

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-114/ Warner Lakes

**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):** 1-114/ Warner Lakes

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
1-114	33,680	Y	N	N	Y
1-114*	33,949	Y	N	Y	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:*

In 1980, the unit was separated from the Poker Jim Rim unit (on USFWS lands) to the east by a road and private lands. This unit was of sufficient size and had several minor “ways,” but appeared primarily natural. The flat character of the unit, combined with limited

vegetation cover was found to limit the opportunity to avoid the presence of others in the unit and, therefore, lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude. The pothole areas around the dry lakes were noted as having some opportunities for day hikes and nature study, but were not considered to be outstanding primitive recreation opportunities. Much of the unit consisted of large lake beds that go through cycles of filling and drying, but standing water historically occurred for only brief durations and did not provide outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation.

**FORM 2**

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY  
CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name:** OR-015-114 / Warner Lakes

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

In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 235,445-acre Poker Jim Ridge Proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) Addition. ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and GIS data with their route and photo point data. All of these materials were considered during the BLM's wilderness inventory process for this area. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in August and September of 2004. They identified this large area as having no interior routes which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 169 of ONDA 2005). Note: the BLM found that a large block of state lands in the middle of ONDA's Poker Jim proposal effectively split that area into at least 2 smaller areas. Since the BLM has no management jurisdiction over state lands and the State of Oregon does not manage this area specifically for roadless or wilderness values, current BLM wilderness inventory policy requires that such lands not be considered in the inventory process.

Between 2008 and 2016, BLM staff conducted field inventory of the area to update its road and wilderness inventories. This field work included photo documentation of the boundary routes. Using BLM and citizen-provided photos, field logs, and staff field knowledge, the BLM completed an analysis of the motorized routes within the area in 2017.

The BLM determined that County Roads 3-11 and 3-12, BLM Roads 6155-C0, and interim numbered routes 0108, 6165-CH, and 6155-CM currently meet the wilderness inventory definition of boundary roads. These roads along with private and state lands form the boundaries of the inventory unit. In addition, the BLM determined that interim route number 0108 (Stone Corral) was still found to be a boundary road and effectively separated the Warner Lakes unit from the adjacent Poker Jim Ridge WSA located on the USFWS refuge. Furthermore, in 1980, a few small portions of the current unit were managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as part of the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (just west of County Road 3-12 and BLM interim numbered road 0108). Management of these areas was transferred from the USFWS to the BLM through a jurisdictional transfer in 1998.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Warner Lakes inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 35,672 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 12 miles northeast of the town of Plush, Oregon. The unit is approximately 11 miles long and 5 miles wide. The topography can be described as a broad valley bottom largely comprised of large lakebeds, water channels, and a 15,000-acre crescentic compound dune formation. The Warner Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) was established in 1989 and now overlaps this entire unit. The ACEC is over 50,000 acres and was established to protect unique geological features, wetlands wildlife habitats, and cultural values.

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

In 2005, ONDA found the much larger Poker Jim proposal to be in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature (p. 165 of ONDA 2005). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM determined that this proposal is not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM found the following man-made developments/disturbances within the unit: 5,676 acres of chemical treatments, 25 miles of pasture division fence, 23 miles of open motorized routes, 23 miles of closed routes, 4 waterholes, and 2 wells.

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 due to the units many large lake depressions and dune formations. In addition, most of disturbances are limited to the southern and western portions of the unit, and thus the majority of the unit is unaffected by their influence.

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 2005, ONDA found the much larger Poker Jim proposal to offer outstanding opportunities for solitude, primarily due to its large size (p. 166-167 of ONDA 2005). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM determined that this proposal is not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that although it is possible to see across large lakebeds in the Warner Lakes unit, crescentic compound dune formations (15-30 feet tall) creating a 15,000-acre labyrinth in the center portion of the unit, with a deeply recessed waterway (channels), offering outstanding opportunities for solitude.

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 Warner Lakes 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 2005, ONDA found the much larger Poker Jim proposal to offer outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation such as wildlife viewing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, and photography (p. 167 of ONDA 2005). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM determined that this proposal is not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The area was designated as an ACEC in 1989. ACEC and recreation management plans were developed in 1990 to manage and promote a primarily semi-primitive motorized recreational experience. Motorized travel was further restricted by closing several roads in the northern half of the ACEC in 2003 (Map SMA-10), which has improved and increased primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Additionally, a unique 13-mile primitive canoe trail was also developed within the Warner Lakes unit. The unit currently offers opportunities for small boating/kayaking/canoeing, fishing, and waterfowl hunting during high-water years. The unit also provides opportunities for wildlife viewing, day hiking, primitive camping, and exploration.

The BLM noted that opportunities for boating along the Warner Wetlands Canoe Trail represent a unique opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

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

Supplemental values identified in 1980 included archaeological resources. Other supplemental values currently noted within the area include an abundance of migratory wildlife, especially waterfowl, and unique geological features.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Number and Name:** OR-015-114 / Warner Lakes

**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

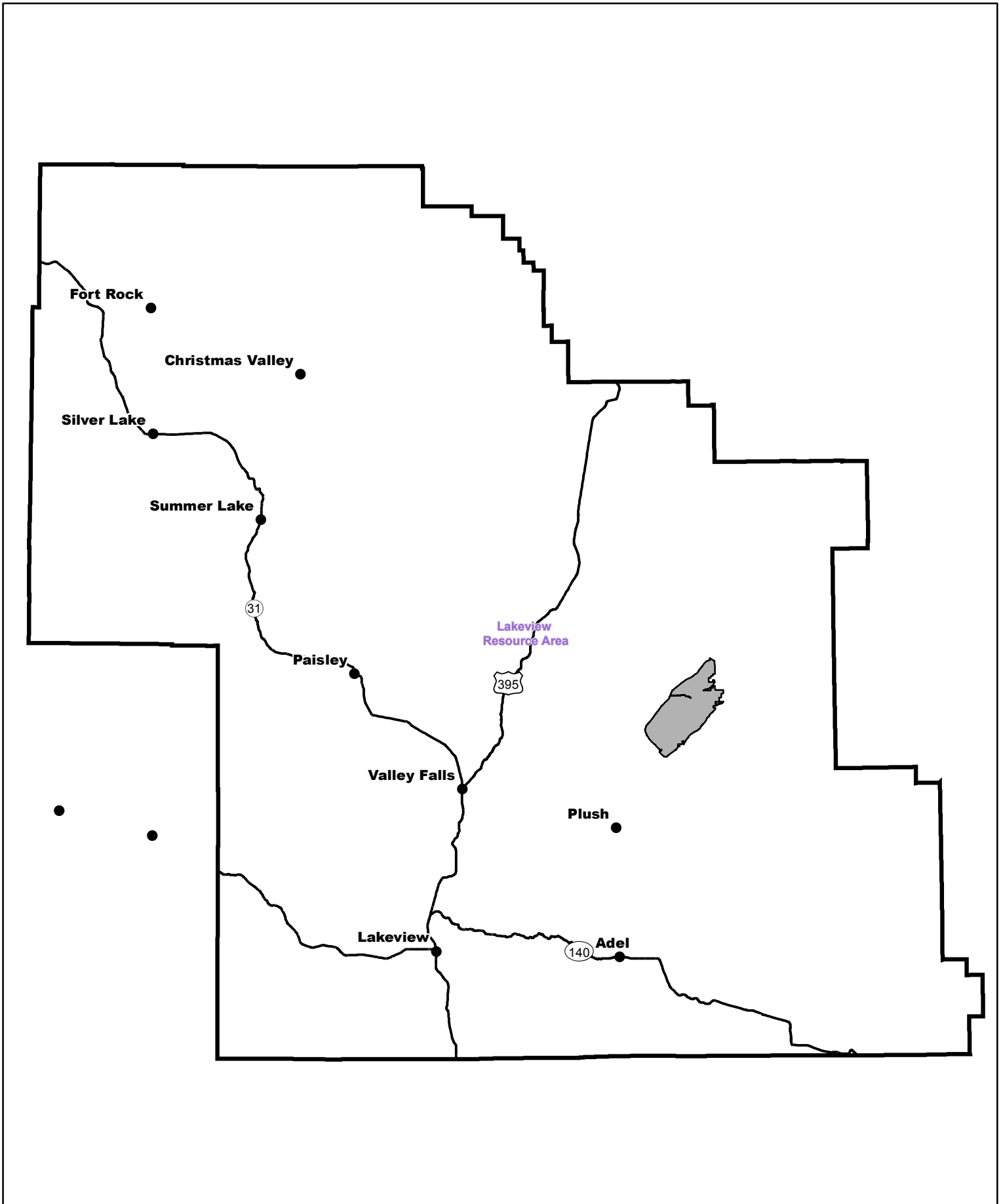
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**Approved by:**

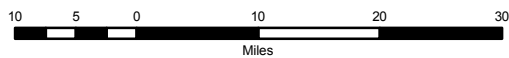
  
J. Todd Forbes  
Field Manager


  6/4/18    
Date

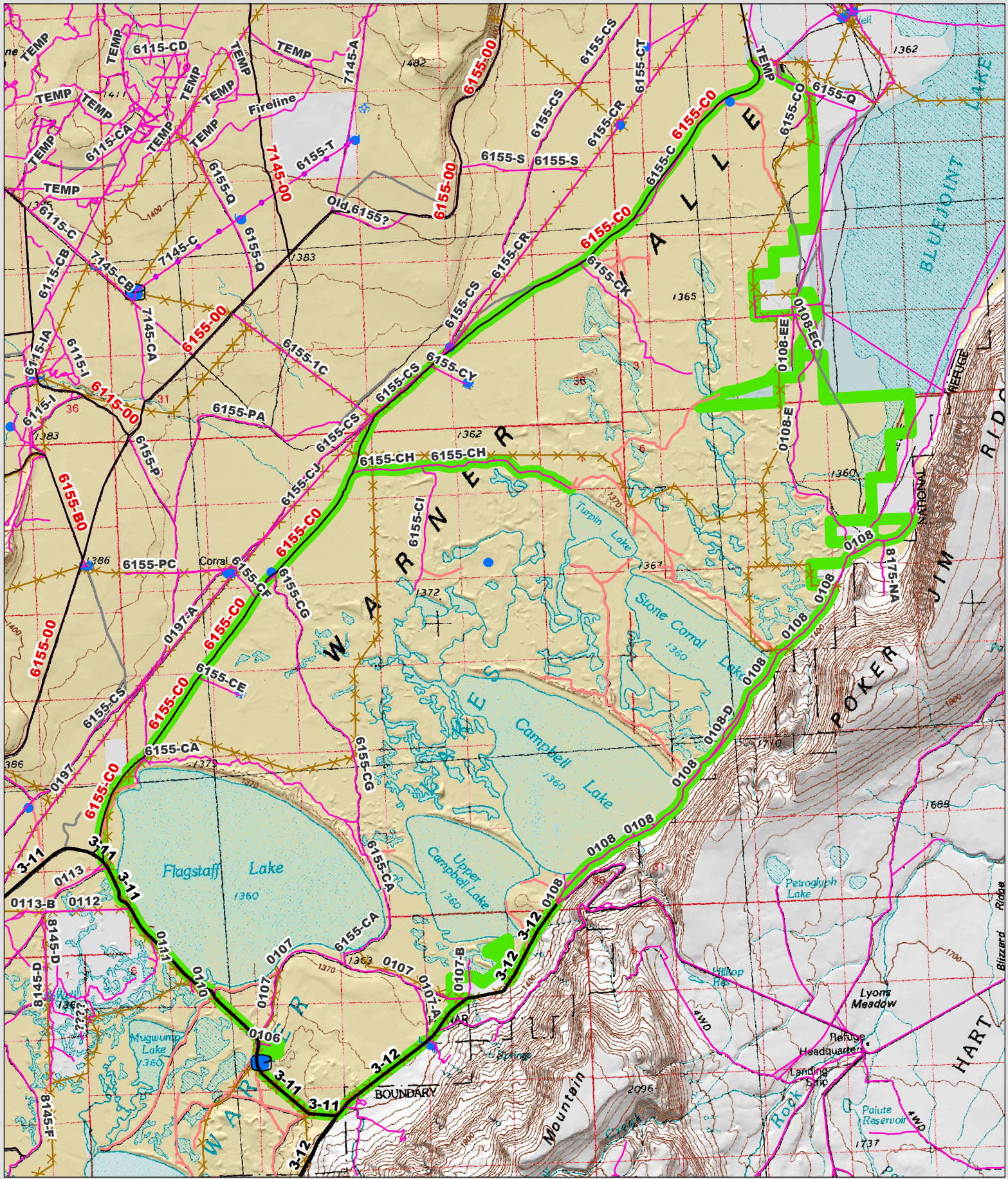
*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.*



 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



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