

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-006/ Peters Butte*

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 Inventory – Final Intensive Inventory Decisions; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, November 1980.

b) Inventory Unit Number(s)/Name(s): 1-6/ Little Benjamin Lake; 1-7/ Painter Ranch; 1-9/ Bull Lake;

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s):

- a. Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon, April 1979.
- b. Intensive Wilderness Inventory - Final Decisions; USDI BLM - Oregon, November 1980.

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
1-6	13,080	N	N	N	N/A
1-6*	10,900	Y	N	N	N/A
1-7	8,000	N	N	N	N/A
1-7*	10,555	Y	N	N/A	N/A
1-9	32,360	Y	N	N	Y
1-9*	29,794	Y	N	N	N/A

* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2009. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2009 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018 inventory review. Documentation of the 2009 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

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

In 1980, Unit 1-6 was described as low rolling hills in the south with sage and juniper cover. The northern portion was somewhat flatter with sagebrush and scattered juniper and several shallow lakebeds. The unit contained several lakebed pits in the north and east, which were substantially noticeable for a considerable distance because of the low topography. A wood pole power line ran approximately five miles north to south through the western side of the unit. Because the poles were higher than the juniper, the line was very noticeable from a considerable distance in all directions. A vehicle “way” paralleled the power line. The unit contained approximately four miles of fence line on the south, which was substantially unnoticeable. The water developments and power line represented significant impacts given the size, topography and vegetation of the unit. The unit did not appear primarily natural and the works of man were substantially noticeable. Because of its narrow shape and limited topographic screening, the unit did not provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude. It would be difficult to avoid the presence of others in the unit. This unit offered some limited opportunities for hiking and horseback riding, but recreation opportunities were less than outstanding as the unit is small and did not offer strong attractions to the recreationist. Supplemental values were unknown at the time of the inventory.

In 1979, Unit 1-7 was described as a gently rolling upland with big sagebrush and scattered juniper. Two power lines (500 KV and 75 KV) impacted the western portions of the unit. Topography and a lack of vegetative screening prevented outstanding opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation within the unit.

In 1980, the original inventory described Unit 1-9 as having rolling hills with moderate to dense juniper cover on the north half of the unit. The highest point in the unit was West Butte. The south half of the unit contained minor rolling contours and flats with a number of small ephemeral lakebeds. Cover on the south half of the unit was big sagebrush with occasional scattered junipers. The unit contained approximately 12 miles of fence line, and nearly ten miles of vehicle “ways”. The “ways” and fences were not substantially noticeable. The unit contained four large lakebed pits, which were visible for a considerable distance. The southwest corner of the unit contained 3,000 acres of seeding which did not appear natural. The majority of the unit, aside from the seeding, appeared generally natural, and the impacts of man’s works were substantially unnoticeable. Small areas with rolling hills and scattered to moderate juniper in the north half of the unit provided an opportunity for some degree of solitude. The south half was much flatter with sagebrush cover that would not offer any significant opportunity to be free of the presence of others. The greatest opportunity for solitude within the unit was found in the widest portion of the unit, an area containing slightly over 6,000 acres. However, ultimately, the unit, as a whole, was found to lack outstanding opportunity to experience solitude. The unit offered some potential for hiking, wildlife observation and hunting. The unit did not present opportunities for recreation, which would be considered outstanding in nature. Supplemental values included approximately 200 acres of the Lost Forest Research Natural Area, located along the southern boundary of the unit.

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: OR-015-006/ Peters Butte

(1) Is the unit of sufficient size? Yes No

In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 62,328-acre Moonlight Butte proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and GIS data. All of these materials were considered during the BLM’s wilderness inventory update for this area. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in 2004. They identified this large area as having no interior routes, which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 156 of ONDA 2005).

Between 2008 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 several of the routes ONDA identified as “ways” are boundary roads. Moonlight Butte proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units, which must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Road 6121-00 and private lands on the east; 6141-00 and private lands on the south; right-of-ways for Country Road 5-12B and residential power lines, portions of BLM Roads 6141-00, 6141-C0, BLM interim numbered roads 6141-G0, 6141-J0, 6141-JC, 6141-M0, and private lands on the west. A segment of BLM Road 6141-B0, used for access to private property from the east boundary of the unit, was cherry stemmed. Portions of BLM Roads 6141-00, 6141-D0 were found to no longer meet the wilderness definition of a road. Due to findings that sections of BLM Roads no longer meet the wilderness definition of a road, changes in boundary determinations (power line and road right-of-ways buffer corrections), and the removal of unnatural features (pipelines, water storage tank, pump house, and propane tank), three original inventory units (1-6, 1-7, 1-9) have been combined to form the new unit boundary. This evaluation will focus on these combined units and will hereby be referred to as the Peters Butte inventory unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Peters Butte inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 45,458 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 18 miles northeast of Christmas Valley, Oregon. The unit is approximately 16 miles long by 6 miles wide and contains two private inholdings (1,214-acres) in the northern and southern halves of the unit. Topographically, the unit is comprised of a half-dozen moderate buttes, 100 – 250 feet high (including Moonlight Butte, West Butte, Peters Butte); 5 large ephemeral lakebed depressions, 10-30 ft. deep (including Little Benjamin Lake, Peters Lake, Rock Lake, Bull Lake, Sagehen, Little Sagehen); 7 miles of Peter’s Creek drainage (10 – 40 ft. deep) in the northern third of the unit; and two lava tube caves. The remaining area is comprised of minor features (rims, butts, drainages, lakebeds) and rolling terrain, 50 – 100 ft. high. Overall, the unit ranges in elevation from 5,231ft. in the north to 4,300 ft. in the south. Vegetatively, the northern two-thirds (roughly 25,000 acres) of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics. The remaining vegetation is scattered juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, and grass.

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

The original 1979/1980 inventories for the area found the following man-made developments/disturbances:

Unit 1-6, in the northern third of the unit, contained several lakebed pits, a 5-mile wood pole power line, a vehicle “way,” and four miles of fence line. Given size, topography and vegetation, the unit did not appear primarily natural and the works of man were substantially noticeable.

Unit 1-7 contained two-power lines (500 KV and 75 KV). Note: this area is no longer within the current unit boundary.

Unit 1-9, in the southern two-thirds of the unit, contained 12 miles of fence line, ten miles of vehicle “ways,” four large lakebed pits, and 3,000 acres of seeding. The majority of the unit, aside from the seeding, appeared generally natural, and the impacts of man’s works were substantially unnoticeable.

ONDA’s 2005 inventory concluded that their Moonlight Butte Proposed WSA appears in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature. ONDA noted that existing water developments were not noticed in the field and due to their proposal being contiguous with other units, any existing developments would not be substantially noticeable to the overall area. Existing water towers are located near the edge of the unit and could be removed or cherry stemmed. Power lines running adjacent to the area would be noticeable from close distance, but the rolling topography and stands of juniper trees would make these un-noticeable (p. 153-154 of ONDA 2005). However, as noted above, the BLM found that this proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of several smaller inventory units, within which the natural character must be evaluated individually.

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 1,712 acres of chemical treatments/seeding, 37 acres of mow strips (fuel breaks), 21 miles of fence lines, 25 miles of motorized routes, 13 wilderness therapy group primitive campsites, 19 waterholes, and 1 reservoir.

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 (1/4th 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.

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 X No N/A

The original 1979/1980 inventories evaluated opportunities for solitude within each unit.

Unit 1-6 was found to lack outstanding opportunities for solitude due to its narrow shape and limited topographic screening.

Unit 1-7 was found to lack topography and vegetative screening, which prevented outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Unit 1-9 was found to be flat, with low vegetative cover, in the southern half of the unit and thus did not offer any significant opportunity to be free of the presence of others. The northern half of the unit contained small areas with rolling hills and scattered to moderate juniper, which provided an opportunity for some degree of solitude. Slightly over 6,000 acres, in the widest portion of the unit, was found to offer the greatest opportunity for solitude within the unit. Ultimately, however, the unit was found to lack outstanding opportunities to experience solitude.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 62,328-acre Moonlight Butte Proposed WSA as having outstanding opportunities for solitude based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. These contiguous units form an area much larger with a more diverse landscape than any of the units by themselves. Juniper trees and the rolling topography throughout the area provide screening from other visitors and offer hikers and horseback riders a sense of outstanding solitude. Furthermore, ONDA noted that the sagebrush lands, although they don't offer vegetative screening, certainly offer one a sense of isolation and solitude (p. 154 of ONDA 2005). However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is in fact comprised of a number of smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that there are several outstanding opportunities for solitude across the unit due to topographic and vegetative screening. Topographically, the unit is comprised of a half-dozen moderate buttes, 100 – 250 feet high (including Moonlight Butte, West Butte, Peters Butte); 5 large ephemeral lakebed depressions, 10-30 ft. deep (including Little Benjamin Lake, Peters Lake, Rock Lake, Bull Lake, Sagehen, Little Sagehen); 7 miles of Peter's Creek drainage (10 – 40 ft. deep) in the northern third of the unit; and two lava tube caves (one of which is nearly a half mile in length). The remaining area is comprised of minor features (rims, butts, drainages, lakebeds) and rolling terrain, 50 – 100 ft. high. Overall, the unit ranges in elevation

from 5,231ft. in the north to 4,300 ft. in the south. Vegetatively, western juniper stands have greatly expanded in height, width, and density. The northern two-thirds (roughly 25,000 acres) of the unit is covered in moderate to high-density western juniper stands, with old-growth characteristics. The remaining vegetation is scattered juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, and grass. Due to the above-described topographic and vegetative screening throughout the unit, one would easily be able to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

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 Peters Butte 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

The original 1979/1980 inventories evaluated opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within each unit.

Unit 1-6 was found to offer some limited opportunities for hiking and horseback riding, but recreation opportunities were ultimately determined to be less than outstanding as the unit was deemed too small and lacked strong attractions to the recreationist.

Unit 1-7 was found to lack outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Unit 1-9 was found to offer some potential for hiking, wildlife observation and hunting. However, opportunities for recreation within the unit were not considered outstanding in nature.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 62,328-acre Moonlight Butte Proposed WSA as having outstanding opportunities for recreation based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. These contiguous units form an area much larger with a more diverse landscape than any of the units by themselves. One could easily find outstanding opportunities for wildlife viewing, camping, and hunting at any of the ephemeral lakes. Juniper trees and the rolling topography throughout the area offer hikers and horseback riders a sense of outstanding recreation. However, the BLM did not find this proposal to be one large roadless area, but is comprised of a number of smaller inventory units that must be evaluated individually.

The BLM finds the combination and diversity of hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, wildlife observation, exploration, spelunking, scenery, photography, stargazing, trapping, and hunting are exceptional. The BLM determined

that options for hiking/ horseback riding the 16 mile length of the unit, hiking/ horseback riding peak to peak in the northern half of the unit, exploration of caves, and route finding among unit's more than 25,000 acres of moderate to dense, old-growth, juniper stands represent unique opportunities 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 pronghorn antelope, mule deer, elk, pigmy rabbit, various bats, and sage-grouse habitat.

In addition, approximately 200 acres of the Lost Forest Instant Study Area/ Research Natural Area are located within the unit along the southern boundary (does not meet the wilderness definition of "contiguous"). The unit also contains Lower Perry and Middle Perry Caves, which may qualify as Significant Caves under the Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988, due to the known presence of biological resources and recreational use. Lastly, approximately 8 miles of ONDA's 750-mile Oregon Desert Trail ("virtual"/ GPS track) crosses the inventory unit.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Number and Name: OR-015-006/ Peters Butte


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):

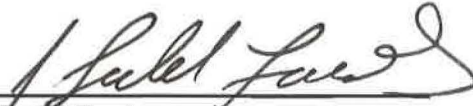

Chris Bishop: Outdoor Recreation Planner

6/4/18
Date


Jami Ludwig: Assistant Field Manager

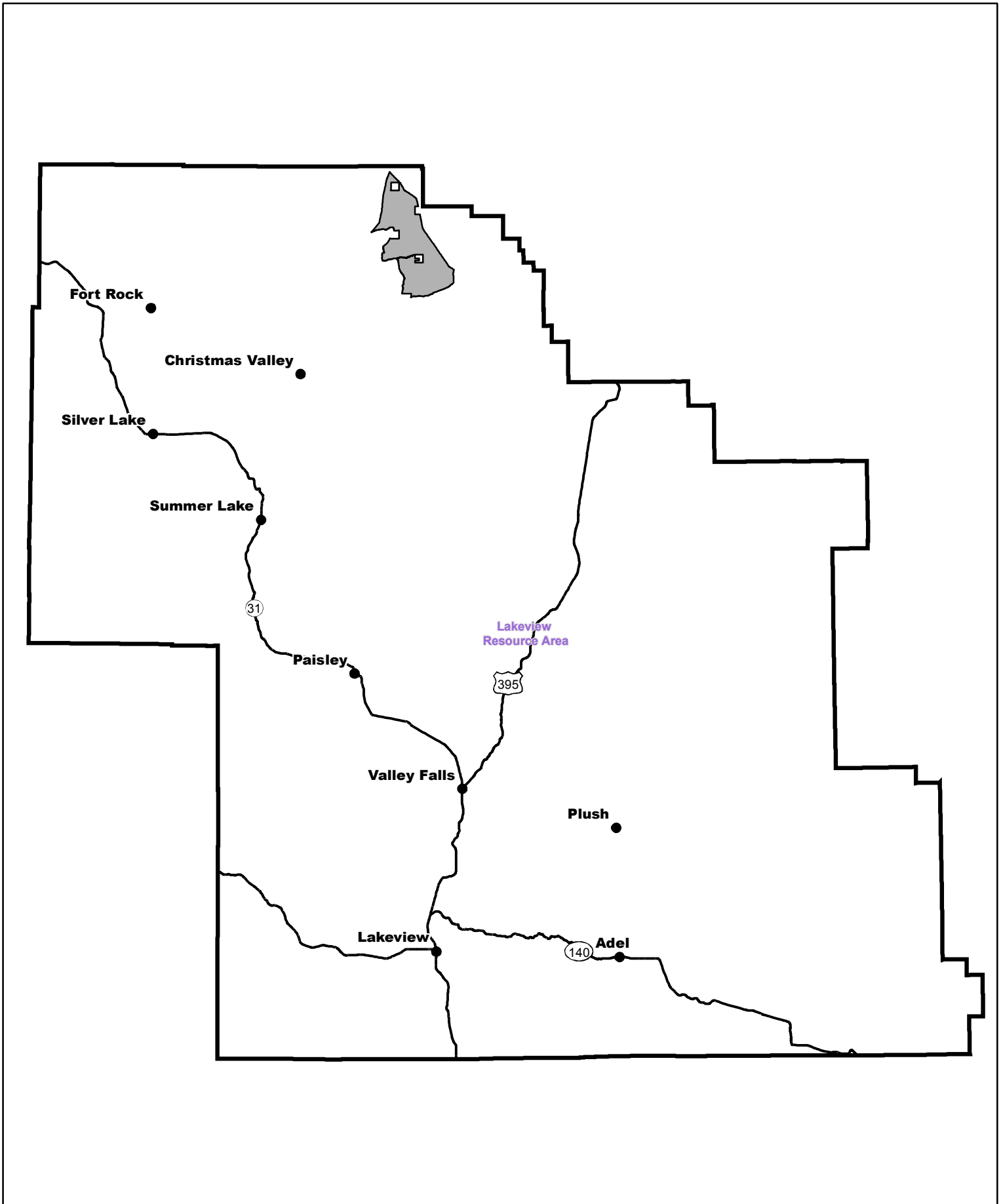
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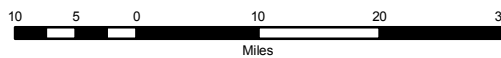

J. Todd Forbes
Field Manager


6/4/18
Date

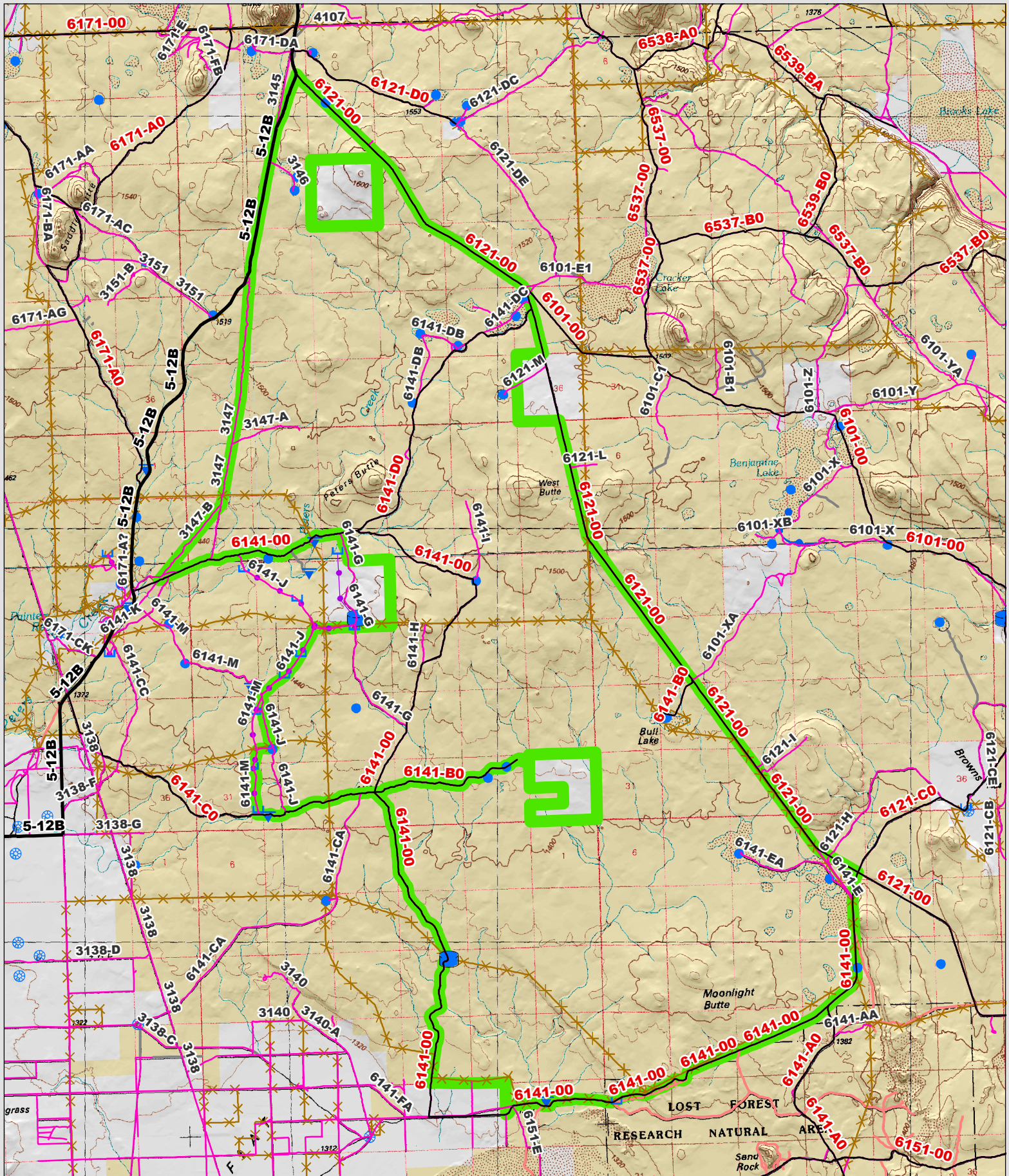
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.



 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



 No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.



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

2 1 0 2 Miles

W N E S

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