

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings on Record

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

No (Go to Form 2) **Yes** **X** (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.):

- a) Inventory Source: BLM
- b) Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): Yellowstone River Islands (MT-067-210)
- c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): _____
- d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Lewiston District office

2. BLM Inventory Findings 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: BLM

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
Yellowstone islands (MT-067-210)	Yes Not identified	Yes	No	No	No

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier_ **Yellowstone and Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River Islands,**
(MT -0100-210)_

Acreage_ **352 acres**_____

(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

Current status plats and aerial photos reveal that there are 10 individual islands or groupings of small islands which are partially or wholly administered public land islands on the Yellowstone River. There are 3 islands on the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River as well. The islands total approximately 1,075.4 acres in size, of which approximately 351.6 acres are public lands managed by BLM. The largest island was 165 acres and the smallest was 3.8 acres. The islands are numbered from west to east for the Yellowstone River and South to North on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River.

All the islands appear to be very low lying and several may be transitory since they appear to be mostly graveled sand bars. After an initial examination of historical documents, it appears that the hydrology of the river can alter size, shapes and features of islands rapidly. An initial inventory was started in FY 2011 but high water and flooding may have altered this determination. This initial inventory could only be done using aerial photos and Land Status Plats. The islands will have to be field inventoried during the June high flows, as well as again during low water. These surveys should best indicate island and mainland features.

Yellowstone River:

The Yellowstone River flows northeast through Montana from its source in the southern Absaroka range in Wyoming to its junction with the Missouri River in North Dakota. The Billings Field Office includes approximately 150 miles of this river between Springdale and Custer, Montana.

Island 1: Located in T. 1 S., R. 13 E., Section 8, found west of the community of Big Timber. The island is approximately 3.8 acres in size and is composed of all public lands.

Island 2: Located in T. 1 N., R. 14 E., Section 19, found just west of the community of Big Timber. It is a total of 113 acres in size, of which approximately 77 acres are public lands. This island is dominated by a mature cottonwood gallery with an understory of willows and wetland communities.

Island 3: Located in T. 3 S., R. 21 E., Section 9. Four small islands grouped together, all with similar vegetation: mature cottonwoods and wetland plant communities (sedges, grasses, etc.) Anecdotal evidence of Invasive Tamarisk species present as well. The islands are located just west of the community of Columbus and approximately 45 miles west of Billings.

Island A is approximately 2.3 acres total size – all public lands managed by BLM.
Island B is approximately 2: 3.8 acres total size – 2.5 acres BLM and 1.3 acres private.
Island C is approximately 3.4 acres total size – 1.8 acres BLM and 1.6 acres private.
Island D is approximately 10.1 acres total size – 8.2 acres of BLM and 1.9 acres private.

Island 4: located in T. 2 S., R 24 E., Section 13. This parcel is adjacent to the Sundance Recreation Area and is near the junction point of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River and the main course of the Yellowstone River. It is a total of 81 acres, of which 34 acres are BLM. The vegetation is mature cottonwoods and wetland plant communities. The island is situated between BLM Recreation Area and a developed Montana State Fishing Aces site. The Sundance Recreation Area is a popular year-round destination for the local community and there is a developed parking lot with a restroom and walking trails which lead to the river.

Island 5: Located in T. 1 S., R. 25 E., Section 25. This parcel is a small portion of a larger island and is the western point (upstream side) of the island. The total island size is approximately 313 acres of which 9 acres are BLM.

Island 6: Located in T. 1 S., R 26 E., Section 2. This island is part of the Four Dances Natural Area managed by the BLM. It is located in mid channel in the downtown section of Billings and is in close proximity to an Oil Refinery, a powerhouse, and Interstate Highway 90. The total size is 23 acres, of which 12 acres are BLM. The island is dominated by a cottonwood gallery with a wetland community understory of willows, sedges and lush grasses.

Island 7: Located in T. 1 N., R 27 E., Section 8. This island has two separate BLM parcels. It is located east of Billings by the community of Lockwood. The approximate total size of the island is 152 acres, of which the two BLM parcels are 16 acres and 28 acres. The island is dominated by a cottonwood gallery with wetland plant community understory, including willows, sedge, rush and other riparian obligate species.

Island 8: Located in T. 3 N., R. 30 E., Sections 19 and 20. This island is known locally as Bundy Island. A portion of the island has an old and naturally rehabbing agricultural field on it. This field is readily apparent and is not in a natural condition. The approximate total BLM lands are 80 acres and 24 acres. Besides the agricultural area, the island is dominated

by a mature cottonwood gallery and wetland communities. There is a fishing access site, administered by MT FWP, on the eastern tip of the island that receives high levels of use. There is a camp site and a vault toilet at the site.

Island 9: Located in T. 3 S., R 30 E., Sections 21 and 22. This island is known locally as Pompeys Pillar Island. It is just downstream from the Pompey's Pillar National Monument. The approximate size of the island is 165 acres, of which 105 acres are managed by BLM. This island is dominated by a grassy field surrounded by a mature cottonwood gallery and wetland plant communities. The immediate area, including Pompey's Pillar National Monument, is well known as a birding mecca. There is a bald eagle nest on this island and it is used extensively by hikers and hunters, accessed through PPNM and by river boat.

Island 10: Located in T. 4 N., R33 E., Section 7. This island is located just west of the community of Custer and is near 7 mile Flat. The total size of the island is approximately 84 acres, of which 19 acres are BLM. Vegetation comprises willows, tamarisk, and immature cottonwoods on BLM, but there is a mature cottonwood gallery on the privately owned portion of the island.

Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River:

The Clarks Fork Yellowstone River (sometimes called the Clarks Fork River) is a tributary of the Yellowstone River, 150 mi (241 km) long in the U.S. states of Montana and Wyoming.

It rises in southern Montana, in the Gallatin National Forest in the Beartooth Mountains, approximately 4 mi (6 km) northeast of Cooke City and southwest of Granite Peak. It flows southeast into the Shoshone National Forest in northwest Wyoming, east of Yellowstone National Park, then northeast back into Montana. It passes Belfry, Bridger, Fromberg, and Edgar, and joins the Yellowstone approximately 2 mi (3 km) southeast of Laurel.

Island 1: Located in T. 6 S., R. 23 E., Section 15. This island is located just north of the community of Belfry. It is approximately 6 acres in size, of which 3.0 acres are BLM. The vegetation comprises a Cottonwood, Russian olive and Willow complex.

Island 2: This Island is located just east from the community from Rockvale. The total size of the island is approximately 30 acres, of which 13 acres are BLM. Russian Olive dominates the overstory with some cottonwood and other wetland plant communities in the understory.

Island 3: This parcel is included in the Sundance Recreation Area and is the junction point of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River and the main course of the Yellowstone River. It is a total of 5.0 acres, of which 2.0 acres are BLM. The vegetation is mature cottonwoods and wetland plant communities. The Sundance Recreation Area is a popular year-round destination for the local community and there is a developed parking lot with a restroom and walking trails which lead to and along the river. The island is located on the far side of

the Recreation Area from a county paved road, (Thiel Road), which runs along the main course of the Yellowstone River.

Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

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

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

Several of the islands are in a natural condition, but others have extensive populations of invasive plant species. None have roads or ways on them.

Human use is centered on boating and fishing on the Yellowstone River. These rivers are a popular attraction for local, regional, national, and international visitors. Use numbers are unknown. There are numerous commercial guide and outfitter services. The islands are used for landing of visitors. There is some evidence of overnight camping occurring on several islands in the Yellowstone River. There is no grazing, timber cutting, access easements or mineral activities. There are no permanent improvements.

(2) 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):

Due to extensive works of man found along the River banks, and the islands small sizes, there might be little sense of solitude; however, there may be some vegetation screening or location in the river channel which may affect the determination. Interstate Highway 90 and the mainline of the Northern Pacific Rail Road parallel the Yellowstone River for much of the distance, but not always right by the river and there are rolling hills and curves in the road and Rail Road courses. In some cases this may be a level of outstanding, but in other cases it may not be.

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 "N/A" for question 5.

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

The islands do provide outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation since access is limited to boat only and the Yellowstone River is a popular fishing and rafting destination. However, the Yellowstone River is also open for motorboat use, which is a semi-primitive activity and not a primitive one. User percentages and numbers, as well as trends in seasons of use, types of use and numbers are not known. There is commercial floating and fishing operators on both rivers and the area attracts users from local, regional, national, and international localities.

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

Yes No N/A

Description:

The Yellowstone River had long been an important artery of transportation for Native Americans in the 19th century; European-American settlers depended on it as well, entering the region by riverboat. The region around the rivers is the traditional summer hunting grounds for numerous Native American tribes: Sioux, Crow, Cheyenne and Cree. Gold was discovered near Virginia City Montana in the 1860s, and two of the primary routes for accessing the gold fields were the Bozeman Trail and the Bridger Trail both of which followed the Yellowstone for a short length. The river was explored in 1806 by William Clark during the return voyage of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Clark's Fork of the river was named for him. Congress has established the river as a portion of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The Nez Perce National Historic Trail also crosses the Yellowstone River at or near the Sundance Lodge Recreation Area and it follows the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River for some distance as well. The Bozeman Trail is also designated as a Historical trail by Montana State and follows both rivers.

The Yellowstone River is considered to be one of the greatest trout streams of the world and is officially classed as a blue ribbon stream in Montana from the park to the confluence with the Boulder river east of Livingston and from the mouth of Rosebud creek near Rosebud, Montana to the North Dakota border. The lack of dams along the river provides for excellent trout habitat from high inside Yellowstone Park, downstream through Gardiner, the Paradise Valley, Livingston, and to Big Timber, a stretch of nearly 200 miles (320 km). The Yellowstone varies in width from 74 feet (23 m) to 300 feet (91 m), so fishing is normally done by boat. The most productive stretch of water for trout is through Paradise Valley in Montana, especially near Livingston which produces brown trout, rainbow trout and native cutthroat trout as well as mountain whitefish. From Billings

downstream to the North Dakota border, anglers seek Burbot, Channel catfish, Paddlefish, Sauger, Smallmouth bass, and Walleye.

Several of the islands in the Yellowstone River have a wide diversity of plant life and topographic features. Shallow backwater coves and inlets, deep offshore pools, cattail marshes, grassy knolls and inland swamps are interspersed with old growth cottonwood galleries and willow thickets.

The Yellowstone River possesses a wide variety of birdlife that is of educational and possibly scientific value. Cormorants and other waterfowl use the inland old growth cottonwoods and marshes for protected nesting sites. Ospreys and eagles hunt the waters surrounding the islands. A variety of shorebirds including avocets and great blue herons, roam the shores in search of food. The swamps, grassy areas, willow thickets, and old growth cottonwoods support a wide variety of songbirds. The river bottom is home to an abundant population of big game, including mule deer, whitetail deer and elk.

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: _Yellowstone and Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River islands, (MT-0100-210)

Summary

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When an LWC has been identified that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included in the LWC (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 Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

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Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Date: _____

* This form documents information that constitutes and 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.