

Wilderness Characteristics Evaluation

Interdisciplinary Team Signature Sheet

The following interdisciplinary (ID) team reviewed the citizen's wilderness proposal. The review included field inventory and an analysis of the routes within the proposed area, as well as an evaluation of the wilderness characteristics within the proposed area. This signature sheet documents the BLM ID Team members that participated in this wilderness evaluation process along with the member's agreement with the conclusions reached in the road analysis forms and wilderness character form completed for the proposal. These forms are contained in this wilderness inventory file.

Proposed WSA: Fish Creek Rim Addition

Team Members:

Theresa Romasko Theresa Romasko Date: 5/4/2009
Associate Field Manager for Range, Fuels, Weeds, Botany, and Special Forest Products

Todd Forbes Todd Forbes Date: 5/4/2009
Associate Field Manager for Wildlife, Fisheries, Riparian, Hydrology, Wilderness, Recreation, and Cultural

Paul Whitman Paul Whitman Date: 5/4/2009
Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Les Boothe Les Boothe Date: 5/4/2009
Range Management Specialist

Kim McLean Todd Forbes for Kim McLean Date: 5/4/09
Recreation/Wilderness Specialist

Jayna Ferrell Jayna Ferrell Date: 5/4/09
Range Management Specialist

Year: 2009

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-117A/Monument Flat

FORM 1

**DOCUMENTATION OF BLM WILDERNESS INVENTORY
FINDINGS ON RECORD**

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

No ___ Yes X

a) Inventory Source: Wilderness Inventory: Oregon and Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions November 1980

b) Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s): Monument Flat/OR-015-117A

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): U.S. Department of the Interior: Bureau of Land Management Oregon: Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decisions November, 1980

d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area, Lakeview, Oregon

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory unit is associated with the area, list each unit and answer each question individually for each inventory unit):

Ownership	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
BLM	16,240	N	N	N	Unknown
Private	560				

Inventory Source: Wilderness Inventory: Oregon and Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

a. Unit Number/Name: OR-015-117A/ Monument Flat

(1) Is the unit of sufficient size?

Yes X No

Citizen Information Received: In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 17,417-acre proposed Fish Creek Rim Addition Wilderness Study Area (WSA). ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and GIS data with their route and photo point data; all of these materials were considered during the BLM's wilderness inventory process for this BLM Unit. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in September of 2004. They identified the area as having no interior routes which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see p. 79-86 of ONDA, 2005).

Boundary Determination and Consideration of Citizen Information: Between 2006 and 2008, BLM conducted its own field inventory of the area to update its road and wilderness inventory for the area and to gather additional information to supplement ONDA's information. This field work included photo documentation of the boundary routes and some of the interior routes. Using both ONDA and BLM photos, field logs, and staff field knowledge, a BLM inter-disciplinary (ID) team completed an analysis of the main motorized routes within the area in 2008.

The results of the route analysis are documented in the road analysis forms contained in the wilderness evaluation file. On the west, the unit is bounded by the Bonneville Power Association (BPA) power line right-of-way (750 feet from centerline). On the south, the unit is bounded by BLM Road 7142-00. On the east, the unit is bounded by BLM Road 7105-00 (Map 2). On the north, the unit is bounded by a combination of private lands and BLM Roads 8125-00 and 8125-B0. In addition to all of the main boundary routes, the BLM ID team determined that a portion of one additional interior route that ONDA identified as a "way" still meets the wilderness definition of a road, and forms a "cherry-stem" boundary extending into the unit (see Map 1, road analysis forms, photos, photo logs, and BLM ID team minutes in the wilderness inventory file for additional supporting information regarding these boundary determinations). The inventory unit currently contains about 17,725 acres of BLM-administered land and about 120 acres of private land inholdings locate near the northwest boundary (Map 2).

Following the boundary determination, the BLM ID team subsequently reviewed ONDA's information, examined the previous inventory information contained in the BLM's wilderness inventory files and published inventory documents, and its own field inventory information, and then conducted an inter-disciplinary evaluation of the current wilderness characteristics within the unit boundary. The results are contained in the

following sections. Since the ID team determined that BLM Roads 7124-00 and 7105-00 still serve as a unit boundary, the Monument Flat unit was evaluated solely on its own merit separate from, rather than contiguous with the existing Fish Creek Rim WSA. Additional background on the process that the BLM ID team followed during this evaluation is contained in the ID team meeting notes and the document, *Wilderness Inventory Maintenance Process for the Lakeview Resource Area, BLM*. Both documents are contained in the wilderness inventory file.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS:

The inventory unit is located about 4 miles northwest of Adel, Oregon. This unit is roughly triangular in shape and is about 7.2 miles long and 6 miles wide. The unit is relatively flat throughout (0-15% slopes), with minor topographical depressions and drainages. The vegetative cover is high-desert sagebrush and grasses with expanding pockets of young juniper trees scattered throughout.

(2) Is the unit in a natural condition?

Yes No N/A

1980 Unit Description: The previous inventory described the majority of the area as a high sage flat with minor depressions and drainages. The vegetation consisted of sagebrush and grasses with scattered western juniper trees on the east and at several springs. The 500-KV BPA power line defining the western boundary was found to have a substantial impact on the naturalness of the area, presumably due to its visibility from almost any point within the unit. The unit contained a fence line, 14 miles of vehicle ways, and nine constructed livestock reservoirs which were determined to cumulatively detract from the natural appearance of the area. The unit was found to be marginal in terms of meeting the naturalness criteria.

Current Condition Description: The area topography and vegetation have changed little since 1980. Vegetation data from the BLM's ecological site inventory shows the evaluation unit is dominated by low sagebrush/grassland vegetation (66.7%), western juniper/grassland vegetation (7.7%), rockland (ie unvegetated; 5.0%), and mountain big sagebrush/grassland (4.3%) cover types. Small pockets of mountain mahogany and aspen occur along the rim on the eastern boundary of the unit which were not mapped during the ESI effort.

Since the ecological site inventory was conducted in 1988, approximately 50 acres in the very northeast corner of the unit burned in the Dingo wildfire in the fall of 1996 and was subsequently seeded with a native grass seed mix in 1997. Another 310 acre wildfire occurred in the center of the unit in 1999, but was allowed to revegetate naturally. Several small noxious weed sites totaling about 20 acres have been inventoried and are scattered around the perimeter of the unit on or near existing roads and include Mediterranean sage, hoary cress, Canada thistle, and bull thistle. Since 1980, western juniper has expanded across the unit (Map 3).

In 2003, a portion of the area was designated as an ACEC/RNA. The relevant and important values identified included the following intact plant community cells: big sagebrush-bitterbrush/Idaho fescue, low sagebrush/Idaho fescue scabland, mountain mahogany/mountain big sagebrush and bitterbrush, and snowbrush/bittercherry shrub complex.

There are currently 8 constructed waterholes, 9 reservoirs, 3 developed spring systems, and approximately 12.2 miles of pasture division fence within the unit. A temporary wind testing tower is located along the south central boundary of the unit. Currently, there are approximately 14.3 miles of primitive roads and 4.9 miles of reclaiming routes within the unit. Many of the existing primitive roads are immediately adjacent to the fence lines and provide access for fence maintenance (Map 2). Most of these developments are scattered across the unit and are substantially noticeable within close proximity and are less noticeable from further distances. Though the total disturbances have increased since 1980 and they cumulatively detract from the natural quality of the area, the ID team felt that overall, the unit currently meets the naturalness criteria.

(3) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes _____ No X N/A _____

1980 Unit Description: During the previous inventory, the majority of the unit was identified as offering less than outstanding opportunities for solitude because of the broad, open expanses of flat terrain where the sights, sounds, and presence of others in the unit would be highly noticeable. Some opportunities for solitude were identified on the east boundary of the unit where the vegetative cover was taller and there was more topographic relief; however, even this area was identified as less than outstanding in character.

Current Condition Description: The topography within the unit has not changed since 1980. The majority of the unit consists of broad expanses of flat terrain (0-15% slope) dominated by low-growing vegetation where it would be difficult to avoid the presence of others within the unit. Pockets of young, low density juniper are scattered throughout the unit (see Map 3 and photos EQ025, img_3004, img3006, img_3007, img_3008, EQ026, img_3010 through img3014, EQ037img_3016, img_3017, img_3018, EQ031, EQ035, img_3020 through img_3026, img_3031 through img_3033, img_3035 through img_3046, img_3065, img_3066, img_3070, img_3109, img_3111 through img_3124, img_3127, img_3128, img_3131, img_3135, FC008S_TF_091208, FC007E_TF_091208, FC006NE_TF_091208, FC005S_TF_091208, FC003SSE_TF_091208, FC001S_TF_091208, and crump_reservoir_04251980). However, the power line is readily visible from many locations. Pockets of medium and high density western juniper and aspen provide some vegetative screening, particularly along the eastern third of the unit (photos img_3047 through img_3053, img_3056 through img_3061, img_3063, img_3064, img_3067, img_3069, img_3073 through img_3075, img_3077, img_3078, ER028, ER025, ER023, ER020, ER019, img_3083, and ER016) where one could avoid the presence of others in the unit. The 14.3 miles of existing primitive motorized routes

extending into the center of the unit also increases the likelihood of encountering others within the interior of the unit.

The unit lies underneath airspace designated at the Hart South Military Operation Area (MOA). Jet fighters frequently fly over the area during training missions causing noticeable and/or loud noise intrusions into the unit. Though the MOA is outside BLM's regulatory or management authority and, in and of itself, does not preclude the area from meeting the solitude criteria, the aircraft noise does have an adverse impact on the opportunity for solitude within the unit.

For these reasons, the ID team determined that the opportunities for solitude have not changed substantially since 1980 and are not outstanding.

(4) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes _____ No X N/A _____

1980 Unit Description: In the previous inventory, the unit was determined to offer limited potential for primitive recreation. Some scenic views of the Warner Mountains were noted *outside* of the unit, but no significant scenic values were found within the unit. The area offered some potential for hunting and wildlife viewing, but did not offer any outstanding potential for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Current Condition Description: The ID team noted the unit currently provides some opportunity for antelope hunting and dispersed camping. The Lakeview RMP/ROD (Map R-7) shows the entire unit is open to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The 14.3 miles of existing primitive motorized routes within the interior of the unit also encourages motorized use within the unit and further limits the opportunities for a primitive (non-motorized) and unconfined recreation experience. The unit may offer some limited potential for other types of primitive recreation (hiking, backpacking, horseback riding), but these opportunities are similar to those available throughout much of the surrounding Lakeview Resource Area.

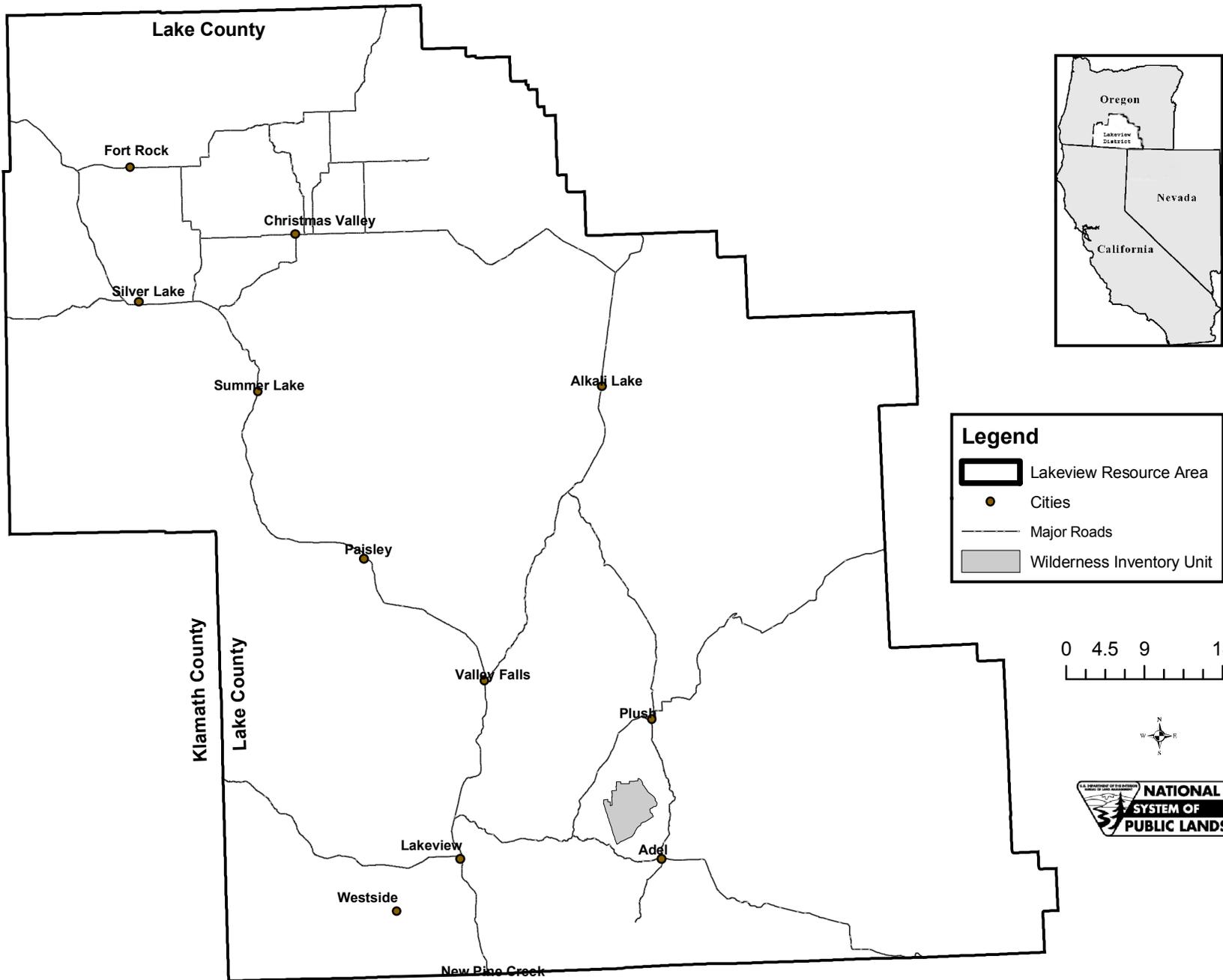
For these reasons, the ID team found that the unit does not offer any single outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational opportunity, nor does it offer an outstanding diversity of recreational opportunities.

(5) Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes _____ No _____ NA X

Description: Supplemental values were not evaluated as the unit did not meet all of required wilderness character criteria.

Map 1 - Wilderness Character Evaluation Area

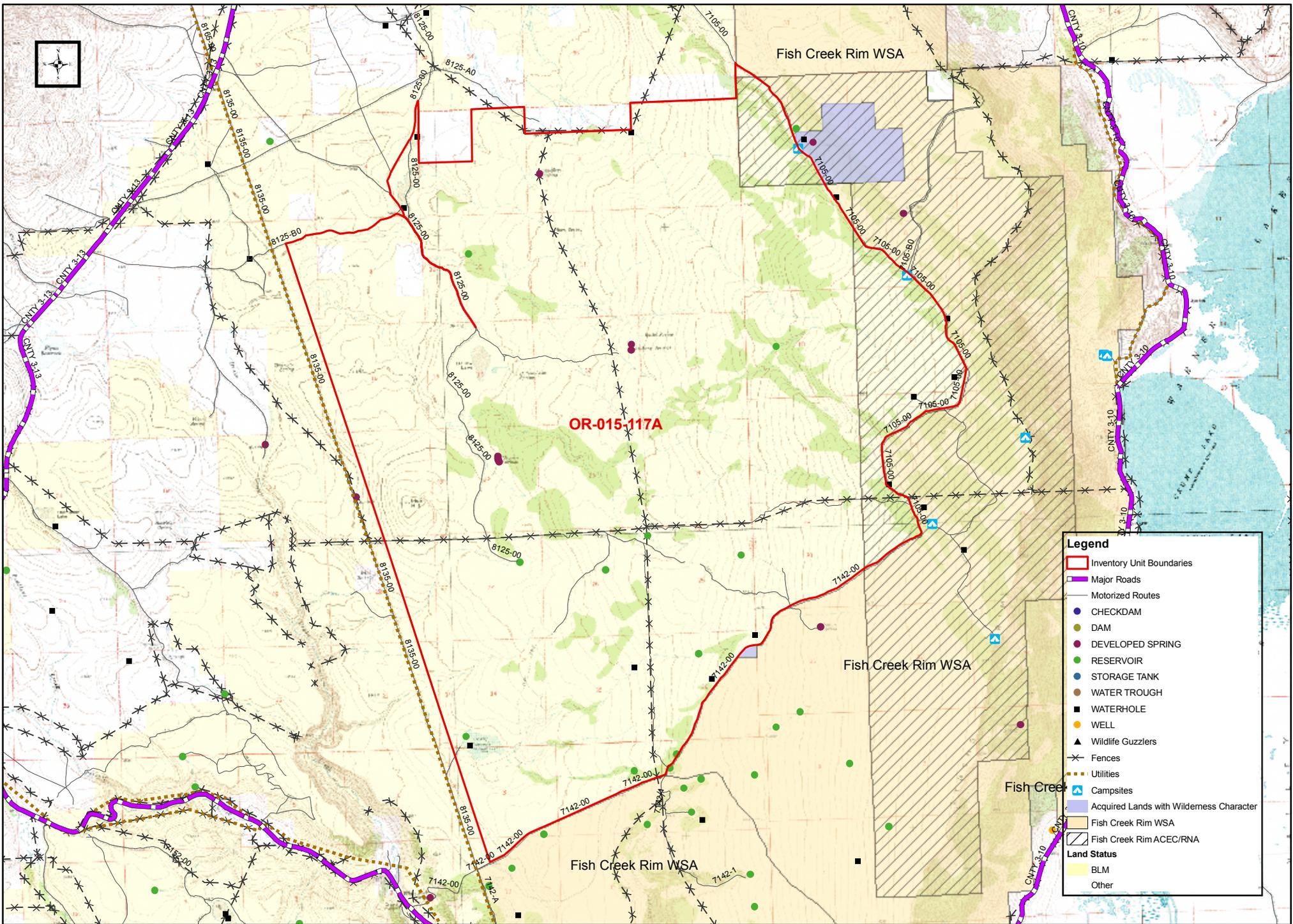


Legend

-  Lakeview Resource Area
-  Cities
-  Major Roads
-  Wilderness Inventory Unit



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Legend

- Inventory Unit Boundaries
- Major Roads
- Motorized Routes
- CHECKDAM
- RESERVOIR
- STORAGE TANK
- WATER TROUGH
- WATERHOLE
- WELL
- ▲ Wildlife Guzzlers
- x Fences
- Utilities
- ▲ Campsites
- Acquired Lands with Wilderness Character
- Fish Creek Rim WSA
- Fish Creek Rim ACEC/RNA

Land Status

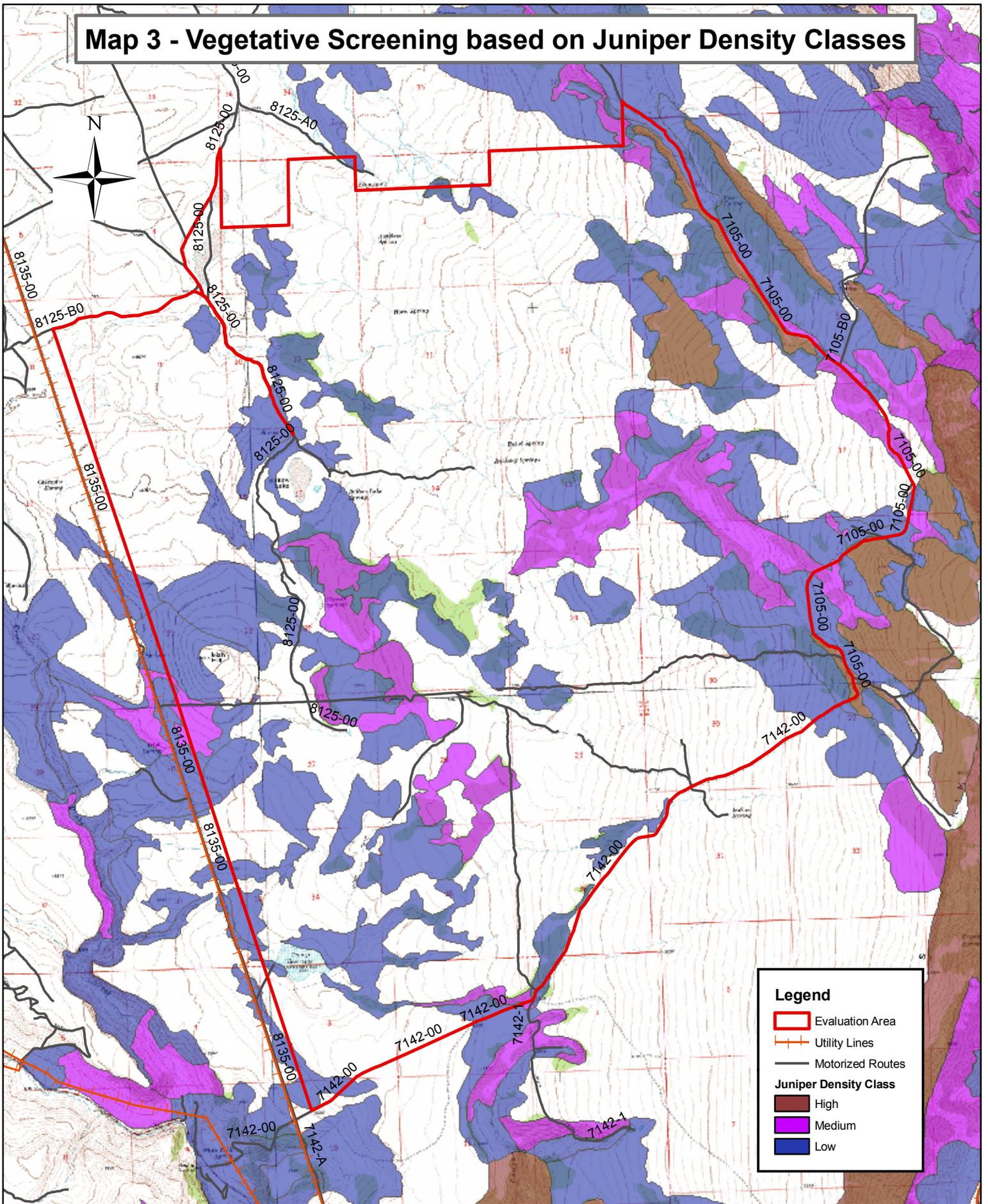
- BLM
- Other

Map 2 - Wilderness Character Evaluation - Monument Flat (Unit OR-015-117A)



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Map 3 - Vegetative Screening based on Juniper Density Classes



Legend

- Evaluation Area
- Utility Lines
- Motorized Routes

Juniper Density Class

- High
- Medium
- Low



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