<u>Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents</u> Rattlesnake Creek OR-036-028, 14 total pages

Page 1: Index Cover Sheet

Page 2: Form 1 – Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory: Findings on Record

Page 5: Form 2 – Documentation of Current Wilderness Inventory Conditions

Page 10: Form 2 – Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Page 11: Wilderness Characteristics Overview–Rattlesnake Creek OR-036-028 Map 1 of 2

Page 12: Wilderness Characteristics-Land Treatments-Rattlesnake Creek OR-036-028 Map 2 of 2

Page 13: Wilderness Characteristics-BLM Photo Points-Rattlesnake Creek OR-036-028 Map/Log

Page 14: OR-036-028 Rattlesnake Creek BLM Photos

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-036-028 Rattlesnake Creek

FORM 1 -- DOCUMENTATION OF BLM WILDERNESS INVENTORY FINDINGS ON RECORD

NOTE: In the early 1980's, this inventory unit was intensively inventoried (OR-03-178 Rattlesnake Creek; unpublished BLM documents stored in District Wilderness Study Area case files)

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

Yes <u>X</u> 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 Units OR-03-13-13 and 3-178 of OR-03-13-15 Rattlesnake Creek. (unpublished BLM documents stored in Vale District 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)
- (X) October 1979 Wilderness Review Intensive Inventory Oregon, Proposed Decision on the Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas (grey document).
- (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 document)
- (X) 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) BLM OR-03-13-13 Coyote Holes; 3-178 of OR-03-13-15 Rattlesnake Creek

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

- (X) Final Decision Initial Wilderness Inventory Map, August 1979, Oregon
- (X) Proposed Decision -- Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas Map, October 1979, Oregon
- (X) Intensive Wilderness Inventory Map, March 1980, Oregon
- (X) 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)

District Office Vale District

Field Office Jordan 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.

| Unit# / Name | Size (historic acres) | Natural Condition? Y/N | Outstanding Solitude? Y/N | Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N | Supplemental Values? Y/N |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 3-178 | 58,400 | N | N | Ν | Y |
| Rattlesnake | | | | | |
| Creek OR- | | | | | |
| 03-13-15 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 58,400 | | | | |

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

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<u>FORM 2</u> -- DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS

Unit Number/Name: <u>OR-036-028-- Rattlesnake Creek</u>

Note: In February, 2004, the Vale District received from Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) its evaluation of wilderness characteristics for what ONDA names its 65,951 acre "Rattlesnake Canyon Proposed WSA". For reference a hard copy of ONDA's proposal is retained in this unit's file. OR-036-028 represents virtually the same unit boundaries as ONDA's proposal, and original 1980's intensively inventoried unit (OR-03-178 Rattlesnake Creek) with the exception of this inventory includes slightly more acreage in the northwest area of unit as BLM road 6361-0-00 (ONDAs Beeber Ranch Road) and ONDA northwest boundary is located on what they identify as Potomac Ranch Road. The differences in unit boundaries are an artifact of BLM's GIS capabilities versus ONDA's more generalized overview map provided to BLM. Differences in this BLM inventory unit and ONDA's proposal will differ slightly because of these mapping differences.

In addition, this BLM wilderness characteristic inventory update unit combines the previously deferred findings and conclusions of wilderness characteristics inventory update for unit (OR-036-017 Rattlesnake Creek C) with this inventory unit (OR-036-028 Rattlesnake Creek). BLM previously (2007) had confined OR-036-017 inventory unit to meet litigation requirements covering the Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area (LCGMA), BLM limited its inventory and analysis of wilderness characteristics to that part of the inventory unit within the confines of the LCGMA boundary. This inventory unit covers the portions of this unit in the Rattlesnake Canyon Geographic Management Area (RCGMA) and LCGMA.

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<u>X</u>No_____

Description: Refer to Rattlesnake inventory unit's associated Map 1 for its location. Unit OR-036-028 is comprised of 66,078 acres, meeting the size criteria. The 66,078 total acres that are shown to comprise the OR-036-028 in Form 2 are different from the 58,400 acres total acres listed in Form 1. Acreage for unit OR-036-028 in Form 2 is calculated from BLM GIS information. The 58,400 acreage in Form 1 reflects the final extent of the Rattlesnake unit 3-178 as described in Oregon's November, 1980 Intensive Wilderness Inventory – Final Decision Map document. Present inventory acreage is a function of improved technology and the difference between methods and maps used in the initial inventories. The 1980s's inventory also did not include 2640 acres of state land inventoried for wilderness characteristics that was in the process of being transferred into BLM ownership during the initial inventory of 1978. The transfer was completed and the The boundaries of unit OR-036-028 are identified as BLM roads; 6360-0-00 and private property on its south boundary, 6357-0-00 on its east boundary, 6360-0-00 on its west boundary, 6361-0-00 and private property on its northwest boundary, and 6360-0-AO on its north boundary. These BLM roads receive mechanical maintenance as needed to keep them passable on a regular and continuous (seasonal) basis.

2. Is the unit in a natural condition?

Yes<u>X</u>No<u>N</u>/A

Description: Topography is flat to rolling in the majority of the unit with Little Grassy Mountain, Rattlesnake Creek/Canyon, Woolhawk Canyon, Pistol Canyon, Road Canyon, Bull Creek, and Chimney Creek as features providing topographic relief. These features are located mainly in the northwest and western portions of unit and merge together near or on the private property along the unit's northwest boundary. Elevation differences within the unit range from 4,140 to 5,400 feet above sea level. Vegetation consists primarily of big and low sagebrush and both native and non-native grass species.

Refer to this inventory unit's associated Map 1 and Map 2 for the location of human imprints. They include 62.0 miles of 19 motorized primitive trails (MPTs), 26.2 miles of fence line, 2.1 miles of pipeline serving two systems with five associated livestock water troughs, one developed spring, one wildlife guzzler, 5 vegetative manipulation treatments (implemented 1964-2001), and 16 earthen reservoirs. Approximately 862 acres of the unit is designated a common use area for the collection of decorative flat rock. This common use area encompasses all public lands in sections 01, 02, and 12 of township T37S-R43E within the unit.

Presently, to the average visitor, the various vegetation treatments affecting the unit between 1964 and 1965 would appear –individually and collectively - indistinguishable from native vegetation that has not been altered by treatment. At the time of the August 1980 wilderness inventory, the vegetation treatments were substantially noticeable to the average visitor. The fence lines, reservoirs, and MPTs are substantially unnoticeable because of the relatively large unit size and vegetative screening provided by sagebrush on the relatively flat terrain. Overall, the area appears to be primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of human activity substantially unnoticeable.

<u>Note</u>: BLM documents the presence of 7 MPTs within this BLM unit for which no ONDA documentation is provided or a given route depicted by ONDA as present but without supporting inventory information. ONDA's proposal does not qualify or indicate locations of other known man-made features of its proposed WSA while concluding that it appears primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. For comparative reference, refer to this BLM unit's associated Map 1 and 2 and to ONDA's proposal map, all located in this unit's inventory file folder.

3. Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes<u>X</u>No<u>N</u>/A____

Description: Unit OR-036-028 is roughly shaped like an upside down boot pointing to the east. The unit varies in width (east-west) from approximately 7 miles in the south to 12 miles in the north area while the length (north-south) varies from 3.5 miles in the northeast area of unit up to 12 miles in the southeast area of unit.

The majority of the unit consists of rolling to near flat open sagebrush plateaus. These plateaus contain the headwater drainages of Peacock, Little Peacock, and Little Antelope creeks that flow to the north and east respectively from the unit. The three drainages, listed previously, travel through broad open sagebrush flats characterized by fairly uniform gentle stream gradients with an absence of canyons, deep depressions, or vegetative species that usually are associated with the possibility of providing solitude. The remaining acreage located in the northwest and western area of the unit contains knolls, canyons and deep drainages. Little Grassy Mountain, Rattlesnake Creek/Canyon, Woolhawk Canyon, Pistol Canyon, Road Canyon, Bull Creek, and Chimney Creek drainages located in the northwest and west area provide variation for both topographic relief and visual barriers.

The variation of relief in Rattlesnake Canyon as well as in the other drainages creates outstanding opportunities for solitude compared to the relative flatness of the remaining acreage in the unit. Although the remainder of the unit consists of plateaus with flat to rolling topography, because of the vast extent of mainly waist high sagebrush, this area does provide fragmented vegetative screening for the opportunity of seclusion from other visitors. Although the unit lacks screening from tree and shrub species, the substantial topographic screening in the northwestern and western portion of the unit in combination with the unit's relatively large size allows for outstanding opportunities of solitude. BLM concludes that unit OR-036-028 in a natural condition does provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

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

Yes <u>X</u> No N/A

Description: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available in the unit including hiking, horseback riding, photography, general sightseeing, and hunting of common game species (chukar, antelope, and deer). Although, the canyons in the northwest area of the unit that includes Rattlesnake Canyon does provide challenging terrain and a diversity of landforms which may attract the visitor to pursue afore mentioned opportunities, these opportunities are not considered to be outstanding as they are confined to only a portion of this unit. However, this unit does provide outstanding hunting of big horn sheep which qualifies the unit as providing opportunities for outstanding for primitive and unconfined recreation. The present inventory agrees with the 1980 inventory in that while opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist, they are not considered outstanding; yet the opportunity for a quality big horn sheep hunt probably did not exist in the late 1970s (due to a stable population not

being established at that time) and therefore the unit presently provides for outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Horseback riding and hiking are also identified as recreational opportunities within the unit. BLM concludes that unit OR-036-028 provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation due to the outstanding quality of the big horn sheep hunting available within the unit.

5. Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes X_No___N/A____

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 dependant 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-dependant wildlife populations over a large area and in 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

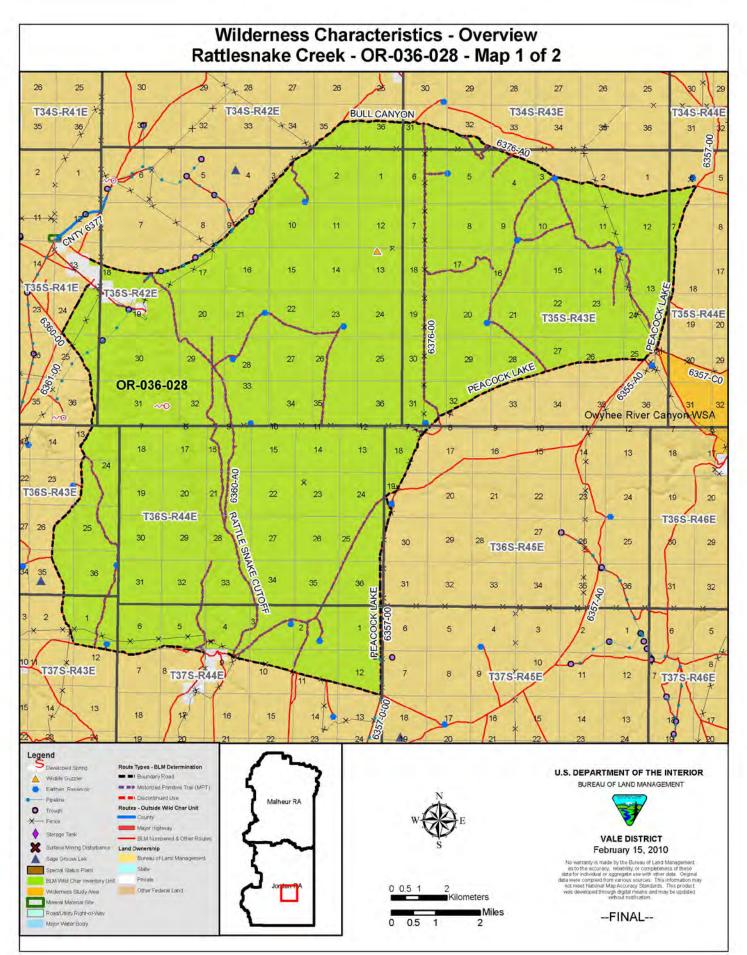
| Unit Name and Number: <u>OR-036-028 Rattlesnake Creek</u> | |
|---|---------|
| Summary Results of Analysis: | |
| 1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? X Yes | No |
| 2. Does the area appear to be natural? <u>X</u> Yes <u> </u> | No |
| 3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a pri and unconfined type of recreation? <u>X</u> Yes <u>No</u> | |
| 4. Does the area have supplemental values? <u>X</u> Yes <u>No</u> | NA |
| Conclusion check one: <u>X</u> The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness character. | |
| The area does not have wilderness character. Prepared by: Jack Wenderoth, Planning Contractor Team Members: | |
| (mung hopen 3/22 | -/10 |
| Marcy Egger, Rangeland Management Specialist Date | |
| Dave Drakeim, Outdoor Recreation Planner Date | 23/2010 |
| Garth Ross, Wildlife Biologist Date | -2010 |
| Jon Sadowski, Environmental Contractor Date | 2/10 |
| Eian Ray, GIS Specialist, Contractor Date Brent la Grante 31 | 19/10 |
| Brent Grasty, GIS Coordinator Date Approved by: | -1 |

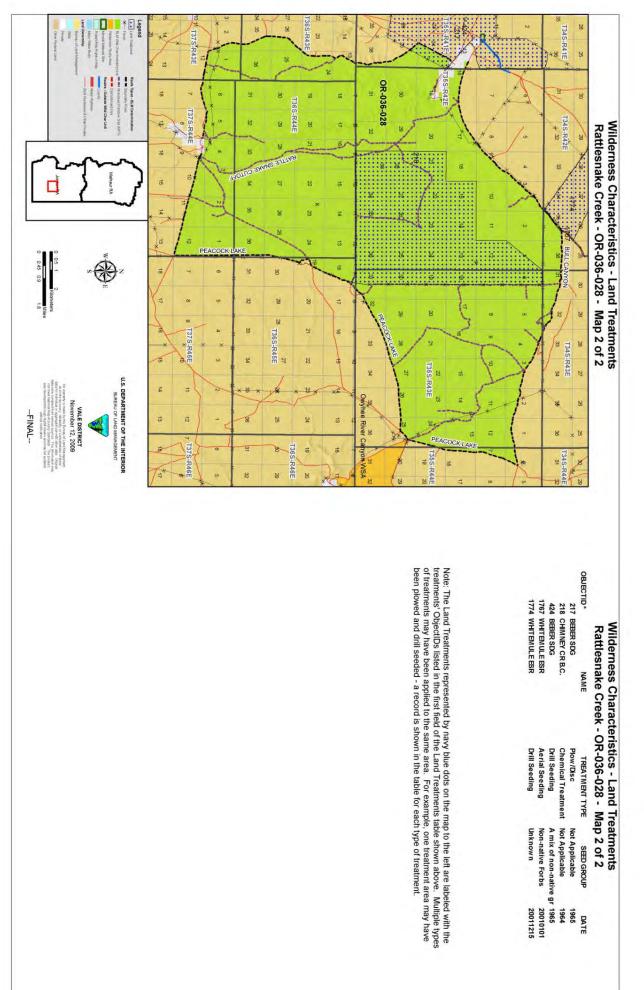
Jarden R Freeboin

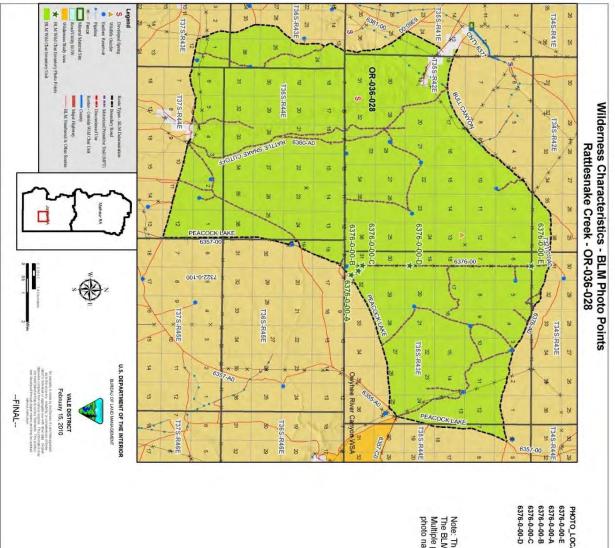
Carolyn Freeborn, Jordan Resource Area Field Manager

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.

Date







| | Wilder | ness Char | acteristic | Wilderness Characteristics - BLM Photo Points |
|-----------|-----------|---|------------|---|
| | | Rattlesna | ake Creek | Rattlesnake Creek - OR-036-028 |
| LOCATION* | DIRECTION | LOCATION* DIRECTION PHOTO_TYPE PHOTO_DATE | PHOTO_DATE | COMMENTS |
| 00-E | S | Route | 20070507 | End Of Peacock Lake |
| -00-A | z | Route | 20070507 | |
| -00-B | WW | Route | 20070507 | |
| -00-C | z | Route | 20070507 | |

z

Route

20070507

Note: The BLM Wild Char PhotoPoints displayed on the map are labeled with their Photo Locations. The BLM Photo Log table shown above lists the photos taken at their respective Photo Locations. Multiple photos may be taken at each Photo Location. Scenery and Project Photo Type pictures have their photo names provided in the Comments field.

Wilderness Characteristic Photos



6376-0-00-A-N.JPG



6376-0-00-D-N.JPG



6376-0-00-B-NW.JPG



Date Taken: 06/07/07

6376-0-00-C-N.JPG



6376-0-00-E-S.JPG