

Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents  
**Oregon Butte OR-036-004, 20 total pages**

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## **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.*

Attachment 1

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

**APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION**

**Year: 2007****Inventory Unit Name/Number: Oregon Butte OR-036-004****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  X  No  \_\_\_

**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 - *BLM Wilderness Inventory Units OR-03-14-01* (unpublished BLM documents stored in 6-way case files).
- (X) April 1979 - *Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics* (yellow book).

**Wilderness Decision Documents**

- (X) August 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory: Final Decision on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington* (green book).
- ( ) October 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory: Oregon, Proposed Decision on the Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas* (grey book).
- (X) 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 book).
- (X) November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* (brown book).
- (X) November 1981 - *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet).

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

- BLM unpublished file OR-03-14-01 (1978); Oregon Butte 3-159 (November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* [brown book]). This unit was formed by the combination of the Tent Creek (3-159) and Oregon Butte (3-187) inventory units. During the intensive inventory, the former

boundary between Units OR-03-187 and OR-03-159 was determined to be incorrectly placed along a road. The two units were combined and are contiguous with Idaho inventory unit ID-106-70E and Nevada unit NV-020-811 (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 book]).

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

- (X) Final Decision – Initial Wilderness Inventory Map August 1979
- ( ) Proposed Decision Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas Map October 1979
- (X) Intensive Wilderness Inventory Map March 1980
- (X) Intensive Wilderness Inventory, Final Decisions Map November 1980
- (X) November 1981 *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet)

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

- Vale District/Jordan Resource Area

**2) BLM Inventory Findings on Record:**

<b>Unit#/Name</b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>Natural Condition</b>	<b>Outstanding Solitude</b>	<b>Outstanding Primitive &amp; Unconfined Recreation</b>	<b>Supplemental Values</b>
OR-03-159	32,250*	Y	N	N	N*
NV-020-811	10,680	Y	N	N	N
ID-106-70E	3,400	Y	N	N	N
<b>Total acres &gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>46,520</b>				

\* Acreage includes 2,200 acres of state land inventoried for wilderness characteristics that was in the process of being transferred into BLM ownership during the initial inventory. The transfer was completed and the acreage is now under BLM management.

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

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

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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 2****DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS:****Inventory Unit Name/Number: Oregon Butte OR-036-004**

For this exercise BLM refers to the unit as 2007 Oregon Butte OR-036-004. BLM has determined that the Oregon Butte unit is comprised of 32,149 acres within Oregon, 12,614 acres in Nevada, and 4,239 acres in Idaho for a total of 49,002 acres. A citizen wilderness proposal provided by Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), received February 2004, identified BLM unit OR-036-004 as a portion of their proposal known as the “Willow Butte proposed WSA Addition.” ONDA states that the citizen proposal presents new information that documents wilderness criteria and therefore qualifies the area for interim protection as a Wilderness Study Area. The citizen proposal identified only the 32,149 acres of this unit inside Oregon known as the Willow Creek proposed WSA Addition. The Willow Butte proposed WSA Addition utilized the Nevada and Idaho State lines as its southern and eastern boundaries respectively, whereas the BLM inventory delineation of unit OR-036-004 continues into Nevada and Idaho, utilizing existing roads as southern and eastern boundaries for the unit.

**1) Is the unit of sufficient size?**Yes X No     

Unit OR-036-004 is comprised of 32,149 acres in Oregon, 12,614 acres in Nevada, and 4,239 acres in Idaho for a total of 49,002 acres meeting the size criteria. The 49,002 total acres that comprise the OR-036-004 unit in Form 2 differ from the 46,520 total acres for this unit listed in Form 1. Acreage for unit OR-036-004 in Form 2 is calculated from BLM GIS information that included 400 acres of private land in Nevada, while the 46,520 acres in Form 1 was either not calculated properly or resulted from a rounding error from methods and maps used in the initial 1978 inventory. The largest discrepancy between entries on the two forms is in total acres for the Nevada and Idaho acreage. There is no conclusion why these acres on Form 1 differ from those on Form 2 because the boundaries in the 1978 and 2007 inventories are identical. The citizen wilderness proposal identified only the 32,149 acres of BLM unit OR-036-004 in Oregon by terminating their inventory at the Oregon/Nevada State line.

**Description:**

The boundaries of unit OR-036-004 are identified as BLM road 6352-0-00 on the north side, BLM road 6350-0-00 to the Quinn River Road junction in Nevada on the west side, an Idaho road on the east side, and a Nevada road on the south side that connects with the Quinn River Road junction. The unit is surrounded by 17.97 miles of boundary road in Oregon, 17.73 miles of boundary road in Nevada, 8.2 miles of boundary road in Idaho (43.9 miles total boundary road). Periodic maintenance of the boundary roads has occurred in the past (no confirmed dates available) and they are used regularly by ranchers (as observed by current BLM staff) and BLM employees for livestock management. Refer to map 2007\_Oregon\_Butte\_OR\_036\_004.pdf for the unit boundary.

The citizen wilderness proposal boundaries for the unit differed from BLM’s by utilizing state boundary lines between Oregon and Nevada for the south boundary and between Oregon and Idaho for the east boundary. The citizen proposal also claimed that the northern boundary of their unit, BLM road 6352-0-00, did not meet the definition of a road and that the unit is therefore contiguous with the Lookout Butte WSA north of the Willow Butte proposed WSA Addition.

Information gathered for this inventory by BLM concerning BLM road 6352-0-00 is inconsistent with the ONDA claim that this existing route between Unit OR-036-004 and the Lookout Butte WSA does not qualify as a road but only a motorized primitive trail. BLM has concluded that unit OR-036-004 is not contiguous with Lookout Butte WSA because they are separated by the existing BLM road 6352-0-00 that does meet the definition of a road (refer to attached BLM road 6352-0-00 analysis form).

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

Yes  X  No  \_\_\_

**Description:**

Human imprints within the Oregon Butte OR-036-004 unit include one earthen reservoir, 11.6 miles of motorized primitive trails for all states, 19 miles of fenceline that includes 3 miles of bladed fenceline along the Oregon/Idaho State line. The bladed area was cleared of vegetation for the construction of fence along the Oregon/Idaho State line in 1979 and has since rehabilitated itself by natural process. Refer to map 2007 Oregon Butte OR-036-004 for location of projects and motorized primitive routes.

The unit exhibits a near-natural condition throughout because fencelines generally blend in with areas of knee- to waist-high big sagebrush, the motorized primitive trails are few and widely scattered, and the one reservoir is substantially unnoticeable due to its small size and location. Fences and motorized primitive trails are substantially unnoticeable because of the flat but rolling terrain. Overall, the area appears to be primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of human activity substantially unnoticeable. Refer to map 2007\_Oregon\_Butte\_OR\_036\_004A.pdf for human imprints.

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

Yes  X  No  \_\_\_

**Description:**

Unit OR-036-004 is approximately 6 miles in width in the western and central portion of the unit then tapers to about 2.5 miles wide at the Oregon/Idaho border and about 1 mile at its most eastern tip in Idaho. The unit is approximately 16 miles in length. The majority of the unit consists of a rolling open sagebrush plateau west of Willow Butte and a flat open sagebrush plateau to the east of Willow Butte. Star Valley Knoll near the Idaho border in the eastern portion of the unit, Willow Butte in the center portion, Mahogany Butte in the west portion, Tent Creek in the northwest portion, and Mahogany Creek in Nevada provide variation in topographic relief and visual barriers that create outstanding opportunities for solitude not present within the relative flatness of the remaining acreage of the unit. However, the elongated shape (the maximum distance from the perimeter to its core is 3 miles) may make it difficult to avoid the presence of others in the eastern portion of the unit where it narrows to about 1 mile wide, is bounded by perimeter roads, and exhibits flatter topographic relief.

Tent Creek, one of only two drainages in the unit, flows for about 1 mile along the northwestern boundary of the unit adjacent to BLM road 6350-0-00. The drainage consists of a low gradient semi-confined channel with steep 60-foot side slopes over 75 percent of its length, which transitions into a broader open-valley bottom supported by areas of interrupted perennial water and sparse patches of willow.

Mahogany Creek drainage comes into the unit from the west and flows eastward through the southwestern half of the unit. Mahogany Creek drainage consists of open to semi-confined 200-

foot-deep canyons with steep side slopes and rock escarpments containing numerous springs and wet meadows.

Topographic relief in the unit ranges from about 5,100 feet mean sea level (msl) along the eastern boundary rising to the west to about 6,355 feet (msl) at the southwest corner. Star Valley Knoll in the eastern portion of the unit is about 5,513 feet (msl), Willow Butte in the middle of the unit is 5,810 feet (msl), and Mahogany Butte in the western third is about 6,110 feet (msl). Elevation differences in most of the unit, traversing east to west, are gradual and average about 80 feet per mile. Traversing the unit from north to south, elevation essentially does not change except near the southern border along Mahogany Creek where the plateau drops approximately 150-200 feet into the stream channel. The unit provides a variation of vegetative screening consisting of broad expanses of low and big sagebrush and desert saltbrush. Flatter relief areas containing low sagebrush within the middle and eastern portions of the unit provide little opportunity for outstanding solitude except for areas near Willow Butte and Star Valley Knoll. However, many areas in the western portion of the unit contain deep drainages, rolling hills, and big sagebrush that provide topographic and vegetative screening. The original 1978 inventory did not fully identify topographic features which contribute to numerous opportunities for visitors to find seclusion and which would result in a finding of outstanding opportunities for solitude.

A citizen wilderness proposal (ONDA, February 2004) includes a portion of unit OR-036-004 as a contiguous area with another previously BLM-identified roadless inventory unit (Lookout Butte WSA) for their proposed wilderness area. Information gathered by BLM for this inventory concerning BLM road 6352-0-00 is inconsistent with the ONDA claim that this existing road between Unit OR-036-004 and the Lookout Butte WSA does not qualify as a road but only a motorized primitive trail. BLM has concluded that unit OR-036-004 is not contiguous with Lookout Butte WSA because they are separated by the existing BLM road 6352-0-00 that does meet the definition of a road (refer to BLM road 6352-0-00 analysis form).

ONDA does not address any portion of unit OR-036-004 in Nevada or Idaho because their 2004 inventory document only addressed acres within Oregon.

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

Yes  No

**Description:**

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available in the unit. However, opportunities for activities such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and photography are not outstanding because the unit lacks scenic quality, diversity of landforms, and challenging terrain. The two buttes and one knoll within the unit rise 200 feet or less in elevation above the remaining flat topography of the unit. Drainage depressions are the only other topographic feature in the unit to add variety of terrain. The present inventory agrees with the 1978 inventory that determined the unit lacks exceptional scenery and a diversity of landforms that would result in a strong attraction to the unit for persons seeking any type of primitive recreation activity. Backpacking across the unit could be a monotonous experience with no change in hiking conditions or scenery except for the Mahogany Creek drainage located in Nevada. There are no unique photographic opportunities in the unit because of the vast acres of homogeneous topography and vegetation, which lacks significant points of interest or attractive sites. Despite the unit's size, the lack of scenic quality and lack of diversity of landforms render the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation less than outstanding. Although wildlife viewing opportunities have been identified as a recreational value within this unit, they are not considered to be outstanding by the inventory team.



Citizens promoting the Oregon Butte proposed Addition have presented a number of scenic photographs (WA91-95, 100, 105-111) as evidence of outstanding opportunity for hiking, photography, and sightseeing in the Oregon portion of the Oregon Butte OR-036-004 unit. Photographs WA91 and 94 depicts Willow Butte rising about 200 feet above the relative flatness of the unit and WA92, 93, and 100 show the Santa Rosa Mountain range, outside of the unit, in the background of photographs. Photograph 95 shows the only fenceline in the unit with Mahogany Butte in the background. Photographs WA105 and 110 portray Tent Creek that flows approximately 1.25 miles through the extreme northwest corner of the unit. Photograph WA111 shows 60 feet or less of a typical drainage, a depression with a quarter-mile lateral width. Photographs WA106-109 are of riparian and upland vegetation located on a 40-acre private parcel outside of the unit.

By definition, “An area may possess outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation either through the diversity in the number of primitive and unconfined recreational activities possible in the unit, or the outstanding quality of one opportunity.” The inventory team has determined that unit OR-036-003 does not contain outstanding opportunities or outstanding qualities for primitive and unconfined recreation because of the extremely limited extent of diverse landforms.

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

Yes  No

**Description:**

With some minor exceptions, the ecological integrity of rangeland in this unit has been largely unaffected by the combined impacts of wildfire and invasive, non-native plants such as cheatgrass. This means the area possesses wildlife habitat supplemental values for sagebrush-dependent species of BLM management importance including pygmy rabbit, sagebrush vole, greater sage-grouse, Brewer’s sparrow, black-throated sparrow, sage sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and sage thrasher. Observed rangeland conditions within this unit can be expected to contribute towards the existence of healthy sagebrush-dependent wildlife populations for a large area and over the long term because: (1) native plant functional and structural groups are well represented within the unit, and (2) wildlife forage, cover, and structure is available for use by species of management importance.

In contrast to conditions described above, rangeland at similar elevations and in similar ecological sites within Malheur County, Oregon has been highly disturbed due to the combined effects of improper historical grazing use, loss of biological crust integrity, invasive plant establishment, and catastrophic wildfire impacts over the last few decades. Cheatgrass presence is known to accelerate and aggravate wildfire spread because it is a highly flammable fine fuel, and wildfire often reduces or completely eliminates critical shrub-based forage, cover, and habitat structure values for many species of wildlife. Literally millions of acres of Wyoming big sagebrush habitat types, similar to those within this unit, have been burned over the last few decades and recovery of these losses will take multiple decades if not centuries to occur.

Finally, the land considered within this unit is also recognized as part of the Owyhee Uplands Physiographic Province, a region incorporating rangeland in Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada which supports some of the largest contiguous blocks of intact sagebrush steppe remaining west of the Continental Divide.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

**Inventory Unit Name/Number: Oregon Butte OR-036-004**

### Summary

#### Results of Analysis:

- |   |              |    |
|---|--------------|----|
| 1) Does the area meet any of the size requirements?   | <b>[Yes]</b> | No |
| 2) Does the area appear to be natural?  | <b>[Yes]</b> | No |
| 3) Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?<br>NA | <b>[Yes]</b> | No |
| 4) Does the area have supplemental values?<br>NA  | <b>[Yes]</b> | No |

### Conclusion

#### Check One:

- (X) The area or a portion of the area has wilderness character.
- ( ) The area does not have wilderness character.

The ID team has reviewed the findings summarized in the original Statewide Wilderness Inventory as well as in the published decision documents and maps identified on Form 1. Current conditions relative to the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics have been considered including citizen wilderness proposals. Based on all the best available information and staff field visits to the area since 2000, the ID team has found compelling reasons, described in sections above, to change existing BLM inventory decisions for solitude and supplemental values wilderness characteristics. BLM finds that the naturalness of the area is primarily affected by the forces of nature, outstanding opportunities for solitude are present in portions of the unit, and there are supplemental values present. The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited for reasons already described above and BLM concludes that there are not outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

This updated inventory includes areas that overlap state boundaries with Nevada and Idaho. Although inventory information was collected on the entire area, the wilderness characteristic findings are only conclusive for the portion of each unit that is within Oregon.


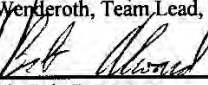
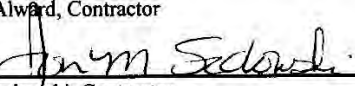
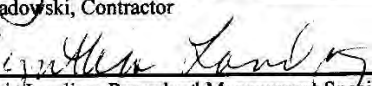

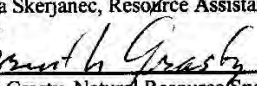
#### Sources of Reference for Evaluation:

- All BLM documents listed in Form 1; existing BLM wilderness inventory information.
- Wilderness Inventory Recommendations: Vale District, Submitted by Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), February 6, 2004.

- Current geographic information system (GIS) data on existing projects, vehicle routes/roads, land ownership, etc.
- BLM Job Documentation Record (JDR) files.
- National Agriculture Imagery Project digital images (2005).
- Official BLM Transportation Plan Map.
- BLM staff has obtained first-hand field knowledge about this unit's plant communities, road conditions, and other attributes as a result of rangeland health investigations conducted between July and October of the year 2000. BLM gathered quantitative rangeland data from trend plots in support of the assessment and evaluation process for Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area, but most other data collected for rangeland health evaluation purposes were either estimated or qualitative in nature. BLM staff has also visited this and adjoining units annually and on multiple occasions after 2000 in the process of establishing and reading riparian monitoring locations, performing layout and design work for rangeland development projects, conducting rangeland supervision duties, collecting livestock utilization data, and documenting current road conditions. Field observations were made during Rangeland Standards and Guides assessment work in 2000.

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**Wilderness Characteristics Interdisciplinary Team:**

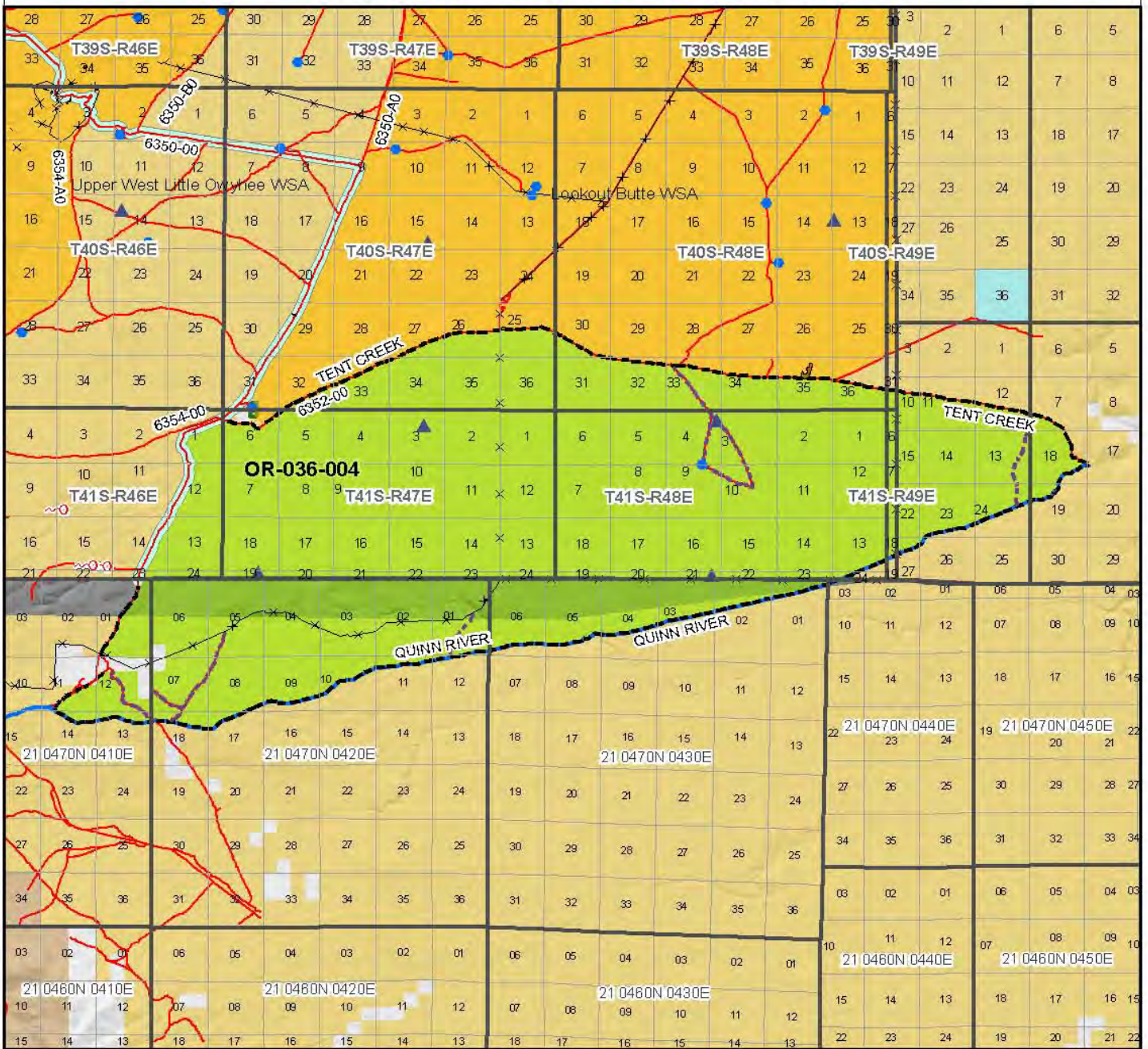
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Jack Wenderoth, Team Lead, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Bob Alward, Contractor	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Jon Sadowski, Contractor	Date
	<u>10-26-07</u>
Cynthia Landing, Rangeland Management Specialist, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Trisha Skerjanec, Resource Assistant - GIS, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Brent Grasty, Natural Resource Specialist — GIS, Vale District	Date

**Concurrence:**

	<u>10/26/07</u>
Carolyn R. Freeborn	Date
Field Manager, Jordan R. A.	

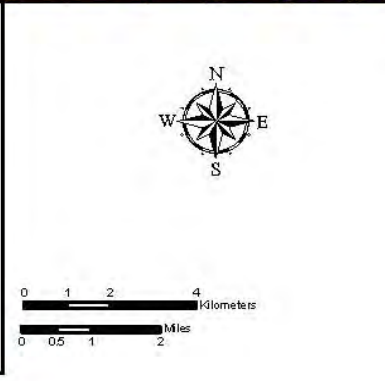
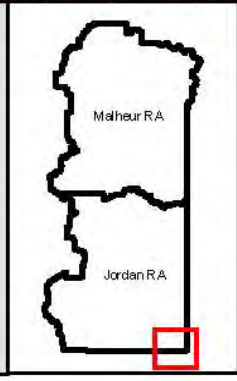
*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.*

# Wilderness Characteristics - Overview Oregon Butte - OR-036-004 - Map 1 of 1



**Legend**

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



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

**VALE DISTRICT**  
March 30, 2010

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**--FINAL--**









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6352-0-00-B-E.JPG



6352-0-00-C-W.JPG



6352-0-00-D-W.JPG



6352-0-00-E-W.JPG



6352-0-00-F-W.JPG



6352-0-00-G-W.JPG



6352-0-00-H-W.JPG



6352-0-00-I-W.JPG



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LCGMA-Unknown A-B-W.JPG



LCGMA-Unknown A-C-W.JPG

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

### **APPENDIX C – ROAD<sup>1</sup> ANALYSIS**

**Wilderness Inventory Area Name and Number (Unit ID):** Oregon Butte OR-036-004

**Route Name and/or Identifier:** BLM Road Tent Creek/6352-0-00; Willow Creek  
proposed WSA Addition WC4

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#### **I. LOCATION**

Refer to attached map 2007\_Oregon\_Butte\_OR\_036\_004.pdf and BLM corporate data (GIS).

List photo point references (if applicable): BLM DSC02281-DSC02293; Willow  
Butte proposed WSA Addition WA096-WA99

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#### **II. CURRENT PURPOSE OF ROUTE**

Describe: BLM road 6352-0-00 is utilized mainly by ranchers (as observed by current BLM staff) and by BLM staff for the administration of rangeland resources, livestock grazing, and the maintenance of livestock improvements (fences, water well, and reservoir) in two pastures of the Star Valley Community Allotment. The road is also a route from Oregon to the 45 Ranch in Idaho. The road is used on a seasonal basis by hunters and recreation enthusiasts and is an access route into southwestern Idaho.

#### **III. ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY**

Is a road right-of-way associated with this route? Yes  No  Unknown

#### **IV. CONSTRUCTION**

Yes  No

Examples: Paved  Bladed  Graveled   
Roadside Berms  Cut/Fill  Other

Describe: Local information (unknown origin) declares that BLM Road 6352-0-00 was used as a wagon route into Idaho in the late 1800s. Sometime in the late 1960s to early 1970s the road surface was bladed and ditches and berms were added on the roadsides, using a road-grader. The bladed road with its berms and



ditches can be clearly seen in a photograph taken for the 1978-1981 wilderness inventory and unit decisions for the southern (northern boundary for Oregon Butte OR-036-004) boundary of the Lookout Butte WSA which is also the northern boundary of the Oregon Butte OR-036-004 unit. Road 6352-0-00 consists of natural materials and is one of the BLM roads in the Vale District Transportation Plan.

The Willow Creek proposed WSA Addition citizen proposal does not address whether BLM road 6352-0-00 was constructed by mechanical means. Further, ONDA's information for roads in their 2004 document references pictures WA96-99 and includes a short narrative about their road segment WC4 (BLM road 6352-0-00) that states, "This is a rocky, rutted, and overgrown way (see photos WA96-99)." Based on these four pictures, taken over a three-quarter mile section of the 12-mile length of road that makes up the northern boundary of the Oregon Butte OR-036-004 unit, ONDA determined that BLM road 6352-0-00 was not a road but a way. BLM does not support ONDA's conclusion and based on BLM pictures (DSC02281-DSC02293) and field reconnaissance in April 2007, has determined that BLM road 6352-0-00 does meet the definition of a road. BLM's pictures clearly show sections of the road over the entire 12 miles where the road has been bladed in the past, with ditches and berms on the side. Vegetation has reclaimed some of the ditches and berms but the road base is clear of vegetation with bare mineral soil across the entire width of the road.

## V. IMPROVEMENTS

Yes \_\_\_ No X

Yes or No for each: By hand tools \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ By machine \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Examples: Culverts \_\_\_ Stream Crossings \_\_\_ Bridges \_\_\_ Drainage  
\_\_\_ Barriers \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

## VI. MAINTENANCE

A. Is there Evidence or Documentation of Maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes X No \_\_\_

By hand tools \_\_\_ By machine X

Explain: Recent maintenance (within 5 years) on BLM road 6352-0-00 is not evident although periodic maintenance of the boundary roads has occurred in the past (no confirmed dates available). Earthen berms and ditches left on the edge of the road, shown in pictures DSC02281- DSC02393, presently contain brush encroaching from undisturbed areas outside of the roadbed. In some areas sparse vegetation has become established in the berms and ditches. Although it has been many years since maintenance has been performed on this road it is evident that little to no maintenance is needed to keep the roadbed in good operational condition. This is consistent with the Best Management Practices BLM has incorporated into the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan for Vale District.

**B.** If the route is in good condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM in the event this route became impassable?

Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: BLM road 6352-0-00 receives annual use, as evidenced by the lack of brush in the road and by well-used bare ground where vehicles travel. To reduce the potential for erosion and establishment of invasive plant and weed species BLM emphasizes minimal ground disturbance for road construction and maintenance, following the Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in the SEORMP, Appendix O. BMPs are designed to assist in achieving land use objectives for maintaining or improving water quality, soil productivity, and the protection of watershed resources from ground disturbing activities. Therefore, BLM does not grade many roads unless obstruction to vehicle passage is evident. To further reduce ground disturbance and to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns, roads are kept to the minimal width necessary. Additional precautions are taken to reduce erosion and vegetation removal by retention of vegetation on cut slopes, unless it poses a safety hazard or restricts maintenance activities, and by conducting roadside brushing of vegetation in a way that prevents disturbance to plant root systems and does not create visual intrusions.

## **VII. REGULAR AND CONTINUOUS USE**

Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_

BLM road 6352-0-00 has annual use as evidence by berms, ditches, lack of brush in the road, and by well-used bare ground where vehicle tires track (DSC02281- DSC02293). ONDA's 2004 Willow Creek proposed WSA Addition document (pictures WA096-WA99) refers to BLM road 6352-0-00 as a way and as not meeting the definition of a road. BLM does not support their decision. The road is well traveled, wide along much of its length, maintenance has been performed on the roadbed periodically, and it is clearly defined on the landscape.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

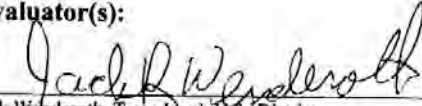
To meet the definition of a road, items IV or V, *and* VI-A or B, *and* VII must be checked yes.

Road: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: BLM has determined that road 6352-0-00 meets the definition of a road as stated in sections IV, VI-A and VI-B, and VII above. BLM road 6352-0-00 was constructed by mechanical equipment, has been maintained since being constructed, would be approved by management to be maintained as needed if the road base became impassable, and has regular and continuous use.

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**Evaluator(s):**

  
 Jack Wonderoth, Team Lead, Vale District

Date 10-26-2007

  
 Jon Sadowski, Contractor

Date 10-26-2007

  
 Cynthia Landing, Rangeland Management Specialist, Vale District

Date 10-26-2007

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The following definition of road is quoted from OSO Draft (4/19/07) H-6300-1, Wilderness Inventory Maintenance in BLM Oregon/Washington:

**road:** The BLM will continue to base the definition of what constitutes a “road” from the FLPMA’s legislative history. The language below is from the House of Representatives Committee Report 94-1163, page 17, dated May 15, 1976, on what became the FLPMA. It is the only statement regarding the definition of a road in the law or legislative history.

“The word ‘roadless’ refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.”

The BLM previously adopted and will continue to use the following sub-definitions of certain words and phrases in the BLM road definition stated above:

- a. **“Improved and maintained”** – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. “Improved” does not necessarily mean formal construction. “Maintained” does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

b. **“Mechanical means”** – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

c. **“Relatively regular and continuous use”** – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

A road that was established or has been maintained solely by the passage of vehicles would not be considered a road, even if it is used on a relatively regular and continuous basis. Vehicle roads constructed by mechanical means but that are no longer being maintained by mechanical methods are not roads. Sole use of hands and feet to move rocks or dirt without the use of tools or machinery does not meet the definition of “mechanical means.” Roads need not be “maintained” on a regular basis but rather “maintained” when road conditions warrant actions to keep it in a usable condition. A dead-end (cherry-stem) road can form the boundary of an inventory area and does not by itself disqualify an area from being considered “roadless.”