

APPENDIX H

POTENTIAL WILDERNESS INVENTORY



APPENDIX H

INVENTORY OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS and IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER UNDEVELOPED LANDS

BACKGROUND

This document describes the process and rationale used to inventory for and identify potential wilderness areas within the South George Vegetation and Fuels Management Project, Pomeroy Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest. The inventory is based on, and consistent with criteria found at Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12, Chapter 71.

Each step of the inventory process is visually documented as a map (see map discussion below). These maps are displayed in this appendix. The Forest Service used professional judgment and local knowledge regarding unique, site-specific conditions of each area being considered for placement in the inventory of potential wilderness areas.

Potential Wilderness Areas (PWA): Areas of potential wilderness identified using inventory procedures found in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12, Chapter 71 are called potential wilderness areas. The inventory is conducted with the express purpose of identifying all lands that meet the criteria for being evaluated for wilderness suitability.

Potential wilderness areas are not a land designation decision, they do not imply or impart any particular level of management direction or protection, they are not an evaluation of potential wilderness (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 72), and lastly they are not preliminary administrative recommendations for wilderness designation (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 73). The inventory of potential wilderness areas does not change the administrative boundary of any inventoried roadless areas (IRAs), any congressionally established wilderness, or any forest plan management areas.

Typically, PWAs substantially overlap and/or are contiguous with inventoried roadless areas. PWAs may also be contiguous with designated wilderness. Some newly inventoried PWAs may be stand alone areas that were not identified as 'roadless areas' in Appendix C of the 1990 Umatilla Forest Plan and 'inventoried roadless areas' as identified in a set of maps in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR). PWAs overlap inventoried roadless areas only where those acres of land are consistent with the inventory criteria (FSH 1909.12 Chapter 71) and may extend beyond IRA and wilderness boundaries consistent with inventory criteria.

METHODOLOGY:

The inventory process was conducted through a sequence of GIS analyses and application of professional judgment. The judgment applied was situational and instance by instance.

Each map (Maps H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4, and H-5) in this appendix documents the outcome of the application of specific inventory criteria. Inventory criteria were applied in a different order than appears in Chapter 71 but all criteria were considered and accounted for as described below under the Map H2 – H-5 headings. Table H-1B was used to account for and display all polygons as described in Map H-4. Table H-1C shows the Forest Service's consideration of the four largest polygons in relation to potential

wilderness inventory criteria. Map H-0 is a summary map that depicts all five maps to aid the reader’s understanding of this inventory process.

Examples of typical situations that required applications of professional judgment included, but are not limited to:

1. placement of PWA boundaries along permanent natural or semi-permanent human-made features such as ridges, streams, topographic breaks, past harvest, or forest roads to facilitate easy on the ground identification; (See map H-5A. The Forest Service took a hard look at how polygon 1 would be affected);
2. whether to proceed through an isthmus (or pinch point) created between two roads or two harvest areas or place a PWA boundary across the isthmus; and
3. whether to locate a PWA boundary around a peninsula or place the boundary through the peninsula.

The scope of this potential wilderness inventory included all acres contained within the project planning area boundary.

Map by Map Descriptions:

Table H-1A below is a summary of acres in the inventory process.

Table H-1A Potential Wilderness Area Inventory Summary

	Approximate Acres
Total Acres Inventoried	21,000
Acres Removed from inventory (past harvest) Map H-2	6,890*
Acres removed from inventory (300 feet each side of roads) Map H-3	4,925*
Acres identified as Other Undeveloped Lands Map H-4	8,875**
Acres of Potential Wilderness Areas identified within the project planning area Map H-5	0 - None
*Acres that overlapped were not considered in this figure.	
** This number does not include polygons less than one acre in size.	

Map H

Map displays South George project planning area, in context with Umatilla and other nearby National Forests, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and designated Wilderness areas.

Map H-0

Map H-0 is a summary map that displays all five maps described below.

Map H-1

Map H-1 displays South George project planning area, forest roads, and Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek inventoried roadless areas (IRAs). Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs are outside the project planning area and separated by forest roads (FR) 4400 and FR 4300 and FR 4304. No project activities are proposed in the IRAs. South George project planning area is approximately 21,000 acres.

Map H-1A

Map H-1A is a NAIP09 imagery photo representation of Map H-1.

Map H-2

Map H-2 displays South George project planning area, forest roads, past harvest, and Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs. The entire planning area was overlain with Pomeroy district's GIS harvest layer which displays locations of timber harvest over the past 60 years. Past timber harvest included clear-cuts to thinning units. The past timber harvest layer also includes lands where local knowledge and field visits were utilized to verify past timber harvest (notes from field verification) can be found in the South George project record. In all cases, past timber harvest resulted in features such as stumps, skid trails etc. which are evident; therefore, all acres (approximately 6,890 acres) depicted in the map do not meet FSH 1909.12 Ch 71.11(9) inventory criteria and will be removed from the inventory in Map H-3.

Map H-2A

Map H-2A is a NAIP09 imagery photo representation of Map H-2.

Map H-3

Map H-3 displays South George project planning area, forest roads, acres with evidence of recognizable stumps, skid trails, uneven canopy closure, and Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs. The entire project planning area was overlain with Pomeroy district's GIS forest roads layer. Forest roads have associated permitted uses (danger tree removal) and maintenance. Road maintenance and many permitted uses have removed trees and created visible stumps in the corridor. These activities are expected to continue into the future.

During initial road construction trees were felled within a clearing limit to provide for safe and efficient construction and future operational safety of road users. Clearing distances away from the edge of a road varied by many factors including tree height, topographic slope, and other factors. Past clearing of trees along forest roads created stumps that are evident and recognizable.

Road maintenance occurs to varying degrees along each road according to an assigned maintenance level and available funding. Road maintenance includes the periodic clearing of brush and the falling of danger trees that present a hazard to forest visitors, employees, and contractors as defined by the Region 6 Danger Tree Policy (2008). The distance of the hazard removal away from a road varies by tree height, topographic slope, and other factors. Past removal of danger trees along forest roads created stumps that are evident and recognizable.

Harvest of trees for personal-use firewood is permitted within 300 feet of open forest roads consistent with project NEPA decisions and travel and access management plan decisions. Past firewood gathering along open forest roads created stumps that are evident and recognizable.

We recognize stumps are not present along every mile of forest road; for example roads adjacent to a meadow, talus, or a lake. The judgment we applied in setting a PWA boundary balanced inventory criteria regarding excluding past harvest and facilitating easy on-the-ground identification.

Based on local knowledge, and professional judgment regarding the evidence of recognizable stumps, skid trails, etc. which occur to varying degrees adjacent to forest roads (as described above) and to facilitate easy on-the-ground identification of a uniform, measurable boundary along a semi-permanent, human-made feature; the boundary was set as 300 feet each side of the forest road.

This boundary is fully consistent with and supported by the following inventory criteria.

- FSH 1909.12 at 71.1(3); potential wilderness areas do not contain forest roads therefore all acres that are a forest road will be removed from the inventory in Map H-4.
- FSH 1909.12 at 71.1(9); acres with evidence of past logging and roads will be removed from the inventory in Map H-4.
- FSH 1909.12, at 71; locate potential wilderness area boundaries at semi-permanent, human-made features to facilitate easy on-the-ground identification of a boundary.

Therefore, highlighted acres along forest roads (approximately 4,925 acres) in Map H-3 will be removed from the inventory in Map H-4.

Map H-3A

Map H-3A is a NAIP09 imagery photo representation of Map H-3.

Map H-4

Map H-4 displays South George project planning area, forest roads, acres that do not contain evidence of past harvest or forest roads, and Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs. Approximately one hundred and four (104) individual polygons were evaluated. Thirty-three (33) individual polygons less than 1 acre in size were eliminated from further study. The removal of these polygons resulted in seventy one (71) individual polygons, ranging in size from 1 acre to approximately 4,440 acres, covering approximately 8,785 acres being evaluated.

Map 4 displays 71 polygons, each with its own unique, numeric identifier. These polygons do not have substantially recognizable stumps, do not contain forest roads, and each polygon boundary is greater than or equal to 300 feet from a forest road.

All of the 71 polygons are not contiguous with inventoried roadless areas due to the presence of main access forest system roads (FRs 4400, 4300, and 4304) and or past timber harvest activity. All 71 individual polygons are part of a larger ecosystem and none are separate, self-contained ecosystems, such as found on an island surrounded by water. None of the 71 polygons can be separately preserved due to a physical terrain or a natural condition in part because of their small size and in part because they are each part of a larger, overall continuous ecosystem condition distributed throughout and beyond the project area (see Table H-1B). Based on the discussion above, local knowledge, and professional judgment none of these individual polygons met inventory criteria at 71.1 2a, 2b, or 2c, and therefore will not be brought forward as potential wilderness areas (PWAs).

An outcome of the PWA inventory process was the identification of isolated polygons of other undeveloped lands (Table H-1B). These 71 polygons are other undeveloped lands. These 71 polygons did not meet inventory criteria as PWAs, and they are not inventoried roadless areas or a designated wilderness area. Each individual polygon of isolated land has no history of harvest activity and does not contain forest roads. They are stand-alone polygons of varying acreages all less than or equal to 4,999 acres within the project planning area. Other undeveloped lands will be brought forward and displayed in Map H-5.

Map H-4A

Map H-4A is NAIP09 imagery photo representation of Map H-4.

Map H-5

Map H-5 displays the Forest Service's completed inventory of PWAs within South George project planning area. There are no areas that meet the inventory criteria as PWAs. Map H-5 also displays 71 polygons of other undeveloped lands within South George project planning area. These approximate 8,785 acres of land have no history of harvest activity, do not contain forest roads¹ and are not designated as a wilderness area or inventoried as a PWA.

The only areas showing as PWAs are the Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs which are separated from South George project planning area by existing forest system roads. As mention in previously, typically PWAs substantially overlap and or are contiguous with IRAs and can be considered an IRA/PWA (Chapter 3, p. 3-178). A PWA inventory was not done for Asotin Creek and Wenatchee Creek IRAs because South George project planning area in not contiguous to these areas and no activities would occur in either IRA.

The remaining acres of land (approximately 11,815 acres) within South George project planning area displayed in Map 5, are essentially developed because they contain forest roads or have evidence of past timber harvest

Map H-5A

Map H-5A is NAIP09 imagery photo representation showing Forest Service consideration of placement of PWA boundaries along permanent natural or semi-permanent human-made features such as ridges, streams, topographic breaks, past harvest, or forest roads to facilitate easy on the ground identification for polygon 1 the largest polygon.

Maps H-6, H-7, and H-8

Maps display interaction between Other Undeveloped Lands and activities in Alternatives B, C and D.

¹ Forest Road – A road wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest system and the use and development of resources. Road – A motor vehicle route over 50 inches wide, unless identified and managed as a trail (36 CFR § 212.1).

Table H-1B: South George Potential Wilderness Inventory

The following inventory for the South George project planning area was created using the inventory criteria found in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12 Chapter 71.1. Each polygon from Map H-4 (described above) was examined against the following criteria from FSH 1909.12 Chapter 71.1:

- (1) Area is more than 5,000 acres in size
- (2) Area contains less than 5,000 acres, but can meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - 2a. Area can be preserved due to physical terrain and natural conditions.
 - 2b. Areas are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
 - 2c. Areas are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.

The Forest Service relied on local knowledge and judgment regarding unique, site specific conditions of each area being considered for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness. Delineation of areas for potential wilderness inventory; locate boundaries at prominent natural or semi-permanent human-made features to facilitate easy on-the-ground identification.

Note 1: The following narrative is a comment that applies to each of the 71 polygons in Table H-1B. ‘This individual polygon displayed on Map H-4 is part of a larger ecosystem and is not a separate, self-contained ecosystem, such as found on an island surrounded by water. This polygon cannot be separately preserved due to a physical terrain or a natural condition because of the small size and shape of this polygon in relation to the setting of its physical terrain. While there are no roads or past timber harvest in this polygon, this condition alone is not a sole indication of a natural condition. For example, policies over the past 50 years have excluded fire disturbance from much of the area surrounding this polygon creating a context of uncharacteristic or un-natural conditions. In addition this polygon is part of a larger, overall continuous ecosystem condition distributed throughout and beyond the project area. This isolated, individual polygon cannot be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Polygon ID	Sum of Acres	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (1)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2a.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2b.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2c.)	Comments Note 1 above applies to all 71 polygons in Table H-1B
1	4,440	No	No	No	No	See Comments in Table H-1C
2	995	No	No	No	No	See Comments in Table H-1C
3	1,115	No	No	No	No	See Comments in Table H-1C
4	1,055	No	No	No	No	See Comments in Table H-1C
5	161	No	No	No	No	
6	129	No	No	No	No	
7	109	No	No	No	No	
8	98	No	No	No	No	
9	83	No	No	No	No	
10	75	No	No	No	No	
11	54	No	No	No	No	
12	35	No	No	No	No	

Polygon ID	Sum of Acres	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (1)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2a.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2b.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2c.)	Comments Note 1 above applies to all 71 polygons in Table H-1B
13	35	No	No	No	No	
14	28	No	No	No	No	
15	28	No	No	No	No	
16	25	No	No	No	No	
17	21	No	No	No	No	
18	20	No	No	No	No	
19	19	No	No	No	No	
20	16	No	No	No	No	
21	15	No	No	No	No	
22	15	No	No	No	No	
23	14	No	No	No	No	
24	12	No	No	No	No	
25	11	No	No	No	No	
26	10	No	No	No	No	
27	10	No	No	No	No	
28	9	No	No	No	No	
29	8	No	No	No	No	
30	8	No	No	No	No	
31	7	No	No	No	No	
32	7	No	No	No	No	
33	6	No	No	No	No	
34	6	No	No	No	No	
35	6	No	No	No	No	
36	5	No	No	No	No	
37	5	No	No	No	No	
38	5	No	No	No	No	
39	5	No	No	No	No	
40	5	No	No	No	No	
41	4	No	No	No	No	
42	4	No	No	No	No	
43	4	No	No	No	No	
44	4	No	No	No	No	
45	4	No	No	No	No	
46	4	No	No	No	No	
47	4	No	No	No	No	
48	3	No	No	No	No	
49	3	No	No	No	No	
50	3	No	No	No	No	
51	3	No	No	No	No	
52	3	No	No	No	No	
53	3	No	No	No	No	
54	3	No	No	No	No	
55	3	No	No	No	No	
56	3	No	No	No	No	

Polygon ID	Sum of Acres	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (1)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2a.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2b.)	FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2c.)	Comments Note 1 above applies to all 71 polygons in Table H-1B
57	3	No	No	No	No	
58	3	No	No	No	No	
59	2	No	No	No	No	
60	2	No	No	No	No	
61	2	No	No	No	No	
62	2	No	No	No	No	
63	2	No	No	No	No	
64	2	No	No	No	No	
65	2	No	No	No	No	
66	1	No	No	No	No	
67	1	No	No	No	No	
68	1	No	No	No	No	
69	1	No	No	No	No	
70	1	No	No	No	No	
71	1	No	No	No	No	
Grand Total	8,785					

INVENTORY RESULTS:

In summary there are no areas within the project planning area that meet the inventory criteria as potential wilderness areas as displayed in Map H-5.

CONSIDERATION OF FOUR LARGEST POLYGONS:

The following four polygons of undeveloped lands were analyzed in more detail because of their size.

Other remaining polygons of undeveloped lands were smaller in size (about 160 acres or less).

Table H-1C reflects the result of the review.

Table H-1C – Consideration of Four Largest Polygons of Other Undeveloped Lands

PWA Inventory Criteria	Polygon 1 Approx. 4,440 acres	Polygon 2 Approx. 995 acres	Polygon 3 Approx. 1,115 acres	Polygon 4 Approx. 1,055 acres
FSH 1909.12 71.1 (1) Areas contain 5,000 acres or more	No	No	No	No
FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2a.) Areas contain less than 5,000 acres but, can be preserved due to physical terrain and natural conditions	The majority of acres are in FP management area allocations C4 and C3A. The goal and desired future condition for both MAs is to provide high levels of habitat effectiveness for big game and other wildlife. Prescribed fire alone without management of	Size and shape of polygon prohibits preserving it due to physical terrain and natural conditions. It is located in FP management area allocations C3 and C3A. The goal and	Same as Polygon 2 (size and shape of polygon and majority of acres are in MA C4)	Same as Polygon 2 (size and shape of polygon and majority of acres are in MA C4)

PWA Inventory Criteria	Polygon 1 Approx. 4,440 acres	Polygon 2 Approx. 995 acres	Polygon 3 Approx. 1,115 acres	Polygon 4 Approx. 1,055 acres
	<p>vegetation would not maintain or enhance big game or other wildlife habitat. If added to the PWA inventory future options for big game and wildlife habitat would be limited and eventually in the long-term have a negative impact on wildlife.</p> <p>Proximity of existing road systems adjacent to the polygon with ongoing activity, adjacent private land and associated activities, and the size of the polygon itself would preclude a primitive wilderness experience.</p> <p>Adjacent private land (Cloverland area) on the western boundary is being parceled off in 5-acre sections for development. Past history and ongoing experience is that some private landowners enter onto National Forest land from their adjacent property on ATVs, and snowmobiles regardless of whether the Forest Service land is open to that use. It would not be possible to monitor this boundary area at all times.</p>	<p>desired future condition for these MAs is to provide high levels of habitat effectiveness for big game. Prescribed fire alone without management of vegetation would not maintain or enhance big game habitat. If added to PWA inventory future options for wildlife habitat would be limited and eventually in the long-term have a negative impact on wildlife.</p> <p>Cook Ridge Pond is located within this polygon and is used for the grazing allotment.</p>		
<p>FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2b.) Areas contain less than 5,000 acres but, are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit on the National Wilderness</p>	<p>No</p> <p>It is part of a larger overall contiguous ecosystem condition distributed throughout and beyond the project planning area.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Same as 1</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Same as 1</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Same as 1</p>

PWA Inventory Criteria	Polygon 1 Approx. 4,440 acres	Polygon 2 Approx. 995 acres	Polygon 3 Approx. 1,115 acres	Polygon 4 Approx. 1,055 acres
Preservation System				
FSH 1909.12 71.1 (2c.) Areas contain less than 5,000 acres but, are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size	No	No	No	No
FSH 1909.12 71.1 (3) Areas do not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanent authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100th meridian.	No roads	No roads	No roads	No roads