

**Guano Slough (Murphy Waterholes)/ OR-015-115
INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION**

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

FORM 1

**Documentation of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness Characteristics
Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record**

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

No _____ (Go to Form 2) Yes X (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.)

a) **Inventory Source:** Wilderness Inventory – Oregon/Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980. Historical units 1-115 Guano Slough, consisting of subunits 1-115A and 1-115B.

b) **Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s):** OR-015-115

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Wilderness Unit Inventory Map, November 1980

d) **BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** Unit is shared by the Burns and Lakeview District Offices.

2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record

Inventory Source: Wilderness Inventory – Oregon/Washington Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980.

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
1-115A	Yes 47,360	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
1-115B	Yes 59,120	Yes	No	N/A	N/A

Unit 1-115

Subunits: The unit contained 106,480 acres. During the intensive inventory Unit 1-115 was found to be divided by roads 7155 A and B into two subunits.

Unit 1-115A

Size: Public land comprised 47,360 acres. The subunit contained three full sections of State land and a 960-acre block of private land.

Location: The unit was adjacent to the east boundary of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge.

Boundaries: Frenchglen Road and the boundary of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. The remaining boundaries were BLM roads 7185B, 7185C, 6176H, and private lands.

Physical Characteristics: The subunit consisted of sage flats on the east and low, rolling hills with some small, broken rims on the west. The highest point on the unit was Cox Butte, which rises some 300 feet above the surrounding terrain. Vegetation on the unit was a big sagebrush community.

Naturalness: The subunit contained 9 major lakebed pits and approximately 9 miles of vehicle ways. The overall appearance was generally natural with the works of man substantially unnoticeable.

Solitude: With the flat to moderately rolling terrain in the unit and high visibility of persons moving within it, the unit did not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Recreation: The unit possessed no characteristic landscape feature or particular point of interest that would appeal to the general wilderness recreationist. The unit had a high potential for antelope hunting, but this was not considered a form of primitive recreation as practiced in the region because it depended on motor vehicles.

Supplemental Values: None known.

Proposed Decision: Eliminate from further review.

Unit 1-115B

Size: The unit contained approximately 59,120 acres of public land, with two complete sections of State inholdings and approximately 680 acres of small, scattered tracts of private land near the south boundary. These tracts were all less than 120 acres.

Location: The unit was adjacent to the east side of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge.

Boundaries: The west boundary was the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and BLM Road 6176A. The remaining boundaries were private and State lands, and BLM roads 6176, 7185, and 7185C. BLM road 7185A from Cox Butte Waterhole to Socket Waterhole intruded into the subunit for approximately 8.5 miles.

Physical Characteristics: The unit was essentially a very broad, sage covered basin with little topographic relief. Guano Slough and Black Canyon cross the southern third of the subunit. Black Canyon was approximately 6 miles long, approximately 100 feet deep at the maximum, and less than several hundred feet at the widest point. The canyon had vertical basalt walls along most of its length with several small side canyons. The subunit contained numerous ephemeral lakes; most had been developed to provide stock water.

Naturalness: The dead-end road mentioned under boundaries was very noticeable. The subunit contained 8 moderate to large lakebed pits and approximately 9 miles of vehicle ways. There was an emergency airfield located near the south boundary. There was a small quarry site 2 miles west of Guano Reservoir. The man-made features had a minor cumulative impact on the unit; however, they remained substantially unnoticeable because of the large size of the subunit.

Solitude: A person would have a feeling of isolation in the unit but the arrival of others in the area would be immediately noted. One could hike in Black Canyon and gain some sense of solitude but only extremely limited user capacity would allow for solitude. This subunit did not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

Recreation: The Black Canyon area was of some geologic interest and offered opportunities for wildlife observation, notably of cliff dwelling birds. However, the opportunity was not considered outstanding. Opportunities for hiking and backpacking in the unit were not outstanding because there was no unique or noteworthy feature which would attract recreationists and cause the recreation opportunities to stand above others of their kind.

Supplemental Values: Black Canyon was of some geologic interest, and the area was expected to contain some archeological sites though none were documented.

Final Decision: Eliminate both subunits from further review.

Rationale: After reviewing the public comments and re-evaluating the unit in the field, the BLM continued to believe the unit did not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation. The broad, open expanses of the unit as a whole offered very few opportunities to avoid others in the unit and little recreation opportunity. The canyon area did offer some recreation potential and limited opportunity for solitude, as stated in the initial evaluation. However, a joint re-assessment of the unit by Burns and Lakeview District personnel confirmed that, though the canyon offered some recreation potential, it was not outstanding in character.

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier OR-015-115 Acreage 100,793

1. Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below.)

Yes X No _____

1980 Assessment: This unit began as unit 1-115 with 106,480 acres in the final decision of the initial wilderness inventory of 1979. During the intensive inventory of 1979 unit 1-115 was found to be divided by roads 7155A and 7155B and subsequently divided into two subunits: 1-115A and 1-115B.

In 2007, the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) submitted citizen proposed lands with wilderness characteristics to the Burns BLM. Unit 1-115 was not included in their submittal.

In 2013 Burns District responded to a request from the Lakeview District to conduct route analysis and wilderness character inventories for units shared by both districts. A route analysis was completed for unit 1-115, although wilderness character was not assessed at that time.

2017 Evaluation: The Burns and Lakeview Districts made the determination they would complete the inventories of units shared by both districts.

The unit is bounded on the north by Rock Creek Lane (412) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands. On the west side the unit is bounded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands and Black Canyon Road (6176-KO). The south side of the unit is bounded by private lands, Black Canyon Road (6176-KO), Red Hills Road (6176-JO) and West Guano Slough Road (8249-AO).

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No _____ N/A _____

1980 Assessment: The 1980 wilderness inventory described subunit 115A as in a generally natural condition with 9 lakebed pits and approximately 9 miles of vehicle ways. Those features were determined to be substantially unnoticeable. Subunit 115B was also described as being in a natural condition. The inventory mentions 8 moderate to large lakebed pits and about 9 miles of vehicle ways. There is also a small airfield on the southern boundary of unit 115B and a small quarry located 2 miles west of Guano reservoir.

2017 Evaluation: Unnatural features in the unit include 11 waterholes, 4 reservoirs, 13.2 miles of fences and a quarry that was mentioned in the 1980 inventory. Vegetation has overgrown the quarry and it is no longer visible as an unnatural feature. The unnatural features are substantially unnoticeable. The unit remains in a natural condition.

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

1980 Assessment: The 1980 Wilderness Inventory described outstanding opportunities in the following manner:

Unit 1-115A noted, "With the flat to moderately rolling terrain in the unit and high visibility of persons moving within it, the unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude."

Unit 1-115B noted, "A person would have a feeling of isolation in the unit but the arrival of others in the area would be immediately noted. One could hike in Black Canyon and gain some sense of solitude but only extremely limited user capacity would allow for solitude. This subunit does not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude."

2017 Evaluation: Waterholes, canyons, and drainages in the unit provide low-lying areas where visual screening is available to visitors. Cox Butte, which stands out in the unit due to its size and elevation, provides topographic screening to visitors who ascend its slopes and recreate on the plateau that overlooks the rest of the unit. The unit is approximately 14 miles by 12 miles. An individual in the center of the unit would not be visible to those on the boundary due to vegetative and topographic screening due to the distances involved. Opportunities for solitude exist throughout the unit. The size of the unit, the diverse topography, and the presence of both low and high sagebrush in the unit combine to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

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

1980 Assessment: The inventory found no outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

Unit 1-115A noted, "The unit possesses no characteristic landscape feature or particular point of interest which would appeal to the general wilderness recreationist. The unit has a high potential for antelope hunting but this would not be considered a form of primitive recreation as practiced in the region because it depends on motor vehicles."

Unit 1-115B noted, "The Black Canyon area is of some geologic interest and offers opportunity for wildlife observation, notably of cliff dwelling birds. However, the opportunity is not considered outstanding. Opportunities for hiking and backpacking in the unit are not outstanding because there is no unique or noteworthy feature which would attract recreationists and cause the recreation opportunities to stand above others of their kind."

2017 Evaluation: Recreational activities visitors may participate in include (but are not limited to) hunting, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, rockhounding, and exploration. These activities (and others) are available at any time a visitor chooses to participate. The antelope refuge adjacent to the unit provides opportunities for hunters to stalk trophy antelope. Cliff dwelling birds are of interest to bird watchers. The size of the unit and absence of interior roads provides opportunities for visitors to hike cross-country to points of interest such as geologic outcroppings. Outstanding opportunities for unconfined types of recreation are present in this unit.

5. Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value)?

Yes No N/A

1980 Assessment: Supplemental values within Unit 1-115A were unknown. Unit 1-115B noted Black Canyon was of some geologic interest, and the area would be expected to contain some archeological sites though none were documented at the time.

2017 Evaluation: Supplemental values in this unit would include sage grouse leks, pygmy rabbit habitat, and in Black Canyon there are paleo-environmental sites, as well as highly significant archeology sites.

Summary of Analysis*

Area Unique Identifier: OR-015-115

Summary Results of Analysis: The (Guano Slough) Murphy Waterholes Unit meets the size criteria. The boundary analysis created a unit of 100,793 acres. The unit appears to be in a natural condition. The unnatural objects and features in the unit are substantially unnoticeable due to the type of development or because of their location. The unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its size and topographic and vegetative screening. The rolling landscape with prominent outcrops and drainages allows visitors to find solitude in many locations. The size of the unit contributes to these outstanding opportunities. A visitor in one location may be completely unaware of visitors in other sections of the unit 10 miles away. These outstanding opportunities extend to unconfined types of recreation. The adjacent Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge provides outstanding hunting opportunities. The size of the unit also contributes to the outstanding opportunities by providing more room to participate. The unit also includes supplemental values. These values include sage grouse leks, pygmy rabbit habitat, archeological sites of high significance, and paleo-environmental sites in Black Canyon.

* 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 1610.5-3.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? Yes ___ No ___ N/A
2. Does the area appear to be natural? Yes ___ No ___ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for 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 lands with wilderness characteristics.

The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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OR-015-115 Murphy Waterholes Wilderness Characteristics Unit Map

