

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-094/ Poker Jim Flat

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

b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** 1-94/ Poker Jim Flat

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Intensive Wilderness Inventory - Final Decisions; USDI BLM - Oregon, November 1980.

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

**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
1-94	14,360	Y	N	N	Y
1-94*	11,125	Y	N	N	N/A

\* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2014. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2014 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018 inventory review. Documentation of the 2014 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

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

The majority of the unit was described as a triangular-shaped piece of land on sagebrush flats north of Bluejoint Lake and below Poker Jim Ridge. The remaining acreage was on a high sagebrush flat above Poker Jim Ridge and north of the Hart Mountain Refuge boundary. The

rim dividing the unit was approximately 600 feet high. The land above and below the rim was very flat and sagebrush covered. There was one dry lakebed located near the east boundary. Above the rim there was a “way” running through the upper part of the unit for approximately 4 miles and a lakebed waterhole on the southeast corner of the unit. There was a “way” crossing the lower portion of the unit just north of Bluejoint Lake. The unit also contained approximately 1.5 miles of fence line near the south boundary. These developments were substantially noticeable and negatively affected the areas on the northeast and south borders of the unit. The majority of the unit was found to be in a natural condition. It was noted that it would be difficult to avoid the presence of others in the unit due to the low vegetation and lack of topographic relief on both the portions above and below the rim. While the rim would prevent persons on one part of the unit affecting those in the other, neither part offered any substantial degree of solitude. The unit did not offer any outstanding opportunities for one to avoid the sights, sounds and presence of others. The Poker Jim Rim offered a highly interesting geologic and scenic feature. However, only a small portion of the rim occurs within the unit. The rim did not offer any physical recreation potential as the terrain was not very suitable for climbing or hiking. The unit did not offer any outstanding primitive or unconfined type of recreation opportunity due to the small size of the subparts and flat terrain on each. The unit contained the geological features of the Poker Jim Ridge and had some potential for archeological values.

## **FORM 2**

### **DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS**

**Unit Number/Name:** OR-015-094/ Poker Jim Flat

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

In 2005, the BLM received a citizen proposal from the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) for the 235,445-acre Poker Jim Ridge Proposed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) Addition. ONDA included in their information a narrative report, maps, photos, photo and route logs, and GIS data with their route and photo point data. The photos submitted by ONDA were taken in 2004. ONDA identified this large area as having no interior routes which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 169 of ONDA 2005). All of these materials were considered during the BLM’s wilderness inventory process for this area.

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. The Poker Jim Ridge 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 Roads 8185-00 and 7165-00 on the north; .U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands to the south; BLM interim numbered road 8185-I on the west; and BLM Road 7165-A0 and BLM interim numbered road 7165-AA on the east. Additionally, in 1980, a few small portions of the original unit, just south of the current southwest boundary, were managed by the BLM. Management of these areas was transferred from the BLM to the .U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through a jurisdictional transfer in 1998. As a result, the southwest corner of the inventory unit is now contiguous with the Poker Jim WSA, which was established by the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in 1967.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit not only exceeded the minimum size criteria at approximately 13,047 acres of BLM-administered lands, but was also found to be contiguous with the 17,130 acre Poker Jim WSA on USFWS-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 about 28 miles northeast of Plush, Oregon. The current unit is approximately 4 mile wide by 6 miles long. The unit is topographically dominated by upper Poker Jim Ridge running 4 miles north to south, with the flat north end of Warner Valley on the west and a slightly rolling plateau to the east above the rim. Other features in the unit include Orijana Point (5087 feet) and 2 depressed lakebeds above the plateau. Wildfires burned the west-facing slope of the rim in 1985 and 2010. Vegetatively the unit is covered by sagebrush, and both native and non-native grasses.

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

In 1980 the unit was describes as having 4 miles of “ways,” a lakebed, and 1.5 miles of fence line. These developments were substantially noticeable and negatively affected the areas on the northeast and south borders of the unit. However, the majority of the unit was found to be in a natural condition

ONDA’s 2005 inventory found that because the units within their Poker Jim Ridge proposed WSA Addition are contiguous, forming an area 235,445-acres in size, with the few manmade developments within the area would not have a cumulative impact on the area as a whole. ONDA noted ephemeral lakes and Poker Jim Ridge add to the naturalness of the area, not only because of the feel they give the area, but because of the habitat they provide. ONDA

concluded that the Poker Jim Ridge proposed WSA Addition appears primarily affected by the forces of nature. 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 unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 1,343 acres of wildfire, 405 acres of seeding, 165 acres of mow strips (fuel breaks), 15 miles of motorized routes, 1 well, 1 waterhole, and 1 wildlife guzzler.

Presently, almost 4 decades after the original inventory, these developments are weathered and grown over with herbaceous grasses and sagebrush. 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. Although evidence of the fire remains, fire in and of itself represents a natural and acceptable disturbance from a wilderness character perspective. Areas that were seeded as well as areas that were allowed to revegetate naturally have been invaded by rabbit/ sagebrush 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 on its own merits appears in a natural condition where the imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable. Furthermore, since the unit is contiguous with USFWS's Poker Jim WSA, which was found to have wilderness values, the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit must be analyzed in the context of these now shared wilderness values. The 1967 Poker Jim WSA Reported listed impacts to naturalness including the cutting of juniper trees for fence posts and fuel by early ranchers, the existence of limited vehicle routes, and changes in vegetation associated with grazing animals. However, activities of man and his animals have left few enduring marks on the area as the evidence of this use has largely disappeared.

After considering wilderness values offered by both units, the BLM determined that the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit and WSA in fact contribute mutually additive effects to the natural condition of both units as a whole and thus the area was found to be in a natural condition primarily affected by the forces of nature.

**(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       

In 1980, the original inventory noted that it would be difficult to avoid the presence of others in the unit due to low vegetation and lack of topographic relief on both portions above and below the rim. While the rim would prevent persons on one part of the unit affecting those in the other, neither part offered any substantial degree of solitude.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 235,445-acre Poker Jim Ridge proposed WSA Addition 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.

ONDA pointed out that BLM's *Wilderness Inventory and Study Handbook H-6310-1*, states that one should not assume "simply because an area or portion of an area is flat and/or unvegetated, it automatically lacks an outstanding opportunity for solitude... Consideration must be given to the interrelationship between size, screening, configuration, and other factors that influence solitude." Thus, ONDA concluded that because the proposed WSA is so large (235,445 acres), wide in configuration, and offers a full diversity of landscape, it would be easy for visitors to experience outstanding opportunities for solitude. 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 determined that the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude due to lack of overall topographic and vegetation screening. While the rim would screen visitors on southwest part of the unit (below the rim) from those in the northeast portion (above the rim), neither part offers any substantial degree of solitude and, as such, would be difficult to avoid the presence of others on these flat, open, plains.

Based on a review of all the available information including photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded that the unit on its own merits does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. However, since the unit is contiguous with USFWS's Poker Jim WSA, which was found to have wilderness character, the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit must be analyzed in the context of shared wilderness values. USFWS's Poker Jim WSA, at 17,130 acres, is comprised of Poker Jim Ridge Proper, Snyder Canyon, numerous buttes, drainages, fallen shelves along the rim, and several distinct stands of old-growth western juniper sufficient for vegetative screening. After considering wilderness values offered by both units, the BLM determined that the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit and WSA contribute mutually additive effects to the solitude of both units. Therefore, as a contiguous unit, the BLM found the area to possess outstanding opportunities for solitude, where one would easily be able to avoid the sights and sounds of others.

**(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 1980, the original inventory noted that within the unit, Poker Jim Rim offered a highly interesting geologic and scenic feature. However, only a small portion of the rim occurred within the unit and did not offer any physical recreation potential as the terrain was not very suitable for climbing or hiking. The unit did not offer any outstanding primitive or unconfined type of recreation opportunity due to the small size of the subparts and flat terrain on each.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 235,445-acre Poker Jim Ridge proposed WSA Addition as having outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation based on sheer size as their proposal is contiguous with other inventory units and therefore no longer stands alone. ONDA pointed out that BLM's *Wilderness Inventory and Study Handbook H-6310-1*, stated that "the absence of water in an area is not a valid basis for concluding that an outstanding primitive and unconfined recreation opportunity does not

exist.” Thus, ONDA concluded that because the proposed WSA is so large (235,445 acres), wide in configuration, and offers a full diversity of landscape, it would be easy for visitors to experience outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined forms of recreation. ONDA noted these opportunities are particularly exemplary along the impressive fault-block ridge, and by itself, offers outstanding hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife viewing, and photography. 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.

Based on a review of all the available information including photos, staff knowledge, and field review, the BLM concluded that the unit on its own merits does not possess outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, since the unit is contiguous with USFWS’s Poker Jim WSA, which was found to have wilderness character, the Poker Jim Flat unit must be analyzed in the context of shared wilderness values.

USFWS’s Poker Jim WSA, at 17,130 acres, was noted as having petroglyph viewing, wildlife viewing (see supplemental values section), sightseeing (Poker Jim Ridge), hunting (mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage-grouse, chukar, quail, bighorn sheep), hiking/horseback riding, rock hounding, nature study, and camping near the upper end of Snyder Canyon. The wilderness study report stated, “The area has much to offer the person who wants to retreat from city life and the increasingly popular forms of “mechanized” outdoor recreation. This is habitat for those willing to walk or ride horse-back over rocky sagelands to be by themselves on the edge of a 2,500 foot high west face, to explore juniper woodlands and to revel in the fact that they have purged themselves or worrisome modern contrivances.”

After considering wilderness values offered by both units, the BLM concluded that all activities listed above contribute mutually additive effects to the recreation opportunities of both units within the Poker Jim Flat inventory unit and WSA. Therefore, as a contiguous unit, the BLM found the area to possess outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

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

Based on information from the original 1980 inventory, ONDA’s 2005 inventory, and the USFWS’s 1967 WSA report, the following supplemental values are present within the contiguous inventory unit. Wildlife habitat for pronghorn antelope, mule deer, sage-grouse, horned larks, robins, raptors, coyotes, bobcats, cottontails, white-tailed jackrabbits, marmots, ground squirrels, porcupines, chucker partridge, valley quail, and small rodents. As well as geological, archeological, zoological, and numerous other scientific studies.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

**Unit Number and Name:** OR-015-094/ Poker Jim Flat

**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):

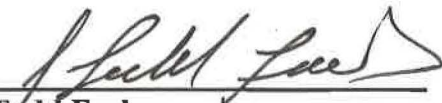
  
Chris Bishop: Outdoor Recreation Planner

6/4/18  
Date

  
Jami Ludwig: Assistant Field Manager

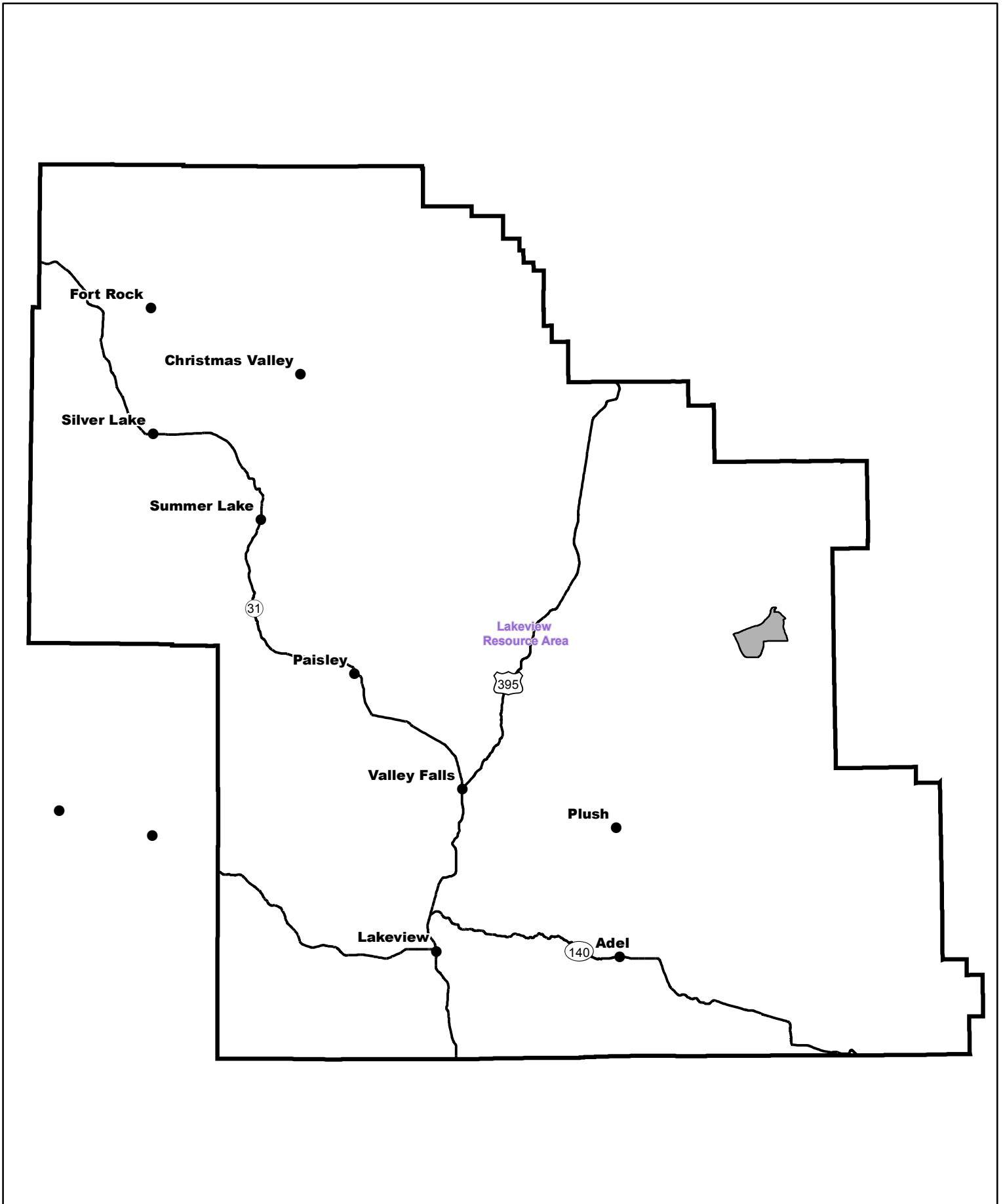
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**Approved by:**

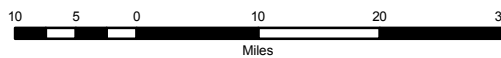
  
J. Todd Forbes  
Field Manager


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.*

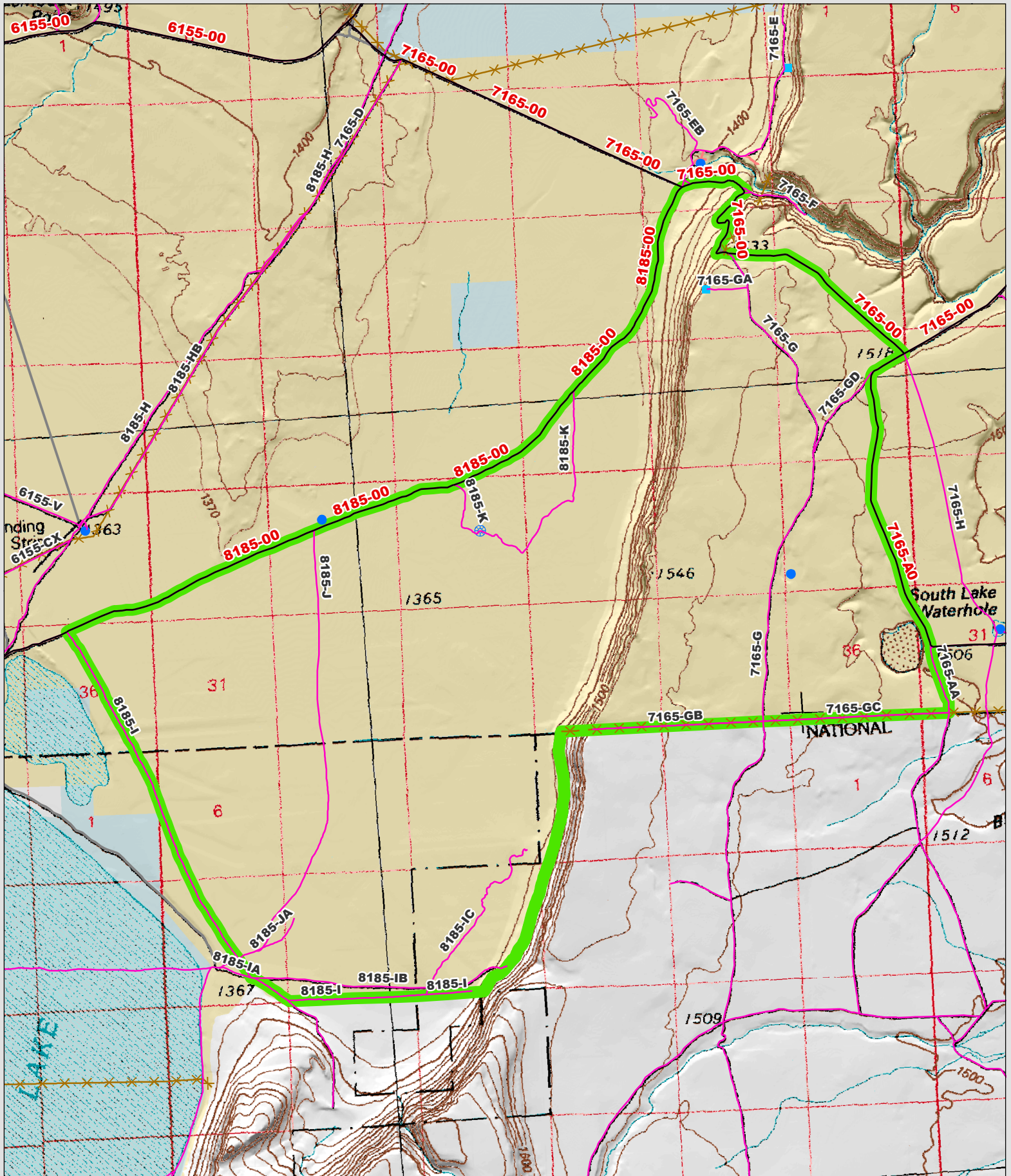


 Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



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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

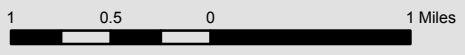
**Pipelines and Ditches**

- Ditch
- Water Pipeline
- Guzzler
- Fences

**Water Developments**

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

- Water Tank
- Waterhole
- Well - Water



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