

CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGKOFA 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>

## 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