

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-099/ Lake Abert

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:

- a. Wilderness – Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Clearly Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, April 1979.
- b. 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; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, August 1979.

b) Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s): 1-99/ Lake Abert

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

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
1-99	43,500	N	N	N	NA
1-99*	40,594	Y	N	N	Y

* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2012. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2012 inventory

analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018 inventory review. Documentation of the 2012 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

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

The majority of Unit 1-99 was the alkali flats of Abert Lake. Approximately 6,000 acres of land on the north end of the lake is in public ownership. Private inholdings are scattered throughout the north end. Vegetation on lands to the north was primarily greasewood association. The unit was impacted heavily by roads, water tanks, fences, and other works of man; and offered little opportunity for solitude. Recreational opportunities were also severely limited on the unit.

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: OR-015-099/ Lake Abert

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

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 the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Roads 6104-A0, state, and private lands on the west; a right-of-way for County Road 2-06, BLM interim numbered road 2107-C0, and private lands on the north; a BPA power line right-of-way, U.S. Highway 395 right-of-way, state, and private lands on the east; and state and private lands on the south. A right-of-way for BLM interim numbered road 0180-00 was cherry stemmed along the southwest boundary. Approximately 36 acres of concentrated areas of unnatural features were removed from the unit including drainage ditches, corrals, private feedlots, haystacks, and agricultural equipment. In addition, approximately 268 were added to the unit along the southern boundary due to recent Master Title Plat corrections.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Lake Abert inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 40,774 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 4 miles northeast of Valley Falls, Oregon. The unit is approximately 17.5 miles long by 6 miles wide, including two state inholdings (1,247 acres) and three private inholdings (1,347 acres). The topography is dominated by a vast flat alkali lakebed or lake surface depending on the year. The northernmost portion of the unit contains Sawed Horn Butte (300 ft. high). Elevation within the unit ranges from 4,250 to 4,573 feet. In most years, water occupies the majority of the unit's surface. However, the lake level fluctuates in response to wet and dry cycles. During dry years a large, bare unvegetated alkali flat is exposed along the north side. Bands of unvegetated lake bottom can also be exposed on the east and west shore during dry years. Greasewood continues to dominate the plant community along the north shore. Narrow bands of cattails, rushes, and sedges ring portions of the shoreline, particularly near springs and seeps. The western shoreline burned during wildfires in 1971 and 1986. The 1971 burn area was reseeded with crested wheatgrass while the other area was allowed to revegetate naturally. A narrow swath of upland grasses and sagebrush exists between the shore and Highway 395 and County Road 3-09.

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

In 1979, historic Unit 1-99 was described as being heavily impacted by roads, water tanks, fences, and other works of man.

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 530 acres of wildfires, 75 acres of seeding, 44 acres of chemical treatments, 6.75 miles of fence lines, 7.5 miles of motorized routes, and 1 developed spring.

Presently, almost 4 decades after the original inventory, these developments are weathered and grown over with herbaceous grasses and sagebrush. 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 vast distances of the area also plays a large role in separating/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.

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 X No N/A

In 1979, historic Unit 1-99 was found to offer little opportunity for solitude.

The BLM determined that although the unit lacks both vegetative and topographic screening, the vast distances and space found within the unit, in combination with the unit's great size, provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of other users. Therefore, there is a high likelihood for visitors to find seclusion across 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 Lake Abert 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 X No N/A

In 1979, recreational opportunities within historic Unit 1-99 were deemed to be severely limited.

The BLM finds the combination and diversity of hiking, backpacking; primitive camping, wildlife observation, exploration, scenery, photography, stargazing, and waterfowl hunting are exceptional. The BLM determined that, when water is present, opportunities for wildlife viewing and sightseeing while hiking, around the lakes 36 miles of shoreline represents unique opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. In addition, in dry years, traversing the length of the lakebed represents a truly unique primitive recreation opportunity that is closely tied to risk, physical/ mental challenge, and isolation, such that one must not undertake lightly. Visitors embarking on the crossing must be prepared, conditioned, and equipped for exposure to the elements heat, cold, wind, mud and lack of water/shade.

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

The BLM found the unit to possess archaeological and geological values as well as the presence of snow plover, long-billed curlew, white-tailed antelope squirrel, greater sandhill crane, white-faced ibis, and habitat for various other shore bird and water fowl species.

In 1996, the BLM designated Lake Abert and surrounding public lands as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC management plan recognized and provided special management for four important resources or processes in this area including wildlife, cultural, ecological and scenic values. These values were primarily associated with the use of Lake Abert by shorebirds and waterfowl during spring and fall migration. In addition, snowy plover (special status species) habitat is located on the playa at the north end of the lake.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Number and Name: OR-015-099/ Lake Abert

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


Jami Ludwig: Assistant Field Manager

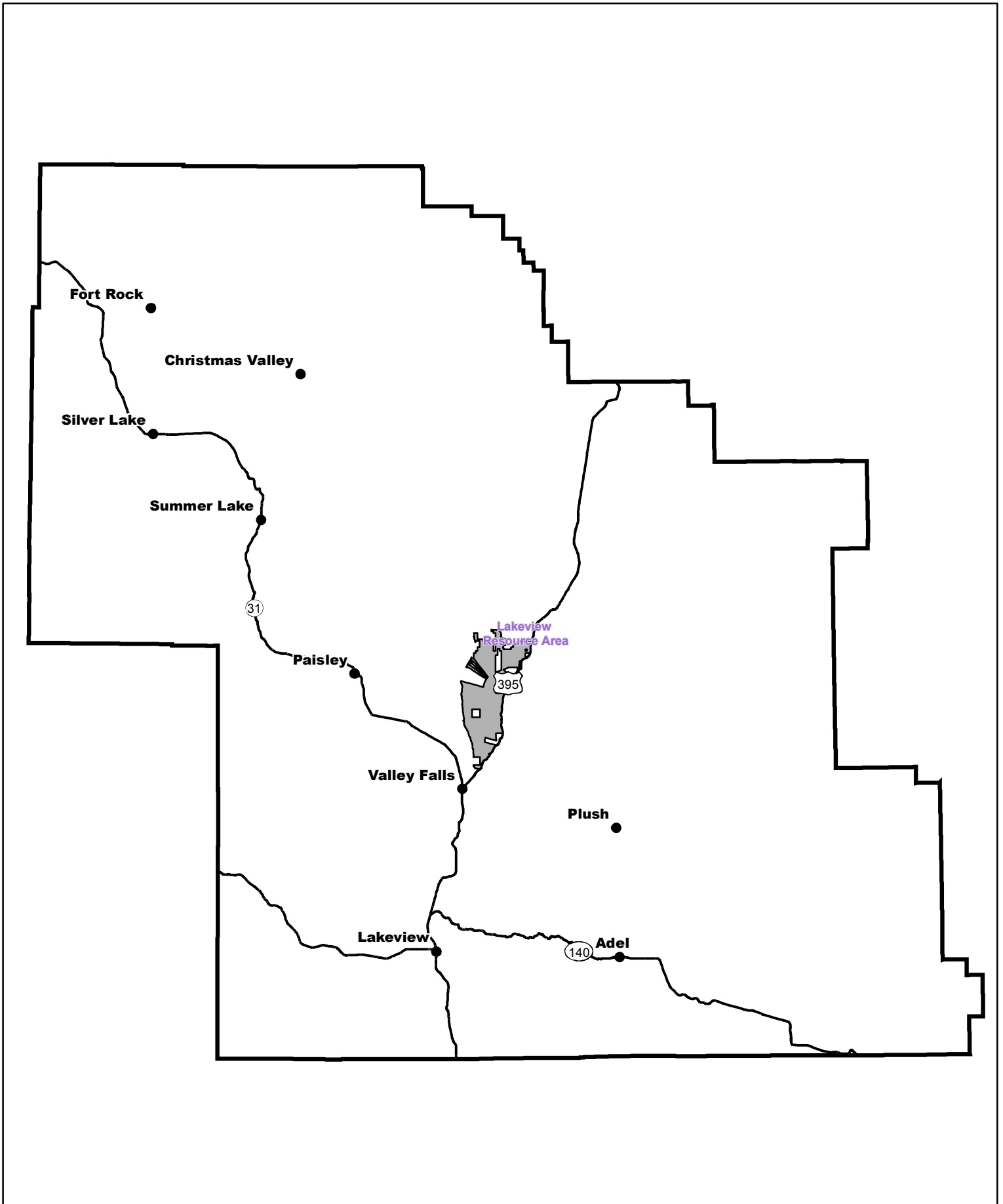
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Date


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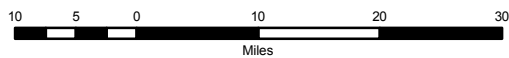

J. Todd Forbes
Field Manager


 6/4/18
Date

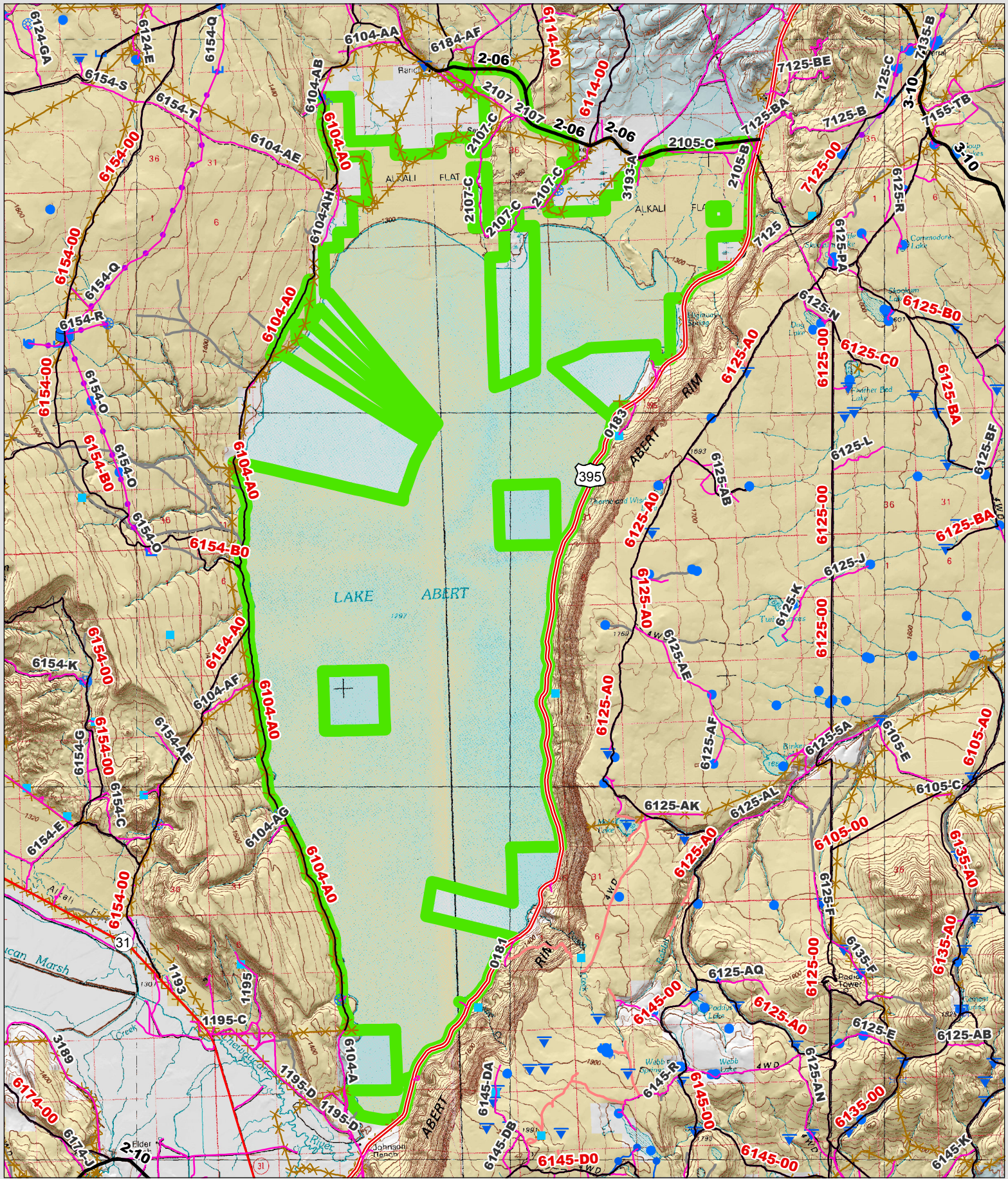
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.

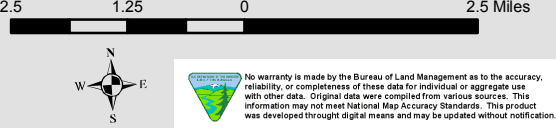


 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



 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.



<p>Wilderness Character Inventory Unit</p> <p>Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Land Management U.S. Forest Service Private/Unknown 	<p>Roads/Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motorized Routes Highways Reclaiming Routes Interim Routes 	<p>Pipelines and Ditches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ditch Water Pipeline Guzzler Fences 	<p>Water Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dam Reservoir Spring Development Trough Water Diversion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Tank Waterhole Well - Water 	<p>2.5 1.25 0 2.5 Miles</p>  <p>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.</p>
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