



United States
Department of
Agriculture



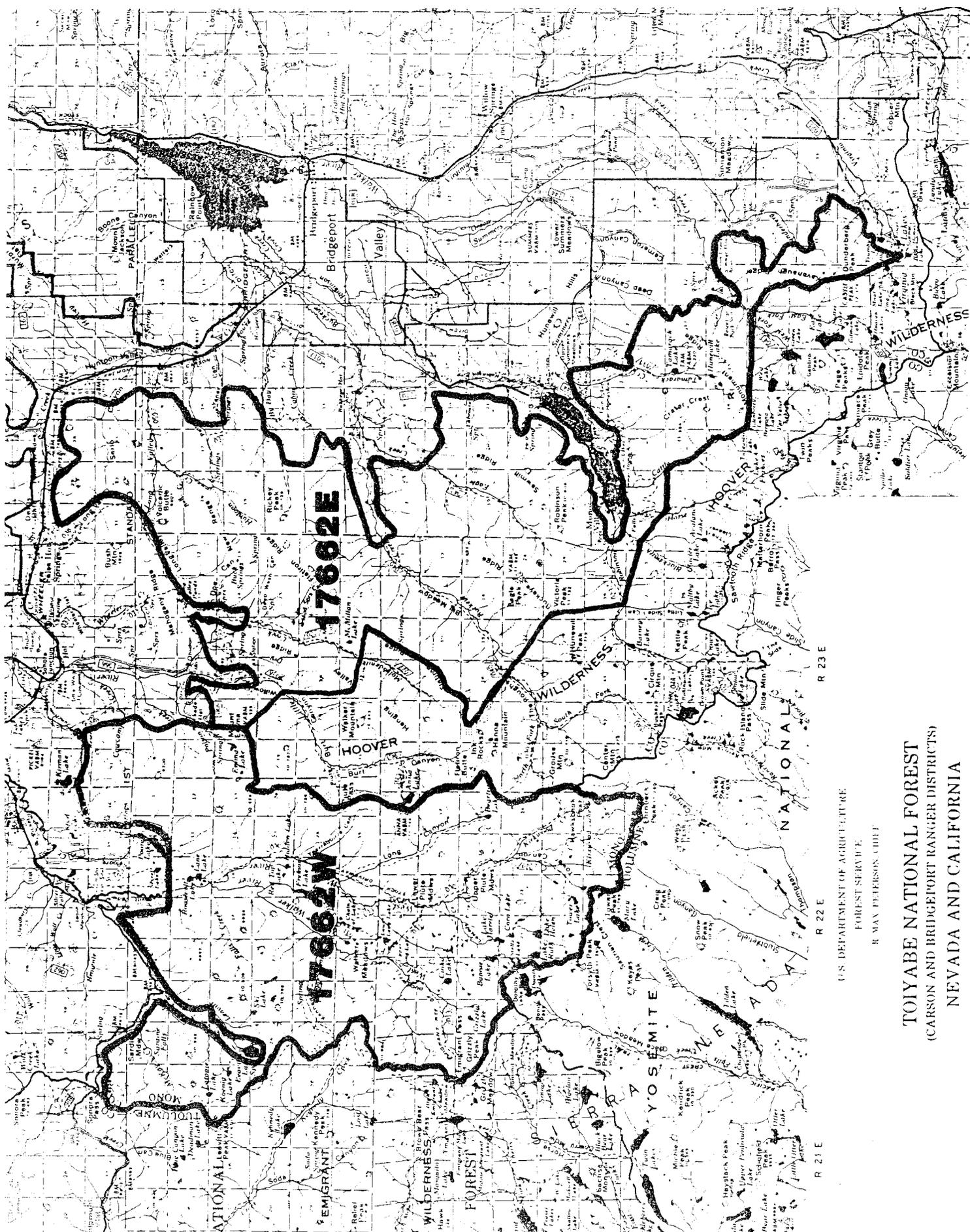
LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Appendix



TOIYABE

NATIONAL FOREST



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 FOREST SERVICE
 R. MAX PETERSON, CHIEF

TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST
 (CARSON AND BRIDGEFORD RANGER DISTRICTS)
 NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA

17662W HOOVER PLANNING AREA

17662E HOOVER FURTHER PLANNING AREA

<u>Roadless Area Name:</u>	<u>Net Acres:</u>
Hoover Planning Area, 17662W	49272
Hoover Further Planning Area, 17662E	54132

Description

As a result of the California Wilderness Act of 1984 the original Hoover Extension roadless area (RARE II) has been split into two areas: The Hoover Planning Area (West Walker portion), and the Hoover Further Planning Area (East Walker portion). A report on wilderness recommendation is due to congress within three years for the Hoover Planning Area. For purposes of this analysis the two areas will be studied as one.

The area is on the Bridgeport Ranger District, about six miles west of Bridgeport California. It is entirely within Mono County, and adjacent to the Emigrant Wilderness. The area surrounding this roadless area includes Yosemite National Park, the Emigrant Wilderness, and Cherry Creek roadless area to the west. To the north is California Highway 108 and U.S. 395. To the east is the Bridgeport Valley.

The area has a very large perimeter and is accessible by many travel routes along the north and eastern boundary. Highway 108 is the primary access on the north. A constructed gravel road in the Little Walker drainage also provides access to the north boundary. Roads leading to the area along the east boundary include the Buckeye road, Robinson Creek County road, Green Creek road, and the Virginia Lakes County road. Numerous trails provide access within the area. The entire west side is only accessible by trail.

The area includes the headwaters of the West Walker River and a portion of the East Walker River. The West Walker River drainage is a large "U" shaped glaciated basin rimmed by many high peaks and numerous lakes. East Walker is less spectacular but still offers a diverse scenic landscape. Elevation varies from about 7,400 to 11,800 feet.

The area is within the Sierran Province-lodgepole pine subalpine forest and alpine meadows and barren ecosystems. Due to the elevational range, a diverse vegetative communities exist, some of the more common species being meadow grasses, lodgepole pine, mixed conifer, and sagebrush-grass. Jeffrey pine stands occur at lower elevations around the fringes of the area.

Recreation use is about 200,000 RVDs per year. Helicopter skiing is currently permitted in portions of the East Walker area. The Soil Conservation Service has a snow course at Center Mountain within the Hoover wilderness. In 1978 a new course was located at Leavitt Lake. The intent is to correlate the two areas and eventually remove the Center Mountain course to reduce conflict with potential wilderness designation.

Special attractions include the emigrant route of the Duckwell party, many high mountain lakes, the headwaters of the West Walker River, Robinson Creek and Green Creek.

Capability

The upper West Walker basin portion of the area is surrounded by high peaks and sharp ridges, providing manageable and identifiable boundaries. The

northern boundary of the West Walker area follows roads and property boundaries and would be manageable. The northeastern boundary of the West Walker and most of the boundary of the East Walker portion crosses drainages and would be difficult to identify on the ground and would not provide readily manageable boundaries. Presently there is some off-highway vehicle and snowmobile encroachment in the Dunderburg Peak and Green Creek areas. The only alternative would be to move the boundary up higher but it still would cross drainages. There are no sharp terrain features to provide a more suitable boundary.

The long term ecological process is intact. There have been some historic modifications caused by logging, mining, and ranching activities. These are now subordinant to the current natural processes.

The scenic values are spectacular. This area represents the northern extension of the Sierra Crest escarpment. The natural beauty dominates over any minor modifications by man.

Most of the area provides high opportunities for solitude through good topographic relief and vegetative screening. Some exceptions are from Robinson Creek south to Virginia Lakes and near popular lakes within the area.

A wide variety of recreational opportunities are present. This includes day hiking, back packing, camping, fishing, hunting, mountain climbing, ski touring, horse riding and photography. There are numerous trails that provide easy movement throughout the area. Also there are extensive opportunities for cross country hiking. Many lakes and streams are present that enhance the recreational experience.

A full range of opportunities exist for a challenging wilderness experience, for all levels of users. For the beginner, there are readily accessible areas capable of instilling a feeling of remoteness, challenge and adventure. For the veteran wilderness user there are many remote areas, especially when combined with adjacent wilderness areas, that can provide a feeling of challenge, self-reliance and judgement.

Special features include historical cabins relating to early mining and ranching activities. There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species.

Availability

Present use is about 200,000 RVDs. This use includes a wide variety of primitive recreational activities as described previously. Overall the area is not at its maximum capacity. However, some popular areas are exceeding acceptable use levels. There are three potential ski areas inventoried in the east side of the area; (1) Eagle Peak, (2) Monument Ridge, and (3) Dunderberg. Although development has not been economically feasible, the potential for development is still good, particularly at Dunderberg.

There is a good diversity of wildlife habitat. The California Fish and Game Department supports wilderness classification to protect the existing habitat. The species that are common to the area include deer, bear, cougar, and coyote. Several trout species are found in the numerous lakes and streams.

The mean annual precipitation is 30 to 40 inches. Soils developed from volcanic flow rock parent materials and also from granitic materials. The volcanic soils vary from shallow to moderately deep and have loamy surface horizons and clayey subsoils. Erosion hazard is slight to moderate. Water holding capacity is low to moderate. Soils of the granitics are sandy throughout their profiles. The area is an important watershed within the Walker River system and produces excellent water quality and quantity. Watershed conditions are generally considered good.

The area is grazed by both cattle and sheep. Cattle utilize the area for 3,694 AUMs, and sheep for 1,370 AUMs.

Much of the area is in a climax stage of vegetation. Vegetative trends are stable. The area meets air quality standards for wilderness.

There is limited commercial timber growing in the area, no estimate of annual potential yield has been calculated. Yield would probably be minimal, and no timber sales are scheduled within the area.

According to preliminary review by the USGS, a potential mineral resource area is located along the northern zone of the Hoover Wilderness and lies mostly in the Hoover roadless area. The mineral resource is not exposed at the surface and more detailed geologic studies and subsurface exploration would be required to define the extent and value of this mineral resource. The USGS report is not completed and is further supplemented by information provided by the Forest Service zone geologist. This information indicates the eastern part of the roadless area has moderate potential for economic mineral utilization. There is no known oil and gas or geothermal resources.

Cultural resources include prehistoric and ethnographic Northern Paiute and Miwok use. Also, there are some cabins and remnants of early mining and ranching activity.

Improvements in the area include primitive roads in Kennedy Canyon, Molybdenite, Stockade, Dunderburg, and Rocky Peak areas. Range and administrative fences are in the area as well as four cabins.

Fire hazard is low in the West Walker portion and moderate to high in the East Walker portion. There are no fuel reduction or modification projects planned.

There is an endemic population of insects and some occurrence of disease. No control projects are planned. The potential exists for epidemic populations of insects due to the presence of old growth timber.

There are 530 acres of private land within the area. These presently have no adverse affect on the current management.

Need

This area is adjacent to the Imigrant and Hoover Wilderness areas and Yosemite National Park. Yosemite Park and Emigrant Wilderness both require permits as use is considered at capacity for these areas. It is located about 250 miles east of the San Francisco Bay area and 350 miles north of Los Angeles.

During RARE II, 83% of the public response favored wilderness. Preservation

groups strongly favor wilderness classification for all or part of the area. The RARE II process resulted in recommendations of wilderness for the majority of the West Walker portion, and further planning for the East Walker portion. The Mono County Board of Supervisors has gone on record opposing additional acres of wilderness in Mono County. However, the board has not objected to inclusion of the West Walker portion in proposed legislation. The Board also wants to maintain options for development of down hill ski areas in the area directly west of Bridgeport from buckeye Creek south to Virginia Creek. The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board supports wilderness designation in order to protect the water quality of the area.

The California Wilderness Act of 1984 identified the western half of the area as a Congressional Wilderness Study Area requiring the Forest Service prepare and submit a recommendation to the Congress within three years of the date of the Act. The Hoover Further Planning Area was also placed in Further Planning status, but no special reporting was required. The Congressional intent for this area was for wilderness to be evaluated in the normal Land Management Planning process. Because of the above, the Hoover roadless area will be presented in two areas for evaluating the effects of wilderness/nonwilderness prescriptions.

The ecosystems represented in the Hoover roadless area are common throughout the Sierras, and is probably not needed to represent a specific ecosystem type within the wilderness system.