

Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents
Deer Flat OR-036-005, 21 total pages

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H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON

APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION

Evaluation of Current Conditions:

1) Document and review the existing BLM wilderness inventory findings on file, if available, regarding the presence or absence of individual wilderness characteristics, using Form 1, below.

2) Consider relevant information regarding current conditions available in the office to identify and describe any changes to the existing information (use interdisciplinary (ID) team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.), and document your findings on Form 2, below.

When Citizen Information has been submitted regarding wilderness characteristics, document the submitted materials including: date of Submission; Name of District(s) and Field Office(s) Affected; Type of material Submitted (e.g. narrative, map, photo). Evaluate any submitted citizen information regarding the validity of proposed boundaries of the unit(s), the existence of roads and other boundary features, the size of the unit(s), and the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics based on relevant information available in the office (prior BLM inventories, ID team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.)

Conduct field reviews as necessary to verify information and to ascertain current conditions. Reach conclusions on current conditions including boundaries, size of areas and presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Fully explain the basis for each conclusion on form 2, including any critical differences between BLM and citizen information.

Document your findings regarding current conditions for each inventoried area. Describe how the present conditions are similar to, or have changed from, the conditions documented in the original wilderness inventory. Document your findings on Form 2 for each inventory area. Cite to or attach data considered, including photographs, maps, GIS layers, field trip notes, project files, *etc.*

Year: 2007**Unit Name/Number: Deer Flat OR-036-005****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?**Yes No **A.) Inventory Source(s) -- (X) Denotes all applicable BLM inventory files, printed maps, or published BLM Decision documents with information pertaining to this unit.****Wilderness Inventories**

- 1978 - *BLM Wilderness Inventory Units OR-03-13-02* (unpublished BLM documents stored in 6-way case files).
- April 1979 - *Proposed Initial Inventory – Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics* (yellow book).

Wilderness Decision Documents

- August 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory: Final Decision on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington* (green book).
- October 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory: Oregon, Proposed Decision on the Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas* (grey book).
- March 1980 - *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory: Final Decisions on 30 Selected Units in Southeast Oregon and Proposed Decisions on Other Intensively Inventoried Units in Oregon and Washington* (orange book).
- November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* (brown book).
- November 1981 - *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet).

B.) Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s)

- BLM unpublished file OR-03-13-02 (1978); Deer Flat 3-172 (November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* [brown book]). This unit was formed by the combination of the Deer Flat (3-172) and NV-02-020-809A inventory units.

C.) Map Name(s)/Number(s)

- Final Decision – Initial Wilderness Inventory Map August 1979
- Proposed Decision Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas Map October 1979
- Intensive Wilderness Inventory Map March 1980
- Intensive Wilderness Inventory, Final Decisions Map November 1980
- November 1981 *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet)

D.) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s)

- Vale District/Jordan Resource Area

2) BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Unit#/Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition	Outstanding Solitude	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation	Supplemental Values
Deer Flat 3-172A, B&C	12,249	Y	N	N	N
NV-02-020-809A	1,200	Y	N	N	N
Total acres >>	13,449				

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Conduct field reviews as necessary to verify information and to ascertain current conditions. Reach conclusions on current conditions including boundaries, size of areas and presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Fully explain the basis for each conclusion on form 2, including any critical differences between BLM and citizen information.

Document your findings regarding current conditions for each inventoried area. Describe how the present conditions are similar to, or have changed from, the conditions documented in the original wilderness inventory. Document your findings on Form 2 for each inventory area. Cite to or attach data considered, including photographs, maps, GIS layers, field trip notes, project files, *etc.*

FORM 2 -- DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS:

Unit Name/Number: Deer Flat OR-036-005

For this exercise BLM refers to the area as 2007 Deer Flat OR-036-005. A citizen wilderness proposal provided by Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) received February 2004 identified BLM unit OR-036-005 as a portion of their proposal known as the “Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition.” ONDA states that the citizen proposal presents new information that documents wilderness criteria and therefore qualifies the area for interim protection as a Wilderness Study Area. The Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition also includes BLM unit OR-036-002 and BLM unit OR-036-003. The Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition utilized the Nevada State line as its southern boundary whereas the BLM inventory delineation of units OR-036-002 and OR-036-003 continued into Nevada and utilized existing roads as southern boundaries for units OR-036-002 and 003.

1) Is the unit of sufficient size?

Yes X No ___

Unit OR-036-005 is comprised of 12,249 acres in Oregon and 9,022 acres in Nevada for a total of 21,271 acres, meeting the size criteria. The 21,271 total acres that comprise the OR-036-003 unit as shown in Form 2 differs from the 13,449 total acres for the unit listed in Form 1. Acreage for unit OR-036-005 in Form 2 is calculated from BLM GIS information that included 7,822 additional acres of land in Nevada. BLM has presently determined that the original 1978 southern boundary road located in Nevada did not meet the definition of a road and has enlarged the Deer Flat unit southward until boundary qualifications set for wilderness characteristics were met. The citizen wilderness proposal identified only the 12,249 acres of BLM unit OR-036-005 in Oregon, by terminating their inventory at the Oregon-Nevada State line.

Description: The boundaries of unit OR-036-005 are identified as BLM road 6354-0-00 and private property on the north, the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation on the west, BLM road 8300-6-01 on the east, and by the Quinn River Road and United States Forest Service boundary in the Nevada unit on the south. Periodic maintenance of the boundary roads has occurred in the past (no confirmed dates available) and they are used regularly by ranchers (as observed by current BLM staff) and BLM employees for livestock management. Refer to map 2007_Deer_Flat_OR_036_005.pdf for the unit boundary.

The citizen wilderness proposal boundaries for unit OR-036-005 differed from BLM’s by utilizing the state line between Oregon and Nevada as the southern boundary for the Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition, and including areas that now consist of BLM new inventory units OR-036-002 and OR-036-003. ONDA combined the three BLM inventory units into their Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition because they do not recognize the northern and western boundary roads of BLM unit Cairn C OR-036-003 as meeting the definition of a road. BLM does not agree with their road determination and has explained why these two routes do meet the definition of a road, in BLM road analysis forms 8300-6-01 and 6354-0-00 (attached).

2) Is the unit in a natural condition?

Yes X No ___

Description: Human imprints within the Deer Flat OR-036-005 unit include two earthen reservoirs, 23.75 miles of motorized primitive trails, 5.3 miles of internal fenceline, and seven developed springs. The original inventory identified only two developed springs. All seven springs were developed at the time of the original inventory but are not noticeable from existing routes through the unit. In 2006 two of the spring developments were abandoned and all plumbing and troughs were removed from the original sites. A route at one time considered a boundary road that formed units A, B, and C of the original 1978 inventory unit 03-172, was determined to not meet the definition of a road and was redefined as a motorized primitive trail. Because these trails are no longer considered boundaries between the three original units, they now are combined into unit OR-036-005.

The Deer Flat unit exhibits a near-natural condition throughout because fencelines generally blend in with the knee- to waist-high big sagebrush, the motorized primitive trails are widely scattered, and all of the seven spring developments are substantially unnoticeable due to their small size. Overall the area appears to be primarily affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of human activity substantially unnoticeable. Refer to map 2007_Deer_Flat_OR_036_005A.pdf for human imprints.

3) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes X No ___

Description: Unit OR-036-005 is approximately 11.0 miles diagonally in length and 6 miles in width near its center. The majority of the unit in Oregon and about one-third of the acreage in Nevada consists of a rolling, open sagebrush plateau containing the headwater drainages of Deer and Jack Creeks. The southeastern area of the unit consists of a series of small knolls that drain into the Quinn River to the south and into Deer Creek to the north. The area along the entire southwestern boundary contains portions of the Quinn River and the steep land transition from the flatter plateau to the northeast.

The headwaters of Jack Creek form along the northern boundary of the unit and flow eastward onto private property in the northeast corner. Jack Creek drainage consists of broad open sagebrush flats with small wet-meadow/spring areas and large expanses of dry meadows in the headwaters. The drainage then transitions into a semi-confined canyon with steep side slopes containing terraces of sagebrush and dry meadows. Immediately upstream of the private property the drainage becomes seasonally wet and supports willow species. Water and willows increase once the creek enters the private parcel.

The headwater drainages of Deer Creek start in the southeastern portion of the unit and flow to the north where Deer Creek leaves the unit and enjoins Jack Creek. Deer Creek drainages consist of uniform gentle gradients with a series of springs and associated wet meadows surrounded by dry meadows and sagebrush flats in the western tributary drainages. Headwater tributaries in the southeastern portion of the unit start in rolling hills and consist mainly of dry cobble streambeds that support big sagebrush.

Perennial flowing Quinn River and its tributaries line the southwestern and southern boundaries of the unit. The Quinn River and its tributaries contain perennial flowing springs and wet-meadow terraces that support willow and herbaceous riparian species.

Topographic relief within the plateau area of the unit ranges from about 6,000-6,400 feet mean sea level (msl) while the Quinn River break land elevations start at about 6,400 feet msl and descend to about 5,200 feet msl along the Quinn River in Nevada. The southeastern portion of the unit is the only area above the break lands that contains dissected rolling terrain. The remaining area above the break lands is mostly flat with little change in relief and does not contain any buttes. Elevation differences in the plateau area of the unit traversing from north to south or from east to west are gradual and average about 40-60 feet per mile. Outstanding solitude within the plateau portion of the unit is provided by the substantially unnoticeable network of motorized primitive trails and the extensive but limited height of vegetative screening consisting of broad expanses of low and big sagebrush. The extent of rolling knolls in the southeastern area of the unit, the break lands, and the numerous canyon segments of Quinn River tributary drainages also provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The original 1978 inventory did not identify these features which contribute to topographic screening and create opportunities for seclusion and result in a finding of the presence of outstanding opportunities for solitude. The larger size of the unit from that identified in the original inventory also contributes to increased opportunities for solitude.

A citizen's wilderness proposal (ONDA, February 2004) includes unit OR-036-005 as an area contiguous with previously BLM-identified inventory units Cairn C (BLM unit OR-036-003) and Twin Butte (BLM unit OR-036-002) in their Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition. BLM has concluded that the three units are not contiguous because they are separated by existing routes that meet the definition of a road. Refer to BLM road 6354-0-00 and 8300-6-01 road analysis forms.

4) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes _____ No X

Description: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available in the unit. However, opportunities for activities such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and photography are not outstanding because the unit lacks scenic quality, diversity of landforms, and challenging terrain. The rim area between the headwaters of Deer Creek and the Quinn River to the south in Nevada provides the only topographic feature in the unit that notably alters the flatness of the terrain.

Backpacking and photographic opportunities across the unit could be a monotonous experience with no change in hiking conditions or scenery until reaching the watershed breaks to the Quinn River. Despite the unit's increased size, the lack of high scenic quality, minimal vegetative screening, and a predominate lack of diversity of landforms within the unit render the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation less than outstanding. Although wildlife viewing opportunities have been identified as a recreational value within this unit, they are not considered to be outstanding by the inventory team.

Citizens promoting the Oregon Butte proposed Addition have presented a scenic photograph (WA141) as evidence of outstanding opportunity for hiking, photography, and sightseeing in the Deer Flat OR-036-005 unit. Photograph WA141 depicts a view of the Deer Creek drainage in the southeast portion of the unit in Oregon, showing the unit's broad expanse of sagebrush upland with the Santa Rosa Mountains located outside of the unit in the background.

By definition, "An area may possess outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation either through the diversity in the number of primitive and unconfined

recreational activities possible in the unit, or the outstanding quality of one opportunity.” The inventory team has determined that unit OR-036-005 does not contain any outstanding opportunities or outstanding qualities for primitive and unconfined recreation because of the limited extent of diverse land forms.

5) Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes X No ___

Description: With some minor exceptions, the ecological integrity of rangeland in this unit has been largely unaffected by the combined impacts of wildfire and invasive, non-native plants such as cheatgrass. This means the area possesses wildlife habitat supplemental values for sagebrush-dependent species of BLM management importance including pygmy rabbit, sagebrush vole, greater sage-grouse, Brewer’s sparrow, black-throated sparrow, sage sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and sage thrasher. Observed rangeland conditions within this unit can be expected to contribute towards the existence of healthy sagebrush-dependent wildlife populations over a large area and in the long term because: (1) native plant functional and structural groups are well represented within the unit, and (2) wildlife forage, cover, and structure is available for use by species of management importance.

In contrast to conditions described above, rangeland at similar elevations and in similar ecological sites within Malheur County, Oregon has been highly disturbed due to the combined effects of improper historical grazing use, loss of biological crust integrity, invasive plant establishment, and catastrophic wildfire impacts over the last few decades. Cheatgrass presence is known to accelerate and aggravate wildfire spread because it is a highly flammable fine fuel, and wildfire often reduces or completely eliminates critical shrub-based forage, cover, and habitat structure values for many species of wildlife. Literally millions of acres of Wyoming big sagebrush habitat types, similar to those within this unit, have been burned over the last few decades and recovery of these losses will take multiple decades if not centuries to occur.

Finally, the land considered within this unit is also recognized as part of the Owyhee Uplands Physiographic Province, a region incorporating rangeland in Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada which supports some of the largest contiguous blocks of intact sagebrush steppe remaining west of the Continental Divide.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

Unit Name/Number: 2007 Deer Flat OR-036-005

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 |
| 3) Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? | [Yes] | No NA |
| 4) Does the area have supplemental values? | [Yes] | No NA |

Conclusion--Check One:

- (X) The area or a portion of the area has wilderness character.
- () The area does not have wilderness character.

The ID team has reviewed the findings summarized in the original Statewide Wilderness Inventory as well as in the published decision documents and maps identified on Form 1. Current conditions relative to the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics have been considered including citizen wilderness proposals. Based on all the best available information and staff field visits to the area since 2000, the ID team has found compelling reasons, described in sections above, to change the existing BLM inventory decisions for solitude and supplemental values wilderness characteristics. BLM finds that the naturalness of the area is primarily affected by the forces of nature, outstanding opportunities for solitude are present in portions of the unit, and there are supplemental values present. The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited for reasons already described above and BLM concludes that there are not outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

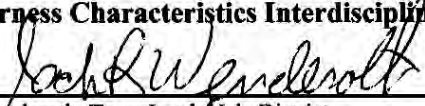
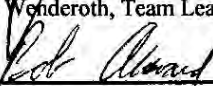
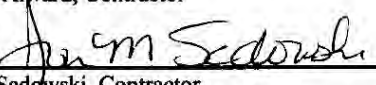

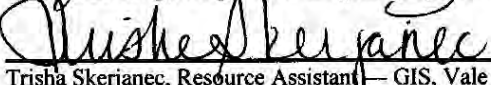
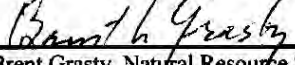
This updated inventory includes areas that overlap state boundaries with Nevada. Although inventory information was collected on the entire area, the wilderness characteristic findings are only conclusive for the portion of each unit that is within Oregon.

Sources of Reference for Evaluation:

- All BLM documents listed in Form 1; existing BLM wilderness inventory information.
- Wilderness Inventory Recommendations: Vale District, Submitted by Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), February 6, 2004.
- Current geographic information system (GIS) data on existing projects, vehicle routes/roads, land ownership, etc.
- BLM Job Documentation Record (JDR) files.
- National Agriculture Imagery Project digital images (2005).
- Official BLM Transportation Plan Map.
- BLM staff has obtained first-hand field knowledge about this unit’s plant communities, road conditions, and other attributes as a result of rangeland health investigations conducted between July and October of the year 2000. BLM gathered quantitative rangeland data from

trend plots in support of the assessment and evaluation process for Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area, but most other data collected for rangeland health evaluation purposes were either estimated or qualitative in nature. BLM staff has also visited this and adjoining units annually and on multiple occasions after 2000 in the process of establishing and reading riparian monitoring locations, performing layout and design work for rangeland development projects, conducting rangeland supervision duties, collecting livestock utilization data, and documenting current road conditions. Field observations were made during Rangeland Standards and Guides assessment work in 2000.

Wilderness Characteristics Interdisciplinary Team:

	10/26/07
Jack Wenderoth, Team Lead, Vale District	Date
	10/26/07
Bob Alward, Contractor	Date
	10/22/07
Jon Sadowski, Contractor	Date
	10-26-07
Cynthia Landing, Rangeland Management Specialist, Vale District	Date
	10/26/07
Trisha Skerjanec, Resource Assistant — GIS, Vale District	Date
	10/26/07
Brent Grasty, Natural Resource Specialist — GIS, Vale District	Date

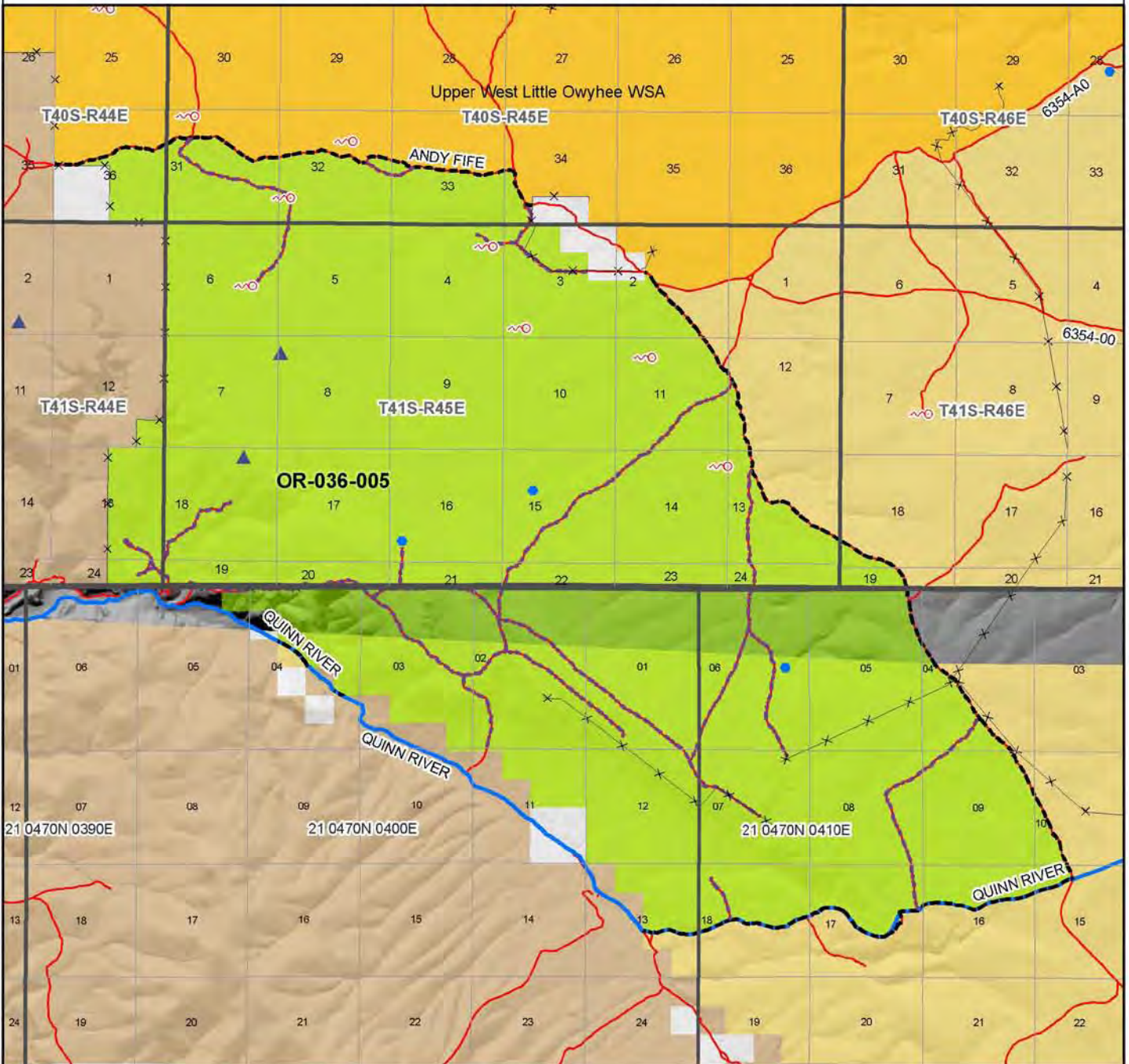
Concurrence:

	10/26/07
Carolyn R. Freeborn	Date
Field Manager, Jordan R. A.	

This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.

Wilderness Characteristics - Overview

Deer Flat - OR-036-005 - Map 1 of 1



Legend

- Developed Spring
- Wildlife Guzzler
- Earthen Reservoir
- Pipeline
- Trough
- Fence
- Storage Tank
- Surface Mining Disturbance
- Sage Grouse Lek
- Special Status Plant
- BLM Wild Char Inventory Unit
- Wilderness Study Area
- Mineral Material Site
- Road/Utility Right-of-Way
- Major Water Body

Route Types - BLM Determination

- Boundary Road
- Motorized Primitive Trail (MPT)
- Discontinued Use

Routes - Outside Wild Char Unit

- County
- Major Highway
- BLM Numbered & Other Routes

Land Ownership

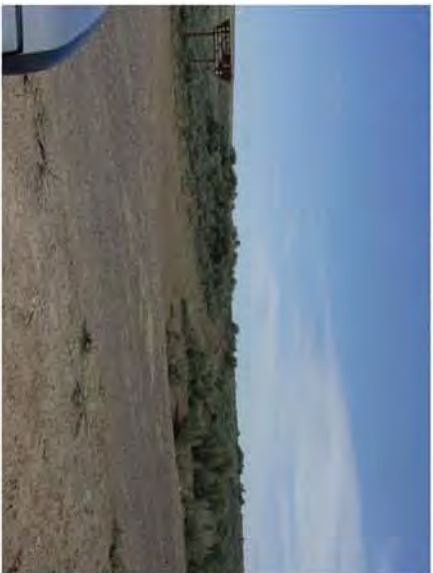
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Private
- Other Federal Land

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

VALE DISTRICT
March 30, 2010

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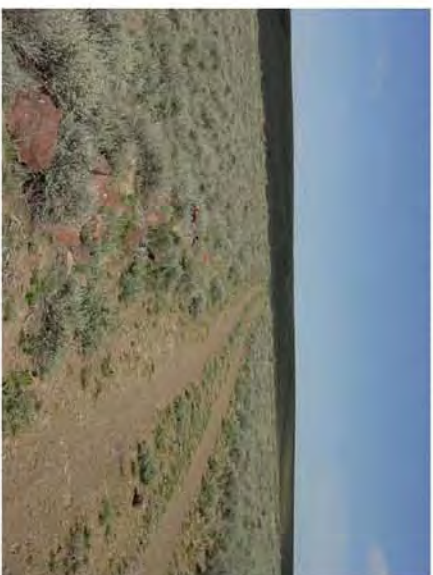
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8300-6-01-C-NW.JPG



8300-6-01-D-NW.JPG



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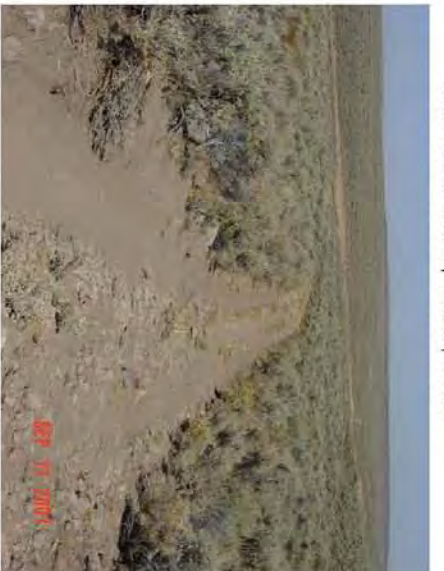
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H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON

APPENDIX C – ROADⁱ ANALYSIS

Wilderness Inventory Area Name and Number (Unit ID): Boundary road between BLM
Cairn-C OR-036-003 and Deer Flat OR-036-005

Route Name and/or Identifier: BLM Road 8300-6-01; Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition
WO15a

I. LOCATION

Refer to attached map: 2007_Cairn-C_OR_036_003.pdf and BLM corporate data (GIS).

List photo point references (if applicable): BLM, DSC02308, DSC02316-DSC02324,
DSC02537-DSC02545, DSC02547-DSC02549; Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition,
WA130-WA141

II. CURRENT PURPOSE OF ROUTE

Describe: BLM road 8300-6-01 is utilized mainly by ranchers (as observed by current BLM staff) and by BLM staff for the administration of rangeland resources, livestock grazing, and the maintenance of livestock improvements (fences, springs, and reservoirs) in two allotments. The road is also used on a seasonal basis by hunters, recreation enthusiasts, and as access to private inholdings for livestock management.

III. ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY

Is a road right-of-way associated with this route? Yes _____ No X Unknown _____

IV. CONSTRUCTION

Yes X No _____

Examples: Paved _____ Bladed X Graveled _____
Roadside Berms X Cut/Fill _____ Other _____

Describe: Local information for the Louse Canyon area points to origins of BLM road 8300-6-01 as a wagon trail which along with later off-road vehicle use created a two-track trail. Road 8300-6-01 was then developed in the late 1960s to early 1970s by blading. Whether a road-grader and/or a bulldozer were utilized to construct this road is

not known but from interpretation of BLM photographs DSC02318 and DSC02324 it appears both were used. These two BLM photographs show a line of boulders located approximately 3 feet from the current edges of the road. The size of these boulders and the makeup of the associated rocky roadbed in the photograph indicate that a bulldozer was used to help develop the roadbed for BLM road 8300-6-01 and that a grader was used to widen and smooth it and to develop the side berms. Currently, berms are not evident in some segments of the road. Most of the ditches and berms are covered with brush, with sediment filling in the ditches. This road consists of natural material and is part of the BLM Vale District Transportation Plan.

ONDA's information about roads in their 2004 document, Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition, referred to photographs WA130-WA141. Based on these photographs and field information, ONDA determined that BLM road 8300-6-01 was not a road but a way. BLM does not support ONDA's conclusion, and based on BLM photographs DSC02308, DSC02316-DSC02324, DSC02537-DSC02545, DSC02547-DSC02549 and on field reconnaissance, has determined that BLM road 8300-6-01 does meet the definition of a road. ONDA's photographs and information cover only about the northern 2 miles of the 5-mile length of BLM road 8300-6-01, and the last two photographs WA140-WA141 are not pictures of BLM road 8300-6-01 as stated in their wilderness inventory photo log.

V. IMPROVEMENTS

Yes No

Yes or No for each: By hand tools No By machine Yes

Examples: Culverts Stream Crossings Bridges Drainage
Barriers Other

Describe: BLM road 8300-6-01 contains a bladed "turnout" (DSC02320) constructed with a road-grader that channels water from the roadbed onto the upland sagebrush rangeland. In addition, in the autumn of 2006 ruts were filled in and water bars were placed on a sloped curve of the road with a tractor back-hoe, to control drainage before entering Deer Creek (DSC02537-DSC025390).

VI. MAINTENANCE

A. Is there Evidence or Documentation of Maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes No

By hand tools By machine

Explain: Maintenance to BLM road 8300-6-01 has been conducted over time as needed to keep this route passable. Earthen berms, water bars, and drainage turnouts on the edge of the road in photographs DSC02308, DSC02310-312, DSC02316-DSC02324, DSC02537-DSC02545, and DSC02547-DSC02549 show maintenance work that has been performed on this road. Although it has been many years since maintenance has been performed on the entire road it is evident from photographs BLM has taken, that little to no maintenance is needed to keep the roadbed in good operational condition.

Recent maintenance to BLM road 8300-6-01 was performed in the autumn of 2006. At that time the BLM Maintenance Organization performed site maintenance to two sections of this road above and along Deer Creek. BLM reconstructed existing springs in the area of Deer Creek that summer. Spring runoff along the stream had created a problem with one stream crossing. Heavy spring rainfall also rutted a section of the road on a sloped curve above Deer Creek. The road in and above Deer Creek needed maintained to allow access by heavy equipment to the spring areas. The maintenance crew filled in the rutted road area, reshaped road berms, and placed water bars across the road with a tractor back-hoe to channel water from the road (DSC02537-DSC02539). The crew also filled in the washed-out area in the Deer Creek drainage channel (between photos DSC02547-DSC02548) with the back-hoe to allow vehicle passage across the creek. Maintaining only those sections along an existing road to allow passage is consistent with the Best Management Practices that BLM has incorporated into the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan for Vale District.

Near the northern extent of road 8300-6-01 in this inventory unit the road crosses two drainages contributing to Deer Creek, as well as the main channel (BLM DSC02541, ONDA WA131-WA132), which contain sedges and rushes. These crossing pictures show that the road is not bladed to mineral soil and contains vegetation. Blading the road across Deer Creek would only disturb the natural growth established in the drainage and would tend to dewater the associated wet meadow species that now persist year-round. This road and roads in the surrounding area are used seasonally after high-water runoff has occurred. Therefore, most low-water crossings, although vegetated, are used when they are drier and less susceptible to damage. Establishing a rocked low-water crossing through the Deer Creek drainage is not needed in most years. Exceptionally wet years extend the time period when these crossings can become damaged.

B. If the route is in good condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM in the event this route became impassable?

Yes X No _____

Comments: BLM road 8300-6-01 receives annual use, as evidence by the lack of brush in the road and by well-used bare ground where vehicles travel. It should be noted that small amounts of low brush occur sporadically throughout the length of the road. To reduce the potential for erosion and the establishment of invasive plant and weed species, BLM emphasizes minimal ground disturbance for road construction and maintenance, through

Best Management Practices (BMPs) as described in the SEORMP, Appendix O. BMPs are designed to assist in achieving land use objectives for maintaining or improving water quality, soil productivity, and the protection of watershed resources from ground disturbing activities. Therefore, BLM does not grade many roads unless obstruction to vehicle passage is evident. To further reduce ground disturbance and to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns, roads are kept to the minimal width necessary. Additional precautions are taken to reduce vegetation removal by retention of vegetation on cut slopes unless it proposes a safety hazard or restricts maintenance activities, and by conducting roadside brushing of vegetation in a way that prevents disturbance to plant root systems and that does not create visual intrusions.

VII. REGULAR AND CONTINUOUS USE

Yes No

BLM road 8300-6-01 has annual use as evidence by the lack of brush in most sections of the road and by the well-used bare ground where vehicle tires track (DSC02308, DSC02310-312, DSC02316-DSC02324). ONDA's 2004 document, Oregon Butte proposed WSA Addition, refers to BLM Road 6354-0-00 as a way and as not meeting the definition of a road. BLM does not support their decision. BLM road 8300-6-01 is well traveled, wide along most of its length, and is clearly defined on the landscape.

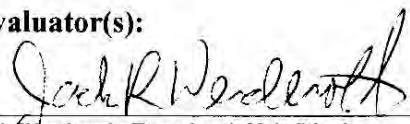
VIII. CONCLUSION

To meet the definition of a road, items IV or V, *and* VI-A or B, *and* VII must be checked yes.

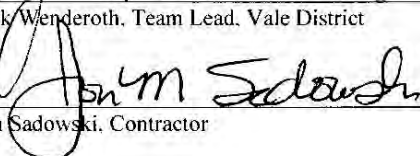
Road: Yes No

Explanation: BLM has determined that road 8300-6-01 meets the definition of a road as stated in sections IV, VI-A and VI-B, and VII above. BLM road 8300-6-01 was constructed by mechanical equipment, has been maintained since being constructed, would be approved to be maintained by management as needed if the road base became impassable, and has regular and continuous use.

Evaluator(s):


Jack Wenderoth, Team Lead, Vale District

Date 10-26-2007


Jon Sadowski, Contractor

Date 10-26-2007

Evaluator(s):


 Cynthia Landy, Rangeland Management Specialist, Vale District

Date 10-26-2007

ⁱ Note: The following definition of road is quoted from OSO Draft (4/19/07) H-6300-1, Wilderness Inventory Maintenance in BLM Oregon/Washington:

road: The BLM will continue to base the definition of what constitutes a “road” from the FLPMA’s legislative history. The language below is from the House of Representatives Committee Report 94-1163, page 17, dated May 15, 1976, on what became the FLPMA. It is the only statement regarding the definition of a road in the law or legislative history.

“The word ‘roadless’ refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.”

The BLM previously adopted and will continue to use the following sub-definitions of certain words and phrases in the BLM road definition stated above:

a. **“Improved and maintained”** – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. “Improved” does not necessarily mean formal construction. “Maintained” does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

b. **“Mechanical means”** – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

c. **“Relatively regular and continuous use”** – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

A road that was established or has been maintained solely by the passage of vehicles would not be considered a road, even if it is used on a relatively regular and continuous basis. Vehicle roads constructed by mechanical means but that are no longer being maintained by mechanical methods are not roads. Sole use of hands and feet to move rocks or dirt without the use of tools or machinery does not meet the definition of “mechanical means.” Roads need not be “maintained” on a regular basis but rather “maintained” when road conditions warrant actions to keep it in a usable condition. A dead-end (cherry-stem) road can form the boundary of an inventory area and does not by itself disqualify an area from being considered “roadless.”