

**BUZZARD LAKE UNIT ORB05-03208
INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION
WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY**

FORM 1

**Documentation of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Characteristics
Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record**

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

No _____ (Go to form 2.) Yes X (If yes, and if more than one area is within the
area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.)

a. Inventory Source: Historical unit 2-64 composed of Subunit 2-64A and West Warm
Springs Unit 12.

2-64A = West Warm Springs Unit 20, OR-025-024H.

West Warm Springs Unit 12 = Buzzard Creek Subunit <5000 acres, OR-025-024T.

b. Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): Buzzard Lake, ORB05-03208

c. Map Name(s)/Number(s): Wilderness Unit Inventory Map, November 1980

d. BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Unit is located in the Three Rivers Resource Area of
the Burns District.

2. BLM inventory findings on record

Inventory Source: Wilderness Inventory -- Oregon/Washington Final Intensive Inventory
Decisions, November 1980

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
2-64A OR-025-024H	Yes 14,140	Yes	No	No	N/A
2-64 Subunit- West Warm Springs Unit 12 OR-025-024T	Yes 7,276	Yes	No	No	N/A

Unit 2-64 contains 34,495 acres of public land. Intensive inventory identified a number of roads that divide the unit into seven subunits. Five of the subunits contain less than 5,000 acres of public land and do not meet any of the minimum size criteria for wilderness study areas (WSA).

Unit 2-64A consists of 14,140 acres approximately 8 miles southwest of Harney Lake, and about 28 miles southeast of Wagonfire. Roads and adjacent public land bound the subunit on all sides with the exception of a State parcel intruding on the west boundary. The subunit contains an extensive terrace with some scattered rimrock and rolling hills. Deep Canyon, a broad and open drainage, traverses the south and southeast portions. Big and low sagebrush are the dominant vegetation types.

Naturalness: The subunit contains 4 reservoirs and 4 vehicle ways totaling approximately 6 miles. All of the developments are dispersed and located near the perimeter of the area. The developments are not substantially noticeable; the subunit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Solitude: The north portion is flat and open, and it does not provide sufficient area for seclusion. Deep Canyon in the middle of the area would provide the best opportunity for solitude. However, there is not enough elevation difference around the drainage for visitors to sufficiently screen themselves from others in the area. The remaining south portion consists of broad, open rolling hills that would allow the visitor to be highly visible. The area does not offer outstanding solitude.

Recreation: Opportunities for hunting, viewing wildlife, horseback riding, and hiking are present in this area; however, they are not outstanding.

Supplemental Values: The subunit lies in a major avian flyway from Hart Mountain to Silver Creek Valley, Oregon. Some raptor nesting sites may be located in the rimrock areas.

West Warm Springs Unit 12 was a subunit of Unit 2-64 that did not meet the size criteria in the 1980 inventory. The subunit was eliminated from further review in March 1980.

FORM 2**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

Area Unique Identifier: ORB05-03208 Acreage: 22,238

1. Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes," and describe the exception in the space provided below.)

Yes X No

1980 Assessment: Unit 2-64A consists of 14,140 acres approximately 8 miles southwest of Harney Lake and about 28 miles southeast of Wagontire. Roads and adjacent public land bound the subunit on all sides with the exception of a State parcel intruding on the west boundary. The subunit contains an extensive terrace with some scattered rimrock and rolling hills. Deep Canyon, a broad and open drainage, traverses the south and southeast portions. Big and low sagebrush are the dominant vegetation types.

The unit met the size criteria.

Citizen Information Received: On September 19, 2007, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 462,828-acre Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA. ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and geographic information system (GIS) data with their route and photo point data, all of which were considered as part of the wilderness inventory maintenance process for this BLM unit. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in July of 2004 and June of 2005. They identified the Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA as having no routes that meet their definition of a boundary road and included State land within their proposal. ONDA's comments stated: "[U]nit 2-64 is a single Roadless area that is contiguous with unit 1-57, 2-63, 2-65, and 2-61, and is a portion of a much larger Roadless area."

As part of BLM's boundary determination process, it was determined that several of ONDA's "ways" are still boundary roads. It was BLM's finding that ONDA's Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is made of several smaller units that are similar, though not exactly the same, to those units identified by the 1979 and 1980 wilderness inventory effort.

Boundary Changes Since 1980: The boundaries for Unit 12 appear similar to those identified for the subunit of 2-64; however, a non-federal inholding has become BLM land, which is likely why Unit 12 now meets the size criteria.

2017 Evaluation: Route analysis for this unit was conducted in 2017. Photo points, Global Positioning System (GPS) points, and route analysis forms are kept in the wilderness inventory file for this unit.

Route analysis of units within the West Warm Springs grazing allotment, on the Burns District, found routes that no longer met the criteria for a wilderness boundary road. West Warm Springs Units 20 and 12 were combined into 1 larger unit renamed Buzzard Lake Unit.

Comparison of historic units to current units:

West Warm Springs Unit 20 = Historic Unit 2-64A

West Warm Springs Unit 12 = Historic Unit 2-64 Subunit <5000acres

Buzzard Lake Unit Boundary Description:

West Side Boundary: Buzzard Springs Road (8211-OO), Flybee-Moon Lake North Loop Road (7256-G0).

South Side Boundary: Foster Flat Peterson Ranch Road (7256-00), Buzzard Road (7256-J0).

East Side Boundary: Hurlburt Spring Up Buzzard Creek Road (8211-A0).

North Side Boundary: Private lands.

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

1980 Assessment of Naturalness: Unit 2-64A contains 4 reservoirs and 4 vehicle ways totaling approximately 6 miles. All of the developments are dispersed and located near the perimeter of the area. The developments are not substantially noticeable; the subunit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

2007 ONDA Submittal: The interdisciplinary team (IDT) reviewed photos from the 1977 inventory effort and landscape-related photos provided by ONDA. The unit is located approximately 28 miles southeast of the community of Wagontire. The unit contains a portion of Buzzard Creek where it is small and shallow. Other drainages are shallow and limited in size with some rolling hills. Sagebrush and grasses are the dominant vegetation. The primary human uses in the unit and the surrounding area are associated with livestock grazing and recreation by the public. A portion of the western boundary road and the entire eastern boundary road have been brush beat. This consists of mowing sagebrush (24 feet) on either side of the road to assist with providing a firebreak. Dozer lines are also observable around past wildfire suppression efforts; however, these have not been mapped. The unit currently has the following developments:

- 6.1 miles of interior routes (non-boundary roads)
- 1 waterhole
- 5 miles of fencing

The unit's relatively small size, long and narrow character, and the location of the developments made making the naturalness determination more challenging for the IDT; however, they still found that the imprint of humans is substantially unnoticeable. Finding the unit natural is generally consistent with ONDA's proposal for their Buzzard Creek Unit, which they found to be natural as a whole.

2017 Evaluation: This unit is dominated by big sagebrush and perennial grasslands. Livestock grazing and recreational activities are the primary uses. Unnatural features in the unit include:

- 11 miles of interior routes
- 5 miles of fencing
- 8 acres of seeding
- 6 waterholes

Unnatural features in the unit are placed along the boundary road or at the end of cherry-stemmed routes within the unit. The features are typical livestock grazing installations, which along with recreation, is one of the primary uses in the unit. The unnatural features in the unit are substantially unnoticeable. The unit is in a natural condition.

3. Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes X No N/A

1980 Assessment of Solitude (Unit 2-64A): The north portion is flat and open, and it does not provide sufficient area for seclusion. Deep Canyon, in the middle of the area, would provide the best opportunity for solitude. However, there is not enough elevation difference around the drainage for the visitors to sufficiently screen themselves from others in the area. The remaining south portion consists of broad, open, rolling hills that would allow the visitor to be highly visible. The area does not offer outstanding solitude.

2007 ONDA Submittal: The IDT felt that the portion of Buzzard Creek that runs along the southern edge of the unit was not sufficient in size to offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. ONDA's report indicated that the sheer size of their Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA, with endless rolling hills, rimrock ridges, and juniper stands (not present in this unit), makes the opportunities for solitude outstanding. The BLM found that ONDA's Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA is not one large, roadless area, but rather several smaller BLM units, including this unit.

2017 Evaluation: Canyons and drainages in the unit indicate low-lying areas where visual screening is available to visitors. Elevation changes of 700 feet are shown by contour lines on maps for the unit. In addition to existing opportunities created by topography, updated route analysis increased the size of the unit, creating more opportunities to find solitude. The unit is full of drainages, rolling hills, rimrocks, deep washes, and broad, flat terraces. Vegetative screening is created by big sagebrush and perennial grasslands, which dominate the landscape. Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available in this unit.

4. Does the area (or the remainder of the area 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 X No _____ N/A _____

1980 Assessment of Recreation Opportunities (Unit 2-64A): Opportunities for hunting, viewing wildlife, horseback riding, and hiking are present in this area; however, they are not outstanding.

2007 ONDA Submittal: The IDT found that the recreation opportunities identified above are likely still present. ONDA’s report also identified wildlife viewing, backpacking, camping, rock hounding, and photography. ONDA indicated that the sheer size of their proposed Buzzard Creek WSA cannot help but provide for a diverse and exceptional recreational experience and that the endless rolling hills, rimrock ridges, juniper stands, multiple water features, and geologic structures present add to the interest of their unit. They also indicated they observed several wildlife species including birds of prey, pronghorn antelope, coyotes, badgers, and numerous birds.

While the recreation opportunities identified by both BLM and ONDA may be present, no unique features of interest were identified for this particular BLM unit, and the diversity and quality of the recreational opportunities for this particular unit are not unlike those that can be found on much of the public lands in eastern Oregon in the Northern Great Basin region. None of the game species generally hunted in the area, including and around this unit, are considered by the State as being unique or rare, thus these opportunities are not outstanding.

After reviewing the information submitted, the IDT found 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.

2017 Evaluation: The topography and vegetation in this unit combined with its size and location are contributing factors in determining opportunities for primitive recreation. The diverse landscape provides a home for a wide variety of wildlife such as antelope, deer, and elk. The unit is on a flyway for migratory birds, providing opportunities for bird watching enthusiasts. Archeological and cultural sites in the unit are of interest. Topography creates opportunities for visitors to camp and explore. Viewing the night sky from this unit is a high quality experience due to its dark skies. Opportunities for a primitive type of unconfined recreation are outstanding in this unit.

5. Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value)?

Yes X No _____ N/A _____

1980 Assessment of Supplemental Values: The subunit lies in a major avian flyway from Hart Mountain to Silver Creek Valley, Oregon. Some raptor nesting sites may be located in the rimrock areas.

2007 ONDA Submittal: The BLM noted in their inventory that Units 2-68, 2-69, 2-70, 2-71, 2-92, and 2-114 at Buzzard Creek Proposed WSA are located within a major migration route for birds traveling between the Hart Mountain Area and Silver Creek Valley. In addition, wild horses and burros can be found at Units 2-62 and 2-63, while Unit 2-67 is a winter range for them. The area has several cultural resources found throughout the area. 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. Several leks are known to be present in the area. This area is likely home to other Federal species of concern including pygmy rabbit, California bighorn sheep, burrowing owl, and peregrine falcon.

2008 BLM Evaluation of Citizen Proposed WSA Supplemental Values: The BLM IDT did not find any outstanding opportunities in the unit for solitude or primitive types of recreation. Therefore, they did not look for any supplemental values.

2017 Evaluation: Supplemental values include migratory bird routes, deer winter range, sage-grouse leks, pygmy rabbit habitat, antelope range, and archeological sites.

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: **ORB05-03208**

Results of Analysis: This unit met the size criteria. Two units have been combined for a total of 22,238 acres on the Burns District. The unit has unnatural features situated primarily along the boundary roads. The unnatural features that do exist in the unit are substantially unnoticeable. There are many diverse areas where topographic screening creates outstanding opportunities for visitors to find solitude. Outstanding opportunities for solitude are present in the unit. Visitors to the area would also find many opportunities to engage in primitive types of recreation. The large size of the unit and the diverse topography provide opportunities to hunt big game, hike in an area without trails, view wildlife, participate in dispersed camping, explore canyons, and many other diverse activities. This unit has outstanding opportunities for primitive types of outdoor recreation.

In addition to outstanding opportunities, this unit has supplemental features such as migratory bird routes, deer winter range, sage-grouse leks, pygmy rabbit habitat, antelope range, and archeological sites.

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

2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes X No N/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 1610.5-3.

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

4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes X No ___ N/A ___

Check one:

X The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

___ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by:

[Signature] 2/13/2018
Tom Wilcox, Wilderness Specialist, Burns District Date

[Signature] 3/7/18
Chris Bishop, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Lakeview District Date

Reviewed by:

[Signature] 2/13/18
Richard Roy, Three Rivers Resource Area Field Manager Date

[Signature] 3/7/18
Todd Forbes, Lakeview Field Manager Date

