

**WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE
IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON**
(Source: Oregon State Office Internal Guidance as of July 2007)

Year: 2010

Inventory Unit Name: Upton Mountain

**FORM 1: DOCUMENTATION OF BLM WILDERNESS INVENTORY
FINDINGS ON RECORD:**

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

No _____ Yes X (if more than one unit is within the area, list the names/numbers of those units): 2-2E, 2-2F

a) **Inventory Source:** Wilderness Review Intensive Inventory (March, 1980), Pages 21-23

b) **Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s):** Warm Springs – Black Butte, 2-2E & 2-2F

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** March, 1980; Final Decision on 30 Selected Inventory Units

d) **BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Burns District BLM – Three Rivers Resource Area and Vale District-Malheur Resource Area

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record: Wilderness Review-Intensive Inventory, March 1980, Pages 21-23

Unit#/Name	Size (Historic Acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
2-2E, Warm Springs – Black Butte	11, 920 acres	Y	N	N	Y
2-2F, Warm Springs – Black Butte	25,980 acres	Y	N	N	Y

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

Unit Name: Upton Mountain

(1) Is the unit of sufficient size?

Current Unit Acres: 5,567 acres Yes X No

Citizen Information Received: On September 19, 2007, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 56,535 acre Middle River proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs and GIS data with their route and photo point data, all of which were considered as part of the wilderness inventory process for this BLM unit. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in October 2003, and July 2003, 2005, and 2007. ONDA identified the Middle River PWSA as having no routes within the proposed WSA which met their definition of a boundary road. For reference, a hard copy of ONDA's proposal is retained in this unit's file. Information provided by ONDA's proposal was considered and incorporated as appropriate for this BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory maintenance in Burns District.

As described below, the BLM also conducted a boundary road determination process and found that several of ONDA's "ways" are still boundary roads. It is BLM's finding that ONDA's Middle River proposed WSA is a unit made of three, original, smaller, BLM units identified by the 1979 and 1980 wilderness inventory effort. In addition, ONDA's proposed WSA includes a parcel of public land adjoining the aforementioned units on the northeast and southeast. The Upton Mountain Unit represents only a portion of ONDA's proposal.

ID-team Meetings: An ID-team consisting of BLM staff from the Burns District evaluated the unit. Prior to the ID-team evaluation Autumn Toelle, Rangeland Management Specialist, reviewed ONDA photos to identify those which applied to this BLM unit for review by the Interdisciplinary (ID)-team. The ID-team was also provided with ONDA's narrative and maps as well as BLM's current and past maps and photographs of routes/areas in the unit plus other past inventory descriptions. The ID-team consisted of wilderness, range and planning staff. Wildlife, archaeology, lands and realty, and forestry staff were also consulted.

BLM's Boundary Road Determination Process: BLM conducted a route analysis, including a field check to verify the current conditions for the boundary roads identified for the unit. District staff were also contacted prior to the ID-team meeting and provided information about current uses of routes by BLM personnel, grazing permittees, and other publics.

Some of the interior routes not identified as boundary roads may have been mechanically improved or maintained at some point and may be maintained in the future as needed. Most are in a useable condition, but during the field review, relatively regular use was not evident and other supporting information about regular use was not observed in the field or identified in the ID-team meeting. Therefore, these routes were not recognized as boundary roads.

Boundary changes since 1980: The western boundary was previously along BLM Road 6274-0-00. This road was replaced by County Road 311, which followed most of the same route. Approximately 2.5 miles of County Road 311 is located west of the old boundary road, removing approximately 415 acres from unit 2-2E. The rest of the western boundary and southern boundary is the same, and follows County Road 311. The eastern boundary is the same, and follows the property boundary where BLM managed land meets State or Bureau of Reclamation managed land. In 1980, the northern boundary of the unit was likely BLM Road 6274-0-C0, and it is the current unit boundary. The maps show some difference in the northern boundary between 1980 and now; however, this difference is most likely due to the inaccurate location of the road in 1980. ONDA's report said that BLM 6274-0-C0 is a way. The ID-team reviewed ONDA and BLM photos and based on the team's knowledge of the routes concurred that the route has been mechanically improved or maintained at some point. The route will continue to be maintained, if needed, and utilized to check range developments, access range condition monitoring sites, and provide access to Upton Cabin on State Lands, and to the Malheur River. The grazing permittee will continue to use the route to check livestock and place salt and mineral blocks at various locations.

Current Unit Boundaries (See BLM Unit Character Map):

The routes forming boundaries were driven during field review in 2009. All have been mechanically constructed, maintained and improved in the past, and will continue to be maintained as needed to allow for high-clearance vehicle passage for public land users.

- N. boundary: BLM Road 6274-0-C0
ONDA Photos: HK22 through HK32, TC10 and TC11
BLM Photo: MR-14 through MR-21
- E. boundary: State Lands and Bureau of Reclamation Lands
ONDA Photos: None
BLM Photo: None
- S. boundary: CNTY Road 311 (Warm Springs Road); Bureau of Reclamation
Lands
ONDA Photos: None
BLM Photos: MR-22

W. boundary: County Road 311 (Warm Springs Road)
ONDA Photos: HK21, HK22, TC10
BLM Photos: MR-14

Interior Boundary Road: There are no interior boundary roads within this unit.

(2) Is the unit in a natural condition?

Yes X No N/A

1980 Unit Description: The subunit contains one reservoir, one spring, three fencelines totaling three miles, and one way. The developments are dispersed through the subunit and are not substantially noticeable.

Current Condition Description: The unit currently has the following developments (See Unit Character Map):

Fences: 4.8 miles
Reservoirs: 3
Spring Developments: 1
Aerial Seedings: 2,062 acres
Broadcast Seeding: 680 acres
Overland Drill Seeding: 190 acres
Fire: 5,362 acres
Boundary roads (not within unit, but determine part of unit perimeter): 8.6 miles
Non-boundary roads: 3.7 miles

The current unit contains less land area than the 1980 subunit 2-2E. The unit is within three grazing allotments, River Allotment is on the northeast side, Upton Mountain Allotment on the northwest side, and Texaco Basin Allotment on the south side of the unit. Fences have been constructed to divide these three allotments. However, the fence dividing the River and Upton Mountain allotments is a gap fence, that ties into the ridges on top of Upton Mountain; therefore, there is not an allotment boundary fence at all points between the two allotments. A Pasture fence has been constructed in the south end of the unit, dividing two pastures within the Texaco Basin Allotment. The fences that are present are obvious to the casual observer since they generally tie into the boundary roads.

There are three reservoirs and one spring development, all of which are located off of boundary roads in the unit's interior, and they are not obvious to the casual observer. A fire in 2007 burned 5,362 acres within this unit, removing much of the natural vegetation. In response to the fire, 2,932 acres of the burned area was reseeded. The majority of the reseeded was done aerially or by broadcast. These two methods result in a natural appearing landscape. However, approximately 190 acres was reseeded using an overland drill, all of which occurs within one-half mile of a boundary road. The proximity to the

boundary roads increases the visibility of the linear contrast of dirt and vegetation along the drill lines, creating a significant contrast to the average visitor. Therefore, these 190 acres are not affected primarily by the forces of nature and are not substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor. The area seeded by overland drill will be removed from the unit evaluation in the following sections of Form 2. The remaining 5,377 acres will be evaluated in the following sections.

The ID-team found that many of these developments and treatments were dispersed through the unit enough that the imprint of humans is still substantially unnoticeable and that the unit is in a natural condition. This finding is generally consistent with ONDA's proposal for their Middle River Unit, which they found to be natural as a whole.

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

Yes _____ No X N/A _____

1980 Unit Description: The subunit provides some opportunity for solitude where the topography consists of gently rolling hills but it is not outstanding due to the lack of vegetative screening, the open expanses between hills, and the subunit's limited size. Users would find it difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the subunit, or to find a secluded spot.

Current Condition Description: This analysis will only include the area within the unit that was not seeded by overland drill in 2007. The west boundary of this unit is the Warm Springs Road, which is a county improved road and gets used frequently. While this road is a boundary road, and does not lay within the unit boundary, visitors often pull off the road (and within the unit) to park while participating in other activities. Therefore, it is likely that a visitor on the west side of Upton Mountain would be able to see vehicles parked just off the road, and other visitors on the edge of the unit. Also on the northwest side of the unit is a non-boundary road that may occasionally be used by other visitors and would be visible from many areas on Upton Mountain.

Upton Mountain runs north-south down the middle of this unit. While there are some small, shallow drainages running off of Upton Mountain, they are generally not sufficient to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The slopes of Upton Mountain generally consist of gently rolling hills, with large open expanses between them. Therefore, the topography may provide for some solitude, but it would not be outstanding. While there are some scattered patches of juniper trees, these patches are mainly near the top of Upton Mountain; there is very little vegetative cover on the lower slopes of Upton Mountain. Since this unit has little vegetative screening, and minimal topographic screening, any activities which involve vehicles, camps/camping activities, hunting, firefighting, and moving of cattle are likely observed.

While solitude may occasionally be found due to the presence of some rolling hills on the slopes of Upton Mountain, this is not outstanding due to the overall lack of topographic and vegetative screening, and the small size of the unit.

ONDA indicated in their report that the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. This is because ONDA considered all the BLM subunits as contiguous, within their large, proposed Middle River WSA.

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

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

1980 Unit Description: The subunit offers opportunities for hunting (deer, antelope, upland game), rockhounding, hiking, backpacking, and trapping, but none of the opportunities are outstanding.

Current Condition Description: This analysis will only include the area within the unit that was not seeded by overland drill in 2007. This unit is in California bighorn sheep habitat, and opportunities to hunt them may be available. However, big horn sheep presence in this area is minimal and there are other areas nearby where bighorn sheep are generally present. Therefore, the opportunity to hunt bighorn sheep within this unit is not an outstanding. The opportunities noted in the 1980 description are still present in the WIM unit; none are outstanding. ONDA indicated in their report that the area provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, this is because ONDA considered all the BLM subunits as contiguous, within their large, proposed Middle River WSA, and ONDA felt the increased size of their proposed WSA (which includes the Malheur River) enhanced these recreation opportunities to make them outstanding.

While the recreation opportunities identified by both BLM and ONDA may be present, their diversity and quality are not unlike that which can be found on public lands in the much of eastern Oregon in the Northern Great Basin region. After reviewing the information submitted, the ID-team found that the recreation opportunities present are not unique and do not present characteristics either individually or collectively that would result in these recreation activities being outstanding within the unit.

(5) Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

1980 Unit Description: The western portion of this subunit provides yearlong antelope habitat.

Current Condition Description: This analysis will only include the area within the unit that was not seeded by overland drill in 2007. Approximately 800 acres in the south part of the unit are part of the Stinkingwater Herd Management Area (HMA) which is 92,120 acres in total size. While wild horses may occasionally be present within the unit, they

are uncommon since less than 1% of the HMA is within the unit. The entire unit provides yearlong sage-grouse habitat, and the majority of the unit is also within California Big Horn Sheep habitat.

In the southeastern part of the unit, there is an area (less than 1 acre in size) which is known to have Oregon princesplume (*Stanleya confertiflora*), there is also a small area with Leiberg's clover (*Trifolium leibergii*), both of which the BLM considers a rare plant. In addition, the Canyon City – Winnemucca Wagon Road may have existed where the current Warm Springs Road is, and sometimes just east of the current road.

ONDA's report, which considered all the BLM subunits as contiguous, within their large, proposed Middle River WSA, concluded that the area provides crucial deer winter range and yearlong antelope range. Furthermore, the juniper trees and water located within the Middle River proposed WSA add ecological value to the area because they provide a diversity of excellent habitat to other wildlife species. The Greater Sage Grouse is a species of concern throughout its range with a population that is on a significant downward trend. Habitat fragmentation is one of the primary causes of this decline. The Middle River proposed WSA provides prime habitat for this species as it is home to at least one sage grouse lek. Moreover, this area is likely to be home to the Pygmy Rabbit and Burrowing Owl, which are Federal Species of Concern.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Name: Upton Mountain

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: Autumn Toelle, Rangeland Management Specialist

Coordinating Personnel:

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Autumn Toelle, Rangeland Management Specialist Date

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Bill Dragt, Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist Date

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Jason Brewer, Wildlife Biologist Date

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Skip Renchler, Lands and Realty Specialist, Burns District Date

Approved by:

acting Richard Roy 4/6/2011
Richard Roy, Field Manager, Three Rivers Resource Area, Burns District 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 1610.5-2.02

Upton Mountain Unit Character Map

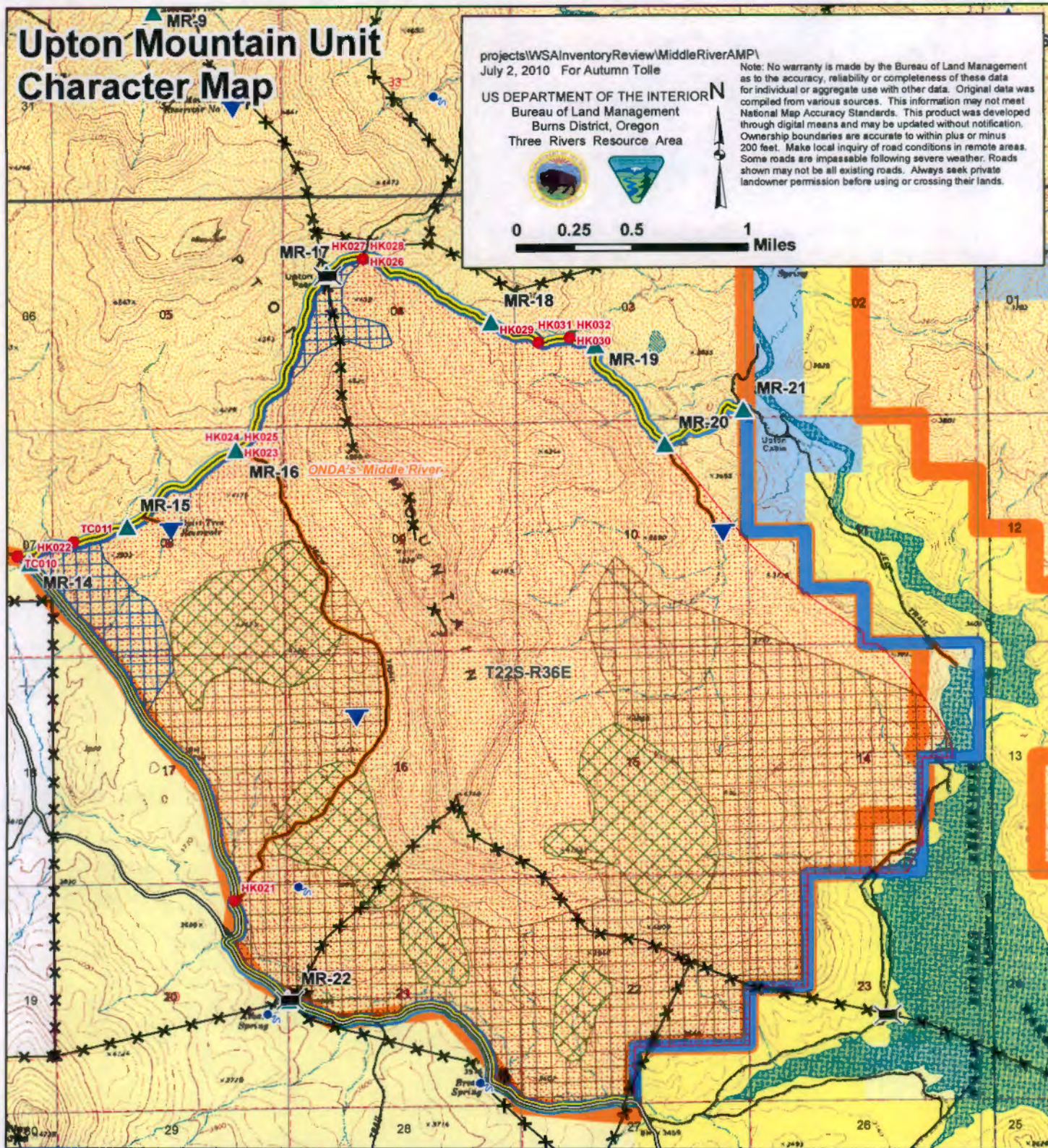
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July 2, 2010 For Autumn Tolle

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Burns District, Oregon
Three Rivers Resource Area



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0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



- Upton Mountain Unit 5,567 Acres
- ONDA Proposed WSA Units
- Boundary Roads 8.6 Miles
- Primitive Routes 3.7 Miles
- BLM Photo Points
- ONDA Photo Points
- Fire 5,362 Acres

- Cattle Guard 2
- Reservoir 3
- Spring 1
- Fence 4.8 Miles
- Aerial Seed 2,062 Acres
- Broadcast Seed 680 Acres
- Drill Seed 190 Acres

- Land Administration
- Bureau of Land Management
 - Private
 - State
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Non-Paved Improved Road
 - Primitive Road Surface