

**Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Report:  
Thirty-One Mile Mountain  
COF-020-061**

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. BLM Manual 6310 'Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands' provides the guidance on conducting this inventory process.

Following BLM guidance the Royal Gorge Field Office conducted an inventory in 2013 and found the 7,136 acre unit did not meet the criteria for having wilderness characteristics. Per policy, the public has the opportunity to provide new information regarding wilderness characteristics that the BLM must evaluate and consider. New information that meets the minimum standard for further review was submitted by Wild Connections on May 6, 2015 contending that the unit did in fact meet the criteria. This report reflects an updated inventory that combines BLM's 2013 findings and an evaluation of the data submitted by Wild Connections.

<b>Inventory Effort</b>	<b>Acreage Inventoried</b>	<b>Wilderness Characteristics Acreage</b>
BLM 2013 Inventory	7,136	0
Wild Connections Inventory (Backdoor Gulch)	7,500 (approximate)	7,500 (approximate)
BLM 2015 Evaluation Conclusions	7,136.4	0

**Form 1: Document Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings on Record  
(Refers to Original 1980's Inventory Effort)**

Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

NO   X   (If no, go to form 2)  
 YES   —   If yes, and if the area has subunits within the broader area, list the unique identifiers for each of those subunits:

Inventory Source: 1980 Wilderness Study Report

Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): 069 426

Map Name(s)/Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Front Range District/ Royal Gorge Field Office

BLM Inventory findings on record: Document existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Document BLM Wilderness Characteristics Findings on Record (Historic Findings)					
Inventory Source Document:					
Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? (YES/NO & acres)	Naturalness (YES/NO)	Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude (YES/NO)	Outstanding opportunities for primitive & unconfined recreation (YES/NO)	Supplemental Values? (YES/NO)

(add rows as needed)

## Form 2: Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: CO-020-061, Thirty-one Mile Mountain      Acreage: 7,136.4 acres

1. Is the area of sufficient size? :

Yes  No

The land is greater than 5,000 acres and meets the size exception 2.a.i.

The unit, CO-020-061, is bounded as follows:

- The north is bounded by property lines other than BLM management;
- The east is bounded by wilderness inventory road, Colorado State Highway 9;
- The south is bounded by wilderness inventory road CO-020-061-A and property lines other than BLM management.
- The western edge is bounded by property line other than BLM management and wilderness inventory road, CO-020-61-B.

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No

The unit, CO-020-061, is located northwest of Cañon City, CO less than 20 miles (measured to the nearest point). The unit is located west of US Highway 9 and north of Fremont County Road 2. The unit is less than 4 miles southwest of Guffey, Colorado. The majority of access occurs along wilderness inventory roads, CO-020-061-A, B, and C. The unit consists of 7,136.4 acres of public land.

The topography of the unit is mountainous and rugged. Prominent features within the unit include Thirty-one Mile Mountain and Mill Gulch and. The vegetation consists primarily of piñon- juniper ponderosa pines and mixed conifers in the higher reaches. Riparian vegetation such as cottonwoods is found along Cottonwood Creek. There are also open parks that have gambel oak-montane shrubland and subalpine grasslands.

The man-made features include numerous routes that receive regular off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Past BLM road inventory efforts identified approximately 23 miles of routes with most of the routes forming the boundary of the unit; 7.4 miles of routes lie within the unit (see route inventory map 2). The majority of these were originally constructed but there is no documentation of maintenance so they are not being considered wilderness inventory roads. However, travel management planning has not been conducted for this area so the routes in existence are considered available for use. While private land deters most of the public from accessing a large portion of these routes the adjacent private land owners use the routes on a regular basis. These routes

are used extensively during the big game hunting seasons. These 7.4 miles of routes are located throughout the unit. While the routes individually would be considered minor, they cumulatively impact the overall naturalness of the unit.

Timber sales and vegetation treatment projects have occurred within the unit. Recently, the Mill Gulch Road was improved and maintained for full size vehicle use and access for timber sale sites. The evidence of the timber sale in the area was evident at the time of inventory. Large machinery was located in the unit harvesting trees. Large slash piles and routes on the hillside were a visual impact to the unit. There is another active timber harvesting project in the northwestern portion of the unit. The project involves the use and maintenance of several miles of roads.

The mining activity within the area is apparent and visible from the road but no longer active. Mining structures are located within the site and add supplemental value from their historic use. Tailing piles and prospecting pits left a visual scar on the landscape although the vegetation has grown in around the disturbances. Occurrence of mining activity is still evident in the area but is not readily noticeable and does not attract from the overall naturalness.

The unit is actively managed for rangeland management. There are stock tanks, drift fences, gates, and routes to assist in rangeland management of the area. A couple of developed springs are identified within the unit. The developed springs have routes to them to assist with maintenance of the spring.

While not considered wilderness inventory roads due to lack of maintenance records, the extensive 7.4 miles of inventoried routes impact naturalness of the unit. The recent and active timber harvesting projects also impact naturalness. Since these impacts are spread throughout and not confined to a small area they cannot be excluded. The BLM retains its original assertion that the unit does not meet the naturalness criteria.

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 \_\_\_ NA X

Description:

N/A

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 \_\_\_ NA X

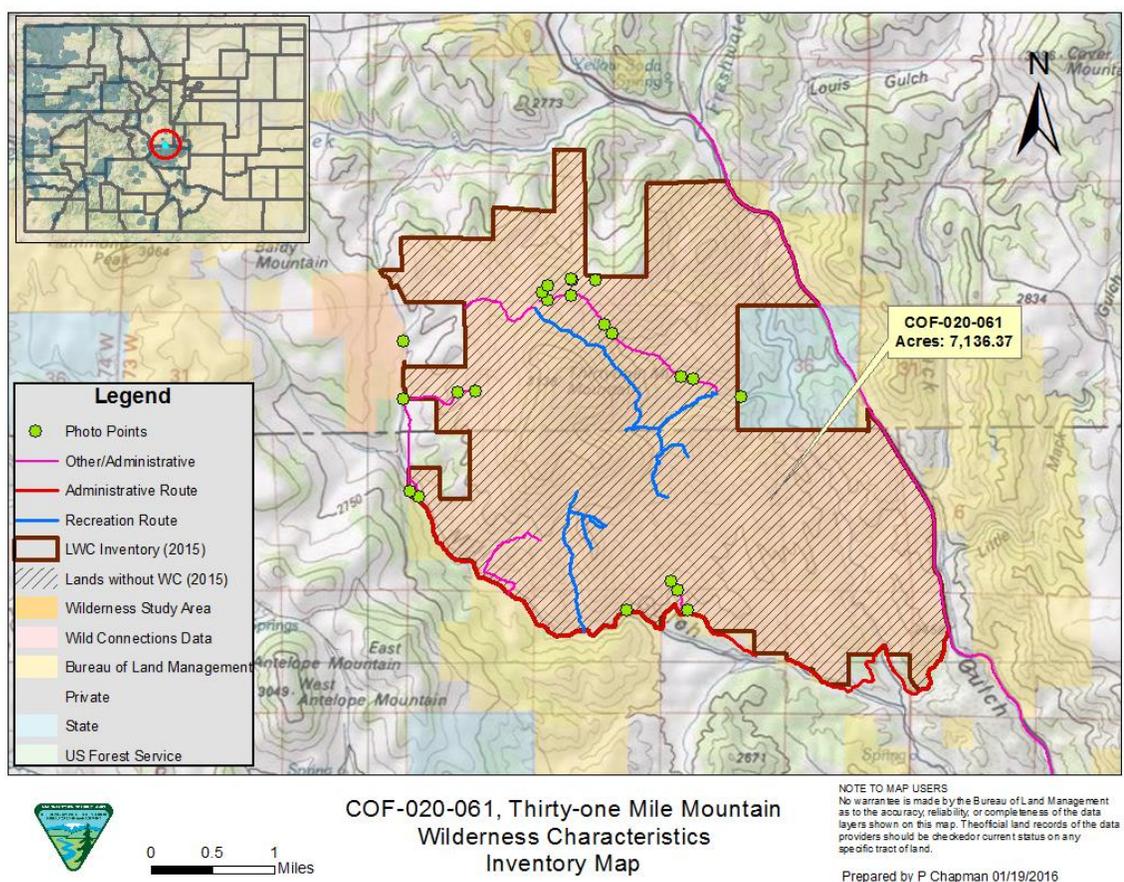
Description:  
N/A

5. Does the area have supplemental values?

Yes  No  NA

Description:  
The unit provides elk and mule deer severe winter range as mapped by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Map 1 Thirty-one Mile Mountain 2015 inventory with routes and photo points



## Summary of Analysis:

Unique Identifier: COF-020-061, Thirty-one Mile Mountain

Acreage: 7,136.4 acres

### Results of Analysis:

Inventory concluded that the unit does not consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive unconfined recreation. The unit contains man-made features that significantly impact the naturalness of the unit. The current man-made features include numerous OHV routes, and vegetation treatment projects. The unit does not possess wilderness characteristics.

The unit, CO-020-061, is bounded as follows:

- The north is bounded by property lines other than BLM management;
  - The east is bounded by wilderness inventory road, Colorado State Highway 9;
  - The south is bounded by wilderness inventory road CO-020-061-A and property lines other than BLM management.
  - The western edge is bounded by property line other than BLM management and wilderness inventory road, CO-020-61-B.
  - The unit is found in parts of the sections listed in the following townships;
    - o T. 15 S. R. 73 W. Sections: 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36,
    - o T. 16 S. R. 73 W. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12
    - o T. 16 S. R. 72 W. Sections: 6 and 7
- 
- Does the area meet size requirements or exceptions? Yes  No
  - Does the area appear natural? Yes  No  NA
  - Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes  No  NA
  - Does the area have supplemental value? Yes  No  NA

Check one:

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

The area does not have wilderness characteristic.

This does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision, and does not represent a decision in regard to how the area will be managed or address impacts of management decisions.

Prepared by:

Evaluator: Janine Prout/ Recreation Technician

Date: May 30, 2013

Evaluator: Kalem Lenard/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date: December 21, 2015

Evaluator: Ken Reed/ Forrester

Date: August 4, 2013

Evaluator: Jeff Williams/ Rangeland Management Specialist

Date: September 9, 2013

Evaluator: Matt Rustand/Wildlife Biologist

Date: Sept 13, 2013

### **Form 3: Route Analysis:**

The Route Analysis includes factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. For the purposes of this analysis, use the following definition of a “road”. This definition is drawn from and the FLPMA legislative history and historic BLM inventory direction.

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.

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 system road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-061, Thirty-one Mile Mountain

Route or Route Segment Name and/or Identifier: Colorado State Highway 9, CO-020-061-A, CO-020-061-B, CO-020-061-C

#### **I. LOCATION:**

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

Map Title: Unit, COF-020-061 Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Map

Map Date: 2013

Describe:

The map shows the parcel inventoried for wilderness characteristics, photo points and routes collected by GPS

#### **II. ROUTE CONTEXT**

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.

A. Current Purpose of Route:

Describe:

- Colorado State Highway 9: Used for general transportation.
- CO-020-061-A: Used for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and BLM administrative route.
- CO-020-061-B: Used for a private access road to BLM, and BLM administrative road.
- CO-020-061-C: Used for rangeland improvement projects and recreation use by OHVs.

B. Right-of-Way (ROW):

B.1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes  No  Unknown

If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW?

- Colorado State Highway 9: Has a ROW association, serial #, COC 61025
- CO-020-061-A: has a ROW association for the portions that cross private property:
- CO-020-061-B: has a ROW association.
  
- CO-020-061-C: does not have a ROW association.

B.2. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes  No  Unknown or N/A

Explain:

Yes, the above stated routes have the ROWs still in use.

III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA

A. Is there evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means?

Yes, if either III.A.1 or III.A.2 is checked "yes" below

No, if both III.A.1 and III.A.2 are checked "no" below

- All of the inventoried routes have had mechanical construction or improvements.

A.1. Construction: Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?

Yes  No

Describe:

- Colorado State Highway 9: have been mechanically constructed and paved.
- CO-020-061-A: has been mechanically constructed, perhaps by a bull dozer.
- CO-020-061-B: has been mechanically constructed, perhaps by a bull dozer.

- CO-020-061-C: has been mechanically constructed, evidence of cut/ fill on route.

A.2. Improvements: Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?

Yes   X   If "yes", improvements by? Hand Tools        by Machine   X    
No       

Describe:

- Colorado State Highway 9: has been recently mechanically improved, bridges, culverts, drainage features are found along the route.
- CO-020-061-A: has recently been mechanically improved, use of a bull dozer and drainage features incorporated in the route.
- CO-020-061-B: has been recently mechanically improved, culverts and drainage feature are installed in the route.
- CO-020-061-C: Does not have recent improvements on the route.

B. Maintenance: Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?

Yes, if either III.B.1 *or* III.B.2 is checked "yes" below   X    
No, if both III.B.1 *and* III.B.2 are checked "no" below       

- Colorado State Highway 9: yes, regularly used and maintained.
- CO-020-061-A: Recently maintained for full size vehicle use and BLM administrative use.
- CO-020-061-B: Recently maintained for regular use by full size vehicles.
- CO-020-061-C: no recent maintenance.

B.1. Is there evidence or documentation of maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes   X   If "yes", maintenance by? Hand Tools        by Machine   X    
No       

Explain:

- Colorado State Highway 9: Evidence of mechanical maintenance is apparent.
- CO-020-061-A: Evidence of mechanical maintenance is apparent.
- CO-020-061-B: evidence of mechanical maintenance is apparent.
- CO-020-061-C has not received mechanical maintenance.

B.2. If the route or route segment is in good 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? "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.

Yes  X  No      

Explain:

- Colorado State Highway 9: would be maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation.
- CO-020-061-A would be maintained by the BLM for administrative use.
- CO-020-061-B would be maintained by the private land owners or BLM if needed.
- CO-020-061-C would be maintained for rangeland access.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?

Yes  X  No      

Explain: 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 (regular and continuous use relative to the purpose(s) of the route). Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes (e.g., trips per day, week, month, season, year, or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases).

- Colorado State Highway 9: receive continuous use. 100-200 times daily.
- CO-020-061-A Receives continuous use by private landowners and BLM administrative use.
- CO-020-061-B receives continuous use by private land owners and BLM administrative use.
- CO-020-061-C receives seasonal non-continuous use by BLM administrative and recreational use.

#### IV. CONCLUSION:

Does the route or route segment meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)? 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. Also, describe and explain rationale for any discrepancies with citizen proposals.

Yes  X  = Wilderness Inventory Road

Explain:

- Colorado State Highway 9: meets the criteria to be a wilderness inventory road.
- CO-020-061-A meets the criteria to be a wilderness inventory road.
- CO-020-061-B meets the criteria to be a wilderness inventory road.

- No   X   = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes
- CO-020-061-C does not meet the criteria to be a wilderness inventory road.

Evaluator: Janine Prout/ Recreation Assistant

Date: August 27, 2013





#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7



#8



#9



#10

**Royal Gorge Field Office Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory, 2015: Evaluation of new information**

**Assessment and Determination**

The BLM Royal Gorge Field Office followed manual 6310 in the performance of inventory for lands with wilderness characteristics. In response to new information submitted in May, 2015 by Wild Connections, the 2013 inventory was re-evaluated. A final review was made by comparing existing data and when needed additional field trips were taken to collect data by GPS, inventory forms, and photo points. Resource specialists were also consulted to determine if the conclusion reached in the 2013 inventory remains valid, or whether changes should occur. The above report documents those findings for the following area(s):

Unit ID	Unit Name	Total BLM acreage inventoried	Acreage with Wilderness Characteristics	Acreage without Wilderness Characteristics
COF-020-061	Thirty-one Mile Mtn	7,136.4	0	7,136.4

**Review:**

I have reviewed the inventory results, reports, photos, and maps for the above Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and concur with the findings as submitted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James Kalem Lenard  
Outdoor Recreation Planner, Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 2/22/16

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith E. Berger  
Field Manager  
Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 2/24/16