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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Subject 6310—Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands (Public)

1. Explanation of Materials Transmitted: This manual contains the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) policy and guidance for conducting wilderness characteristics inventories under Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).
2. Reports Required: None.
3. Materials Superseded: This manual supersedes BLM Manual Section 6310 Rel 6-129
4. Delegations of Authority Updated: None
5. Filing Instructions: File as directed below.

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Directorate Name/Designation

6310 - CONDUCTING WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS  
INVENTORY ON BLM LANDS (P)

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## **Chapter 1 - Overview**

### **1.1 Purpose**

This revised policy contains the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) updated guidance and general procedures for conducting wilderness characteristics inventories under Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and supersedes all previous guidance on this topic. Managing the wilderness resource is part of the BLM's multiple use mission. Lands with wilderness characteristics provide a range of uses and benefits in addition to their value as settings for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. This policy also identifies those circumstances under which a new or updated inventory for the presence of wilderness characteristics may be necessary. This policy does not address Wilderness areas designated by Congress or Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) pending before Congress.

### **1.2 Objective**

This Manual establishes BLM policy for identifying lands with wilderness characteristics.

### **1.3 Authority**

Principal authorities affecting the inventory of public lands for wilderness characteristics are:

- A. FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*, exclusive of 43 U.S.C. 1782.
- B. Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 U.S.C. 1131, *et seq.*

### **1.4 Responsibilities**

The Director shall:

Coordinate with State Directors in conducting wilderness characteristics inventories.

State Directors shall:

Implement policy and provide statewide program coordination and guidance for conducting wilderness characteristics inventories.

Provide program development, technical management assistance, and support to District and Field Offices as required for conducting lands with wilderness characteristics inventory.

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District Managers and Field Managers shall:

Review and document relevant data, including information from State and local governments and citizen-submitted information, for conducting and maintaining the wilderness characteristics inventory on a continuing basis.

Determine and document whether it is necessary to update an existing inventory (e.g., there has been a change in circumstances that no longer supports the previous wilderness characteristics inventory) or initiate a new inventory (e.g., a land exchange or acquisition). Where appropriate, determine and document which inventory areas or portions of inventory areas possess or lack wilderness characteristics. Maintain a permanent documentation file for inventoried areas.

Coordinate with other Federal agencies in conducting wilderness characteristics inventories.

Engage cooperators, including States and counties, as early as possible during the inventory process to ensure that the Bureau adequately considers the interests and input of local stakeholders.

## 1.5 References

Principal references for this Manual are:

FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. 1701, *et seq.*

Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*

BLM Regulations, 43 CFR Part 1600.

## 1.6 Policy

**A. Maintaining the Inventory.** Section 201 of FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values, which includes wilderness characteristics. It also provides that the preparation and maintenance of the inventory shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands. Regardless of past inventory, the BLM must maintain and update as necessary, its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands. In some circumstances, conditions relating to wilderness characteristics may have changed over time, and an area that was once determined to lack wilderness characteristics may now possess them. The BLM will determine when it is necessary to update its wilderness characteristics inventory. Under the following circumstances, the BLM will consider whether to update a wilderness characteristics inventory or

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conduct a wilderness characteristics inventory for the first time:

1. The public or the BLM identifies wilderness characteristics as an issue when the Bureau is conducting an analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
2. The BLM is undertaking a land use planning process.
3. The BLM has new information concerning resource conditions, including wilderness characteristics information submitted by the public that meets the BLM's minimum standard described in the Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Process section of this policy.
4. A project that may impact wilderness characteristics is undergoing NEPA analysis.
5. The BLM acquires additional lands.
6. There also may be other circumstances in which BLM will find it appropriate to update its wilderness characteristics inventory.

The primary function of an inventory is to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Keeping an inventory current requires gathering information and ensuring that all inventories have permanent files. It is essential that an adequate record of the inventory and subsequent updates be maintained to ensure proper documentation of inventory findings, including relevant narratives, maps, photographs, new information, and any other relevant information.

**B. Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Process.** A wilderness characteristics inventory is the process of determining the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. The BLM must document existing conditions as opposed to potential future conditions. The BLM should conduct the inventory using available information (e.g., existing maps, photos, records related to range projects, monitoring data) and will field check the information as necessary. This wilderness characteristics inventory process directive does not mean that the BLM must conduct a completely new inventory and disregard the inventory information that it already has for a particular area. Rather, the BLM must ensure that its inventory is maintained. An inventory update may be necessary only if a change in circumstances in a project area has occurred that no longer supports the previous inventory (e.g., the removal of noticeable structures that had affected an area's naturalness may necessitate an inventory update of the area). Similarly, new information that identifies an error in the previous inventory may warrant an update.

Documentation and Minimum Standards for Review of New Information from an outside entity.

1. When new information regarding wilderness characteristics is received

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from an outside entity such as a state or local agency, NGO, or individual, the BLM will document the submitted materials including:

- a. date of submission;
  - b. name of proponent;
  - c. name of proposal and/or area identified by the proponent;
  - d. BLM District(s) and Field Office(s) affected;
  - e. type of material submitted (e.g., narrative, map, photo); and
  - f. whether or not the public information meets the minimum standard for further review by the BLM.
2. The minimum standard that new information must meet in order for the BLM to consider the information during a wilderness characteristics inventory process requires a submission of the following information to the BLM:
- a. a map of sufficient detail to determine specific boundaries of the area in question;
  - b. a detailed narrative that describes the wilderness characteristics of the area and documents how that information substantially differs from the information in the BLM inventory of the area's wilderness characteristics; and
  - c. photographic documentation.

Evaluation of New Information.

Subject to the reference above about new information from the public and when such new information regarding wilderness characteristics meets the minimum standard for further review, as soon as practicable, the BLM shall evaluate the information regarding the validity of proposed boundaries of the area(s), the existence of wilderness inventory roads and other boundary features, the size of the area(s), and the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. The BLM will rely on existing inventory information and will update its inventory using relevant information available in the office (e.g., prior BLM inventories, interdisciplinary team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, monitoring data, records related to range projects, etc.). The BLM will field check the information as necessary to ensure its accuracy.

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If the new information presents different conclusions from the existing BLM inventory, the BLM will determine if the documents represent significant new circumstances or information relative to the conditions present when the current inventory was completed. To do so, the BLM will compare existing data with the submitted information, determine if the conclusion reached in previous BLM inventories remains valid, determine whether the area qualifies as lands with wilderness characteristics, and document its findings. The BLM will document the rationale for the findings, make the findings available to the public, and retain a record of the evaluation and the findings as evidence of the BLM's consideration. If the BLM determines that the submission represents a disagreement with agency findings rather than new information, the BLM will not re-evaluate current agency findings.

Before allocating resources to update an inventory, a Field Office should first identify if changes in circumstances suggest that the existing inventory may no longer be current or accurate. If so, the Field Office should focus its efforts on bringing those specific aspects or areas up to date.

### Identification of Lands Requiring Inventory.

Identification of a specific area where inventory is needed requires a combined review of existing land status and available route inventory data. Where acquired lands are inventoried, the area inventoried may be larger than the acquired lands because of the need to look at contiguous roadless Federal lands.

Each area will be assigned a unique identifier using a two-letter state code, office code, and an inventory area number, e.g. NV-030-051. Where possible, numbers assigned should build on the original inventory.

The Permanent Documentation File for each area will be updated or developed as appropriate (Appendix A).

Split estate lands (BLM subsurface) are excluded from the requirements for wilderness characteristics inventory.

### Completing the Inventory.

Necessary forms for each area will be completed (see Appendix B: Inventory Area Evaluation, Appendix C: Route Analysis, and Appendix D: Photo Log). The forms in Appendices B, C, and D should be adequate for most wilderness characteristics inventories, but minor modifications may be made to meet Field Office needs as long as primary criteria and definitions remain unchanged. In order to complete the inventory, District or Field Managers must document wilderness

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characteristics inventories according to attached Appendices A-D as applicable. Due to the high level of interest from state and local agencies, NGOs and the public, District and Field Managers are encouraged to share updated BLM wilderness characteristics inventory findings as soon as practicable after completion.

### **C. Wilderness Characteristics.**

1. Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Initial Unit Boundary Delineation. The boundary of the initial wilderness characteristics inventory unit must be established. Where possible, BLM offices should use existing wilderness characteristics inventory units for maintaining the inventory. The boundary is generally based on an initial GIS analysis of the presence of wilderness inventory roads (see Appendix C to determine if a route meets the wilderness inventory road definition), and can also be based on property lines between lands in Federal ownership and other ownerships or developed rights of way. Other inventory unit boundaries may occasionally be identified. Review all Travel and Transportation data layers including Ground Transportation Linear Features, Transportation System, and Travel Network (see glossary and MS 1626 for definitions of these data types) as well as data associated with developed right-of-ways and other facilities in identifying initial unit boundaries.

2. Analysis of Wilderness Characteristics. The inventory will evaluate wilderness characteristics as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act and incorporated in FLPMA. In order for an area to qualify as lands with wilderness characteristics, it must possess sufficient size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. In addition, it may also possess supplemental values. There may be some circumstances under which an inventory of the entire area is not required. For example, if a proposed project would only cross a small corner of an inventory unit and would be confined to previously disturbed land that is an unnatural condition, a full inventory may not be necessary. Note that competing land uses, manageability, and other similar factors are not considered during the inventory. These factors are taken into consideration during the land use planning process to help inform whether a unit found to have wilderness characteristics should be managed for protection (see manual section 6320—*Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process*).



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a. Size.

Determine if the size criteria will be satisfied for areas by meeting one of the following situations and circumstances:

- (1) Roadless areas with over 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM lands. State or private lands are not included in making this acreage determination.
- (2) Roadless areas of less than 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM lands where any one of the following apply:
  - a) They are contiguous with lands that have been formally determined to have wilderness or potential wilderness values, or any Federal lands managed for the protection of wilderness characteristics. Such lands include:
    - (1) designated Wilderness,
    - (2) BLM Wilderness Study Areas,
    - (3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service areas Proposed for Wilderness Designation,
    - (4) U.S. Forest Service (FS) Wilderness Study Areas or areas of Recommended Wilderness, and
    - (5) National Park Service (NPS) areas Recommended or Proposed for Designation.

They do not include NPS areas merely considered “Eligible for Wilderness Study,” nor do they include FS Roadless Areas unless they are also designated as “Recommended Wilderness” through a Forest Plan Revision.

- b) It is demonstrated that the area is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.
- c) Any roadless island of the public lands.

Determine whether or not at least one of the size criteria are met by lands within the inventory unit and document in writing the rationale for arriving at this determination.

Roadlessness is determined and documented on the route analysis form in Appendix C. The FLPMA definition of a road included in the Glossary contains the criteria for analysis. If, after further analysis,

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routes within a unit have been determined to be roads, they must be excluded from the inventory unit. If an inventory area does not meet at least one of the size criteria, it does not contain wilderness characteristics. Further inventory activity to document naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values is unnecessary. The findings must be documented. If roads are excluded and a portion of the inventory unit still meets the size criteria, it is carried forward in the remaining steps of analysis. In some situations, a unit may be bisected by a road(s) and two or more remaining subunits meet the size criteria. Those polygons are now treated as separate units for the remainder of the analysis.

b. Naturalness.

Affected Primarily by the Forces of Nature. Determine if the area appears to be in a natural condition.

The area must appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, and any work of human beings must be substantially unnoticeable. Examples of human-made features that may be considered substantially unnoticeable in certain cases include: trails, trail signs, bridges, fire breaks, pit toilets, fisheries enhancement facilities, fire rings, historic properties, archaeological resources, hitching posts, snow gauges, water quantity and quality measuring devices, research monitoring markers and devices, minor radio repeater sites, air quality monitoring devices, fencing, spring developments, barely visible linear disturbances, and stock ponds.

Describing Human Impacts. Document noticeable human impacts within the area. If several minor impacts exist, summarize their cumulative effect on the area's degree of apparent naturalness.

The review of human impacts will assess the presence or absence of apparent naturalness (i.e., do the works of humans appear to be substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor?). There is an important difference between an area's natural integrity and its apparent naturalness as explained below.

Natural integrity refers to the presence or absence of ecosystems that are relatively unaffected by modern human activities.

Apparent naturalness refers to whether or not an area looks natural to the average visitor who is not familiar with the

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biological composition of natural ecosystems versus human-affected ecosystems.

Caution should be used in assessing the effect of relatively minor human impacts on naturalness. Some human works are acceptable so long as they are substantially unnoticeable. Avoid an overly strict approach to assessing naturalness. For example, the presence of a water trough is a relatively minor human impact on naturalness and may be considered substantially unnoticeable. Where there are several minor impacts, they should be evaluated for their cumulative effect on an area's apparent naturalness. If the cumulative impacts are substantially noticeable, then that portion of the unit should be identified as not containing naturalness.

Lands located between individual human impacts should not be automatically excluded from the area.

When establishing the boundary, do not create a setback or buffer from the physical edge of the imprints of humans.

Developed rights-of-way (ROW) are treated like other impacts, and the boundary should be drawn to exclude those ROWs.

Undeveloped ROWs and similar undeveloped possessory interests (e.g., mineral leases) are not treated as impacts to wilderness characteristics for inventory purposes because these rights may never be developed.

**Outside Human Impacts.** Human impacts outside the area will not normally be considered in assessing naturalness of an area. If, however, a major outside impact exists, it should be noted in the overall inventory area description and evaluated for its direct effects on the area.

**Determination and Documentation.** Determine whether the naturalness criterion is met on all or a portion of the unit. Exclude that portion of the unit that does not contain naturalness from further consideration, and document in writing the rationale for arriving at the determination. When excluding portions of the unit that are found not to meet the naturalness criteria, do not create a setback or buffer from the physical edge of the imprint of man. Document the area(s) that do not meet the naturalness criteria on the inventory map.

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If a portion of the unit is removed for not meeting the naturalness criteria, and after removal the remaining acreage no longer meets the size criteria described in (a) above, the unit does not have wilderness characteristics. Further inventory activity to document outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation or supplemental values is unnecessary. Document the findings.

- c. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation. Determine if the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The word “or” in this sentence means that an area only must possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre, i.e., if a portion of the unit does not contain these outstanding opportunities, it is not removed from the remainder of the unit – the unit is considered as a whole. In most cases, the two opportunities can be expected to go hand-in-hand. An outstanding opportunity for solitude, however, may be present in an area offering only limited primitive recreation potential. Also, an area may be so attractive for primitive recreation that it would be difficult to maintain an opportunity for solitude.

To determine whether an area possesses an outstanding opportunity, assess each area on its own merits, or, if contiguous with lands formally determined to have wilderness or potential wilderness values (i.e., as described under the size criterion in this section of the policy), evaluate the area in combination with the contiguous unit(s). While the term “outstanding” implies some degree of comparative analysis, do not interpret that to mean that only one area will meet that requirement by standing out in comparison to all other areas. Instead, consider an opportunity exemplary if it stands out at a comparative regional scale as contributing to outstanding opportunities within the region. Do not disqualify an area based on a finding that outstanding opportunities exist in only a portion of the area. Do not use any type of rating system or scale—whether numerical, alphabetical, or qualitative—in making the assessment. Use professional judgment in determining whether outstanding opportunities exist in each area and document in writing the rationale for arriving at the determination.

Solitude. Determine whether the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude.

In making this determination, consider factors that influence solitude only as they affect a visitor’s opportunity to avoid the

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sights, sounds, and evidence of other people in the area. Only consider the impacts of sights and sounds from outside the inventory area on the opportunity for solitude if these impacts are pervasive and omnipresent.

Factors or elements influencing solitude may include size, configuration, topographic and vegetative screening, and ability of the visitor to find seclusion. It is the combination of these and similar elements upon which an overall solitude determination will be made. It may be difficult, for example, to avoid the sights and sounds of people in some areas unless the area is relatively large. Outstanding opportunities for solitude can be found in areas lacking vegetation or topographic screening. A small area could also provide opportunities for solitude if, due to topography or vegetation, visitors can screen themselves from one another.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation.

Determine whether the area offers an outstanding opportunity for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In making this determination, consider those activities that provide dispersed, undeveloped recreation which do not require facilities, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanized transport.

Some examples of primitive and unconfined types of recreation include hiking; backpacking; fishing; hunting; spelunking; horseback riding; climbing; river running; cross-country skiing; snowshoeing; dog sledding; photography; bird watching; canoeing; kayaking; sailing; and sightseeing for botanical, zoological, or geological features.

An area may possess outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation through either the diversity in primitive and unconfined recreational activities possible in the area or the outstanding quality of one opportunity. Other factors to consider include:

Present visitor use of an area is not necessary in evaluating this criterion. Determine whether an outstanding opportunity is present, regardless of the amount of use.

A trail system or convenient access is not essential for an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation. The absence of these facilities may increase

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opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The presence of water is not essential for an outstanding primitive recreation opportunity.

The presence of “challenge” and “risk” are appropriate considerations, but not essential for an outstanding primitive recreation opportunity to exist in an area.

If an inventory area does not meet the solitude criterion and does not meet the primitive and unconfined recreation criterion, it does not contain wilderness characteristics. Further inventory activities to document supplemental values are unnecessary. If the area meets the primitive recreation and/or solitude criteria as well as the size and naturalness criteria, it does contain wilderness characteristics. Document in writing the rationale for arriving at the determination.

- d. Supplemental Values. If size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities criteria are met, then determine if the area contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Supplemental values are not required to be present in order for an area to be identified as lands with wilderness characteristics, but their presence should be documented where they exist.

3.Final Wilderness Characteristics Polygon Boundary Delineation.

Review the inventory criteria and ensure that the final polygon or polygons determined to contain wilderness characteristics excludes wilderness inventory roads and other substantially noticeable human-caused impacts. The defined area of lands with wilderness characteristics must meet the previously described criteria for size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The boundary should be determined largely on the basis of wilderness inventory roads and naturalness rather than being constricted on the basis of opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The location of boundaries should primarily be set to exclude the unnatural portions of the area.

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**GLOSSARY**

Following are definitions for terms used in this policy. Also see definitions for terms used in Section 103 of FLPMA, BLM planning regulations at 43 CFR 1601.0-5, the wilderness regulations at 43 CFR 6301.5, and the Wilderness Act. This glossary does not supersede those definitions or those in other laws or regulations.

Apparent Naturalness: See naturalness.

Boundaries: Inventory unit boundaries are normally formed by wilderness inventory roads, property lines, developed rights-of-way, or other substantially noticeable imprints of human activity. Dead-end roads (i.e., “cherry stem roads”) may extend into the unit and are excluded from the unit, which will modify the unit boundary.

Contiguous: Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary. Lands either bisected by wilderness inventory roads or having only a common corner are not contiguous. A checkerboard land pattern does not contain contiguous lands.

Ground Transportation Linear Feature (GTLF): A geospatial database of all transportation linear features (from motorized to foot use) as they exist on the ground, not just those in the BLM transportation system (refer to the Ground Transportation Linear Features Data Standard Report, October 22, 2014, version 2.0 or later, for detailed information on the GTLF data standard).

Island: An area of land surrounded by water.

Land Use Plan: A set of decisions that establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under the planning provisions of the FLPMA; an assimilation of land-use-plan-level decisions developed through the planning process outlined in 43 CFR 1600, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed. As used in this policy, Land Use Plan also includes Integrated Activity Plans used in the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska.

Naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of people’s work substantially unnoticeable. It is not synonymous with “natural integrity.”

Natural Integrity: The presence of ecosystems that are relatively unaffected by modern human activities.

Opportunity: A situation or condition favorable for attainment of a goal.

Outstanding: 1. Standing out among others of its kind; conspicuous; prominent; 2. Superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Non-motorized, non-mechanized (except as provided by law), and undeveloped types of recreational activities.

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Primitive Route: Any transportation linear feature located within areas that have been identified as having wilderness characteristics and not meeting the wilderness inventory road definition.

Road: For the purpose of inventorying wilderness characteristics only, the BLM will continue to base the “road” definition on FLPMA’s legislative history. The language below is from the House of Representatives Committee Report 94-1163, page 17, dated May 15, 1976, on what became FLPMA. Note that this is different than the BLM Road definition used in Travel and Transportation Manual (see MS 1626).

“The word ‘roadless’ refers to the absence of roads that have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.”

The BLM will refer to routes that meet the above definition as wilderness inventory roads. The BLM previously adopted and will continue to use sub-definitions of certain words and phrases in the BLM wilderness inventory road definition stated above. Routes that have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use are wilderness inventory roads.

- a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. “Improved” does not necessarily mean formal construction. “Maintained” does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
- b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
- c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

A route that was established or has been maintained solely by the passage of vehicles would not be considered a road for the purposes of wilderness inventory, even if it is used on a relatively regular and continuous basis. Vehicle routes constructed by mechanical means but that are no longer being maintained by mechanical methods are not wilderness inventory roads. Sole use of hands and feet to move rocks or dirt without the use of tools or machinery does not meet the definition of “mechanical means.” Wilderness inventory roads need not be “maintained” on a regular basis but rather “maintained” when road conditions warrant actions to keep it in a usable condition. A dead-end (cherry-stem) road can form the boundary of an inventory area and does not by itself disqualify an area from being considered “roadless.”

A route, or a segment of a route, which was mechanically improved to permit the passage of vehicles, but which to date has not needed any further mechanical improvement or maintenance to facilitate the relatively regular and continuous passage



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of vehicles, can be a road in those circumstances where the road would be maintained if the need were to arise.

While the purpose of a route is not a deciding factor to consider in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness inventory purposes, it does provide context in which to consider the criteria for a road determination. For example, the purpose of the route provides context when the BLM considers whether maintenance of the route insures relatively regular and continuous use and whether maintenance, that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure the use, would occur when the need arises.

Route: Roads, primitive roads, and trails that are identified as part of the travel network/GTLF inventory.

Setback: A buffer or border, including “zone of influence.”

Solitude: The state of being alone or remote from others; isolation. A lonely or secluded place.

Supplemental Values: Ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values may be present in an area with wilderness characteristics, but they are not required.

Transportation System: The sum of the BLM’s inventory of transportation linear features that have been classified as roads, primitive roads, or trails and are formally recognized and approved as assets and entered into FAMS as described in MS 1626.

Travel Network: The routes occurring on public lands or within easements granted to the BLM that are recognized, designated, decided upon, or otherwise authorized for use through the planning process or other TTM decisions. These may or may not be part of the transportation system and may or may not be administered by the BLM.

Wilderness: An area defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act and included in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Wilderness Characteristics: These attributes include the area’s size, its apparent naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. They may also include supplemental values. Lands with wilderness characteristics are those lands that have been inventoried and determined by the BLM to contain wilderness characteristics as defined in section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act.

Wilderness Inventory Road: See road.

Wilderness Study Area: Areas with wilderness characteristics identified and designated through the inventory and study processes authorized by Section 603 of FLPMA, and, prior to 2003, through the planning process authorized by Section 202 of FLPMA.

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**ACRONYMS**

BLM – Bureau of Land  
Management CFR – Code  
of Federal Regulations  
FLPMA – Federal Land Policy and Management  
Act of 1976 FS – U.S. Forest Service  
NEPA – National Environmental Policy  
Act of 1969 NPS – National Park Service  
ROW – Right-of-way  
U.S.C. – United States  
Code WSA –  
Wilderness Study  
Area

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**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY**

**APPENDIX A – PERMANENT DOCUMENTATION FILE**

The permanent documentation file should include the following:

1. **Inventory Area Evaluation:** Appendix B.
2. **Route Analysis:** Appendix C.
3. **Inventory Maps:** Inventory maps used in conducting and documenting findings of wilderness characteristics inventories must be retained. Maps should depict the area's unique identifier, boundary, and any photo points.
4. **Photo Documentation:** Documentation could include a descriptive log and photographs (Appendix D).
5. **Supporting Documentation:** Include additional notes, forms, and documents.

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INVENTORY ON BLM LANDS (P)

A-2

**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY**

**APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION**

**Evaluation of Current Conditions:**

1) Document and review any existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory findings on file regarding the presence or absence of individual wilderness characteristics, using Form 1, below.

2) Consider relevant information regarding current conditions available in the office. Identify and describe any changes to the existing inventory information. Use interdisciplinary team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc. and document the findings on Form 2, below. Document current conditions regarding wilderness characteristics, as opposed to potential future conditions.

Conduct field reviews as necessary to verify information and to ascertain current conditions. Reach conclusions on current conditions including boundaries, size of areas and presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Fully explain the basis for each conclusion on Form 2, including any critical differences between BLM and citizen information.

Document the findings regarding current conditions for each inventoried area. Describe how the present conditions are similar to, or have changed from, the conditions documented in the original wilderness characteristics inventory. Document the findings on Form 2 for each inventory area. Cite to or attach data considered, including photographs, maps, GIS layers, field trip notes, project files, etc.



**FORM 2**

**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics**

Area Unique Identifier \_\_\_\_\_ Acreage \_\_\_\_\_  
(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).

In completing steps (1)-(5), use additional space as necessary.

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If "No" is checked the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Does the area or a portion of the area appear to be natural?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If "No" is checked the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude):

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(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If "No" is checked for both 3 and 4 the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for question 5.

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

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(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

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## Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Summary

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

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

Check one:

The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

**Prepared by (team members):**

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**(Name, Title, Date)**

**Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\* 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 1610.5-3.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

## APPENDIX C – ROUTE ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

*(Factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road<sup>2</sup> for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes.)*

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

Route or Route Segment<sup>3</sup> Name and/or Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Include Transportation System Identifier, if known, and include route number supplied by citizen information, when available.)

**I. LOCATION:** Refer to attached map \_\_\_\_\_ and BLM corporate data (GIS). List photo point references (where applicable) or reference attached photo log:

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### II. ROUTE CONTEXT

A. Current Purpose<sup>4</sup> (if any) of Route: (Examples: Rangeland/Livestock Improvements (stock tank, developed spring, reservoir, fence, corral), Inholdings (ranch, farmhouse), Mine

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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 1610.5-3.

<sup>2</sup>Road: An access route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. “Improved” does not necessarily mean formal construction. “Maintained” does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

<sup>3</sup>If a portion of a route is found to meet the wilderness inventory road criteria (see Part III) and the remainder does not meet these criteria (e.g., a cherry stem road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings under pertinent criteria.

Site, Concentrated Use Site (camp site), Recreation, Utilities (transmission line, telephone, pipeline), Administrative (project maintenance, communication site, vegetation treatment)).

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Right-of-Way (ROW):**

1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown \_\_\_\_\_

2. If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown or N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA**

A. Evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (if either A.1 *or* A.2 is checked "yes" below) No \_\_\_\_\_ (if both A.1 *and* A.2 are checked "no" below)

1. Construction: (Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Paved \_\_\_ Bladed \_\_\_ Graveled \_\_\_ Roadside Berms \_\_\_ Cut/Fill \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>4</sup>The purpose of a route is not a deciding factor in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. The purpose of a route does provide context for factors on which such a determination may be based, particularly the question of whether maintenance of the route ensures relatively regular and continuous use. The purpose also helps to determine whether maintenance that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure such use would be approved by BLM when the need arises.

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2. Improvements: (Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?) Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_If “yes”: by Hand Tools\_\_\_\_\_by Machine \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Culverts\_\_\_\_Hardened Stream Crossings\_\_\_\_Bridges\_\_\_\_Drainage\_\_\_\_Barriers\_\_\_\_  
Other\_\_\_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Maintenance: (Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?): Yes\_\_\_\_(if either B.1 *or* B.2 is checked “yes” below) No\_\_\_\_(if both B.1 *and* B.2 are checked “no” below)

]

1. Is there Evidence or Documentation of Maintenance using hand tools or machinery?  
Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_If “yes”: by Hand Tools\_\_\_\_\_by Machine \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. If the route or route segment is in good<sup>5</sup> condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM to meet the purpose(s) of the route in the event this route became impassable?  
Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>5</sup> Good condition would be a condition that ensures regular and continuous use relative to the purposes of the route. Consider whether the route can be clearly followed in the field over its entire course and whether all or any portion of the route contains any impediments to travel.

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C. Relatively regular and continuous use: (Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Describe evidence (e.g., direct, vehicles or vehicle tracks observed, or indirect, evidence of use associated with purpose of the route such as maintenance of facility that route accesses) and other rationale for whether use has occurred and will continue to occur on a *relatively* regular basis (i.e., regular and continuous use relative to the purpose(s) of the route).<sup>6</sup>

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**IV. CONCLUSION:**

Does the route or route segment<sup>7</sup> meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ = Wilderness Inventory Road                      No \_\_\_\_\_ = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes

Explanation<sup>8</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>6</sup> Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes, e.g., trips/day or week or month or season or year or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases.

<sup>7</sup> If part of the route meets the wilderness inventory road definition and the remainder does not, describe the segment meeting the definition and any remaining portion not meeting the definition and why.

<sup>8</sup> Describe and explain rationale for any discrepancies with citizen proposals.

