

ROADLESS REVIEW AND WILDERNESS INVENTORY
Roan Plateau
Glenwood Springs Field Office

I. INVENTORY TEAM

A. BLM and Citizen Team Members

In June 1999, BLM formed a volunteer, seven-member Citizen Observer Ad-Hoc Committee to assist with the Roadless Review and Wilderness Character Inventory. These citizens were asked to participate with BLM staff as active members of the Inventory Team during all field reviews which occurred between July 7-21. In this capacity, the citizen observers contributed to the Inventory Team effort in four primary ways: 1) by participating in as many scheduled field review trips as possible; 2) by joining in group discussions at every opportunity; 3) by offering opinions about the wilderness characteristics they observed and experienced as field review participants; and 4) by providing local and regional information pertinent to BLM-administered lands. Listed below is the roster of Citizen Observer Ad-Hoc Committee and BLM team members assembled by the Colorado State Director. As planned, the ad-hoc committee disbanded after the committee's final field trip.

CITIZEN AD-HOC COMMITTEE:

NAME AFFILIATION

- Kurt Kunkle -Colorado Environmental Coalition
- Janey Hines -Grand Valley Citizens Alliance
- Gerald Lindauer -Grazing Permittee
- Dewayne Zavadil -Barret Resources (alternate)
- Ken Curry -Beartooth Oil and Gas (alternate)
- Joe Weaver -MB Construction (alternate)
- Wayne McFetridge -Western Slope ATV Association
- John Martin -Garfield County Commissioner
- Rick Tobey -Magnum Guides

BLM TEAM MEMBERS:

- Kay Hopkins -Team Leader -Outdoor Recreation Planner, Glenwood Springs Field Office, Colorado
- Jim McBrayer -Outdoor Recreation Planner, Little Snake Field Office, Craig Colorado
- Eric Finstick -Wilderness Specialist, Colorado State Office

II. INVENTORY PURPOSE

The purpose of the inventory is to identify roadless areas that have 5,000 acres or more, that currently possess wilderness characteristics consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Key Points

Legal criteria that were used in the original wilderness inventory will apply.

The June 1997 Colorado Wilderness Review Procedures will guide the inventory process.

Each area will be considered on its own merits.

This administrative inventory is being performed under authority of Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (it is not associated with the original inventory performed under the Act)

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Each area will be considered on its own merits.

This administrative inventory is being performed under authority of Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (it is not associated with the original inventory performed under the Act's Section 603).

Because this will be a pure inventory effort, to determine the presence or absence of wilderness character, no recommendations or decisions regarding legislative designation of wilderness areas or the creation of new wilderness study areas will be included as a part of the Wilderness Inventory Report.

III. INVENTORY PROCESS

The inventory process is strictly limited to the administrative identification of lands that are roadless and have wilderness characteristics based on established wilderness review procedures and legal definitions. A seven-step process is being used to complete the Roadless Review/Wilderness Character Inventory. These seven procedural steps are:

Step 1: Establish Wilderness Character Inventory Team comprised of:

- BLM Staff
- Citizen Observer Ad-Hoc Committee Members

Step 2: Conduct the Roadless Review Inventory

Step 3: Analyze Wilderness Character During Roadless Reviews

- Area Size
- Area Naturalness
- Solitude and/or Primitive and Unconfined Type Recreation
- Supplemental Values

Step 4: Compile a Permanent Documentation File for each area

Step 5: Prepare Draft Wilderness Inventory Report (Findings) to the BLM Colorado State Director (CSD)

Step 6: Release Draft Wilderness Character Inventory Report for Public Review and Comment

Step 7: Review Public Comments and Prepare Final Wilderness Character Inventory Report

IV. INVENTORY PRODUCTS

A formal case file will be compiled for each inventory unit.

Key Points

Each case file will contain:

The original signed/dated Preliminary Roadless Review and Wilderness Character Inventory Evaluations and maps.

A copy of the Final Road/Way analysis and Wilderness Character Inventory Evaluations and maps.

Field maps and preliminary roadless area and wilderness character maps.

Field review photographs and photo logs.

Miscellaneous information pertinent to the inventory.

V. ROADLESS DETERMINATION

In conducting the road/way analysis the inventory team needed to determine what lands within the inventory area are roadless.

Definitions:

A "road" is a route which has been mechanically improved and maintained and has been used on a relatively regular and continuous basis.

A "way" is a route which has been created solely by the passage of vehicles.

A "roadless area" is an area of 5,000 acres or more without "roads".

Roadless area: An area must be "roadless" in order to meet the basic wilderness characteristic needed to qualify for further analysis under the inventory procedures.

Key points

Mechanical improvements or maintenance are physical actions taken by people to keep the road open to vehicular traffic. It does not imply formal construction or annual maintenance.

Improvement or maintenance by mechanical means necessitates the use of hand or power tools.

Relatively regular and continuous use is use which has occurred in the past and is expected to continue in the future. Examples include: vehicular roads used to access stock water tanks, recreation sites or mining claims.

Routes which have been established solely by the passage of vehicles are not considered to be "roads" even if used on a regular and continual basis.

Vehicle routes which have been mechanically constructed but are no longer being mechanically maintained (when needed), do not meet the definition of a "road".

Use of hands or feet without the use of tools does not qualify as mechanical improvement.

A dead end "cherry stem" road can form the boundary of an inventory unit and does not, by itself, disqualify an area from being considered "roadless".

VI. EVALUATING WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

In evaluating wilderness characteristics (size, naturalness, solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values), the Inventory Team considered:

A. Size: Generally, an area must be roadless with at least 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands.

Key Points

All 3 inventory areas exceed the 5,000-acre contiguous public lands threshold.

This characteristic will only be revisited if the 5,000-acre size threshold is at risk due to a negative finding tied to the naturalness characteristic evaluation.

B. Naturalness: This wilderness characteristic needs to be verified/determined for each inventory area.

Key points

If an area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable - it meets the test of the naturalness characteristic.

An area may include some human impacts, provided they are substantially unnoticeable in the inventory area as a whole.

Caution should be used in evaluating the effect on naturalness that relatively minor human impacts create.

Human impacts outside the inventory area (i.e., off-site sights and sounds) should not automatically lead to a conclusion that the area lacks wilderness characteristics.

C. Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation: This wilderness characteristic needs to be verified/determined for each inventory area.

Key Points

The word "or" is significant since an inventory area only has to possess one or the other of these two opportunities.

Opportunities have to be outstanding (excellent) to meet the test of the solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation characteristic.

Outstanding opportunities need not be found on every acre within inventory boundaries - there must be outstanding opportunities found somewhere in the inventory area.

Each inventory area must be assessed on its own merits as to whether an outstanding opportunity exists - in other words, there must be no comparison with other areas.

Regarding Solitude Specifically

Consider factors which influence solitude only as they affect a person's opportunity to avoid sights, sounds, and evidence of other people in the inventory area.

Simply because an inventory unit, or a portion thereof, is flat or un-vegetated, do not automatically assume that outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist.

Factors influencing solitude may include natural screening such as vegetation or topography, and/or the opportunity for a person to find a secluded spot.

Regarding Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation Specifically

Consider those activity opportunities that provide dispersed, undeveloped recreation requiring no facilities or motorized equipment.

Present/existing visitor use is not an evaluation criterion.

The absence of a developed trail system or convenient access is not a valid basis for determining a lack of outstanding opportunities.

The absence of water is not a valid basis for determining a lack of outstanding opportunities.

The presence of "challenge" and "risk" to visitors is not necessary to find that the inventory area meets the test of the primitive and unconfined type of recreation characteristic.

D. Supplemental Values: This wilderness characteristic needs to be verified/determined for each inventory area.

Key Points

Supplemental values are: ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

The Wilderness Act states that an area "may also contain" these values - however, none of these supplemental values are required to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics.