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WILD AND SCENIC RIVER SUITABILITY REPORT

FOR BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE, CALIFORNIA

July 2010

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym or Abbreviation	Full Phrase
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BKFO	Bakersfield Field Office
BLM	United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
EIS	environmental impact statement
NPS	US Department of the Interior, National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
ORV	outstandingly remarkable value
Reclamation	US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
RMP	resource management plan
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
VRM	visual resource management
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WSR Act	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bakersfield Field Office (BKFO) has completed the eligibility phase of a wild and scenic rivers (WSR) evaluation as part of a past resource management plan (RMP) revision process. In 1997, the BLM identified seven segments as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) as part of the Caliente RMP (BLM 1997a, 1997b). As part of this RMP revision, the BLM studied two additional rivers for eligibility, the Fresno and the San Joaquin, and found two segments along the San Joaquin River to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. The cumulative result of these studies is that nine segments within the BKFO have been identified as eligible. However, Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River is withdrawn to the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the Central Valley Project, in accordance with a 1969 land management contract between Reclamation and the BLM. The land management contract is supplemented by an Interagency Agreement between the two parties that gives the BLM the lead in making land management decisions pertaining to the withdrawn lands. The BLM is to coordinate with Reclamation on land allocation decisions. As such, any suitability determination for that stretch of river should be made in conjunction with Reclamation and a suitability determination is not made for Segment 2 in this report.

The next step in the WSR process is evaluating eligible segments for suitability. The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be appropriate additions to the national system by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. This report describes the method used, data considered, and determinations made during the eligibility and suitability phases. All eligible segments were assessed for suitability, except for Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River.

Project Area

The project area for this suitability study includes all BLM-managed river segments in the BKFO that have been determined to meet the eligibility criteria for WSRs. The BKFO manages approximately 403,910 acres of public lands in central California.

Eligibility Phase Summary

The eligibility studies have determined nine individual segments meet the criteria for inclusion in the NWSRS: Chimney Creek, East Fork of the Kaweah River, Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, North Fork of the Kaweah River, lower Kern River, South Fork of the Kern River, Salinas River, and two segments of the San Joaquin River. Eligibility reports for the nine eligible segments can be found in Appendix A, which also contains the eligibility report for the Fresno River, which was studied as part of the RMP process and was not found eligible.

Suitability Phase

The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be appropriate additions to the NWSRS by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. The suitability evaluation does not result in actual designation but only a suitability determination for designation. The BLM cannot administratively designate a stream via a planning decision or other agency decision into the NWSRS, and no segment studied is designated or will be automatically designated as part of the NWSRS. Ordinarily only Congress can designate a WSR, but the Secretary of the Interior can designate a WSR when the governor of a state, under certain conditions, petitions for a river to be so designated. Congress will ultimately choose the legislative language if any suitable segments are presented. Water-protection strategies and measures to meet the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are the responsibility of Congress in any legislation proposed. Rivers found not suitable by the managing agency conducting the suitability study would be dropped from further consideration and managed according to the objectives and specific management prescriptions outlined in the RMP.

Suitability Criteria

In accordance with BLM Manual 8351 (BLM 1993a) and the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council Guidelines on Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999), the BLM applied the following 10 suitability criteria factors to each eligible river segment when completing the suitability study:

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS;
2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses;
3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the

NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated;

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river;
5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and administering the area if designated;
6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation;
7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation;
8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's outstandingly remarkable values by preventing incompatible development;
9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies; and
10. Other issues and concerns, if any.

Suitability Determinations

Table ES-1 shows the preliminary suitability determination for each segment.

Table ES-1
Summary of Preliminary Suitability Determinations

River or Creek	Segment Length (miles) on BLM land	Preliminary Suitability Determination	Recommended Classification
Chimney Creek	15.5	Not suitable	
East Fork of the Kaweah River	2.3	Not suitable	
Middle Fork of the Kaweah River	0.12	Not suitable	
North Fork of the Kaweah River	2.5	Suitable	Recreational
Lower Kern River	3.2	Not suitable	
South Fork of the Kern River	0.7	Not suitable	
Salinas River	0.8	Not suitable	
San Joaquin River (Segment 1)	5.4	Suitable	Wild/Scenic

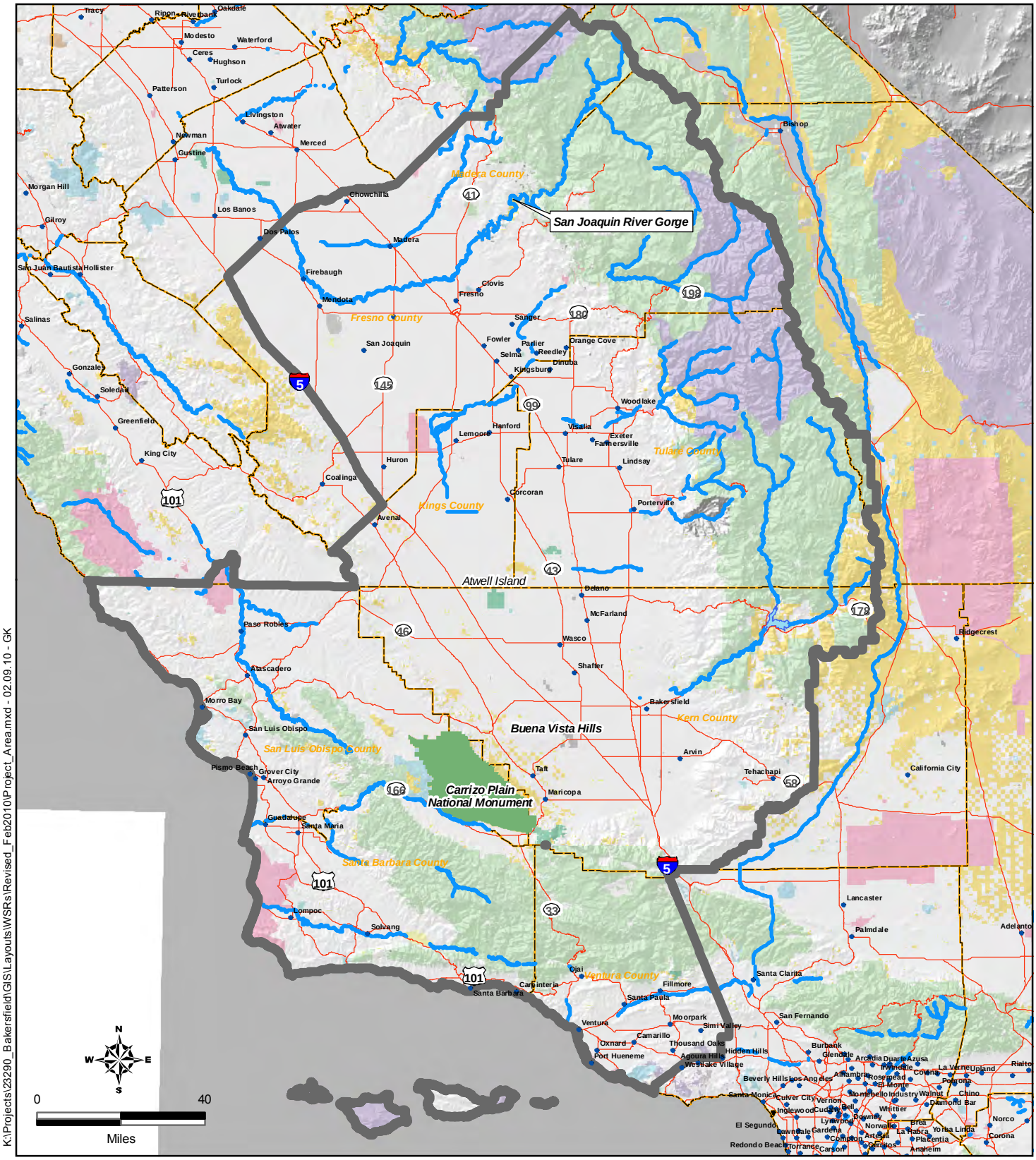
SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

The US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bakersfield Field Office (BKFO) has completed the eligibility phase of a wild and scenic rivers (WSR) evaluation as part of a past resource management plan (RMP) revision process. In 1997, the BLM identified seven segments as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) as part of the Caliente RMP (BLM 1997a, 1997b). As part of this RMP revision, the BLM studied two additional rivers for eligibility, the Fresno and the San Joaquin, and found two segments along the San Joaquin River to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. The cumulative result of these studies is that nine segments within the BKFO have been identified as eligible. However, Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River is withdrawn to the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the Central Valley Project, in accordance with a 1969 land management contract between Reclamation and the BLM. The land management contract is supplemented by an Interagency Agreement between the two parties that gives the BLM the lead in making land management decisions pertaining to the withdrawn lands. The BLM is to coordinate with Reclamation on land allocation decisions. As such, any suitability determination for that stretch of river should be made in conjunction with Reclamation and a suitability determination is not made for Segment 2 in this report.

The next step in the WSR process is evaluating eligible segments for suitability. The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be appropriate additions to the national system by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. This report describes the method used, data considered, and determinations made during the eligibility and suitability phases. All eligible segments were assessed for suitability, except for Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River.

1.1 PROJECT AREA

The project area for this suitability study includes all BLM-managed river segments that have been determined to meet the eligibility criteria for WSRs. The BKFO manages approximately 403,910 acres of public lands in central California (**Figure 1-1**).



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Legend

- Kern — County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Rivers and Aqueducts
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Project Area
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 1-1

1.2 WHY CONDUCT A SUITABILITY STUDY AND WHY NOW?

Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act) (Public Law 90-542, 16 US Code 1271-1287) directs federal agencies to consider potential WSRs in their land and water planning. To fulfill this requirement, whenever the BLM undertakes a land use planning effort (for example, an RMP) it must analyze river and stream segments that might be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS.

The BKFO is revising its RMP for the BLM-administered public lands within the field office and completing an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the RMP. This WSR eligibility and suitability study is being conducted now because the BLM is required by the WSR Act to assess river and stream segments under its management jurisdiction as part of the RMP process.

1.3 WHAT IS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER?

Congress enacted the WSR Act on October 2, 1968, to address the need for a national system of river protection. As an outgrowth of a national conservation agenda in the 1950s and 1960s, the WSR Act was in response to the dams, diversions, and water resource development projects that occurred on America's rivers between the 1930s and 1960s. The WSR Act stipulated that selected rivers should be preserved in a free-flowing condition and be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Since 1968, the WSR Act has been amended many times, primarily to designate additional rivers and to authorize the study of other rivers for possible inclusion in the NWSRS.

The WSR Act protects and enhances a river's natural and cultural values and provides for public use consistent with its free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs). A WSR designation affords certain legal protection from development. For instance, new dams cannot be constructed, and federally assisted water resource development projects that might negatively affect the designated river values are not permitted within the designated segment. Where private lands are involved, the federal managing agency works with local governments and landowners to develop protective measures.

As of June 2009, more than 12,500 miles of 203 rivers in 39 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have been protected in the NWSRS (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 2009). These nationally recognized rivers make up a valuable network of natural and cultural resources, scenic beauty, and recreation opportunities.

1.4 STEPS IN THE WILD AND SCENIC STUDY PROCESS

A WSR study process has two main components: the eligibility phase and the suitability phase. The BLM has completed the eligibility phase for the streams within the BKFO; the BKFO is now completing the suitability phase for eligible streams. The eligibility and suitability phases were conducted in accordance with BLM Manual 8351, *Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management* (BLM 1993a), *The Wild and Scenic River Study Process*

Technical Report (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999), and the WSR Act.

1.4.1 Eligibility Phase

The eligibility phase was completed for the BKFO for most of its streams in 1997 as part of the Caliente RMP (BLM 1997a, BLM 1997b). As part of this RMP revision, two additional rivers, the Fresno and San Joaquin, were studied for eligibility. Below is a brief description of the steps that were implemented in completing the eligiblity phase.

Steps in the Eligibility Phase

The process described in the following paragraphs has been completed and is included here as a reference. For a complete description of the method used, see the Caliente Final RMP/Final EIS (BLM 1997a) and Record of Decision (BLM 1997b). The eligibility reports for the segments studied in this suitability report are presented in **Appendix A**.

River and Stream Identification

The WSR Act defines a river as, "a flowing body of water or estuary or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills, and small lakes." All rivers that have potential for WSR designation must be identified and evaluated. Rivers identified for review may be divided into segments for evaluation. There are no specific requirements for segment length.

A river study area extends the length of the identified river segment and includes the river area and its immediate environment, which is an average of no more than 320 acres per mile from the ordinary high-water mark on both sides of the river. The planning team outlines a preliminary or proposed boundary, usually extending a quarter-mile from either side of the river.

Eligibility Evaluation

Each identified river segment is evaluated to determine whether or not it is eligible for inclusion as a component of the NWSRS. Determinations of eligibility are documented by the authorized officer (BLM Field Office Manager) before the alternatives are formulated but no later than the release of the draft land management plan or land management plan amendment.

The WSR Act states that, in order to be found eligible, a river segment must be free flowing and contain at least one river-related value considered to be outstandingly remarkable.

Free-flowing is defined by Section 16(b) of the WSR Act as "existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway." The existence of small dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time the river is being considered should not automatically disqualify it for consideration as a potential addition to the NWSRS.

Congress did not intend to require rivers to be "naturally flowing," in other words, flowing without any upstream manipulation except by nature. A river cannot be rendered ineligible by the presence of impoundments above or below the segment (including those that may regulate flow regime through the segment) or by existing minor dams or diversion structures within the study reach.

To be considered outstandingly remarkable, a river's related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale.

Assign Tentative Classification

If the eligibility phase determines segments to be eligible, the appropriate agency assigns a tentative classification and management measures needed to ensure appropriate protection of the values supporting the eligibility and classification determinations. There are three classes for rivers designated under the WSR Act: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational. Classes are based on the type and degree of human development and access associated with the river and adjacent lands at the time of the eligibility determination. The classification does not reflect the types of values present along a river segment. The classification assigned during the eligibility phase is tentative; it may be changed by the managing agency in the final land management plan to fit with other land management prescriptions, provided the revised classification was analyzed in the draft land management plan as part of the National Environmental Policy Act process. Final classification is a congressional legislative determination, along with designation of a river segment as part of the NWSRS.

Results of Eligibility Phase

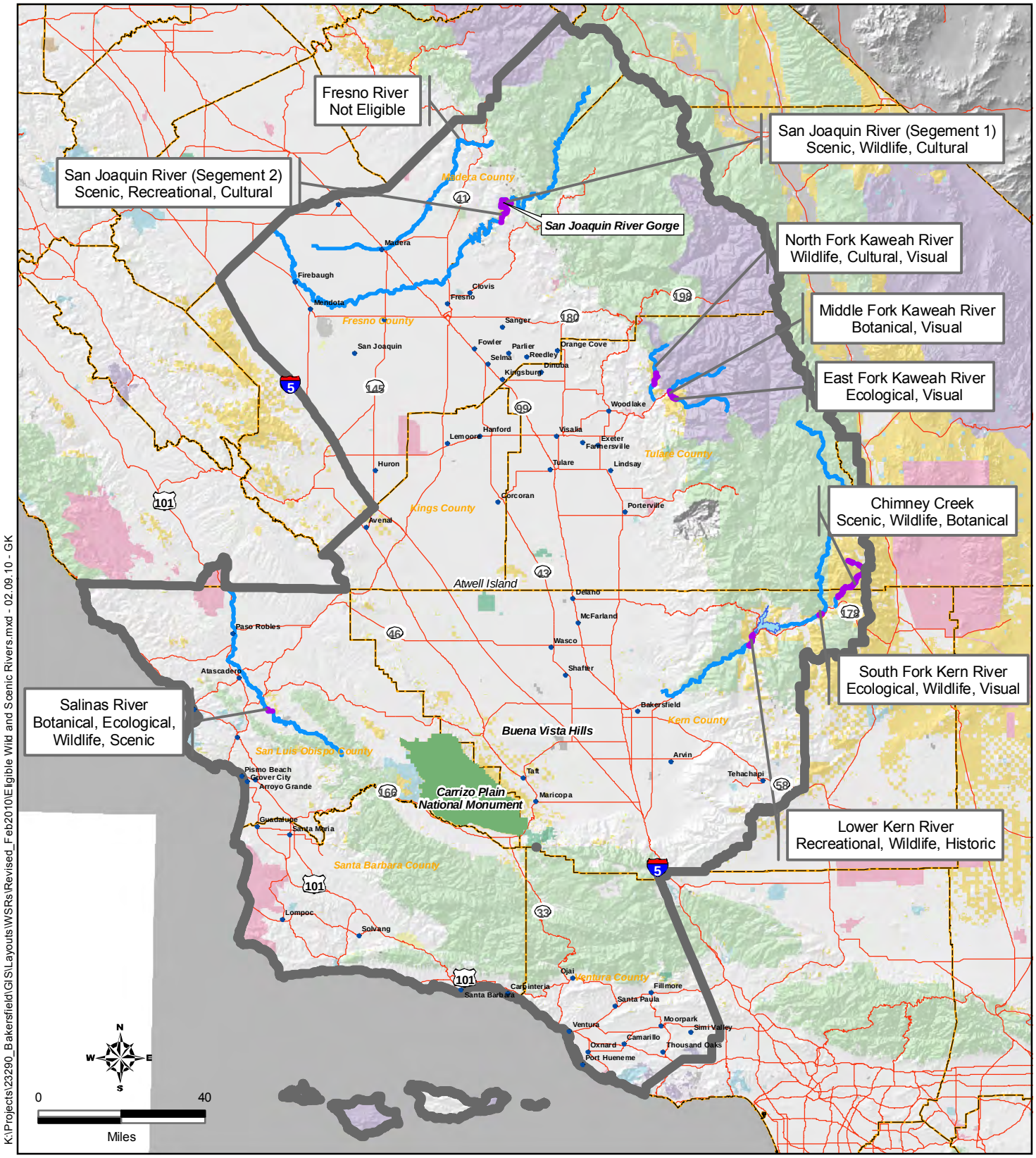
The eligibility studies previously completed determined seven individual segments met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the NWSRS: Chimney Creek, East Fork of the Kaweah River, Middle Fork of the Kaweah River, North Fork of the Kaweah River, Lower Kern River, South Fork of the Kern River, and the Salinas River.

As part of this RMP revision process, the BKFO studied two additional rivers, the Fresno River and the San Joaquin River. The Fresno River was found not eligible while two segments of the San Joaquin River were found eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS.[1] Eligibility reports for the nine eligible segments and the Fresno River can be found in Appendix A, and **Figure 1-2** shows the eligible BKFO segments.

1.4.2 Suitability Phase

The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible segments would be appropriate additions to the NWSRS by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. The suitability

[1]Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River is withdrawn by BLM to Reclamation per a 1968 agreement between Reclamation and the BLM. As such, any suitability determination for that stretch of river will be made in conjunction with or in whole by Reclamation. Segment 2 was not studied for suitability in this report.



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Legend

- County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 1-2

evaluation does not result in actual designation but only a suitability determination for designation. The BLM cannot administratively designate a stream via a planning decision or other agency decision into the NWSRS, and no segment studied is designated or will be automatically designated as part of the NWSRS. Ordinarily only Congress can designate a WSR, but the Secretary of the Interior can designate a WSR when the governor of a state, under certain conditions, petitions for a river to be so designated. Congress will ultimately choose the legislative language if any suitable segments are presented. Water-protection strategies and measures to meet the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are the responsibility of Congress in any legislation proposed. Rivers found not suitable by the managing agency conducting the suitability study would be dropped from further consideration and managed according to the objectives and specific management prescriptions outlined in the land management plan. A summary of segments identified as eligible in the BKFO and that were evaluated for suitability in this report is provided in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1
BLM Eligible Segments Studied for Suitability

River or Creek	Planning Unit	Total River Length (miles)	Length on BLM Land (miles)	Preliminary Classification	ORVs
Chimney Creek	Sierra	21.5	15.5	Wild/Recreational	Scenic, Wildlife, Botanical
East Fork of the Kaweah River	Sierra	21.8	2.3	Recreational*	Ecological, Visual
Middle Fork of the Kaweah River	Sierra	18.8	0.12	Recreational	Botanical, Visual
North Fork of the Kaweah River	Sierra	20.7	2.5	Scenic/Recreational	Wildlife, Cultural, Visual
Lower Kern River	Sierra	39.1	3.2	Recreational	Recreational, Wildlife, Historic
South Fork of the Kern River**	Sierra	85.0	0.7	Recreational	Ecological, Wildlife, Visual
Salinas River	Coast	75.6	0.8	Scenic	Botanical, Ecological, Wildlife, Scenic
San Joaquin River (Segment 1)***	Sierra	186.9	5.4	Wild/Scenic	Scenic, Wildlife, Cultural

Sources: BLM 1997a, 1997b

*The preliminary classification for the East Fork of the Kaweah River was identified as scenic in the 1997 Caliente RMP (BLM 1997a). However, when the BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed this classification during this suitability study, it changed the preliminary classification to recreational due to the presence of a road that parallels most of the segment.

**In addition to those ORVs listed here for the South Fork of the Kern River, the Caliente Resource Management Plan Record of Decision also identified historic and prehistoric ORVs (BLM 1997b). When the BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed these ORVs during this suitability study, it was found that ranching, the historic ORV, is not outstandingly remarkable in the region. Additionally, the prehistoric sites are not on BLM land within the study area corridor.

***An additional segment of the San Joaquin River was found eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, but it is on lands withdrawn by Reclamation to the BLM, in accordance with a 1968 agreement between Reclamation and the BLM. As such, any suitability determination for that stretch of river will be made in conjunction with or in whole by Reclamation. Segment 2 is not studied for suitability in this report.

SECTION 2
METHOD

This section describes the method implemented to evaluate eligible segments for suitability. The criteria used to evaluate eligible river and stream segments are those described in BLM Manual 8351, *Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management* (BLM 1993a) and recommendations from the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999).

2.1 SUITABILITY CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE RIVER AND STREAM SEGMENTS

The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be appropriate additions to the NWSRS by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. Suitability considerations include the environment and economic consequences of designation and the manageability of a river if Congress were to designate it.

A suitability study is designed to answer these questions:

1. Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?
2. Will the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is it the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions, the benefits and impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated, and alternative protection methods considered.
3. Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities who may be partially responsible for implementing protective management?

With the above guidance from the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999) in mind, the following eight suitability criteria factors, identified in BLM Manual Section 8351 (BLM 1993a), were applied to each eligible river segment the suitability study:

1. Characteristics which do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the NWSRS.

2. Status of landownership, minerals (surface and subsurface), use in the area, including the amount of private land involved, and associated or incompatible uses. Jurisdictional consideration (administrative role and/or presence) must be taken into account to the extent that management would be affected. In situations where there is limited public lands (shoreline and adjacent lands) administered by the BLM within an identified river study area, it may be difficult to ensure those identified outstandingly remarkable values could be properly maintained and afforded adequate management protection over time. Accordingly, for those situations where the BLM is unable to protect or maintain any identified outstandingly remarkable values, or through other mechanisms (existing or potential), river segments may be determined suitable only if the entity with land use planning responsibility supports the finding and commits to assisting the BLM in protecting the identified river values. An alternative method to consider these segments is for state, local governments, or private citizens to initiate efforts for designation under Section 2(a)(iii), or a joint study under Section 5(c) of the WSR Act. In certain cases, there might be existing or future opportunities for the BLM to acquire river shoreline or where landowners are willing to donate, exchange, transfer, assign, sell, or sign an easement. Wherever appropriate, the BLM shall encourage the state, responsible federal agency or other entities to evaluate segments where the BLM lacks sufficient jurisdictional control and the BLM shall provide technical assistance concerning the WSR river studies, as well as information concerning public lands within the study corridor. The BLM shall continue to protect and, wherever possible, enhance any outstandingly remarkable values identified in the RMP process which are associated with lands under the BLM's jurisdiction.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters which would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and the values which could be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the NWSRS.

4. Federal, public, state, tribal, local, or other interests in designation or nondesignation of the river, including the extent to which the administration of the river, including the costs thereof, may be shared by state, local, or other agencies and individuals. Also, the federal agency that will administer the area should it be added to the National System.

5. Estimated cost, if necessary, of acquiring lands, interests in lands, and administering the area if it is added to the NWSRS. Section 6 of the WSR Act outlines policies and limitations of acquiring lands or interests in land by donation, exchange, consent of owners, easement, transfer, assignment of rights, or condemnation within and outside established river boundaries.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and/or protect the river area or segment as a WSR river, or other mechanisms (existing and potential) to protect identified values other than WSR designation.
7. Historical or existing rights which could be adversely affected. In determining suitability, consideration of any valid existing rights must be afforded under applicable laws (including the WSR Act), regulations, and policies.
8. Other issues and concerns, if any.

In addition to the criteria described above, two suitability factors were considered, as suggested by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999):

1. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development. This evaluation may result in a formal finding that the local zoning fulfills Section 6(c)'s requirements, which in turn preempts the federal government's ability to acquire land through eminent domain if the river is designated.
2. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies and in meeting regional objectives. Designation may help or impede the "goals" of other tribal, federal, state, or local agencies. For example, designation of a river may contribute to state or regional protection objectives for fish and wildlife resources. Similarly, adding a river which includes a limited recreation activity or setting to the National System may help meet statewide recreation goals. Designation might, however, limit irrigation and/or flood control measures in a manner inconsistent with regional socioeconomic goals.

2.2 DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

The BLM relied on several sources, including geographic information systems data, BKFO resource specialists, informational sources, and other agencies. The result was a compilation of data applicable to the suitability criteria. This data was then used to determine the suitability of a particular segment.

2.2.1 BLM Resource Interdisciplinary Team

The BLM interdisciplinary team consisted of nine resource specialists. The interdisciplinary team provided information pertaining to the suitability criteria factors for accuracy. Once all available data were compiled, the team evaluated each segment and made a suitability determination.

2.2.2 Informational Sources

The BLM used the following informational sources and publications to evaluate segments for suitability:

- BLM Manual Section 8351;
- Land status maps;
- Agreements with other agencies;

- Other agency management plans; and
- Land use planning and zoning documents for local and county governments.

2.2.3 Public Input

Eligibility Phase

Public involvement for the BKFO WSR evaluation process began during the eligibility phase. After the publication of the Draft Caliente RMP/Draft EIS in 1993 (BLM 1993b), the public had an opportunity to comment on the eligibility of segments. Any comments received were taken into account and incorporated into the Final Caliente RMP/Final EIS (BLM 1997a).

Suitability Phase

When the Draft RMP/Draft EIS for this RMP revision is published, the public will have 90 days to comment on the draft suitability determinations. Comments will be incorporated into the Final RMP/Final EIS.

2.3 SUITABILITY DETERMINATIONS

Each of the eight individual eligible segments were evaluated to assess whether it would be suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. The determination was made based on the suitability criteria factors described previously. When the Draft RMP/Draft EIS is published, the public will have 90 days to comment on the draft suitability determinations.

2.4 INTERIM MANAGEMENT OF SUITABLE SEGMENTS

BLM guidance requires that interim management be developed and followed to protect the free-flowing nature, ORVs, and recommended classification of suitable segments until congressional action regarding designation is taken. Interim protections for suitable segments are provided administratively by the management agency and are not legislative protection under the WSR Act. Legislative protection is provided only by formal designation by Congress. A general description of interim management for suitable segments is included in **Section 4**.

SECTION 3
SUITABILITY CRITERIA-BASED DATA AND DETERMINATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the suitability phase is to determine whether eligible river segments are suitable or not suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, in accordance with the criteria from the WSR Act. The suitability evaluation does not result in actual designation but only a suitability determination for designation. The BLM may or may not recommend a stream segment for designation into the NWSRS by transmitting its suitability determinations to Congress and the President. No stream segment studied is designated or will be automatically designated as part of the NWSRS. Ordinarily only Congress can designate a WSR, but the Secretary of the Interior can designate a WSR when the governor of a state, under certain conditions, petitions for a river to be so designated. Congress will ultimately choose the legislative language if any suitable segments are presented. Water-protection strategies and measures to meet the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are the responsibility of Congress in any legislation proposed. Rivers found not suitable will be dropped from further consideration and will be managed according to the objectives outlined in the RMP.

Impacts that would occur from designating or not designating the suitable river segments will be analyzed in the EIS associated with the RMP. Public review and comment on suitability determinations included in the Draft RMP are considered before the BLM makes final suitability determinations.

The criteria described in **Section 2.1** are presented as follows:

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS;
2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses;

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated;
4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river;
5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and administering the area if designated;
6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation;
7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation;
8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's outstandingly remarkable values by preventing incompatible development;
9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies; and
10. Other issues and concerns, if any.

3.2 SUITABILITY DATA AND DETERMINATIONS

This section is a discussion of 10 suitability factors in relation to each of the eight river and stream segments determined to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. These factors were described in **Section 2.1**.

The following river and stream segments were evaluated for suitability within the BKFO:

- Chimney Creek;
- East Fork of the Kaweah River;
- Middle Fork of the Kaweah River;
- North Fork of the Kaweah River;
- Lower Kern River;
- South Fork of the Kern River;
- Salinas River; and
- San Joaquin River.

3.2.1 Chimney Creek

Description	From the headwaters to the BLM/private land boundary near Canebrake in the SW¼, SW¼ of Section 9, T25S, R36E (**Figure 3-1**).		
Total River Length	21.5 miles	**Total River Area**	5,850.4 acres
Length on BLM Land	15.5 miles	**Area on BLM Land**	4,497.6 acres
Preliminary Classification	Wild/Recreational		
ORVs	Scenic, Wildlife, Botanical		

Suitability Criteria

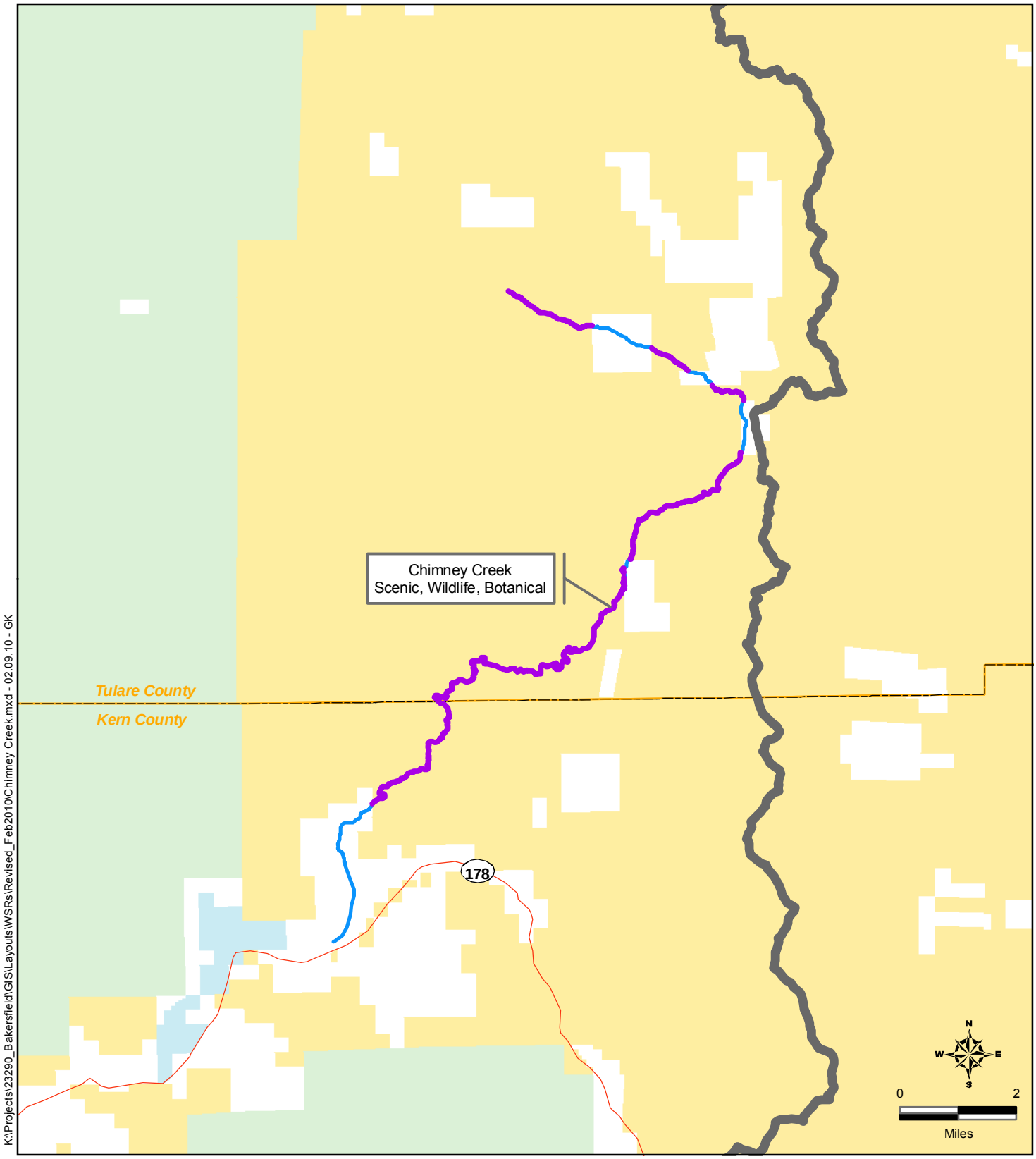
1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   Chimney Creek, located in both Tulare and Kern Counties, forms part of the South Fork of the Kern watershed. Most of the creek is on BLM land, which borders the Sequoia National Forest.

   The BLM's Chimney Creek campground is on the upper reaches of Chimney Creek. The creek forms part of the recreational and scenic attraction in the Chimney Peak Wilderness for dispersed camping, hiking, and hunting. Its rugged, rocky steep banks contribute to the scenic beauty of these areas. The area is also within the Chimney Peak Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Principal recreation activities occurring within the SRMA include hiking/backpacking, camping, hunting, pleasure driving, and wilderness exploring.

   Chimney Creek is a low volume stream, and portions of it can become dry during the summer. Riparian vegetation generally consists of an intermittent thick ribbon of low-growing willow trees. Single-leaf pinyon pine can be found throughout the watershed. The creek runs along a pristine and extremely rocky granitic bed when not crossing Chimney and Lamont Meadows.

   This drainage is primarily vegetated by willow thickets and wet meadows and passes through a great diversity of habitats. The headwaters are in high elevation with Jeffrey pine, and as the river drops in elevation, dominant species change from pinyon pine to California juniper and finally to Joshua tree. The higher elevation stretches contain wet meadows, which have meandering, narrow stream channels and overhanging grasses and are examples of what a stream in good condition should look like. The Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), a federally endangered species, depends willow thickets in excellent condition, such as



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Legend

- County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Chimney Creek
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-1

those found along this creek. Few drainages have as large a population of flycatchers as this one. This habitat at higher elevations is extremely important for mule deer fawning, migrating, and wintering. The long corridor of habitat is an excellent and important migration route for neotropical migrating birds heading to or from the Sierra Nevada or beyond. Some of these species nest along this river system as well.

Chimney Creek flows through four different grazing allotments, which, in combination, are active throughout most of the year. The allotments use both spring and surface waters.

The area is managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I but is inventoried at VRM Class II and III; the area has a scenic quality category of A. The BLM's VRM system provides a way to identify and evaluate scenic values to determine the appropriate levels of management. VRM management classes may differ from VRM inventory classes, based on management priorities for land uses. The scenic quality rating is part of the VRM inventory process and is one of the factors in determining the appropriate VRM class for the area. The objectives for each VRM class are as follows:

VRM Class I Preserve landscape character. This class provides for natural ecological changes but does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

VRM Class II Retain existing landscape character. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen but should not attract a casual observer's attention. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of line, form, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

VRM Class III Partially retain existing landscape character. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate a casual observer's view. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

VRM Class IV Provide for management activities that require major modification of the landscape character. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. Management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repetition of the basic landscape elements.

Source: BLM 1984

The Chimney Creek segment is nearly entirely within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. BLM land in the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area is managed to improve and maintain a diverse assemblage of vegetative communities to benefit wildlife resources and recreational opportunities. Each vegetative community is managed to perpetuate that particular vegetative community and the various wildlife and plant species associated with it. Lands within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area are withdrawn from application under the nonmineral public land laws and from disposition under the homestead, desert land entry, and script selection laws (BLM 1997a).

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

The principal development along the upper river corridor is the BLM's Chimney Creek Campground. A large house complex is readily seen in Lamont Meadows. The slowly expanding rural residential area with surrounding private lands contains rural residences between two and a half and forty acres in size.

Approximately ten rights-of-way exist on surrounding BLM lands.

The creek flows through Mesozoic granitic rocks. There is potential for sand and gravel extraction in the area. There are several mining claims on BLM lands surrounding the creek and a land use permit for an apiary site (beehives).

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

While nothing precludes overlapping Congressional designations (such as Wilderness and WSR), management as wilderness provides similar, if not more stringent, management protections. Because most of Chimney Creek is within Chimney Peak Wilderness, the wilderness area and the WSR could each benefit from the existence of the other. For example, if designated, a federal-reserve water right would be appropriated to ensure an instream flow at the level necessary to support and if possible enhance the ORVs. The wilderness area could benefit from the protection of the ORVs because they help support the wilderness characteristics in the area.

The area is also within the Chimney Peak SRMA. Activities within the SRMA are not likely to diminish the ORVs associated with Chimney Creek.

Because of the wilderness designation, it is unlikely that the ORVs would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

   None known.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands and in administering the area if designated

   The cost of administering the area if designated is not likely to increase. Current BLM management on nonwilderness within the study corridor is minimal, and minimal management is expected to be required if the segment were designated.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

   While nothing precludes overlapping Congressional designations (such as Wilderness and WSR), management as wilderness provides similar, if not more stringent, management protections. A large portion of the WSR corridor is within the Chimney Peak Wilderness, and management of the wilderness area is commensurate with protection of the ORVs. BLM wilderness areas are managed according to BLM Manual 8560, *Management of Designated Wilderness Areas* (BLM 1983). Wilderness areas allow for continued use of valid existing rights (i.e., rights or activities that existed when the area became a wilderness study area [WSA]).

   The area is also within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area to protect wildlife and vegetation habitats.

   There has been minimal management on the part of the BLM in the area, and the ORVs are still able to exist. Minimal management would be required if designated.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

   Designation would not preclude valid existing rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time of designation, should the segment be designated.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   The segment flows through both Tulare and Kern Counties. Within Tulare County, Chimney Creek passes through only small portions of private land, all of which is surrounded by wilderness. It is unlikely that any incompatible development would occur in these areas.

   The private land next to the study corridor within Kern County (at the downstream end of the segment, near Canebrake) is zoned as Category A

(Exclusive Agriculture District). The purpose of the Exclusive Agriculture District is to designate areas suitable for agricultural uses and to prevent the encroachment of incompatible uses onto agricultural lands. Uses are limited primarily to agriculture and other activities compatible with agricultural uses (Kern County 2008).

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies
   Designation would be consistent with management of the surrounding wilderness areas on BLM and US Forest Service land. Because the small portion of the study corridor on nonwilderness land requires minimal management, WSR designation would be compatible.

10. Other issues and concerns, if any
    None.

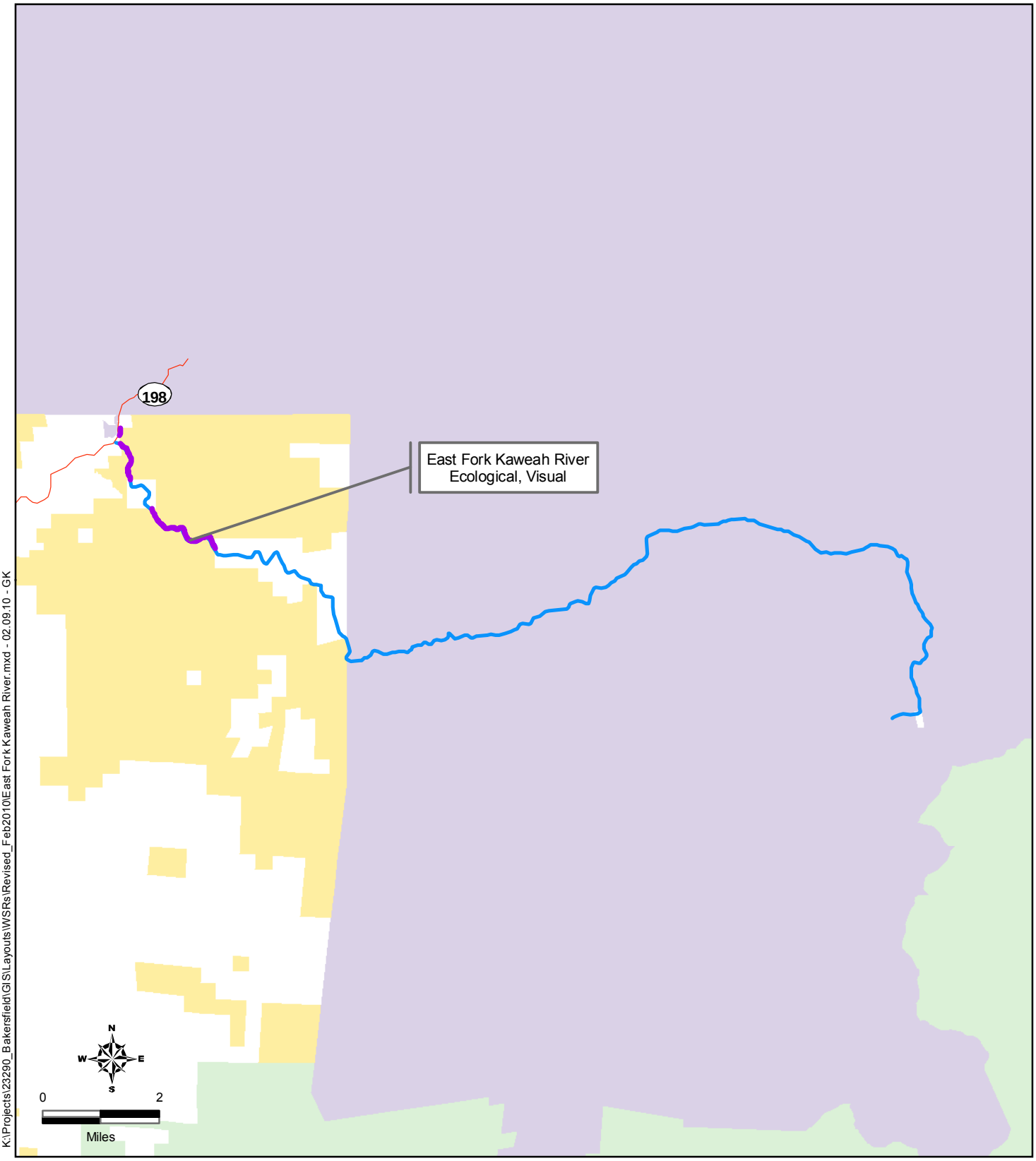
Preliminary Determination

Most of the Chimney Creek segment under study flows through designated wilderness and the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. The ORVs receive protection from wilderness designation by prohibiting most forms of development and the National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. This segment is preliminarily determined **not suitable.**

3.2.2 East Fork of the Kaweah River

Description	T17S, R29E, Section 37, SW¼; Section 38 NE¼, SE¼; Section 10 S½; Section 39 NE¼ (**Figure 3-2**).		
Total River Length	21.8 miles	**Total River Area**	6,411.4 acres
Length on BLM Land	2.3 miles	**Area on BLM Land**	762.3 acres
Preliminary Classification	Recreational[2]		
ORVs	Ecological, Visual		

[2]The preliminary classification for the East Fork of the Kaweah River was identified as Scenic in the 1997 Caliente RMP (BLM 1997a). Upon further review by the BLM interdisciplinary team during this suitability study, however, the preliminary classification was changed to Recreational due to the presence of a road that parallels most of the segment.



Legend

- Kern County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

East Fork Kaweah River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-2

Suitability Criteria

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The East Fork of the Kaweah River extends approximately 18 miles, from Mineral King in Sequoia National Park to Highway 198, just north of the small town of Hammond in Tulare County. A portion of the BLM study corridor falls into the Milk Ranch parcel of the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA, and the entire segment is within the Case Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

   Development along this corridor consists of the Oak Grove/Mineral King access road south of the river. There is limited evidence of human impact along the entire segment.

   This segment is an outstanding example of a pristine, low-elevation major drainage originating from the Mineral King segment of the southern Sierra Nevada. The stream channel is carved out of solid granite, which takes on the appearance of a carved out chain of deep pools for much of the segment. Riparian streamside vegetation grows intermittently along the segment. A rainbow trout fishery is in this stream.

   The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species, including Cooper's hawk and osprey, and, in the winter, bald eagle. This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada, which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes, including Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.

   Mouse buckwheat (*Eriogonum nudum* var. *murinum*), a BLM sensitive species, likely occurs within this segment of the river corridor.

   Developments that can be seen from the river corridor include houses and cabins, a flume, a jeep road, and the paved parallel road.

   The area is managed as VRM Class III and has a scenic quality of Category A. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

   Water power generation and production is an important industry in this area. Associated with a Federal Power Commission Order is a conduit, penstock,

and road in the vicinity of the river corridor. Private lands include rural residences.

There are three rights-of-way for two roads and a telephone line.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

A portion of the segment is within the Oak Grove grazing allotment. If designated, grazing would continue to be allowed to the extent practiced before designation. Because the river is the main water source for the livestock, there is potential for water contamination and erosion from grazing. Because grazing at its current level would continue to be permitted, a WSR designation may not protect the segment from contamination and sedimentation.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

None known.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands and in administering the area if designated

The upper portion of the study corridor is within the Milk Ranch Case Mountain WSA and, because of the rugged terrain and adjacent private land, access to the river on BLM land is difficult. As such, the cost of administering the area if designated would be minimal.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

The entire river corridor is within the Case Mountain ACEC, and a portion is within the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA. The Case Mountain ACEC was designated to protect special status plant species as well as the sequoia groves in the area. The entire area is within the proposed Kaweah ACEC and protections afforded the ACEC could also protect the ORVs. However, ACECs are administrative designations and could be repealed with an RMP amendment or revision; thus ACEC designation does not afford the same long-lasting protection as congressional designation.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

Designation would not preclude valid existing rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time the segment is designated.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   The majority of the land surrounding the river is zoned as AF, Foothill Agricultural Zone, while a smaller stretch is zoned AE-80, Exclusive Agricultural Zone- 80 acre minimum. Both of these zones are designed to protect agriculture from encroachment from other types of uses. Two small stretches near the confluence of the Middle Fork Kaweah River (each < 100ft) are zoned R-A-217, Rural Residential Zone and F-1, Primary Floodplain Zone. The Rural Residential Zone allows for mostly single family homes on lots larger than 600 square feet. The Primary Flood Plain Zone protects life and property from flooding by establishing structures to prevent the overflow of flood waters. Agricultural and wildlife uses with temporary structures are allowed in the Primary Flood Zone (Tulare County 2005).

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   Upstream of the BLM segment is private land (see Criteria 8 for zoning information), and upstream of the private land, the East Fork of the Kaweah River flows on NPS land in Sequoia National Park. The NPS portion of the river from the park boundary to the headwaters was determined to be suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS (NPS 2006).

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

    None.

Preliminary Determination

Most of the East Fork of the Kaweah River segment under study flows through a WSA and is within a proposed ACEC. While WSR designation would be compatible with the management of these areas, protection of the ecological ORV requires a larger area of protection than WSR designation can afford.

Similarly, the scenic value on BLM land is protected via the WSA. While development that would obstruct the scenic value is unlikely to occur on private land, the BLM does not have the authority to manage for the preservation of the scenic value on private land, and the scenic value could be degraded, even by development that does not occur on BLM land. Although the values associated with this segment are worthy of protection, this protection should be provided administratively for a broader area of protection. This segment is preliminarily determined to be **not suitable.**

3.2.3 Middle Fork of the Kaweah River

Description	Section 37, T17S, R29E (**Figure 3-3**).		
Total River Length	18.8 miles	**Total River Area**	5,415.7 acres
Length on BLM Land	0.12 mile	**Area on BLM Land**	51.8 acres
Preliminary Classification	Recreational		
ORVs	Botanical, Visual		

Suitability Criteria

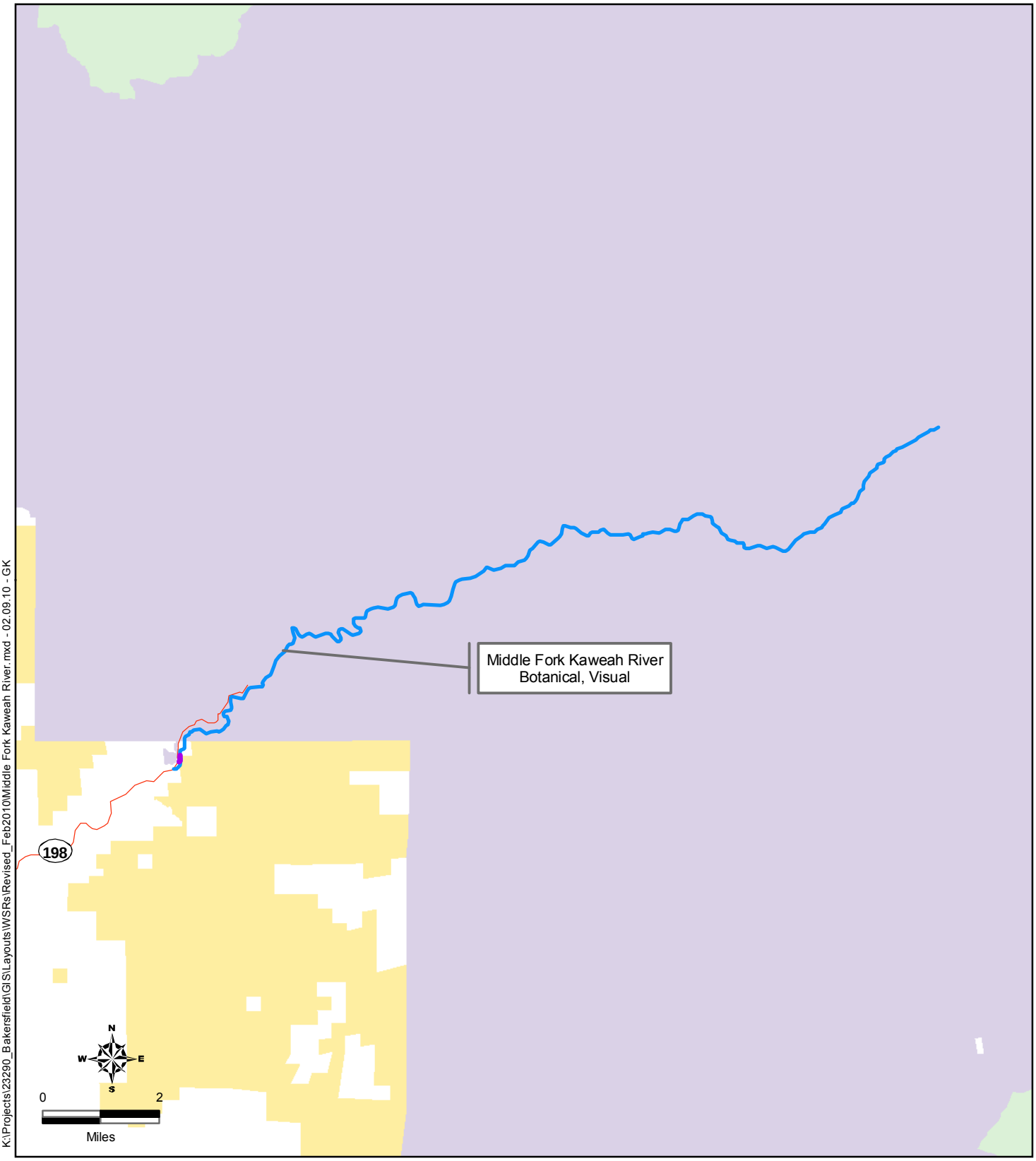
1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The Middle Fork of the Kaweah River extends from the confluence of several creeks in Sequoia National Park near Redwood Meadows to the resort community of Three Rivers in Tulare County. Most of the land that the river crosses is within Sequoia National Park or is privately owned. The BLM study corridor flows next to the main access road, Highway 198, to Sequoia National Park, and adjacent to the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA. The entire segment is within the Case Mountain ACEC.

   Within Sequoia National Park there is a popular hiking trail along the corridor of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah. However, the BLM section is so short that recreational usage is not documented. The river across BLM lands flows so close to Highway 198 that solitude is limited, but access for fishing is possible.

   This segment is a typical example of a low elevation major drainage originating from the upper reaches of the southern Sierra Nevada. Much of the stream channel has carved its bed through solid granite. Minimal streamside riparian vegetation exists in pockets along the stream channel. Common dominant plants from the Kaweah drainage are sycamore, willow, interior live oak and ash. The adjacent slopes are variously covered by chaparral, blue oak/digger pine, and black oak. A rainbow trout fishery is in this stream.

   The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species, including Cooper's hawk and osprey, and, in the winter, bald eagle. This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada, which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes, including Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.



Legend

- Kern — County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Middle Fork Kaweah River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-3

Mouse buckwheat (*Eriogonum nudum* var. *murinum*), a BLM sensitive species, and Kaweah brodiaea (*Brodiaea insignis*), a state of California endangered species (California Department of Fish and Game 2009b), occur on BLM land within the river corridor.

This segment of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River falls within the ethnographical boundary of the Patwisha, a Western Mono Native American group. Two prehistoric sites are known along this short segment of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River. No formal evaluation of the prehistoric sites has been completed to determine their significance at present. There are no known historic sites of significance on BLM land along this river corridor. The area is regarded as sensitive for the potential high occurrence of both prehistoric and historic resources.

The area is managed as VRM Class III and has a scenic quality rating of A. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

Surrounding private lands include residential and rural residential, with parcels ranging in size from half an acre to twenty acres. Approximately 0.2 mile of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River flows through the corner of a grazing allotment that is used from April 1 to September 30 each year.

There are no mining claims and only one right-of-way for a water facility. There are withdrawals on adjoining BLM land for power projects, including a conduit, penstock, roads, and a ditch. The following developments can be seen from the river corridor: houses, a gauging station, a power line running parallel to the river, a flume, parallel trails, and the paved road and the ending of a primitive road.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

A portion of the segment is within the Oak Grove grazing allotment. If designated, grazing would continue to be allowed to the extent practiced before designation.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

None known.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and of administering the area if designated

   The study segment is on BLM land. Upstream of the study corridor, the river flows through Sequoia National Park on US Department of the Interior NPS land. Because of the short segment length, management costs would be minimal.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR, or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

   It would be difficult for the BLM to ensure the preservation of the botanical and visual ORVs. This is because of the short segment length and because activities on adjacent land outside of the BLM's control could negatively impact the ORVs in the future.

   The segment is entirely within the proposed Kaweah ACEC. Protections afforded the ACEC could also protect the ORVs. However, ACECs are administrative designations and could be repealed with an RMP amendment or revision. Thus ACEC designation does not afford the same long-lasting protection as a designation by Congress.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

   Designation would not preclude valid existing rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time the segment is designated.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   Private land surrounding BLM land within Tulare County is zoned as F-1, Primary Flood Plain Zone. This zone protects life and property from flooding by establishing structures to prevent the overflow of flood waters. Agricultural and wildlife uses with temporary structures are permitted (Tulare County 2005).

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   Upstream of the BLM segment, the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River flows on NPS land in Sequoia National Park. The NPS section extending from the boundary of the park to the headwaters was determined suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS (NPS 2006).

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

    None.

Preliminary Determination

The Middle Fork of the Kaweah River segment that is under study flows through an ACEC. While WSR designation would be compatible with the management of the ACEC, protection of the ecological ORV requires a larger area of protection than WSR designation can afford.

Because the BLM does not have the authority to manage for the preservation of scenic value on adjacent private land, and the scenic value could be degraded, even by development that does not occur on BLM land, the BLM would be unable to ensure the protection of a scenic ORV on such a short segment. This segment is preliminarily determined **not suitable.**

3.2.4 North Fork of the Kaweah River

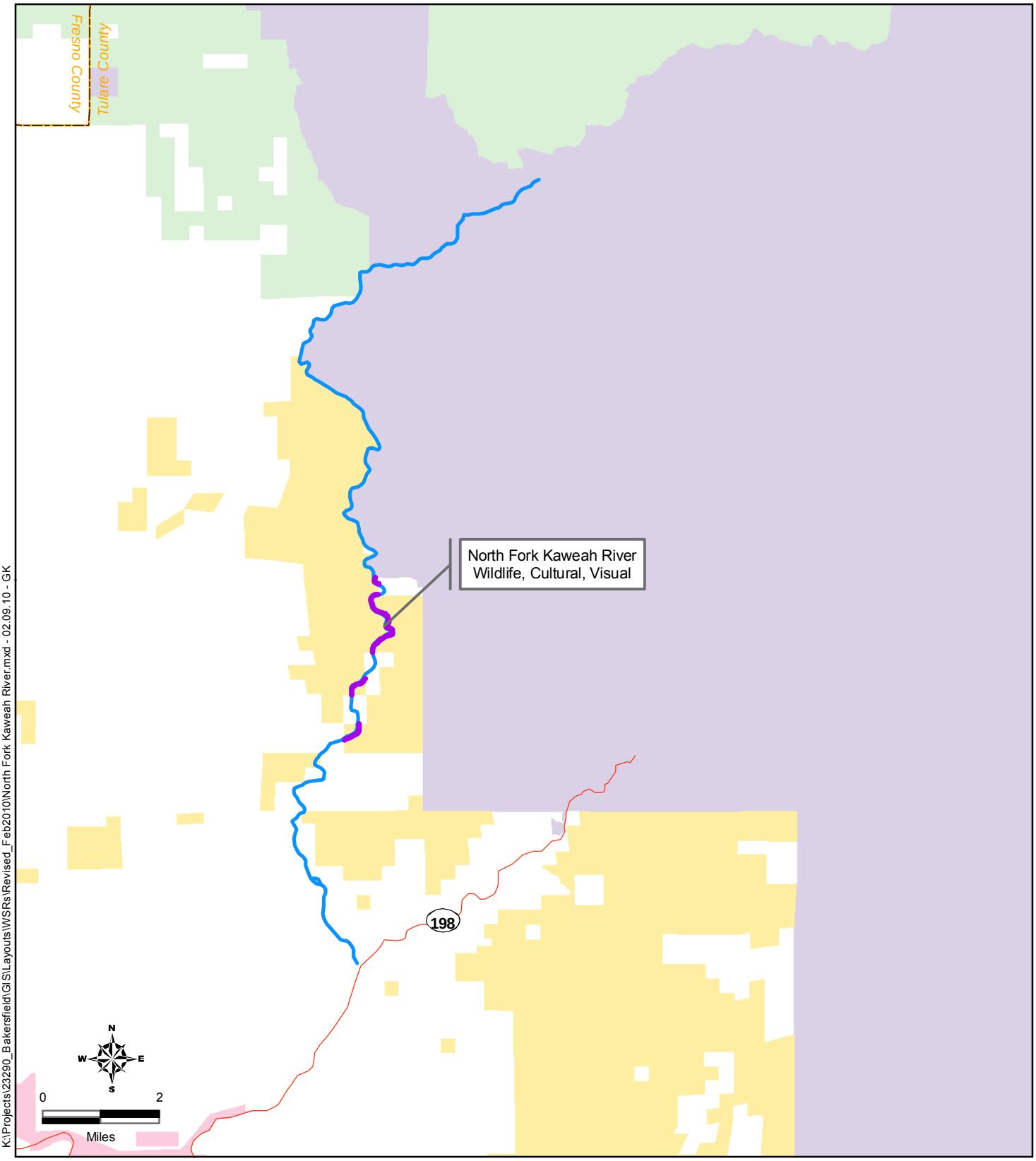
Description	From approximately 1,000 feet south of the confluence with Pierce Creek to the BLM boundary in the SW ¼ of Section 26, Township 16S, Range 28E in the south (**Figure 3-4**).		
Total River Length	20.7 miles	**Total Segment Area**	5,689.98 acres
Length on BL M Land	2.5 miles	**Area on BLM Land**	800.4 acres
Preliminary Classification	Scenic/Recreational		
ORVs	Wildlife, Cultural, Visual		

Suitability Criteria

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The North Fork of the Kaweah River flows out of the southern Sierra Mountains and forms part of the border between Sequoia National Forest and Sequoia National Park. The BLM's study corridor begins 1,000 feet south of the junction of Pierce Creek and the North Fork of the Kaweah River, approximately five miles north of the town of Three Rivers and about 24 miles northeast of Visalia, in Tulare County. The North Fork of the Kaweah River generally flows southerly to the confluence of the main fork of the Kaweah River. A locally maintained paved and partially graded road runs within half a mile along the entire length of the BLM contiguous corridor and has contributed to high use of the BLM parcels. This road serves access for fire emergency vehicles to private and NPS lands farther north. The North Fork of the Kaweah River is within the Sheep Ridge WSA and borders the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA.

   The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and



Legend

- Kern — County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

North Fork Kaweah River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-4

mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species, including Cooper's hawk and osprey, California species of special concern, and, in the winter, bald eagle. This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada, which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes, including Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for neotropical migrating birds, whose numbers are declining.

The area ethnographically is at an interface between two Native American cultures. The Waksachi, a Mono group, were centrally located in the Epsom Valley area, but they also used lands to the south along the North Fork of the Kaweah within the northern portion of the river corridor. The Wukchumni, a Yokuts group occupied lands on the southern portion of the corridor along the Kaweah River, extending from the vicinity of Three Rivers community to the west near Lemoncove.

The North Fork of the Kaweah River was the scene of a utopian socialism experiment between 1884 and 1891. This was generally referred to as the Kaweah Colony but also was known as the Kaweah Cooperative Commonwealth. It has been described as a form of German socialism that envisioned an idealistic cooperative colony in which the working members would own and control production and profit accordingly. By 1892, the colony had disbanded, and its members had moved away.

Within a quarter-mile of the river corridor there are four known prehistoric sites and one historic site (Advance). These sites have not been formally evaluated, so their significance is uncertain. The remains at the Advance Site appear to lack physical integrity, but the site does possess local historic interest. The river corridor is regarded as culturally sensitive for the occurrence of prehistoric and historic resources.

The river corridor is within three grazing allotments and the North Fork SRMA. Principal activities in the area include water play, kayaking, fishing, and hunting. Two sites service the area: Advance Site and Cherry Falls, which are currently closed due to safety concerns.

The river corridor is also within the North Fork of the Kaweah River Special Management Area to protect riparian and cultural resources and sensitive vegetation.

The area is managed as VRM Class II and has a scenic quality rating of A. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

Metasedimentary rock has potential for tungsten, but there are no known occurrences on BLM land.

Surrounding private lands include rural residences on sites ranging from two-and-a-half acres to forty acres. Livestock graze on private lands and on several BLM allotments on the lands surrounding the river. The North Fork of the Kaweah flows through the eastern edge of allotment 00017. This pasture is unfenced from the river for approximately 1.75 miles and is seasonally grazed from October 1 to July 30. The remaining half mile is fenced from livestock. In allotment 00102, cattle can be grazed at any time of the year but usually during winter and spring. Cattle will water at the river in the limited accessible riverbank stretches. The river also flows through a quarter-mile of allotment 00095. It is accessible for the full length to cattle that graze from March 1 to June 30.

There are four rights-of-way on BLM land along the North Fork of the Kaweah River for a fire break, two power transmission lines, and a road. From the river corridor the following developments are visible: old mining buildings (in the northernmost section of BLM lands), primitive camping and picnic sites, trails that parallel and end at the river, and the paved and gravel road that parallels the river.

Land in the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, just southeast of the river is managed as wilderness. The region's topographic variation, its rugged rocky terrain, and vegetation variety combine to create areas of seclusion. However, military aircraft periodically fly over the area. Most of the users are local residents; regional and national visitors are drawn to the nearby National Park lands.

The river is used as a municipal water source for the community of Three Rivers.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

If designated, grazing would continue to be allowed to the extent practiced before designation. Because the river serves as a water source for the livestock, there is potential for water contamination and erosion from grazing. Because grazing at its current level would continue to be permitted, a WSR designation may not protect the segment from contamination and sedimentation.

If the area were not designated, an instream flow to protect the ORVs would not be appropriated. If water projects were permitted in the area, habitat could be lost from inundation or lack of water, as the case may be. Inundation could also affect the visual and cultural values if covered. Note that there are no reasonably foreseeable significant water development projects in the area.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

None known.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and of administering the area if designated

Concerns over public safety at the Advance Site and Cherry Falls recreation areas have lead to their closure. If these areas were to be reopened, designation could attract attention and unwanted activity again. The BLM may experience increased costs if this were to occur. However, at present, little management is required by the BLM.

If the segment were to be designated, the BLM would be interested in acquiring adjacent lands to improve manageability of the designated segment.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

The North Fork of the Kaweah River is within the Sheep Ridge WSA and borders the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA. WSA management is commensurate with protection of the ORVs. However, if Congress were to release the area from wilderness study, the protection would default to underlying prescriptions in the RMP. Underlying prescriptions may or may not be sufficient to protect the ORVs.

Historic ORVs are not ecosystem dependent. Cultural resources and historic values associated with the river segment are protected and regulated by a number of laws, regulations, executive orders, programmatic agreements, and other requirements. The principal federal law addressing cultural resources is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 US Code, Section 470) and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800). These regulations, commonly referred to as the Section 106 process, describe the procedures for identifying and evaluating historic properties, for assessing the effects of federal actions on historic properties and for project proponents consulting with appropriate agencies to avoid, reduce, or minimize adverse effects.

The study area corridor is within the proposed Kaweah ACEC (800.4 acres), which would be designated to protect giant sequoia groves, limestone caves and other karst features, riparian areas, and other sensitive biological and

cultural resources. Protective management measures include seasonally restricting public access to specific recreation sites, closing the area to motorized activities (except for North Fork Drive), and restricting mechanized activities to designated routes.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

   Designation would not preclude valid existing rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time of designation.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   This segment flows through the Extensive Agriculture Zone district in Tulare County. Unless the area were rezoned, incompatible development is unlikely to occur on adjacent private land.

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   Immediately upstream of the segment, the North Fork of the Kaweah River is bordered on the west bank by BLM land and on the east bank by NPS land in Sequoia National Park. It then turns eastward and forms the border of Sequoia National Forest and Sequoia National Park. The NPS did not determine the North Fork of the Kaweah River to be suitable (NPS 2006).

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

    The water quality of the area is fair. In drought times, coliform and fecal coliform contamination is high. The river is used as a municipal water source for the community of Three Rivers.

Preliminary Determination

The segment is located within the proposed Kaweah ACEC, which provides protections against adverse impacts from human use. Continued management of the area as VRM Class II would further deter incompatible development and protect the visual resources. The study corridor is entirely within grazing allotments, and grazing is contributing to water contamination. Because grazing would continue to be permitted if the segment were designated, water contamination would likely continue.

The BLM is committed to managing the area for the protection of the ORVs; the preliminary determination for this segment is **suitable**, with a recommended classification of **recreational**.

3.2.5 Lower Kern River

Description	From the BLM land boundary near Lake Isabella to the BLM/US Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service land boundary in the NW¼, NW¼ of Section 12, T27S, R32E (**Figure 3-5**).		
Total River Length	39.1 miles	**Total River Area**	11,248.16 acres
Length on BLM Land	3.2 miles	**Area on BLM Land**	877.4 acres
Preliminary Classification	Recreational		
ORVs	Recreational, Wildlife, Historic		

Suitability Criteria

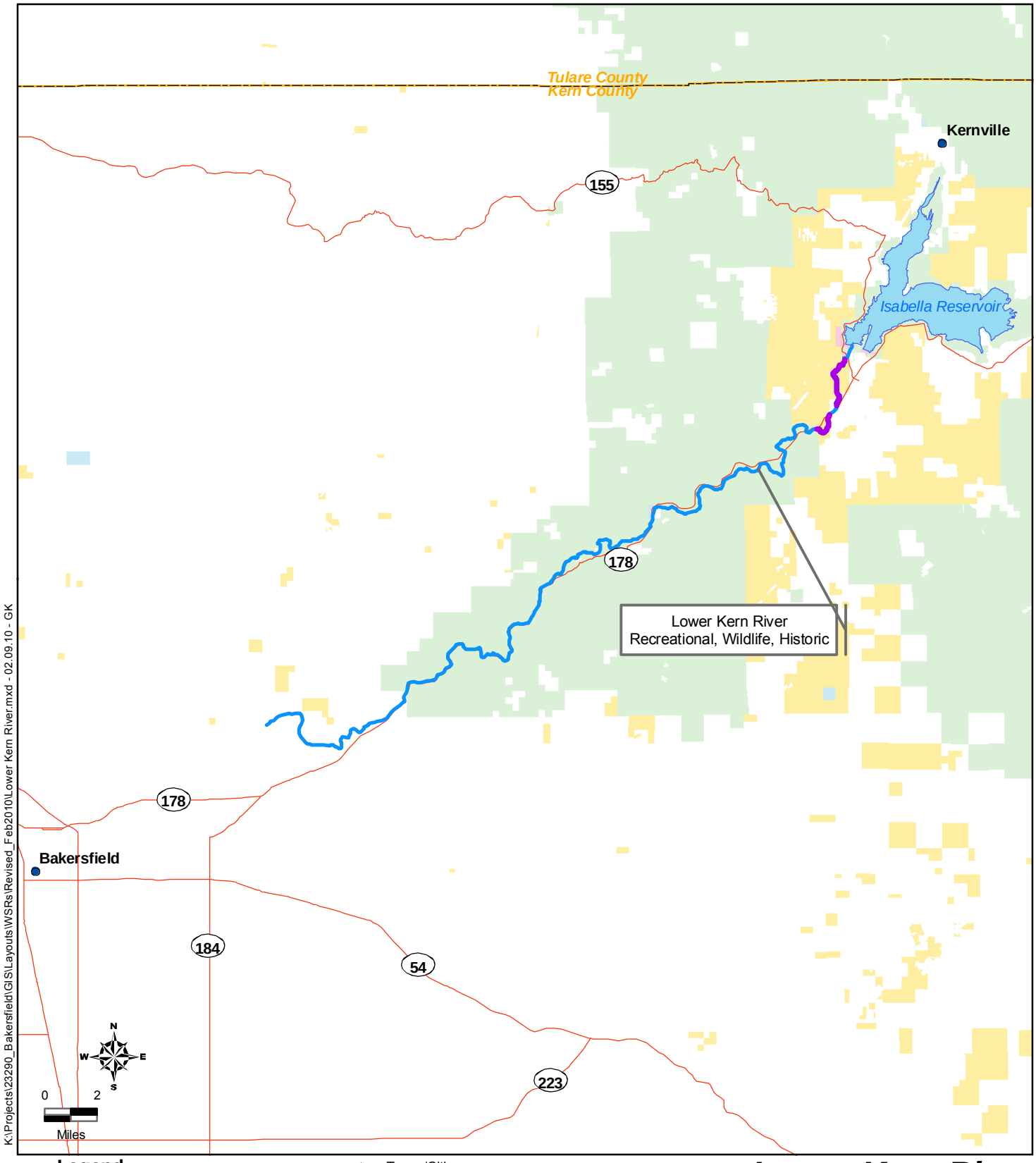
1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The Lower Kern River runs from Isabella Dam (Highway 155) in Kern County to the Kern Canyon mouth above Bakersfield. A four-lane freeway bridge of Highway 178 crosses the Lower Kern River and then runs next to it. The BLM lands are surrounded by Sequoia National Forest and private land.

   Two designated boat launch sites, south of the Lake Isabella Main Dam at BLM South and Slippery Rock are on BLM land. Approximately 12,000 commercial and noncommercial rafters use the area each year. During normal water years, rafting takes place from May to September, with waterflows depending on releases from Lake Isabella. Normal flows range from 800 to 3,000 cubic feet per second. Dispersed camping, recreational mining, shooting, and off-highway vehicle use occur on the lands adjoining the river.

   The Lower Kern River flows through canyons and boulders. The topographic relief allows for a tremendous variety of microclimates that provide a diversity of habitats. Sycamores, cottonwoods, and interior live oaks line the stream and are bordered by blue oak/digger pine, chaparral, and annual grassland. Many game animals reside along the river and on the nearby slopes. Nongame animals reside in and migrate through in great numbers. This river system is extremely important to neotropical migrating birds. This river is also habitat for such sensitive species as bald eagle in winter and osprey in migration. Dippers nest along this stretch of the river, and this may be the only place within the BKFO where this species nests on BLM land. This is an important aquatic ecosystem and provides considerable recreational fishing. The fishery consists of rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, and channel catfish.

   Connected to the Lower Kern River is a large wet meadow complex east of Highway 178 and west of the town of Lake Isabella. It is the only natural



Legend

- Kern County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Lower Kern River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-5

wetland meadow downstream of Lake Isabella. One California species of concern, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), occurs here. This large wet meadow adds substantially to the biodiversity of the Isabella area. A willow patch at the southwest corner of the meadow and near the confluence of the Lower Kern may be occupied by southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), a federally endangered and California endangered species.

Historically, the area was important for mineral resources. Initial settlement in the Keyesville area came with the discovery of gold by Richard M. Keyes in the mid-1850s. Remnants of this early mining is evident along the Lower Kern River corridor. Due to the poor condition of historic resources along the river corridor, there are no known sites of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) quality sites remaining within or immediately adjoining the river.

This segment of the river falls within the Tubatulabal Indian territory. The river has a high occurrence of prehistoric resources, ranging from food processing to rock art sites. Although no prehistoric sites have been formally found eligible for listing on the NRHP on the BLM land segment, it is highly probable that sites of this quality are present on BLM land. One known pictograph site on a segment of private land is considered significant.

The area is managed as VRM Class II and has a scenic quality of B+. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

After discovery of placer gold in the Kern River in the spring of 1854, miners stampeded to the area. The rush continued through 1855. Soon hardrock gold was also discovered. By 1856 the first mill to recover gold was erected in Keyesville. Over the years a number of mills were erected along the Kern River to serve the mines of Keyesville, only to be destroyed by the floods of 1861-1862. In 1865 a twenty-stamp gold mill was built on the river. Numerous other mills were also built along the river, but their location is unknown. A stamp mill associated with the Mammoth Mine stood on the west bank of the river in the southeast quarter of Section 35 as late as 1959. Gold continues to be recovered from gravel in the bed and banks of the river by various placer mining techniques. There are mining claims on nearby BLM lands.

Surrounding private lands contain rural residences, with parcels ranging in size from one to five acres. Livestock graze on surrounding private lands and on BLM lands bordering the river, from March 1 to May 31. There are ten rights-of-way for power lines, roads, a drainage easement, and a gauging station.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

Water flow through this stretch of river depends on releases from the Lake Isabella Dam. While designation would provide the BLM with an instream flow water right to protect the ORVs, it would be junior to any existing water rights in the area.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

Two segments of the Kern River downstream of the BLM's segment have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS by the USFS; however, no suitability determination has been made.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and of administering the area if designated

The Keyesville SRMA has seen a large increase in visitors in recent years, and the BLM has had difficulty providing adequate staff for patrol and enforcement. It is possible that designation would attract more visitors, and the BLM may not be able to maintain adequate facilities at the Keyesville recreation area due to lack of funds.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

Most of the segment is within the Keyesville SRMA, where principal activities are dispersed camping, off-highway vehicle use, recreational prospecting, and kayaking, rafting, and water play. Recently, both motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use has increased in the Keyesville area as a result of increased visits from both local and destination visitors. Increased off-highway vehicle use in the area could lead to habitat loss for special status species and could negatively impact the wildlife ORV.

Water flows, and consequently the recreational ORV, depend on releases from Lake Isabella. The BLM cannot control the release rates, and if the flows were significantly diminished or increased, the recreational ORV could be negatively impacted.

Historic ORVs are not ecosystem dependent. Cultural resources and historic values associated with the river segment are protected and regulated by a number of laws, regulations, executive orders, programmatic agreements, and other requirements. The principal federal law addressing cultural resources is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 US Code, Section 470), and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800). These regulations, commonly referred to as the Section

106 process, describe the procedures for identifying and evaluating historic properties, for assessing the effects of federal actions on historic properties, and for project proponents consulting with appropriate agencies to avoid, reduce, or minimize adverse effects.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

Designation would not preclude valid existing rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time of designation, should the segment be designated. An instream flow water right to protect the ORVs would be junior to existing water rights in the area.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

This stretch of river is in Kern County. Private land next to the river near Lake Isabella has many different zones, ranging from A (Exclusive Agriculture) to C-2 PD (General Commercial/Precise Development) to R (Residential) (Kern County 2008). If residential and commercial developments continue to grow to the extent that it would jeopardize habitat for special status species, the BLM would not be able to fully protect the wildlife ORV.

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

The North Fork of the Kern River, which flows into Isabella Lake on National Forest land, was designated a WSR on November 24, 1987 (Public Law 100-174). However, the designated portion of the river and the BLM study corridor are separated by Lake Isabella, a reservoir created by the dam.

The lower section of the Lower Kern River is within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. BLM land in the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area is managed to improve and maintain a diverse assemblage of vegetative communities to benefit wildlife resources and recreational opportunities. Each vegetative community is managed to perpetuate that particular vegetative community and the various wildlife and plant species associated with it. Lands within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area are withdrawn from application under the nonmineral public land laws and from disposition under the homestead, desert land entry, and script selection laws (BLM 1997a).

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

None.

Preliminary Determination

Because the primary management focus in this area is for intensive recreation, management goals may not be consistent with designation where management focus should be on the protection of the ORVs. Ensuring the protection of the wildlife

ORV, which extends beyond the jurisdiction of the BLM, may be difficult on a shorter segment interspersed with non-BLM land in a developed area. BLM management needs to be flexible in order to deal with the change in species status or presence, should it occur. Other administrative protections are more appropriate for protecting the identified values. The preliminary determination for this segment is **not suitable**.

3.2.6 South Fork of the Kern River

Description	From the boundary with the Canebrake Ecological Reserve (Section 35, T25S, R36E) to the BLM/private land boundary (Section 25, T25S, R36E, Section 3, T26S, R36E) (**Figure 3-6**).		
Total River Length	85.0 miles	**Total River Area**	22,834.4 acres
Length on BLM Land	0.7 mile	**Area on BLM Land**	200.5 acres
Preliminary Classification	Recreational		
ORVs	Ecological, Wildlife, Visual		

Suitability Criteria

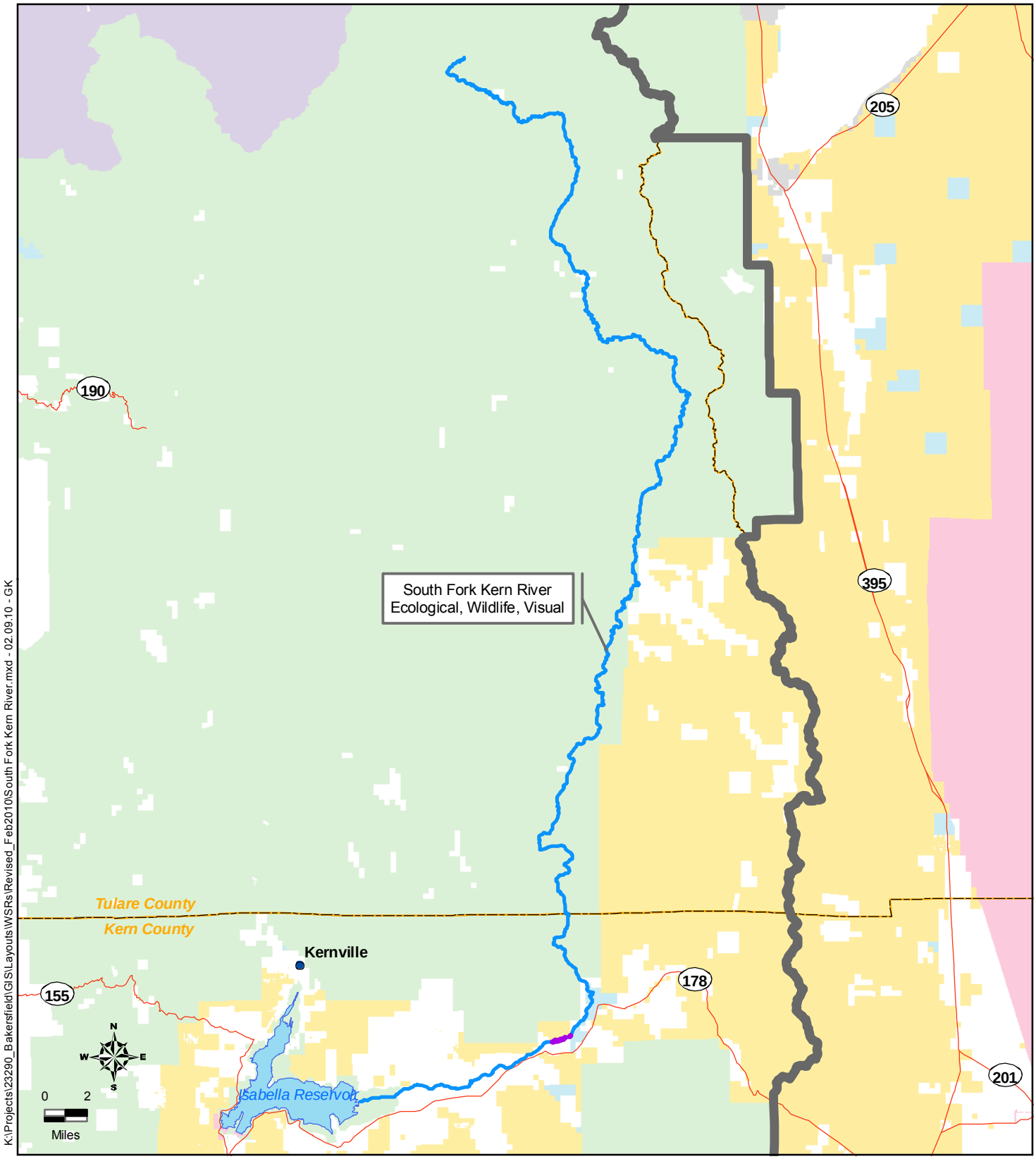
1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The South Fork of the Kern River flows out of Sequoia National Forest into Isabella Lake and reaches BLM land in a small area of broad valley and floodplain along Highway 178 near Onyx in Kern County. The BLM corridor falls into the Domeland WSA, which the BLM recommended as unsuitable for wilderness. BLM land adjoins the Sequoia National Forest and is within the South Fork Cooperative Management acquisition area. It also falls within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area.

   A regionally significant diversity of game and nongame species is documented to occur along this drainage system. Important research is underway on the population biology and habitat requirements of yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager, and willow flycatcher.

   The upper reaches of the drainage contain appropriate habitat for California spotted owls. Surveys are being conducted to determine the number of birds in the region. The South Fork of the Kern River is a regionally significant migratory corridor and nesting area for neotropical migrating birds.

   The area is managed as VRM Class IV and has a scenic quality rating of A. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.



Legend

- Kern — County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

South Fork Kern River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-6

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

   Livestock grazing, irrigated pastures, and intensive agricultural development occur on surrounding private lands. The South Fork of the Kern River flows through grazing allotment 00080 on BLM land. This portion of the allotment is unfenced, as is the river from private pasture land that adjoins it. There is also an unfenced and unalloted 80-acre parcel of BLM land on the South Fork of the Kern River within half a mile of the parcel described above. This parcel is most likely grazed without authorization.

   There are three rights-of-way for a phone line, a road, and the highway.

   Adjacent land upstream of the BLM study corridor is the Canebrake Ecological Reserve, managed by the California Department of Fish and Game, and a small portion of the Kern River Preserve.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

   None identified.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

   None known.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and of administering the area if designated

   Because of the short segment length and limited public access, the cost of administering the area is not expected to increase over current levels.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

   The BLM corridor falls into the Domeland WSA. WSA management is commensurate with protection of the ORVs. However, if Congress were to release the area from wilderness study, the protection would default to underlying prescriptions in the RMP. Underlying prescriptions may or may not be sufficient to protect the ORVs.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

   Designation would not preclude valid rights from continuing. Grazing would still be permitted to the extent that it occurs at the time of designation.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   The private land next to the study corridor within Kern County (at the downstream end of the segment near Canebrake) is zoned as A (Exclusive Agriculture). The purpose of this zoning is to designate areas suitable for agricultural uses and to prevent the encroachment of incompatible uses onto agricultural lands. Uses are limited primarily to agricultural uses and other activities compatible with agriculture (Kern County 2008).

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   The South Fork of the Kern River on National Forest land, approximately three miles upstream of the BLM study corridor, was designated a WSR on November 24, 1987 (Public Law 100-174). The US Forest Service stretch of river is approximately 41 miles long and flows through the South Sierra, Golden Trout, and Domeland Wildernesses (US Forest Service 2006). Land along the South Fork of the Kern River upstream and downstream of the BLM study corridor is part of the Canebrake Ecological Reserve.

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

    None.

Preliminary Determination

Because of the short length of the river on BLM land, the BLM would have difficulties ensuring the protection of the ORVs that extend beyond its jurisdiction. The preliminary determination for this segment is **not suitable**.

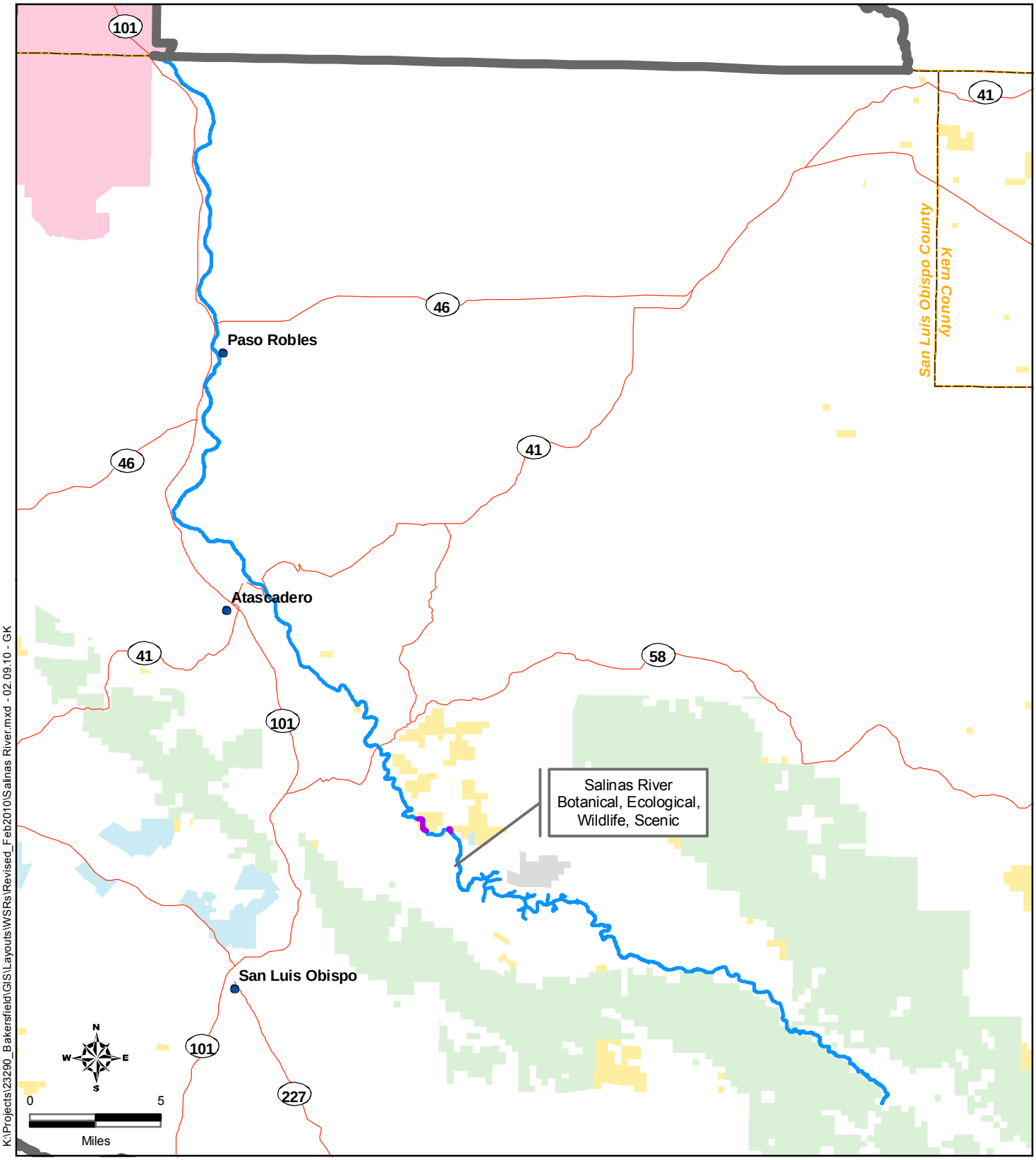
3.2.7 Salinas River

Description	From the BLM/private land boundary in NW¼ of Section 31, T29S, R14E to the BLM/private land boundary in SW¼ of Section 25, T29S, R14E (**Figure 3-7**).		
Total River Length	75.6 miles	**Total River Area**	20,657.3 acres
Length on BLM Land	0.8 mile	**Area on BLM Land**	244.5 acres
Preliminary Classification	Scenic		
ORVs	Botanical, Ecological, Wildlife, Scenic		

Suitability Criteria

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

   The Salinas River flows from los Padres National Forest to Monterey Bay in the Pacific Ocean. The BLM's study corridor lies approximately 4.5 miles upstream of Santa Margarita Lake, or about eight miles northeast of the town



Legend

- County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Salinas River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-7

of Santa Margarita in San Luis Obispo County. The reservoir is the domestic water source for the City of San Luis Obispo.

The BLM corridor is landlocked by private property, and the river is in a steep canyon. There is moderate access up the river from the BLM corridor if permission is obtained to cross private land. Recreation is limited to hunting, hiking, and horseback riding. The study corridor is within the Salinas River ACEC.

The BLM corridor has high value as a riparian area, ranging from riparian forests of cottonwood, sycamore, and willow trees to dense thickets of streamside mulefat and coyote bush. Water, food, and protection is afforded to the local fauna. The riparian belt of the Salinas River is unique for the area because it is along an isolated major drainage. The flow of the Salinas River, including the BLM corridor, is controlled by Santa Margarita Lake. The flow within the study area is slowed by beaver dams.

The excellent condition of the habitat, along with its physical alignment with the Coast Ranges, makes it an extremely important migratory corridor for neotropical migratory birds, which are showing severe declines throughout the country.

Due to steep topography next to the river, the riparian vegetation comes in contact with several major plant communities found in the Coast Ranges. This diversity adds greatly to the number of animals using the river system.

Hardham's evening-primrose (*Camissonia hardhamiae*), a BLM sensitive species, occurs along the Salinas River but is not documented from the BLM corridor. Another BLM sensitive species that may occur along the river is the straight-awned spineflower (*Chorizanthe rectispina*).

The area is managed as VRM Class III and has a scenic quality rating of A. See **Section 3.2.1**, Criteria 1, for more information on VRM Class and scenic quality rating.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

The BLM segment is approximately three miles north of Los Padres National Forest boundary and two miles northwest of Santa Margarita Lake. Surrounding private land contains dispersed rural ranchettes approximately 20 to 80 acres in size. The 440-acre BLM parcel was determined to be unsuitable for livestock grazing due to steep slopes and dense brush outside of riparian areas. There is a potential for unauthorized grazing to occur on this parcel from adjacent private land because it is unfenced. There are no mining claims within the study corridor.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

   No reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters have been brought to the attention of the BLM. However, because the area is bounded by private land, uses on those lands could conflict with management of the BLM segment as a WSR, and the BLM does not have the authority to control those uses, which could negatively impact the ORVs.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

   The Friends of the River have expressed interest in WSR designation for this segment.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands, interests in lands, and administering the area if designated

   The segment has limited public access. As such, the cost of administering the land, should it be designated, would not likely increase over present levels.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

   The entire segment is within the Salinas River ACEC, which was designated to protect an exemplary riparian area. Protections afforded the ACEC could also protect the botanical ORV. However, ACECs are administrative designations and could be repealed with an RMP amendment or revision. Thus ACEC designation does not afford the same long-lasting protection as a designation by Congress.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

   None known.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   This segment is in San Luis Obispo County. Private land next to the study corridor is zoned Rural. Unless the zoning changed to permit dense residential development, it is unlikely that incompatible development would occur on private land next to the BLM study corridor.

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   The study corridor is within the Salinas River ACEC, which was designated to protect the riparian area. Designation would be consistent with ACEC management.

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

None known.

Preliminary Determination

The study corridor for the Salinas River has limited public access, which could make it difficult to enforce management required for a WSR designated river. Other protections, such as an ACEC, are more beneficial in protecting the ORV because the condition of the riparian area could change over time. A designation by Congress does not give the BLM as much flexibility in managing the area as does an ACEC, where management can be dynamic. The preliminary determination for this segment is **not suitable**.

3.2.8 San Joaquin River

The BLM study corridor of the San Joaquin River is composed of two segments. However, Segment 2 of the San Joaquin River is withdrawn by BLM to Reclamation, in accordance with a 1968 agreement between Reclamation and the BLM. The agreement is set to expire in 2018, at which time surface management will revert to BLM unless another agreement is reached. In the meantime, the BLM manages the surface activities. As such, any suitability determination for that stretch of river will be made in conjunction with or in whole by Reclamation. The following discussion of suitability criteria applies only to Segment 1 of the San Joaquin River (**Figure 3-8**).

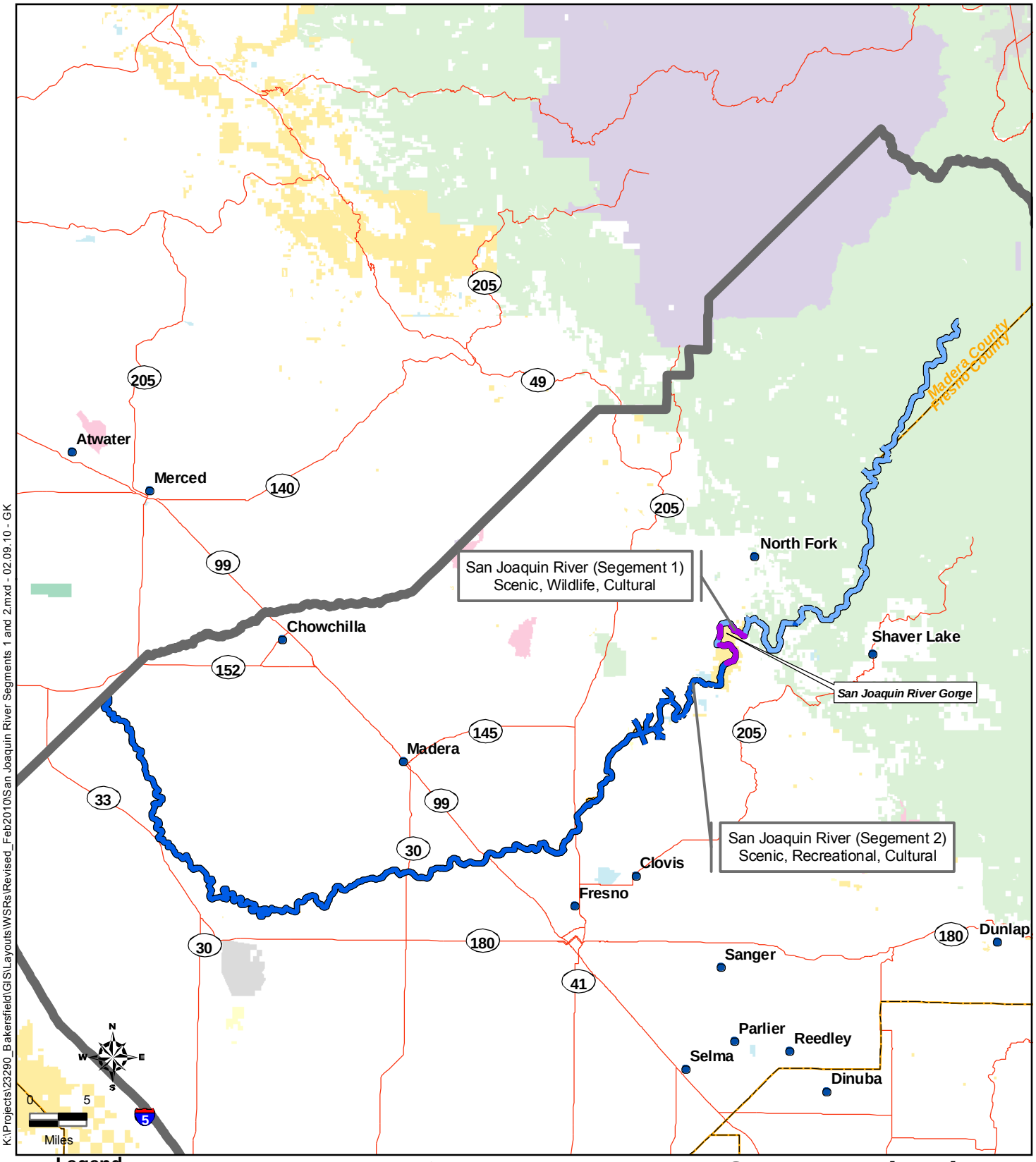
Description	From the Kerckhoff Dam downstream to the Kerckhoff powerhouse.		
Total River Length	186.9 miles	**Total River Area**	51,055.9 acres
Length on BLM Land	5.4 miles	**Area on BLM Land**	1,557.6 acres
Preliminary Classification	Wild/Scenic		
ORVs	Scenic, Wildlife, Cultural		

Suitability Criteria

1. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS

At 330 miles long, the San Joaquin River is the second-longest river in California. It is also the second-largest drainage in the state, its eight major tributaries draining about 32,000 square miles of California's San Joaquin Valley. Water from the river is used to irrigate 1,500 square miles of highly productive farmland on the east side of the Central Valley, where 200 kinds of produce are raised, from oranges to cotton.

The confluence of the three forks that make up the San Joaquin River passes through a narrow valley of which John Muir once said, "Certainly this Joaquin Canyon is the most remarkable in many ways of all I have entered." It



Legend

- Kern County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- San Joaquin River Segment 1
- San Joaquin River Segment 2
- Wild and Scenic Rivers on BLM Lands
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

San Joaquin River - Segments 1 and 2
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Figure 3-8

eventually emerges from the foothills at what was once the town of Millerton, the location of Friant Dam, which forms Millerton Lake.

The area is available for recreational uses, such as fishing, hiking, backpacking, bicycling, swimming, camping, nature studying, and horseback riding, although access to the upper reaches of the river is limited to primitive trails only.

One state-listed endangered species, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and one federally threatened species, the vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchii*), are known to occur within the area,. The federally endangered valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*) is likely to occur in the area. The two other state-listed or federally listed species could occur in the area are the federally threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and the state-listed and federally endangered Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). Seven additional BLM and state-listed special-status species are known to occur within the area, with potential habitat for a several more.

One state-threatened plant species, tree anemone (*Carpenteria californica*), is known to occur within the area, with potential habitat for an additional ten special-status plant species, whose ranges are reported to include the San Joaquin River Gorge; this includes the state and federally listed endangered Hartweg's golden sunburst (*Pseudobahia bahiifolia*), the state-listed as endangered and federally listed as threatened San Joaquin Valley orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*), the federally listed as threatened Mariposa pussypaws (*Calyptridium pulchellum*), and the state-listed as endangered and federally listed as threatened succulent owl's clover (*Castilleja campestris* ssp. *succulenta*).

The San Joaquin River Gorge is within the ethnographic region of several Foothill Yokuts groups and the North Fork Mono group of Indians. The Yokuts tribelets known to have used this area are the Kechayi Yokuts and the Dumna Yokuts. Each of these groups lived off the resources of this diverse area by hunting, gathering, and fishing. Archaeological sites left behind by the Yokuts and the Mono in this region include pictograph rock art, bedrock mortar and millingstone food processing stations, lithic scatters, and village sites. A review of archaeological files and maps, augmented with field visits, revealed that overall there are eighteen known archaeological sites in the area and several of these sites are eligible for listing on the NRHP.

The area has a scenic quality rating of A. The BLM's VRM system provides a way to identify and evaluate scenic values to determine the appropriate levels of management. VRM management classes may differ from VRM inventory classes, based on management priorities for land uses. The scenic quality rating is part of the VRM inventory process and is one of the factors in determining the appropriate VRM class for the area.

2. The status of landownership and surface and subsurface minerals use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses

The area is known for placer gold, and gold prospecting is a frequently seen activity. The parcel surrounding the river segments are part of several livestock grazing allotments.

Immediately downstream of the segment is the Kerckhoff Powerhouse, which generates hydroelectric power and controls flows through the segment. Water is released from the Kerckhoff Dam immediately upstream of the segment.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and values that would be foreclosed or diminished if the area were not designated

If designated, future projects related to or in addition to the current hydroelectric facilities may not be permitted if they are on or directly affect the river.

In 2002, Reclamation, in conjunction with the State of California Department of Water Resources, initiated the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation. This is to determine the type and extent of federal, state, and regional interests in a potential project to expand water storage capacity in the upper San Joaquin River watershed. In 2005, the agencies released the Initial Alternatives Information Report, in which they looked at six potential storage sites in the Upper San Joaquin River Basin. One option would raise the level of the reservoir, while another option would create a reservoir on Fine Gold Creek with water pumped from the San Joaquin River. Three other options would create reservoirs at one of three dam sites upstream of Millerton Lake at river miles 274 and 279. Both sites would create a reservoir that, at peak storage capacity, would inundate the San Joaquin River Segment 2 (Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources 2008), potentially impacting the cultural, visual, and wildlife ORVs, depending upon the level of inundation..

If a new dam were to be constructed within or downstream of the BLM study corridor before designation, the area could be inundated as part of the project, potentially impacting identified ORVs. Likewise, the ORVs could be impacted if a dam were erected on Fine Gold Creek and water were diverted from the San Joaquin River. Depending on the level and area of inundation, such ORVs as cultural and visual could be underwater. Opportunities for recreation could also be diminished. If a dam were erected on Fine Gold Creek and water were diverted from the San Joaquin River before WSR designation, the loss of water could also diminish opportunities for recreation that relied on specific instream flows.

4. Federal, state, tribal, local, public, or other interest in designating or not designating the river

Although neither Reclamation nor the California Department of Water Resources have expressed a position on designating the river, designation before a project approval could prevent the project from being implemented.

5. Estimated cost of acquiring necessary lands or interests in lands and of administering the area if designated

A WSR designation could bring increased levels of visitors. If that occurred, the cost of administering the area could increase from the present level to provide adequate facilities for visitors. The need for BLM presence for such activities as monitoring and law enforcement could also increase from the present level. On the other hand, the BLM could offset the costs by collecting fees for camping, specialized programs, and services.

The BLM would be interested in acquiring adjacent land in the area with or without designation. Designation may facilitate acquisition of lands by making it easer to get funding and gain public support.

6. Ability of the agency to manage and protect the river area or segment as a WSR, or other means to protect the identified values other than WSR designation

The physical structures related to the cultural resources in the grazing allotments would not be affected by WSR designation as they are protected and regulated by a number of laws, regulations, executive orders, programmatic agreements, and other requirements. The principal federal law addressing cultural resources is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 US Code, Section 470), and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800). These regulations, commonly referred to as the Section 106 process, describe the procedures for identifying and evaluating historic properties, for assessing the effects of federal actions on historic properties, and for project proponents consulting with appropriate agencies to avoid, reduce, or minimize adverse effects. It should be noted, however, that traditional food and fiber resources are present and still relied upon. These resources are not directly protected by the aforementioned laws.

VRM can be used as a tool to minimize visual impacts of surface-disturbing activities and to maintain scenic values.

The area is managed as an SRMA. Behind the Keyesville SRMA, the San Joaquin River Gorge SRMA is the second most-visited area in the BKFO.

7. Historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected with designation

If designated, grazing would continue to be permitted, as long as it did not degrade the ORVs.

If designated, the hydroelectric facilities along the segment would continue to operate according to existing terms and conditions. All existing water rights, including water required for hydroelectric power generation, would be senior to a water right for protecting the ORVs, though current use levels are commensurate with protecting the identified values. Future projects related to or in addition to the current facilities may not be permitted if they are on or directly affect the river.

While Reclamation would still maintain current appropriated water rights if Segment 1 were designated, dam construction may not be permitted if the area is designated beforehand.

8. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development

   This stretch of the San Joaquin River forms the border of Madera and Fresno Counties. The Madera County side of the river has Agricultural, Rural Exclusive, 40 acres districts (ARE-40), Rural Mountain District districts (RM), and Public Open Space District districts (POS). The ARE-40 district and the RM district permit many types of agricultural uses, single family homes, and limited other uses with a permit. The Public Open Space district has many uses that would be compatible with WSR designation such as natural resource conservation, public recreation, and grazing; but other uses may not be compatible with WSR designation, such as public transportation, public utilities, and public airports (Madera County 2008).

   The Fresno County side of the river has Resource Conservation districts(RC-40), Recreation districts (RE), and Exclusive Agricultural districts (AE-40). The RC districts are used for natural resource conservation and use, such as grazing and timber harvest, or fish habitats. The AE-40 district is used exclusively for agriculture and agricultural-related activities. The RE district is used for recreational development such as campsites and hotels, trails for hiking and off-road vehicles, and boat storage (Fresno County 2004).

9. Consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies

   While a hydroelectric power station exists at the downstream end of the segment, current management is consistent with designation. However, designation could preclude future water projects in the area that are not currently permitted. Future water projects could be permitted only if Congress removed any WSR designation.

10. Other issues and concerns, if any

    None.

Preliminary Determination

A large portion of the BLM study corridor is on BLM land and does not involve private land. As such, the BLM is able to control activities that occur throughout the

segment. While current BLM management measures offer some protection for the ORVs, a designation by Congress would offer permanent protection. The values warrant lasting protection. The preliminary determination for this segment is **suitable**, with a recommended classification of **wild/scenic**.

3.3 SUMMARY OF SUITABILITY DETERMINATIONS

Table 3-1 is a summary of the preliminary suitability determinations. Of the nine individual segments evaluated, two were determined to be suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. The suitable segments are North Fork of the Kaweah River and the San Joaquin River (Segment 1).

Table 3-1
Summary of Preliminary Suitability Determinations

River or Creek	Segment Length (miles) on BLM land	Preliminary Suitability Determination	Recommended Classification
Chimney Creek	15.5	Not suitable	
East Fork of the Kaweah River	2.3	Not suitable	
Middle Fork of the Kaweah River	0.12	Not suitable	
North Fork of the Kaweah River	2.5	Suitable	Recreational
Lower Kern River	3.2	Not suitable	
South Fork of the Kern River	0.7	Not suitable	
Salinas River	0.8	Not suitable	
San Joaquin River (Segment 1)	5.4	Suitable	Wild/Scenic

SECTION 4
PROTECTIVE MANAGEMENT

The WSR Act requires that interim management be developed to protect the free-flowing nature, ORVs, and recommended classification of suitable segments. Interim management applies beginning at the time of final suitability determination until Congress designates the segments or releases them from suitability. Guidelines for management are in **Table 4-1**. Once final determinations have been made, the BLM will draft protective management measures for each suitable segment.

Table 4-1
Interim Protection for Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers[1]

Issue/Action	Suitable
Study boundary	Minimum of 0.25 mile from ordinary high-water mark. Boundary may include adjacent areas needed to protect identified values.
Preliminary classification	3 classes: Wild, scenic, recreational defined by statute. Criteria for classification described in Interagency Guidelines. Manage at recommended classification.
Study Report Review Procedures	Notice of study report/draft EIS published in *Federal Register*. Comments/responses from federal, state, and local agencies and the public included in the study report/final EIS transmitted to the President and Congress.
Private land *Administration *Acquisition	Affect private land uses through voluntary partnership with state/local governments and landowners. No regulatory authority. Typically, an evaluation of the adequacy of local zoning and land use controls is a component of suitability determination.[2]

Table 4-1
Interim Protection for Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers[1]

Issue/Action	Suitable
	No ability to acquire interest in land under the act's authority before designation.
Water resources project	River's free-flowing condition protected to the extent of other agency authorities; not protected under the WSR Act.
Land disposition	Agency discretion to retain lands within river corridor in federal ownership.
Mining and mineral leasing	Protect free flow, water quality, and ORVs through other agency authorities.
Actions of other agencies	Affect actions of other agencies through voluntary partnership.
Protect ORVs	No regulatory authority conferred by the WSR Act; agency protects through other authorities. Limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in acquiring, protecting, and managing river resources.[3]

[1]Agency-identified study rivers as directed by Section 5(d)(1) of the act.

[2]For an agency-identified study river that includes private lands, there is often the need to evaluate state and local land use controls and, if necessary, to assess the willingness of state and local government to protect river values.

[3]Section 11(b)1 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture, or the head of any other federal agency, to provide for "limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, and management of river resources." This authority "applies within or outside a federally administered area and applies to rivers which are components of the National System and to other rivers." The recipients of federal assistance include states or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals. Some examples of assistance under this section include riparian restoration, riparian fencing to protect water quality and riparian vegetation, and vegetative screening to enhance scenery/recreation experience.

Source: Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999

SECTION 5
LIST OF PREPARERS

An interdisciplinary team of resource specialists from the BLM BKFO prepared this suitability report (**Table 5-1**). Contractors Tetra Tech, Inc., and EMPSi assisted the BLM.

Table 5-1
Wild and Scenic River Suitability Report Preparers

Name	Role/Responsibility
BLM, Bakersfield Field Office	
Kim Cuevas	Cultural Resource Specialist
Peter De Witt	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Karen Doran	Grazing and Rangeland Health Specialist
Blake Goforth	Park Ranger
Denis Kearns	Botanist
Amy Kuritsubo	Wildlife Biologist
Stephen Larson	Assistant Field Manager, Resources
Tracy Rowland	San Joaquin River Gorge Project Manager
Larry Vredenburgh	Geographic Information Systems
Contractor, Tetra Tech, Inc.	
Kelly Bayer	RMP Project Manager, QA/QC
Yashekia Evans	Geographic Information Systems
Contractor, EMPSi	
Kate Wynant	Wild and Scenic Rivers

SECTION 6
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APPENDIX A
ELIGIBILITY REPORTS

This appendix contains the eligibility reports for the Fresno and San Joaquin Rivers, studied as part of this RMP, as well the eligibility reports for the segments studied as part of the Caliente RMP.

A map of the Fresno River is included for reference. Maps of the San Joaquin River can be found in the body of this report.

Wild & Scenic River Report
Fresno River

Name of Water Course: Fresno River

General Description: The Fresno River is a river in Central California and a major tributary of the San Joaquin River. It runs approximately 68 miles (109 km) from the Sierra Nevada Range to the San Joaquin River. The Fresno River is formed by the confluence of Nelder Creek and Lewis Fork near the town of Yosemite Forks. It then flows generally southwest through Oakhurst to Hensley Lake. Hensley Lake is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineer constructed reservoir formed by Hidden Dam; an earth-fill dam completed in 1974. The majority of the Fresno River flows across private property, exceptions to this include areas around the reservoirs it serves, and a small parcel of BLM-managed land between river mile 58 and 59. Access to the public portion of the River is from County Road 600 near Awahnee.

Legal Description: T7S, R20E M.D.M. Section 2

Total Miles/BLM Miles (Approximately): 68/0.6

Recreational Values: Public access is somewhat limited due to the topography of the area (steep slopes on either side of the river). Two trails exist from Road 600 down to the river. One of these trails has had improvements (steps) and a recent fencing project. A primitive parking area for river access is provided north of Road 600, along Crooks Ranch Road. The area is widely used by the local community for fishing, picnicking and water-play. American Whitewater (americanwhitewater.org) reports the section of river to be a popular kayaking spot in early to mid spring. It suggests a put-in location on the BLM-managed segment to start an 11 mile kayak with rapids classified as a class IV-V(V+).

Ecological Values: This river segment is a typical example of a low elevation major drainage originating from the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The river has carved though mica schist bedrock to form its present course. Pockets of streamside riparian vegetation exist leading in some areas to Valley Oak Woodland.

Wildlife Values: The River provides habitat for many species of wildlife, species noted on the site include; red-trailed Hawk and Golden Eagle, it's suspected that deer frequent the site and the potential for black bear exists. Suitable habitat exists for three special status animals along this segment of the river; the foothill yellow-legged frog, the western pond turtle and the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, although further survey is needed to document these species.

Botanical Values: Vegetation consists primarily of Blue Oak Woodland interspersed with occasional grey pines and live oaks. Ground cover consists mainly of non-native grasses. Valley Oak Woodland is found along a small section of the river at the confluence of Crooks Creek with the main watercourse, this is of special interest as they are endemic to California and uncommon in Madera County. Only a small percentage of the historical Valley Oak population remains, with very few examples found on BLM-managed lands in the Bakersfield Field Office. Ewan's Larkspur (*Delphinium hansenii ssp. Ewanianum*) is the only special status species can be found along the river segment, although there is potential for

Madera Linanthus (*Linanthus Serrulatus*), smallflower monkeyflower (*Mimulus inconspicuus*), and Farnsworth's jewelflower (*Streptanthus farnsworthianus*).

Cultural/Historic Values: Evidence of bed-rock mortars exists near the main water course; however the most notable historic value is the log flume that crossed the area paralleling the river. Within the main water course there is evidence of some historic structure that could be the footings of the log flume.

Physiography/Geology: Within the segment the bed rock is mica schist (locally known as "Slate") a metamorphosed sedimentary rock. Soil types found in the area include both Coarsegold rocky loam, and Coarsegold loam, with varying slopes from 40% to 70%. These soils share characteristics of rapid run-off, excessive drainage and severe erosion hazard.

Mineral Resources: The area is known for placer gold and an active mining claim exists on the BLM portion of the River. Gold-panning is a frequently seen activity. The Enterprise Mine is south of the BLM parcel, however a small monument has been erected to note the existence of the mine and of an historic Log Flume that crossed the region.

Land Use: The parcel surrounding the River segment is part of a livestock grazing allotment. Recent projects include fencing cattle out of the riparian zone at the confluence of Crooks Creek and the main watercourse; the project will also place a water trough for cattle and improve the parking area for recreationalists. The surrounding private property consists of residential units and ranches. Consideration of the region to be designated a "Green Belt" by the County is known, however at this time no specific information is available.

Scenic Quality: B

Water Quality: Fair

Eligibility Requirements:

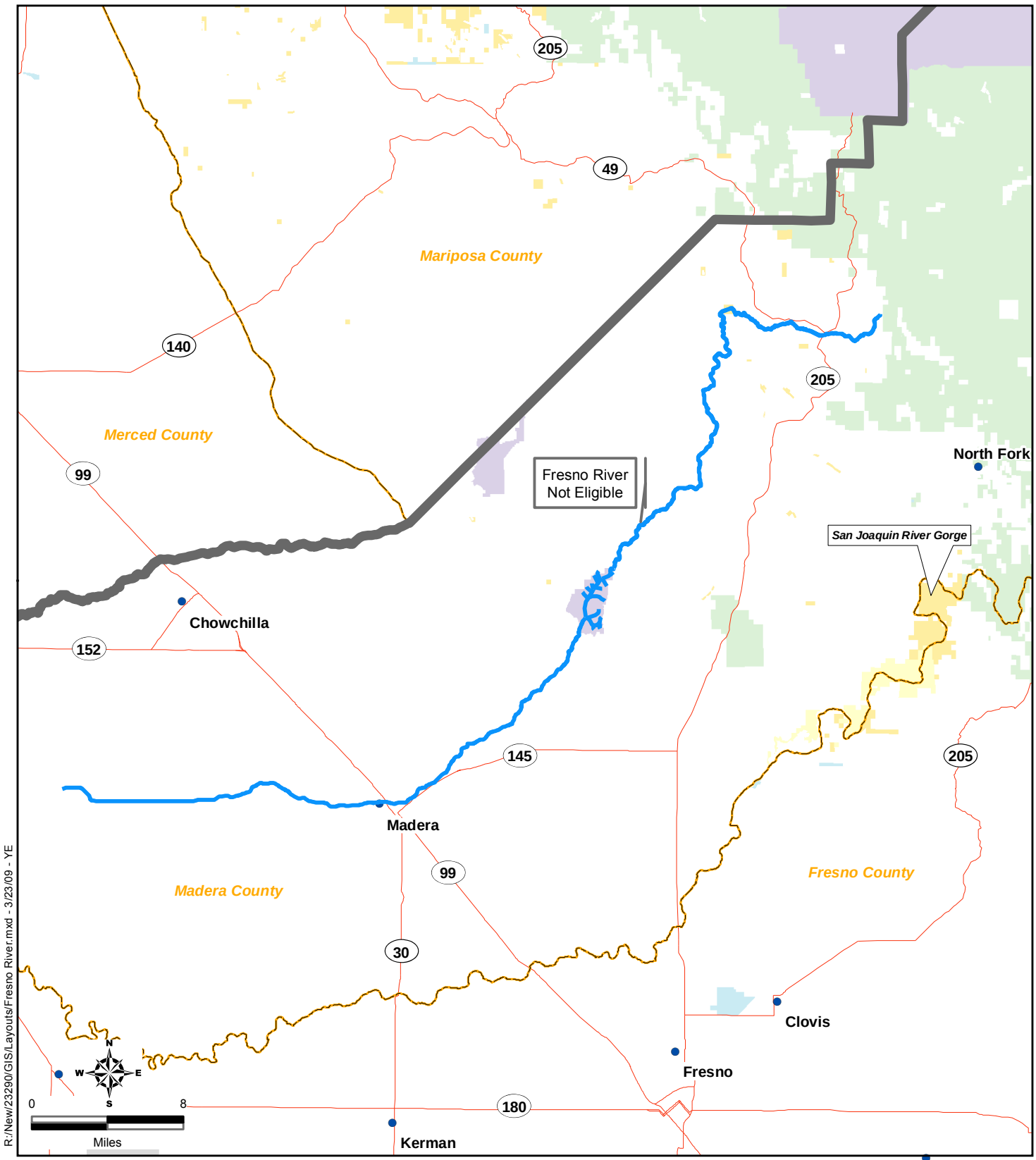
Eligibility requirements are presented in the BLM Wild and Scenic River Manual (8351). To be considered eligible for designation as a Wild and Scenic River the river segment must be "free-flowing" and must possess at least one river-related value considered to be "outstandingly remarkable". The following table addresses each of the elements identified in the eligibility policy and program direction.

Free Flowing		The River segment is free flowing and shows only limited evidence of historical developments within the main water course.
Values	Scenic	The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water color, and related factors do not result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attraction within the geographic region. Using the BLM Visual Resources Manual to evaluate the scenic value of the area, the River segment is rated as "Scenic Quality B", a rating of "A" is required to be considered outstandingly remarkable.
	Recreation	Recreational opportunities are not and do not have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. The river segment alone does not have the potential to attract visitors from outside

		the geographic region or provide a setting for national or regional commercial usage, or competitive events. The River segment does not provide a critical important regional recreation opportunity, and is not a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.
	Geologic	The River segment and its corridor do not contain any examples of geological features, processes, or phenomena that are rare, unusual, or unique in the geographic region.
	Fish (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment is not nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous and/or anadromous fish species, nor does the river provide exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. The river segment has no known populations of special status fish species.
	Wildlife (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment does not contain nationally or regionally significant populations of resident indigenous wildlife dependant on the river environment, nor does it provide exceptionally high quality habitat for such wildlife. The segment does contain potential Special Status Species habitat, however this is neither unique nor a critical link in habitat conditions.
	Cultural	The River segment corridor does contain known sites where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. However the sites are not deemed to be rare, have unusual characteristics or exceptional human-interest value. The sites are not known to have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.
	Historic	The river segment and its corridor are not known to contain sites or features associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, or unusual in the region.
	Other Similar Values	Although other resource values are present none of these values are deemed outstandingly remarkable within the river segment or its corridor.
Jurisdictional Considerations		The BLM manages the river segment identified and controls the suggested 40 percent or more of the shoreline and river corridor.

Eligibility Determination: Ineligible.

Classification: Not Applicable.



Legend

- Kern — County Boundary
- Bakersfield Field Office Boundary
- Carizzo National Monument
- Wild and Scenic River
- Towns/Cities
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Military
- State Lands
- County / City / Regional
- Unclassified

Fresno River
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office

Bakersfield, California

Wild & Scenic River Report
San Joaquin River

Name of Water Course: San Joaquin River

General Description: The San Joaquin River is 330 miles (530 km) long. It is the second-longest river in California. The San Joaquin and its eight major tributaries drain about 32,000 square miles (83,000 km²) of California's San Joaquin Valley. Water from the river is used to irrigate 1,500 square miles (3,900 km²) of highly productive farmland on the east side of the Central Valley where 200 kinds of produce are raised from oranges to cotton. The River originates high on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada and drains most of the area from the southern border of Yosemite, south to Kings Canyon National Park, making it the second largest river drainage in the state. The San Joaquin River's tributaries include the Stanislaus River, Tuolumne River, Merced River, Calaveras River and Mokelumne River.

The river originates at three locations. The South Fork begins at Martha Lake at an elevation of 11,004 feet (3354 m). The Middle Fork begins at Thousand Island Lake and joins the South Fork north of Balloon Dome in the Ansel Adams Wilderness. The North Fork begins at an unnamed lake at 11,190 feet (3410 m) elevation and joins the Middle Fork east of Junction Butte.

The confluence passes through a narrow valley of which John Muir once said: "Certainly this Joaquin Canyon is the most remarkable in many ways of all I have entered." It eventually emerges from the foothills at what was once the town of Millerton, the location of Friant Dam; completed in 1944, which forms Millerton Lake.

The San Joaquin River meets the Sacramento River near the city of Antioch. Together they form the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, one of the largest estuaries in the United States.

Legal Description:

Total Miles/BLM Miles (Approximately): 330/10.75

Recreational Values: The San Joaquin River has two distinct recreational opportunity settings on BLM-managed land. The entire area is available for recreational uses such as fishing, hiking, backpacking, bicycling, swimming, camping, nature studying and horseback riding; although access to the upper reaches of the river is limited to primitive trails only. The lower segment below the powerhouse is accessible by vehicle from a maintained road. In this area the BLM operates several facilities, including; a replica Native American village site, simulated archeological dig, authentic bedrock mortars, a nature trail focusing on plants and animals of cultural importance, a small museum, and several pond sites used for aquatic investigations. In addition to interpretive programs, visitors have access to over 22 miles of hiking and equestrian trails, including a National Recreation Trail. The area also has group and individual campsites.

Ecological Values: This river segment is an exemplary example of a low elevation (under 2000 ft) major drainage originating from the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Wildlife Values: Species common to the area include; western rattlesnake, gopher snake, California kingsnake, western fence lizard, side-blotched lizard, mourning dove, great horned owl, horned lark,

common raven, lark sparrow, western meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, red-tailed hawk, golden eagle, prairie falcon, American kestrel, northern harrier, greater roadrunner, loggerhead shrike, desert cottontail, black-tailed jackrabbit, California ground-squirrel, Bottae's pocket gopher, and coyote. During the winter, raptor numbers increase tremendously, depending on the numbers and availability of prey, primarily red-tailed hawk, northern harrier, short-eared owl, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk and merlin. In addition, large numbers of mountain bluebird, savannah sparrow, lark sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, and house finch utilize this habitat in winter as well as smaller numbers of sage thrasher, vesper sparrow and Lincoln's sparrow.

Oak woodlands support a larger array of species than the grassland and desert scrub habitats. While many species overlap between these habitats, oak grasslands support tree inhabiting species not found in the grasslands. In addition to many species noted above, additional species include, wild turkey (introduced), European starling (introduced), western bluebird, white-breasted nuthatch, ash-throated flycatcher, oak titmouse, acorn woodpecker, western kingbird, western screech-owl, little brown bat, wild boar and mule deer. Winter influxes of raptors are not as pronounced as in grasslands and desert scrub, however, many white-crowned and golden-crowned sparrows utilize this habitat during winter.

Chaparral is a structurally homogeneous brushland type dominated by shrubs with thick, stiff, heavily cutinized evergreen leaves. As such these communities are nearly impervious to larger animals, except for a couple of years following a stand replacing fire. Wildlife use in chaparral is largely dependent on time since fire, with mule deer benefiting from the regrowth of shrubs and release of herbaceous plants. Typical chaparral birds include wretit, scrub jay, spotted and California towhees, and California thrasher. Winter influxes of raptors in chaparral are not pronounced, however, many white-crowned and golden-crowned sparrows utilize this habitat during winter. Some grassland is contained within chaparral habitats, and wildlife here would be similar as described above.

One federally listed special-status species is known to occur within the area; the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), with potential for three more including the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchii*) and Least Bell's Vireo *(*Vireo bellii pusillus*).* Seven additional BLM & State special-status species are known to occur within the area with potential habitat for a several more.

Botanical Values: The area mainly consists of foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland with annual grassland understory. Interior live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*), and California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) are also common in varying densities. Chamise chaparral (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) is a minor vegetation component at the lower elevations.

One special-status species, tree anemone (*Carpenteria californica)*, is known to occur with within the area, with potential habitat for an additional ten special-status species, whose ranges are reported to include the San Joaquin River Gorge; this includes the federally listed Hartweg's golden sunburst (*Pseudobahia bahiifolia*), San Joaquin Valley orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*) Mariposa pussypaws (*Calyptridium pulchellum*), and succulent owl's clover (*Castilleja campestris* ssp. *succulenta*).

Cultural/Historic Values: The San Joaquin River Gorge is located within the ethnographic region of several Foothill Yokuts groups and the Northfork Mono. Two Yokuts tribelets are known to have used this area, the Kechayi Yokuts and the Dumna Yokuts. Each of these groups lived off the resources of this diverse area by hunting, gathering, and fishing. Archeological sites left behind by the Yokuts and the Mono in this region includes pictograph rock art, bedrock mortar and millingstone food processing stations, lithic scatters, and village sites.

The cultural resources (including archeological and paleontological resources) in the grazing allotments would not be affected by the proposed action. A review of archeological files and maps, augmented with field visits revealed that overall there are eighteen known archeological sites within area. Several of these archeological sites are eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. In particular, the areas of Lower Hidden Valley Ranch, Big Sandy, and Smalley Road contain cultural resources that embody characteristics for eligibility for prehistoric archeological values and possibly Native American traditional use values.

Mineral Resources: The area is known for placer gold and gold prospecting is a frequently seen activity.

Land Use: The parcel surrounding the River segments are part of several livestock grazing allotment.

Scenic Quality: A

Water Quality: Good

Eligibility Requirements:

Eligibility requirements are presented in the BLM Wild and Scenic River Manual (8351). To be considered eligible for designation as a Wild and Scenic River the river segment must be "free-flowing" and must possess at least one river-related value considered to be "outstandingly remarkable". The following table addresses each of the elements identified in the eligibility policy and program direction.

Due to the various outstandingly remarkable values and potential classification categories applicable for the San Joaquin River it has been divided into two segments to determine eligibility. Segment 1 consists of the upper reaches of the river from the Kerckhoff Dam to the Kerckhoff powerhouse. This segment consist of approximately 7.25 miles the majority of which flows across BLM managed lands. Segment 2 flows from the powerhouse to the start of the Millerton reservoir; approximately 3.5 miles all of which is located on BLM managed lands.

San Joaquin River – Segment 1

Free Flowing	The River segment is free flowing and shows no sign of anthropogenic change.

Values	Scenic	The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water color, and related factors result in notable and exemplary visual features and/or attraction within the geographic region. Using the BLM Visual Resources Manual to evaluate the scenic value of the area, the River segment is rated as "Scenic Quality A"; this rating is required to be considered outstandingly remarkable.
	Recreation	Recreational opportunities are not and do not have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. The river segment alone does not have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic region or provide a setting for national or regional commercial usage, or competitive events. The River segment does not provide a critical important regional recreation opportunity, and is not a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.
	Geologic	The River segment and its corridor do not contain any examples of geological features, processes, or phenomena that are rare, unusual, or unique in the geographic region.
	Fish (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment is not nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous and/or anadromous fish species, nor does the river provide exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. The river segment has no known populations of special status fish species.
	Wildlife (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment does not contain nationally or regionally significant populations of resident indigenous wildlife dependant on the river environment, nor does it provide exceptionally high quality habitat for such wildlife. The segment does contain several known Special Status species and potential habitat for more, however this is neither unique or a critical link in habitat conditions.
	Cultural	The River segment corridor does contain known sites where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. The sites are deemed to be rare, have unusual characteristics or exceptional human-interest value, and potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The sites are not known to have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.
	Historic	The river segment and its corridor are not known to contain sites or features associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, or unusual in the region.
	Other Similar Values	Although other resource values are present none of these values are deemed outstandingly remarkable within the river segment or its corridor.
Jurisdictional Considerations		The BLM manages the river segment identified and controls over 40 percent of the shoreline and surrounding area.

San Joaquin River – Segment 2

Free Flowing	The River segment is free flowing and shows only limited evidence of developments within the river corridor.

Values	Scenic	The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water color, and related factors result in notable and exemplary visual features and/or attraction within the geographic region. Using the BLM Visual Resources Manual to evaluate the scenic value of the area, the River segment is rated as "Scenic Quality A"; this rating is required to be considered outstandingly remarkable.
	Recreation	Recreational opportunities are and do have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. The river segment alone does have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic region or provide a setting for national or regional commercial usage, or competitive events. The River segment does provide a critical important regional recreation opportunity, and is a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.
	Geologic	The River segment and its corridor do not contain any examples of geological features, processes, or phenomena that are rare, unusual, or unique in the geographic region.
	Fish (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment is not nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous and/or anadromous fish species, nor does the river provide exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. The river segment has no known populations of special status fish species.
	Wildlife (Populations & Habitat)	The River segment does not contain nationally or regionally significant populations of resident indigenous wildlife dependant on the river environment, nor does it provide exceptionally high quality habitat for such wildlife. The segment does contain several known Special Status species and potential habitat for more, however this is neither unique or a critical link in habitat conditions.
	Cultural	The River segment corridor does contain known sites where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. The sites are deemed to be rare, have unusual characteristics or exceptional human-interest value, and potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The sites are not known to have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.
	Historic	The river segment and its corridor are not known to contain sites or features associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, or unusual in the region.
	Other Similar Values	Although other resource values are present none of these values are deemed outstandingly remarkable within the river segment or its corridor.
Jurisdictional Considerations		The BLM manages the river segment identified and controls over 40 percent of the shoreline and surrounding area.

Eligibility Determination:

San Joaquin River - Segment 1: Eligible

San Joaquin River – Segment 2: Eligible

Potential Classification:

San Joaquin River - Segment 1: Wild/Scenic

San Joaquin River – Segment 2: Recreational/Scenic

Appendix H-3 Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Preliminary Classification Report

Introduction

The BLM is mandated to evaluate potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) during the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process by Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). NWSRS study guidelines are found in BLM Manual 8351, U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior guidelines published in Federal Register Vol. 7, No. 173, September 7, 1982, and in various BLM memoranda and policy statements.

The NWSRS study process has three distinct steps:

1. Determine what rivers or river segments are eligible for NWSRS designation.

2. Determine the potential classification of eligible river segments as wild, scenic, recreational, or any combination thereof.

3. Conduct a suitability study/legislative EIS to determine if the river segments are suitable for designation to the NWSRS.

Any river found to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, will result in the associated BLM administered lands, within 1/4 mile of the river, being managed as if the river were an actual component of the NWSRS, until the suitability issue is resolved. If a river is found to be suitable for inclusion into the NWSRS, Congress must then pass legislation designating the river before it is added into the system. The State of California can also include the river as a State designated Wild and Scenic River and then apply to the Secretary of Interior for its inclusion into the NWSRS.

The following discussion provides information on how BLM considered streams and rivers for potential inclusion in the NWSRS. The first section portrays what efforts BLM used to identify study river corridors. The second section discusses eligibility criteria. The third section is a brief statement on how BLM addressed classification. Suitability determinations for inclusion in the NWSRS will only be completed when BLM develops activity plans for the management of high priority areas which encompass eligible corridors. Most of the BLM eligible study corridors contain small amounts of public lands. Suitability determinations for these corridors are deferred until BLM is able to consult the parties affected by these determinations (such as state agencies, local governments and private landowners).

The majority of this appendix contains a description of the values within each study river corridor followed by a conclusion on eligibility and recommendation for preliminary classification.

Identification

Prior to conducting any assessment for inclusion into the NWSRS, BLM established a list of study river corridors. BLM considered existing lists of such river corridors (i.e. suggestions from Friends of the River, the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, and Outstanding Rivers List), public input, and BLM staff nominations. Streams lacking public lands administered by BLM, streams with limited public ownership, and streams where information is insufficient to identify the lack of outstandingly remarkable values/free-flowing characteristics were not considered, or were dropped from analysis.

Eligibility

The WSRA states that to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, a river or river segment must be free flowing and within its immediate environment, and must possess one or more outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.

Free flowing, as defined in Section 16(b) of the WSRA, means "existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway. The existence, however, of low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures at the time any river is proposed for inclusion in the national wild and scenic river system shall not automatically bar its consideration for such inclusion." A river may flow between large impoundments and may qualify if conditions within the segment meet the eligibility criteria. There are many river segments already in the NWSRS which are downstream from or between major dams which severely regulate and diminish the flow of water in the effected segments. Some examples are: the Trinity River, Klamath River, and Tuolumne River in California, the Snake River in Idaho, and the Deschutes River in Oregon. Some of these rivers have had certain types of recreation enhanced by the water flow regulation of these dams. Examples of designated rivers with substantial diversions within the NWSRS segment, at the time of designation, include the North Fork Kern River and the upper Merced River, both in the California Sierra. There are no minimum flow requirements for inclusion into the NWSRS.

There are no minimum river segment lengths in the NWSRS. Congress has designated a segment as short as 4.25 miles. Considerations in defining study segments include substantial changes in land ownership, physical changes in the river and its surrounding land characteristics, and the type and amount of modern human modification.

The term "outstandingly remarkable" is not clearly defined in the WSRA; consequently the determination of what constitutes "outstandingly remarkable" is left to the professional judgement of the managing agencies and their staffs. Outstandingly remarkable means something which is more than ordinary when considered within a regional (Resource Area wide) context. In order for the river to be considered eligible in this study, the outstandingly remarkable value(s) must occur on BLM administered public lands within ¼ mile of the river.

Some examples of outstandingly remarkable values are as follows: scenic quality rating of "A" (BLM Manual 8400 Visual Resource Management-Scenic Quality); threatened or endangered species critical habitat; physiographical, biological, recreational, geological or ecological type locations (exemplar); and areas which are very natural or primitive in character, showing little, if any, evidence of modern human modification, and which may be very rugged and physically challenging to travel through.

In the following discussion of specific river study corridors, outstandingly remarkable characteristics are marked with an asterisk. Only characteristics on BLM administered lands are considered. Segments or corridors deemed ineligible in this study because of lack of outstandingly remarkable values on BLM administered lands, may have outstandingly remarkable values on non-BLM lands. In this instance, BLM defers to other appropriate organizations and agencies to (re)evaluate these segments and corridors. BLM will participate in any joint studies with the responsible agency(s), as appropriate.

Classification

To ensure that outstandingly remarkable values located on public lands are not adversely impacted by BLM authorizations, each eligible study corridor has been assigned preliminary classifications. These preliminary classifications are based on the classification definitions found in Section 2 (b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542 of October 2, 1968.

WILD RIVER AREA: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

SCENIC RIVER AREA: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

RECREATIONAL RIVER AREA: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Water Quality Rating

The water quality rating was based on a comparison of physical, chemical, biological and bacteriological constituents with water quality standards and criteria.

GOOD = water quality suitable for all uses
FAIR = water quality suitable for all uses except domestic and recreational use
POOR = water quality unsuitable for domestic, recreational, wildlife and livestock use

SUMMARY OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY STUDY

River Corridor	Management Area	Eligibility Status	Outstanding Resource Values	Wild, Scenic or Recreational
Salinas	Coast	Eligible	Ecological Wildlife Visual	Scenic
Soda Lake	Valley	Eligible	Recreational Ecological Wildlife Flora Cultural Visual	Scenic
Bodfish	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Caliente	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Canebrake	South Sierra	Eligible	Ecological Wildlife Flora	Recreational
Chimney	South Sierra	Eligible	Wildlife Flora Visual	Wild and Recreational
Clear	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Erskine	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Kaweah East Fork	South Sierra	Eligible	Ecological Visual	Scenic
Middle Fork	South Sierra	Eligible	Floral Visual	Recreational
North Fork	South Sierra	Eligible	Wildlife Cultural Visual	Scenic and Recreational
South Fork	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Long Valley	South Sierra	Non-eligible		

River Corridor	Management Area	Eligibility Status	Outstanding Resource Values	Wild, Scenic or Recreational
Lower Kern	South Sierra	Eligible	Recreational Wildlife Historic	Recreational
Pine	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
South Fork, Kern	South Sierra	Eligible	Ecological Wildlife Floral Prehistoric Historic Visual	Recreational
Salt	South Sierra	Non-eligible		
Spanish Needles	South Sierra	Eligible	Wildlife Floral Visual	Scenic and Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Bodfish Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Bodfish Creek, situated in Kern County, southwest of the resort town of Lake Isabella, is part of the Kern River watershed. Its upper reaches are in Sequoia National Forest and its lower reaches are privately-owned. The creek flows within the Piute-Cypress Wilderness Study Area, recommended unsuitable for wilderness by the BLM. It also occurs within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. Access along a dirt road is available but a locked gate blocks the public. Remains of unauthorized mining activity are being removed within the river corridor and the WSA.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T27S, R33E, M.D.M. Sec. 21, W 1/2, Sec. 20 NE 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 5 / 1.26

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The Creek receives low use due to lack of public access and its rocky, steep terrain. It is situated in the Piute-Cypress WSA, recommended non-suitable for wilderness.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Riparian vegetation grows intermittently along the entire segment. This stream generally flows year-round along the BLM segment. The largest of the Piute Cypress groves is located in the creek's watershed area.

WILDLIFE: Bodfish Creek flows from blue oak/digger pine through chaparral and pinyon pine-juniper and desert scrub. The sycamores, willows and coyote brush provide shelter and the basis for the food for many game and nongame species. They have a high potential for supporting willow flycatchers. Many neotropical migrating birds nest and migrate along the drainage.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There are no documented locations of sensitive plant species within the river corridor.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Adjacent to BLM's segment of Bodfish Creek are remnant features of historic gold mining. These ruins are not formally recorded nor evaluated. Although mining was an important historic event in this region, there are no known sites of particular significance along the creek corridor. Bodfish Creek was named after George H. Bodfish who came into the Keyesville area in the late 1850's to mine for gold. He eventually settled in the canyon that is now named after him. Prehistorically, there are no recorded sites of significant value along the Creek's corridor. The region was primarily occupied by the Kawaiisu Indian culture.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The northern portion of public lands is underlain by pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rock; the southern half is underlain by Mesozoic Granitic Rocks.

MINERAL RESOURCES AND THEIR HISTORY: The early mining history of the mines on BLM administered land in Bodfish Canyon is unknown, but may date to the 1860s or 1870s, the same period that the mines in Keyesville and Erskine Creek were active. The Mondora (or Polka Dot) mine, located in the Bodfish Creek drainage in the NE¼ Sec. 21 was active in the 1890s. The foundation of a mill which stands in the NW¼ Sec. 21 presumably served this mine, and dates from this period. In the 1970s and early 1980s this mine was worked by Joe Freear, who constructed a mill about 500 feet south of the old mill site. There are other prospects in the NW¼ Sec. 21 and just a few tens of feet south of the USFS boundary in Sec. 28 along Bodfish Creek.

LAND USE: Public lands are adjacent to Sequoia National Forest and between the towns of Lake Isabella and Bodfish. Surrounding private lands include residential and rural residential parcels

ranging from one-half to two and one-half acres in size. There are several mining claims (as stated above) situated on the public lands along the river corridor. The 1.5 miles of Bodfish Creek on BLM land is currently unalloted and determined to be unsuitable for livestock grazing. The mouth of the drainage is fenced from private lands and there has never been a livestock drift problem. There are five rights-of-way on public land near this creek (CA 14324 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 15778 for road to C. Mehalko, CA 14022 for road to D. Anderson, S 078122 for drainage easement and Highway 178, and S047108 for gaging station to Corps of Engineers).

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Caliente Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Caliente Creek flows from the foothills of the Piute Mountains, west to the Mountain View oilfields, in Kern County. Development along the BLM corridor consists of the Caliente Creek county road running adjacent to the creek, road crossings, check dams, houses and fences in site of the river, culverts, roadside pullouts, evidence of heavy livestock use, and trash.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T30S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec.24, NW 1/2; T30S, R33E, Sec. 21, N 1/2.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 32/1.4

RECREATIONAL VALUES: There are no known recreational uses on this creek except local use by private landowners.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: BLM's segment is a low-elevation stream running over granitic rocks and gravel. The upper reaches of the creek on BLM land appear as a dry wash most of the year. There is a small man-made dam on the upper reach but otherwise the stream is free-flowing. Digger pine and blue oak are the dominant trees of the adjacent area. Occasional California sycamore, willow and cottonwood trees are found growing along the stream's riparian habitat. The corridor is subject to extreme flooding during periods of excessive rainfall.

WILDLIFE: Caliente Creek provides an important corridor between the valley grasslands and the mountains. The habitat is diverse, depending on the slope and geology. The streamside is vegetated by sycamore, cottonwood and willow. Occasionally, steep, rocky north-facing slopes provide habitat for the State listed and Federal candidate Tehachapi slender salamander. Two other Federal candidates for listing may occur along this portion of the stream, the California red-legged frog and the foothill yellow-legged frog. Both species generally require high quality perennial streams; few streams of this quality remain in California.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There are no documented locations of any sensitive plant species within this river corridor.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: At the confluence of Caliente Creek and Indian Creek is the small settlement

of Loraine. Paris, which was founded circa 1903, was renamed Loraine in 1912. Mining was the principal attraction to the area. Historically, the most noted mines in the area were the Barbarosa, Amalie, Gold Peak, Juan Dos, Zenda and the Barrosa. The region was prehistorically inhabited by the Kawaiisu culture. Although there are no recorded sites of significance known along the creek corridor on public land, the adjacent area is considered culturally sensitive for both historic and prehistoric resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY AND MINING HISTORY: The Creek flows through a rocky, V-shaped canyon and narrow valley with steep walls. Technically, in this area Mesozoic granitic rocks and roof pendants of pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rocks have been intruded by Tertiary rhyolite dikes and plugs. Gold and silver mines in the Loraine area yielded over $500,000 worth of ore. In addition there has been production of tungsten, antimony, lead, zinc and copper. Recent exploration by major mining companies has confirmed the existence of an economic gold ore body at the previously productive Zenda mine. New exploration has targeted the Tertiary rhyolite plugs southwest and southeast of Loraine. At this time no other ore bodies have been discovered.

Loraine itself has grown up on patented mining claims. However two historically productive mines, the Barbarosa and Amalie were never patented.

LAND USE: Surrounding private lands include rural residences, especially around the community of Loraine. Residences and abandoned cabins are visible from the river corridor. There are two BLM livestock grazing allotments on the scattered pieces of public land, and livestock grazing also occurs on the surrounding private lands. There are several mining claims on BLM lands around the Creek and abandoned mine tunnels. A mill site and mine can be seen although there are no signs of recent mining activity. Four rights-of-way (LA 087459 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 10633 for road to D.J. Ryman, R 1860 for phone line to Pacific Bell, and CA 15784 for PCNST (BLM reservation). Powerlines, telephone lines, paved and gravel roads cross the creek and also parallel it. Debris from the floods of the early 1980s is evident all along the creek.

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class IV; Scenic Quality C

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Canebrake Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Originating in the Scodie Mountains of Sequoia National Forest in Kern County, Canebrake Creek flows westward from Walker Pass (on Highway 178) to join the South Fork of the Kern River near the small town of Onyx. The entire BLM study corridor flows adjacent to Highway 178. Canebrake Creek's lower stretches enter a patchwork of BLM and private lands. The Creek flows in the Owens Peak WSA and the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T26S, R37E, M.D.M., Sec. 17, SW 1/4; Sec. 18, SE 1/4 NE 1/4; Sec. 7, SE 1/4; T26S, R36E, M.D.M., Sec. 1, NE 1/4; T25S, R36E, M.D.M., Sec. 36, Sec. 25, SW 1/4,

SW1/4NW1/4; Sec. 21, NE 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 16 / 5.3

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The southwest boundary of the Owens Peak WSA reaches the Canebrake Creek study corridor. However, due to the closeness of Highway 178, this river corridor offers few opportunities for solitude. Limited recreation use is in the form of dispersed hunting and fishing, and birdwatching.

*ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This unique low volume perennial stream exhibits excellent riparian stream-side vegetation consisting of low-growing willow trees and intermittently-occurring cottonwood trees of varying sizes. Much of the river is sluggish in nature and runs over granitic alluvium. It affords excellent riparian wildlife habitat in areas occupied solely by Joshua trees.

*WILDLIFE: The Canebrake Creek is part of one of the most biologically diverse regions in the country. It flows through pinyon pine woodlands, Great Basin shrublands and Mojave Desert associations. The willow, cottonwood and ash are regionally important resting areas for neotropical migratory birds. **Willow Flycatchers**, State listed and Federal candidate, nest along this drainage. This area is an important zone of contact for many sibling species of plants and animals. Important research on hybridization and physiological adaptations are being initiated in this area.

*FLORA: The following species are known to occur on BLM land within the river corridor:
Needles buckwheat (Eriogonum breedlovei var. shevockii), a Federal category 3C candidate
Walker Pass milkvetch (Astragalus erterrae), a Federal category 2 candidate
Charlotte's phacelia (Phacelia nashiana), a California Native Plant Society List 1B species

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Historically, this area is recognized for several important historical events. Joseph R. Walker, who led one of John C. Fremont's expeditions over Walker Pass in 1834 is formally honored as the first American to have entered Kern Valley. Walker's eastward expedition through Kern Valley to Walker Pass probably paralleled segments of Canebrake Creek. (Walker Pass, which is outside the Canebrake Creek corridor, is recognized as a National Historic Landmark). A remnant segment of the old stage run established circa 1870 trends from Canebrake Creek to Canebrake Flat. The historic road once continued to Onyx where it terminated. The portion of the historic road near Canebrake Creek is situated on private land. There are no known significant historic sites within the Canebrake Creek corridor. The area was ethnographically situated at the interface between the Tubatulabal and the Kawaiisu cultural groups. There are several known prehistoric sites along the Canebrake Creek corridor; however, no significant cultural properties have been determined. The Canebrake Creek cultural region is considered culturally sensitive.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY/MINERALS: The Creek flows through both Mesozoic granitic rock and some metasedimentary rock. There is an active sand and gravel pit and an old Caltrans maintained borrow pit that was used for more than 20 years.

LAND USE: Public lands adjoin the Sequoia National Forest. This is a slowly expanding rural residential area with surrounding private lands containing rural residences between two and one-half to 40 acres in size. Several houses and cabins are visible from the river corridor. Four miles of Canebrake Creek flows through a grazing allotment which has cattle grazing from January 1 to June 30. The other mile of the creek flows through scattered tracts of public land in another allotment offering the same grazing period when annual forage is available. Livestock grazing also occurs on the surrounding private lands. Evidence of cattle grazing (such as a watering trough and fences) is visible along the river corridor. There are two permits for apiary sites and mining claims on adjacent

public lands. Eleven rights-of-way have been granted (CA 9471 for road to C. Allen, LA 0163327 for phone line to Contel, LA 0147800 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 4663 for road to Kern County, CA 8256 for buried phone line to Contel, R 06784 for pipelines to E. Day, CA 22499 for visitor center/fire station (BLM reservation), CA 2953-55 for seismograph station to U.S.G.S., CA 8763 for PCNST & campground (BLM reservation), CA17660 for pipeline & collection box to L. Zabel, and CA 6973 for PCNST to Sequoia National Forest).

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (ecological, wildlife and flora - federal candidate T&E fauna and flora); NON-ELIGIBLE corridor due to potential for sand and gravel extraction: T25S, R36E, M.D.M., Sec. 21 SW 1/4 NE 1/4

CLASSIFICATION: Recreation

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Chimney Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Chimney Creek, located in both Tulare and Kern Counties, and in the Owens Peak and Rockhouse Basin Wilderness Study Areas, forms part of the South Fork of the Kern watershed. Most of the creek is located on BLM land which borders the Sequoia National Forest; several short corridors flow on private land. Parts of the study corridor are easily accessed by the Canebrake Road (a BLM maintained gravel road off Hwy. 178) and minor jeep roads. These dirt roads parallel and cross the creek in its upper reaches only. The lower section, at parts, is so steep and rocky that foot travel is difficult. The principal development, along the upper river corridor, is BLM's Chimney Creek Campground. A large house complex is readily seen in Lamont Meadows.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: (main tributary) T24S, R37E, M.D.M., Sec. 5, N 1/2 SE 1/4; Sec. 17 (unsurveyed); Sec. 18, S 1/2; T24S, R36E, M.D.M., Sec. 24, E 1/2; Sec. 25, W 1/2, Sec. 33; Sec 34; Sec. 35; Sec. 36, NW 1/4 NW 1/4; T25S, R36E, M.D.M., Sec. 3; Sec. 10, NW 1/4; Sec. 9.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 19/16.9

RECREATIONAL VALUES: BLM's Chimney Creek campground is located on the upper reaches of Chimney Creek. The Creek forms part of the recreational and scenic attraction in the Owens and Rockhouse Basin WSAs for dispersed camping, hiking and hunting. Its rugged, rocky, steep banks contribute to the scenic beauty of these areas.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Chimney Creek is a typical low volume stream, originating from the southern end of the Kern Plateau at elevations below 9000 feet. Portions of this creek can become dry during the summer. Riparian vegetation generally consists of an intermittent thick ribbon of low-growing willow trees. Single leaf pinyon pine can be found throughout the watershed. The creek runs along a pristine and extremely rocky granitic bed when not crossing Chimney and Lamont meadows.

*WILDLIFE: This drainage is primarily vegetated by willow thickets and wet meadows, and passes through a great diversity of habitats. The headwaters are in high elevation with Jeffrey pine, and as the river drops in elevation, dominant species change from pinyon pine, California juniper, and finally

Joshua tree. The higher elevation stretches contain wet meadows which have meandering, narrow stream channels and overhanging grasses, and have served as examples for tours with other agencies and the public of what a stream in good condition should look like. The **willow flycatcher**, State threatened and Federal candidate, is dependent upon willow thickets in excellent condition as found along this creek. Few drainages have as large a population of flycatchers as this one. This habitat at higher elevations is extremely important for mule deer fawning, migrating and wintering. The long corridor of habitat is an excellent and important migration route for neotropical migrating birds heading to or from the Sierras or beyond. Some of these species nest along this river system as well.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There is a high potential that Alkali mariposa lily, Calochortus striatus, occurs along BLM's river corridor. This plant, a Federal C2 candidate species, is known to occur nearby.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: This area was ethnographically claimed by the Tubatulabal cultural group and is recognized for its high cultural resource sensitivity. There are a number of recorded prehistoric sites along the creek corridor. Although there are no known National Register cultural properties along the corridor, it is highly probable that significant prehistoric sites are present. There are no significant historic resources presently identified along the creek.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY/MINERALS: The creek flows through mesozoic granitic rocks. There is potential for sand and gravel extraction in T.25 S., R.26E. M.D.M. Sec. 17. In the final analysis this sand and gravel area may be excluded from eligibility status.

LAND USE: Chimney Creek flows through four different grazing allotments which, in combination, are active throughout most of the year. They use both spring and surface waters. There are several mining claims on public lands surrounding the Creek and a land use permit for an apiary site. The slowly expanding rural residential area with surrounding private lands contains rural residences between two and one-half to forty acres in size. Ten rights-of-way exist on surrounding public lands (CA 20759 for road to Edgar Family Trust, R 4846 for BLM road and campground, CA 8763 for PCNST (BLM reservation), CA 27428 for BLM reservation, CA 3943 for BLM fire station, CA 17467 for communication site to U.S. Forest Service, CA 16180 for communication site to Cal Trans, CA 20927 for communication site to U.S. Air Force, R 1940 for communication site to BLM, CA 2953-53 for communication site to U.S. Geological Survey).

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class II and III; Scenic Quality = A

WATER QUALITY: Poor

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (due to combination of federal candidate T&E fauna and possibly flora, and scenic values)

CLASSIFICATION: WILD (north of T24S, R36E, M.D.M. N1/2, Sec. 35); RECREATIONAL (from T24S, R36E, M.D.M. N1/2, Sec. 35 south to T25S, R36S, N1/2, Sec.9, which is approximately 1/4 mile above private property.)

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Clear Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Clear Creek drains Havilah Canyon in Kern County, from Sequoia National Forest's Piute and Breckenridge Mountains to the Lower Kern River. The majority of the main creek's corridor flows on Sequoia National Forest Service lands which are within one mile of public lands. The Creek is also within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. Surrounded by private land, the small BLM corridor along Clear Creek shows some visible historic mining operations, a paralleling footpath and the end of a jeep road.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Main tributary: T27S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 26, SW 1/4; Sec. 35, N 1/2 NW 1/4. Sections of tributaries: T27S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 25,26,33. T28S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 3,4,9, 10, 12.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 18 /.5 (main tributary)

RECREATIONAL VALUES: insignificant

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Much of the segment qualifies as a ephemeral stream course, becoming active during wet periods. Typical watershed values of the general area are represented in this segment. The creek becomes perennial below Havilah Valley at a point where it enters a canyon which guides it to the Kern River. Only small pools of water are found in the creek bed during the summer months.

WILDLIFE: No data

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Piute Mountain navarretia, Navarretia setiloba, a Federal category 1 candidate for listing occurs along the river corridor and could occur within the BLM's corridor.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: With the discovery of gold along Clear Creek in 1864, Havilah shortly became a bustling mining community. Havilah was Kern County's first county seat from 1866 to 1872 before it was moved to Bakersfield. Clear Creek Mining District was a flourishing mining district for more than 20 years. One of the most productive mines in the district was the Delphi which was also known as the McKeadney Mine. By the 1890's, Havilah was nearly a ghost town. Clear Creek is within the area which was ethnographically inhabited by the Kawaiisu Indian culture. The core areas occupied by the Kawaiisu were Walker Basin, Kelso Canyon, and Loraine area. There are no recorded cultural properties of significance on public land on either Clear Creek or its tributaries (Havilah is located on non-public land along a tributary of Clear Creek). However the area, pending intensive field inventory, is considered potentially a high sensitivity area for the occurrence of both historic and prehistoric resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Creek occurs at the contact of Mesozoic granitic rocks and pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rocks.

MINERAL RESOURCES: The only surface administered by BLM on Clear Creek is the former "Marsh and Kennedy Millsite". This mill was owned by D. L. Reese and J. B. Haggin and served the mine they and George Hearst owned in the Havilah area. Two years from when the gold mines were discovered in 1864, there were ten mills processing gold ore. The principal period of activity lasted until 1880. Since then there has been intermittent mining. Also, several tungsten deposits have been located, some less than 1/4 mile from the BLM parcel on Clear Creek.

LAND USE: Livestock grazing occurs on adjacent private lands. Clear Creek itself is flowing across approximately .5 mile of unalloted public land. This land appears to be suitable and is grazed by livestock drifting over from private land. Two miles of a tributary crosses an allotment with a year long season while one and one-half mile of another tributary flows across an allotment which has a season

of use from July 1 to February 28. These tributaries flow only during and shortly after storms. Clear Creek occurs in a slowly expanding rural residential area with parcels ranging from two and one-half to forty acres in size. There are five rights-of-way (S 3858 for road to U.S. Forest Service, Sequoia NF, S 2175 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 18946 for road to U&T Bolt, R 2849 for road to U.S. Forest Service, and S 3267 for power line to Kern River Co.).

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Unknown

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE (note: due to possibility of Federal candidate T&E plant species which may occur, this river needs further evaluation in conjunction with a suitability study, which should be lead by USFS)

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **East Fork of the Kaweah River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The East Fork of the Kaweah River extends approximately 18 miles from Mineral King in Sequoia National Park to Highway 198, just north of the small town of Hammond in Tulare County. The BLM study corridor falls into the Milk Ranch parcel of the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA, recommended unsuitable by the BLM for wilderness. Development along this corridor consists of the Oak Grove/Mineral King access road south of the river. There is limited evidence of human impact along the entire segment.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T17S, R29E., M.D.M., Sec. 37 Lots 6, 7, 8, SE1/4; Sec. 38 NE1/4SE1/4; Sec. 10 S1/2; Sec. 39 NE 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES: 10/ 2.4

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The study corridor is located in rocky, steep and rugged terrain with dense mixed chaparral which is difficult to access. Public lands are adjacent to the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA and also the Sequoia National Park boundary. Most recreationists bypass this lower river section for the hiking and horseback riding opportunities offered in the Mineral King Valley, Sequoia National Park, located along the upper reaches of the E. Fork of the Kaweah. This BLM corridor would most likely be used by fishermen.

*ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This segment is an outstanding example of a pristine low elevation major drainage originating from the Mineral King segment of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The stream channel is carved out of solid granite which takes on the appearance of a carved out chain of deep pools for much of the segment. Occasional riparian streamside vegetation grows intermittently along the segment. A rainbow trout fishery exists in this stream.

WILDLIFE: The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species including Cooper's hawk and osprey, California species of special concern, and the bald eagle (in winter). This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada Mountains which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes, including Kings

Canyon/Sequoia National Park. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Mouse buckwheat, Eriogonum nudum var. murinum, a Federal C-2 candidate for listing, likely occurs within this segment of the river corridor.

CULTURAL / HISTORIC: This stretch of the East Fork is ethnographically situated within the territory of a Western Mono group known as the Patwisha. Only one prehistoric site on public land is known along this segment of the river. The area is considered sensitive for the potential occurrence of both prehistoric and historic resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The river flows through Mesozoic granitic rock.

LAND USES: Water power generation and production is an important industry in this area. Associated with a Federal Power Commission Order is a conduit, penstock and road in the vicinity of the river corridor. Approximately two miles of the East Fork flows through a grazing allotment and serves as one of its main water sources. Private lands include rural residences. There are three rights-of-way (CA 19079 for a road to S. Quade, S 072970 for a telephone line to Pacific Bell, and CA 20186 for a road to E. Casey). Developments which can be seen from the river corridor include houses and cabins, a flume, jeep road and the paved parallel road.

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: Good

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (should be studied in conjunction with NPS. NPS should be lead agency to initiate study; has outstanding scenic and ecological values)

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Erskine Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Erskine Creek, situated in Kern County, southwest of the resort town of Lake Isabella, is part of the Kern River watershed. Its upper reaches are in Sequoia National Forest and its lower reaches are privately-owned. The middle section of the creek is a checkerboard of both private and BLM land. It lies within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area and Piute-Cypress Wilderness Study Area, which is determined to be unsuitable for wilderness by the BLM. Easy access to the creek is available on the gravel Erskine Creek Road which fords the creek nine times on BLM lands. Ample evidence of man-made alterations is present in the form of check dams, mining settlements, dams, road crossings, culverts, livestock trampling, primitive campsites and picnic areas, and trash.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T27S, R33E, M.D.M., Sec. 9, S 1/2; Sec. 16, NE 1/4; Sec. I5 NW 1/4; Sec. 23, N 1/2, SW 1/4; Sec. 24 NW 1/4 SW 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 11/2 plus .91 miles of tributary

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The creek is used during the warmer months for camping, fishing,

swimming, picnicking, and sunning. The gravel road alongside the creek is popular with mountain bicyclists and OHV users. OHV use tracks also extend upslope from the riverbed.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Riparian vegetation grows intermittently along the entire creek.

WILDLIFE: Erskine Creek flows from blue oak/digger pine through chaparral and pinyon pine-juniper and desert scrub. The sycamores, willows and coyote brush provide shelter and the basis for the food for many game and nongame species. The vegetation has a high potential for supporting willow flycatchers. Many neotropical migrating birds nest and migrate along the drainage.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Alkali mariposa lily, Calochortus striatus, and Piute Mountains jewelflower, Streptanthus cordatus var. piutensis, both Federal C2 candidates for listing, may occur along Erskine Creek.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Erskine Creek was named after Michael Erskine, an early gold miner in the region. The dispersed occurrence of early mining features along the creek attest to the importance of this mining area which was established as the Valley View Mining District in the 1860's (see Mineral Resources section below). The area was primarily occupied, ethnographically, by the Kawaiisu cultural group. There are no recorded cultural properties along the public land segments of Erskine Creek. However, the area is considered to have potential for such resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: Outcrops of limestone are located near the creek and contain natural caves. Harrington's Cave, located approximately one-third mile above and south of the Creek, is 120 feet deep which makes it the deepest known cave in the area. Above Sec. 16 lies metavolcanic rocks of French Gulch, and quartzite of Fairview (with marble); below Sec. 16 lie Mesozoic granitic rocks. Three faults have been mapped as paralleling and within the Erskine Creek drainage. Travertine deposits sit astride one fault.

MINERAL RESOURCES AND THEIR HISTORY: The Valley View Mining District, established in 1865, encompassed the Erskine Creek Area. Little is known about mining in the early years, but in the mid-1870s four mining claims were located, which were then patented in the 1880s. Three of the claims are adjacent to BLM lands, north of the USFS boundary. One mine was developed for antimony, the other three for lode gold. Gold was also mined at the Illinois and Golden Bell mine immediately after the turn of the century. During the 1950s uranium was discovered and prospected southwest of Laura Peak and southeast of the mouth of Erskine Creek. At this same time tungsten was produced at the Unip mine 1/4 mile northwest of the junction of Willow Gulch and Erskine Creek. Tungsten was prospected at the Christmas Tree mine, near the head of Spring Gulch. In the 1970s the Rampors Company explored an area in the SE¼ of Sec. 9 and the SW¼ of Sec. 10, presumably for gold. During the 1980s Virgil Schuette prospected Erskine Creek for placer gold and garnets. In addition to the above named mines and prospects there are numerous unnamed prospects on public lands within the Erskine Creek drainage.

LAND USE: Public lands are adjacent to the Sequoia National Forest and between the towns of Lake Isabella and Bodfish. Surrounding private lands include residential and rural residential parcels ranging from one-half to two and one-half acres in size. There is no legal grazing allowed on the adjoining public lands. One mile of Erskine Creek is on land determined to be unsuitable and the remainder is on unalloted parcels which are suitable but closed to grazing. Drift of livestock from surrounding private lands has occurred in the past and evidence of grazing use on public lands is visible. There are two rights-of-ways (CA 5043 for road to J. Nemish and S078122 for Highway 178) and one land use permit for an apiary site.

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Long Valley Watershed**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Long Valley watershed, located in Tulare County, on the southern end of the Kern Plateau, has several tributaries which join to flow into the South Fork of the Kern River. Part of the drainage falls within the Rockhouse WSA and the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. Public lands adjoin the Sequoia National Forest and Domeland Wilderness Area. BLM's Long Valley Campground and access road which parallels the stream (and fords it once), windmill, gabion dams, and fence spring are the only significant developments along the unnamed tributaries of the watershed. Cattle impact is high and trampling is evident in all but the inaccessible, rocky and steep reaches.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T24S,R36E, M.D.M. (portions of the North Half); T23S,R36E, M.D.M., Secs 31,32,33,34.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 15/13.5 (all tributaries)

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The watershed is used for dispersed bird and deer hunting, fishing, hiking and camping, picnicking, viewing wildlife and birdwatching. BLM's semi-developed Long Valley Campground is located along the Long Valley Creek and is a popular trailhead for access to the South Fork of the Kern River.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Long Valley watershed is a typical low volume stream originating from the southern end of the Kern Plateau at elevations below 9000 feet. Riparian vegetation generally consists of an intermittent thick ribbon of low-growing willow trees.

WILDLIFE: This drainage system flows through extensive pinyon pine woodlands and sagebrush/bitterbrush uplands. The streamside vegetation is dominated by grass and sedge, willow, pinyon pine and jeffrey pine. The drainage system is an important breeding area, migratory corridor and wintering area for the Monache mule deer herd. The willow habitats are important nesting areas for the **willow flycatchers** as well as for other nesting and migratory neotropical migrating birds. The drainage is generally in good condition and provides a good example of this habitat in the southern Sierras. Nesting populations of the federal candidate, **California spotted owl**, are found within this drainage system.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There are no documented locations of any sensitive plant species within this river corridor.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: This area was ethnographically used primarily by the Tubatulabal Native American Indians. There are at least eight formally recorded prehistoric sites dispersed along the tributaries. While no formal evaluation of site(s) significance has been determined at present, it is

highly probable that National Register quality sites do occur within one-quarter mile of the tributaries. In regard to cultural sensitivity, the area is considered to have a high potential for prehistoric site occurrence. There are no recorded historic sites along the main and secondary tributaries on BLM public lands. However, several mining prospects of undetermined age can be found in the area.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: Much of the geological formation of the watershed is granitic, with some flow over metasedimentary rock. The two mining prospects are for gold and turquoise.

LAND USE: Public lands adjoin the Sequoia National Forest and Domeland Wilderness. Private lands include rural residences between two and one-half to forty acres in size. Livestock grazing occurs on the surrounding private land. The Long Valley Creek flows through an allotment which is grazed only during October 1 to November 30. Most livestock waters are spring sources at the upper reaches of the creek, or at the five artificial check dams constructed near the Long Valley Campground. This is in a slowly expanding rural residential area. There are several mining claims on BLM lands, a land use permit for an apiary site, and right-of-way R4846 for the BLM road and campground.

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Poor

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Lower Kern River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Lower Kern River runs from Isabella Dam (Hwy 178) in Kern County to the Kern Canyon mouth above Bakersfield. Although most of the Lower Kern is situated in the Sequoia National Forest, the upper BLM reaches form the study corridor. These reaches are situated within the Keyesville/Lower Kern Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. Access is available via a main dirt road within the SRMA. A four-lane freeway (Hwy 198) bridge crosses the Lower Kern River in T27S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 1 and then runs adjacent to it. The public lands are surrounded by Sequoia National Forest and private land.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T26S, R33E, M.D.M. Sec. 30, W 1/2; T26S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 25, SE 1/4, Sec. 36, E 1/2; T27S, R32E, M.D.M. Sec. 1, NE 1/4 SW 1/4; Sec. 12, NW 1/4

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 32/3.5

*RECREATIONAL VALUES: Twenty miles out of the 32 mile Lower Kern River draw thousands of river runners each summer. Two designated launch sites, south of the Lake Isabella Main Dam at "BLM South" and "Keyesville Bridge" are on BLM public lands. At normal flows, BLM south to Sandy Flat (the third launch site, on USFS land) is mostly Class II water with a few short Class III rapids. From Keyesville Bridge put-in, brush and trees overhang the riverbed presenting a floater's special hazard. Rafting during normal water years runs from May to September, with waterflows dependent upon releases from Lake Isabella. Normal flows range from 800-3000 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Approximately 12,000 commercial and noncommercial rafters use the area each year. Dispersed camping, recreational mining, shooting, and OHV use occurs on the lands adjoining the river.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This segment is an example of a major watershed drainage originating from the Mt. Whitney area of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. Riparian vegetation grows intermittently along the boulder-laden channel which has been carved from granitic rock.

*WILDLIFE: The Lower Kern River flows through canyons and boulders. Due to the high relief surrounding the river, there is a significant element of solitude and lack of disturbance from the surrounding hillsides. The topographic relief allows for a tremendous variety of micro-climates which provide a wide diversity of habitats. Sycamores, cottonwoods and interior live oaks line the stream and are bordered by blue oak/digger pine, chaparral and annual grassland. Many game animals reside along the river and on the nearby slopes. Nongame animals reside and migrate through in great numbers. This river system is extremely important to neotropical migrating birds. This river is also habitat for sensitive species such as bald eagle in winter, California spotted owls year-round, and osprey in migration. Dippers nest along this stretch of the river and this may be the only place within Caliente Resource Area where this species nests on Bureau land. This is an important aquatic ecosystem and provides considerable recreational fishing. The fishery that exists on the river consists of rainbow trout, smallmouth bass and channel catfish.

Connected to the Lower Kern River is a large wet meadow complex east of highway 178 and west of the town of Lake Isabella. This meadow is the only natural wetland meadow downstream of Lake Isabella. Two wildlife candidate species are found here, **ferruginous hawk** and **tricolored blackbird**. This large wet meadow adds substantially to the biodiversity of the Isabella area. A willow patch at the southwest corner of the meadow and near the confluence of the Lower Kern may be occupied by **willow flycatchers**, a federal candidate and California threatened species. It is also the southern most nesting area for the Sierran population of the Savannah Sparrow.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Alkali mariposa lily, Calochortus striatus, a Federal C2 candidate occurs along this river and may occur within the BLM corridor.

*CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Historically, the area was important for the exploitation of mineral resources. Initial settlement in the Keyesville area came with the discovery of gold by Richard M. Keyes in the mid-1850's. Remnants of this early mining is evident along the Lower Kern River corridor. Due to the poor condition of historic resources along the river corridor, there are no National Register quality sites remaining within or immediately adjoining the river. This segment of the river falls within the Tubatulabal Indian territory. The river has a high occurrence of prehistoric resources ranging from food processing to rock art sites. Although no prehistoric sites have been formally found eligible for the National Register on the public land segments, it is highly probable that sites of this quality are present on BLM. One known pictograph site on a segment of private land is considered significant.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Lower Kern River flows through Mesozoic granitic rocks. The Kern Canyon fault lies immediately to the southeast of the river. The fault is closest at the Bodfish off-ramp of SR 178 where the freeway is apparently built directly on the fault.

MINERAL RESOURCES and their HISTORY: After discovery of placer gold in the Kern River in the spring of 1854 a stampede of miners entered into the area. The rush continued through 1855 with a swarm of miners in this area. Soon hardrock gold was also discovered. By 1856 the first mill to recover gold was erected in Keyesville. Over the years a number of mills were erected along the Kern River to serve the mines of Keyesville, only to be destroyed by the floods of 1861-1962. In 1865 a

twenty stamp gold mill was built on the river. Numerous other mills were also built along the river, however their location is unknown. A stamp mill associated with the Mammoth Mine stood on the west bank of the river in the southeast quarter of Section 35 as late as 1959. Placer gold mining has continued along the river until the present. Gold continues to be recovered from gravel in the bed and banks of the river by various placer mining techniques.

LAND USE: Surrounding private lands contain rural residences with parcels ranging in size from one to five acres. Livestock grazing occurs on surrounding private lands, and BLM lands bordering the river in an allotment from March 1 to May 31. There are mining claims on nearby BLM lands, and ten rights-of-way (CA 5549 easement from U.S., S 20144 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 16439 for road to E. Lunenschloss, CA 5043 for road to J. Nemish, S 47496 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., S 78122 for Highway 178 and drainage easement, S 47108 for gaging station to Corps of Engineers, CA 15778 for road to C. Mehalko, CA 14324 for power line to Southern California Edison Co., and CA 14022 for road to D. Anderson).

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class II; Scenic Quality B+

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (due to combination of recreational, wildlife, historic and possibly plant resources). Note: The USFS studied this river corridor and concluded "non-eligibility". However, this conclusion is being reevaluated in their suitability study.

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Middle Fork of the Kaweah River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Middle Fork of the Kaweah River extends from the confluence of several creeks in Sequoia National Park near Redwood Meadows to the resort community of Three Rivers in Tulare County. Most of the land which the river crosses is within Sequoia National Park or is privately-owned. The BLM study corridor flows next to the main access road, Hwy. 198, to Sequoia National Park, and adjacent to the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T17S, R29E, M.D.M. Sec. 37.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES: 10 miles / 1000 feet

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Within Sequoia National Park there is a popular hiking trail along their corridor of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah. However, the BLM section is so short that recreational usage is not documented. The river across BLM lands flows so close to Highway 178 that solitude is limited, but access for fishing is possible.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This segment is a typical example of a low elevation major drainage originating from the upper reaches of the Southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. Much of the stream channel has carved its bed through solid granite. Minimal streamside riparian vegetation exists in pockets along the stream channel. Common dominant plants from the Kaweah drainage are sycamore, willow, interior live oak and ash. The adjacent slopes are variously covered by chaparral, blue oak/digger pine and black oak. A rainbow fishery exists in this stream.

WILDLIFE: The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species including Cooper's hawk and osprey, California species of special concern, and the bald eagle (in winter). This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada Mountains which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes including Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.

*SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Mouse buckwheat, Eriogonum nudum var. murinum, a Federal C-2 candidate plant and Kaweah brodiaea, Brodiaea insignia, a state of California endangered and Federal C-2 candidate, occur on BLM land within the river corridor.

CULTURAL / HISTORIC: This segment of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah falls within the ethnographical boundary of the Patwisha, a Western Mono group. Two prehistoric sites are known along this short segment of the Middle Fork. No formal evaluation of the prehistoric sites has been completed to determine their significance at present. There are no known historic sites of significance located on BLM public land along this river corridor. The area is regarded sensitive for the potential high occurrence of both prehistoric and historic resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: This short stretch of BLM administered land is underlain by Mesozoic granitic rock.

LAND USE: Surrounding private lands include residential and rural residential with parcels ranging in size from half an acre to twenty acres. Approximately .2 miles of the Middle Fork flows through the corner of a grazing allotment (# 00061) which is used from April 1 to September 30 each year. There are no mining claims and only one right-of-way: CA 16680 for water facility to BL&I Industries. There are withdrawals on adjoining public land for power projects including a conduit, penstock, roads and a ditch. The following developments can be seen from the river corridor: houses, gaging station, a power line running parallel to the river, flume, parallel trails and the paved road and the ending of a primitive road.

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: unknown

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (sensitive plant species and scenic quality); Should be studied for Wild and Scenic River suitability but National Park Service should be lead agency; BLM has very limited public land adjacent to river.

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **North Fork of the Kaweah River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The North Fork of the Kaweah flows out of the southern Sierra Mountains and forms part of the border between Sequoia National Forest and Sequoia National Park. BLM's study corridor begins 1000 feet south of the junction of Pierce Creek and the North Fork of the Kaweah River, approximately 5 miles north of the town of Three Rivers and about 24 miles northeast of Visalia, in Tulare County. The North Fork generally flows in a southerly direction to the confluence

of the main fork of the Kaweah River. A locally-maintained paved and partially graded road runs within one-half mile along the entire length of the BLM contiguous corridor and has contributed to high use of the BLM parcels. This road serves access for fire emergency vehicles to private and National Park Service lands further north. The North Fork is within the Sheep Ridge WSA and borders the Milk Ranch/Case Mountain WSA. Non-BLM land south of the Forest/Park boundaries is in private ownership.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T15S, R28E, M.D.M., Sec. 27, NE 1/4; Sec. 26, S 1/2; Sec. 35, NE 1/4, SE 1/4; Sec. 34 (tangent to BLM parcel),; T16S, R28E, M.D.M., Sec. 2, E 1/2; Sec. 11, NE 1/4; Sec. 13, W 1/2; Sec. 24, W 1/2; Sec. 23, SE 1/4; Sec. 26 SE 1/4; T17S, R28E, M.D.M. Sec. 2, NW 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 6 / 4

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Sections of BLM's North Fork corridor are part of two wilderness study areas: Sheep Ridge and Milk Ranch/Case Mt. WSAs, both of which have been recommended by BLM as unsuitable for wilderness. Land in the Sequoia and King Canyon's National Parks, just southeast of the river is managed as wilderness. Three accessible areas along BLM's corridor receive high recreational use in the form of non-commercial kayaking, fishing, picnicking, swimming, sunning, dispersed camping and water play. These areas are Cherry Falls, Advance Site and Picnic Site # 1. The region's topographic variation, rugged, rocky terrain and vegetative variety combine to create areas of seclusion. However, the area is periodically overflown by military aircraft. The majority of the users are local residents; regional and national visitors are drawn to the National Park lands which are in close proximity.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This segment is a good example of a low elevation (2000 feet) drainage originating from South Sierra alpine elevations. Vegetation along the North Fork of the Kaweah and the other drainages of the Kaweah contains examples of habitat types often in excellent condition. It is a mixture of riparian forest, scattered oaks and grasses and dense chaparral on the drier, south-facing slopes. Common dominant plants are sycamore, willow, interior live oak and ash. The adjacent slopes are variously covered by chaparral, blue oak, digger pine and black oak. A rainbow trout fishery exists in this stream.

*WILDLIFE: The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species including Cooper's hawk and osprey, California species of special concern, and the bald eagle (in winter). This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada Mountains which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes including Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There are no documented locations of any sensitive plant species within this river corridor.

*CULTURAL/HISTORIC: The area ethnographically is situated at an interface between two Native American cultures. The Waksachi, a Mono group, were centrally located in the Epsom Valley area, but they also utilized lands to the south along the North Fork of the Kaweah within the northern portion of the river corridor. The Wukchumni, a Yokuts group occupied lands on the southern portion of the corridor along the Kaweah River extending from the vicinity of Three Rivers community to the west near Lemoncove. The North Fork of the Kaweah River was the scene of a utopian socialism experiment between 1884 to 1891. This was generally referred to as the Kaweah Colony but also known as the Kaweah Cooperative Commonwealth. It has been described as a form of German

socialism that envisioned an idealistic cooperative colony in which the working members would own and control production and profit accordingly. Arcady, which was later named Haskell's Bluff, was the first colony settlement a few miles up the North Fork. The first task of the colony was to build a road to the timber claims so pine and redwood lumber could be transported from a sawmill in the timber area to a mill for processing. Advance, an area a few miles up the North Fork from Arcady, was a focal area for road construction. Work was initiated in 1886, and as work progressed, other camps in addition to Advance were developed. After four years, the road was completed and a mill was in operation cutting lumber at a rate of 3,000 board feet per day. Due to the creation of the Sequoia National Park by Congress, the Secretary of the Interior soon confirmed timber claims within the Park as invalid. By 1892, the colony disbanded and moved away. Within one quarter of a mile of the river corridor there are four known prehistoric sites and one historic site (Advance). No formal evaluation of these sites has been developed at present; therefore, the significance of these cultural sites is uncertain. The remains at the Advance Site appear to lack physical integrity; however, the site does possess local historic interest. The river corridor is regarded as culturally sensitive for the occurrence of prehistoric and historic resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: Most of the North Fork flows through pre-Cretaceous metasedimentary rock. The northern three miles flows through Mesozoic granitic rock. Live Oak Gulch is granitic rock. The metasedimentary rock has potential for tungsten, but there are no known occurrences on public land.

LAND USE: Surrounding private lands include rural residences ranging in size from two and one-half to forty acres in size. Livestock grazing takes place on private lands, and several BLM allotments occur on the lands surrounding the River. The North Fork of the Kaweah flows through the eastern edge of allotment 00017. This pasture is unfenced from the river for approximately 1.75 miles, and is seasonally grazed as forage is available from October 1 to July 30. The remaining half mile is fenced from livestock. In allotment 00102, cattle can be grazed at any time of the year, but usually use occurs during winter and spring. The North Fork serves as the eastern boundary of this allotment for 2.5 miles, and keeps cattle from drifting eastward into the Park. Cattle will water at the river in the limited accessible riverbank stretches. The river also flows through .25 miles of allotment 00095. It is accessible for the full length to cattle that graze during the season of March 1 to June 30. There are four rights-of-way on BLM land along the N.Fork of the Kaweah (S 074189 for firebreak, CA 1830 for power transmission line to Southern California Edison Co., CA 5076 for road to E&S Mitchell, S 40969 for transmission line to Southern California Edison Co.). From the river corridor the following developments are visible: old mining buildings (in the northernmost section of BLM lands), primitive camping and picnic sites, trails which parallel and end at the river, and the paved and gravel road which parallels the river.

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class II; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: Fair (in drought times, coliform and fecal coliform contamination is high); algae growth and trash is found in the river at high use areas.

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (due to wildlife values, scenic quality and cultural interest); Suitability study should be done in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and private landowners with BLM (or NPS) as the lead agency.

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic (for the stretch of the river north of the NPS locked gate); Recreational (for the stretch of the river south of the NPS locked gate). Locked gate is in T16S, R28E, M.D M. Sec. 12, SW1/4.

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Pine Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Pine Creek is a tributary of the South Fork of the Kern River. It is located in Tulare County between Sacatar and Rockhouse Basin Wilderness Study Areas, largely along the paved road which links Kennedy Meadows to the Nine Mile Canyon Road. It falls into the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. The main developments visible from the creek are a paved road and a dirt road, both paralleling the creek and private property at either end of the study corridor.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T23S, R36E, M.D.M. Sec. 3, W 1/2; Sec. 4, NE 1/4; T22S, R36E, M.D.M. Sec. 33

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 5/1.8

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Although this creek contributes to the scenic surroundings of the area, it offers little opportunity for solitude as it is very close to the road with easy access. The many recreational opportunities in this area, especially within the WSAs, such as hunting, hiking, camping, picnicking, and OHV use and mountain bicycling, are not dependent upon Pine Creek. There is a washed out low-headed dam constructed possibly for recreational fishing and access across the creek, located at a pull-off from the access road.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Pine Creek is a typical low volume perennial stream running through a pinyon-juniper conifer type forest. Much of the stream course runs over granitic rocks. The thin and intermittent stream-side riparian zone consists of low growing willow trees found along the entire segment. This creek, very typical of the area, is similar to Long Valley and Chimney Creeks.

WILDLIFE: This drainage system flows through extensive pinyon pine and sagebrush/bitterbrush uplands. The streamside vegetation is variously dominated by grass and sedge, willow, pinyon pine and Jeffrey pine. The drainage system is an important breeding area, migratory corridor and wintering area for the Monache mule deer herd. The willow habitats are important nesting areas for the **willow flycatchers** as well as for other nesting and migratory neotropical migrating birds. The drainage is generally in good condition and provides a good example of this habitat in the southern Sierras. Nesting populations of the Federal candidate, **California spotted owl**, are found within this drainage system.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: There are no documented locations of any sensitive plant species within this river corridor.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Ethnographically, Pine Creek falls within the territory that was primarily claimed by the Tubatulabal cultural group. Only one prehistoric site is recorded along the tributary on BLM. Although the site has not been formally evaluated, preliminary investigations indicate the site is not eligible for the National Register. No historic resources are recorded along this stretch of the creek. The area is assigned a high probability for the potential occurrence of prehistoric resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Creek flows through Mesozoic granitic rocks.

LAND USE: Public lands adjoin the Sequoia National Forest. Private lands include rural residences between two and one-half to 40 acres in size. Pine Creek flows through allotment 00125, which is

grazed by cattle from approximately August 15 to September 30. Cattle will water at a spring at the source of the creek (Boy Scout spring) and from the creek surface water. Livestock grazing also occurs on the surrounding private land. This is in a slowly expanding rural residential area. There are no mining claims. BLM's one right-of-way is CA 19928 for road to Precise Machine and Tool).

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality = C+

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Salinas River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Salinas River flows from Los Padres National Forest to Monterey Bay in the Pacific Ocean. BLM's study corridor lies approximately four and one-half miles upstream of Santa Margarita Lake, or about eight miles northeast of the town of Santa Margarita in San Luis Obispo County. The "lake" (reservoir) is the domestic water source for the City of San Luis Obispo.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T29S, R13E, M.D.M. Sec. 25 SW 1/4, Sec. 36, NW 1/4.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 40 / 1

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Recreation is limited as access is difficult. The BLM corridor is landlocked by private property and the river is in a steep canyon. There is moderate access up the river from the BLM corridor if permission is obtained to cross private land. Recreational activities are limited to hunting, hiking and horseback riding. However, there are abundant day-use recreational opportunities at the reservoir including fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding, nature study, picnicking, swimming and environmental education.

*ECOLOGICAL VALUES: The BLM corridor has high value as a riparian area ranging from riparian forests of cottonwood, sycamore and willow trees to dense thickets of streamside mulefat and coyote bush. Water, food, and protection is afforded to the local fauna. The riparian belt of the Salinas River is unique for the area, since it is located along an isolated major drainage. The flow of the Salinas River, including the BLM corridor, is controlled by Santa Margarita Lake. The flow within the study area is slowed by beaver dams.

*WILDLIFE: A wide diversity of species are drawn to the area year round. The riparian vegetation is habitat for many nongame and game animals and is used by many migratory birds and bats. The federally endangered Least Bell's Vireo formerly nested along this river, and this portion may be important for recovery of this rare bird. This largely perennial stream and its accompanying vegetation provides suitable habitat for an abundant aquatic flora and fauna. The excellent condition of the habitat along with its physical alignment with the Coast Ranges makes it an extremely important migratory corridor for a group of birds known as the neotropical migratory birds which are showing severe declines throughout the country.

Due to steep topography adjacent to the river, the riparian vegetation comes in contact with several

major plant communities found in the Coast ranges. This diversity adds greatly to the number of animals using the river system.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Hardham's evening primrose, Camissonia hardhamiae, a C2 candidate species for Federal listing occurs along the Salinas River but is not documented from the BLM corridor. Another C2 Candidate species that may occur along the river is the one-awned spineflower, Chorizanthe rectispina.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Geographically, the river corridor is situated near the interface of two pre-contact Native Californian Indian cultural groups. It appears that the two indigenous groups represented are the Migueleno or southern Salinan and the Obispeno, also known as the northern Chumash. Traditionally, the interior boundary of the two cultures was placed in the general vicinity of the Santa Margarita divide, situated just below the Salinas River. More recent research suggests the interior boundary of the two cultural groups may have been located as far north as Paso Robles. There are eight prehistoric sites along this stretch of the Salinas River within one quarter mile of the corridor. The majority of these sites are on private land. Historically, the Asistencia of Santa Margarita was constructed (circa 1809) for use as a chapel and storehouse for Mission San Luis Obispo. Between 1834 and 1846 secularization and dispersement of mission property in California occurred. This resulted in missions being broken up into numerous large Mexican land grants. The boundary of one of these land grants, Rancho Santa Margarita, is within one quarter mile of the proposed WSR corridor. However, there are no recorded historic sites per se within close proximity of the river. Currently, no formal evaluation of the prehistoric sites have been conducted to determine their significance. The area is regarded culturally sensitive for the potential occurrence of prehistoric and historic resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The BLM portion is entirely underlain by Cretaceous granitic rock. Most of the rock is deeply weathered and commonly decomposed, giving rise to a highly dissected terrain that supports a dense growth of chaparral. Slightly weathered rock is intermittently exposed along the Salinas River.

LAND USE: Public land is approximately three miles north of the Los Padres National Forest boundary and two miles northwest of Santa Margarita Lake. Surrounding private land contains dispersed rural ranchettes approximately 20 to 80 acres in size. There are no mining claims. The 440 acre BLM parcel was determined to be unsuitable for livestock grazing due to steep slopes and dense brush outside of riparian areas. There is a potential for unauthorized grazing to occur on this parcel from adjacent private land, since it is unfenced.

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: Good

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (Should be studied for eligibility due to scenic quality, uniqueness, wildlife values and ecological importance as a river corridor in this region. Study must be done in conjunction with state of California, USFS and numerous landowners. BLM's corridor is insignificant in comparison to miles of corridor of other landowners. BLM should cooperate with study, but not be the lead agency).

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Salt Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Salt Creek is located between Highway 198 and Case Mountain (6,818 feet) in Tulare County, near Sequoia National Park. It joins the middle fork of the Kaweah River at a point nearly midway between the towns of Three Rivers and Hammond. Its steep, rocky terrain has been, to date, virtually landlocked from public access by private property. BLM may acquire public access to the Creek; this issue is discussed in the RMP.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T17S, R29E, M.D.M. Sec. 42; Sec. 43, SW 1/4; Sec. 45, NE 1/4; Sec. 44.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 5.5/2.2

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Very limited due to its present status as landlocked and its difficult physical access. Local landowners and their friends camp and hike along accessible stretches of the creek, and admire the waterfalls.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Much of the Creek contains a thin ribbon of stream-side riparian vegetation and is considered good wildlife habitat. The stream flows occur generally during the winter and spring months, drying up in the summer. Areas of localized perennial water can be found in the stream channel where spring-fed.

WILDLIFE: This drainage is an important tributary to the Kaweah River system and shares all of the characteristics of that system. Additionally, the headwaters of the drainage are intricately connected to ancient groves of Giant Sequoias. These groves are no doubt responsible for the hydrological regime of the Salt Creek and home to California spotted owls, a Federal C2 candidate for listing. Many vertebrates are restricted to this type of habitat and this is the only example of this habitat on Bureau land.

FLORA: Springville clarkia, Clarkia springvillensis, listed as endangered by the state of California and a Federal category 1 candidate, occurs along Salt Creek, but has not been documented from BLM lands.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: The Patwisha, a Mono group, centrally occupied the territory ethnographically just below the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the Kaweah River. Hence, the Patwisha apparently lived in large villages along the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River and at the confluence with Salt Creek. The stretch of BLM public land along Salt Creek is considered to be at least moderately sensitive for the potential occurrence of prehistoric resources. Three prehistoric sites are recorded along the corridor; however, no formal evaluation of site significance has been conducted to date. There are no known historic resources along this segment of Salt Creek.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Creek flows through Mesozoic granitic rock. There are two substantial waterfalls with 100 foot drops over a granitic escarpment. These waterfalls are presently located on private land.

LAND USE: Some livestock grazing, hunting, and timber production occurs on public lands. The Salt Creek drainage travels through two allotments which may run cattle at anytime during the year. Stock water is captured by either reservoirs or spring developments with troughs. There is no year-round surface water available to livestock in these allotments. There are no mining claims on public lands. One right-of-way has been granted (CA 4797 for road to Sequoia Forest Industries). Hunting

and timber production occurs on surrounding private land.

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Soda Lake**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Soda Lake lies adjacent to the southwest edge of the San Joaquin biogeographic province in San Luis Obispo County, separated from the San Joaquin Valley floor by the Temblor Range. It is situated half-way between Bakersfield and San Luis Obispo on Highway 58, and is the dominant feature of the recently designated Carrizo Plains Natural Area. Development around the lake is being kept to the minimum to preserve the scenic integrity. It is possible to drive a partially paved, but mostly dirt road around Soda Lake. This road approaches the lake bed at varying distances, from right on its edge to one-half mile away. From parts of this large lake, evidence of grazing, houses, and a powerline are visible.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T31S, R19E, M.D.M. Sec 1, SW 1/4; Sec. 2; Sec. 11, E 1/2; Sec. 12; Sec. 13; Sec. 14 NE 1/4; Sec. 24 N 1/2; T31S, R20E, M.D.M. Sec. 18; Sec. 17; Sec. 2O, W 1/2; Sec. 19, N1/2.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 12 square miles or 102 miles of shoreline/10 square miles.

*RECREATIONAL VALUES: This outstanding area offers an opportunity to view, appreciate and study the dynamics of a unique natural community. Soda Lake attracts worldwide visitation from birdwatchers, both individually and in commercial tours, as well as other conservation groups. Compatible visitor use facilities are planned and in the process of development.

*ECOLOGICAL VALUES: Soda Lake, the largest remaining natural alkali wetland in California, is a distinctive hydrologic type known as a seasonal astatic habitat (a lake that may fill and redry one or more times during any given year depending on the seasonal nature of precipitation and drought). Water is often present in the lake from December to April, infrequent in May and June, and rare in September and October after thunderstorm-induced flash floods.

*WILDLIFE: This ephemeral lake is a magnet to migratory waterbirds and raptors during the winter and spring when water arrives and causes a tremendous algal and fairy shrimp bloom. Often, up to ten thousand lesser sandhill cranes and dozens of greater sandhill cranes, a State listed and Federal candidate, spend several months of the winter and early spring getting in a proper physiological state for the long spring migration and breeding season. The peregrine falcon and bald eagle, State and Federally listed, occasionally winter in the area feeding on waterbirds drawn to the Lake. More commonly, wintering and nesting northern harriers and prairie flacons make use of the animals at Soda Lake. The western snowy plover, a Federal candidate, has been seen on Soda Lake and may well nest there. The aquatic food chain is driven by three species of fairy shrimp which are

not known to occur elsewhere. All three species are Federal candidates.

The surrounding vegetation, largely present because of the high water table, is an outstanding example of the extremely rare and highly endangered alkali sink scrub and valley saltbush scrub habitats. These habitats contain a number of listed animals such as the San Joaquin kit fox, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, giant kangaroo rat and the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and Federal candidate short-nosed kangaroo rat.

*SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: The vegetation surrounding the lake supports stands of Valley Sink Scrub, one of the world's rarest community types. Two annual saltbush species, Lost Hills saltbush, Atriplex vallicola, and heart-leaved saltbush, A. cordulata, are known to occur around the lake. Both species are Federal C2 candidate plants. Another locally rare species that occurs around the lake, Jared's peppergrass, Lepidium jaredii, has recently been petitioned for emergency Federal listing.

*CULTURAL/HISTORIC: Soda Lake is centrally located in the confines of the Carrizo Plain. The plain lies between the known territories of three different Native California groups. Specifically, villages attributed ethnographically to the Salinan are found to the north in the Cholame Valley; the Yokuts were centrally located to the east in the San Joaquin Valley; and the Interior Chumash established villages in Cuyama Valley and the San Emigdio Mountains. Based upon limited archaeological investigations and the style of rock art found on the Carrizo, this information suggests the area was primarily used by the Chumash and perhaps to a much lesser degree by the Yokuts. There are no formally recorded prehistoric sites within one-quarter mile of the study area; however, one historic mining site is known. In the 1880s the saline deposits at Soda Lake were mined for use at nearby cattle ranches. Prior to 1908, the Carisa Chemical Company invested $60,000 for a plant and narrow-gauge railroad on the east side of the lake for the extraction of sodium sulphate. Between 1923 and 1925 the operation was active, and the product was hauled to McKittrick by a combination of the railroad and truck. In 1934 the plant was moved from the south side of the lake to the north and a small amount of mineral was produced. Various physical remains exist on the ground to mark the location of the mining operation; however, the physical integrity of the site is considered to be in poor condition.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Carrizo Plain is a structural depression (an area of interior drainage), which has resulted in the formation of Soda Lake. In 1912, Hoyt Gale, with the U. S. Geological Survey, estimated that Soda Lake contained reserves of over a million tons of sodium sulphate. The BLM has classified Soda Lake prospectively valuable for sodium. Sodium sulphate is used primarily in the production of kraft paper. In California today, sodium sulphate is recovered from Searles Lake.

LAND USE: This area is designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Additionally, it lies within the Carrizo Plain Natural Area (CPNA). The surrounding private lands which are expected to be acquired by BLM for the CPNA are open space and scattered ranches. There is some livestock grazing as well as some agricultural development on The Nature Conservancy and State lands. However all public lands within 1/4 mile of highwater mark are closed to grazing. The area is partially fenced, but does have the possibility of unauthorized sheep grazing from private lands on the north and east sides of the lake. There are no mining claims, one oil/gas lease and two rights-of-way: (S2538 to PG&E for power transmission line and access road, and S077189 to AT&T for buried telephone line and communication site).

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class II; Scenic Quality A. One of the splendors of this area is the vast, unobstructive views adjacent to and across the lake, virtually a "sea of nothingness" bordered by the Temblor and Caliente Ranges. This unaltered open space is priceless, especially considering that

the intensively developed oil and gas fields of the San Joaquin Valley lap at its borders, and the megalopolis of Los Angeles and the southern California coast are close-by.

WATER QUALITY: Poor

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (due to ecological, geological, recreational, floral and faunal T&E species, and historic resources)

CLASSIFICATION: Scenic

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **South Fork of the Kaweah**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The South Fork of the Kaweah River starts at the confluence of several creeks above Clough Cave in Sequoia National Park, in Tulare County. It flows in a westerly, northwest direction to meet the main fork of the Kaweah below the town of Three Rivers. The river flows close to a small parcel, but not on BLM land. The remainder of the South Fork flows across privately-owned land and in its upper reaches, Sequoia National Park. A local paved and graded dirt road parallels the river corridor.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T18S, R29E, M.D.M., Sec. 23 (tributary). Main stream does not flow on BLM land.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES: 12 miles/none

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Not significant

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: This segment is a typical example of a low elevation major drainage originating from the upper reaches of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. Most of the segment is not impacted from human uses. The stream tends to be a high energy stream course. Portions of the channel are occasionally scoured by high stream flows. Good examples of low elevation south Sierran streamside riparian habitat are found along this stream. A rainbow trout fishery exists in this stream.

WILDLIFE: The diverse riparian community along the entire Kaweah River drainage system provides habitat for mule deer, black bear, gray fox, California and mountain quail, wood duck, common mergansers, many nongame species including Cooper's hawk and osprey, California species of special concern, and the bald eagle (in winter). This drainage provides a migratory network leading into the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which is a crucial link to the higher altitudes including Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park. This riparian system is an important migratory stopping place and corridor for declining neotropical migrating birds.

SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Kaweah brodiaea, Brodiaea insignis, a plant species listed by the State of California as endangered and a Federal C2 candidate for listing occurs within one-quarter mile of this river on BLM land. Kaweah monkeyflower, Mimulus norrisii, a category 3C candidate for Federal listing and mouse buckwheat, Eriogonum nudum var. murinum, a Federal C2 plant, occur along the river but have not been documented on BLM land in that area.

CULTURAL / HISTORIC: This segment of the South Fork lies to the south of the area occupied by

two cultural groups. The Patwisha Mono group were centrally located below the Middle Fork of the Kaweah in the Salt Creek vicinity. The Wukchumni, a Foothill Yokuts group, ethnographically lived along the Kaweah River stretching from the vicinity of Three Rivers community to the west near Lemoncove. There are no formally recorded prehistoric or historic resources on BLM public land along tributaries south of the South Fork. However, the area is regarded as sensitive for the potential occurrence of prehistoric resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Creek flows through Mesozoic granitic rock.

LAND USE: Cattle drifting over from adjacent unfenced private lands makes for a high probability that the riverine habitat is grazed. There are no BLM land use authorizations within 1/4 mile of the river nor are there any mining claims.

SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class III; Scenic Quality B

WATER QUALITY: Unknown

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: NON-ELIGIBLE (This determination is due to the presence of sensitive plant species near the river corridor coupled with the scarcity of BLM lands. Should the National Park Service lead a Wild and Scenic River study, the BLM should be a contributing agency).

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **South Fork of the Kern River**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The South Fork of the Kern River flows out of Sequoia National Forest into Isabella Lake and reaches BLM land in a small area of broad valley and floodplain along Highway 178 near Onyx in Kern County. The BLM corridor falls into the Domeland Wilderness Study Area, recommended unsuitable for wilderness by the BLM. Public land adjoins the Sequoia National Forest and is within the South Fork Cooperative Management acquisition area. It also falls within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T25S, R35E, M.D.M., Sec. 34 SE 1/4; Sec. 35 SW 1/4; T26S, R35E M.D.M, Sec. 4.(wetland area)

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES: 83/.8

RECREATIONAL VALUES: Some local fishing may occur here.

*ECOLOGICAL VALUES: The South Fork of the Kern is an excellent example of a major drainage leading out of the high Sierras through undeveloped lands into the South Fork valley. The BLM river corridor occurs in a wide riparian zone with a strong water flow. A riparian forest surrounds the water course, dominated with cottonwood trees, alders and willows and containing a diversity of herbaceous species.

*WILDLIFE: The South Fork of the Kern River contains the largest continuous stand and one of the last stands of cottonwood riparian remaining in the Central Valley of California. This riparian system contains a diverse flora and fauna, further enhanced by the diversity of adjacent major floristic

provinces such as the Sierran, Mojave, Great Basin and Californian. The convergence and mixing of these floristic provinces occurs nowhere else. A regionally significant diversity of game and nongame species is documented to occur along this drainage system. Important research is underway on the population biology and habitat requirements of yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager and willow flycatcher.

The upper reaches of the drainage contain appropriate habitat for California spotted owls. Surveys are currently being conducted to determine the number of birds in the region. The South Fork of the Kern River is a regionally significant migratory corridor and nesting area for neotropical migrating birds.

*SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Mimulus pictus, a California Native Plant Society listed 1B species and Calochortus striatus, a Federal candidate 2 species, both occur within one mile of public land.

LAND USE: Livestock grazing, irrigated pastures, and intensive agricultural development occur on surrounding private lands. The South Fork of the Kern River flows through .8 miles of allotment 00080 on BLM land. This portion of the allotment is unfenced, as is the river from private pasture land that adjoins it. There is also an unfenced and unalloted 80 acre parcel of public land on the South Fork of the Kern within .5 mile of the parcel described above. This parcel is most likely grazed without authorization. Grazing therefore does occur on the BLM river riparian areas, which also provide shade. There are three rights-of-way (CA9471 for road to C. Allen, LA 01613327 for phone line to Contel and CA 16852 for the highway (Federal Highway Act)).

*CULTURAL / HISTORIC: This segment of the South Fork of the Kern River played an important role in the historical development of this area. William Scodie was proprietor of the first store built in Onyx in the 1860s. The historic Cottage Grove Cemetery is found nearby Onyx. Several ranches such as the Bloomfield, Smith, and Onyx Ranches attest to the historical importance of ranching along the South Fork. This area ethnographically is at the interface between the Tubatulabal and the Kawaiisu Indians; however, the stretch along the river is considered within Tubatulabal territory. There are no formally recognized cultural properties of significance within this segment of the South Fork corridor, although prehistoric sites of potential significant value are known along the river.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: Exposed granitic rock outcrops can be observed along the entire stream course. The stream itself flows through quaternary alluvium. There is potential for sand and gravel extraction.

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class IV; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: Fair

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (Due to the combination of ecological, wildlife, prehistoric and historic, and scenic quality values); T25S, R35E M.D.M. Sec.34 SW1/4 SE1/4 is non-eligible due to its high potential for sand and gravel extraction. BLM's study corridor is limited; USFS has designated the portion of the S.Fork which flows through their land a Wild and Scenic River. In the Sequoia Forest Land Management Plan the BLM segment of the S. Fork was labeled as "non-eligible" due to diversions and lack of perennial water. However, since their plan was written, guidelines have been altered; BLM guidelines are broader as to what constitutes an eligible corridor.

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational

NAME OF WATER COURSE: **Spanish Needles Creek**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Spanish Needles Creek is a tributary of the Canebrake watershed, located partially within the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area, and also within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area. The closest settlements are Canebrake and Onyx; both towns are located on Highway 178. The river corridor crosses both BLM and private lands. A dirt road parallels the creek approximately 50% of its length. Evidence of human impact is low. Developments, other than the dirt road, include the crossing of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, fences, dirt tracks and a spring box. Impacts from cattle grazing are high.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T25S, R37E, M.D.M. Sec. 7; Sec. 8; Sec. 9; T25S, R36E, M.D.M.Sec. 12, S 1/2; Sec. 14.

TOTAL MILES/BLM MILES (approximately): 5/4

RECREATIONAL VALUES: The Creek provides a reliable water source for PCNST users; consequently, dispersed camping occurs near the river. Otherwise, access is blocked by private property.

ECOLOGICAL VALUES: An intermittent ribbon of low-growing willow trees grows along the creek. Spanish Needles Creek can become dry in places during the summer and is very typical of the creeks found in the region.

*WILDLIFE: The scattered cottonwood groves and clumps of willow and coyote bush are oases surrounded by one of the most diverse areas in the country. The area immediately adjacent to this drainage supports plants and animals with affinities for the Mojave Desert, the Great Basin, the Sierran Mountain Province and the Central Valley. Spanish Needles is an important representative of this edge effect of four bioregions.

*SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES: Dedecker's clover, Trifolium dedeckerae, a category 3C candidate for Federal listing, and Spanish Needle onion, Allium shevockii, a California Native Plant Society list 1B species, are known to occur on BLM land within the river corridor. Spanish Needle onion is known to occur only along this creek.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC: The area is ethnographically situated at an interface between the Tubatulabal and the Kawaiisu native groups. Although no significant prehistoric sites are known along the creek corridor, there are a couple of sites nearby that could be eligible for the National Register. This area is of particular interest to the public and educational groups due to the rock art values exhibited at these sites. No historic resources of significance are known along the corridor.

PHYSIOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY: The Creek flows through Mesozoic granitic rock.

LAND USE: Public lands adjoin the Sequoia National Forest. Surrounding private lands contain rural residences between two and one-half to 40 acres in size. Livestock grazing occurs on the surrounding private lands, with 4 miles of the creek falling into two BLM allotments. These allotments use spring surface water during March 1 - April 30 and January 1 to June 30. There are several mining claims near the river, a land use permit for an apiary site, and two BLM rights-of-way (CA 8763 for the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, and R4845 for a BLM road).

*SCENIC QUALITY: VRM Class II and III; Scenic Quality A

WATER QUALITY: Poor

ELIGIBILITY CONCLUSION: ELIGIBLE (due to scenic quality and combination of ecological-wildlife and floral values)

CLASSIFICATION: Recreational (lower stretches); Scenic (upper stretches)