

A wide-angle photograph of the North Sahwawe mountain range. The mountains are rugged and rocky, with some snow patches visible on the higher elevations. The foreground shows a dry, grassy slope with sparse vegetation. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

North Sahwawe

Current Proposed Acres: 13,875

CBLC Proposed Acres: 15,047

Current Management Status: BLM Lands with Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

Area Description

The Sahwawe Mountains, like most Nevada ranges, are a north-south trending range marked by a steep central ridgeline. In the northern part of the range this vertical relief is most pronounced, with a number of steep outcroppings and cliff areas and groves of juniper at the highest elevations. From the high point of the range (Juniper Mountain at 7,474 feet) to Juniper Pass on the northern boundary, the Northern Sahwawe proposal would protect the most scenic and rugged part of the range.

Naturalness

White granite rock formations create the most outstanding feature of this area. Throughout the North Sahwaves, fantastic rock formations top the peaks and ridges. Between these formations, open groves of junipers and native grasses create private, park-like retreats in the white decomposed granitic soils. Many of the “parks” have small ephemeral pools that temporarily capture precious water nestled in the tops of some formations. Several springs are scattered throughout the range. Each spring creates a tiny oasis of water loving vegetation and provides a crucial resource for the California bighorn sheep that frequent this range. The Sahwaves also provide summer and transitional range for mule deer. American kestrels, Gray flycatchers, upland game birds, coyotes and bobcats live within the area. Pronghorn utilize the open foothills and surrounding flats. The multitude of granitic cliffs and boulder outcrops within this area provide secure nesting sites and perches for large predatory birds. Visitors are often surprised by the large shadow of a soaring golden eagle crossing their path. Wild horse and burro trails wind throughout the area. Winters in the North Sahwawe can be deeply quiet. Spring bursts forth with a visual riot of the many wildflower species and a cacophony of bird songs. Although Juniper Mountain is the highpoint of the range, the summit ridge continues north for nearly two miles with several additional highpoints rising to within 20 feet of Juniper Mountain itself.



North Sahwave

Recreation and Solitude

From the highest points of the Sahwaves, there are spectacular views of several Wilderness Study Areas, the Black Rock National Conservation Area, and down onto the white spectacle of Bluewing Flat, a large dry lakebed to the east. Additional vistas include the stunning formations of the Lava Beds to the west, King Lear Peak to the north, the northern Sierras to the west, and the Stillwater and Clan Alpine mountains to the southeast. The ubiquitous stands of juniper and secluded rock gardens provide cover not only for the wildlife of the region, but also for hikers looking to get out of the midday sun or late afternoon zephyr. The weather in the North Sahwave Mountains can be quite unpredictable in the fall and spring with sudden storm moving in from California. The quiet and solitude here are outstanding; one gets the impression that you can almost hear the music of the earth turning. Hiking, camping, backpacking, upland bird hunting, and mule deer and California bighorn sheep hunting are all outstanding in the North Sahwave area. A record bighorn sheep was taken here in the Sahwaves. Photographers will find a paradise in the Sahwaves with intriguing rock formations, long vistas, continually changing light and shadows. Wildlife photography, star gazing, and exploration and route finding opportunities are also outstanding.

Issues and Proposed Resolution

During the Checkerboard Lands Committee process sponsored by Pershing County Commission over the period of time from 2004-2006. After a series of meetings and field trips, the Checkerboard Committee recommended to the Pershing County Commission the North Sahwave be considered for wilderness. This proposal was then adopted by the Pershing County Commission on March 1, 2006. When the Winnemucca BLM began working on identifying resource inventory information as a part of the Resource Management Plan, based on the Checkerboard Lands Committee recommendation, North Sahwave was included as having as having wilderness values. When the Winnemucca BLM resource management plan was finalized, North Sahwave was included as part of the final decision.

During the current series of public meetings, no specific issues have been brought forward. There are no mining claims or leases in the area and it is considered to have little if any mineral potential. Access routes for ranching and hunting have been identified and will remain open for motorized use.

Maps

The maps on the following pages show the original North Sahwave area as well as the revised area where conflicts have been resolved.

