

Year: 2015 Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-054-007-B1/Waterhole Unit B1

**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 yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas):

**a) Inventory Source:** Wilderness Inventory: Oregon and Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980 (p. 372-374)

**b) Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s):** Stud Horse Butte (OR-5-63)

**c) Map Name(s)/Number(s):** U.S. Department of the Interior: Bureau of Land Management Oregon: Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decisions (November, 1980)

**d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Prineville District, Central Oregon Resource Area, and Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area, Oregon

**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):

Inventory Source: Documents cited above and Prineville and Lakeview District Wilderness Inventory Unit case files.

**Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics:**

Unit#/Name	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
Stud Horse Butte/OR-5-63	BLM: 16,504 Private: 0	Y	N	N	None

*Summary:* The 1980 intensive inventory described historic unit 5-63 as having several different topographic features. The eastern portion contained relatively flat land, low rolling hills, small basins, valleys, and shallow sloping bajadas. The central portion contained Stud Horse Butte, the most predominant landmark in this unit. Low rolling hills, small desert basins, and small walls of Columbia River Basalt were also found in this portion. In the western portion, there were higher rolling hills and larger basins.

Juniper trees were more apparent in the western and central portions. Big sagebrush was the dominant understory plant along with rabbitbrush, lupine, Sandberg's bluegrass, Idaho fescue, squirreltail, and other vegetation. There were several portions of the landscape within the unit that had been altered by the works of man.

A 25-foot water tank was located just south of Parmele Well, and there were several wooden fences and a pump house just south of Brown's Well. A road extended around a constructed cattle pond. These developments were all found to be substantially noticeable. In addition, there were four constructed cattle ponds, ten miles of primitive ways, seven miles of fence, one mile of buried water pipeline, and three small metal water tanks. The cumulative effect of these human works upon the overall naturalness of this unit was found to be minimal. Most of the ways, pipelines, and ponds were re-vegetating naturally. Most of the unit appeared to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude were not available within this unit because of its irregular shape, combined with very little topographic or vegetative screening, made it difficult for a visitor to avoid the sights and sounds of other visitors. Several types of primitive and unconfined types of recreational activities were noted as available within this unit, such as hiking, camping, and hunting. However, none of these recreational activities were found to be outstanding because the amount of diversity in topography, vegetation, and wildlife was limited and did not appear to be significant enough to attract visitors to this unit.

**FORM 2 - DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS<sup>1</sup>****a. Unit Number/Name: Waterhole Unit B1/OR-054-007-B1**

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

Citizen Information Received: In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 49,942-acre Yreka Butte proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). 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 evaluation. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken between 2004 and 2013. They identified this large area as having no interior routes which they felt met BLM's definition of a wilderness inventory unit boundary road (see Yreka Butte Proposed WSA Map, in inventory file).

Boundary Determination: BLM staff reviewed its own historic wilderness inventory information and ONDA's information to identify potential data gaps. BLM staff conducted their own field inventory of the area between 2008 and 2015 to gather additional information to supplement the existing inventory information and the information provided by ONDA. This included taking numerous additional route photos throughout the area. Using both ONDA and BLM photos, field logs, and staff field knowledge, BLM staff from both the Prineville and Lakeview Districts completed an inter-disciplinary (ID) analysis of most of the existing routes within the western half of this proposal in 2015. The results of the route analysis are documented in the route analysis forms and team meeting notes contained in the wilderness evaluation files.

The BLM ID team determined that several of the internal routes that ONDA identified as "ways," in fact, meet the wilderness inventory definition of a boundary road. For this reason, the BLM found that the Yreka Butte proposal is not one large roadless unit, but rather is comprised of several smaller inventory units. For purposes of this inventory update, 3 units met the size criteria and 2 did not. Those that met the size criteria were evaluated individually (see Map 2). (*Note:* the eastern half of ONDA's Yreka Butte proposal was evaluated separately by the Prineville District BLM staff in 2008, and generally is not addressed further herein).

The BLM ID teams found that the boundary for historic unit 5-63 has changed since the previous inventory was completed in 1980. The current inventory unit is smaller and is bounded on the west by BLM Road 6537-00; on the south by BLM Road 6101-00 and private land; on the east by interim road number 6101-YA; and on the north by BLM Road 6537-B0 (Map 2). Refer to the route analysis forms, photos, photo logs, and BLM ID team minutes in the wilderness inventory files for additional supporting information regarding these boundary determinations.

Following the boundary determination, BLM staff evaluated the wilderness characteristics within this unit. The results are contained in the following section. Additional background on the process that the BLM staff followed during this evaluation is contained in the document, *Wilderness Inventory Maintenance Process for the Lakeview Resource Area, BLM*, correspondence, and the ID team meeting notes contained in the wilderness inventory files.

**DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS:** This inventory unit is located approximately 8 miles southwest of Hampton, Oregon, (Map 1), is somewhat horseshoe shaped, and contains approximately 5,259 acres of BLM-administered lands.

Much of the current unit contains a complex of higher hills collectively known as Benjamin Point (Map 2). The predominant vegetation in the unit includes sagebrush and juniper trees. Big sagebrush is the dominant understory plant along with rabbitbrush, Sandberg's bluegrass, Idaho fescue, squirreltail, and other common sagebrush-steppe vegetation. Most wildlife species common to the Northern Basin and Range ecosystem are found here.

The public lands are commercially grazed under BLM grazing permit(s) issued by both the Prineville and Lakeview Districts, BLM. There is a commercial recreation operation conducting wilderness therapy activities. The lands are not identified as having high or sensitive visual character.

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

In 2005, ONDA found their larger Yreka Butte proposal to be in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature (p. 3). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM ID team determined that this proposal was not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

In 1980, evaluators noted a number of existing disturbances within historic unit 5-63, but found the cumulative effect of these human works upon the overall naturalness to be minimal and, therefore, most of the unit appeared to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Currently, there are numerous human intrusions associated with the livestock/range management operations in the unit. Many of these were identified in the previous wilderness inventory efforts and are all still in use today. The unit currently contains approximately 4.8 miles of open, primitive motorized routes, 1.3 miles of reclaiming routes, 5 miles of fence, 1 waterhole, and 2 designated primitive wilderness therapy school campsites (see Map 2). These human disturbances are noticeable within close proximity (0.25 miles), but are less noticeable when viewed from longer distances. None of these disturbances were found to dominate a large portion of the unit's landscape and many are generally screened by exiting topography and vegetation.

Based on a review of all of the available information, including that provided by outside parties, the BLM ID team concluded that, the unnatural features are widely scattered and the overall natural character has not changed substantially since the previous inventory was completed. Human-caused disturbances are substantially unnoticeable throughout most of the current unit and it is in a predominantly natural condition.

**(3) Does the unit have outstanding<sup>2</sup> opportunities for solitude?** Yes X No      N/A     

In 2005, ONDA found their Yreka Butte proposal had outstanding opportunities for solitude, primarily due to its large size and some topographic and vegetative screening (p. 4). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM ID team determined that this proposal was not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

In 1980, evaluators found that historic unit 5-63 offered some opportunities for solitude, but were not outstanding because of its irregular shape/configuration, combined with very little topographic or vegetative screening, made it difficult for a visitor to avoid the sights and sounds of other visitors.

The unit has decreased to roughly one-third the size of historic unit 5-63, but retains most of the topographic relief/diversity, including higher hills/buttes which provide some screening. Juniper tree cover and density have increased in recent years (see photos 480LL\_WNW\_992015, 810LL\_SEb\_992015, IMG\_0920, IMG\_0920, YRKA20130920\_3633 (right half of photo), GH005, BK044, GH008, BK033, BK034, YRKA20130920\_3660 (background of photo)) providing additional screening where a visitor could avoid the presence of others within the unit.

Based on a review of all of the available information, including that provided by outside parties, the BLM ID team concluded that even though the unit decreased in size and changed in configuration/shape, the screening provided by the existing topography and increased juniper cover currently provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

**(4) Does the unit have outstanding<sup>2</sup> opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?**

Yes X No \_\_\_ NA \_\_\_

In 2005, ONDA found their Yreka Butte proposal had outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined, including hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, and hunting. They found these opportunities to be outstanding primarily due to their unit's larger size and ample screening (p. 4). However, for the reasons described above, the BLM ID team determined that this proposal was not one large, contiguous roadless area, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

In 1980, evaluators found that historic unit 5-63 offered some opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, including hiking, camping, and hunting. However, none of these recreational activities were found to be outstanding because the diversity in topography, vegetation, and wildlife was limited and did not appear to be significant enough to attract visitors to this unit.

The BLM ID team noted the current unit has areas with dense juniper cover that, when combined with the topography and formations of Benjamin Point, would draw visitors to the area provide outstanding opportunities for hiking, back-country exploration treks, and hunting. Based on a review of all of the available information, including that provided by outside parties, the BLM ID team concluded that primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities within the area have improved since 1980 despite the decrease in unit size. For these reasons, the current unit offers an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

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

In 2005, ONDA found their Yreka Butte proposal had ephemeral lakes with ecological and wildlife values, potential for archeological sites, and sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, bighorn sheep, burrowing owl, and peregrine falcon habitats within their larger unit's boundary (p. 4).

BLM staff also noted the presence of a sage-grouse general habitat management area (GHMA), and pygmy rabbit and burrowing owl habitat, as well as the potential presence of some cultural/historic sites within the unit.

### Summary of Findings and Conclusion

**Unit Name and Number:** Waterhole Unit B1/OR-054-007-B1

#### Summary Results of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of 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.

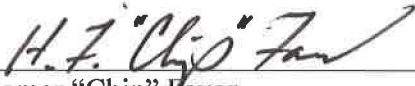
the area does not have wilderness character.

**Prepared by/Team Members:****Prineville BLM District:**

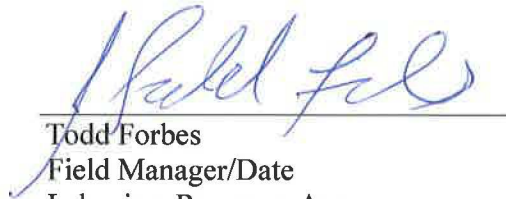
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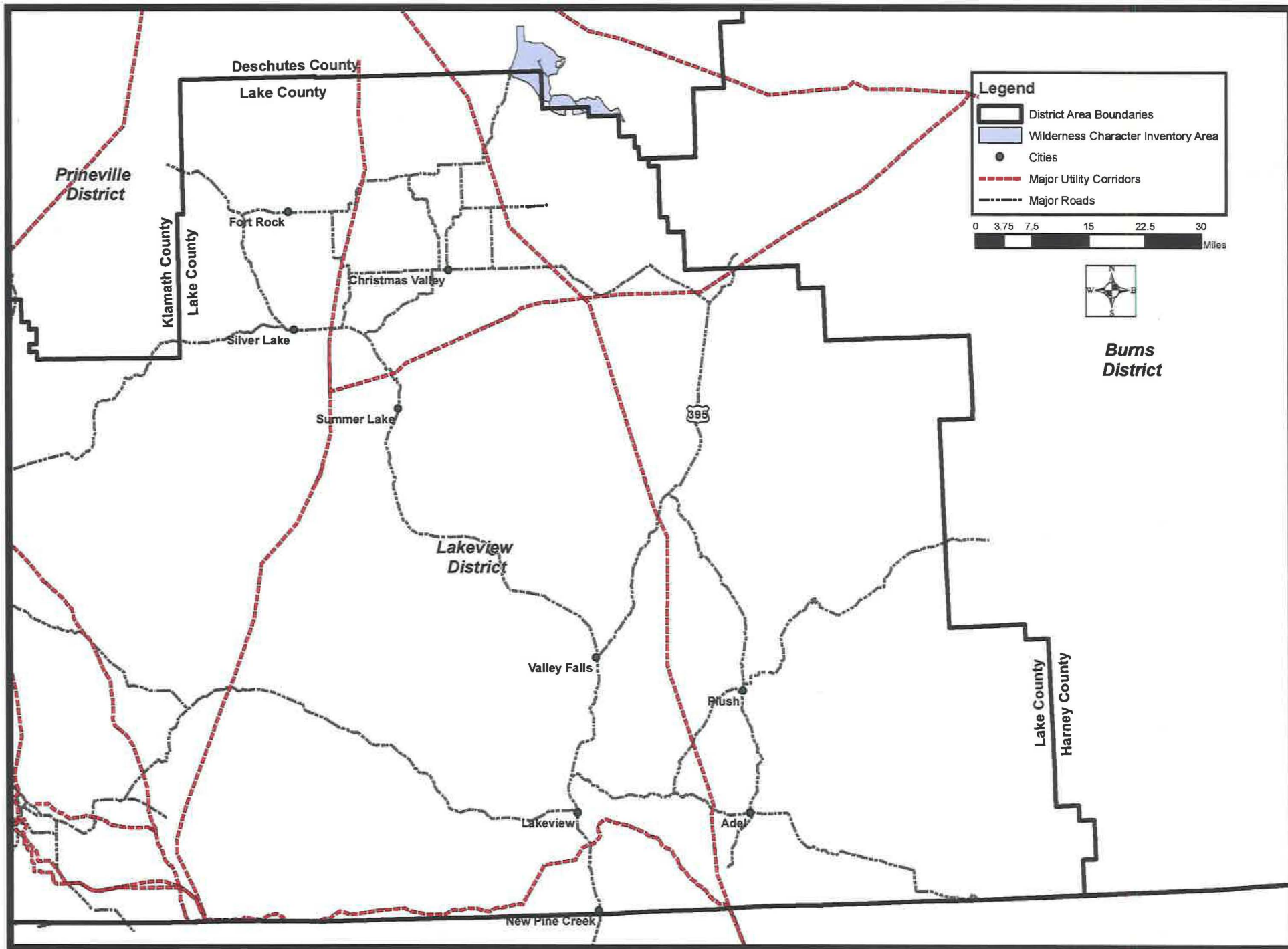


Todd Forbes  
 Field Manager/Date  
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<sup>1</sup> This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.

<sup>2</sup> Definition of Outstanding: 1) Standing out among others of its kind; conspicuous; prominent; 2) Superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent (BLM Manual 6310, 2012; p. 12). See also 62 IBLA 319, 326 and 64 IBLA 50.





**Map 1 - Wilderness Character Evaluation Area**

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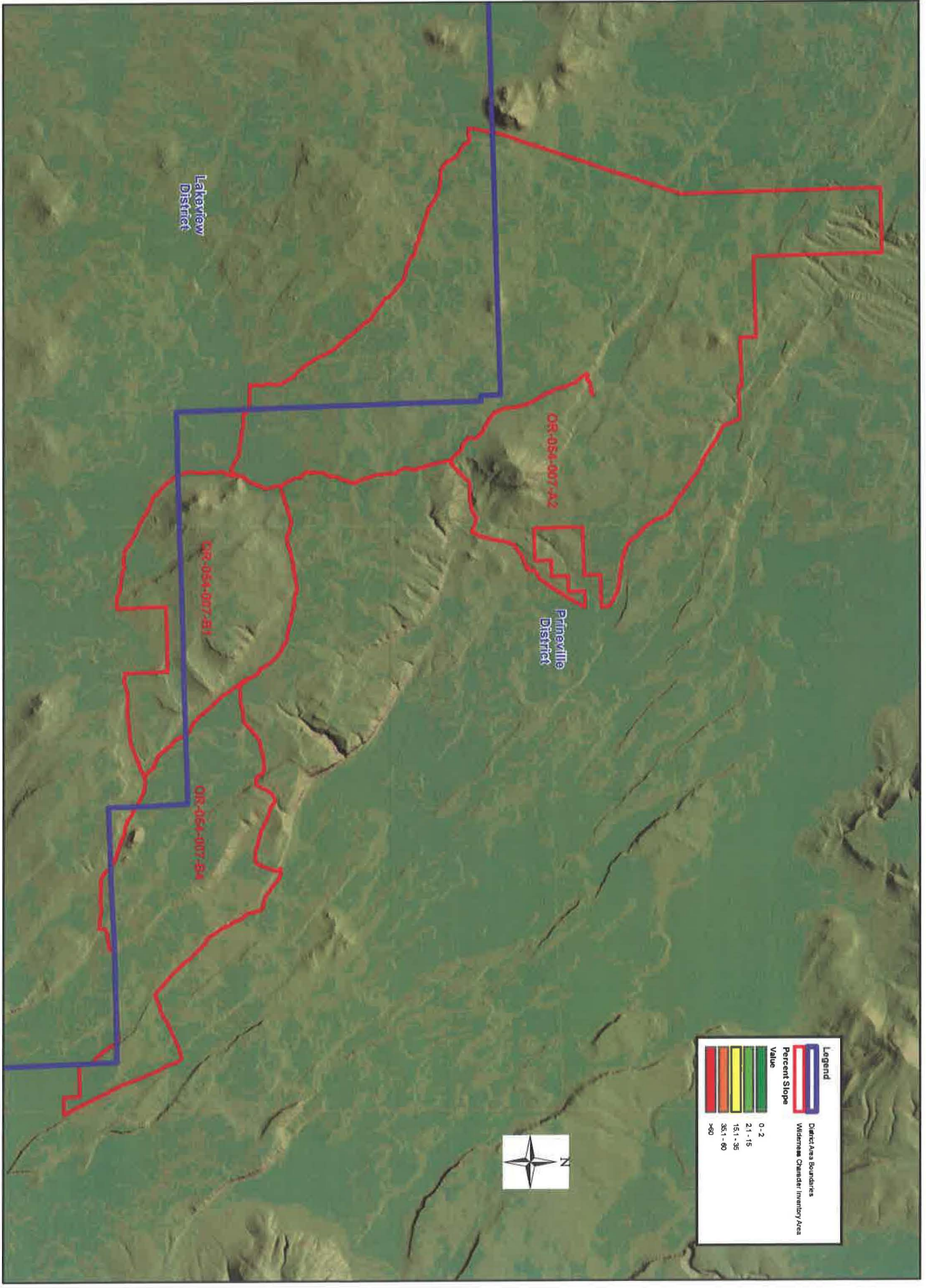








Map 3 - Screening in Yreka Butte Area



**Legend**

- District Area Boundaries
- Wilderness Character Inventory Area

**Percent Slope**

Value	Color
0 - 2	Green
2.1 - 15	Light Green
15.1 - 35	Yellow
35.1 - 60	Orange
>60	Red



Map 3 - Screening in Yreka Butte Area  
 Prepared by: [Name]  
 Date: [Date]  
 Scale: [Scale]  
 Source: [Source]