

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-019/ Connley Hills\*

**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   X   (if more than one unit is within the area, list the names/numbers of those units):

**a) Inventory Source:**

- a. Wilderness – Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Clearly Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, April 1979.
- b. Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory: Final Decision on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Wilderness Characteristics and Announcement of Public Lands to be Intensively Inventoried for Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, August 1979.

**b) Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** OR-1-019/ Hayes Butte North

**c) Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Final Decision - Initial Wilderness Inventory: Public Lands and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics and Units To Be Intensively Inventoried; USDI BLM - Oregon, August 1979.

**d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area.

\*Note: Unit name was changed to better reflect values and features found within the unit, and to reduce confusion of similarly named inventory units.

**2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record:**

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory unit is associated with the area, list each unit and answer each question individually for each inventory unit):

Unit #	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
1-19	5,700	NA	NA	NA	NA

1-19*	6,306	N	NA	NA	NA
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\* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2010. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2010 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018 inventory review. Documentation of the 2010 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

*Summarize any known primary reasons for prior inventory findings listed in this table:*

The Connley Hills rose approximately 800 feet above the surrounding flats. The vegetation was sagebrush and scattered juniper. Although the unit contained only minor impacts of man (two roads and several “ways”), the topography, size, and lack of screening precluded any outstanding opportunity for solitude or unconfined recreation. A road was ultimately determined to split the unit into parcels less than 5,000 acres. The unit was surrounded by private lands, with extensive agriculture and occupation observable from within the unit.

**FORM 2**

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name:** OR-015-019/ Connley Hills

**(1) Is the unit of sufficient size?** Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_

Between 2006 and 2016, BLM staff conducted field inventory in the area as part of a process to update its road and wilderness inventories and to gather additional information to supplement ONDA’s wilderness information. This fieldwork included photo documentation of the boundary and interior routes and a re-evaluation of wilderness characteristics for this area. Using both ONDA and BLM photos, field logs, and staff field knowledge, the BLM completed route analysis within the area in 2017.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Roads 7117-00 on the south; County Road 5-13 right-of-way, BLM interim numbered roads 2195, 2199, and 2199-A0, and private lands on the west; Bonneville Power Administration right-of-way and private lands on the north; BLM Road 7117-00, BLM interim numbered road 7117-C0, and private lands on the east. Due to changes in boundary determinations (roads and power line rights-of-ways buffer corrections) and cut-outs of unnatural features (pipelines), approximately 600 acres were removed from the unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Connley Hills inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 5,386 acres of BLM-administered lands.

Additional background on the process that the BLM followed during this evaluation is contained in the document, *Wilderness Inventory Maintenance Process for the Lakeview Resource Area, BLM* and in the *Route Analysis Forms*. Both documents can be found in the wilderness inventory file.

## **DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS:**

The unit is located approximately 8 miles north of Silver Lake, Oregon. The unit is approximately 4.5 miles long by 3 miles wide. Topographically, the unit is dominated by the Connley Hills, a steep, 4.5-mile ridge, running north to south, with multiple peaks and broken drainages. Elevations range from aprx. 4,300 to 5,555 feet. The unit contains 3 deeply eroded unnamed drainages (200 to 600 ft. deep), each located in the northern, middle, and southern third of the unit. Approximately 5,000 acres of the unit is covered in high-density western juniper stand, much of which is old-growth. The remaining vegetation is sagebrush and grass. The unit contains one 77-acre private parcel in the eastern portion of the unit. Additionally, a wildfire burned approximately 80 acres in the 1980s.

**(2) Is the unit in a natural condition?** Yes  No  N/A

In 1979, the original inventory noted the unit contained only minor impacts of man (two roads and several “ways”).

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 80 acres of wildfire, 7 miles of motorized routes, 4 miles of closed routes, 1 mile of reclaiming routes, 1 mile of cat lines, 2 wells (1 historic, hand dug), 1 trough, and 1 wildlife guzzler.

Presently, almost 4 decades after the original inventory, these developments are weathered and grown over with herbaceous grasses, sagebrush, and juniper. As a result, developments now fade into the background of the unit and are largely only noticeable at a close distance (1/4<sup>th</sup> mile or less) and are thus substantially unnoticeable from further distances. The topography and vegetation of the area also plays a large role in screening disturbances and man-made developments. Furthermore, many of the disturbances are located near the perimeter of the unit and, as such, have a small area of influence. Additionally, areas that were allowed to revegetate naturally after wildfire have been invaded by juniper, rabbit bush, sagebrush, and grasses and have returned to a natural, post fire, appearing condition.

Based on a review of all the available information including photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded that the unit appears in a natural condition where the imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable.

**(3) Does the unit** (or the remainder of the unit 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

In 1979, the original inventory determined the topography, size, and lack of screening precluded any outstanding opportunity for solitude.

The BLM determined that there are several outstanding opportunities for solitude across the unit due to topographic and vegetative screening. Topographically, the unit is dominated by the Connley Hills, a steep, 4.5-mile ridge, running north to south, with multiple peaks and broken drainages. Elevations range from aprx. 4,300 to 5,555 feet. The unit contains 3 deeply eroded unnamed drainages (200 to 600 ft. deep), each located in the northern, middle, and southern third of the unit. Vegetatively, western juniper stands have greatly expanded in height, width, and density. Sufficient pockets of juniper for screening purposes can now be found across the majority of the unit (over 5,000 acres). Due to the above-described compartmentalized topography and vegetative screening throughout the unit, one would easily be able to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit.

Thus, for the reasons specified above and based on a review of all the available information including (BLM and citizen provided) photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded the Connley Hills inventory unit possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude.

**(4) Does the unit** (or the remainder of the unit 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

In 1979, the original inventory determined the topography, size, and lack of screening precluded any outstanding opportunity for unconfined recreation.

The BLM finds the combination and diversity of hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, wildlife observation, exploration, scenery, photography, trapping, and hunting, are exceptional. The BLM determined that hiking/horseback riding peak to peak along the 4.5-mile ridge that form the Connley Hills, represents a unique opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

**5) Does the unit have supplemental values?** Yes  No  N/A

The BLM found the unit to possess archaeological and geological values as well as the presence of elk, mule deer, golden eagle, pigmy rabbit, and sage-grouse habitat.

In the 2003 *Lakeview Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (RMP), officially designated approximately 3,496 acres of the inventory unit The Connley Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)/Research Natural Area

(RNA). The Connley Hills ACEC/RNA was designated to preserve significant cultural sites that contain materials and information from Great Basin inhabitants dating back 11,000 years, as well as, to protect distinct vegetation communities, three of which are found nowhere else in Oregon. This area also serves as an important reference point for comparative rangeland health studies and research projects. (Refer to: Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement 2003. Pg. A-197).

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Number and Name:** OR-015-019/ Connley Hills

**Summary Results of Analysis:**

- 1. Does the area meet the size requirements?        X   Yes         No
- 2. Does the area appear to be natural?              X   Yes         No
- 3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?        X   Yes         No         NA
- 4. Does the area have supplemental values?        X   Yes         No         NA

**Conclusion (Check One):**

  X   The area- or a portion of the area- has wilderness character:  
*(items 1, 2 and 3 must be checked "yes").*

       The area does not have wilderness character: *(any of items 1, 2 and 3 are checked "no").*

**Prepared by** (Member Names and Titles):

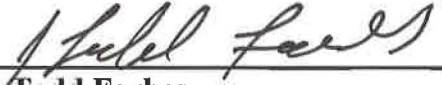
  
Chris Bishop: Outdoor Recreation Planner

  6/4/18    
Date

  
Jami Ludwig: Assistant Field Manager

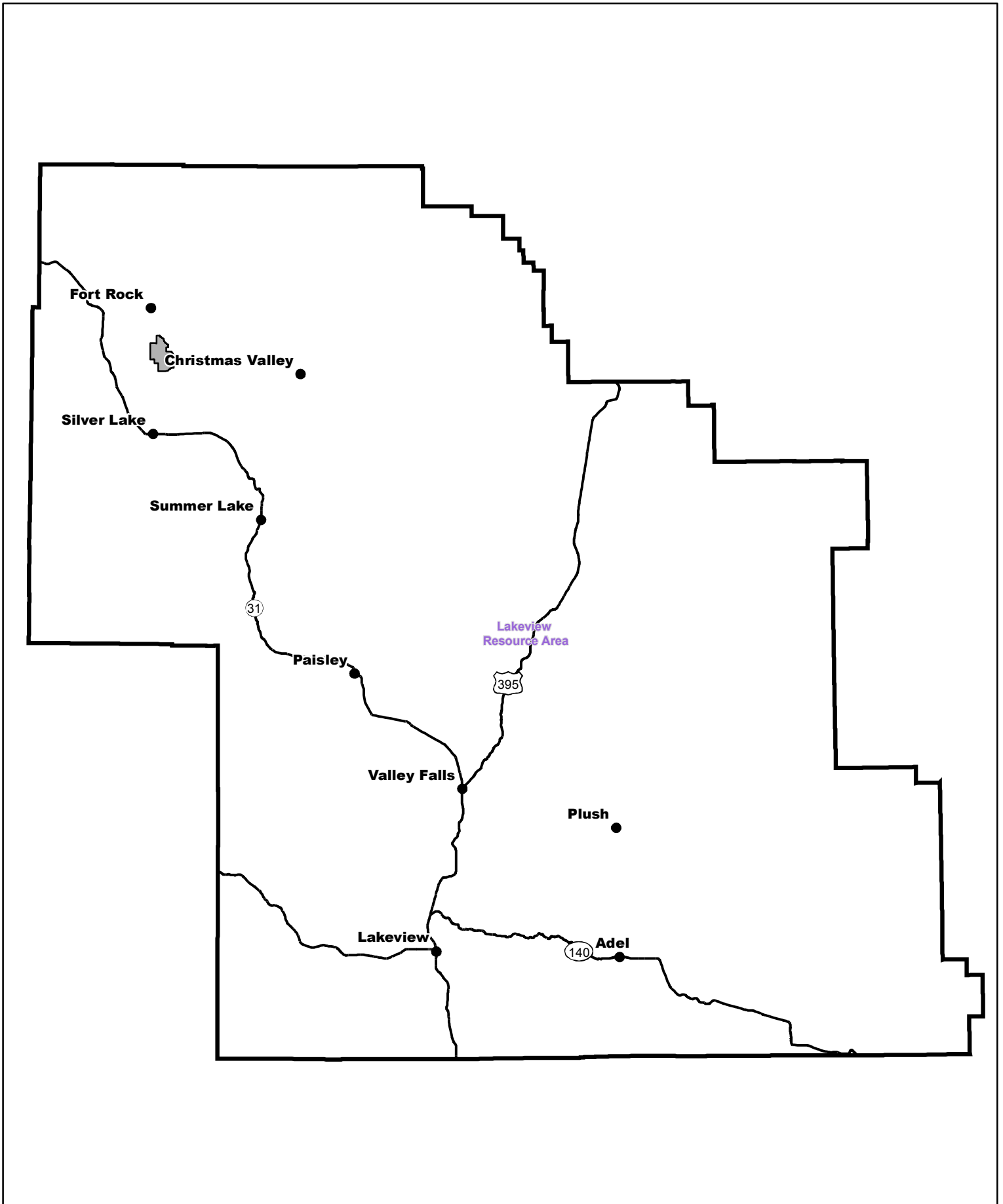
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**Approved by:**

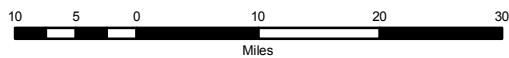
  
J. Todd Forbes  
Field Manager


  6/4/18    
Date

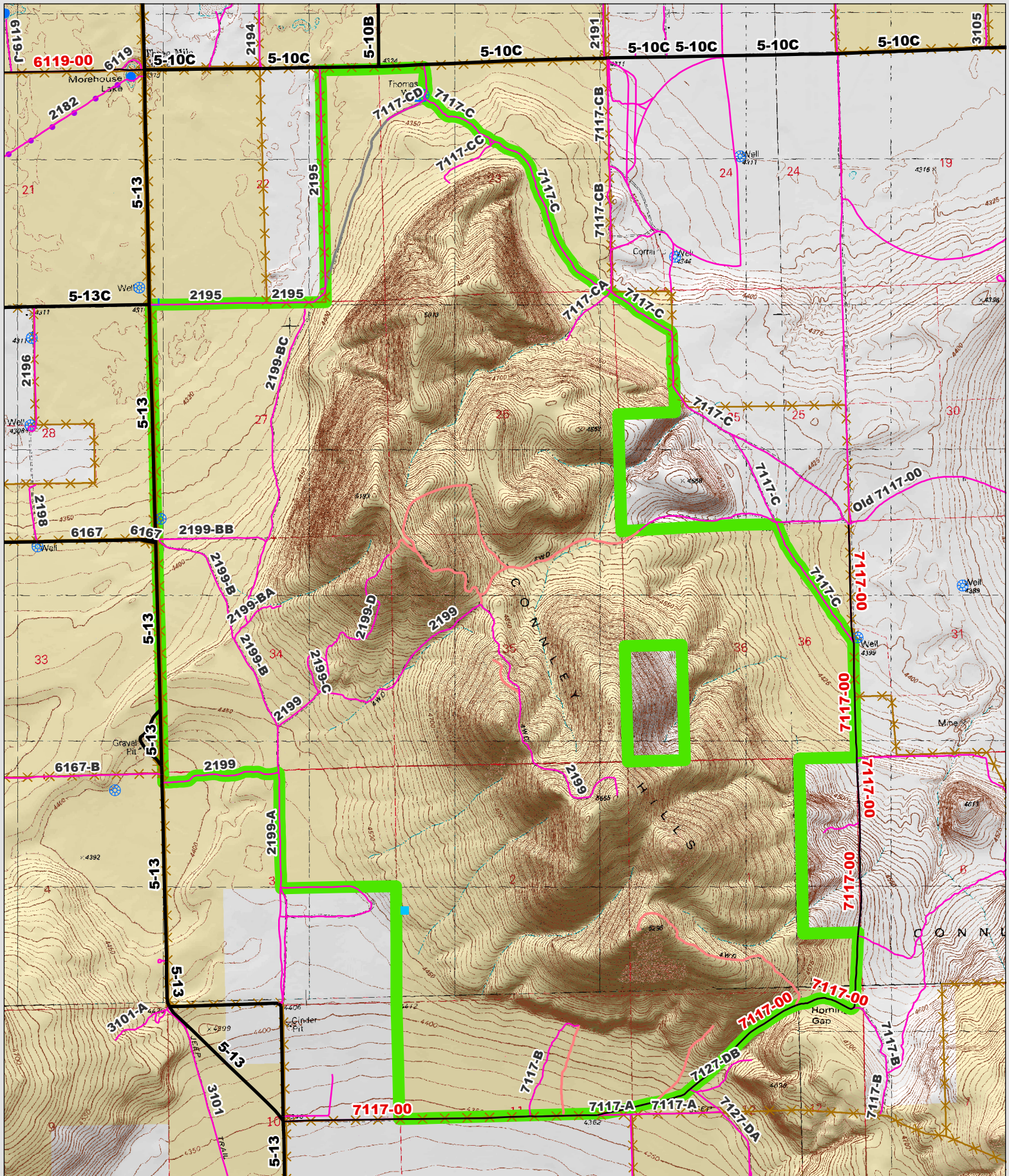
*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.*



 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



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**Wilderness Character Inventory Unit**

**Ownership**

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- State
- Private/Unknown

**Roads/Trails**

- Motorized Routes
- Highways
- Reclaiming Routes
- Interim Routes

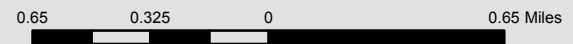
**Pipelines and Ditches**

- Ditch
- Water Pipeline
- Guzzler
- Fences

**Water Developments**

- Dam
- Reservoir
- Spring Development
- Trough
- Water Diversion

- Water Tank
- Waterhole
- Well - Water



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