

Name: **Little Sand Spring WY-030-26N87W19-2012**

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

a) Inventory Source: _____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): _ _____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s):

d) BLM District (s)/Field Office(s): ___

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: [Click here to enter text.](#)

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name: **Little Sand Spring WY-030-26N87W19-2012** Acreage 9189.09

(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 the Ferris Mountains WSA. The unit is bound on the south by a Class 3, light duty, well road maintained by industry. The unit is bound on the east by private and state land. The unit is bound on the west by BLM Road 3103 a.k.a. Dorr Meadow Road.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The Little Sand Spring area under consideration is 9,189.09 acres of BLM public land. The unit contains the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t26n	r88w	35	t26n	r88w	24
t26n	r88w	34	t26n	r88w	23
t26n	r87w	26	t26n	r88w	22
t26n	r87w	27	t26n	r87w	16
t26n	r87w	28	t26n	r87w	17
t26n	r87w	29	t26n	r87w	18
t26n	r87w	30	t26n	r88w	13
t26n	r88w	25	t26n	r87w	9
t26n	r88w	26	t26n	r87w	8
t26n	r88w	27	t26n	r87w	7
t26n	r88w	28	t26n	r88w	12
t26n	r87w	22	t26n	r88w	11
t26n	r87w	21	t26n	r87w	5
t26n	r87w	20	t26n	r87w	6
t26n	r87w	19	t26n	r88w	1

The Little Sand Spring area contains several areas of private and state land within the central portion of the unit. The topography consists, primarily, of rolling prairie, buttes, hills, and drainages created by Battle Spring Draw and Stratton Draw. Elevation ranges from 7,700 feet on the foothills of the Ferris Mountains above the drainages to, approximately, 6,900 feet at the

bottom of the drainages. The dominant vegetation cover is Mountain Big Sagebrush on the slopes and uplands of the unit and wet meadow cover along creeks and draws. The primary land use is livestock grazing. The primary, dispersed recreational activity in the area is hunting.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

Description: The 110.53 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 16.15 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 8-10 and 16. When hiking across the Little Sand Spring 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 untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains 36 oil and gas wells throughout the Little Sand Spring Unit (see examples in Photos 1-5 and 10). When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, it was determined that two have active injectors, two have pumping roads, three are shut-in, and 29 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 Little Sand Spring Unit also contains one man-made reservoir (see location in unit map). When the casual observer encounters this man-made borrow pit and impounded reservoir, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to these 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 reservoir, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered an impounded, muddy borrow pit. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this "reservoir" is designed for cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming. The numerous range improvements, including the reservoir, one spring, and 14 fences, were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations. These improvements give the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammelled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of numerous grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous oil and gas wells, primitive routes, wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Little Sand Spring 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: Little Sand Spring WY-030-26N87W19-2012

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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Team members:

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