

Name: **Middlewood Hill East Central WY-030-17N85W5-2012**

**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  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:

**FORM 2**

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

a. Area Number/Name **Middlewood Hill East Central WY-030-17N85W5-2012**

Acreage 15118.39

(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 to the northeast, east, and southwest by private and state land. The unit is bound to the southwest by private and state land and BLM Road 3422. The unit is bound to the west and northwest by Sage Creek Rim Road, which is a maintained road.

See also **Middlewood Hill East Beaver Creek WY-030-17N87W14-2012, a subunit of Wild Horse Basin WYO-030-408, and Middlewood Hill Outlier WY-030-17N85W2-2012.**

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: (Include acreage, land ownership, location, topography, vegetation and summary of the major human uses/activities)

The Middlewood Hill East Central area under consideration is 15118.39 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships: Township 17, Range 86, Sections 1-4, 8-15, and 24-25; Township 17, Range 85, Sections 1-2, 11, 15, 17-20, and 30; Township 18, Range 85, Sections 31-32, and 34; Township 18, Range 86, Sections 34 and 35. The terrain consists mainly of First Cottonwood Draw, Second Cottonwood Draw, Coyote Draw and the surrounding hills and prairie which drain into these drainages. The elevation ranges from 7,853 feet on the tallest hilltops to 7000 feet at the bottom of the draws. The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land use is livestock grazing. There is one natural gas well pad within the unit and one access road. Among range improvements, there are fences throughout the unit, eight reservoirs, one spring, and one water well. The area also contains a number of unimproved two-track routes and 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 64.29 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes are demonstrated in the large-scale aerial photo. When hiking across the Middlewood Hill East 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 untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains one oil and gas well within the Middlewood Hill East Central Unit (see locations in the large-scale aerial photo). This oil and gas installation within the unit represents permanent improvements and loss of primeval character. When examining the status of the oil and gas well, this well was found to be permanently abandoned. Despite this status, this well remains as an existing installation that detracts from the naturalness. However, this well is unlikely to be substantially noticeable to the casual observer while hiking through the unit since it was reclaimed in 1980.

The Middlewood Hill East Central Unit also contains nine man-made reservoirs (see locations in the large-scale aerial photo). When the casual observer encounters these man-made borrow pits and impounded reservoirs, 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 any of the nine reservoirs, 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 nine reservoirs, one spring, one water well, and six fences, were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations giving 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 primitive routes and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Middlewood Hill East 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: Middlewood Hill East Central WY-030-17N85W5-2012**

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