

**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY  
INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION (FORM 2)**

**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

Area Unique Identifier: **Excelsior North- Unit 2**

Acreage: **8,336**

(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).  
In completing steps (1)-(5), use additional space as necessary.

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

**YES**

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc): **The Silver Dyke Canyon and the Thunder Mountain mining activity form the east boundary east; the route that follows along the front of the range forms the south boundary; and the west/north boundary follows the route connecting the Moho Mine with the Thunder Mountain mining district.**

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

**YES**



Note: If “No” is checked the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check “NA” for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

**The Excelsior North Unit 2 offers an outstanding diversity of natural landscapes, from extensive pinyon wooded uplands on along the west and north part of the unit, to steep and convoluted metamorphic and sedimentary rocky canyons carved deep into the unit where the vegetation changes dramatically to embrace the lower desert salt brush habitat. These rugged canyons provide prime habitat for desert bighorn sheep and the springs along the base of the mountain provide critical water supplies for wildlife and wild burros from the adjacent Marietta Wild Burro Range. Throughout the range, old stumps can be found as testament to the wood cutting industry that fueled the surrounding mining activities. This early 20<sup>th</sup> century human activity is substantially unnoticeable as the intervening decades have produced a second growth forest that appears to be entirely natural.**



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*K A Peterson*

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

**YES**

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude): **The rolling hills and piñon uplands of the west part of the unit offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. This densely wooded area was once an important wood resource for the booming surrounding mining towns. Today, the second generation woodlands appear completely natural with only an occasional weathered stump to give any indication that humans had ever visited the area. Deeper exploration into the rugged canyons and steep slopes of the eastern part of the unit furnish visitors with outstanding opportunities to find and enjoy terrain that feels as if no one else has ever passed through. From within these hidden sanctuaries, solitude is complete with an occasional distant view back toward the sprawling desert landscapes far below. The southern escarpment walls, in burnt hues of browns and rust provide an outstanding challenge for any visitor who has the grit to confront these steep and inaccessible country. Most likely your only companions will be the elusive big horn sheep that inhabit these rugged canyons. This challenging country offers visitors with outstanding and complete opportunities for solitude. Silence is the most common sound heard within this unit. For the wilderness explorer who climbs from the foot of this dramatic range to the lofty heights may find themselves sharing the outstanding solitude of this area with a golden eagle silently soaring overhead.**

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

**YES**

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation): **This area offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. From the rolling woodlands of the summit of this unit to the steeper and dry desert canyons on the south and east sides, the diversity of landscape and elevation gain offer opportunities for hikers of all skill levels. The colorful and varied geology of the area provides many wonders for people who enjoy rockhounding. Camping is also an option at select trailheads while the overall size of the area provides the opportunity for backpacking as well. The rugged terrain presents a challenge for any experienced equestrian and the native big horn sheep, mule deer, upland game bird species provide outstanding opportunities for wilderness hunters. This area is an ideal environment for wildlife viewing and photography. Throughout the area exists the opportunity to capture portraits of elusive wild plants, wildlife, or colorful and enigmatic rock formations. From the summit there excellent views of the surround deserts and the bleached playas of Teels Marsh and Garfield Flats provide opportunities for personal enjoyment or subjects for spectacular and vivid photographs. Winter recreation activities run the gamut from hiking in the lower, dry canyons, to and winter backcountry camping in the higher elevations. For the artist, This area offers opportunities for inspiration, sketching, and painting. The Excelsior North Unit 2 area presents visitors outstanding possibilities to challenging themselves with primitive and unconfined recreation.**



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(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

**YES**

Description:

**This area is wealthy in supplemental values. The ecological value is enhanced by its diverse array of habitats within this unit from the deep and dry desert canyons to the high wooded summit. The desert big horn sheep population is well monitored and managed. This area has important historic value as region that helped supply crucial resources to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century mining camps surrounding the area. The geological values are obvious and apparent from the diverse rock types and colors that comprise this steep and rocky area. Archaeological evidence in the form of arrowheads and tools made of chert and obsidian tell of an even deeper prehistoric use of the area. Part of this unit coincides with the Marietta Wild Burro Range.**



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