

Year: 2018

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-047/ Sheep Rock

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:** BLM Wilderness Inventory files for Pacific Power and Light Company (PP&L) Transmission Line: PP&L Roadless Area Inventory Files (1977).
- b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** OR-010-04-15, 1-46/ Fandango; OR-010-01-12, 1-47/ Sheep Rock (1-61, Sheep Rock West)
- c) **Map Number(s)/ Name(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.

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
1-46	14,000	Y	N	N	N/A
1-47, 1-61	58,200	Y	N	N	N
1-47, 1-61*	48,999	Y	N	N	N/A

* 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:

Historic Unit 1-46 was described as gently rolling plateau, broken by a series of low to high rims. Vegetation consisted of desert shrubs and scattered pockets of juniper. It was determined that the unit was natural, with stock water developments and a few “ways” as the only evidence of man’s activities within the unit. Outside impacts included farms and subdivided lands in the distance to the north. It was also determined that the outstanding opportunities for solitude were not present within the unit. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation were listed as hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and camping, though none were deemed outstanding. Ultimately, this inventory unit was found lack wilderness values and was dropped from the wilderness review process.

Historic Unit 1-47/1-61 was described as a series of north to south trending rims with moderate relief (500 ft.). Relatively flat on top with many small playa basins and valleys in between rims. Sheep Rock, a large mesa, dominated the southern portion of the area. Many small playas and draws between rims. Vegetation consisted of desert shrubs. Manmade intrusions included stock ponds and three roads (approx. 7 miles) extending into the area, two from the north and one from the south. The unit was deemed pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities were minimal. The unit was found to have a feeling of spaciousness, with topography, size, and/or shape of the area providing seemingly complete isolation. Recreation opportunities within the unit included marginal antelope and deer hunting, medium scenic quality rating (sightseeing), backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, and dry camping. However, these opportunities were found to be less than outstanding. The team concluded that the area contained the essential characteristics of a wilderness area. However, the unit was ultimately dropped from wilderness consideration due to foreseen access issues requiring fences and vehicle closures, construction/ maintenance of roads to waterholes, needed fences for wild horses, inholding of private lands with potential for agricultural development, and a Military Operation Area was discovered above the unit for low flying aircraft. Thus, the unit was dropped from wilderness consideration as it lacked significant resources desirable for primitive recreation or wilderness preservation.

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: OR-015-047/ Sheep Rock

(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 90,489-acre Burma Rim 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. They identified this large area as having no interior routes, which met the BLM wilderness inventory definition of a road (see Map, p. 29 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 some of the routes ONDA identified as "ways" are boundary roads. Burma Rim proposed WSA is not one large roadless unit, but is comprised of smaller inventory units, which must be evaluated individually.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Roads 6104-00 on the west and south; 6184-B0, 6194-00, 6194-A0, BLM interim numbered roads 6194-AA, 6194-AD and 6194-D0 on the east; and 6131-00, 6104-G0, BLM interim numbered roads 6104-GA and 6104-Y0, private lands, and a PacifiCorp 500-KV power line right-of-way to the north. Portions of BLM Roads 6104-G0 and the road which historically separated units 1-47 (Sheep Rock) and 1-61 (Sheep Rock West) no longer meets the definition of a boundary road. Due to findings that sections of BLM Roads no longer meet the wilderness definition of a road, historic inventory units (1-47, 1-61, and the southern portion of 1-46) 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 Sheep Rock inventory unit.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Sheep Rock inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 52,078 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 12 miles southeast of Christmas Valley, Oregon. The unit is approximately 13 miles long by 9 miles wide, with one 161-acre private inholding. The unit ranges in elevation from 4,310 ft. to 5,755 feet and is tremendously topographically diverse with numerous moderate to large points (north Black Point), buttes (Bunker Hill), tabletops (Sheep Rock), ridges, and rims (Coffee Pot Rim) ranging from 150-1,000 ft. high. The unit has over 35 miles of moderate rims running north to south, the largest of which runs 12.5 miles from the northern border to Sheep Rock in the south. In addition the unit contains dozens of large, deep, draws, drainages, depressed lakebed, playas, and small, closed-in, valleys (50-1,000 ft. deep) including Coffee Pot Basin, State Game Reservoir, Horse Trap, Horsetail, Square, Impossible, Handy, Legal, Faber, and Rocky waterholes. Vegetation consists of a shrub-steppe biotic community, which includes sagebrush, grass, and low growing perennials.

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

In 1977, historical Units 1-46, 1-47, and 1-61 contained stock water developments and a few “ways” (approx. 7 miles). The unit was initially deemed pristine or nearly so, where evidence of man’s activities were minimal. However, impending projects pertaining to fences, road construction, wild horse traps, and an aerial Military Operation Area were used to cast doubt on the unit’s perceived future naturalness.

In 2005, ONDA found the much larger 90,489-acre Burma Rim proposed WSA to be in a natural condition, primarily affected by the forces of nature (p. 27). ONDA acknowledged manmade developments within the unit such as lakebed pits, mowed fuel breaks, and power lines along the boundaries. ONDA noted the short-term impacts of the mow strips that will return to a natural appearance in just a few years. ONDA also pointed out that BLM guidelines explicitly exclude outside sights and sounds as rationale to preclude designation, thus bordering power lines should not be a factor in deciding the naturalness of the unit. And in any case, the power lines are only noticeable when in close proximity, less than 0.5 miles, due to topographic screening. 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: 85 acres of mow strips (fuel breaks), 48 miles of motorized routes, 6 miles of reclaiming routes, 13 miles of fence lines, 32 waterholes, 3 reservoirs, 2 wildlife guzzlers, and 1 dike.

Presently, almost 4 decades after the original inventory, these developments are weathered and grown over with herbaceous grasses, rabbit brush, and sagebrush. 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 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 _____

In 1977, historic Unit 1-46 was found to lack outstanding opportunities for solitude. While historic unit 1-47/1-61 was found to have a feeling of spaciousness, with topography, size, and/or shape of the area providing seemingly complete isolation.

In 2005, ONDA’s inventory identified the larger 90,489-acre Burma Rim 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. ONDA noted that size of the unit would easily allow visitors to experience solitude because they could easily avoid the sights and sounds of others. ONDA acknowledged the area does not have much for vegetative screening, but that it does offer plenty of topographical screening for visitors to experience outstanding opportunities for solitude (p. 28 of ONDA 2005). 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 there are several outstanding opportunities for solitude across the unit due to topographic screening and size. The unit ranges in elevation from 4,310 ft. to 5,755 feet and is tremendously topographically diverse with numerous moderate to large points (north Black Point), buttes (Bunker Hill), tabletops (Sheep Rock), ridges, and rims (Coffee Pot Rim) ranging from 150-1,000 ft. high. The unit has over 35 miles of moderate rims running north to south, the largest of which runs 12.5 miles from the northern border to Sheep Rock in the south. In addition the unit contains dozens of large, deep, draws, drainages, depressed lakebed, playas, and small, closed-in, valleys (50-1,000 ft. deep) including Coffee Pot Basin, State Game Reservoir, Horse Trap, Horsetail, Square, Impossible, Handy, Legal, Faber, and Rocky waterholes. Due to the above-described topographic 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 Sheep Rock 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 1977, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within historic Unit 1-46 were listed as hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and camping. Though, none of these opportunities were deemed outstanding. Historic Unit 1-47/1-61 was found to possess recreation opportunities, which included marginal antelope and deer hunting, medium scenic quality rating (sightseeing), backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, and dry camping. However, these opportunities were found to be less than outstanding.

In 2005, ONDA's inventory identified the larger 90,489-acre Burma Rim 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. ONDA noted the topography of the unit allows outstanding opportunities for hikers, horseback riders, backpackers, hunters, photographers, and sightseers. Therefore, the Burma Rim proposed WSA provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation (p. 28 of ONDA 2005). 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, scenery, photography, stargazing, trapping, and hunting are exceptional. The BLM determined that options for exploration and route finding through the unit's diverse topography, as well as, hiking/ horseback riding along any combination of the unit's estimated 35 miles of rims, particularly a 12.5 mile traverse of the unit from the northern border to Sheep Rock in the south, 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 mule deer, pronghorn antelope, pygmy rabbit, golden eagle, California bighorn sheep, and sage-grouse habitat. Additionally, approximately 9 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-015-047/ Sheep Rock

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

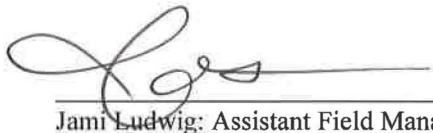
Conclusion (Check One):

- 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

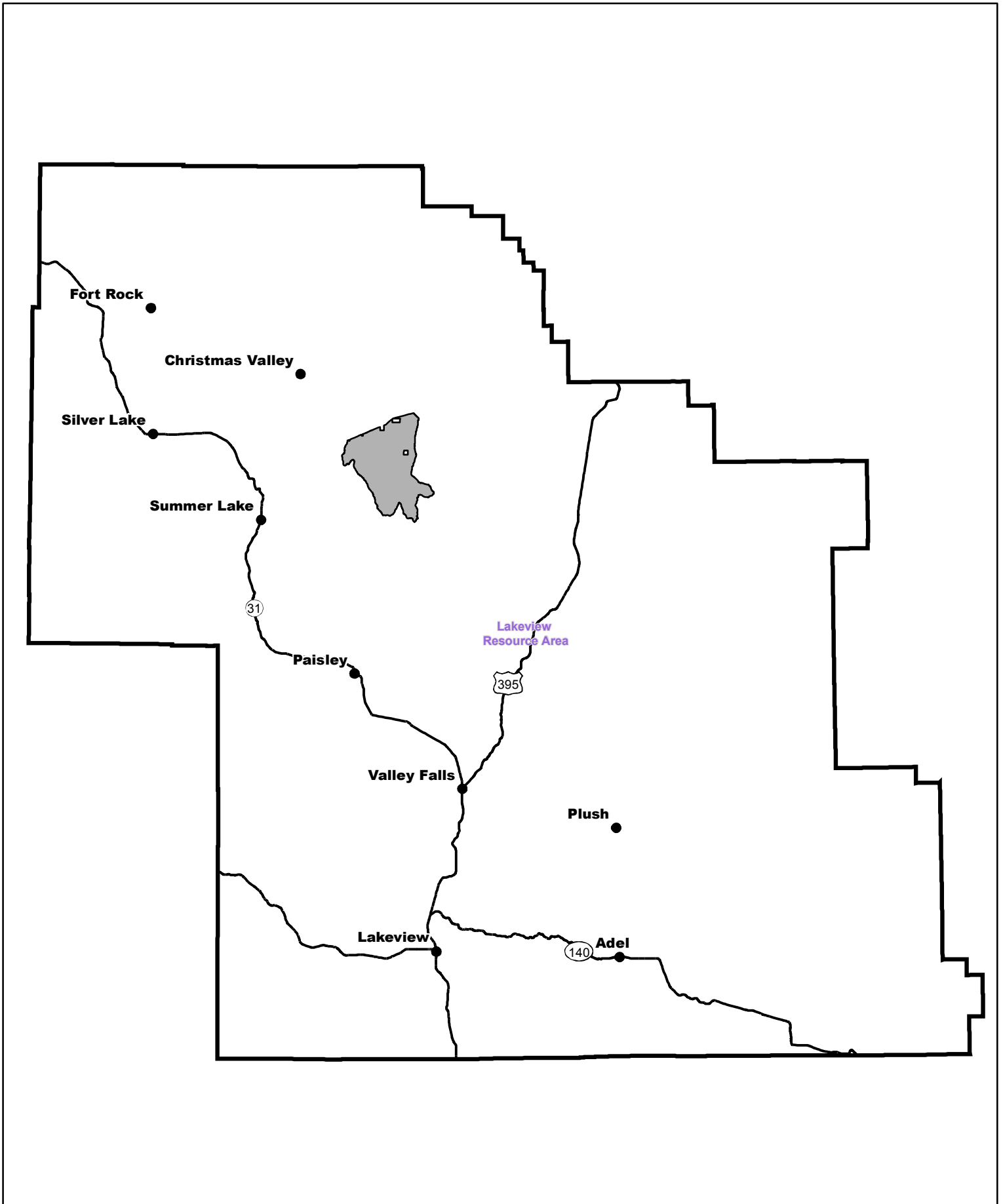
 6/4/18
Date

Approved by:


J. Todd Forbes
Field Manager

 6/4/18
Date

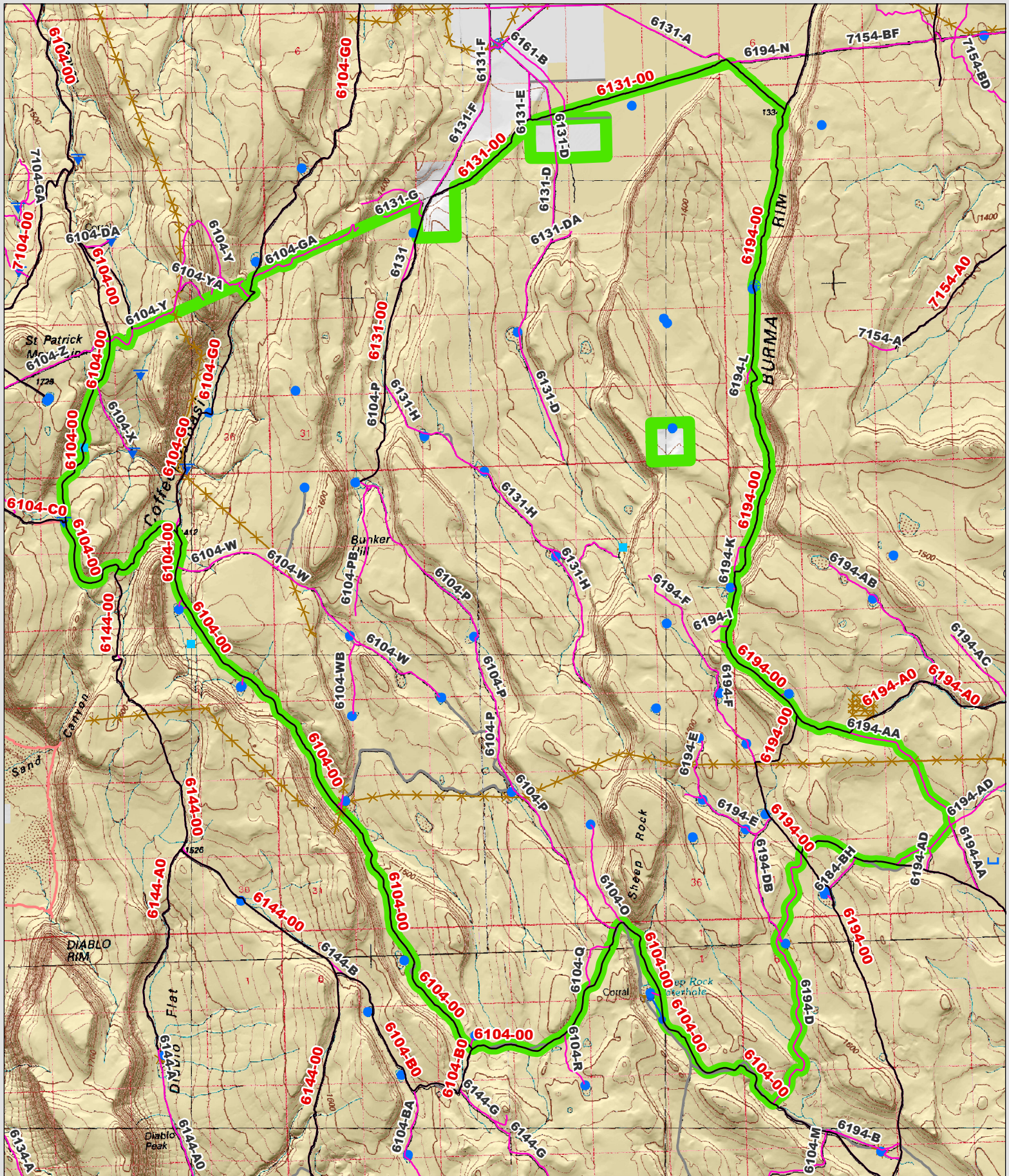
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.



Wilderness Character Inventory Unit



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

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.