

Name: **Poison Buttes Central WY-030-13N92W27-2012**

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:

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name **Poison Buttes Central WY-030-13N92W27-2012** Acreage 25397.48

(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 3318, a.k.a. Shell Creek Truck Trail, as well as private and state land. The unit is bound to the east by Highway 789, as well as private and state land. The unit is bound to the south and west by County Road 700, as well as private land, including a cut-out along the east end for an outlier unit.

See **Poison Buttes Outlier WY-030-12N92W1-2012**.

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

The Poison Buttes Central area under consideration is 25,397.48 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships: 6th P.M., T. 13 N., R. 91 W., Sections 4-9, 15, 17-22, 28-29, and 32; T. 12 N., R. 92 W., Sections 1-4, 6, and 10-11; T. 13 N., R. 92 W., Sections 10-15 and 19-35; T. 12 N., R. 93 W., Sections 1-4; and T. 13 N., R. 93 W., Sections 20-29 and 33-36. The terrain consists mainly of the Red Creek Drainage, Streckfus Draw, Van Fleet Draw, Devils Canyon, Poison Draw, Red Creek Rim, and The Bluffs, which is a large rim at the east end of the unit overlooking Wyoming State Highway 789. There is one private inholding within the area and five other non-federal properties which extend into the area. The elevation ranges from 6,909 feet at the highest point of The Bluffs in T. 13 N., R. 91 W., Section 17, to 6,100 feet at the Red Creek Bridge in T. 12 N., R. 93 W., Section 4. The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land use on public land is livestock grazing, however, there is a sizable oil & gas development on private land in Poison Basin near the center of the area. Among range improvements, there are ten fences, two of which cross the area, five water wells, one dam which creates small reservoir in T. 13 N., R. 92 W., Section 14, and twenty other small ponds spread throughout the area. The area also contains a number of unimproved two-track trails accessible only by 4wd vehicles. The primary, dispersed recreational activities in the area are hunting and hiking.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No N/A

Description: The 210.69 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 3.45 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 16, 8-11, and 13-17. When hiking across the Poison Buttes 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 33 oil and gas wells throughout the Poison Buttes Central Unit (see locations in large-scale aerial photo). 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, nine wells have expired permits, one well is flowing, 21 have been permanently abandoned, one well is shut-in, and one well has a subsequent report of abandonment. 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 Poison Buttes Central Unit also contains 19 man-made reservoirs (see examples in photos 1 and 2 and 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 19 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 19 reservoirs, seven fences, and five water wells, 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 and wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Poison Buttes 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: Poison Buttes Central WY-030-13N92W27-2012

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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