

Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents  
**Deer Butte OR-034-017, 13 total pages**

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**Prepared by:**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Vale District Office**  
**100 Oregon Street**  
**Vale, Oregon 97918**



## **H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON**

### **APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION**

#### **Evaluation of Current Conditions:**

1) Document and review the existing BLM wilderness inventory findings on file, if available, regarding the presence or absence of individual wilderness characteristics, using Form 1, below.

2) Consider relevant information regarding current conditions available in the office to identify and describe any changes to the existing information (use interdisciplinary (ID) team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.), and document your findings on Form 2, below.

When Citizen Information has been submitted regarding wilderness characteristics, document the submitted materials including: date of Submission; Name of District(s) and Field Office(s) Affected; Type of material Submitted (e.g. narrative, map, photo). Evaluate any submitted citizen information regarding the validity of proposed boundaries of the unit(s), the existence of roads and other boundary features, the size of the unit(s), and the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics based on relevant information available in the office (prior BLM inventories, ID team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.)

Conduct field reviews as necessary to verify information and to ascertain current conditions. Reach conclusions on current conditions including boundaries, size of areas and presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Fully explain the basis for each conclusion on form 2, including any critical differences between BLM and citizen information.

Document your findings regarding current conditions for each inventoried area. Describe how the present conditions are similar to, or have changed from, the conditions documented in the original wilderness inventory. Document your findings on Form 2 for each inventory area. Cite to or attach data considered, including photographs, maps, GIS layers, field trip notes, project files, *etc.*

Year: 2010 Unit Number/Name: OR-034-017 – Deer Butte

**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?**

Yes  No  (If yes, and if more than one unit is within the area, list the names of those units.):

**A.) Inventory Source(s) --** (X) Denotes all applicable BLM Inventory files, printed maps, or published BLM Decision documents with information pertaining to this unit.

**Wilderness Inventories**

- (X) 1978-1980 --- BLM Wilderness Inventory Unit 3-55 of OR-03-04-10 Deer Butte (unpublished BLM documents in case files)
- (X) April 1979 – *Wilderness -- Proposed Initial Inventory – Roadless Areas and Islands Which Clearly Do Not have Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington*

**Wilderness Decision Documents**

- (X) August 1979 – *Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory, Final Decision on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Wilderness Characteristics and Announcement of Public Lands to be Intensively Inventoried for Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington* (green document)
- ( ) October 1979 – *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory - Oregon, Proposed Decision on the Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas* (grey document)
- ( ) March 1980 – *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory; Final Decisions on 30 Selected Units in Southeast Oregon and Proposed Decisions on Other Intensively Inventoried Units in Oregon and Washington* (orange document)
- ( ) November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* (brown document)
- ( ) November 1981 *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan document)

**B.) Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s)**

3-55 of OR-03-04-10 Deer Butte

**C.) Map Name(s)/Number(s)**

- (X) Final Decision – Initial Wilderness Inventory Map, August 1979, Oregon
- ( ) Proposed Decision -- Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas Map, October 1979, Oregon

- ( ) Intensive Wilderness Inventory Map, March 1980, Oregon
- ( ) Intensive Wilderness Inventory --Final Decisions Map, November 1980, Oregon
- ( ) November, 1981 *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan document)

**D.) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s)**

Vale District/Malheur Resource Area

**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):

**Inventory Source:** See above.

<b>Unit#/ Name</b>	<b>Size (historic acres)</b>	<b>Natural Condition? Y/N</b>	<b>Outstanding Solitude? Y/N</b>	<b>Outstanding Primitive &amp; Unconfined Recreation? Y/N</b>	<b>Supplemental Values? Y/N</b>
3-55 of OR-03-04-10 Deer Butte **	4,360	*	*	*	*
<b>TOTAL</b>	4,360				

\* -- These criteria were not addressed in the inventory of this unit.

\*\* -- See Form 2 of the 2009 BLM inventory unit OR-034-017, under element “1.”, which addresses area size for additional information.

## **H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON**

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## **FORM 2 -- DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name -- OR-034-017 – Deer Butte**

**Note:** In February, 2004, the Vale District received from Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) its evaluation of wilderness characteristics for its 11,436 acre “Pinnacle Point Proposed WSA”. For reference, a hard copy of ONDA’s proposal is retained in this unit’s file. The outer boundaries of the Association’s proposal and of unit OR-034-017 are very similar.

A difference in wilderness characteristics findings between BLM and ONDA regarding the unit’s boundaries is that, unlike ONDA’s proposal, OR-034-017 includes 2004 rescinded federal lands to BLM from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) located along the Owyhee River below the Owyhee dam. These lands were rescinded to BLM after Vale District received ONDA’s WSA proposal.

**Description of Current Conditions:** [Include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation features and summary of major human uses/activities.]

### **1. Is the unit of sufficient size?**

Yes   X        No \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:** Refer to this inventory unit’s associated Map 1 for location. Its 12,068 acres of public land is bounded by county roads 3668 (Rock Spring Canyon) and 846 (asphalted Lake Owyhee Road), and private lands. The unit’s boundary roads are mechanically maintained as needed to provide for relatively regular and seasonally continuous use. The current inventory unit is notably larger than the BLM’s late 1970’s Deer Butte 3-55 inventory unit. This is due to the addition of abutting public lands located to the north and west of the 3-55 wilderness characteristics inventory unit. These abutting public lands were part of a previous BLM-conducted (accelerated) wilderness characteristics (WC) inventory for a then proposed PP & L 500kV transmission line right-of-way (ROW) corridor. At present, those WC inventory documents for the proposed ROW have gone missing as a possible historic reference. Thus, presently it is unknown what specifically constituted the boundary between 3-55 and the abutting public lands at the time (since, by example, currently there is no visual evidence that a vehicle route may have served as a separating boundary). That said, the decision map which accompanies BLM’s August 1979 inventory decision depicts the abutting previously WC-inventoried ROW-affiliated public lands as not possessing wilderness character.

**2. Is the unit in a natural condition?**

Yes   X                        No                             N/A       

**Description:** The diverse terrain of OR-034-017 consists of Deer Butte, Pinnacle Point, and Haystack Rock with their steep slopes of run-off canyons, of some rolling hills, and the Owyhee River through its visually striking incised canyon setting. Elevations range from approximately 2,320 to 3,625 feet. Various basaltic rock outcrops and walls, mostly associated with the unit's river setting, possess high geologic scenic values. The unit's eastern portion (approximately a third of the inventory unit's acreage) is within the Owyhee River Below the Dam Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), which, in part, possesses high quality scenic values and is a relevant and important attribute of the ACEC. The unit's vegetation consists predominately of sagebrush, greasewood, bitterbrush, and grasses; additionally, the floodplain of the Owyhee River within the unit possesses willow thickets and sparsely scattered deciduous tree species.

Refer to this unit's associated Map 1 and Map 2 for human imprints within the unit. They include 8.2 miles of rangeland fences, 3 developed springs, and 16.2 miles of 35 motorized primitive trails (MPT) which penetrate various areas of the unit. Twenty seven of the MPT's (totaling approximately 1.8 miles) and short segments of a 1930's railroad bed (part which currently is used as MPTs) are located between the unit's east boundary asphalted county road and the Owyhee River (affecting a total of 120 acres in locations where the river is within the inventory unit). The combination of the number, spatial density and extent of these 27 MPTs in the affected 120 acres precludes the river's immediate environment along that portion of the unit's east boundary from appearing substantially natural, thus does not meet natural condition criteria. There is also 2.1 miles of 9 discontinued routes (no longer used; or officially closed along the river), most which are barely visually distinguishable. There remains no visual evidence of a 1968 chemical treatment of sage brush. Given the distribution, locations, and extent of the remaining MPT's and other human imprints within the unit relative to the varied nature of the unit's topography and terrain, the unit (minus the 120 acres) appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of humans being substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor.

Consideration by ONDA of the 27 vehicle routes along the Owyhee River was not made possible since ONDA's submitted WSA proposal received by BLM in February 2004 predated the November, 2004 land transfer from the BOR to the Vale District BLM. ONDA's submission for its proposed WSA makes mention of BLM's 1970's documentation of "two miles of fence and numerous ways" as human imprints (for unit 3-55), but does not account for the additional developments present within its proposed WSA while concluding it appears primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. For comparative reference, refer to the BLM inventory maps and the ONDA proposal, both located in this inventory unit's file folder.

**3. Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?**Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No   X   N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:** The remainder of the unit that meets naturalness criteria (see “2.”, above) is approximately 1.5 to 3.5 miles wide and 3 to 6.5 miles long. The area possesses insufficient vegetative screening to provide an outstanding opportunity of solitude. While the unit’s varied topography of its interior combined with the unit’s size and configuration provide some settings for opportunities to experience a sense of solitude, the opportunities are not outstanding. This is due to the extent of penetration, distribution, interconnectedness and close spatial distances between all but 3 of the MPTs within the unit. These combined factors circumstantially can result in a degree of audible disturbance caused by vehicle travel on the MPTs as to preclude outstanding opportunities for solitude for other (non-motorized) visitors within significant sectors of the inventory unit, especially in the more so west half of it. Along the Owyhee River, where some of the unit’s more pronounced topographic contrasts are evident, the extent and frequency of vehicular use of the numerous MPTs associated with the river’s setting within the unit combined with the numbers, frequency and density of non-motorized public use associated with this river corridor of the unit compounds the inability of this setting of the inventory unit to provide an opportunity for outstanding solitude. The repetitive penetrating vehicular sounds associated with travel on the asphalt road further dampens the quality of a solitude experience in the proximity of the river and the unit’s associated eastern reaches. Collectively, these factors preclude outstanding opportunities for solitude within the unit.

**4. Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?**Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No   X   N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:** Since the late 1990’s, the unit’s segment of the Owyhee River along its eastern boundary has gained regional and international attention for its high quality brown trout catch-and-release fly fishing fishery. Due to the exceptional opportunity for such a high quality fishing experience on the river, which is available within the inventory unit, this recreational activity at this location is considered of high value but is not considered an outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational activity because of the extent of motorized vehicle use on 27 MPT’s on the river’s floodplain within the unit along the east side of the river. The river’s relatively deep canyon setting and varied mineralized soils provides a striking though not outstanding visual experience for visitors of the area. The unit provides for hunting of common upland bird (chukar) and big game species (deer, primarily), rockhounding, fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking and sightseeing. Unlike ONDA’s conclusion, BLM has determined that while providing a variety of high quality recreational experiences, no one of these activities -- or a



combination of any or all of them -- possess attributes which represent or provide for outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

**5. Does the unit have supplemental values?**

Yes   X   No        N/A       

**Description:** One location each of two BLM special status plant species are documented within the inventory unit -- *Astragalus mulfordiae* (Mulford's milkvetch) and *Lupinus biddlei* (Biddle's lupine). The SEORMP identifies the Owyhee River canyon corridor below the dam as a component of Vale District's larger Owyhee River corridor that is occupied by concentrations of various raptor bird species.

Unlike ONDA's WSA proposal which states that the SEORMP notes the presence of sage grouse leks within the area, BLM records (including the SEORMP) indicate sage grouse leks have not been documented within its proposed WSA or within OR-034-017. ONDA states that the proposed Deer Butte WSA "may also be home to the Ground Snake, Ferruginous Hawk, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Pygmy Rabbit, and White-tailed Antelope Squirrel", which ONDA's February 2004 submission to the Vale District declares are listed as "sensitive species in Oregon". As of 2009, the Ground Snake and White-tailed Antelope Squirrel were not considered sensitive by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, BLM, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. BLM acknowledges that habitat requirements may exist for the Ground Snake, Ferruginous Hawk, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Pygmy Rabbit, and White-tailed Antelope Squirrel; however, neither ONDA nor any other entity has provided BLM with official documentation confirming the presence of these species within this inventory unit.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Name and Number:** OR-034-017 -- Deer Creek Butte

**Summary Results of Analysis:**

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements?  Yes  No
2. Does the area appear to be natural?  Yes  No
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?  Yes  No  NA
4. Does the area have supplemental values?  Yes  No  NA

**Conclusion -- check one:**

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness character.

The area does not have wilderness character.

**Prepared by:** Robert Alward  
Robert Alward, Wilderness Planner contractor

**Team Members:**

<u>Steve Christensen</u>	<u>2-23-2010</u>
Steve Christensen, Rangeland Management Specialist	Date
<u>Shaney Rockefeller</u>	<u>3/10/10</u>
Shaney Rockefeller, Soil Scientist	Date
<u>Dave Draheim</u>	<u>2/10/10</u>
Dave Draheim, Outdoor Recreation Planner	Date
<u>Michelle Caviness</u>	<u>2/22/10</u>
Michelle Caviness, Wildlife Biologist	Date
<u>Jonathan Westfall</u>	<u>02/05/2010</u>
Jon Westfall, Geologist	Date
<u>Eian Ray</u>	<u>02/09/10</u>
Eian Ray, GIS Specialist, contractor	Date
<u>Brent Grasty</u>	<u>2/10/10</u>
Brent Grasty, GIS Coordinator	Date

(NOTE: Previous staff members who reviewed this unit include Botanist Jean Findley (retired 7/2008), and Wildlife Biologist Technician Sandy Vistine Amdor (transferred 8/2008)).

**Approved by:**

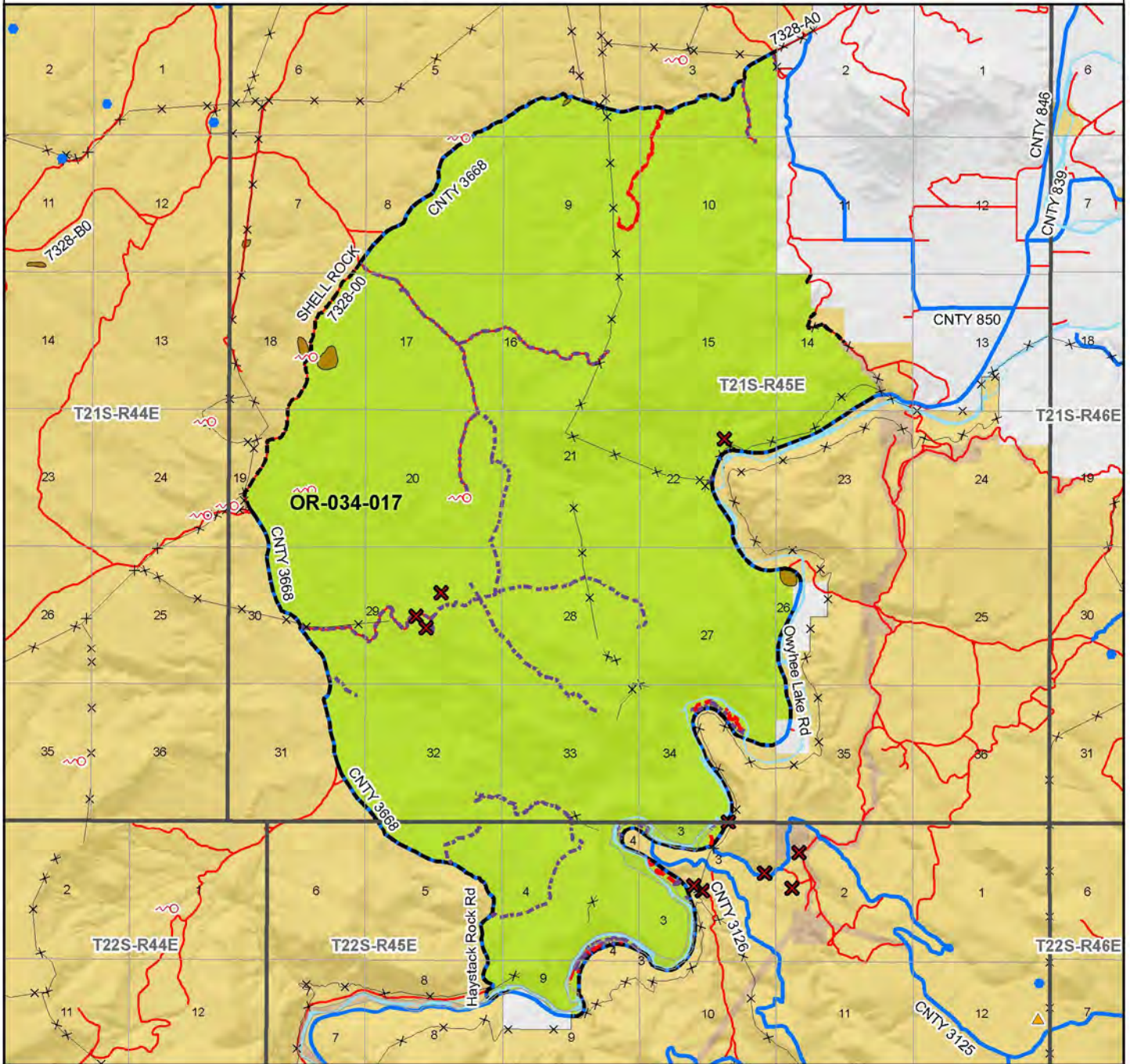
Pat Ryan  
Pat Ryan, Malheur Resource Area Field Manager

3/30/2010  
Date

*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.*

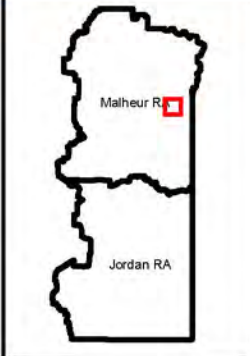
# Wilderness Characteristics - Overview

## Deer Butte - OR-034-017 - Map 1-a of 2



### Legend

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Developed Spring</li> <li> Wildlife Guzzler</li> <li> Earthen Reservoir</li> <li> Pipeline</li> <li> Trough</li> <li> Fence</li> <li> Storage Tank</li> <li> Surface Mining Disturbance</li> <li> Sage Grouse Lek</li> <li> Special Status Plant</li> <li> BLM Wild Char Inventory Unit</li> <li> Wilderness Study Area</li> <li> Mineral Material Site</li> <li> Major Water Body</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Route Types - BLM Determination</b></li> <li> Boundary Road</li> <li> Moltized Primitive Trail (MPT)</li> <li> Discontinued Use</li> <li><b>Routes - Outside Wild Char Unit</b></li> <li> County</li> <li> Major Highway</li> <li> BLM Numbered &amp; Other Routes</li> <li><b>Land Ownership</b></li> <li> Bureau of Land Management</li> <li> State</li> <li> Private</li> <li> Other Federal Land</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



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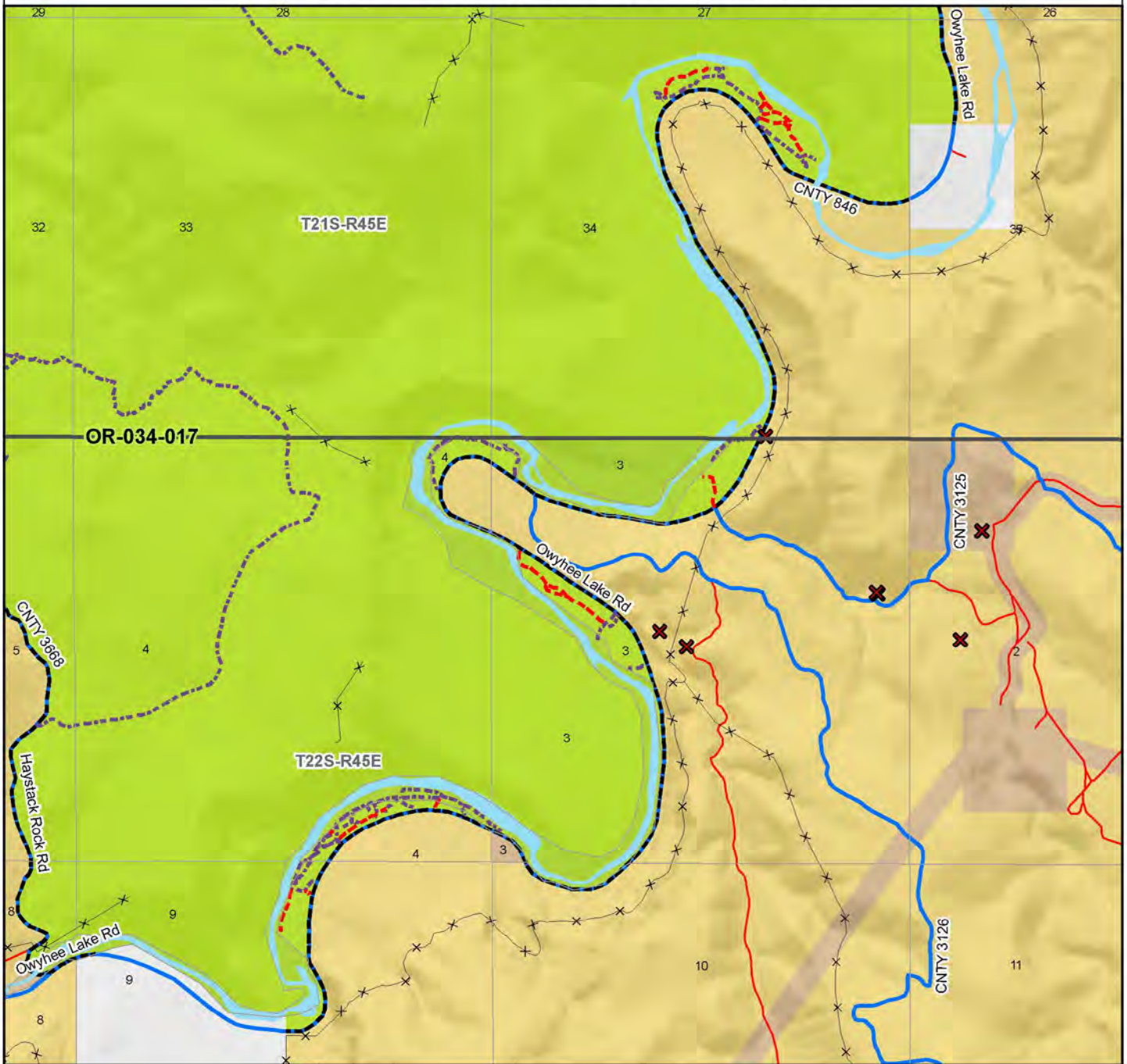
**VALE DISTRICT**  
February 11, 2010

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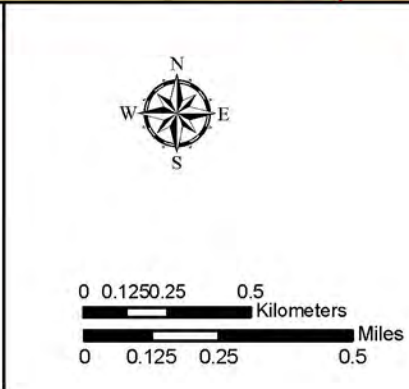
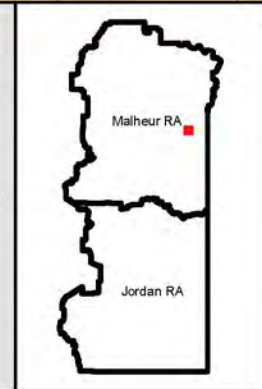
--FINAL--

# Wilderness Characteristics - Overview

## Deer Butte - OR-034-017 - Map 1-b of 2



Legend	
	Developed Spring
	Wildlife Guzzler
	Earthen Reservoir
	Pipeline
	Trough
	Fence
	Storage Tank
	Surface Mining Disturbance
	Sage Grouse Lek
	Special Status Plant
	BLM Wild Char Inventory Unit
	Wilderness Study Area
	Mineral Material Site
	Road/Utility Right-of-Way
	Major Water Body
	<b>Route Types - BLM Determination</b>
	Boundary Road
	Motorized Primitive Trail (MPT)
	Discontinued Use
	<b>Routes - Outside Wild Char Unit</b>
	County
	Major Highway
	BLM Numbered & Other Routes
	<b>Land Ownership</b>
	Bureau of Land Management
	State
	Private
	Other Federal Land



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

**VALE DISTRICT**  
February 11, 2010

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**-FINAL-**

