

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-143B/ Ryegrass

**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:** Wilderness Inventory – Final Intensive Inventory Decisions; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, November 1980.

b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** 1-143/ Ryegrass Valley

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Intensive Wilderness Inventory - Final Decisions; USDI BLM - Oregon, November 1980.

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
1-143	31,880	Y	N	N	N
1-143B*	31,796	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:*

The unit was described as a broad sage basin known as Ryegrass Valley. The major geographic feature was a large dry lakebed known as Shallow Lake. There were low hills and ridges to the northwest of Shallow Lake, which provided the major topographic relief in the unit. Contours were minimal on the unit to the degree that from the west one could readily see across the entire unit. Vegetation was a sagebrush community. The unit contained 5 small reservoirs, 1 lakebed pit, and approximately 5 miles of relatively unnoticeable “ways.” The unit appeared in a natural condition as none of the manmade features were visible from any significant distance. Although the unit was of considerable size, the area was very flat and one could see across most, if not all, of the unit from any particular point. There was a slight amount of variation in topography in the northern part of the unit, which could offer some solitude, but this portion of the unit was also a narrow segment extending from the main body of the unit. The unit could not support many visitors at one time and offer an opportunity for them to avoid the presence of others in the unit. It did offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The wide and exposed sage flats in the unit did not offer an area conducive to an outstanding recreation experience such as backpacking or hiking. The unit was found to lack outstanding opportunities for recreation due to the monotony of the landscape in traversing the unit on foot in conjunction with lack of water. The area did offer opportunities for hunters, although by means of vehicular related activities. Ultimately, the unit was found to lack any feature that would represent an outstanding recreation opportunity. Supplemental values were unknown.

**FORM 2**

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY  
CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name:** OR-015-143B/ Ryegrass

**(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 82,532-acre Spaulding Addition 2 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 meet the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 216 of ONDA 2005). Additional photos were taken in the area in 2007 and provided to the BLM.

Between 2007 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. The Spaulding Addition 2 proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units, which must be evaluated individually and must stand on their own merits rather than be added to the wilderness values of the existing Spaulding WSA.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Road 6156-00 on the west and northwest; 6176-00 on the south and east; and BLM interim numbered road 6156-H0 on the northeast. The BLM found that the boundary for this unit has changed since the 1980 inventory. A new road was constructed across the northern portion of the unit when the Wilson Spring pipeline project was constructed in 1989. This road divides the former Ryegrass Valley unit into two units (currently referred to as Ryegrass Valley North and Ryegrass) which must be evaluated separately. This analysis will focus on Ryegrass. Additionally, road determinations in the northwest corner of the area have resulting in adding 7 acres to the unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Ryegrass inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 31,804 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 Plush, Oregon. The unit is approximately 9 miles long by 6 miles wide. The inventory unit is characterized by several repeating shallow to moderate (100 ft.-200 ft. tall) ridges running from the northwest to the southeast. The northwest corner is comprised of Ryegrass Valley, while the east-central area of the unit is dominated by the Shallow Lake valley. A broken, multi-fingered, tabletop (200 ft. tall) can be found in the northeast corner. There is a 1-mile long, eroded, drainage (200 ft. deep) in the north-central portion of the unit. While the southern quarter of the unit is characterized by a 6 mile long, canyon (150 ft. deep), running from the southwest to the northeast, terminating at Shallow Lake. Vegetatively, the inventory unit can still be characterized as a sagebrush community.

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

In 1980, the unit contained 5 small reservoirs, 1 lakebed pit, and approximately 5 miles of relatively unnoticeable “ways.” The unit appeared in a natural condition as none of the manmade features were visible from any significant distance.

ONDA’s 2005 inventory stated that their Spaulding Addition 2 proposed WSA appeared in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature. Overall, ONDA concluded that because their proposed unit is part of a large contiguous unit, manmade features do not have cumulative impact on the area. 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: 78 acres of chemical treatments, 18 miles of motorized routes, 1 mile of reclaiming routes, 3.5 miles of fence line, 400 feet of ditches, 10 waterholes, 2 reservoirs, and 1 trough.

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 (1/4<sup>th</sup> mile or less) and are thus substantially unnoticeable from further distances. The topography of the area also plays a large role in screening disturbances and man-made developments. In addition, the majority of disturbances are located near the perimeter of the unit and, as such, have a small area of influence.

Based on a review of all the available information including photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded that the inventory 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 1980, the unit was found to be considerable in size, though flat such that one could see across most, if not all, of the unit from any particular point. There was a slight amount of variation in topography in the northern part of the unit, which could offer some solitude, but this portion of the unit was also a narrow segment extending from the main body of the unit. The unit could not support many visitors at one time and offer an opportunity for them to avoid the presence of others in the unit. It did offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

In 2005, ONDA’s inventory identified the larger Spaulding Addition 2 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 the diverse topography of the area would easily allow visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of others (p. 213 of ONDA 2005). In addition, ONDA pointed out that BLM's *Wilderness Inventory and Study Handbook* H-6310-1, states that one should not assume "simply because an area or portion of an area is flat and/or unvegetated, it automatically lacks an outstanding opportunity for solitude... Consideration must be given to the interrelationship between size, screening, configuration, and other factors that influence solitude." 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 area due to the unit's cumulative interrelationship between size (31,804 acres), screening (shallow to moderate compartmentalized topography), and configuration (9 miles long by 6 miles wide unbroken block of BLM lands).

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 Ryegrass inventory unit possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude where one could avoid the sights and sounds of others in the area.

**(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 1980, the inventory unit was found to lack an area conducive to an outstanding recreation experience such as backpacking or hiking. The wide and exposed sage flats in the unit did not offer an area conducive to an outstanding recreation experience such as backpacking or hiking. The unit was found to lack outstanding opportunities for recreation due to the monotony of the landscape in traversing the unit on foot in conjunction with lack of water. The area did offer opportunities for hunters, although by means of vehicular related activities. Ultimately, the unit was found to lack any feature that would represent an outstanding recreation opportunity.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger Spaulding Addition 2 proposed WSA as having outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. ONDA noted the unit offered outstanding opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, photography, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, hunting, and camping (ONDA 2005; p. 213). 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.

Particularly when taking into account the unit's interrelationship between size, topography, and unconfined recreation, the BLM determined that there are abundant

opportunities for all activities listed above in combination with the diversity of trapping, exploration, and stargazing across the unit. The BLM noted that opportunities for horseback riding, given the unit's moderate topography, represents a unique opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the inventory unit.

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

The BLM noted the presence of archeological values, as well as, pronghorn antelope, sage-grouse, pigmy rabbit, mule deer, various bats, and golden eagle habitat.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Number and Name:** OR-015-143B/ Ryegrass

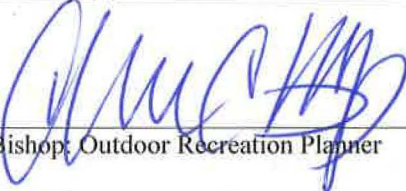
**Summary Results of Analysis:**

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

**Conclusion (Check One):**

- 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

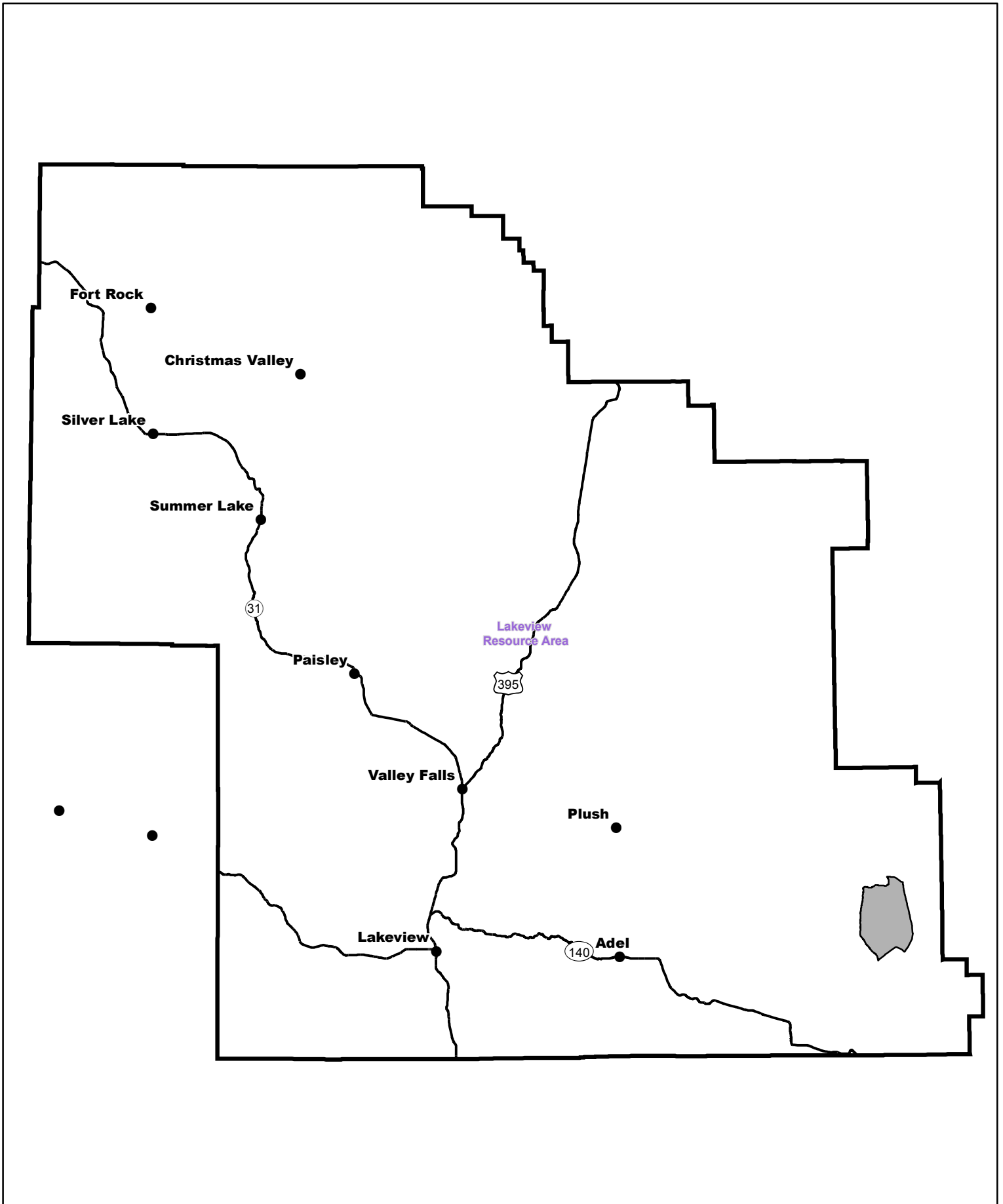
6/4/18  
Date


**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.*

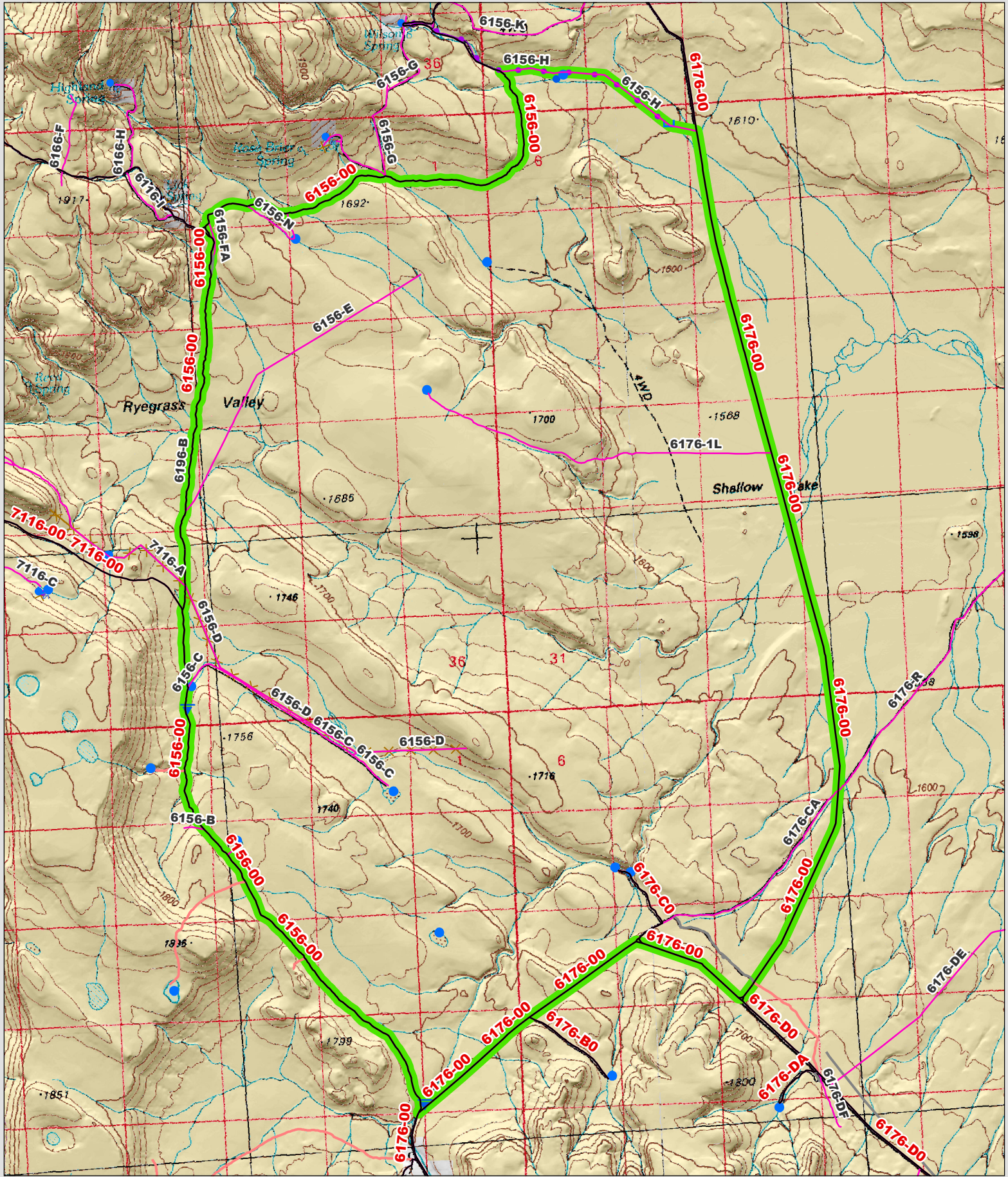


 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



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**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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