

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-041/ Black Hills*

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):

a) **Inventory Source:** BLM Wilderness Inventory files for Pacific Power and Light Company (PP&L) Transmission Line: PP&L Roadless Area Inventory Files (1977).

b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** 1-41 and PP&L #OR-010-04-20/ Squaw Lake; 1-42 and PP&L #OR-010-04-18/ Sheep Corral

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Final Decision - Initial Wilderness Inventory: Public Lands and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics and Units To Be Intensively Inventoried; USDI BLM - Oregon, August 1979.

d) **BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area.

*Note: Unit name was changed to better reflect values and features found within the unit, and to reduce confusion of similarly named inventory units.

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):

Unit #	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
1-41	25,600	Y	Y	N	Y
1-42	10,080	Y	Y	N	Y
1-41, 1-42*	28,370	Y	N	N	N/A

* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2009. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2009 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018

inventory review. Documentation of the 2009 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

Summarize any known primary reasons for prior inventory findings listed in this table:

Historic Unit 1-41 was described as flat to gently rolling, the northern two-thirds dropping gently. Low north south rim through the center of the north half. Several southeast to northwest low rims in the south half. The southern third broke to the south, comprised of a very large ridge, broken by rims and draws. The unit contained many small basins with lakebeds. Sheep Lake was in the center of the unit. Vegetation was desert shrubs with a few bands of juniper along rims and draws. The unit contained some livestock waterholes with “ways” leading to them and a very small seeding in the northwest corner. Outside intrusions included ranches, county roads, and hay fields. Overall, the unit was found to be pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities were minimal. The area was also found to spacious as the topography, size or shape of the area provided seemingly complete isolation (solitude). The unit offered some antelope and deer hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and dry camping. Scenic quality was medium. Overall, the unit lacked outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Supplemental values included possible archaeological sites in the southwest. Initially the unit was found to contain the essential characteristics of a wilderness area. However, the unit was ultimately dropped from wilderness consideration due the need of future projects requiring intensive management of the vegetation for mule deer benefits including water development (reservoirs) and seedings. In addition, use of vehicles on interior routes would negatively affect other users in the area being as the unit was relatively open.

Historic Unit 1-42 was described as rugged welded tuff hills in the northeast corner (Black Hills). A north facing gentle slope with low rim rocks draws going north to south. Vegetation was predominantly desert shrub with junipers along rims and draws. Internal intrusions included off-road vehicle trails in the Black Hills. A few “ways” and small-scale mining activity in the northern portion of the area. Some livestock waterholes and two wildlife “guzzlers.” Outside intrusions included subdivision, farm, and town developments from 1-3 miles outside of area. These intrusions were only visible from ridges and hilltops. Overall, the area was found to be pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities are minimal. The area was also found to spacious as the topography, size or shape of the area provided seemingly complete isolation (solitude). The unit offered moderate value deer hunting, Black Hills geology, and low scenic value. Vegetation on the Black Hills was interesting, but not unique. Overall, the unit lacked outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Initially the unit was found to contain the essential characteristics of a wilderness area. However, the unit was ultimately dropped from wilderness consideration due to perceived management issues controlling access, needed maintenance of “ways” for wildlife guzzlers and water developments, speculation of mining claim development, and subdivision development just outside the north border.

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: OR-015-041/ Black Hills

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

In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 57,827-acre Black Hills proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) Addition. ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and GIS data. All of these materials were considered during the BLM's wilderness inventory update for this area. They identified this large area as having no interior routes, which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 18 of ONDA 2005).

Between 2008 and 2016, BLM staff conducted field inventory in the area as part of a process to update its road and wilderness inventories and to gather additional information to supplement ONDA's wilderness information. This fieldwork included photo documentation of the boundary and interior routes and a re-evaluation of wilderness characteristics for this area. Using both ONDA and BLM photos, field logs, and staff field knowledge, the BLM completed route analysis within the area in 2017.

The BLM determined that some of the routes ONDA identified as "ways" are boundary roads. Black Hills proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of smaller inventory units, which must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Roads 7114-00, BLM interim numbered roads 7114-E0 and 7114-EA, right-of-way for County Road 5-14F, a right-of ways for residential power lines, and private lands on the north; 7114-00 and private lands on the east; 7114-00, 7114-A0, 7124-00, BLM interim numbered roads 7124-AC, 7134-J0, 7134-K0, right-of-ways for a PacifiCorp 500-KV power line and access roads on the south; and 7134-00 on the west. BLM interim numbered roads 2122-00 and 7114-D0 were cherry stemmed for access to private property (right-of-way) and the Black Hills Recreation Site. Due to changes in boundary determinations (roads and power line right-of-ways buffer corrections) and cutout of unnatural features (mineral pit, residential power lines, and pipelines), approximately 105 acres were removed from this unit. Portions of BLM Road 7114-A0 no longer meet the definition of a boundary road. Thus, portions of historic inventory units (1-41 and 1-42) have been combined to form the new unit boundary. This evaluation focuses on these combined units and will hereby be referred to as the Black Hills inventory unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Black Hills inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 28,265 acres of BLM-administered lands.

Additional background on the process that the BLM followed during this evaluation is contained in the document, *Wilderness Inventory Maintenance Process for the Lakeview Resource Area, BLM* and in the *Route Analysis Forms*. Both documents can be found in the wilderness inventory file.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS:

This unit is located approximately 5 miles south of Christmas Lake, Oregon. The unit is approximately 8.5 miles long by 7 miles wide, with one 321-acre inholding in the western third of the unit. Topographically the unit is very diverse numerous points, ridges, buttes, rims, draws, and drainages. The unit ranges in elevation from 4,320 ft. to 5,583 feet. The unit is largely comprised by a gently north facing slope with highland ridges and rims to the south. Two moderate to large rims (7.5 miles long by 150-350 ft. high; 3.5 miles by 325 ft. high) dominate the unit near the western and eastern borders, running from the northwest to the southeast. The northeast corner of the unit is dominated by the Black Hills (325-650 ft. high), rugged welded tuff buttes, peaks, rims and eroded geologic formations. The unit also contains numerous drainages (approx. 30 miles) across the unit (20 to 100 ft. deep). In addition, In addition the unit contains dozens of large, deep, depressed lakebeds and small, closed-in, valleys including Sheeplick Lake, Upper Twin Lake, Blue, Upper Sheep Corral, Look, O'leary #1, Big, and Guinee Reservoirs (#'s 1, 2, 3). Vegetatively, approximately 5,000 acres of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics in the southwest and northeast, and along interior drainages and rims. The remaining vegetation is scattered juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, and grass. Wildfires burned approximately 4,284 acres in the northwest corner of the unit in 1968 and 1984.

(2) Is the unit in a natural condition? Yes No N/A

In 1977, Unit 1-41 contained some livestock waterholes with “ways” leading to them and a very small seeding in the northwest corner. Outside intrusions included ranches, county roads, and hay fields. Overall, the unit was found to be pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities were minimal. Unit 1-42 contained off-road vehicle trails in the Black Hills, A few “ways” and small-scale mining activity in the northern portion of the area, with some livestock waterholes and two wildlife “guzzlers.” Outside intrusions included sub-division, farm, and town developments from 1-3 miles outside of area. These intrusions were only visible from ridges and hilltops. Overall, the area was found to be pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities are minimal.

In 2005, ONDA found their 57,827-acre Black Hills proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) to appear natural throughout, with the works of man substantially

unnoticeable. ONDA noted there are a few manmade features that can be found throughout the unit such as “ways”, fences, and a power line along the southern boundary. However, many of the “ways” are overgrown, fences do not have a cumulative impact on the area, and the power line is only noticeable when in close proximity (0.5 miles) because of rolling topography and juniper trees act as screening. Therefore, the Back Hills proposed WSA is primarily affected by the forces of nature (p. 15 of ONDA 2005). However, as noted above, the BLM found that this proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of smaller inventory units, within which the natural character must be evaluated individually.

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 4,284 acres of wildfire, 2,970 acres of mechanical/fuel treatments, 3,468 acres of seeding, 25 miles of fence lines, 21.5 miles of motorized routes, 4 miles of closed routes, 18 miles of cat lines, 14 waterholes, 12 reservoirs, 1 well, and 2 wildlife guzzlers.

Presently, almost 4 decades after the original inventory, these developments are weathered and grown over with herbaceous grasses, sagebrush, and juniper. As a result, developments now fade into the background of the unit and are largely only noticeable at a close distance (1/4th mile or less) and are thus substantially unnoticeable from further distances. The topography and vegetation of the area also plays a large role in screening disturbances and man-made developments. Furthermore, many of the disturbances are located near the perimeter of the unit and, as such, have a small area of influence. Areas that were seeded or allowed to revegetate naturally after fire have been invaded by rabbit/ sagebrush and have returned to a natural, post fire, appearing condition. In addition, cat lines, now over 30 years old, have also largely revegetated naturally or have been seeded.

Based on a review of all the available information including photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded that the unit appears in a natural condition where the imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable.

(3) Does the unit (or the remainder of the unit if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) **have outstanding opportunities for solitude?** Yes No N/A

In 1977, historic Units 1-41 and 1-42 were found to be spacious as the topography, size or shape of the area provided seemingly complete isolation (solitude).

In 2005, ONDA’s inventory identified their 57,827-acre Black Hills proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. ONDA noted the unit consists of rolling hills, rim rock, juniper stands, and ephemeral lakebeds; all of which for outstanding opportunities for solitude. However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is comprised of smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that there are several outstanding opportunities for solitude across the unit due to topographic and vegetative screening. Topographically the unit is very diverse numerous points, ridges, buttes, rims, draws, and drainages. The unit ranges in elevation from 4,320 ft. to 5,583 feet. The unit is largely comprised by a gently north facing slope with highland ridges and rims to the south. Two moderate to large rims (7.5 miles by 150-350 ft. high; 3.5 miles by 325 ft. high) dominate the unit near the western and eastern borders, running from the northwest to the southeast. The northeast corner of the unit is dominated by the Black Hills (325-650 ft. high), rugged welded tuff buttes, peaks, rims and eroded geologic formations. The unit also contains numerous drainages (approx. 30 miles) across the unit (20 to 100 ft. deep). In addition, the unit contains dozens of large, deep, depressed lakebeds and small, closed-in, valleys including Sheeplick Lake, Upper Twin Lake, Blue, Upper Sheep Corral, Look, O'leary #1, Big, and Guinee Reservoirs (#'s 1, 2, 3). Vegetatively, western juniper stands have greatly expanded in height, width, and density. Approximately 5,000 acres of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics in the southwest and northeast, and along interior drainages and rims. Due to the above-described compartmentalized topography and vegetative conditions within the unit, one would easily be able to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit.

Thus, for the reasons specified above and based on a review of all the available information including (BLM and citizen provided) photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded the Black Hills inventory unit possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude.

(4) Does the unit (or the remainder of the unit if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) **have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?** Yes No N/A

In 1977, historic Unit 1-41 offered some antelope and deer hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and dry camping. Overall, the unit lacked outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Unit 1-42 offered moderate value deer hunting and Black Hills geology. Vegetation within the Black Hills was interesting, but not unique. Overall, the unit lacked outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified their 57,827-acre Black Hills proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) to provide outstanding opportunities for recreation. ONDA noted that hikers, backpackers, and horseback riders would enjoy the diverse terrain of the unit. Wildlife viewers and hunters would the area because the diverse terrain and ephemeral lakes would attract wildlife, Botanists would enjoy the Black Hills Botanical Area, where they could find Cusick's Buckwheat and Haden's Cymopterus (Bureau Sensitive Species). While the many "ways" would provide great hiking and horseback access to the area. However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is comprised of smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM finds the combination and diversity of hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, wildlife observation, exploration, scenery, photography, stargazing, trapping, and hunting are exceptional. The BLM determined that options for exploration of the units many miles of drainages and rims as well as viewing interesting botanical specimens and geological formations within the Black Hills represent unique opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

(5) Does the unit have supplemental values? Yes No N/A

The BLM found the unit to possess archaeological and geological values as well as the presence of various bats, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, pygmy rabbit, golden eagle, and sage-grouse habitat.

In addition, the inventory unit contains 2,569 acres of the Black Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Area (ACEC/RNA), located in the northeast corner of the unit. The ACEC/RNA was designated in 2003 to protect relevant and important botanical values. The ACEC is a local attraction and primitive BLM Recreation Site popular for its unique geology and semi-rare botanical species.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Number and Name: OR-015-041/ Black Hills

Summary Results of Analysis:

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

Conclusion (Check One):

- X The area- or a portion of the area- has wilderness character: *(items 1, 2 and 3 must be checked "yes")*.
- The area does not have wilderness character: *(any of items 1, 2 and 3 are checked "no")*.

Prepared by (Member Names and Titles):


Chris Bishop: Outdoor Recreation Planner

 6/4/18
Date


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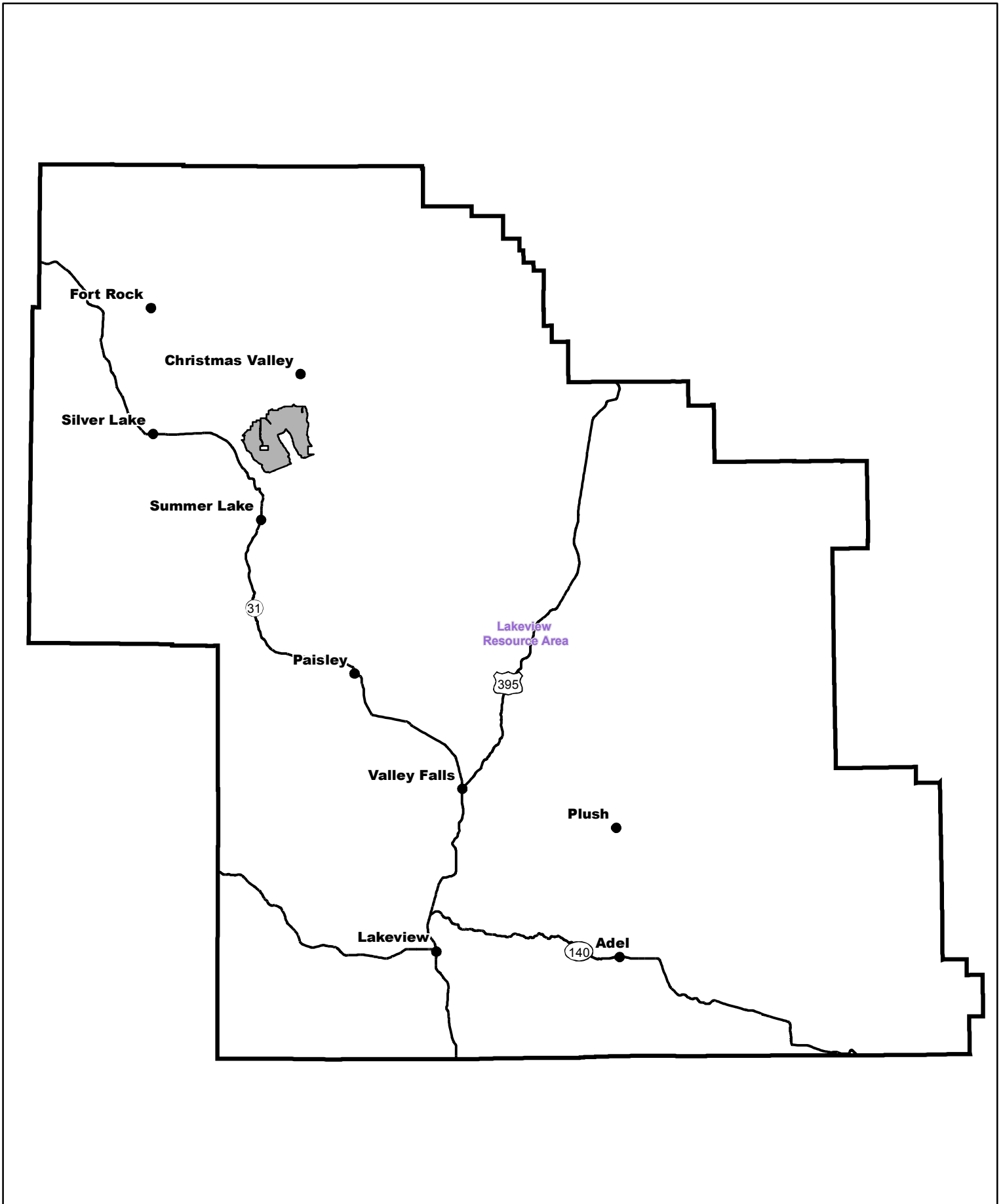
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Date


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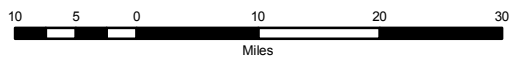

J. Todd Forbes
Field Manager


 6/4/18
Date

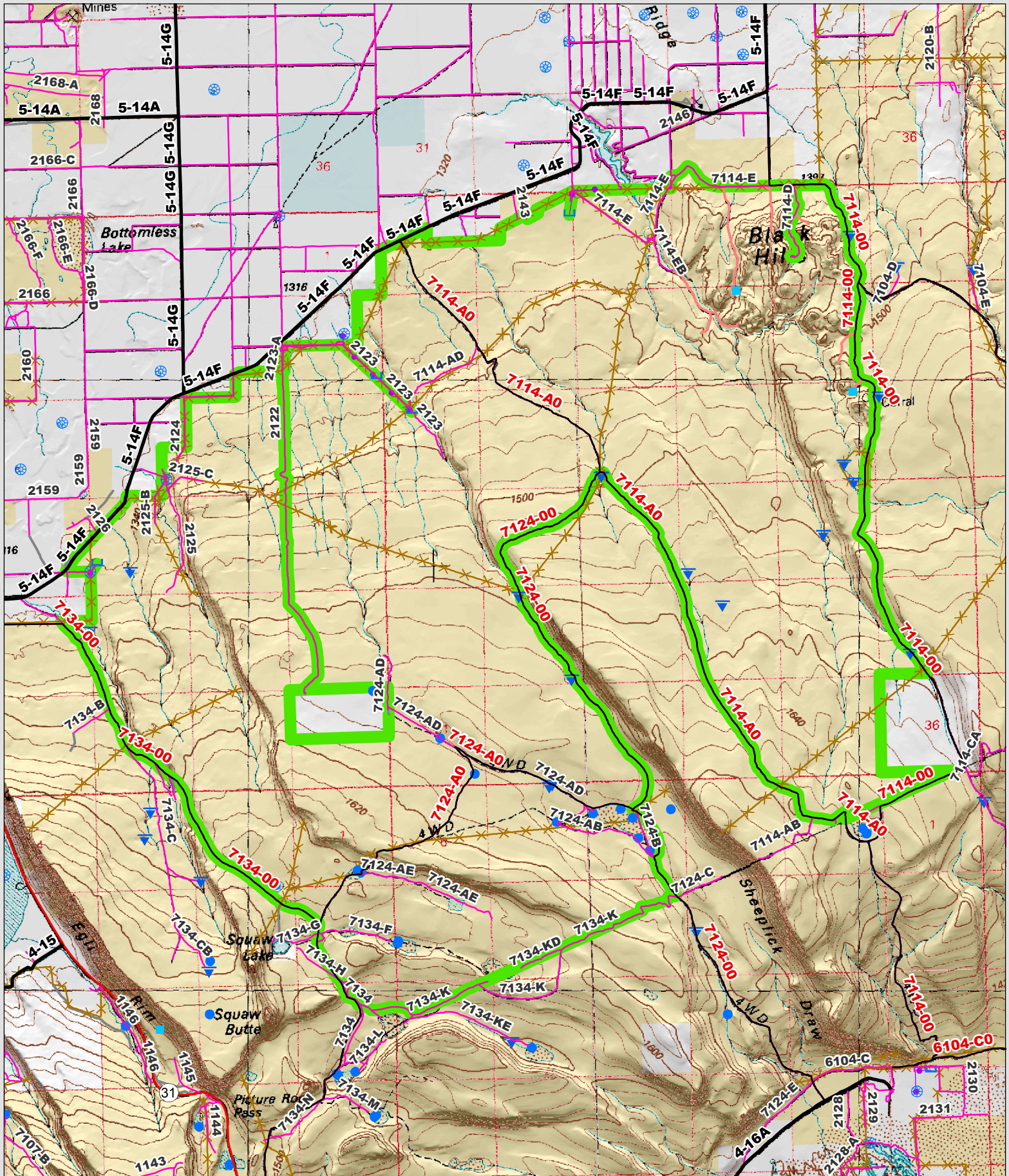
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.



 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



 No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.



Wilderness Character Inventory Unit

Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- State
- Private/Unknown

Roads/Trails

- Motorized Routes
- Highways
- Reclaiming Routes
- Interim Routes

Pipelines and Ditches

- Ditch
- Water Pipeline
- Guzzler
- Fences

Water Developments

- Dam
- Reservoir
- Spring Development
- Trough
- Water Diversion

- Water Tank
- Waterhole
- Well - Water

1.5 0.75 0 1.5 Miles

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