

Name: **Red Desert Basin WY-030-15N91W29-2012**

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: BLM Rawlins FO 1979 Wilderness Inventory Hard Copy Files _____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): _ Seven Lakes Initial Inventory WY-030-409 _____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): ___ Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Wilderness Review Serial No. 66700 _____

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

The unit consists of approximately 400,000 acres north of the checkerboard and west of U.S. Highway 287. Man’s activities are noticeable almost everywhere. Many roads, pipelines, power lines and telephone lines crisscross the area. In spite of the fact that many road less tracts of 5,000 acres are found in the area, none have wilderness potential.

Inventory Source: M:\gis_workareas\Recreation\WSA\LandWilderCharc1979.shp

Area #/Name	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
Seven Lakes Initial Inventory WY-030-409	Yes (400,000 acres)	No	No	No	No

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name: **Red Desert Basin WY-030-15N91W29-2012**, Acreage 10,418.41

(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 east by Tipton Road, a Class 3, light duty road with aggregate surface maintained by Carbon County. The unit is bound on the north by Carbon County Road 20 a.k.a. Luman Rd., a Class 3, light duty road with aggregate surface maintained by county. The unit is bound on the south by private land in the checkerboard ownership pattern and by a well road which is a Class 3, light duty road with aggregate surface maintained by industry. The unit is bound on the west by the Rawlins Field Office boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The Red Desert Basin area under consideration is 10,418.41 acres of BLM public land. The unit contains the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t22n	r97w	2	t23n	r96w	20
t22n	r97w	3	t23n	r96w	19
t23n	r97w	35	t23n	r97w	24
t23n	r97w	34	t23n	r97w	23
t23n	r97w	33	t23n	r97w	22
t23n	r97w	32	t23n	r97w	21
t23n	r96w	29	t23n	r97w	20
t23n	r96w	30	t23n	r96w	17
t23n	r97w	25	t23n	r96w	18
t23n	r97w	26	t23n	r97w	13
t23n	r97w	27	t23n	r97w	14
t23n	r97w	28	t23n	r97w	15
t23n	r97w	29			

The Red Desert Basin area contains several areas of private and state land within the central portion of the unit. The topography consists, primarily, of rolling prairie, sand dunes, hills, and drainages. Elevation ranges from 6,600 feet on the tops of the sand dunes above the drainages to,

approximately, 6,586 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 6.86 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 13.46 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, 7, 9 and 15. When hiking across the Red Desert Basin 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 34 oil and gas wells throughout the Red Desert Basin Unit (see examples in photos 1-2, 4-6, 10-12, and 16). When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, eight of these wells have an active permit to drill status, four have expired permits, six are flowing, six are permanently abandoned, two have pumping submersible status, and eight are shut-in. 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 Red Desert Basin Unit also contains one man-made reservoir (see location on unit map and example in Photo 13). 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 this modification 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 range improvements, including one reservoir, one water well, and 1.51 miles of fence, 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 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 Red Desert Basin 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: Red Desert Basin WY-030-15N91W29-2012

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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Date: _____