

Year: 2020

Inventory Unit Number/Name: OR-015-070/ Venator 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:** Wilderness – Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Clearly Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon and Washington, April 1979.

b) **Inventory Unit Number(s)/ Name(s):** 1-70/ Venator Butte

c) **Map Name(s)/Number(s):** Proposed Initial Inventory: Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics; USDI BLM - Oregon, April 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 t#	Size (historic acres)	Natural Condition? Y/N	Outstanding Solitude? Y/N	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Y/N	Supplemental Values? Y/N
1-70	14,000	N	N	N	NA
1-70*	8,978	N	N/A	N/A	N/A

* The inventory of this unit was updated in 2012. However, due to a State Office-sponsored Wilderness Inventory Consistency Evaluation and subsequent guidance, the 2012 inventory analysis and findings are being replaced by this current 2018 inventory review. Documentation of the 2012 inventory can be found in the wilderness inventory project record.

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

The unit was located immediately south of Alkali Lake and adjacent to Highway 395. Roads formed all boundaries. Dominant vegetation on the majority of the unit was big sagebrush, with 1,500 acres of seeding in the south part of the unit. Topography was dominated by the slopes of Venator Butte, which rose approximately 500 feet above the surrounding flats. Although portions of the unit appeared generally natural, the unit is dominated by land treatments in and surrounding the unit. A chemical dump is located on private lands in Alkali Lake to the north. Opportunity for solitude of unconfined recreation is limited by traffic on Highway 395.

FORM 2

**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY
CONDITIONS**

Unit Number/Name: OR-015-070/ Venator Butte

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

In 2018, the BLM received a citizen inventory from the O’Leary Ranch. All these materials were considered during the BLM’s wilderness inventory process for this area.

Between 2008 and 2019, 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 and revised this information in 2019 based on new citizen submitted information submitted.

The BLM determined that the inventory unit is bounded by BLM Road 6184-00 to the north; State Highway 395 right-of-way on the east; a right-of-way for a distribution power line, BLM Road 6164-00, and BLM interim numbered road 6164-H0 on the southwest; and a right-of-way for a distribution power line to the west. Due to changes in boundary determinations (roads and power line rights-of-ways buffer corrections) and cut-outs of high concentrations of unnatural features (pipelines, well houses, water storage tanks), approximately 182 acres were added to the unit. BLM also reviewed the O’Leary submission, but did not make any route changes based on this information.

Thus, based on these boundary and road determinations, the BLM found the Venator Butte inventory unit to exceed the minimum size criteria at approximately 8,967 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 inventory unit is located approximately 2 miles south of Alkali Lake, Oregon. The unit is approximately 6 miles long by 3 miles wide. Topographically the unit is dominated by Venator Butte, an ancient caldera, with numerous points, saddles, ridges, folds, drainages, and aspects around the circumference of the formation. Centrally located within the unit, Venator Butte's peaks and points range from approximately 600–800 ft. higher than the surrounding terrain, while the caldera's depression is approximately 200-500 ft. deep. The northern portion of the unit is comprised of a sagebrush-covered sand dune, forming the southern end of Alkali Lake. The surrounding area is characterized by low to moderate (50 – 250 ft. tall) rolling terrain, flattening out to the northern end of Coleman Flat to the south. Vegetatively, the unit is primarily sagebrush, rabbit brush, and crested wheatgrass seedings. Three separate wildfires burned through much of the unit between 1981 and 1983.

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

In 1979, the original inventory noted that although portions of the unit appeared generally natural, the unit is was dominated by land treatments including a 1,500-acre seeding.

The O'Leary Ranch noted several man made structures and disturbances in the area. The BLM reviewed all the information submitted but did not make any changes to this unit.

The unit currently contains the following man-made developments/disturbances: 6,791 acres of wildfire, 5,734 acres of seeding, 1,651 acres of chemical treatments, 7 miles of fence lines, 5.5 miles of motorized routes, 3 miles of reclaiming routes, 5 waterholes, 1 well, and 2 historic (rehabbed) gravel pits immediately adjacent to Highway 395.

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, the majority of disturbances are located near the perimeter of the unit and, as such, have a small area of influence. Additionally, areas that were seeded or allowed to revegetate naturally after wildfire have been invaded by 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 failed to mention solitude. However, that unit was described as being topographically dominated by the slopes of Venator Butte, which rose approximately 500 feet above the surrounding flats.

The BLM determined that there are several outstanding opportunities for solitude across the unit, particularly within and near Venator Butte, due to topographic screening. Centrally located within the unit, Venator Butte, an ancient caldera, dominates the unit with numerous points, saddles, ridges, folds, drainages, and aspects around the circumference of the formation. Venator Butte's peaks and points range from approximately 600–800 ft. higher than the surrounding terrain, while the caldera's depression is approximately 200-500 ft. deep. The northern portion of the unit is comprised of a sagebrush-covered sand dune, forming the southern end of Alkali Lake. The surrounding area is characterized by low to moderate (50 – 250 ft. tall) rolling terrain, flattening out to the northern end of Coleman Flat to the south. Due to the above-described compartmentalized topography within 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 Venator 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

In 1979, the original inventory failed to mention solitude. However, that unit was described as being topographically dominated by the slopes of Venator Butte, which rose approximately 500 feet above the surrounding flats.

The BLM finds the combination and diversity of hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, wildlife observation, exploration, scenery, photography, trapping, hunting, and stargazing, are exceptional. The BLM determined that hiking peak to peak around the circumference of Venator Butte's caldera 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 prairie falcon, pronghorn antelope, and sage-grouse habitat.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unit Number and Name: OR-015-070/ Venator 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):


Shane Garside: Outdoor Recreation Planner

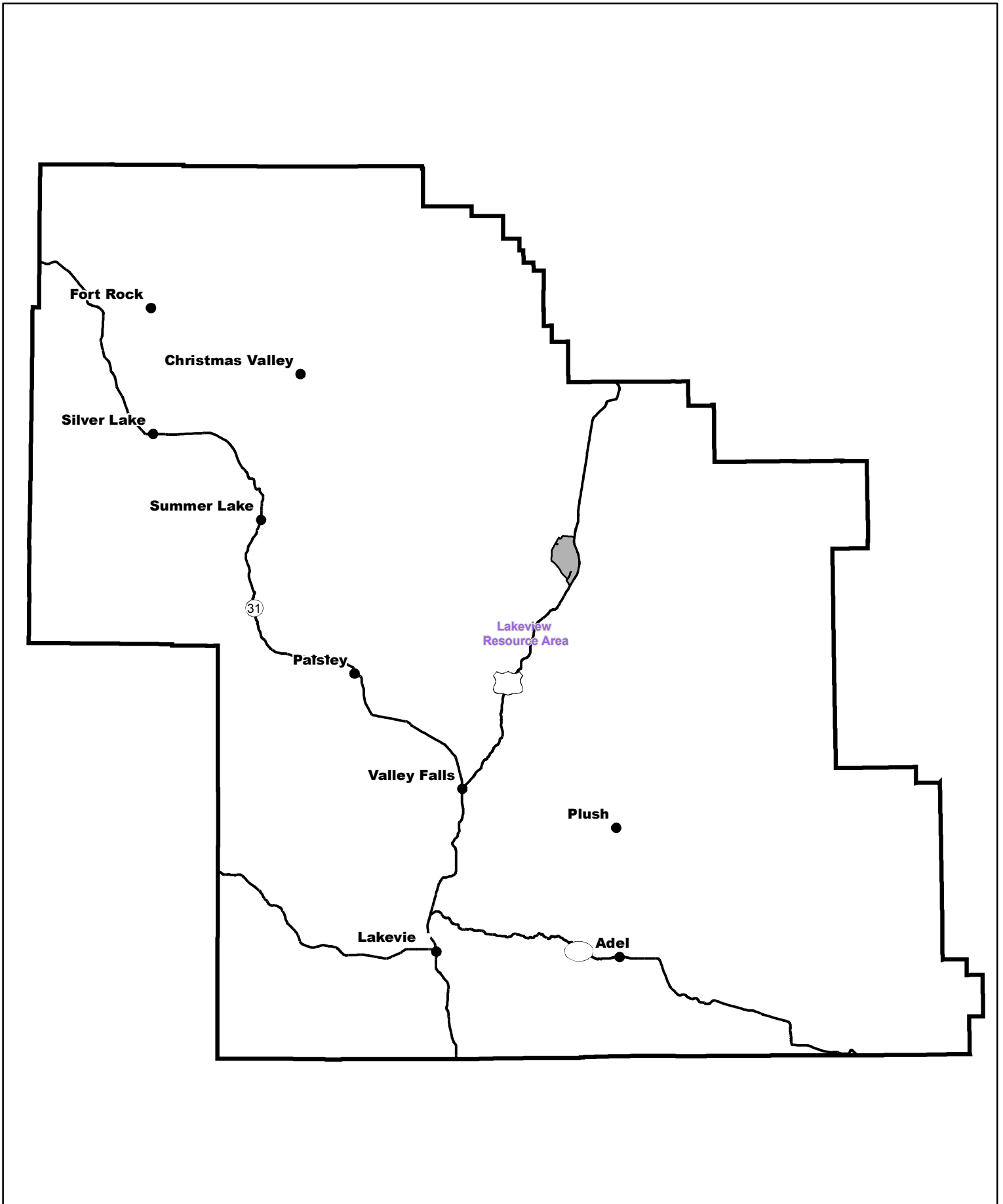
 9/23/20
Date


Approved by:


Jami Ludwig
Field Manager


 10/14/2020
Date

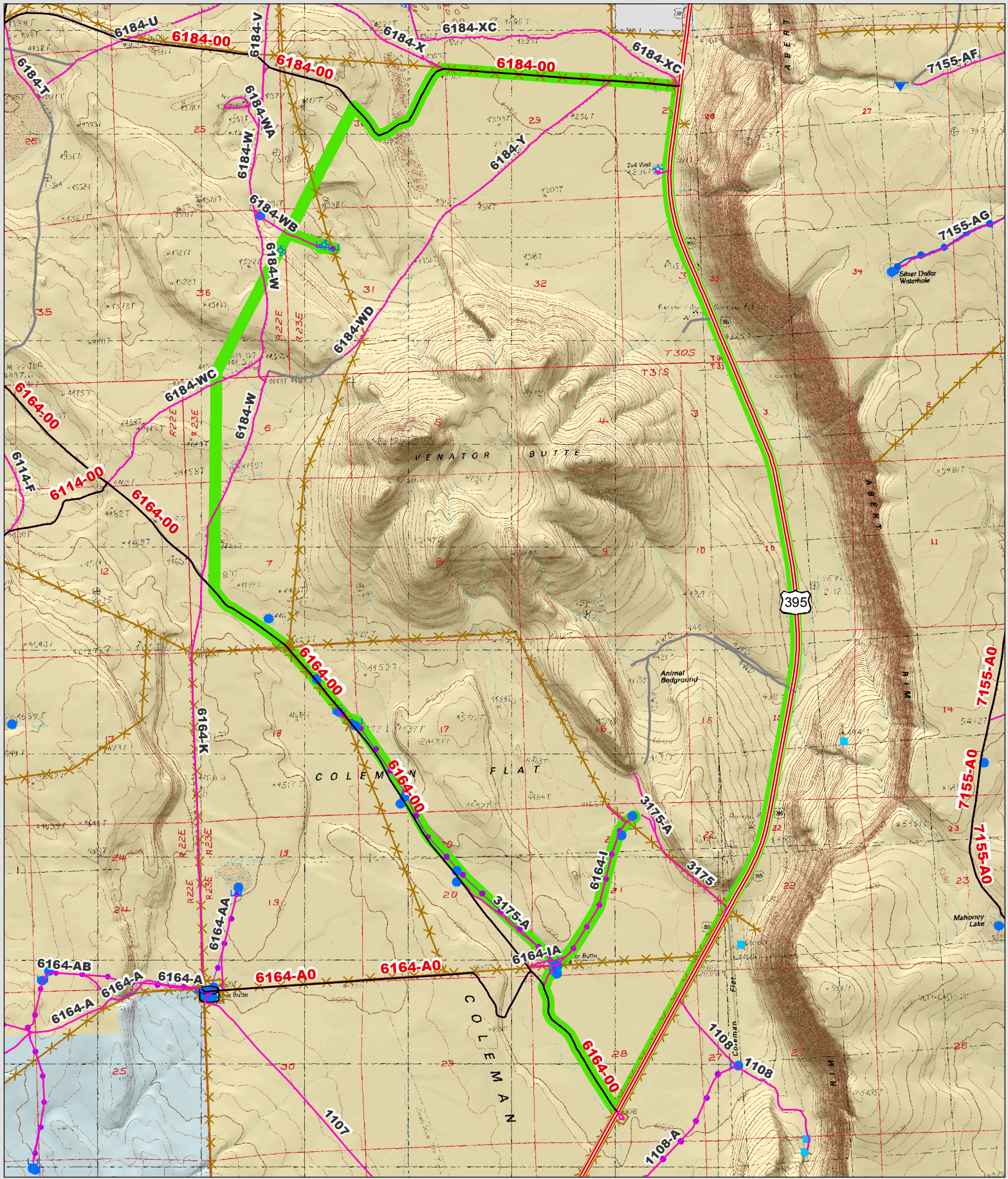
This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under 43 CFR parts either 4 or 1610.5-2.



 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.



<p>Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Land Management U.S. Forest Service Private/Unknown 	<p>Roads/Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motorized Routes Highways Reclaiming Routes Interim Routes 	<p>Pipelines and Ditches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ditch Water Pipeline Guzzler Fences 	<p>Water Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dam Reservoir Spring Development Trough Water Diversion 	<p>Water Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Tank Waterhole Well - Water 	<p>1 0.5 0 1 Miles</p>		<p><small>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.</small></p>
--	---	--	--	---	------------------------	--	---