

SWAMP CEDAR INSTANT STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA - 3,200 acres

The Swamp Cedar Natural Area is located in Spring Valley approximately 23 air miles east of the town of Ely, Nevada in White Pine County, and contains 3,200 acres of public land. The Natural Area was designated in 1970 to protect the unusual ecosystem of the area, a low marshy zone which supports a large stand of Rocky Mountain Juniper (Juniperus scopulorum). The Natural Area was inventoried and evaluated in conjunction with the surrounding 5,820 acre roadless review area NV-040-089. The 9,020 acre review unit was found to lack wilderness character during an accelerated wilderness inventory conducted for the Intermountain Power Project.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE - 0 acres recommended for wilderness 3,200 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The Swamp Cedar Natural Area and its contiguous roadless acreage were determined to lack the wilderness characteristic of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. 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 Swamp Cedar Natural Area as wilderness would be that all uses which previously were compatible with natural area management would continue to be permitted. The area is expected to remain in a natural condition due to the presence of marshy terrain that would prevent most surface disturbing activities.

3. WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

A. Naturalness: Very little alteration of the natural character of the landscape has occurred within the study area and roadless review area. Lands surrounding these areas have been substantially intruded upon by ranching and mining activities and by powerline construction. The marshy conditions found within the study area have contributed to the natural appearance of the roadless lands and the Natural Area. These areas generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

B. Solitude: There is fairly good vegetative screening provided by the small swamp cedar trees in the Natural Area which provides some opportunity for solitude. The flat topography and small size of the study area limit the ability of a visitor to find opportunities for solitude. Opportunities for solitude in the study area are considered to be less than outstanding.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Nature study, hiking, camping and photography are all possible within the study area although these activities are limited by marshy conditions, but neither the diversity nor quality of these activities are considered outstanding.

D. Special Features: The marshy ecosystem and associated stand of Rocky Mountain Juniper is quite unusual, and is found only at four locations in the world. There is evidence that a significant historical site, the battlefield of the Goshute War of 1863, is located within the study area.

4. MANAGEABILITY

The area is not manageable as wilderness due to its small size, lack of natural boundaries and limited

wilderness character.

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. The potential for occurrence of oil and gas resources within the study area is considered to be high. The potential for other mineral resources is considered to be low or no potential for occurrence.

6. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Swamp Cedar Natural Area was inventoried along with the roadless review area in which it is located (NV-040-089) during an early special inventory conducted in conjunction with the Intermountain Power Project. A public meeting to describe the findings of the special inventory and to invite public comment was held in Ely, Nevada on November 14, 1978. A 90-day public review period was held from November 19, 1978 to February 16, 1979. Meetings were also held in Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada during the public comment period.

No public comment was received during the public review period regarding the Swamp Cedar Natural Area or roadless area NV-040-089. One letter supporting wilderness designation for the Swamp Cedar area was received after the comment period had ended.