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Comments: The following text was copied from the original digital MS Word submission and pasted into this text box by Forest Service personnel. See attached original digital MS Word submission.

Cibola National Mt. Taylor Mountain Ranger District
Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

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Email: vseiser@unm.edu

Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D2_5K6 Zuni Mountain Division, Mt. Taylor RD including Little Water Canyon

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This section of the Zuni Mountains has a free-flowing stream with associated riparian habitat, a rare year-round water feature in this desert environment. Riparian area includes moisture loving plant and animal species not found in the surrounding drier environment. Serves as a water source for desert species as well. Stream banks are easily trampled and need special protection. Area is highly scenic and undeveloped.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

Riparian area includes moisture loving plant and animal species not found in the surrounding drier environment.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Report of timber cutting along northern edge, but significant regeneration has restored natural appearance.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

Cherry-stemmed road enters area from the north. Report of a well at Yellow Spring.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Area provides excellent opportunity for solitude. Riparian area attracts surrounding wildlife and supports moisture-loving species, providing unusually good opportunity for wildlife viewing and photography. Area is desirable for hiking and horseback riding. Because of fragility of environment, stream banks may need protection from the compaction caused by camping and pasturing of horses.

Cibola NF Mt. Taylor RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D2_5K6 Zuni Mtn Div. Little Water Canyon page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

The area straddles the Continental Divide and is cross-cut with canyons. It is far from the sights and sounds of civilization, with excellent opportunities for solitude. Surrounding region has little development and is low use.

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Riparian area attracts surrounding wildlife and supports moisture-loving species, providing unusually good opportunity for wildlife viewing and photography. Area is desirable for hiking and horseback riding. Because of fragility of environment, stream banks may need protection from the compaction caused by camping and pasturing of horses.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent?

Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

Little Water Canyon has a free-flowing stream with associated riparian habitat, a rare year-round water feature in this desert environment. Riparian area includes moisture loving plant and animal species not found in the surrounding drier environment. Serves as a water source for desert species as well.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

The area straddles the Continental Divide and is cross-cut with canyons. High ground has scenic vistas across the Zuni Mountains. The canyons have beautiful walls.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

No information on this point.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

Little Water Canyon has a free-flowing stream with associated riparian habitat, a rare year-round water feature in this desert environment

Cibola NF Mt. Taylor RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D2_5K6 Zuni Mtn Div. Little Water Canyon page 3

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Criterion 5- Management

This area may be suitable for designation as a special management area to allow study of isolated riparian plant and animal communities within a desert environment.

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

The area is surrounded by Forest Service land and is far from any urban area. Because of fragility of riparian environment, stream banks may need protection from the compaction caused by camping and pasturing of horses. There is a single cherry-stemmed road entering from the north.

Cibola National Forest Mt. Taylor Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

Phone: 505-306-5212

Email: vseiser@unm.edu

Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D2_5K8 Gooseberry Springs and upper slopes of Mt. Taylor, Mt. Taylor Division, Mt. Taylor RD

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This is a beautiful area on the Continental Divide that I have visited periodically over the last 25 years. It encompasses aspen groves and high alpine meadows. It includes the popular Gooseberry Springs trail but is largely undisturbed, with commanding views over distant vistas.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

It encompasses aspen groves and high alpine meadows, with habitat deer, turkey and other mountain creatures.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

There are reports of some mining disturbance, but the views all along the major trail Gooseberry Springs are highly natural. The view from the summit to the north does reveal communication towers on La Mosca Peak, which is outside the designated polygon. That aside, the vista in all directions is superb.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

North, west and south sides of area are bordered by roads. As a whole, the area retains a natural appearance.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation year-round, including hiking, camping, horse travel, wildlife viewing and photography, snow shoeing and x-country skiing.

Cibola NF Mt. Taylor RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: : D2_5K8 Mt. Taylor Div. Gooseberry Springs and upper slopes page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

Good opportunity for solitude, especially in the eastern less visited portion of the area. The area is surrounded by National Forest to the north, west and south, providing a buffer from the only sizable town in that part of the state. Development of surrounding land is minimal. Half of the eastern border is Laguna Pueblo land.

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation year-round, including hiking, camping, horse travel, wildlife viewing and photography, snow shoeing and x-country skiing.

Criterion 3-Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

Mt. Taylor is the highest peak in western New Mexico and an important landmark on the Continental Divide. It is a sky island of alpine meadows and aspen groves, rising out the surrounding desert. It is snow capped in winter, providing snowplay opportunities rare in this part of the state.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

Alpine meadows.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

At 11,000 feet, Mt. Taylor is the highest peak in western New Mexico and an important landmark on the Continental Divide. The view from the top encompasses hundreds of square miles almost devoid of obvious human development.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

Traditional Native American practices and sites have been reported. Recent history includes an annual Winter Quadrathlon and a Fall 50K foot race that are important to the local community.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

A series of natural springs fed by snowpack.

Cibola NF Mt. Taylor RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: : D2_5K8 Mt. Taylor Div. Gooseberry Springs and upper slopes

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface? Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

Area can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. It is surrounded by National Forest on three sides and partly bordered by Laguna Pueblo on the fourth side. Agreements with local tribes facilitate traditional use. Special use permits for annual Winter Quadrathlon and a Fall 50K foot race could be grandfathered in. Urban interface is not an issue-the nearest town is miles away. Unauthorized motorized use would need to be monitored-there is still local opposition to the Travel Management Plan.

Cibola National Forest Mt. Taylor Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

Phone: 505-306-5212

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D2_ADJ3 Northeast Corner of Mt. Taylor Division, Mt. Taylor Ranger District

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This remote, hard to access area is adjacent to the BLM Chamisa Wilderness Study Area. I was part of a group that attempted to visit it in 2013, approaching from the east on 4-wheel drive BLM roads and hiking toward the National Forest boundary. We ran out of time to complete the journey. From what could be seen from vantage points, this area of the National Forest has the same natural character as the BLM WSA and should be treated as a continuation of it.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical

conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

I talked with local ranchers about how to access this area from the National Forest side and was told that even though there is a road marked on the map, it is in very poor condition, making the area very difficult to access. The naturalness of the area seems intact.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

This is a remote, difficult to access, rarely visited area with high potential for solitude. Recreational opportunities include horseback riding and back packing.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

This is a remote, difficult to access, rarely visited area with high potential for solitude. It is far from the sight and sound of civilization. There are no settlements or development anywhere near.

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ID: D2_ADJ3 Northeast Corner of Mt. Taylor Division p.2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity? Yes.

Recreational opportunities include horseback riding and back packing.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

Shares the characteristics of the BLM Chamisa Wilderness Study Area.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

Several springs marked on map.

Criterion 5- Management

The area should be managed under similar guidelines as the adjacent BLM Wilderness Study Area.

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

The area is bordered by BLM Wilderness Study Area to the north, National Forest to the west, and private ranch land to the south. The area appears to be roadless. There is no urban interface nor any nearby settlements.

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Cibola National Forest Magdalena Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

Phone: 505-306-5212

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D3_5K2 Six Mile Canyon, Magdalena Mtns, Magdalena RD

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This is a beautiful forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land. Pleasing views from ridges over surrounding natural terrain.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

Forest land providing important wildlife habitat, including deer and turkeys.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Some forest thinning along Ryan Hill trail to restore area to historical conditions, has maintained the natural appearance of the area.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

Within the area, there are traces of small-scale historical mining activity largely hidden by vegetation. Area as a whole has a natural appearance. A substantially noticeable (and historically interesting) mining development near the southwest corner of the area has been excluded from the area boundaries.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

This is a beautiful forested area suitable for hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing and photography. It is a lightly used area with ample opportunity for solitude. On a visit in May, we met no other groups in the area.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

The Water Canyon Complex on the northwest edge of the area is a popular picnic area and campground. The road beyond that point is lightly traveled. The southern border of the area is formed by the Langmuir Research Area, a protected zone. The area is mountainous, with good opportunity for solitude, protected from sight and sound of civilization.

Cibola NF Magdalena RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Inventory ID/Location: D3_5K2 Six Mile Canyon, Magdalena Mountains p.2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

This is a beautiful forested area suitable for hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing and photography.

Criterion 3-Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

This is a beautiful forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

This forested area surrounded by range land provides important wildlife habitat.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

The area is mountainous, with scenic views to the south across the forested Langmuir area and to the west across open range land. There are traces of historic mining activity, mostly obscured by natural vegetation but suggestive of interesting rock deposits.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

There are traces of historic mining activity, mostly obscured by natural vegetation.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

Water Canyon on the northern border of the area appears to have year-round stream flow. On our visit in May 2014, Six Mile Canyon was a dry stream bed.

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface? Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

Yes, this area can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. Area boundaries have been drawn to exclude roads. The northwestern boundary is National Forest. The southern boundary is formed by the protected Langmuir Research Area, also National Forest land. The eastern boundary is range land under BLM and state management. Grazing needs to be monitored: in May 2014 we saw evidence of stream bed trampling by cattle that had strayed far up Six Mile Canyon.

Cibola National Forest Magdalena Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D3_5K16 Panther Canyon, San Mateo Mtns, Magdalena RD

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This is a beautiful forested area adjacent to the Withington Wilderness.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

The San Mateo Mountains are a sky island surrounded by range land. They provide important habitat for wildlife, including deer and turkey.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Forested terrain appears natural. Upper Panther Canyon shelters old-growth pines.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

Hiking in to Panther Canyon, we encountered traces of overgrown two-tracks roads, reduced to footpaths by natural vegetation, giving an overall appearance of naturalness. In some places, three-foot tall saplings grew down the center between the tracks, evidence that they had not been used by motorized vehicles for many years.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Good potential for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation including hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding and wildlife viewing. Hiking through the area on a Saturday in May, we did not encounter any other groups.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization? Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

The area is surrounded by National Forest and borders the Withington Wilderness on the east. There are two developed campgrounds on the road on the western border of the area. Entering the area on foot, the access road immediately drops from sight, screened by the succession of canyons and ridges. Hiking through the area on a Saturday in May, we had complete solitude. The area is not impacted by the sight or sound of civilization.

Cibola NF Magdalena RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D3_5K16 Panther Canyon San Mateo Mtns, page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Good potential for primitive, unconfined recreation including hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding and wildlife viewing.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

This is a beautiful forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land. Pleasing views from ridge tops over surrounding natural terrain.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

The San Mateo Mountains are a sky island surrounded by range land. They provide important wildlife habitat.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

Pleasing views from ridge tops over surrounding natural terrain.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

Not aware of any.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

We didn't encounter water on our trip.

Criterion 5-Management

This is a beautiful forested area surrounded by National Forest and adjacent to the Withington Wilderness.

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

Area can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. It is surrounded by National Forest and adjacent to the Withington Wilderness. There is no urban interface. Some cherry-stemmed roads in the western portion of the area.

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser
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Address: 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D3_Lang Langmuir, Magdalena Mtns, Magdalena RD

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This is a beautiful forested area, with a high degree of naturalness, part of a sky island surrounded by range land.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

This is a forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land, and thus provides important habitat for wildlife, including deer and turkeys.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

The area appears to have a high degree of naturalness.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

Research Lab buildings and an observatory located near the north edge have been excluded from the area. The area itself appears to have a high degree of naturalness.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Good opportunity for solitude. Dispersed recreation is allowed so there are opportunities for hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, photography and storm observation.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization? Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

Good opportunity for solitude. There is no recreation development. Area appears to be low use, far from the sight and sound of civilization.

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Dispersed recreation is allowed so there are opportunities for hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, photography and storm observation.

Cibola NF Magdalena RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D3_Lang Langmuir, Magdalena Mtns page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Criterion 3-Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

This is a beautiful forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land. It offers spectacular views across the Plains of St. Augustine. The Lab was sited here because the location is ideal for observing weather phenomena.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

This is a forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land, and thus provides important habitat for wildlife.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

This is a beautiful forested area, part of a sky island surrounded by range land. It offers spectacular views across the Plains of St. Augustine. The Lab was sited here because the location is ideal for observing weather phenomena.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

No specific information.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

No specific information.

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

The area can and should be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. There is no urban interface. The area was set aside by Act of Congress. The activities of the Research Lab are managed through a special use permit. Motorized use is carefully restricted to designated roads. This is federal land that has been set aside for special purposes; the managers should be accountable for managing it for the public good. Maintaining wilderness character of the land is a public good, whether or not the public is granted access.

The area is bordered by National Forest to the north and west, BLM and state range land to the east and southwest, and some private ranch land to the south.

Cibola National Forest Magdalena Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D3_ADJ9 and D3_ADJ10 Sierra Ladrones, Bear Mountains, Magdalena RD

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

The BLM Sierra Ladrones Wilderness Study Area is a rugged, remote and scenic area surmounted by rocky Ladron Peak, which dominates the surrounding landscape. These two adjacent areas should be managed as an extension of the Sierra Ladrones WSA. The whole region has a high degree of naturalness.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

These are remote areas with good opportunity for solitude, far from the sight and sound of civilization. There is no developed recreation in the area. I've hiked the Ladrones and found it challenging terrain. The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation include hiking, backpacking, camping and horseback riding.

Criterion 3-Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

The BLM Sierra Ladrones Wilderness Study Area is a rugged, remote and scenic area surmounted by rocky

Ladrone Peak, which dominates the surrounding landscape. These two adjacent areas should be managed as an extension of the Sierra Ladrone WSA. The whole region has a high degree of naturalness.

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws? Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface? Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads? These two areas can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. They are bordered by the BLM Sierra Ladrone Wilderness Study Area the north and east and should be managed as an extension of the WSA. National Forest land borders to the south and east. There is no urban interface. The road dividing the two areas is in effect cherry-stemmed.

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Cibola National Forest Sandia Ranger District
Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser
Phone: 505-306-5212
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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D5-ADJ4 Las Huertas Canyon Sandia Ranger District

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

The upper slopes of Las Huertas Canyon are an undeveloped area covered with natural vegetation.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives? Provides habitat for wildlife including deer, bear and turkeys. Las Huertas Creek is an important water source for wildlife.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance? The upper slopes of Las Huertas Canyon are an undeveloped area covered with natural vegetation.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole? The upper slopes of Las Huertas Canyon are a roadless area covered with natural vegetation.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Upper Las Huertas Canyon is a little visited area with no developed trails, offering good opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, including hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing and winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization? Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas? Upper Las Huertas Canyon is a little visited area with no developed trails, offering good opportunities for solitude. A small private summer camp and several homes are located on an inholding on the eastern border of the area. A Forest Service managed snowplay facility is south of the area.

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ID: D5-ADJ4 Las Huertas Canyon Sandia Ranger District page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Good opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, including hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing and winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The potential exists to connect the area to the Capulin Snowplay facility with cross-country ski trails.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? NOT applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

The slopes of Las Huertas Canyon offer sweeping vistas to the east, including a view of rugged Palomas Peak. Las Huertas Creek is an important water source for area wildlife.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

No specific information about this.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

The slopes of Las Huertas Canyon offer sweeping views to the east, including rugged Palomas Peak. A shelter cave has been reported in the cliffs above the private summer camp.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

No specific information about this.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

Las Huertas Creek is an important water source for area wildlife.

Criterion 5- Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

This area can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. It is completely within the National Forest and is bounded on the north and west by the existing Sandia Mountain Wilderness. The area is a natural extension of that wilderness. A lightly-used gated private road (Ellis Ranch Road) and associated in-holdings have been cherry-stemmed. This is the only interface with human habitation. Motorized use is limited to this road and the dirt road forming the eastern boundary of the area.

Cibola National Forest Sandia Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D5_ADJ5 Tree Springs Sandia RD

Criterion 1- Apparent Naturalness:

This is a beautiful forested slope descending from the Sandia Crest, populated with deer and bear.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

This is a beautiful forested slope descending from the Sandia Crest, populated with deer and bear. The area includes Oso Corridor which seems to be ideal habitat for natural stands of bear corn.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Naturalness of the area has not been noticeably altered.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

Some forest thinning was done along highway and at Tree Springs Trailhead to remove dangerous snags; care was taken to preserve naturalness of the area as a whole. No roads, mines or pipelines. A wood gateway marks the existing wilderness boundary near the top of Tree Springs Trail.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

Good opportunity for solitude in the area south of Tree Springs Trail along Oso Corridor. Prime opportunity throughout the area for primitive and unconfined recreation, including hiking and winter snowshoeing.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

Tree Spring Trail itself is a popular trail. I hike it frequently myself and usually meet other parties when I do. However, the heavily forested slopes and mountainous terrain keep groups of hikers visually separated. There is a latrine and picnic table at the Tree Springs Trailhead. The area is bounded to the north by the downhill ski area, but visually separated by trees. Oso Corridor and southern section of the 10K Trail offer good opportunities for solitude.

Cibola NF Sandia RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D5_ADJ5 Tree Springs Sandia RD page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

The area includes several trails that afford prime opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation, including hiking and winter snowshoeing. Wilderness designation would protect the area from overuse because it would exclude mountain bikers. Tree Springs is not a good trail for hikers to have to share with bikers because steep terrain and frequent blind corners increase the chance of collisions.

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

This is a mountainous area leading to the crest of the highest peak in the region.

Question 4a. Rare plant or animal communities?

Wonderful displays of summer wildflowers.

Question 4b. Outstanding landscape features? Unique geologic features? Scenic features?

Several switchbacks on the Tree Springs Trail offer sweeping vistas to the east.

Question 4c. Historic & cultural resource sites? Structures, relics or RR beds?

No specific information.

Question 4e. Water resources or watershed features?

The spring for which Tree Springs is named seems to have diminished to a seasonal marsh, maybe due to climate change. The marsh area is fragile and is protected from trampling by a wooden walkway.

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

The area can be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics. It is completely within Forest Service land and is bounded on the west and south by existing Sandia Mountain Wilderness and should be managed as an extension of that area. The area is roadless. The only interface is with the downhill ski run.

Cibola National Forest Sandia Ranger District

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser

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Address 11024 Montgomery NE #272, ABQ NM 87111

Inventory ID/Location: D5-ADJ6 Foothills Sandia Ranger District

Criterion 1-Apparent Naturalness:

This is an urban interface area. It is native scrub land.

Question 1a. Composition of plant and animal communities? Invasives?

An occasional bear may amble across this area on his way to raid garbage cans, but heavy use by bicyclists and dog walkers tends to discourage wildlife. Mostly native plants, which make a nice backdrop for the suburban homes along the western border of the area. Threat of cheat grass invasion.

Question 1b. Ecological conditions associated with area w/o human intervention? Change from historical conditions? Vegetation restoration treatments? Natural appearance?

Mostly native vegetation but the city is always in view from this area.

Question 1c. Improvements? Landing zones? Roads or unauthorized routes? Fencing or pipelines? Mining activity? Range or wildlife improvements? Watershed treatments? Departure from naturalness of area as a whole?

There is at least one wildlife drinker in the area. Some wire fencing present, maybe marking boundary with existing Wilderness area.

Criterion 2-Opportunities for solitude or primitive & unconfined recreation?

The area offers lots of recreation but no solitude.

Question 2a. Pervasive impacts on opportunity for solitude? Topography, sights and sounds of civilization?

Proximity to recreation developments and high use areas?

The area is bordered by a city of half-a-million people to the west. The vegetation is open and the land gently sloping so there is little visual screening. Simms City Park and Elena Gallegos Picnic Grounds are a high use zone bisecting the area.

Question 2b. Primitive & unconfined recreation opportunity?

Heavily used by bicyclists, joggers, dog walkers and day hikers year round. Visual openness makes it easy for bikers and walkers to share trails safely.

Criterion 3-Stand-alone area <5,000 acres not adjacent? Not applicable.

Cibola NF Sandia RD Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form

ID: D5-ADJ6 Foothills Sandia Ranger District page 2

Date: September 24, 2015 Name: Virginia Seiser vseiser@unm.edu

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities?

Albuquerque is remarkable in having so much well-managed public land along it's borders. This area is an asset to the city, but doesn't in itself have outstanding features.

Criterion 5-Management

Question 5a. Can area be managed to preserve wilderness characteristics? Configuration? Relevant laws?

Non-federal lands? Management of adjacent lands? Cultural & traditional uses? Wildland urban interface?

Management activities or restrictions? Motorized uses? Special use permits? Cherry-stemmed roads?

This area is not suitable for wilderness preservation. While it is adjacent to existing wilderness to the east, it is bounded by developed private land to the west, and bisected by a high use city park. It is a textbook example of wildland-urban interface. There is a little-traveled cherry-stemmed road leading to the Academy Easement.

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