

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-017/ Rams Butte\*

**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 (1979).
- b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** 1-17 and PP&L# OR-010-01-2/ Corral Well
- c) **Map Number(s)/ Name(s):** Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon, April 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
1-17	8,300	Y	N	N	N/A
1-17*	8,989	Y	N	N	N/A

\* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2015. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2015 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018

inventory review. Documentation of the 2015 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 1-17 was described as rolling hills and ridges with a few low rims along the eastern edge. The vegetation was dominated by desert shrubs and scattered junipers on hills and along rims. A non-native grass seeding was noted in the southwest portion of the unit. A couple of primitive motorized “ways” and livestock water developments were noted inside the unit. The county road on the south and private farmlands along the southeast edge of the unit were also noted as visible outside intrusions. Despite these intrusions, the unit was found to be in a natural condition where the evidence of man’s activity was minimal. Evaluators found the area did not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The unit contained some limited low to medium opportunities for deer and antelope hunting, hiking, horseback riding, but these opportunities were not found to be outstanding.

**FORM 2**

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name:** OR-015-017/ Rams Butte

**(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 196,015-acre Lonesome Lakes proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). 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. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in 2004. They identified this large area as having no interior routes, which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 141 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 several of the routes ONDA identified as “ways” are boundary roads. Lonesome Lakes proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units, which must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Road 6101-00 and private lands on the west; right-of-way for County Road 5-14, BLM interim numbered roads 3144-00 and 3144-C0, and private lands on the south; BLM Road 7245-00, right-of-ways for both a power line and BLM interim numbered road 7245-Y0, and private lands to the east; and BLM Road 6101-A0 and BLM interim numbered road 6101-AC to the north. Additionally, due to findings that sections of BLM Road 6101-A0 no longer meet the wilderness definition of a road and changes in boundary determinations (power line and road right-of-ways buffer corrections), approximately 2,880 acres were added to the unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Rams Butte inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 11,869 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:**

The unit is located approximately 30 miles east of Christmas Valley, Oregon. The unit is approximately 6 miles long by 4 miles wide and contains two private inholdings (976-acres) in the southeast corner of the unit. Topographically the unit is dominated by Rams Butte, which is split in half by a 500 ft. deep canyon. The east side of Rams Butte rim runs 3.5 miles from the northwest to the southeast and is 450 ft. high above lands to the east. The west side of Rams Butte rim runs 4.5 miles from the northwest to the southeast and is 300 ft. high above lands to the west. The northeast corner of the unit consists of southern end of Jew Valley. The remainder of the unit is comprised of small to moderate rolling hills (50-250 ft. tall), rims, buttes, and drainages. Overall, the unit ranges in elevation from 4,360 to 5,099 feet. Vegetatively, approximately 1,100 acres of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics. The remaining vegetation is scattered juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, and grass. Wildfires burned approximately 2,524 acres in the southwestern corner of the unit in 1968 and 1987.

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

The original inventory for Units 1-17 noted a non-native grass seeding, a couple of primitive motorized “ways” and a few livestock water developments inside the unit. Overall, the unit was found to be in a natural condition where the evidence of man’s activity was minimal.

In 2005, ONDA found the much larger 196,015-acre Lonesome Lakes proposed WSA to be in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature (p. 137-138). However, as noted above, the BLM found that this proposed WSA is not one

large roadless unit, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units, within which the natural character must be evaluated individually.

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 2,525 acres of wildfire, 1,977 acres of seeding, 80 acres of mow strips (fuel breaks), 5.5 miles of fence lines, 9.5 miles of motorized routes, 2 miles of reclaiming routes, and 5 miles of cat lines.

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 (1/4<sup>th</sup> 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 wildfire 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

The original inventory concluded that area lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude, but gave no rationale for the determination.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 196,015-acre Lonesome Lakes proposed WSA as having outstanding opportunities for solitude based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. ONDA noted that Unit 1-17 consisted of sagebrush-covered hills, some topped by rim rock, and stands of juniper. ONDA determined that this type of topography and vegetation present within the unit would allow hikers, horseback riders, campers, and hunters to experience outstanding opportunities for solitude (p. 138 of ONDA 2005). However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is comprised of a number 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 to some degree. Topographically the unit is dominated by Rams Butte, which is split in half by a 500 ft. deep canyon. The east side of Rams Butte rim runs 3.5 miles from the northwest to the southeast and is 450 ft. high above lands to the east. The west side of Rams Butte

rim runs 4.5 miles from the northwest to the southeast and is 300 ft. high above lands to the west. The northeast corner of the unit consists of southern end of Jew Valley. The remainder of the unit is comprised of small to moderate rolling hills (50-250 ft. tall), rims, buttes, and drainages. Overall, the unit ranges in elevation from 4,360 to 5,099 feet. Vegetatively, western juniper stands have greatly expanded in height, width, and density. Approximately 1,100 acres of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics. Due to the above-described topographic screening, and to some degree vegetative screening, one would easily be able to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

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 Rams Butte 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

The original inventory found the unit provided low to medium opportunities for deer and antelope hunting, hiking and horseback riding. However, these opportunities were found to be less than outstanding.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 196,015-acre Lonesome Lakes proposed WSA as having outstanding opportunities for recreation based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. ONDA noted that Unit 1-17 consisted of sagebrush-covered hills, some topped by rim rock, and stands of juniper. ONDA determined that this type of topography and vegetation present within the unit would allow hikers, horseback riders, campers, and hunters to experience outstanding opportunities to practice a variety of forms of primitive and unconfined of recreation (p. 139 of ONDA 2005). However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is comprised of a number 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 hiking/horseback riding along the unit's 8 miles of rims and 2.5-mile canyon of Rams Butte in combination with exploring the canyon's distinctive geological rock formations 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 pronghorn antelope, mule deer, elk, golden eagle, and sage-grouse habitat.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Number and Name:** OR-015-017/ Rams Butte

**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):**

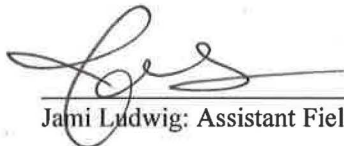
  X   The area- or a portion of the area- has wilderness character:  
*(items 1, 2 and 3 must be checked "yes").*

       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

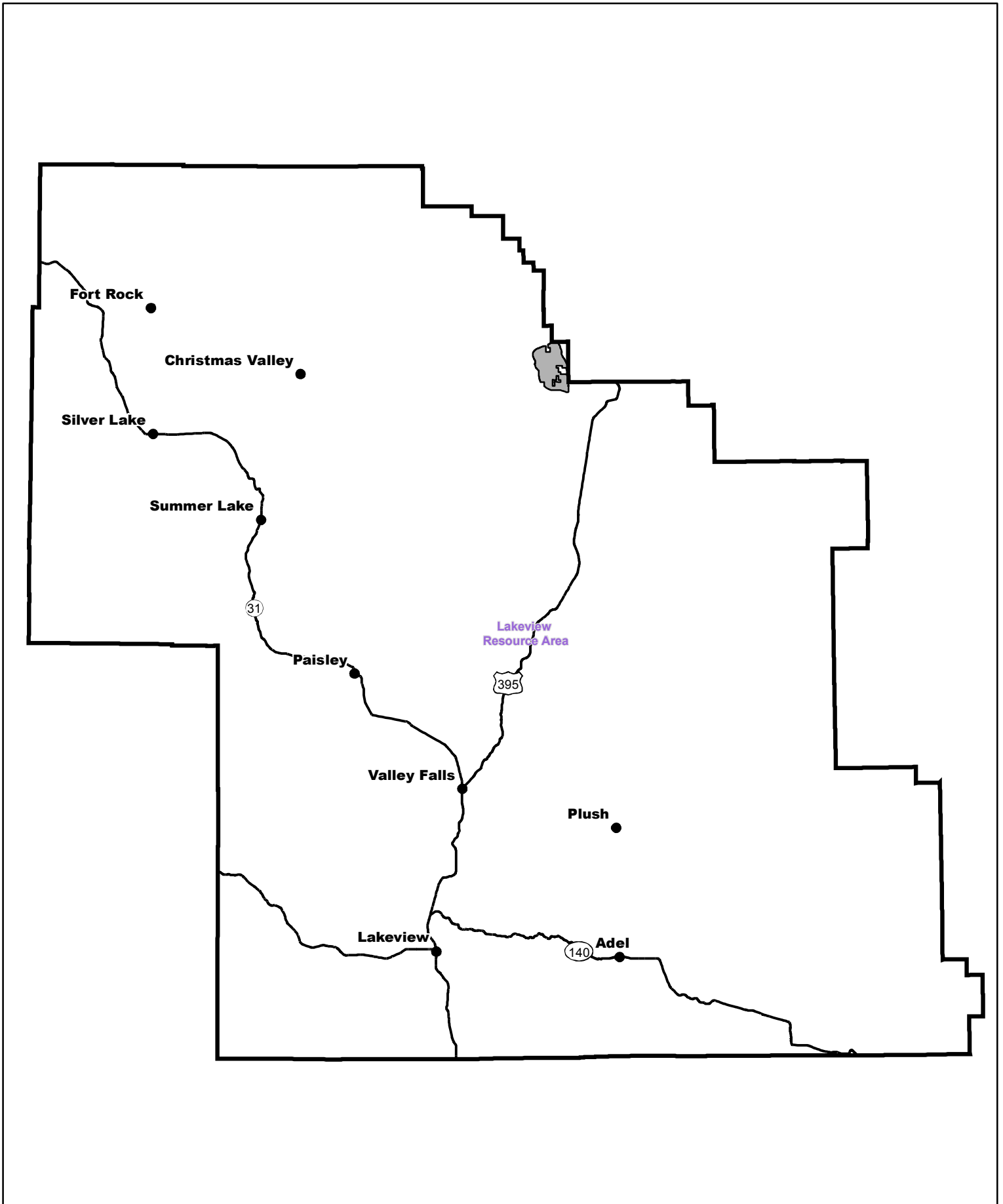
  6/4/18    
Date


**Approved by:**

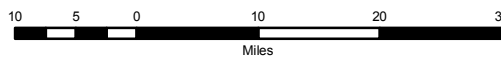
  
J. Todd Forbes  
Field Manager


  6/4/18    
Date

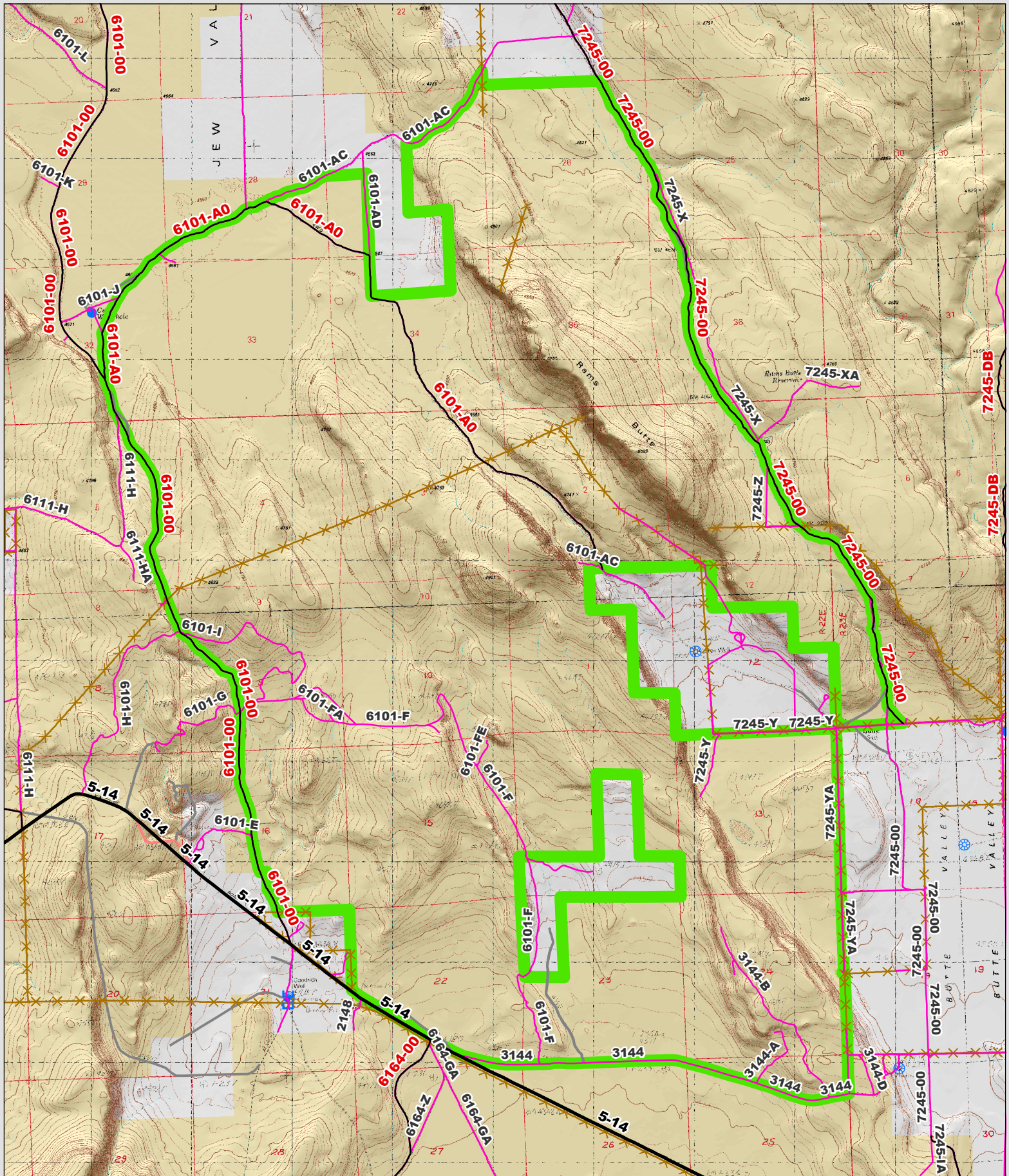
*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.*



 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
- 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 0.5 0 1 Miles

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