

SHOSHONE PYGMY SAGE INSTANT STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA - 160 acres

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area is located northwest of Mount Wheeler within Spring Valley in White Pine County, NV. It consists of approximately 160 acres of public land. The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Research Natural Area was designated in 1965 to assist in the preservation of an example of the pygmy sage ecosystem for comparison with those ecosystems influenced by man, to provide an educational and research area, and provide a gene pool and preserve for an unusual (but not threatened or endangered) species. The Natural Area was intensively inventoried and evaluated in conjunction with the surrounding 3,840 acre roadless review area in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project accelerated wilderness inventory. The entire review unit was found to lack wilderness character following intensive inventory completed in March, 1979.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE -

0 acres recommended for wilderness
160 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area and its contiguous roadless acreage were determined to lack the size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreation considered to define wilderness character. The study area was recommended for release from further wilderness consideration, and the roadless review area was not designated as a wilderness study area.

The long and short term effects of not designating Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area as wilderness would be that all uses which previously were compatible with natural area management would continue to be permitted.

3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

A. Naturalness: During the intensive inventory, the area was determined to be generally unnatural, containing fencelines, a well and a powerline.

B. Solitude: The small size of the area combined with its lack of substantial vegetation and topographic diversity combine to minimize opportunities for solitude.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Hiking, dry camping, photography, and nature study are all physically possible in the area, but neither the quantity nor quality of these opportunities can be considered outstanding.

D. Special Features: Pygmy sage (*Artemesia pygmy*) is an unusual species which grows in the area, however, it is not listed as threatened or endangered.

4. MANAGEABILITY

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size. Even including the surrounding roadless review area, it would contain only 4,000 acres. The lack of any substantial vegetation combined with the flat topography of the area would make management for wilderness nearly impossible.

5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

A minerals report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey was not prepared for this study area.

6. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Shoshone Pygmy Sage Instant Study Area was inventoried along with the roadless review area in which it is located during an accelerated inventory conducted in 1979. There was no public comment made on the Pygmy Sage Natural Area during the formal public comment period. One letter was received after the close of the comment period which supported wilderness classification for the area.