

Name: **West Fork Cherokee Creek WY-030-12N95W24-2012**

**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 **West Fork Cherokee Creek WY-030-12N95W24-2012** Acreage  
7,749.59

(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 3330 a.k.a. Cherokee Trail. The unit is bound to the west by a Class 3 Light Duty Road which was previously graded and maintained by industry. The unit is bound on the east by BLM Road 3321 a.k.a. Pasture B Road. The unit is bound on the south by the Rawlins Field Office boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The West Fork Cherokee Creek area under consideration is 7749.59 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t12n	r95w	24	t12n	r94w	6
t12n	r95w	23	t12n	r95w	1
t12n	r95w	22	t12n	r95w	2
t12n	r95w	21	t12n	r95w	3
t12n	r94w	18	t12n	r95w	4
t12n	r95w	13	t13n	r94w	31
t12n	r95w	14	t13n	r95w	36
t12n	r95w	15	t13n	r95w	35
t12n	r95w	16	t13n	r95w	34
t12n	r94w	7	t13n	r95w	33
t12n	r95w	12	t13n	r95w	32
t12n	r95w	11	t13n	r95w	25
t12n	r95w	10			

The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land uses are for oil & gas exploration and livestock grazing. 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 16.27 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and .40 miles of wilderness inventory roads (i.e., well roads) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in photos 3-16. When hiking across the West Fork Cherokee Creek 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 nine oil and gas wells throughout the West Fork Cherokee Creek Unit (see locations in unit map). When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, all of these wells were either permanently abandoned or have had expired permits between 1937 and 1985 (the expired well has no date recorded for expiration but has no noticeable well pad). All of these nine wells have been reclaimed and were not found to detract from the naturalness or to be substantially noticeable to the casual observer.

The West Fork Cherokee Creek Unit also contains four man-made reservoirs (see locations on unit map and examples in photos 1-2). 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 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 any of the four 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 four reservoirs, one water well, and 1.5 miles of fence (including two relatively large snow fences), were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations and to maintain range vehicle access. 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 primitive routes, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the West Fork Cherokee Creek 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: West Fork Cherokee Creek WY-030-12N95W24-2012**

### 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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**Reviewed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dennis Carpenter, Field Manager

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