Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents
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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.
Form 1 – Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory: Findings on Record

Year: 2010  Unit Number/Name: OR-035-015 – French Gulch

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 ___ X ___

(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

   ( ) 1978 – BLM Wilderness Inventory
   ( ) April 1979 – Wilderness -- Proposed Initial Inventory – Roadless Areas and Islands Which Clearly Do Not have Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington

   Wilderness Decision Documents

   ( ) 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)
   ( ) 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)

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

   N/A
C.) Map Name(s)/Number(s)

( ) 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


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

Vale District Baker Field Office

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit#/Name</th>
<th>Size (historic acres)</th>
<th>Natural Condition? Y/N</th>
<th>Outstanding Solitude? Y/N</th>
<th>Outstanding Primitive &amp; Unconfined Recreation? Y/N</th>
<th>Supplemental Values? Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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TOTAL
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**FORM 2 -- DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: **OR-035-015 -- French Gulch**

**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 its location. The unit is 5,891 acres of public land. Boundaries consist of public lands abutting private land parcels, USFS lands, and roads (Baker County #875 Burnt River road, Baker county road #767 Dark Canyon, BLM road #6647-0-0D0, #6650 0-00 and the Stump Springs Road create the south and west boundaries. The BLM road #6641-0-00 Windy Ridge, and #6647-0-0D0 Woods Gulch in conjunction with private and USFS ownerships create its east end boundary to form the perimeter of the unit. Five cherry stem roads (BLM Stumps Springs/Chicken Peak roads, French Gulch road, and #6647-0-D0) exist on the western sector of the unit. The boundary roads are mechanically maintained as needed to provide for relatively regular and continuous use.

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

   Yes **X**  No __________

   **Description:** The unit includes the northern extent of the Burnt River Canyon and its associated steep slopes, rim rocks and outcrops. Steep to very steep terrain is common throughout the unit which has been eroded by seven major drainages that slope to the south and southwest. Elevations rage from 3,228 feet at the Burnt River Canyon/Dark Canyon road junction, to 5,826 feet at the northern most edge of the unit. Gulch and canyon depth can range from 300 to 800 feet from ridge top to canyon bottom over a distance of 1/4 mile or less. Vegetation is predominately native and non-native grasses, shrubs, and sage brush on the southern and eastern portions of the unit, while coniferous components of pine and fir exist on the northern and western areas. Juniper exists and has encroached across most of the unit.

   Refer to this unit’s associated Map 1 for human imprints. The western third of the unit has been heavily impacted in the past by the works of man as motorized vehicle routes were created for resource management or transportation needs. A bisecting road in the bottom of French Gulch once kept the area from meeting size criteria for wilderness characteristic inventory. Activities indicating the works of man, which are still readily apparent, are focused in the western portion of the unit around and over Chicken Peak,
and directly affect approximately 38% of the inventory unit. The projects and activities include 3 motorized primitive trails (MPTs) totaling 2.5 miles, 7 spring developments and 4.8 miles of rangeland fence. Since the late 1970’s, a large land movement in the middle section of the French Gulch MPT, which had kept the area from meeting size criteria, has become unusable for vehicular passage. Since that time the route has not been repaired and is now considered a “discontinued” route segment for approximately 1 mile of this MPT’s total length. This segment of the French Gulch MPT which originated from the current cherry-stem road system on Chicken Peak and extended to the mouth of French Gulch has been naturally reclaimed by talus sloughing and vegetation encroachment and is primarily no longer visually apparent to the average visitor of the unit. The remaining two segments of this route have become MPTs. Over time, soil and talus sloughing, vegetation encroachment and minimal use and or maintenance has softened the impacts from the works of man in this unit. Visual contrast across the unit remains neutral to the average visitor. Continued motorized use of the 2.5 miles of MPT’s has reduced or restricted the total reclamation of the works of man by natural processes. The MPT’s of the unit exist on the ridge tops, side hills, and the drainage bottoms.

Due to the presence of ridgelines in the unit which provides some visual screening, and (individually and collectively) the wide distribution of and distances between the types and extent of the human developments present within the unit, the unit as a whole appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of humans substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor.

3. Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes _______ No ___X____ N/A _______

Description: With the number and spatial orientation of the cherry-stem roads and the MPTs systems in the unit in addition to the steepness of terrain that focuses motorized and non-motorized uses of the unit, it is not possible for a visitor to experience a sense of outstanding solitude. The rugged terrain offers some topographic screening between users, however it also limits and constrains the usable area and focuses use and users into specific portions of the unit. The low profile of vegetation in the southern and eastern portions of the unit is insufficient to provide adequate screening to support an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The northern and western portions of the unit that do contain vegetation components that would provide screening are heavily impacted by the amount of cherry-stem roads and MPT’s that exist in this portion of the unit. Additionally, the size and shape of the unit, limits the distance to visually and audibly avoid motorized activities. The location of cherry-stem roads and MPTs along the ridge tops and bottom drainages of the unit relative to the configuration of the unit as well as the orientation of the canyons that funnel sounds throughout the unit makes it easy to see or hear people or human activities from most anywhere in the unit. In addition, the size and shape of the unit contributes to the inability of visitors from obtaining solitude. The unit is approximately 5.65 miles long, 3.2 miles wide at its widest points. The eastern section, which is the thinnest portion of the unit, averages just 1/3 of a mile in width in a “hook” shape. This “hook” represents 15% of the unit’s total acreage and is located at the
junction of the county roads of Deer Creek and Burnt River. The activities in this area highly impact the specific solitude of this section of the unit where the sights and sounds of man from outside the area cannot be avoided. The types, density and distribution of vegetation do not provide sufficient screening between visitors to contribute to outstanding opportunities for solitude for most of the unit. In summary, the unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

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

Yes ______  No ___ X___ N/A ______

Description: This unit provides hunting opportunities for common game species (primarily chukar, quail, deer, elk, and some bighorn) which is the primary form of recreational use within the unit. Although bighorn is a highly prized trophy game species in Oregon and does occasionally occupy this unit, this particular game species is not continually present within the unit boundaries. Additionally, human presence regardless of the amount of use causes this species to leave the area and this departure can occur in a short amount of time due to the small size and configuration of the unit. Therefore, due to the temporary and irregular presence of as well as the ease and speed in which the species can vacate the unit, bighorn are not considered to be outstanding for recreational opportunities or pursuits within the unit. The topographic features of the area provide for good day hiking, sightseeing, camping, photography, equestrian and backpacking activities, but the area is not recognized as being a destination for any of these activities, most of which are associated all or in part with motorized uses. The area does have some scenic view and topographic changes, but are not considered to be outstanding for recreational opportunities and pursuits. With the lack of any special or unique natural or cultural features to attract more visitors to this unit, the primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are not of such quality, uniqueness or rarity to consider them outstanding either individually or in combination.

5. Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes ______  No ___ X___ N/A ______

Description:
Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name and Number: OR-035-015 -- French Gulch

Summary Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? X Yes  No

2. Does the area appear to be natural? X Yes  No

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes X No NA

4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes X No NA

Conclusion -- check one:

X The area does not have wilderness character.

Prepared by: Kevin McCoy, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Team Members:

Gary Guymon, Rangeland Management Specialist  10-3-11

Marc Pierce, Forester/Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist  10-3-11

Katy Coddington, Archaeologist  10-5-11

John Quintela, Fisheries Biologist  10-3-11

Melissa Vazquez, Wildlife Biologist/Botanist  10-3-11

Liam Ray, GIS  10-6-11

Approved by: Ted Davis, Baker Field Office Manager  10-11-11

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.