

LWC 6-Rat Hole Ridge, June 2013

Form 1: Document Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings on Record

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

NO (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: Transwest EIS (AECOM-contractor)
 Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): CO-110-06
 Map Name(s)/Number(s): _____
 BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): CO NW District- White River FO

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)
CO-110-06	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES

(add rows as needed)

Form 2: Current Conditions: Presence Or Absence Of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: CO-110-06A, 6B, 6C, and 6D

Acreage: 6A (1,631) 6B (1,032) 6C (424) 6D (1,104)

(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).

1. Is the area of sufficient size? (If area meets an exception to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception):

Yes X No _____

(If "no" is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions)

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

The original Transwest EIS-based inventory for lands with wilderness characteristics for LWC polygon 6 resulted in this polygon not meeting the 5,000 acre minimum size criteria due to being bisected by Wilderness Inventory Roads, and therefore was originally considered to not have wilderness characteristics. It was found that the polygon did contain all other criteria for lands with wilderness characteristics. The Transwest EIS-based inventory only considered lands within the White River Field Office.

Based on information provided by the BLM Utah-Vernal Field Office in June 2013, there are 3 separate LWC polygons in the Vernal Field Office that are contiguous with 4 small polygons from the original LWC polygon 6. These 3 Vernal Field Office LWC polygons are named Bitter Creek, Rat Hole, and Hells Hole Canyon. Because the 4 small polygons in the White River Field Office have been found to contain wilderness characteristics, except the size criteria, but are contiguous with LWCs that do meet all wilderness characteristic criteria in the Vernal Field Office, the 4 small polygons in the White River Field Office should be acknowledged as LWC. These polygons will be named and referred to as LWC 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D. See attached map for details. If the adjacent and contiguous LWC polygons in the Vernal Field Office are found in the future to not contain wilderness characteristics, the LWC 6 polygons in the WRFO will not have wilderness characteristics.

Communication between the Vernal Field Office and White River Field Office about any impacts to wilderness characteristics in this area will be essential to managing the inventory and wilderness characteristics.

The other wilderness characteristics, other than size, from the previous inventory remain unchanged and are still considered valid.

Check one:

- The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as land with wilderness characteristics (*all 3 bullets must be answered "yes"*).
- The area does not have wilderness characteristics (*one or more of the bullets is answered "no"*).

2. Prepared by (list team members, titles, date, signatures; add lines as needed):

Evaluator (name/title): **Aaron Grimes, Outdoor Recreation Planner** Date: **June 25, 2013**
Evaluator (name/title): **Chad Schneckenburger, Section Supervisor** Date: **June 27, 2013**
Evaluator (name/title): **Eric Allen, GIS Specialist** Date: **June 27, 2013**

3. Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: Ken E. Walter
Title: FIELD MANAGER
Date: 07/18/13



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Manual Version 6-129 (03/15/2012)

FORM 1

**Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics
Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record**

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

No (go to Form 2) Yes (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers of those areas):

- a) Inventory Source: N/A
- b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): N/A
- c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): N/A
- d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): N/A

2. BLM Inventory Finds on Record:

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):

Inventory Source: N/A

Area #/Name	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No



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FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Number/Name: White River Unit 006	Acreage: <5,000 acres
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(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.):

The western boundary of Unit 006 is the Colorado/Utah state line; the eastern boundary is the White River/Grand Junction Field Office boundary; the irregular north and south boundaries are a combination of borders with private lands and the field office boundary. Out of eight routes surveyed, two were found to meet the definition of a Wilderness Inventory Road. These routes include Routes 01 and 04 and are used to connect several active oil and gas fields in the area.

Wilderness Inventory Road Route 04 cuts off most of the western portion of the unit. The piece cut by the road is less than 5,000 acres, and therefore does not meet the size requirement. The remaining area of the unit is less than 5,000 acres, so it also does not meet the minimum size requirement. Unit 006 is therefore disqualified from being identified as a Land with Wilderness Characteristics.

(2) Does 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):

Unit 006 is located in Garfield County directly east of the Colorado/State border and south of the White River/Grand Junction Field Office boundary. This unit is located in Township 4 South, Range 103 West; and Township 5 South, Range 104 West; and Township 6 South, Range 104 and 105 West (Ute Meridian). The unit is wholly owned by the BLM with “cutouts” centrally in

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Unit: 006



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the unit excluding tracts of private land. The unit exists in an area of very high relief mountain topography and dense forest cover. The southern end of the unit is dominated by sagebrush and pinyon-juniper with occasional fir trees. Northward, coverage by spruce-firs and aspens dominates the landscape. Vegetation across the unit, including oak shrubs, is uniformly dense and prohibits vehicle and (easy) foot travel where vegetation has not been thinned. Area shows historic use for hydrocarbon extraction and existing roads provide access to active fields. Other current human uses are primarily recreational activities (heavy seasonal hunting, camping, hiking, jeep/OHV, mountain biking, and wildlife observation).

(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):

Very high relief and dense vegetation cover make access to this unit challenging. Vehicle travel to the unit includes many miles over dirt roads with varying levels of maintenance. Some deep canyons of this unit are virtually inaccessible except by well-equipped hiking parties. There are no current industrial uses on site and very little evidence of human activity other than the roads.

(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):

While travel to the unit and travel off of roadways is difficult, accomplishing it can lead to areas of rich natural beauty. Heavy seasonal use by hunters is likely restricted to areas immediately adjacent to roads following ridge tops and valleys.

(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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The area has unique substantial scenic value. Sheer cliffs, deep mountain valleys, and colorful vegetation are visually beautiful.



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Summary of Analysis

Area Name and/or Number: White River Unit 006

Summary

(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).

Results of analysis:

Unit 006 is located in Garfield County directly east of the Colorado/State border and south of the White River/Grand Junction Field Office boundary. This unit is located in Township 4 South, Range 103 West; and Township 5 South, Range 104 West; and Township 6 South, Range 104 and 105 West (Ute Meridian). The unit is wholly owned by the BLM with “cutouts” centrally in the unit excluding tracts of private land. The unit exists in an area of very high relief mountain topography and dense forest cover. The southern end of the unit is dominated by sagebrush and pinyon-juniper with occasional fir trees. Northward, coverage by spruce-firs and aspens dominates the landscape. Vegetation across the unit, including oak shrubs, is uniformly dense and prohibits vehicle and (easy) foot travel where vegetation has not been thinned. Area shows historic use for hydrocarbon extraction and existing roads provide access to active fields. Other current human uses are primarily recreational activities (heavy seasonal hunting, camping, hiking, jeep/OHV, mountain biking, and wildlife observation).

Wilderness Inventory Road Route 04 cuts off most of the western portion of the unit. The piece cut by the road is less than 5,000 acres, and therefore does not meet the size requirement. The remaining area of the unit is less than 5,000 acres, so it also does not meet the minimum size requirement. Unit 006 is therefore disqualified from being identified as a Land with Wilderness Characteristics.

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 of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes No N/A

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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 Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

Name	Title	Date
Jennifer Ashlin	AECOM Geologist	9/23/2012
Nicole Peters	AECOM Natural Resource Specialist	9/23/2012

(Name, Title, Date)

Reviewed by (District of Field Manager):

Name: *Kent E. Walter* Title: *FIELD MANAGER*
Date: *04/08/2013*

