

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY UPDATE – 2011

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 X (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas.):

a) **Inventory Source:** Montana BLM's Initial Inventory (November 1978 – August 1979)

b) **Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s):** East Fork Crow Creek/MT-064-360

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** BLM Montana Wilderness Inventory Maps:
 Final Initial Inventory Map (August 1979)
 Proposed Wilderness Study Decision Map Lewistown & Miles City Districts (March 1980)
 Final Inventory Decision Map Lewistown & Miles City Districts (November 1980)

d) **BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Lewistown/Valley Resource Area

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: Montana BLM's Initial Inventory (November 1978 – August 1979)					
Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? (acres)	Naturalness?	Outstanding Solitude?	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation?	Supplemental Values?
MT-064-360	YES (20,940) (BLM)	YES	--	--	--
Comments	This unit exhibits an excellent example of northern plains type environment. Having no roads, or developments of any kind, it is truly primitive. Because it lies within only 2 miles of the Canadian border, it probably shares numerous wildlife species with the proposed Canadian Grass Land National Park. This could enhance its value considerably. The unit definitely has potential wilderness value, and should be further studied.				
Inventory source: Montana BLM's Intensive Inventory (August 1979 - November 1980)					
MT-064-360	YES (20,940) (BLM)	YES	NO	NO	YES
Comments	This unit will not be studied for wilderness. Although the area appears natural, its lack of screening and ecological diversity allows for neither an outstanding opportunity for solitude nor a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.				

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Unique Identifier East Fork Crow Creek - Area 90 Acreage 22,705
(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).

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

This area contains over 5,000 acres of contiguous BLM-administered lands.

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

The boundaries of this unit are defined by scattered parcels of State and private land as well as county roads, including the Duncan Road, Hinsdale North Road, and Bluff Creek Road, to the north, east and west. During the inventory update, the northern portion of the inventory unit was eliminated from further consideration due to the numerous fences, large reservoirs, and access routes leading to the large parcel of State and private inholdings. This reduced the inventory unit acreage to 20,290. The north boundary was adjusted to the south boundary of the inholding parcels, an access route to the State parcel in T37N, R35E, Section 17 and the south boundary of T37N, R35E, Section 14.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural? Yes X 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):

This unit is primarily a rolling glaciated landscape with western wheatgrass, thick-spike wheatgrass, green needlegrass and needle-and-thread being common native grasses. Northern porcupine grass and bearded wheatgrass also occur in large patches, often as community dominants.

There are 2 small private in-holdings of native rangeland in the unit (640 acres total). Livestock grazing on these private lands is managed in conjunction with adjacent public land grazing allotments.

There is one plugged and abandoned gas well within this unit which is 1% leased. There are approximately 30 miles of vehicle routes scattered throughout the unit, but none of these routes meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road. There are portions of 6 grazing allotments with approximately 20 miles of interior fences, around 30 water developments (reservoirs and pits), and some crested wheatgrass seedings that have been chiseled in the 1980's. Even though there are numerous water developments in the unit, their placement, scattered throughout in dips

and depressions, made most of them substantially unnoticeable. The highest concentration of range "improvements" is in the southern portion of the unit, but they weren't pervasive enough to warrant removing these lands from the unit. All-in-all the human-made features present didn't detract from the overall apparent naturalness of the unit.

(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):

The size and remoteness of the unit combined with its rolling topography provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. Most private lands directly adjacent to the unit are either native range or have been seeded or reverted back to grass and are no longer farmed. With the possible exception of big game hunting season vehicle use of routes in the unit and on adjacent lands is infrequent.

(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 areas does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for question 5.)

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

Big game and upland bird hunting are currently the most popular recreational pursuits in the unit. It's possible to participate in a variety of primitive and unconfined recreation activities in the East Fork Crow Creek including hiking, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, photography and sightseeing for botanical, zoological and geological features.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)? Yes No N/A

Description:

The mix of native grasses present in this unit on provides an excellent example of a highly productive prairie landscape before widespread conversion to agriculture. The unit contains mule deer winter range and the southern tip of the unit provides pronghorn winter range. Sharp-tailed grouse dancing grounds are present within the unit and nesting habitat is provided for greater sage-grouse, waterfowl and grassland birds.

Cultural Resources, both known and unknown within the unit boundary are present and may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Sites types located within the general area include prehistoric cultural resources such as subsistence gathering and processing areas, rock alignments, spiritual locales and numerous habitation sites. Historic cultural resources include the physical remains of sites associated with farming, ranching, railroad, mining and the homestead era. It is important to note that physical manifestations associated with prehistoric and historic cultural resources are rarely apparent or visually dominating to the overall landscape.

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: East Fork Crow Creek - Area 90

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.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

Name	Title	Date
Fritz Prellwitz	Wildlife Biologist	3/22/2011
Kathy Tribby	Outdoor Recreation Planner	6/15/2011
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Brian Hockett	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	7/13/2011
Jordan Thompson	Rangeland Management Specialist	7/13/2011
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Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: Steve Klessens Title: Acting FM
 Date: 6-28-2012

**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.*