

APPENDIX 3B
Visual Resource Inventory Summary

Visual Resource Inventory Summary

The following land areas were selected by the BLM El Centro Field Office within Eastern San Diego County RMP Planning Area to re-evaluate the current status of the visual resources:

- Buck Canyon, San Ysidro Mountains
- San Felipe Hills WSA
- Volcan Mountains & Chariot Canyon
- McCain Valley West
- Lark Canyon OHV Area, Campground, & Cottonwood Campground
- McCain Valley East
- Airport Mesa, south of Table Mountain

Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	Scenic Quality Rating ¹	Visual Sensitivity	Distance Zone(s)	Visual Inventory Classification ²
Buck Canyon, San Ysidro Mountains	A	High, considering recreational users/sightseers, adjacent San Ysidro Mountain WSA, and general expectation for scenic quality in this somewhat remote area.	Foreground. This is a small area, visible and within 1–2 miles of County Route S22, and within 0–0.5 miles of the unpaved access road traveling through it. It is also visible from higher elevation areas of the adjacent WSA, 0–3 miles to the east/northeast.	II
San Felipe Hills WSA	A	High, considering recreational users/sightseers, public interest, status of this area as a WSA, and presence of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, which generally follows the central ridgeline of this area.	Foreground. Highly visible and within 0–1.5 miles of County Route S2, Hoover Canyon Road, and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.	I ³
Volcan Mountains & Chariot Canyon	A ⁴	High, considering recreational users/sightseers, high visibility, presence of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in the eastern portion of Chariot Canyon, and adjacency of Granite Mountain Wilderness Area (to the east).	Foreground. Highly visible and within 0-1.5 miles of Inspiration Point and elsewhere along State Route 79, Chariot Canyon Road, and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail	II

Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	Scenic Quality Rating ¹	Visual Sensitivity	Distance Zone(s)	Visual Inventory Classification ²
McCain Valley West	A	Medium High, considering recreational users/sightseers, public interest, proximity to In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC, and high visibility. Sensitivity is tempered by presence of authorized and unauthorized trails, and adjacency of OHV staging and use area.	Foreground. Highly visible and within 0-3 miles of McCain Valley Road, and private land and roads further west in McCain Valley. Also visible from the Carrizo and Sacatone Overlooks and other higher elevations within the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness and the In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC	II
Lark Canyon OHV Area, Campground, & Cottonwood Campground	C ⁵	Medium Low: Overall sensitivity is tempered by high degree of OHV use and associated expectation of surface disturbance and visual impacts.	Foreground. Adjacent to and highly visible from McCain Valley Road and within 2-3 miles of the Sacatone Overlook.	IV
McCain Valley East	A	High, considering recreational users/sightseers, high visibility, relative lack of cultural modification, adjacency of In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC, and proximity of Carrizo Gorge Wilderness Area (to the east).	Foreground. Highly visible and within 0-1.5 miles of McCain Valley Road and Carrizo Overlook. Also visible from the Sacatone Overlook and other higher elevations within the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness and the In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC	II
Airport Mesa, south of Table Mountain	B	Medium Low: Overall sensitivity is tempered by use, existing roads, adjacency to International Border, ongoing activities, and surface disturbance. Recreational use/sightseeing is low in this area due to border security and public safety issues.	Foreground. Highly visible and within 0–1.5 miles of Interstate 8 and State Route 94.	III

¹ See attached Scenic Quality Field Inventory forms for each of the areas.

² Visual Resource Inventory Classification assignments are determined by the BLM matrix included at the bottom of page 3. Inventory classes do not establish management direction. Management Classes are assigned by the RMP and are based on the RMP management decisions.

³ In accordance with BLM VRM Manual H-8410-1 and 2000 IM 2000-096, Visual Resource Inventory Class I is assigned to areas, such as Wildern and WSAs, where a management decision has been made to maintain a natural landscape—regardless of Scenic Quality.

⁴ Unless managed as Wilderness or WSA, all areas of Scenic Quality A rating are assigned Class II.

⁵ Unless managed as Wilderness or WSA, all areas of Scenic Quality C rating are assigned Class IV, except those areas of High Sensitivity within Foreground Zones, which are assigned Class III.

Matrix for Assigning Visual Resource Inventory Classes:

		Visual Sensitivity Levels					
		High		Medium		Low	
Special Areas		I	I	I	I	I	I
Scenic Quality	A	II	II	II	II	II	II
	B	II	III	III*	III	IV	IV
				IV*			
	C	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
		f/m	b	s/s	f/m	b	s/s
		Distance Zones					

* If adjacent areas are Class III or lower, assign Class III, and if higher, assign Class IV.
 Source: BLM VRM Manual 8410

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	Buck Canyon, San Ysidro Mts.

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Steep to gently rolling and rocky hills, and gently rolling upland valleys	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern	Minimal, few road cuts
Line	Angular slopes, jagged and rounded rock formations	Rounded masses	Serpentine
Color	Tans and grays of rock outcrops and boulders	Dark to light greens of oaks and shrubs, lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals, seasonal color of wildflowers	Tan dirt road cuts
Texture	Moderate to very coarse, depending on distance and rock outcroppings	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

This +/-1 square mile area is located to the west/southwest of the San Ysidro Mountain WSA, approximately 10 miles north/northeast of Julian, California, and one mile north of San Diego County Route S22. The area classified as Class III by the Management Framework Plan (MFP). The area appears to receive relatively light use and vegetative cover is mostly intact. Two mineshaft sites are present, but there are no active mining claims. <The MFP identified this area as> is a "Limited Use Area" for OHV uses and approved unpaved routes are present- no cross-country vehicle travel is allowed. Rugged, and in places steep, terrain on the access road from County Route S22 restricts casual use. Rock outcroppings and boulders throughout this area have served as natural limitations to unauthorized OHV use and have protected the intactness of adjacent vegetation. The existing character of the landscape is mostly retained and the level of change and contrast is moderate to low. Large oaks and snags, which provide visual interest and raptor nesting areas, contribute to overall visual quality. Overall Scenic Quality is High (A).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total	Scenic Quality Classification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform	4			4	
Vegetation		3		3	
Water				0	
Color	4			4	
Adjacent Scenery	4			4	
Scarcity		3		3	
Cultural Modification		3		3	
Totals:	12	9		21	

Representative Photographs:



Steep to moderately sloped hills and mountainous, rugged terrain; numerous boulders and rock outcrops; contrasting colors and texture of vegetation patterns.



High variety of forms, line, color, pattern, and texture; seasonal color adds to visual interest.



Variation in plant species, color and structure provides visual contrast. Dirt road cuts contrasts moderately with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture.



Low level of cultural modification and adjacent undisturbed lands contribute to sense of remoteness.

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	San Felipe Hills WSA

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Even, steep-sloped hills; relatively level to gently rolling valleys; limited rock outcrops;	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern; occasional jagged form of vegetation snags	Minimal, few road cuts, overhead lines and poles
Line	Angular slopes, rounded and angular boulders and rock outcrops	Rounded masses; even edges of past burn areas	Linear and serpentine
Color	Tans and grays of boulders and rock outcrops	Dark to light greens of oaks and shrubs, lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals, seasonal color of wildflowers	Tan dirt road cuts, brown poles
Texture	Medium to coarse, depending on distance and rock outcroppings	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium to fine

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

This set of steep hills is located south of Buck Canyon and the San Ysidro WSA, along the east side of San Diego County Route S2, and two miles southwest of the townsite of Ranchita. The Management Framework Plan (MFP) map did not assign a VRM Class to this area, but as a WSA, it would be managed as Class I. The area appears to receive relatively light use and vegetative cover is mostly intact. The area is highly visible in the foreground view from S2, and from the unpaved roadway that follows Grapevine Canyon. Areas of surface disturbance are few and seldom seen from travel routes. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail alignment follows the +/-7 mile ridgeline of these hills and commands views of this and adjacent areas. Large oaks and snags, particularly in the Grapevine Canyon/east side, provide visual interest, raptor nesting areas, and contribute to overall visual quality. **<The MFP identified this area as>** a "Limited Use Area" for OHV use and there only a few approved unpaved routes. Rugged terrain, rock outcroppings and boulders throughout this area naturally restrict unauthorized OHV use and protect intactness of adjacent vegetation. Past burn areas on eastern slopes of mountains are somewhat visible- selective cutting to create irregular edges to these burn areas would reduce visual contrast, increase naturalness, and improve visual quality. Overall Scenic Quality is moderately High (A).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total	Scenic Quality Classification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform		3		3	
Vegetation		3		3	
Water				0	
Color		3		3	
Adjacent Scenery	4			4	
Scarcity		3		3	
Cultural Modification		3		3	
Totals:	4	15		19	

Representative Photographs:



Large oaks and snags, particularly in the Grapevine Canyon / east side, provide visual interest, raptor nesting areas, and contribute to overall scenic quality.



Area appears to receive relatively light use and vegetative cover is mostly intact. Overhead lines and poles are visible but do not dominate. Most of the area is highly visible in the foreground view from County Route S2, and from the unpaved roadway that follows Grapevine Canyon.



Variation in plant species and structure provides visual contrast; seasonal color of flowers is appealing. Rich color combinations are common.



Dirt road cuts contrasts with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture but do not dominate. Openness of landscape allows views of distant remote mountains.

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	Volcan Mountains, Chariot Canyon

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Even, steep-sloped mountain sides with rounded tops; gently rolling valleys; some areas of intermittent flow	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern; jagged forms of vegetation snags	Road cuts and adjacent development
Line	Angular slopes, rounded and angular boulders and rock outcrops; even edges of past burn areas	Rounded masses with jagged, angular lines of snags and tree trunks	Linear and serpentine; rectangular and rounded
Color	Tans of soil surface	Dark to light greens of oaks, sycamores, pines, and shrubs; light cream of sycamore trunks; lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals, seasonal color of wildflowers	Tan dirt road cuts, lighter colored structures
Texture	Medium	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium to coarse

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

These areas are located east/southeast of the town of Julian, and 5-10 miles south of the San Felipe Hills. It was classified as Class II by the MFP. There is limited development in the area, including the adjacent Whispering Pines private land area to the south of SR-78 (Banner Canyon Roadway). There is relatively little surface disturbance impact visible from primary viewing routes, with the exception of a road scar on eastern front that is moderately visible from SR-78 and County Route S2. Chariot Canyon has intermittent stream flow. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail traverses the easternmost area; Granite Mountain Wilderness (within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park) is adjacent to the east. Overall Scenic Quality is high (A).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total	Scenic Quality Classification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform	4			4	
Vegetation		3		3	
Water			1	1	
Color		3		3	
Adjacent Scenery	4			4	
Scarcity		3		3	
Cultural Modification		3		3	
Totals:	8	12	1	21	

Representative Photographs:



Openness of landscape allows views of distant remote mountains and valley floor. Vegetative density is higher along drainageways and results in contrasting darker patches of oaks and other plants, increased visual variety and enhanced visual quality.



Road cuts are visible but are few and do not dominate.



Adjacent development and structures in Whispering Pines area are noticeable and result in visual contrast in form, line, color and texture, but are not strongly discordant.



Large trees and intermittent flow along drainages are visually attractive and result in increased biodiversity and enhanced scenic quality.

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	McCain Valley West

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Steep to gently rolling and rocky hills, and broad, gently rolling upland valleys	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern	Authorized & unauthorized OHV trails
Line	Angular slopes, jagged and rounded rock formations	Rounded masses	Serpentine
Color	Tans and grays of rock outcrops and boulders	Dark to light greens of oaks and shrubs, lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals	Tan dirt road cuts
Texture	Moderate to very coarse, depending on distance and rock outcroppings	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium to fine

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

This area is located north of I-8, and west of McCain Valley Road (but not including the Lark Canyon OHV Area or Cottonwood Campground.) It was classified as Class II by the Management Framework Plan (MFP). Landscape character is generally rugged with many areas of rock outcrops and boulders. Vegetation consists of masses and smaller patches of oaks and shrubs, with diverse structure and pattern, especially when contrasted with boulder formations. Landscape disturbance from cultural modification is relatively limited, in part due to the rugged terrain and patches of dense vegetation. Several areas provide opportunities for scenic views of nearby scenic areas (e.g., views of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains and Carrizo Gorge Wilderness to the east, Sawtooth Mountains to the north, and Laguna Mountains to the west/northwest. Overall Scenic Quality is moderately High (A).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total / Rationale	Scenic Quality Classification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform	4			4	
Vegetation	4			4	
Water				0	
Color		3		3	
Adjacent Scenery			2	2	
Scarcity		3		3	
Cultural Modification		3		3	
Totals:	8	9	2	19	

Representative Photographs:



Views east of steep slopes, rugged terrain, and texture of vegetation patterns.



Distant road cut contrasts with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture (view north).



Boulders and relatively dense vegetation near Sacatone overlook area. Patches of less dense vegetation and lighter colors provide visual contrast.



Transition between McCain Valley West area and Lark Canyon OHV Area: surface disturbance contrasts strongly with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture.

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	McCain Valley: Lark Canyon OHV Area and Cottonwood Campgrounds

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Gently rolling to relatively level upland terrain	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern	Network of interconnected OHV trails and surface disturbance
Line	Angular slopes, jagged and rounded rock formations	Rounded masses	Serpentine
Color	Tans and grays of rock outcrops and boulders	Dark to light greens of oaks and shrubs, lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals	Tan dirt road cuts
Texture	Moderate to very coarse, depending on distance and rock outcroppings	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

These areas are located north of I-8, west of McCain Valley Road and include the Lark Canyon OHV Area and Campground, and the Cottonwood Campground. They were classified as Class II by the Management Framework Plan (MFP). The adjacent landscape character is generally rugged with some areas of rock outcrops and boulders. Much of these areas have moderate to high levels of surface disturbance. Vegetation consists of masses and smaller patches of oaks and shrubs, with open areas with little or no vegetative cover. Landscape disturbance from cultural modification is relatively high, due to the allowed use of these areas for camping, as well as authorized and unauthorized OHV staging and use in and nearby this area. Overall Scenic Quality is low (C).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total / Rationale	Scenic Quality Classification <input type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform			2	2	
Vegetation			2	2	
Water				0	
Color			2	2	
Adjacent Scenery		3		3	
Scarcity			1	1	
Cultural Modification			1	1	
Totals:		3	8	11	

Representative Photographs:



View of Lark Canyon OHV Area: surface disturbance contrasts strongly with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture.



OHV area is characterized by open areas with little or not vegetative cover.



Campground facilities have surface disturbance areas as well as adjacent vegetated areas.



OHV use of sloped terrain results in noticeable visual contrast and scarring and erosion.

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	McCain Valley East

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Steep to gently rolling and rocky hills, and gently rolling upland valleys	Simple rounded forms and masses, uneven pattern	Minimal, few road cuts
Line	Angular slopes, jagged and rounded rock formations	Rounded masses	Serpentine
Color	Tans and grays of rock outcrops and boulders	Dark to light greens of oaks and shrubs, lighter greens and tans of grasses and annuals	Tan dirt road cuts
Texture	Medium to very coarse, depending on distance and rock outcroppings	Medium to coarse, depending on density and structural diversity of vegetation	Medium to fine

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

This area is located north of I-8, east of McCain Valley Road and west of the Carrizo Gorge Wilderness (VRM Class I). It was classified as Class II by the Management Framework Plan (MFP). Landscape character is generally rugged with many areas of rock outcrops and boulders. Vegetation consists of masses and smaller patches of oaks and shrubs, with diverse structure and pattern, especially when contrasted with boulder formations. Landscape disturbance from cultural modification is relatively limited, in part due to the rugged terrain and patches of dense vegetation. Several areas provide opportunities for scenic views of distant areas (e.g., views of Carrizo Gorge Wilderness, Carrizo Canyon Wilderness, Jacumba Mountain Wilderness viewed from Sacatone and Carrizo Overlooks). Overall Scenic Quality is High (A).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total	Scenic Quality Classification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform	4			4	
Vegetation	4			4	
Water				0	
Color		3		3	
Adjacent Scenery	4			4	
Scarcity		3		3	
Cultural Modification	4			4	
Totals:	16	6		22	

Representative Photographs:



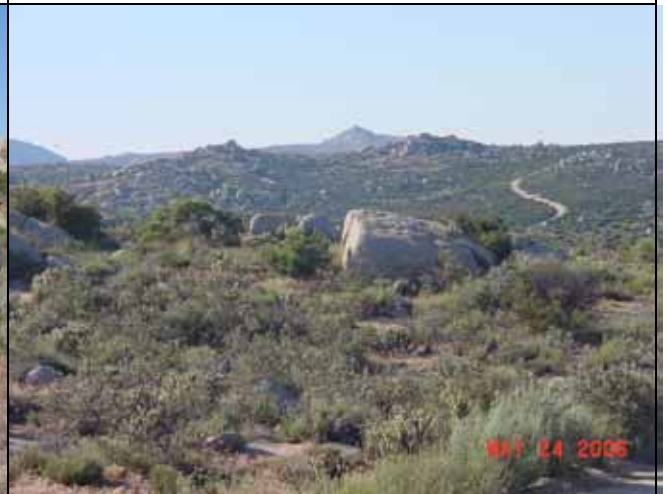
Rugged terrain of boulders and rock outcrops, and contrasting colors and texture of vegetation patterns.



Drier, more rugged terrain in transition zone to Carrizo Gorge Wilderness area.



Boulders and relatively dense vegetation near Sacatone overlook area. Patches of less dense vegetation and lighter colors provide visual contrast.



Distant road cut contrasts with adjacent non-disturbed areas in color and texture (view north).

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Scenic Quality Field Inventory	Field Evaluation:	May 2006
	Evaluator:	RECON (Woods)
	District:	California Desert District
	Field Office:	El Centro
	Resource Area:	Eastern San Diego County
	Scenic Quality Rating Unit:	Airport Mesa area, south of Table Mountain

Landscape Character: (see representative photos on reverse side)

	Landform/Water	Vegetation	Structures (General)
Form	Even, moderately-steep-sloped hillsides with rounded to relatively level tops; relatively flat adjacent lowlands	Low rounded forms and masses, even pattern	Road cuts and border fence
Line	Smooth and rounded	Rounded masses	Linear
Color	Tans of soil surface	Light greens and gray colors of shrubs, tans of grasses and annuals, muted tones with little color variation or contrast	Tan dirt road cuts
Texture	Relatively smooth	Medium to fine, depending on viewing distance	Medium

Narrative / Representative landscape character:

This area is located south of Interstate 8 and Table Mountain, and just north of the International Border, in the far southeast corner of the ESDC Planning Area. It was classified as Class II by the Management Framework Plan (MFP) (except for small area associated with townsite of Jacumba, which was classified as Class III.) The visual quality and landscape character varies, but is generally not distinctive or highly scenic. The upland area of the mesa provides good viewing vantage of the adjacent lower elevations and is used as an overlook site for the Border Patrol. There is ongoing surface disturbance associated with related border security activities (patrolling, observation, etc.) Overall Scenic Quality of the Airport Mesa area itself is Medium (B).

Scenic Quality Score & Classification:

	High (4-5)	Medium (3)	Low (1-2)	Total / Rationale	Scenic Quality Classification <input type="checkbox"/> A (>18) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B (12-18) <input type="checkbox"/> C (<12)
Landform		3		3	
Vegetation			2	2	
Water				0	
Color			2	2	
Adjacent Scenery			1	1	
Scarcity			2	2	
Cultural Modification		3		3	
Totals:		6	7	13	

Representative Photographs:



Rounded form of mesa rises from adjacent agricultural lands; graded road along International Border has a strong linear form and moderate to high visual contrast with adjacent undisturbed hillslopes. Metal border fence extends along southern tip of mesa, partially up the mesa slopes.



Vegetation of mesa and adjacent lowlands is relatively uniform in texture and color, with subtle differences in muted tones noticed at closer viewing range.



Landforms of mesa and adjacent mountains provide vertical relief in contrast to relatively level adjacent lowlands. Little or no variety and contrast in vegetation.



Metal border fence extends along southern tip of the mesa, partially up the mesa slopes.

