

Catlow Valley/OR-015-159
INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION
WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record

1. Is there existing Bureau of Land Management (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: Wilderness Inventory – Oregon/Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980. Historical unit 1-159 Catlow Valley

b. Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): OR-015-159

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

d. BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Unit is shared by the Burns and Lakeview District Offices.

2. BLM inventory findings on record:

Inventory Source: Wilderness Inventory Oregon and Washington Final Intensive 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
1-159	Yes 58,000	Yes	No	No	No

Unit 1-159

Size: The unit was 58,000 acres and contained one 320-acre private inholding and 2,280 acres of State land inholdings located in 4 school sections.

Location: Adjacent to the northeast corner of the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge.

Boundaries: BLM Roads 7165 A, W 68 and W 67; 11 miles of scattered private land boundary and 10 miles of Antelope Refuge boundary on the southwest.

Physical Characteristics: The unit was described as a vast sage flat, which rose in elevation to rolling terrain on the northwest. There were approximately 8 miles of basalt rim on the northeast where the unit dropped into Duhaime Flat. The unit was cut diagonally by Buckhorn Canyon and its tributaries. The canyon country had rolling terrain with shallow draws. Vegetation on the unit was a sagebrush community.

Naturalness: The unit contained approximately 19 miles of vehicle ways. One of the ways passed approximately 5 miles up Buckhorn Canyon and was substantially noticeable within the confines of the canyon. There were 5 miles of fence line in the unit that were substantially unnoticeable. The Duhaime Flat portion of the unit contained a spray/seeding area of approximately 3,000 acres and was definitely affected by the works of man. The majority of the acreage south of Duhaime Flat was in an apparently natural condition.

Solitude: The unit was large enough to afford some degree of solitude even with the generally flat terrain in the unit. The shallow canyons feeding into Buckhorn Canyon would also provide some degree of solitude. The exposed topography in the majority of the area, and the limited offerings of canyons, did not represent an outstanding opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

Recreation: The unit offered limited hunting potential. However, this activity was normally done with motor vehicles in this region. With the broad expanses of sage flats and limited potable water in the unit, hiking and backpacking would be possible but would not represent a high quality experience. The unit did not offer any outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Supplemental Values: None presently recognized.

Proposed Decision: Eliminate from further review.

Rationale: The report on the proposed decision noted that the unit's large size did indeed offer some degree of solitude, but that the opportunity was not outstanding within the region (i.e., when the opportunity was considered with others of its kind). Most of Buckhorn Canyon was a shallow draw and did not contain noteworthy topographic relief. Burns and Lakeview District personnel jointly examined the unit as a result of the public comments and concluded that the unit did not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. Though large, it is very flat. The area did offer solitude, but the presence of others in the unit would be fairly readily detected, and the openness would leave one exposed to others. The recreation potential on the unit was deemed minimal. As with all areas in the region, a person can hike across large expanses of sage flats. However, the opportunities for activities such as horseback riding, camping, hunting, or other primitive pursuits were not outstanding. The unit offered no features or combination of features that constituted an outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation activities.

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier OR-015-159 Acreage 57,091

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: BLM Roads 7165 A, W 68 and W 67; 11 miles of scattered private land boundary and 10 miles of Antelope Refuge boundary on the southwest.

2017 Evaluation: This unit is adjacent to the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge, sharing ten miles of boundary on the southwest edge of the unit. The unit is bounded on the east and north sides by private lands, Ballenbaugh Road (8241-DO), Duhaime Road (8241-EO), and Sand Valley Augustine Road (8241-OO). On the west side, the unit is bounded by Buckhorn Canyon Road (7165-BO), Spine Cob Butte Road (7160-AO), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands. The south side of the unit is bounded by private lands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, and Rock Creek Lane (412). Concentrations of unnatural features were removed from the unit including seedings and pipelines. The unit meets the size criteria.

Route analysis for this unit was conducted in 2016 and the boundaries were determined after consultation with the Lakeview BLM. Photo points, GPS points, and route analysis forms are kept in the wilderness inventory file for this unit.

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No _____ N/A _____

1980 Assessment: The unit was described as having approximately 19 miles of vehicle ways. One of the ways passed approximately 5 miles up Buckhorn Canyon and was substantially noticeable within the confines of the canyon. There were 5 miles of fence line in the unit which were substantially unnoticeable. The Duhaime Flat portion of the unit contained a spray/seeding area of approximately 3,000 acres and was definitely affected by the works of man. The majority of the acreage south of Duhaime Flat remained in an apparently natural condition.

2002 ONDA Submittal: ONDA Proposed Wilderness Study Area – Keg Springs

The Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) submitted information to the Burns District BLM in November 2002 about their Keg Springs proposed wilderness study area (WSA). The Babes Canyon area included lands inventoried in the late 1970s as part of the Robinson Lake (1-57B), Catlow Valley (1-159), Keg Springs (2-58), and Walls Lake (2-94) Inventory Units. The Keg Springs roadless area has remained in a basically natural condition, especially units 2-58, 1-57A, 1-159, and 2-94B, as stated in BLM's intensive inventory of November 1980 (pp. 135, 49, 114, 198). The few man-made reservoirs and wells remain peripheral and not substantially

noticeable. The area continues to generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

In 2003, an interdisciplinary (ID) BLM team reviewed the ONDA submitted information and reached the same conclusion as the previous BLM inventories, "that the areas lack wilderness characteristics." Only those portions of the proposed WSA in the Burns District were considered. Of those portions, four areas were eliminated from further evaluation because each was less than 5,000 acres. The remainder of the proposed WSA is in the Lakeview District. The ID team found that the western, southern, and northern portions of the area evaluated appeared to be natural. The southeastern portion is heavily developed and is not natural.

2017 Evaluation: Unnatural features in the unit include 5 waterholes, 3 reservoirs, 8.7 miles of fences, and 9 water troughs. The majority of the unnatural features are located on the perimeter of the unit. The seeded area in the Duhaime Flat portion of the unit represents approximately 5 percent of the unit. The unnatural features are substantially unnoticeable. This 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 No N/A

1980 Assessment: Unit 1-159 was describes as being large enough to afford some degree of solitude even with the generally flat terrain in the unit. The shallow canyons feeding into Buckhorn Canyon would also provide some degree of solitude. The exposed topography in the majority of the area, and the limited offerings of canyons, did not represent an outstanding opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

2002 ONDA Submittal: ONDA Proposed Wilderness Study Area – Keg Springs
Keg Springs roadless area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The significant size (180,022 acres) of the Keg Springs roadless area provides for ample room to escape the sights and sounds of other visitors.

2003 BLM Evaluation of ONDA's Submittal: Opportunities for Solitude: The ID team found that the area evaluated may contain opportunities for solitude, but they are not outstanding. Most of the proposed WSA is flat to rolling topography with low vegetation. Small canyons provide some isolation, but they are concentrated use areas and generally lack great distances or topographic relief that would separate parties.

2017 Evaluation: The topography of this unit is primarily responsible for providing opportunities for solitude. Waterholes in the unit indicate low-lying areas where visual screening is available to visitors. The unit is full of drainages, rolling hills, rimrocks, and deep washes. The unit is covered in sagebrush that, when combined with the topography, creates outstanding opportunities for solitude 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 No N/A

1980 Assessment: Unit 1-159 offered limited hunting potential. However, this activity was normally done with motor vehicles in this region. With the broad expanses of sage flats and limited potable water in the unit, hiking and backpacking would be possible but would not represent a high quality experience. The unit did not offer any outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

2002 ONDA Submittal: ONDA Proposed Wilderness Study Area – Keg Springs
The significant size (180,022 acres) of the Keg Springs roadless area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

2003 BLM Evaluation of ONDA's Submittal: Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The ID team found that the area evaluated may contain opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, but they were not outstanding.

2017 Evaluation: This unit shares ten miles of boundary with the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge. Opportunities to hunt antelope are present during hunting season. Other primitive types of unconfined recreation such as hiking, wildlife viewing, and dispersed camping are also present in the unit. The opportunities for visitors to participate in these activities are outstanding due to the presence of a variety of available opportunities and, in particular, the high quality antelope habitat adjacent to the unit.

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

Yes No N/A

1980 Assessment: None known.

2002 ONDA Submittal: ONDA Proposed Wilderness Study Area – Keg Springs
The Keg Springs roadless area has numerous supplemental values. The rimrock area in the Keg Springs Valley, as well as in The Dipper, Hidden Spring Canyon, and other canyons provide excellent nesting opportunity for raptors, including golden eagles and red tail hawks. Pronghorn, deer, and wild horses have also been observed.

2003 BLM Evaluation of ONDA's Submittal: The BLM ID team found no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive types of recreation; therefore, they did not look for supplemental values in the unit.

2017 Evaluation: Supplemental values include sage grouse leks, pygmy rabbit habitat, and archeological sites.

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: OR-015-159

Summary results of analysis: This unit met the size criteria with a total of 57,091 acres. The unit appears to be in a natural condition. There are unnatural features along the boundary roads and some other features such as waterholes situated more towards the interior of the unit on cherry-stem routes. There is also about 3,000 acres of land seeded in the '70s. The seeded area is about 5 percent of the unit. The unnatural features are noticeable. Vegetative and topographic screening create areas where outstanding opportunities for solitude exist. The same elements that create outstanding opportunities for solitude also contribute to outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The adjacent Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge shares ten miles of boundary with this unit. Hunting using motor vehicles is not a usual or lawful method of hunting in 2017. The 1980 assessment said that motor vehicles are used to hunt antelope. Motor vehicles are used to drive to a site to hunt from, not to use the vehicle to hunt with. The adjacent antelope refuge provides outstanding opportunities for hunters to seek out trophy antelope. In addition to outstanding opportunities, this unit has supplemental features such as sage grouse lek communities, pygmy rabbit habitat, and archeological sites.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes ___ No ___ N/A
2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes ___ No ___ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes ___ No ___ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? Yes ___ No ___ N/A

Check one:

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.

* 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.

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