

Name: **Blue Gap Central WY-030-15N92W16-2012, a subunit of Wild Horse Basin WYO-030-408**

**FORM 1**

**Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record**

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

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  (if yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas):

a) **Inventory Source:** \_\_\_ Wild Horse Basin \_\_\_\_\_

b) **Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s):** \_\_ Wild Horse Initial Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ Wild Horse Basin; WY-030-048 \_\_\_\_\_

d) **BLM District (s)/Field Office(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ Rawlins Field Office \_\_\_\_\_

**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:

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Area #/Name	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
Wild Horse Basin WYW-030-408	Yes (375,000 acres)	No	No	No	No

**FORM 2**

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

a. Area Number/Name **Blue Gap Central WY-030-15N92W16-2012, a subunit of Wild Horse Basin WYO-030-408** Acreage 5717.40

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes  No

Describe the boundaries of the area (roads, property lines, etc.). If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception. If more than one inventory area is involved, list the acres in each and evaluate each area/sub-area separately. In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

The unit is bound on the north by BLM Road 3315 a.k.a. Standard Road. The unit is bound on the east by private land, a pipeline corridor east of Highway 789 with Rawlins Field Office rights-of-way numbers WYC-071520 and WYW-133358, and a power line with Rawlins Field Office right-of-way number WYW-136480. The unit is bound to the southeast by a 50 foot wide pipeline disturbance with Rawlins Field Office right-of-way number WYW-64964. The unit is bound to the south by a series of Class 3 Light Duty Roads of aggregate surface maintained by industry as well as a 50 foot wide pipeline disturbance with Rawlins Field Office rights-of-way numbers WYW-63222, WYW-77741, WYW-133267, WYW-62839, WYW-146563, WYW-155317, WYW-161324, WYW-129827, and WYW-159963. The unit is bound to the west by a 50 foot wide pipeline disturbance with Rawlins Field Office rights-of-way numbers WYW-49443 and WYW-161345, as well as a Class 3 Light Duty Road of aggregate surface maintained by industry with Rawlins Field Office rights-of-way numbers WYW-73371, WYW-89100, WYW-7783, and WYW-167123.

See **Blue Gap Outlier WY-030-15N92W19-2012, a subunit of Wild Horse Basin WYO-030-408.**

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The Blue Gap Central area under consideration is 5,717.40 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships: 6<sup>th</sup> P.M., T. 15 N., R 92 W., Sections 3-5, 8-10, 14-17, 20-23, and 26-29. The terrain consists mainly of a rim that slopes gently to the south and drops off steeply to the east. The rim drains into Muddy Creek and Blue Gap Draw, a tributary of Muddy Creek. The elevation ranges from 6,765 feet at the highest point of the rim, to 6,500 feet where Blue Gap Draw leaves the unit in T. 15 N., R. 92 W., Section 23. The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land uses are for oil & gas exploration and livestock grazing. There are nine natural gas well pads within the unit and five access roads, maintained by mechanized equipment, which extend into the unit. Among range improvements, there are two fences, one of which crosses the area, and one dam which creates a medium sized pond in Section 21. The area also contains a number of unimproved two-track trails accessible only by 4wd vehicles. The primary, dispersed recreational activity in the area is hunting.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes  No  N/A

Description: The 15.23 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 13.44 miles of wilderness inventory roads (i.e., well access roads) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in photos 3-8. When hiking across the Blue Gap Central Unit, the casual observer cannot escape the constant view of primitive routes. These primitive routes create noticeable linear intrusions and disturbances that interrupt the experience of any wilderness character briefly encountered in areas untrammled by the works of man.

The area contains 16 oil and gas wells throughout the Blue Gap Central Unit. These oil and gas installations within the unit represent permanent improvements and loss of primeval character. When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, two of these wells have a permit to drill, nine are flowing, three have expired permits, and two are permanently abandoned. Despite the variation in status, these wells remain as existing installations that detract from the naturalness and are substantially noticeable to the casual observer while hiking through the unit. All wells, which are not abandoned, are managed as active wells and receive commercial vehicle traffic for periodic maintenance. This traffic would interrupt the casual observer's experience of wilderness character due to road dust plumes and the contrast between the white coloration of these vehicles moving across the tan, brown, and olive landscape. Well pads do not receive final reclamation approval until they have been plugged and abandoned. Visual contrasts created by surface disturbances, including well pad turn-arounds, soil exposure around the facilities, and a rectangular area of wheat grass, remain until final reclamation is established.

The Blue Gap Central Unit also contains a substantially noticeable, man-made, earthen dam which covers 1.032 surface acres and impounds Red Gulch Detention Reservoir in Township 15, Range 92, Section 21. When the casual observer encounters the earthen dam as well as a rectangular borrow pit at the southern end of the reservoir, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to these obvious man-made modifications constructed with mechanized equipment.

The casual observer is often attracted to bodies of water while hiking. Water adds interest and diversity to the landscape. When arriving at the Red Gulch Detention Reservoir, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered a reddish-orange, muddy borrow pit and impounded reservoir. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this mud-red reservoir is designed for cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming. The casual observer would encounter a similar experience when seeking to replenish water supplies from other springs, wells, and reservoirs within this unit. The range improvements, including two reservoirs and one fence, are constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations giving the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous oil and gas wells, primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Blue Gap Central Unit to a level that is incompatible with the definitions of wilderness provided in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (incorporated in FLPMA 1976):

**A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.**

(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:

(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

Description:

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

Yes  No  N/A

Description:

## Summary of Analysis

**Area Name and/or Number: Blue Gap Central WY-030-15N92W16-2012**

### Summary

Results of analysis:

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
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).

\_\_\_X\_ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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