



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 East Main Street
Cañon City, Colorado 81212

In Reply Refer to:
8300 (COF020) LS

Wild Connections
John Sztukowski
2168 Pheasant Place
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear Mr. Sztukowski:

This letter is in reference to the lands with wilderness characteristics inventory. The BLM 2013 inventory was reviewed in response to new information submitted by your organization. In 2015, all of the areas were reviewed and presented to the public on the Royal Gorge Field Office web page. At that time, the BLM agreed to reconsider the Bear Mountain unit # COF-020-071.

The enclosed report includes an updated inventory for Bear Mountain. The total acreage inventoried was 14,109 acres. The evaluation concluded that 8,204 acres qualifies as having lands with wilderness characteristics. The remaining 5,905 acres were excluded for human disturbance affecting naturalness.

The RGFO is currently not able to update the webpage, please share this information with anyone who is interested. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Skinner, 719-269-8732.

Sincerely,

Keith E. Berger
Field Manager
Royal Gorge Field Office

Enclosures:
1 – Copy of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics report

**Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Report:
Bear Mountain
COF-020-071**

Section 201 of FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values, which includes wilderness characteristics. It also provides that the preparation and maintenance of the inventory shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands. Regardless of past inventory, the BLM must maintain and update as necessary, its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands. In some circumstances conditions relating to wilderness characteristics may have changed over time, and an area that was once determined to lack wilderness characteristics may now possess them. BLM Manual 6310 'Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands' provides the guidance on conducting this inventory process.

Following BLM guidance the Royal Gorge Field Office conducted an inventory in 2013 and found 7,193 acres of the 13,591 acre unit met the criteria for having wilderness characteristics. Per policy, the public has the opportunity to provide new information regarding wilderness characteristics that the BLM must evaluate and consider. New information that meets the minimum standard for further review was submitted by Wild Connections on May 6, 2015 contending that the unit did in fact meet the criteria. This report reflects an updated inventory that combines BLM's 2013 findings and an evaluation of the data submitted by Wild Connections.

Inventory Effort	Acreage Inventoried	Wilderness Characteristics Acreage
BLM 2013 Inventory		
COF-020-071	7,193	7,193
COF-020-071-A	2,527	0
COF-020-071-B	3,871	0
Wild Connections Inventory	13,300 (approximate)	13,300 (approximate)
BLM 2015 Evaluation	14,109.07	8,204
Conclusions		

**Form 1: Document Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings on Record
(Refers to Original 1980's Inventory Effort)**

Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

NO (If no, go to form 2)
 YES If yes, and if the area has subunits within the broader area, list the unique identifiers for each of those subunits:

Inventory Source: 1980 Wilderness Study Report
 Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): CO-020-050-10
 BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Front Range District/ Royal Gorge Field Office

BLM Inventory findings on record: Document existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Document BLM Wilderness Characteristics Findings on Record (Historic Findings)					
Inventory Source Document:					
Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? (YES/NO & acres)	Naturalness (YES/NO)	Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude (YES/NO)	Outstanding opportunities for primitive & unconfined recreation (YES/NO)	Supplemental Values? (YES/NO)
CO-050-010	Y	N	Y	Y	N

(add rows as needed)

Form 2: Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-071, Bear Mountain

Acreage: 14,109.1 acres

1. Is the area of sufficient size? :

Yes No

Description:

The unit, COF-020-071, Bear Mountain, is bounded as follows:

- The western edge is defined by wilderness inventory road, Fremont County Road 12, and private lands;
- The southern edge is bounded by lands other than BLM, and BLM Road #6020;
- The eastern edge is bounded by BLM ATV Trails #T6035A, T6035B, T6040A and BLM Roads #6040 and 6040A.
- The north and northwest boundary is defined by property lines other than BLM management.
- The unit is found in parts of the sections listed in the following townships;
 - o T. 48 N. R 11 E. Sections: 1
 - o T. 48 N. R. 12 E. Sections: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15
 - o T. 49 N. R. 12 E. Sections: 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

The BLM's 2013 inventory found the area to have sufficient size to meet the minimal criteria but concluded that portions did not appear natural due to cumulative impacts of man-made features. A nearly 17 mile network of designated roads and ATV trails occupy a large section of the western portion of the unit. As a result the BLM divided the unit into three sub-units using roads old road disturbances as the boundary. The 7193.22 acre eastern unit was found to have wilderness characteristics while the two western units did not meet the size criteria. In 2015, Wild Connections correctly pointed out that the boundary the BLM used to create the three sub-units did not follow policy. They did not contest the existence of the 17 mile wilderness inventory road network and suggested that these roads be cherry stemmed into the unit. The BLM reviewed the information submitted along with policy. BLM Manual 6310 identifies that areas must meet a minimal criteria of being a road-less area over 5,000 acres. By cherry-stemming the routes out of the unit, the unit meets the size criteria.

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes No NA

The Bear Mountain unit, COF-020-071, is located less than 5 miles northeast of Cotopaxi, Colorado. The unit is located less than 25 miles east of Salida, Colorado and less than 35 miles west of Canon City, Colorado (measured to the nearest point). The unit consists of

14,109.1 acres of public lands. There is a 159.3 acre State Land inholding located at T. 49 N. 12 E. Sec. 16 and 21; the inholding lands will not be included in the inventory.

The topography of the unit is steep and rocky. Elevation of the unit ranges from 6,700 feet to 8,500 feet with the primary vegetation being piñon/ juniper, ponderosa pine and mixed conifers. Cottonwoods can be found along the riparian areas. The understory vegetation is primarily rabbit brush, cacti, grasses, and sage brush. Bear Mountain is a prominent peak in the area, being mostly comprised of slab granite face. Long Gulch is another prominent feature within the unit, travelling north to south.

The unit contains two sections of designated motorized routes. The southwest section of the unit contains 11 miles of these routes that detract from the naturalness of this portion of the unit. For this reason, the unit boundary was altered on the western edge to exclude the significant disturbances to naturalness. The boundary is defined by the closed jeep route, CO-020-071- D. Although the route was determined to be a way, it was chosen for its ease to find on the ground and its proximity to the area containing the route disturbance.

The northwestern section of the unit also contains approximately 6.2 miles of designated motorized routes. Although most of the routes are within drainages, the density in the corner of this section is high. To minimize the effects of the human impacts from these routes, the boundary line was drawn to reduce the number of routes from the end of route # 6045C to the property corner. The boundary continues on #6045 to the intersection of the administrative route CO-020-071-A and continues south on this route to serve as the western boundary. This boundary reduces the amount of cherry stemmed routes to approximately 1.7 miles therefore reducing the cumulative effect of the designated motorized routes within the area.

The remaining lands appear to have primarily been affected by forces of nature. Minimal imprints of man do exist within the unit, but the accumulative affects do not affect the naturalness.

The man-made features that exist on the ground include routes, CO-020-071-F and G. The routes have been user created by off-highway vehicles (OHVs). The routes travel from Bear Mountain area to Texas Creek, via Long Gulch. The routes were closed in the Royal Gorge Field Office, Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006). The routes have not had use or maintenance for some time, and the riparian vegetation along Longs gulch is quickly growing in, allowing for the route to become unnoticeable.

Other man-made features within the unit include physical vegetation treatment projects, such as roller chopping and cut-stump removal. The roller chopping treatment is located at the end of BLM 6045. The area has recovered, and the disturbance does not impact the visual landscape of the unit. An average visitor would not be able to tell that roller chopping occurred in the area. The cut stump removal project is located along Long Gulch, to remove salt cedar from the riparian area. The vegetation around the project area has recovered and the disturbance has mostly become unnoticeable to the average visitor.

Without the area excluded for unnaturalness, the portion of the area does meet the criteria for naturalness with a size of 8204 acres. For clarity the qualifying portion was renamed COF-020-071-C. The boundary for the portion that is brought forward is:

Prepared by:

Evaluator: Janine Prout/Recreation Technician

Evaluator: Kalem Lenard/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Evaluator: Ken Reed/ Forester

Evaluator: Jeff Williams/ Rangeland Management Specialist

Evaluator: Matt Rustand/Wildlife Biologist

Evaluator: Linda Skinner/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date: May 30, 2013

Date: December, 22, 2015

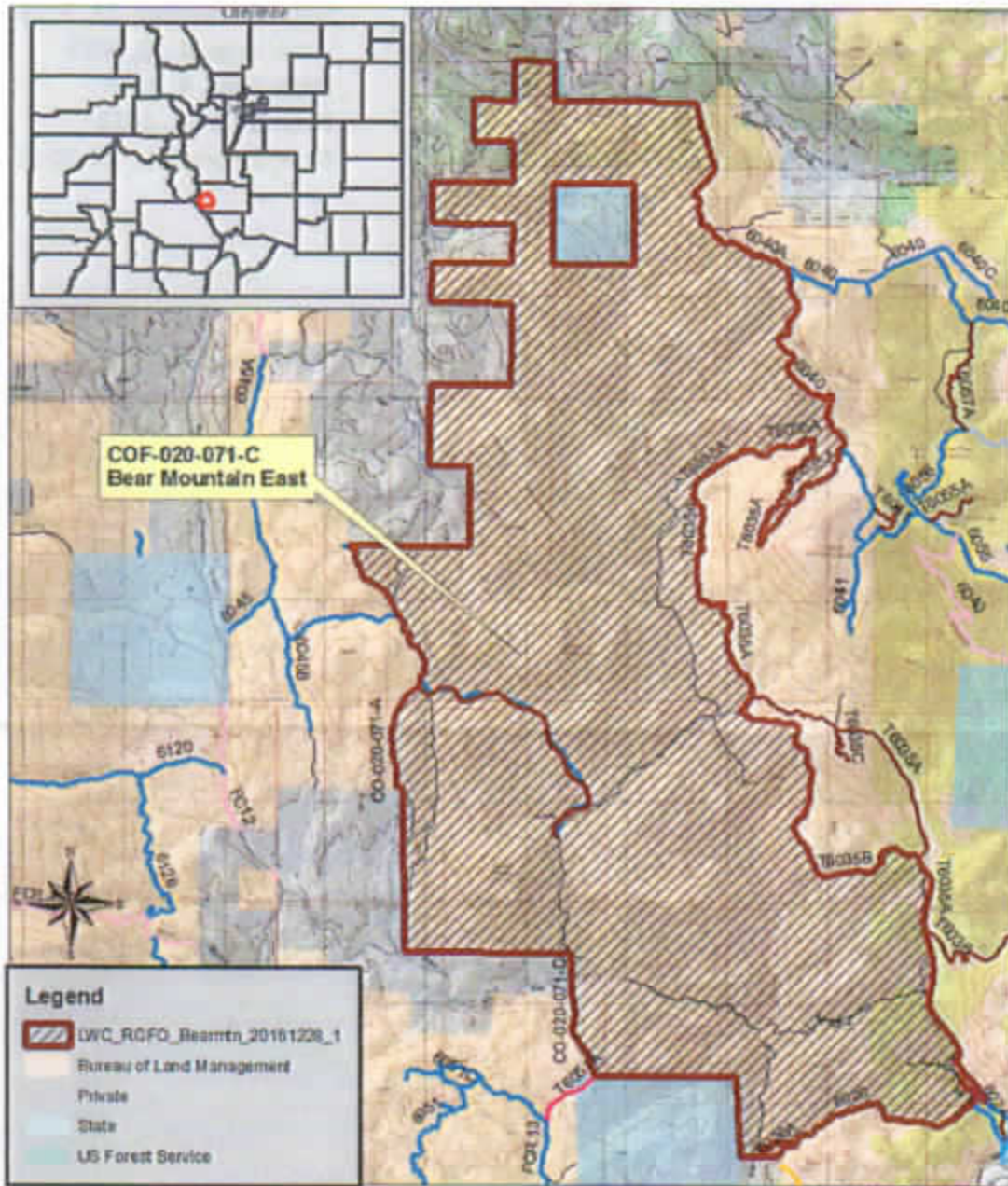
Date: August 28, 2013

Date: Sept. 4, 2013

Date: Sept 11, 2013

Date: December, 28, 2016

Map 1 Bear Mountain 2015 inventory



COF-020-071, Bear Mountain
 Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Map
 Qualifying portion name: COF-020-071-C,
 Bear Mountain East



Prepared by L Skinner 12/28/2016

NOTE TO MAP USERS
 No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked or current status on any specific tract of land.

Form 3: Route Analysis:

The Route Analysis includes factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. For the purposes of this analysis, use the following definition of a "road". This definition is drawn from and the FLPMA legislative history and historic BLM inventory direction.

Road: An access route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

- a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. "Improved" does not necessarily mean formal construction. "Maintained" does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
- b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
- c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

If a portion of a route is found to meet the wilderness inventory road criteria (see Part III) and the remainder does not meet these criteria (e.g., a cherrystem road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-071, Bear Mountain Route or Route Segment Name and/or Identifier: BLM 6045, BLM 6020, BLM 6040, BLM 6040A, CO-020-071-A

I. LOCATION:

Refer to attached map and BLM corporate data (GIS). List photo point references (where applicable) or reference attached photo log:

Map Title: Unit, COF-020-069, Bills Creek Wilderness Inventory Map

Map Date: 2013

Describe:

The map shows the parcel inventoried for wilderness characteristics and routes collected by GPS

II. ROUTE CONTEXT

The purpose of a route is not a deciding factor in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. The purpose of a route does provide context for factors on which such a determination may be based, particularly the question of whether maintenance of the route ensures relatively regular and continuous

use. The purpose also helps to determine whether maintenance that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure such use would be approved by BLM when the need arises.

- A. Current Purpose of Route: (Examples: rangeland/livestock improvements (stock tank, developed spring, reservoir, fence, corral), inholdings (ranch, farmhouse), mine site, concentrated use site (camp site), recreation, utilities (transmission line, telephone, pipeline), administrative (project maintenance, communication site, vegetation treatment)).

Describe:

BLM 6045: Route is currently used for recreation; it is open to full size vehicle use in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).

BLM 6020: Route is currently used for access into inholdings; it is open to full size vehicle use in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).

BLM 6040: Route is currently used for recreation; it is open to full size vehicle use in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).

BLM 6040A: Route is currently used for recreation; it is open to full size vehicle use in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).

CO-020-071-A: Route is currently used as Administrative route in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).

B. Right-of-Way (ROW):

- B.1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes No Unknown

If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW?

- B.2. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes No Unknown or N/A

Explain:

BLM 6020: Has a ROW associated with this route, serial # COC 61253. It is currently still in use.

BLM 6040, BLM 6040A, BLM 6045, CO-020-071-A: do not have ROWs associated with them.

III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA

- A. Is there evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means?

Yes, if either III.A.1 or III.A.2 is checked "yes" below

No, if both III.A.1 and III.A.2 are checked "no" below

A.1. Construction: Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?

Yes No

Examples (partial list):

Paved ___ Bladed Graveled ___ Roadside Berms ___ Cut/Fill ___ Other ___

Describe:

BLM 6045: Evidence of mechanical construction, possibly bladed.

BLM 6020: Evidence of mechanical construction; possibly bladed and bull dozer use.

BLM 6040: Evidence of mechanical construction, cut/fill road.

BLM 6040A: evidence of mechanical construction, possibly bladed.

A.2. Improvements: Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?

Yes If "yes", improvements by? Hand Tools ___ by Machine
No ___

Examples (partial list):

Culverts ___ Built Stream Crossings ___ Bridges ___ Drainage ___ Barriers ___

Describe:

- BLM 6045, no recent improvements observed.
- BLM 6020: improvements such as creating drainage with the route.
- BLM 6040: Improvements such as creating drainage for the route.
- BLM 6040A: no recent improvements observed.
- CO-020-071-A: no recent improvements known.

B. Maintenance: Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?

Yes, if either III.B.1 or III.B.2 is checked "yes" below

No, if both III.B.1 and III.B.2 are checked "no" below ___

B.1. Is there evidence or documentation of maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes If "yes", maintenance by? Hand Tools ___ by Machine

No ___

Explain:

BLM 6045: route on BLM maintenance schedule to maintain for full size vehicle use.

BLM 6020: ROW holder and BLM repair route for regular and continuous use.

BLM 6040: route on BLM maintenance schedule to maintain for full size vehicle use.

BLM 6040A: route on BLM maintenance schedule to maintain for full size vehicle use.

CO-020-071-A: route not on BLM maintenance schedule, only maintained for administrative use.

B.2. If the route or route segment is in good condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved

by BLM to meet the purpose(s) of the route in the event this route became impassable? "Good condition" would be a condition that ensures regular and continuous use relative to the purposes of the route. Consider whether the route can be clearly followed in the field over its entire course and whether all or any portion of the route contains any impediments to travel.

Yes No

Explain:

BLM 6045: Yes, BLM would maintain route if became impassable.

BLM 6020: Yes, BLM would maintain route if became impassable.

BLM 6040: Yes, BLM would maintain route if became impassable.

BLM 6040A: Yes, BLM would maintain route if became impassable.

CO-020-071-A: Yes, BLM would maintain route if became impassable.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?

Yes No

Explain: Describe evidence (e.g., direct: vehicles or vehicle tracks observed; or indirect: evidence of use associated with purpose of the route such as maintenance of facility that route accesses) and other rationale for whether use has occurred and will continue to occur on a *relatively* regular basis (regular and continuous use relative to the purpose(s) of the route). Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes (e.g., trips per day, week, month, season, year, or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases).

BLM 6045: Designated open on Arkansas River Travel Management Plan, on BLM maintenance schedule.

BLM 6020: Designated open on Arkansas River Travel Management Plan, on BLM maintenance schedule, ROW access.

BLM 6040: Designated open on Arkansas River Travel Management Plan, on BLM maintenance schedule.

BLM 6040A: Designated open on Arkansas River Travel Management Plan, on BLM maintenance schedule.

CO-020-071-A: No, this route does not have regular and continuous use.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Does the route or route segment meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)? If part of the route meets the wilderness inventory road definition and the remainder does not, describe the segment meeting the definition and any remaining portion not meeting the definition and why. Also, describe and explain rationale for any discrepancies with citizen proposals.

Yes X = Wilderness Inventory Road

Explain:

- BLM 6045 is a wilderness inventory road.
- BLM 6020 is a wilderness inventory road.
- BLM 6040 is a wilderness inventory road.
- BLM 6040A is a wilderness inventory road.

No X = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes

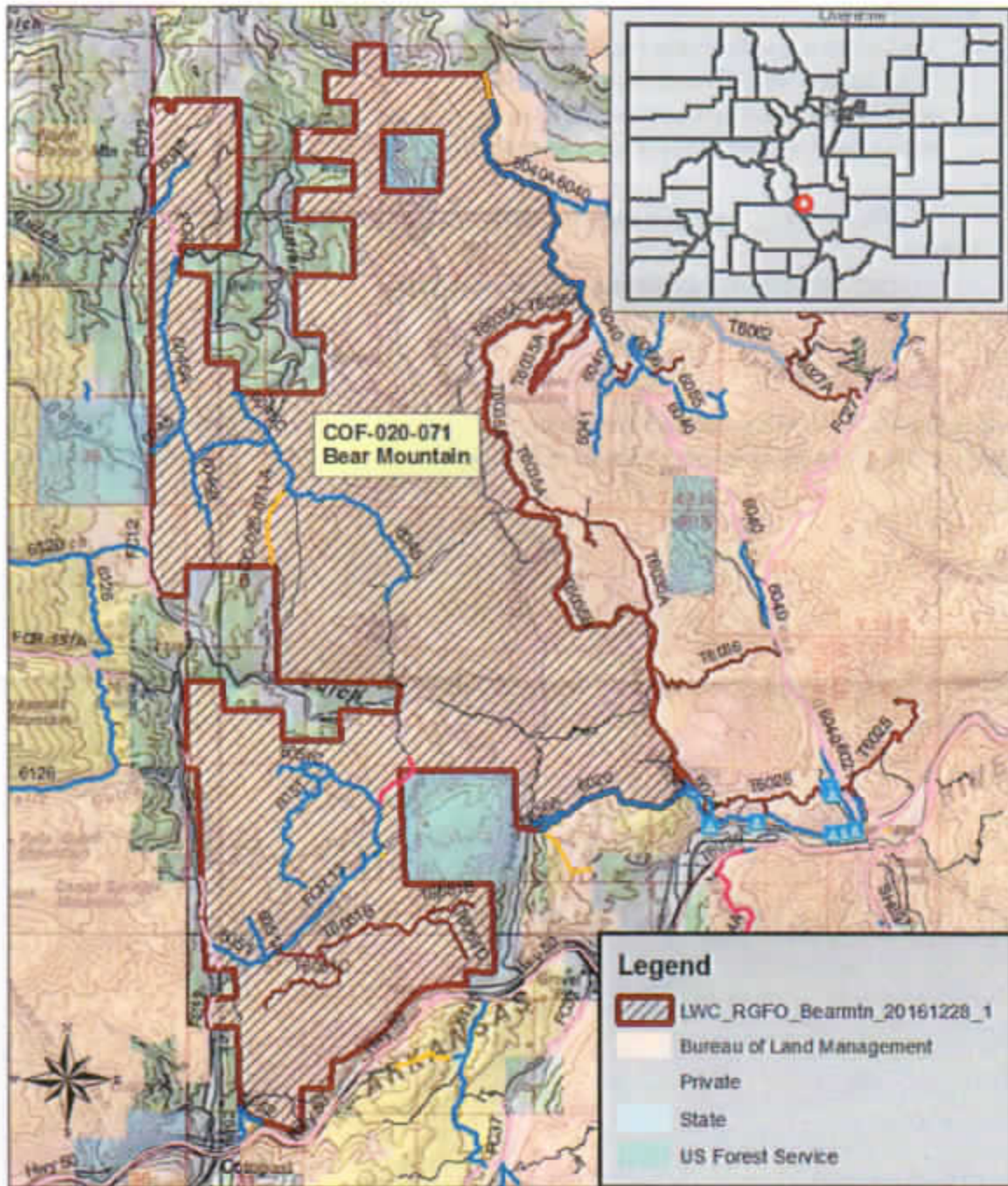
Explain:

- CO-020-071-A is not a wilderness inventory road.

Evaluator: Janine Prout/ Recreation Technician
Evaluator: Linda Skinner/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date: August 27, 2013
Date: December 28, 2016

Map 2 Routes within Bear Mountain inventory unit



COF-020-071, Bear Mountain
Route Reference Map



Prepared by L Skinner 12/28/2016

NOTE TO MAP USERS
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked or current status on any specific tract of land.

PHOTO LOG

Photographer(s):

Inventory Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-071, Bear Mountain

Date	Frame #	Camera Direc.	Description	GPS/UTM Location	Township	Range	Sec.	Photo Point #

Royal Gorge Field Office Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory, 2015: Evaluation of new information

Assessment and Determination

The BLM Royal Gorge Field Office followed manual 6310 in the performance of inventory for lands with wilderness characteristics. In response to new information submitted in May, 2015 by Wild Connections, the 2013 inventory was re-evaluated. A final review was made by comparing existing data and when needed additional field trips were taken to collect data by GPS, inventory forms, and photo points. Resource specialists were also consulted to determine if the conclusion reached in the 2013 inventory remains valid, or whether changes should occur. The above report documents those findings for the following area(s):

Unit ID	Unit Name	Total BLM acreage inventoried	Acreage with Wilderness Characteristics	Acreage without Wilderness Characteristics
COF-020-071	Bear Mountain	14,109.07	8204	5905

Review:

I have reviewed the inventory results, reports, photos, and maps for the above Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and concur with the findings as submitted.



Linda Skinner
Outdoor Recreation Planner, Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 12/28/16



Keith E. Berger
Field Manager
Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 1/23/17