

## VI - INYO MTS. UNIT

### A. LOCATION

The Inyo Mts. Unit is simply the southern extension of the White Mountains. The boundaries are delineated by the Forest boundary on the west, east and south sides, and by the Westgard Pass highway on the north.

### B. DESCRIPTION (Resources and Uses)

The unit is only lightly used and contains meager resources of any kind except possibly mining. It is questionable that it should ever have been incorporated within the boundaries of a National Forest. No sustained water flows are found within the unit, and there are only a few springs. The west slope is barren of vegetation except at the top which sustains a light cover of piñon and bristlecone pine.

The east slope and the vicinity around Little and Big Cowhorn is interspersed with a light to dense cover of piñon pine, bunch grass and brush species. One grazing permittee runs in the northern portion around Squaw Flat, but this operation is irregular because of lack of sustained water flow from springs. In 1946 or '47, the Forest Service attempted to drill a well in Big Cowhorn, but never located water. A temporary grazing permit for early seasonal use was granted to an individual in 1948 in Big Cowhorn. Water was hauled from Big Pine, and the operation soon proved uneconomical.

Considerable mining activity is carried on, but it is in the nature of prospecting. No operation of economic importance exists at present. Many low standard dirt roads meander over and through the more accessible areas and their origin is unknown and their eventual fate unpredictable. Miners and hunters use them in a casual way. Inyo County maintains one road from the Westgard Pass highway to Saline Valley via Marble Canyon. Saline Valley is a low, alkaline sink with heavy salt deposits which may someday be of economic importance. Talc is mined and hauled out via this road.

Wildlife is scarce and limited by water. Mountain sheep are known to be in the area and were hunted heavily at one time by miners and early settlers. Large herds of wild burros infest the area and undoubtedly having a detrimental effect upon mountain sheep through control of water sources. There is a small local population of deer and they are hunted lightly by the more hardy local people.

### C. ZONES

This unit contains no zones, for it is so much the same and is all equally inaccessible.



D. RESOURCES - MANAGEMENT RANK AND OBJECTIVES

Mining is undoubtedly the highest ranking value, followed by grazing or timber. All are of such minor importance at present that it is difficult to ascertain their rank. At some future date, piñon pine may have an increased value for fuel wood or by-products from the resin.

E. PLANNING PERIOD

A planning period of ten years is arbitrarily established.

F. EXISTING OR POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS

None at present, nor can any be foreseen. The unit requires very little administrative attention at present, but a national emergency or the discovery of large deposits of a critically needed metal could change the entire picture. It is difficult for us to understand how any area can be so entirely worthless, therefore, we make such a statement with reservations.