational purposes.



Mining debris in the King Valley Exclusion.

CONCLUSIONS

EXCLUSIONS:

A total of 204,600 acres were excluded because of existing works of man or due to planned facilities that will be incompatible with wilderness.

The Plomosa Exclusion embraces 360 acres of State-owned lands. Mining activity has scarred much of the area, particularly the northwest corner. Eight patented mining claims, two material sites utilized during the construction of Interstate 10, a haul road, three pipelines and numerous roads and vehicle trails are within this exclusion.

The Crystal Hill-Coyote Peak Exclusion traversing the northern one-fourth of the Game Range has a pipeline right-of-way, a microwave tower, a powerline, two charcos, six windmills, a thirty-two unit campground, corrals, a line shack, signs, two blocks of private land, two blocks of state land, graded roads, a boundary fence, a stone patrol cabin, mining scars, surface tracking from four-wheel drive vehicles, and a developed spring with fenced stock pens. The pipeline, MST&T, and the High Tanks Road are needed for auto tour routes, law enforcement, and management.

The Palm Canyon Exclusion is a small area with four miles of graded road, surface tracks, signs, and a parking lot. An interpretive center is planned for the area. Relatively unrestricted public use of the area is essential to the Game Range's interpretative program, which exhibits the native Palms.

The Sheep Tank Exclusion on the eastern boundary possesses an air strip, a dwelling, mining scars, and a graded road.

The King Valley Exclusion has a variety of existing facilities. Among them are private lands, graded roads, state lands, mining buildings, mine shafts, dumps, signs, an exploited rock hounding site, dwellings, and the remains of two small towns. The King Valley Road is an auto tour route as well as access for private land owners. The refuge headquarters is planned in the Hidden Valley Hills south of the main road and will function as an interpretive facility as well as permanent dwelling.

The Stone Cabin Exclusion in the extreme west-central portion of the Range has in it a Bureau of Reclamation powerline and maintenance road.

The Engesser Pass Exclusion has excessive scarring from manganese mining and prospecting. Jeep trails, prospect holes, and bulldozed access routes are common. The road over Engesser Pass is an auto tour route for the refuge and a management access route.

The Castle Dome Exclusion has a number of developments incompatible with wilderness. Among them are graded roads, residences, mine buildings, prospect shafts, mine dumps, and many surface scars. The exclusion also includes several tracts of private land. The routes to McPhearson Pass and to the Big Eye Mine are refuge automobile tour routes as well as access for hunters, miners, and owners of the private lands.

The Neversweat Exclusion has been prospected heavily and has many surface scars, tracks, jeep trails, miscellaneous surface scarring, and a state inholding.

WILDERNESS UNITS:


A total of 542,600 acres in four units are proposed for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System as the Kofa Wilderness. They are:

1. The Plomosa Mountains Unit (51,800 acres).
2. The Livingston Hills Unit (11,400 acres).
3. The Kofa Mountains Unit (245,100 acres).
4. The Castle Dome Mountains Unit (234,300 acres).

The corridors proposed will be 600 feet wide, thereby providing access with roadside areas for non-wilderness recreation and management activities.

The objectives of the refuge will be aided by this action and its provisions, thus benefiting all of this Sonoran Desert ecosystem including the threatened communities of California Palms, bighorn sheep, and fragile desert vegetation.

MAP LEGEND

 Kofa Game Range Boundary

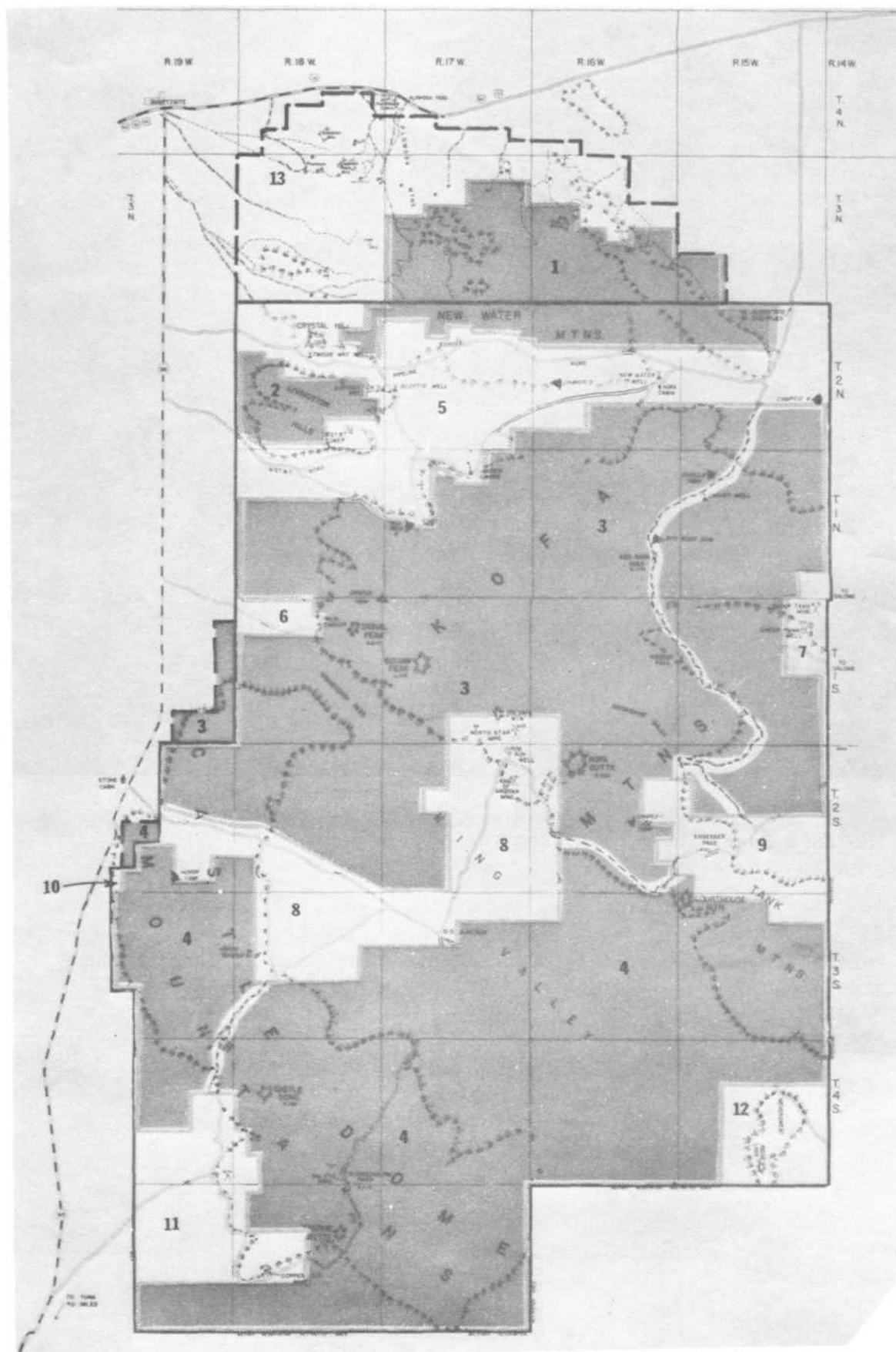
 Proposed Additions

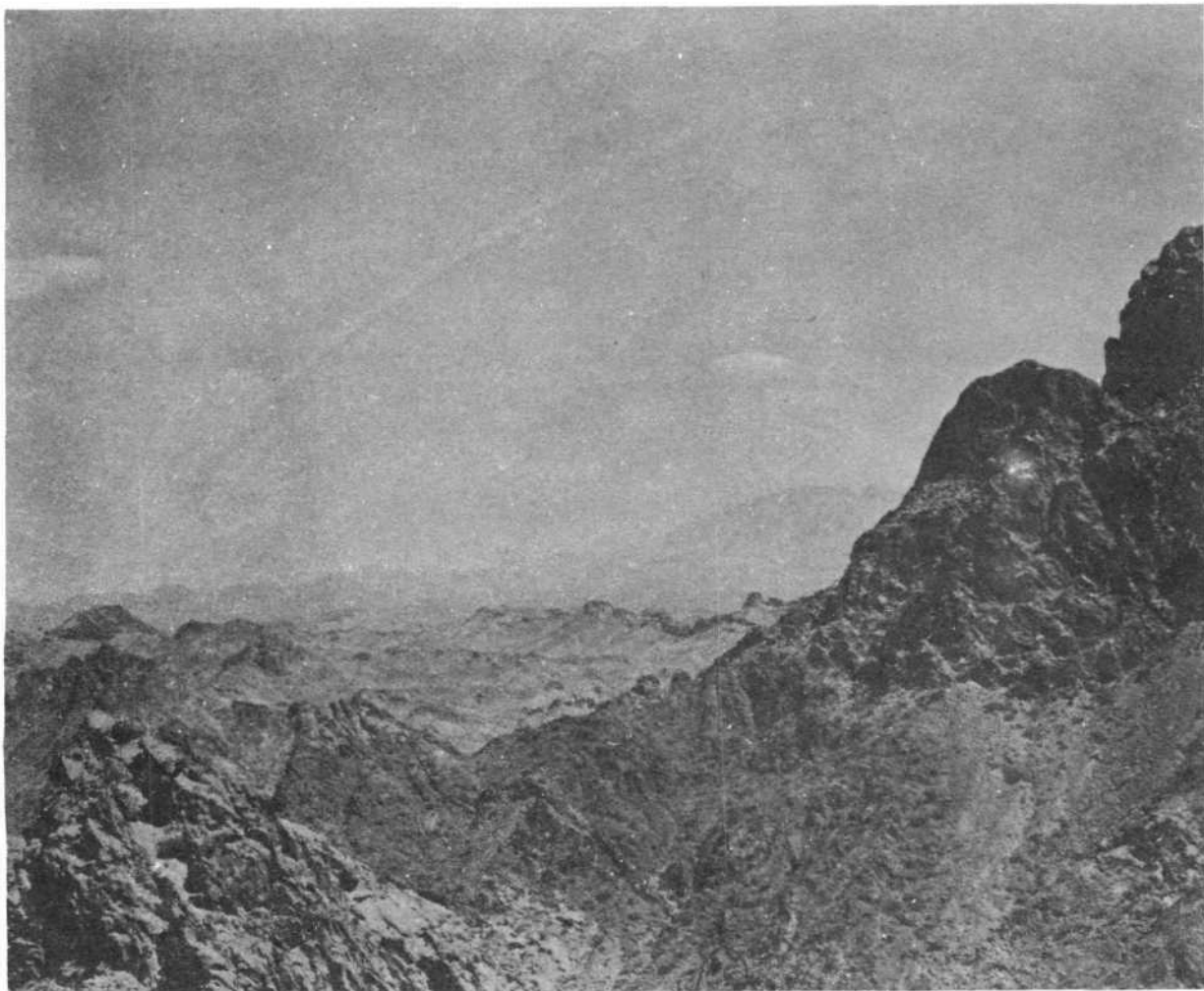
 Proposed Wilderness

 Exclusion

 Refuge road or jeep trail

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Plomosa Mountains Wilderness Unit | 7. Sheep Tank Exclusion |
| 2. Livingston Hills Wilderness Unit | 8. King Valley Exclusion |
| 3. Kofa Mountains Wilderness Unit | 9. Engesser Pass Exclusion |
| 4. Castle Dome Wilderness Unit | 10. Stone Cabin Exclusion |
| 5. Crystal Hill-Coyote Peak Exclusion | 11. Castle Dome Exclusion |
| 6. Palm Canyon Exclusion | 12. Neversweat Exclusion |
| | 13. Plomosa Exclusion |





The Kofa Mountains from Hidden Valley Hills.

Persons interested in this proposal are encouraged to inspect the area. Additional information may be obtained from the Refuge Manager, Kofa Game Range, P. O. Box 1032, Yuma, Arizona 85354, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, 500 Gold Avenue SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Based upon our review, 570,600 acres are suitable for wilderness designation (13,495 acres may become available for wilderness designation at a future date). However, our knowledge of the minerals which may underlie the proposed area is conjectural. Without the benefit of a thorough mineral survey of the area, we are unable to balance its wilderness values and mineral resources. For this reason, we recommend that the Congress appropriate the funds necessary to conduct such a survey and defer action on this proposal until its completion

CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

KOFA WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

The Fish and Wildlife Service recommends that approximately 570,600 acres of the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System as the Kofa Wilderness and that 13,495 acres be added to the wilderness following the acquisition of State interests.

This recommendation reflects several changes from the Kofa Wilderness Proposal presented at the public hearing. These changes are:

1. Wilderness boundaries were modified to follow existing roads and trails or topographic features insofar as was possible. The use of features readily visible on the ground will permit the refuge visitor to identify the wilderness more easily and aid in the enforcing of regulations designed to protect wilderness values.
2. The Neversweat Exclusion was included into the Castle Dome Wilderness Unit and the Palm Canyon Exclusion was reduced to a corridor. Testimony presented at the public hearing and written statements presented the position that surface disturbance in these two areas was not extensive enough to disqualify them from wilderness designation. The Fish and Wildlife Service recognized that these were the least disturbed exclusion of these areas will not impact upon refuge programs, they have been added to the wilderness proposal.
3. One corridor was extended and two additional corridors included in the proposal. These corridor additions encompass existing vehicle trails which the Yuma County Board of Supervisors claim as County rights-of-way.
4. The fourteen administrative trails were deleted from the proposal. The additional corridors recommended include approximately 20 miles of the trails. The Wilderness Act provided for motorized access by the Service to achieve objectives for which the refuge was established and designation of administrative trails is necessary.

As a result of these changes the proposed wilderness would include four units.

	<u>Wilderness</u>	<u>Potential Wilderness</u>
Plomosa Mountain Unit	52,500 acres	1,520 acres
Livingston Hills Unit	12,900 acres	1,335 acres
Kofa Mountain Unit	258,700 acres	5,760 acres
Castle Dome Mountain Unit	246,500 acres	4,880 acres
	<u>570,600 acres</u>	<u>13,495 acres</u>

KOFA WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

KOFA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

