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ROCK SPRINGS DISTRICT, WYOMING WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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In late 1983, the U. S. Geological Survey published Circular 902-A-P, "Petroleum Potential of Wilderness Lands in the Western United States." This assessment indicates that all wilderness study areas in the Rock Springs District have high oil and gas potential. The one exception is the extreme northeastern portion of the Honeycomb Buttes WSA (WY-040-323) which was found to have medium oil and gas potential. While this new information is important, it does not change the recommendations with respect to the area of nonsuitability in this Wilderness Study Report.

Land Dunes	10,233	14,280
Alkali Flats	16,730	0
South Flats	10,810	0
Alkali Washes and Sand Dunes	12,800	0
Red Lake	9,513	0
Honeycomb Buttes	4,117	18,647
Dragon Butte	3,720	0
Whitehorse Creek	4,007	0
Devils Flats and Twin Buttes	10,214	0
Red Creek Badlands	1,000	0
Total	83,433	32,927

It is recommended that all areas of high potential be preserved as wilderness, and that areas of medium potential be preserved as public lands. Areas of low potential should be managed for multiple use. The following table shows the distribution of these areas by county.

This report provides the basis for the management of the areas of high potential and the areas of medium potential. It also provides a picture of the areas of low potential and the areas of nonsuitability.

This report satisfies the requirement for a report to be filed under the regulations at 40 CFR 1300. An environmental impact statement and report are not required.

RECOMMENDATION

This report contains the results of the Bureau of Land Management's review of thirteen Wilderness Study Areas in Sweetwater, Sublette, Fremont, and Lincoln counties, Wyoming. Based upon multiple resource analysis and public involvement, we have concluded that approximately 161,835 acres within these Wilderness Study Areas are not suitable for preservation as wilderness and should be released for uses other than wilderness. These nonsuitable areas are listed below and are shown on maps in this report.

AREA	NONSUITABLE ACRES BLM	PRELIMINARY SUITABLE ACRES BLM
Lake Mountain	13,865	0
Raymond Mountain	32,936	0
Buffalo Hump	10,300	0
Sand Dunes	10,229	16,280
Alkali Draw	16,990	0
South Pinnacles	10,800	0
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes	12,800	0
Red Lake	9,515	0
Honeycomb Buttes	4,117	36,647
Oregon Buttes	5,700	0
Whitehorse Creek	4,002	0
Devils Playground-Twin Buttes	22,561	0
Red Creek Badlands	8,020	0
TOTALS	161,835	52,927

No recommendation is made with respect to those lands preliminarily found suitable for preservation as wilderness, as these areas are now undergoing further consideration involving mineral surveys being conducted by the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines. Recommendations will be transmitted at a later date following completion of these mineral surveys.

This report contains the results of our analysis to date on both the nonsuitable areas and the preliminarily suitable areas in order to give as complete a picture as possible of all the lands reviewed in this wilderness study.

This report satisfies the requirement for a Record of Decision under the regulations of 40 CFR 1505. An environmental impact statement accompanies the report.

This wilderness study report includes wilderness study areas (WSAs) totaling 214,782 acres. These areas are within the Pinedale, Lemmon, Big Horn, and Salt Wells National Monuments and the Snake Springs District located in southwestern Wyoming (under the General Land Office).

The Management Framework Plan (MFP) was prepared during the summer of 1982. The MFP was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management and the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish. The MFP was prepared to provide a framework for the management of the WSAs.

STATE DIRECTOR, WYOMING
Bureau of Land Management

1/31/83

DATE

DIRECTOR
Bureau of Land Management

DATE

Secretary of the Interior

DATE

WILDERNESS STUDY OVERVIEW

This wilderness study report involves thirteen wilderness study areas (WSAs) totalling 214,762 acres. These areas are within the Pinedale, Kemmerer, Big Sandy, and Salt Wells Resource Areas of the Rock Springs District located in Southwestern Wyoming (refer to General Location Map).

The Management Framework Plan (MFP) Step II for these planning units was completed during the summer of 1981. The wilderness resource recommendations were completed in the MFP Step III. These WSAs were studied and evaluated through the Rock Springs District Draft Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement, using the criteria developed in the BLM's Draft Wilderness Study Policy.

At least two alternatives were considered for each WSA:

- 1) All-wilderness alternative
- 2) No-wilderness alternative

The all-wilderness alternative identified the entire acreage of all thirteen WSAs as suitable for wilderness designation. The no-wilderness alternative identified the entire acreages of all thirteen WSA's as unsuitable for wilderness designation. In addition to these alternatives, two alternatives were considered which were a mix of suitable and unsuitable recommendations of the thirteen WSAs. One alternative (alternative 2 in the EIS) recommended six WSAs as suitable and the other alternative (the proposed action in the EIS) recommended one entire WSA and 16,280 acres of the Sand Dunes WSA as suitable.

The cumulative impacts of the proposed action are summarized as follows:

The adverse impacts identified are primarily due to the effects of oil and gas exploration and development on pre-FLPMA leases, where the leasee has a "valid existing right" to exercise the rights and privileges of the lease.

Slightly adverse impacts to air quality, topography, paleontological resources, soils, vegetation and forest resources, wildlife, cultural resources, and visual resources would be realized. Low to moderate adverse impacts would occur to noise and wilderness values. Slightly positive impacts would occur to livestock grazing. Moderately positive impacts would occur to both the timber and mineral industry. There would be no impacts on water resources, fire management, wild horses, and recreation.

Wilderness Study Areas

GENERAL LOCATION MAP

Rock Springs District Wide
Wilderness Study Report

Table 1

LAND WITHIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES

UNIT NO.	NAME	ACRES BLM	ACRES STATE SUBSURFACE*	ACRES STATE	ACRES PRIVATE	GROSS TOTAL
WY-040-110	Lake Mountain	13,865	0	0	0	13,865
WY-040-221	Raymond Mountain	32,936	0	1,320	200	34,456
WY-040-306	Buffalo Hump	10,300	0	0	0	10,300
WY-040-307	Sand Dunes	26,509	0	640	0	27,149
WY-040-311	Alkali Draw	16,990	0	640	0	17,630
WY-040-313	South Pinnacles	10,800	0	0	0	10,800
WY-040-316/317	Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes	12,800	0	0	0	12,800
WY-040-318	Red Lake	9,515	0	0	0	9,515
WY-040-323	Honeycomb Buttes	40,764	640	640	0	42,044
WY-040-324	Oregon Buttes	5,700	0	0	0	5,700
WY-040-325	Whitehorse Creek	4,002	0	0	0	4,002
WY-040-401/402	Devils Playground-Twin Buttes	22,561	1,280	0	0	23,841
WY-040-406	Red Creek Badlands	8,020	0	640	0	8,660

* State owns the subsurface, surface is federally owned.

Table 2

RECOMMENDATIONS

UNIT NO.	NAME	Within Preliminary Suitable Boundary				Within Nonsuitable Boundary				GROSS TOTAL
		ACRES		ACRES STATE	ACRES STATE	ACRES STATE	ACRES PRIVATE			
		BLM	SUBSURFACE					BLM	SUBSURFACE	
110	Lake Mountain	0	0	0	0	13,865	0	0	0	13,865
221	Raymond Mountain	0	0	0	0	32,936	0	1,320	200	34,456
306	Buffalo Hump	0	0	0	0	10,300	0	0	0	10,300
307	Sand Dunes	16,280	0	640	16,920	10,229	0	0	0	10,229
311	Alkali Draw	0	0	0	0	16,990	0	640	0	17,630
313	South Pinnacles	0	0	0	0	10,800	0	0	0	10,800
316/317	Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes	0	0	0	0	12,800	0	0	0	12,800
318	Red Lake	0	0	0	0	9,515	0	0	0	9,515
323	Honeycomb Buttes	36,647	640	640	37,927	4,117	0	0	0	4,117
324	Oregon Buttes	0	0	0	0	5,700	0	0	0	5,700
325	Whitehorse Creek	0	0	0	0	4,002	0	0	0	4,002
401/402	Devils Playground-Twin Buttes	0	0	0	0	22,561	1,280	0	0	23,841
406	Red Creek Badlands	0	0	0	0	8,020	0	640	0	8,660

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

On March 16, 1983, a public hearing was held at Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

A total of 595 oral and written comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the draft EIS. Table 3 shows the results of the comments by alternative. Variations of alternatives were presented by several organizations and individuals during the public comment period. Rock Springs rancher James Magagna presented a variation of the BLM proposed action which, after Bureau consideration and subsequent boundary adjustments, became the BLM preferred alternative for the final environmental impact statement. A coalition of five organizations-Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Club, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, and Wyoming Outdoor Council-proposed a variation of Alternative 2 by adding the Buffalo Hump WSA to the alternative's proposed wilderness designation for Sand Dunes, Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes, Whitehorse Creek and Devils Playground-Twin Buttes. Support for that 142,772-acre wilderness proposal included the Sweetwater County Wildlife Association. A proposal for a Red Desert wilderness complex totalling 252,964 acres drew support from Earth First, Sierra Club, the Wyoming Wilderness Society, and Citizens for the Survival of the Red Desert. The oil and gas industry, ranching and agricultural interests and off-road vehicle enthusiasts tended toward little or no wilderness.

County: County officials in the District did not comment on the WSAs.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within or adjoining the WSAs. State Senator Frank Prevedel of Rock Springs, also taking no position on designation, advised the Bureau to be certain it could actually manage a wilderness area. The Wyoming Recreation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office took no position on wilderness designation.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed wilderness designation because of the oil and gas development potential in each WSA. The Geological Society of Wyoming cited mineral development potential in opposing wilderness, while the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and State Engineer also opposed wilderness designation.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported wilderness designation for protection of seven areas with important wildlife and/or fisheries values. In addition to the Raymond Mountain, Lake Mountain, Sand Dunes, East Sand Dunes, and Honeycomb Buttes WSAs, the Department proposed two units dropped from consideration during the inventory phase-Harris Slough (13,225 acres) and Elk Mountain (7,795 acres)-for wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh advocated designation of all the WSAs and additional areas as wilderness.

Federal: The Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Soil Conservation Service took no position on wilderness designation.

The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of potential conflicts with mineral development.

The Corps of Engineers supported BLM's proposed action, while the Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal. The National Park Service supported wilderness designation for those WSAs that included areas of critical environmental concern and/or potential for outstanding archeological, historical, and paleontological values.

Table 3

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

	ORAL	WRITTEN	TOTAL
Total Comments Received	28	567	595
Support More Wilderness in Addition to Alternative 1	5	14	19
Support Alternative 1- <u>All Wilderness</u> Designate All WSAs as Wilderness Areas (214,762 acres)	1	6	7
Support More Wilderness Than Alternative 2 But Less Than Alternative 1	7	156	163
Support Alternative 2- Designate 6 WSAs as Wilderness Areas (132,472 acres)	1	0	1
Support Proposed Action- Designate 2 WSAs as Wilderness Areas (54,847 acres)	1	5	6
Support <u>No Wilderness</u>	11	379	390
No Position	1	7	8

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
LAKE MOUNTAIN WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Lake Mountain WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-110, LAKE MOUNTAIN, 13,865 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Lake Mountain WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Designation of the entire WSA, or a portion of it, as wilderness was not considered to be an appropriate recommendation based on the application of the wilderness study criteria and because the Rock Creek drainage (the only WSA portion having high quality wilderness values--5,200 acres) does not offer additional diversity to the wilderness system of the region.

The Rock Creek Wildlife Area of Critical Environmental Concern comprises 5,264 acres in the center of the WSA. A total of 3,440 acres of the ACEC are unleased for oil and gas, while the remaining 1824 acres is in pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases within a high potential oil and gas area. Considerable oil and gas exploration has already taken place in the eastern portions of the WSA and this activity is expected to continue. As this activity accelerates, wilderness values will be greatly impaired rendering the WSA unmanageable as wilderness.

2b. STATISTICAL TABLE

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Lake Mountain (WY-040-110)	13,865
Gross Total 13,865	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	13,865
Gross Total 13,865	

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit lies within the Wyoming Range in western Wyoming about 12 miles west-northwest of LaBarge.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the point where Sheep Creek Road and LaBarge Creek Road intersect, thence north along the ridgetop that separates Sheep Creek and Long Hollow to the U.S. Forest Service boundary, thence east to Deadline Ridge, thence southeast and south along Deadline Ridge to an unnamed road, thence southeast along this road to Spring Branch Creek, thence south to Conway Creek (Pine Hollow), thence due west to Grassy Hollow Creek, thence northwest up the hollow to the ridgetop, thence southwest along the ridgetop to the LaBarge Creek Road, thence along the LaBarge Creek Road to the point of beginning. Forty acres of private land are cherrystemmed out of the WSA on the north by the Deadline Ridge-Lake Mountain Road.

(See Map LM-1 on page 12.)

c. General Environment

The unit contains an irregular series of steep-sided ridges ranging in elevation from 7,400 feet to over 9,600 feet. Four major drainages are found within the unit. Rock Creek, in the central part of the unit, contains a population of Colorado River Cutthroat trout designated "rare" by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and "sensitive" by the BLM. Forest cover is found throughout most of the unit. This cover is broken by areas of sagebrush-grass association and bare talus slopes. The area is important habitat for moose, elk, deer, black bear, and grouse.

4. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The Lake Mountain WSA contains 13,865 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Lake Mountain WSA is in a natural state. There are several man-made intrusions, but these are considered insignificant and do not take away from the natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: There are numerous secluded places throughout the WSA where a person could experience outstanding solitude. The mountainous terrain, with moderate to dense forest cover, provides many opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of other users.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The main type of primitive recreation in the area is hunting by foot or on horseback. Elk, deer, moose and bear hunting take place mainly along LaBarge Creek, Long Hollow, and Deadline Ridge. In conjunction with the hunter use is a substantial amount of horseback use.

(2) Special Features

Wildlife is an important special feature in the area. This area is an important elk winter range and Rock Creek contains a pure strain of Colorado River cutthroat trout. One prehistoric site has been located and recorded outside the WSA. It is likely that prehistoric sites can be found within the WSA.

Part of the Lake Mountain WSA has been designated a wildlife Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This area was designated an ACEC to protect the Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat. The Colorado River cutthroat trout has been designated as a sensitive species by the BLM and a rare species by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department because of the questionable status of the trout species population.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- National Forest Land
- Rock Creek Wildlife ACEC
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- High Potential
- Moderate Potential
- Low Potential

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map LM-2
Lake Mountain WSA
**OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL
AND EXISTING LEASES**

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- National Forest Land
- Rock Creek Wildlife ACEC
- Unit Agreement Areas (Graphite, Fogarty Creek, Dry Piney, Hogsback)
- Big Piney - LaBarge Known Geologic Structure
- Dry Hole
- Producing Well
- Proposed Well

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

Under wilderness designation, habitat for wildlife would be protected. Disturbance would be less to wildlife because of the motor vehicle restriction. Recreation opportunities to experience solitude such as hiking and horseback riding would also increase.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The Rocky Mountain Forest Province is well represented in the NWPS throughout the region.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Lake Mountain WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Lake Mountain WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA is adjacent to the Bridger-Teton National Forest which contains the Bridger Wilderness and numerous other areas offering wilderness type experiences.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The Lake Mountain WSA is not recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and would be difficult to manage as wilderness. Much of the boundary is nondescript. The lands outside of the established Rock Creek ACEC are easily accessible and the wilderness values have been reduced by man's activity. The lands within the ACEC encompass a relatively small area -- 5,264 acres in one canyon -- which greatly reduces manageability.

The isolated parcel of private land within the heart of the WSA and its "cherrystemmed" access road greatly reduce the management potential of the area. Past efforts to acquire these lands through exchange have failed and the land has been subdivided and resold.

There has recently been oil and gas wells drilled near the western boundary of the WSA and extensive development is anticipated in the future. This could result in significant intrusion of unnatural sights and sounds into the area.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The most valuable potential resource in the Lake Mountain WSA is hydrocarbons. Producing oil and gas fields occur outside the WSA boundary (Map LM-3) and the potential within the WSA ranges from low to high (Map LM-2).

Wilderness designation would prevent oil and gas from being withdrawn from almost 7,000 acres. As a result of this, there would be a potential loss of direct and indirect revenue generated in the region from the sale of gas.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Lake Mountain WSA would cause no significant adverse impact on resource values.

Vegetation Including Forest Resources

The opportunity to manage the total 3,562 acres (approximately 22.6 million board feet of lumber) of forested lands for wood products within the WSA would be lost. Wilderness designation would eliminate not only timber harvesting but potential firewood and Christmas tree sales; potential treatment of insect infestation; most controlled burning; the opportunity to stimulate the forest growth rate; and increased board foot production.

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning. However, there would be a conflict in management direction with the Forest Service lands adjoining the northern boundary of the WSA and with the state and private lands along portions of the southern and western boundaries. No change in county zoning would be needed. Wilderness designation would preclude construction of a road to Long Hollow (BLM right-of-way).

An easement would still be required to legally cross the 160 acres of private land in sections 22, 26, and 27 T. 27N., R. 115W., to provide access to the WSA.

Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

(3)

Under nondesignation moderately adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Nondesignation would preserve some of the wilderness character of the WSA.

Essentially all the wilderness characteristics within the ACEC would remain intact. The 8,601 acres outside of the ACEC would lose most of their wilderness character, due to the adverse impact on the natural character of the area resulting from anticipated oil and gas activities.

The overall ecological uniqueness and contribution of this WSA to the regional diversity of the wilderness system is somewhat limited, so little loss to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be realized. It should be noted, however, that the opportunity to include one of the best existing drainages containing the sensitive Colorado River cutthroat trout within the National Wilderness Preservation System would be lost.

The total impact on the wilderness character is only moderately adverse because the ACEC encompasses the majority of the area identified as having high wilderness values. ACEC management would minimize the adverse impact to the wilderness character of the WSA.

(4) Public Comments: (this standard is covered in section 6 below)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

The impacts of wilderness designation on timber and oil and gas resources would be similar to nondesignation, but more intense due to the larger amount of timber and gas that would be withdrawn from potential production (approximately two-and-a-half times greater). Economic returns from recreation in the region would be the same as under the proposed action; a change in type of use would occur, but not quantity of use.

Wilderness designation would eliminate use of a portion of an established Common Use Area for moss rock building stone. Approximately half of the use area is within the WSA. This impact could be projected as a loss of approximately 15 tons per year. However, public use of this resource would probably shift to that portion of the Common Use Area outside of the WSA.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans

The recommendations in this report for Lake Mountain WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within a Rural Conservation District while the adjacent lands are zoned agricultural. There would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives:

a. Two alternatives were analyzed for the Lake Mountain WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness-Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (13,865 acres.)

No Wilderness-Nondesignation of the entire WSA (13,865 acres.)

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is the no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts to the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mineral activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

The BLM's preferred alternative is the no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted. To mitigate impacts to the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mineral activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

Table 1-1: Summary of Land Designations

	Designated Wilderness	Designated Wilderness	Designated Wilderness
Public Lands	15	15	15
Private Lands	15	15	15
Total	30	30	30

The BLM's preferred alternative is the no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted. To mitigate impacts to the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mineral activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, 27 comments were received on this unit-24 from Wyoming and three from Colorado, Kentucky, and Washington. Sixteen opposed inclusion of this unit as a wilderness study area, primarily because of conflicts with oil and gas development; and eleven supported the unit's inclusion, mostly because of its wildlife and fisheries values. The decision to include the unit as a WSA was protested by Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming and three oil companies, all in connection with oil and gas development.
- b. Pinedale Resource Area staff members discussed the oil and gas interests of one company with its representatives during the MFP amendment comment period.
- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments related to the WSA were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the DEIS. Those opposing designation were concerned about constraints to oil and gas development in the Overthrust Belt; those supporting designation were most concerned about the important wildlife and fisheries values in the area, as well as potential loss of what they perceived to be an outstanding wilderness area. Table LM-1 displays the comments as they pertain to the Lake Mountain WSA.

Table LM-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY-Lake Mountain WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	23	8	15
WRITTEN	184	21	163
TOTALS	<u>206</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>178</u>

- d. County: Sublette County officials did not comment on the WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported designation of the area as wilderness, noting such designation would protect its important wildlife and fisheries values. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSAs to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Table LM-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Lake Mountain All - Wilderness	13,865 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral (oil and gas) exploration. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 50% of the area. (50% is pre-FLPMA leased).	Slightly increased primitive recreation and increased hunting quality. Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor adverse impacts due to increased erosion and loss of vegetation as a result of oil and gas exploration on pre-FLPMA leases.	Moderately benefited through increased protection due to prohibition of motor vehicle use.
Lake Mountain No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	9,465 acres would be open to mineral entry. 4,400 acres not leased with the Rock Creek ACEC.	Entire area VRM Class II.	Degradation to soil, water, and vegetation as a result of oil and gas exploration and development.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
RAYMOND MOUNTAIN WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Raymond Mountain WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-221, RAYMOND MOUNTAIN, 32,936 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Raymond Mountain WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Ninety-six percent of the WSA is pre-FLPMA leased, the highest of the Rock Springs District's WSAs. This WSA lies within the Overthrust Belt, an area of moderate oil and gas potential. The moderate probability of the existence of oil and gas resources coupled with valid existing rights (pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases) within the WSA effectively removes all manageability as wilderness.

A 13,530 acre area within the WSA is designated as the Raymond Mountain Wildlife Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This ACEC is managed primarily to protect the sensitive Bonneville or Bear River cutthroat trout and its habitat; and big game habitat (elk, deer, moose), including crucial winter habitat for elk and deer.

The primary user group is from the surrounding area and participates in picnicking, camping, and hunting. A wilderness designation would probably not attract many additional people to the area since there are more scenic and nationally well-known parks, forests and wilderness areas in the region. Wyoming State Highway 89 parallels the entire western front of the WSA and can be seen from any high point on this ridge. Access to private lands and phosphate mines that adjoin the WSA is gained from the highway. The U.S. Forest Service has recommended adjacent lands with similar or greater values than the Raymond Mountain WSA as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

2b. STATISTICAL TABLE

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Raymond Mountain (WY-040-221)	32,936
Also within WSA boundary:	
State 1,320	
Private 200	
Gross Total 34,456	

<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	32,936
Also within nonsuitable boundary:	
State 1,320	
Private 200	
Gross Total 34,456	

R.119W.

R.118W.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- Raymond Mountain Wildlife ACEC
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map RM-1
Raymond Mountain WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is part of the Sublette mountain range located in Southwestern Wyoming, approximately 60 miles south of Grand Teton National Park.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the intersection of the Stoner Creek Road and the Igo Speedway, thence south along the Igo Speedway Road, thence due south to Mill Creek, thence south in a direct line to Quealy Reservoir, thence due west to a point one mile east of Highway U.S. 30, thence northwest paralleling U.S. 30 approximately one mile east to Groo Canyon Road, thence north to U.S. 30 at Salt Creek Canyon, thence east along Coal Creek Road to the point of beginning. A five and one half mile road (the Huff Creek Road) is cherrystemmed out of the WSA on the north to Huff Lake.

See Map RM-1 on page 25.

c. General Environment

This unit has diverse vegetation and steep topography. It is forested over major portions interspersed with open parks, giving way to big sagebrush stands and rock outcrops in the south. Several streams are located in the canyons, one of which contains a pure strain of the Bear River cutthroat trout. The area is important moose, deer, and elk habitat.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 32,936 acres of public land, 1,320 acres of state land and 200 acres of private land.

Naturalness: The Raymond Mountain WSA is in a natural state. There are a few minor intrusions -- a communication site with access road, several small phosphate exploration sites, an abandoned well site, several two-track trails and evidence of livestock trailing. These intrusions are slight and do not take away from the natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude abound throughout the Raymond Mountain WSA. The steepness of the terrain and the accompanying vegetation contribute to providing secluded spots which would permit undisturbed recreation. Opportunities exist for hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, and other solitude-oriented activities.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The primary recreation activity in the area is the hunting of moose, elk, deer, and grouse. In the past, hunting primarily was conducted on foot or by horseback. Primitive camping occurs along Raymond Creek, Huff Creek and in White Canyon. Hiking and backpacking occur in the area as well as nature study and sightseeing.

(2) Special Features

Wildlife is an important special feature in the area. The Thomas Fork watershed, which includes Huff and Raymond Creeks, has been designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. This area supports the Bear River cutthroat trout and provides crucial winter habitat for elk and mule deer as well as numerous other wildlife species.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation on the area would ensure).

Wilderness management would provide additional protection for wildlife and even though oil and gas activities on pre-FLPMA leases would continue, nondegradation requirements would have to be met.

These nondegradation requirements would be seasonal closures to keep big game populations from being disrupted and siting stipulations to keep siltation in the creeks containing the Bonneville or Bear River cutthroat trout to a minimum.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

(a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA is a representative of the Wyoming Basin Province -- sagebrush steppe.

(b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Raymond Mountain WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

(c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Raymond Mountain WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA is located in the immediate area of the Bridger-Teton, Wasatch, Targhee, and Caribou National Forests, which contain designated wilderness areas and also have many other areas offering wilderness type experiences.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The Raymond Mountain WSA is not readily manageable as wilderness. The existence of pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases with their inherent "valid existing rights", covering about 96 percent of the area and the moderate oil and gas potential of this portion of the Overthrust Belt effectively removes manageability of this WSA as wilderness.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Oil and gas in the Raymond Mountain WSA is rated as having low to moderate development potential. The Raymond Mountain WSA is rated as low for potential coal development.

The WSA contains both pre- and post-FLPMA leases (Map RM-2). The proposed action would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA.

Oil and gas exploration and development activities would be virtually the same under wilderness designation as under nondesignation because 96% of the area is pre-FLPMA leased and the lessees have a "valid existing right" to exercise the rights of those leases. This effectively eliminates the manageability of the area as wilderness.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness management would provide protection for those areas of the WSA with low potential for oil and gas development. However, in those areas where oil and gas activity takes place on pre-FLPMA leases, the wilderness values would be expected to decline in the long term.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- Raymond Mountain Wildlife ACEC
- Pre-FLPMA Oil and Gas Leases
- Post-FLPMA Oil and Gas Leases
- ▲ Sohio Petroleum Co. Huff Creek Federal No. 1
- Gulf Oil Corp. Huff Lake Federal No. 1.

Map RM-2
Raymond Mountain WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES
AND ACTIVITY

Land Use Constraint - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the management of state lands within and adjoining the WSA. No change in county zoning or other local actions would be necessary.

There would be a difference in management direction between the WSA and the Forest Service lands near the WSA. The Forest Service is managing National Forest lands for uses other than wilderness, but this difference would not cause any conflicts.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation moderately adverse impacts would occur to the wilderness values within the WSA. Wilderness values would be preserved somewhat within the ACEC, but this preservation would be incidental to the ACEC's major objectives. The Raymond Mountain Wildlife ACEC will provide some protection for 13,530 acres out of the WSA's 32,936 acres. The ACEC designation is raising public awareness of the values of the area and could possibly inspire public assistance in maintaining the naturalness within the WSA.

Naturalness would be enhanced by off-road vehicle limitations and the proposed two-track trail closures. However, anticipated oil and gas activities would adversely affect the naturalness of the WSA in the short term.

Opportunities for solitude would decrease within the WSA. Although the steep terrain offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, oil and gas activities are easily observed and heard from canyon bottoms, as well as ridgetops. As oil and gas activity is expected to continue and possibly increase, this adverse impact would be expected to occur.

Under nondesignation some of the WSA's supplemental values would be adversely affected, while others would be retained. The overall adverse impact can be attributed to the continuation of oil and gas activities in the WSA.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Grazing, timber, recreation, and oil and gas resources would not be affected by the proposed action.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Raymond Mountain WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA is located in Lincoln County, although the county does not exercise its zoning powers in the WSA. The towns located near the WSA are Cokeville, Geneva, and Afton. Their existing plans or policies do not conflict with either a wilderness or nondesignation of the WSA.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for the Raymond Mountain WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness-Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (32,936 acres).

No Wilderness-Nondesignation of the entire WSA (32,936 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is the no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the Regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, 28 comments were received on this unit-24 from Wyoming and four from Colorado, Kentucky, and Washington. Fifteen supported inclusion of this unit as a wilderness study area, mostly because of its wildlife and fisheries values; and thirteen opposed the unit's inclusion, primarily because of conflicts with oil and gas development. The decision to include the unit as a WSA was protested by Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming, unless the unit's boundaries were adjusted; Robert M. Price; and C.K. Petroleum, all in connection with oil and gas development.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP amendment comment period.
- c. A total of 208 oral and written comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the DEIS. Those opposing wilderness designation were concerned about the constraints on oil and gas development in the Overthrust Belt; those supporting wilderness designation cited the area's wildlife and fisheries values and what they considered to be outstanding wilderness values as being worthy of preservation. Table RM-1 displays the comments as they pertain to the Raymond Mountain WSA.

Table RM-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Raymond Mountain WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	24	14	10
WRITTEN	<u>184</u>	<u>176</u>	<u>8</u>
TOTALS	208	190	18

d. County: Lincoln County officials did not comment on the WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported designation of the area as wilderness, noting such designation would protect its important wildlife and fisheries values. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential noting it had the highest potential of all the WSAs. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture; and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Table RM-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Raymond Mountain All - Wilderness	32,936 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral (oil and gas) exploration. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 96% of the area. (96% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Slightly increased primitive recreation and increased hunting and fishing quality. Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor adverse impacts due to increased erosion and loss of vegetation as a result of oil and gas exploration on pre-FLPMA leases.	No impacts.
Raymond Mountain No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Most of the WSA would remain VRM Class II, except for a small area in the southeast which would remain VRM Class III.	Soil, water, and vegetation would be degraded as a result of oil and gas exploration and development.	If oil and gas exploration and development occur, the impact would be so adverse that these benefits would be greatly offset.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
BUFFALO HUMP WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Buffalo Hump WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-306, BUFFALO HUMP, 10,300 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Buffalo Hump WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The primary wilderness values of this area are size and naturalness. The main part of the dune area is in the adjacent Sand Dunes WSA. While Buffalo Hump possesses the basic characteristics for wilderness study, it lacks the unique qualities of the Sand Dunes unit. The presence of the U.S. Steel railroad spur line running through the dunes effectively divides the area from the main part of the dunes. Because of this rail line and the lack of extensive dunes, the Buffalo Hump area is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The area has pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases on about half of the area, which decreases manageability. Public comments during the inventory process were generally supportive of preserving active sand dunes, but only a small number exist within Buffalo Hump. Designated wilderness in the region is unlike the ecosystem of Buffalo Hump, however, the Sand Dunes WSA is a better example of this ecosystem and is preliminarily recommended, in part, as suitable for wilderness designation.

2b. Statistical Table

Wilderness Study Area

Acres BLM

Buffalo Hump (WY-040-306).....	10,300
Gross Total	10,300

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	10,300
Gross Total	10,300

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in northcentral Sweetwater County about 30 miles north of Rock Springs, Wyoming.

b. Boundaries

Beginning on the U.S. Steel railroad tracks due west (approximately 1 1/2 miles) of Boars Tusk, thence north along the tracks to the

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map BH-1
Buffalo Hump WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

Fifteen Mile Spring Road, thence along the Fifteen Mile Spring Road to Fifteen Mile Spring, thence southwesterly on the Fifteen Mile Spring Road over Buffalo Hump to a point where the road heads due west, thence south to an unnamed road, thence west to Washington Place where the road "T"s, thence south to a road fork, thence east along the fork to the point of beginning. See Map BH-1 on page 36.

c. General Environment

The unit ranges from climax stands of big sagebrush and greasewood on the north and west, to active sand dunes and meadows on the east and south. The main topographic relief, which consists of many sand valleys, blowouts, dunes and hills, occurs in the southern and eastern portions of the unit.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The Buffalo Hump WSA contains 10,300 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Buffalo Hump WSA is essentially in a natural condition exhibiting an undisturbed sagebrush-grassland ecosystem intermingled with active sand dunes. There are some two-track trails, seismograph lines, livestock pit reservoirs, and a segment of sand fence. However, these intrusions do not detract from the overall integrity and naturalness of the area.

Solitude: Due to the topographic relief in the southern and eastern portions of the WSA, the remoteness of the area provides outstanding solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Most of the primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are found in the eastern and southern portions of the unit. These activities include hiking, backpacking, camping, birdwatching, wildlife photography, horseback riding, and hunting.

(2) Special Features

The Buffalo Hump WSA lies within a mile of two very important archeological sites. These are the Finley site and the Eden-Farson site where a distinctive projectile point gave evidence of one of man's earliest inhabited sites in North America. Therefore, it is highly probable that other significant sites may be located within the WSA.

The area attracts wild horses, mule deer, a herd of unique desert elk, and large numbers of pronghorn antelope. Signs were found

that indicate raptors and coyotes are frequent visitors to the area, plus reports of cougar use have been received in the recent past.

Part of the Buffalo Hump WSA lies within the Greater Sand Dunes Recreation Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The ACEC management plan provides wildlife and cultural resource protections and promotes appropriate recreation use.

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation on the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation of this area would ensure beneficial impacts to soils and vegetation, due to the elimination of motor vehicles within the WSA. Wilderness designation would help to protect the unique values of the WSA and ensure preservation of its scenic quality.

- (4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province, sagebrush-steppe.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Buffalo Hump WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Buffalo Hump WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is not located far from the Bridger Wilderness Area (to the north) and the Shoshone National Forest. Both these areas offer opportunity for wilderness recreation.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The Buffalo Hump WSA is not readily manageable as wilderness. The existence of pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases with their inherent "valid

existing rights", covering about 60 percent of the area effectively remove manageability as wilderness.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

About 60 percent of the WSA is covered by pre-FLPMA leases (Map BH-2). The oil and gas development potential is unknown and industry interest is low, although some exploration drilling may occur. Wilderness designation would remove 40% of the area from oil and gas exploration and development (40% is post-FLPMA or unleased). The area offering the greatest wilderness values (eastern and southern portions) are presently under pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Buffalo Hump WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on any resource values.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or nonwilderness management of this WSA.

The level of livestock grazing and recreation use of the WSA are not expected to change as a result of wilderness management. Therefore, receipts from livestock production and recreation expenditures are not expected to be impacted.

Although the potential for oil and gas development in the WSA is unknown and industry interest is low, some exploration drilling may occur. If exploration drilling does occur, it would have a negligible impact on regional employment, income, revenues, and taxes.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Excluded Area
- Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not Presently Leased

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map BH-2
Buffalo Hump WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

(6) Consistency With Other Plans

The recommendations in this report for Buffalo Hump WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Buffalo Hump WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (10,300 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (10,300 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the Regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, nineteen comments were received on this unit-eighteen from Wyoming and one from Illinois. Seven favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, and eleven opposed its being included. The remaining comment addressed the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's noxious weed control for wilderness study areas. The submissions could not be used to evaluate wilderness criteria. Some alluded to intrusions, but did not include specific information, and some addressed recreational concerns.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 209 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the DEIS. Those opposing wilderness designation were mostly concerned with limitations for off-road vehicle use of the area; those favoring wilderness designation felt the area would be a valuable addition to the wilderness system, especially in conjunction with the Sand Dunes WSA. Table BH-1 lists the results of the comments as they pertain to the Buffalo Hump WSA.

Table BH-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Buffalo Hump WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	25	10	15
WRITTEN	184	176	8
TOTALS	209	186	23

d. County: Sweetwater County officials made no comments on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an area of critical environmental concern.

Table BH-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Buffalo Hump All - Wilderness	10,300 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 60% of the area. (60% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor beneficial impacts to soil and vegetation due to elimination of ORVs in the area.	Wildlife would be benefited due to lessened disturbance by ORVs.
Buffalo Hump No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Entire area VRM Class III.	No impacts.	No impacts.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
SAND DUNES WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Sand Dunes WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-307, SAND DUNES, 26,509 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

A 16,280 acre portion of the Sand Dunes WSA (Area "A") is recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation. Area "A" is an outstanding example of a cold desert sand dune ecosystem which meets all wilderness criteria. Wilderness designation of this area would add an ecosystem not presently in the National Wilderness Preservation system.

A 10,229 acre area (Area "B") is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. Area "B" contains much of the high potential oil and gas area and pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases. It also contains three producing gas wells. Since leasees would be allowed to exercise "valid existing rights" on these pre-FLPMA leases and the area has high oil and gas potential with eight producing wells within or adjacent to the WSA, manageability of Area "B" as wilderness would be virtually impossible.

2b. Statistical Table

Wilderness Study Area

Acres BLM

Sand Dunes (WY-040-307).....26,509

Also within WSA boundary:

State 640

Gross Total 27,149

160 PRIVATE

26,509

160

26,669

640

27,309

26,509

640

27,149

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended nonsuitable.....10,229

Gross Total 10,229

BLM acres preliminarily recommended suitable.....16,280

Also within preliminarily suitable boundary:

State 640

Gross Total 16,920

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in northcentral Sweetwater County about 13 miles southeast of Farson, Wyoming.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC
- Proposed Wilderness Boundary Proposed Action
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Public Water Reserve
- Private Land
- State Land
- Non-Federal Minerals

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map SD-1
Sand Dunes WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

Scale 1:50,000

Legend

- Water
- Forest
- Fields
- Settlements
- Transportation
- Topography

Map of the region of the ...

b. Boundaries

Beginning on the U.S. Steel Railroad tracks due west (approximately 1 1/2 miles) of Boars Tusk, thence north to an unnamed road approximately 1 mile east of Fifteenmile Spring, thence north and east along said road past Ox-yoke Spring Creek to a point due south (approximately 1 mile) of Tule Butte, thence east and south along said road (keeping to all western forks) to its termination southeast of the beginning of Ox-yoke Spring Creek, thence south to the west of Essex Mountain to the Tri-territory Road (County Road 4-17), thence following the powerline along said road, thence leaving said road and following said powerline to a point due east (approximately 1 mile) of Boars Tusk, thence due west to the point of beginning. All state, private, and split-estate lands along the WSA boundary are excluded. See Map SD-1 on page 46.

c. General Environment

Ox-yoke Spring Creek drains out of this unit in the north, and Killpecker Creek runs through this unit in the southwest portion. Besides the barren active dunes which offer superb draws and valleys, this area contains wet meadows, sod grass, greasewood, big sagebrush, and rabbitbrush communities.

Ecologically, the most unique feature of the Sand Dunes is the eolian ice-cells that feed pools at the base of many large dunes. These are formed as snow and ice accumulate on the leeward side of the dunes and then are covered by blowing sand. These pools, or ponds, range in depth from 6 inches to 8 feet deep, some being crystal clear and almost void of life, while others are muddy, murky and alive with tadpoles, salamanders, insects, waterfowl, and various grasses and algae. A very unique wildlife feature to this region is that the dunes presently help support the only herd of desert elk in Wyoming.

4. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics:

Size: The Sand Dunes WSA contains 26,509 acres of public land, 640 acres of state land, and comprises a large part of the Killpecker Sand Dunes. Under the proposed action, the area recommended for wilderness comprises 16,280 acres and does not include much of the high potential oil and gas area in the southeastern portion of the WSA.

Naturalness: The Sand Dunes WSA is in a natural condition. There are some minor intrusions--two abandoned well sites, three producing wells, an old corral, and a deteriorating barbed wire fence--but these are slight and considered insignificant. They do not detract from the overall natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: This WSA offers outstanding opportunity for solitude. The numerous draws, valleys and ridges in the northern and eastern sections provide a screening effect for visitors. The large amount of sand dunes also contribute to the solitude of the area. The opportunity to virtually get lost in a sea of sand is awesome.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The Sand Dunes is a unique place for recreational activities. Opportunities are available for nature photography, bird watching, hunting and sightseeing.

(2) Special Features

The Sand Dunes WSA is unique in that it features eolian ice cells that feed pools at the base of many large dunes. These are formed as snow and ice accumulate on the leeward side of the dunes and then are covered by blowing sand.

A very unique wildlife special feature in this region is that the dunes presently help support the only herd of desert elk in Wyoming.

Parts of the Sand Dunes WSA falls within the Greater Sand Dunes Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This area was designated an ACEC to protect the recreation, scenic, cultural, and wildlife values. The ACEC Management Plan provides protection for wildlife and cultural resources and promotes appropriate recreation use. Protection of the Sands elk herd is of paramount importance to ensure that the herd and its habitat are sustained.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation of this WSA would ensure benefits to water resources by requiring lessees to meet nondegradation requirements on pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases to protect water resources of the area.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System:

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province, sagebrush steppe.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Sand Dunes WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC
- Proposed Wilderness Boundary
Proposed Action
- High Potential
- Moderate Potential

Map SD-2
Sand Dunes WSA
OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL

Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

(c)

The Sand Dunes WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is a unique example of the Great Divide Basin. This WSA is located south of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. No other designated wilderness is within close proximity of this WSA.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The portion of the Sand Dunes WSA recommended as suitable for wilderness is manageable as wilderness. The oil and gas potential for this portion of the WSA is rated as moderate and is primarily post-FLPMA leased or unleased. Most impacts caused by oil and gas development would be soil compaction and vegetation loss but would be minimal if mitigated properly on pre-FLPMA leases found in the area.

The boundary of the Sand Dunes WSA recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness may not be manageable as wilderness, depending on oil and gas development. This area is rated as moderate to high in oil and gas potential. It encompasses the southeastern and northern portion of the Sand Dunes which includes most of the pre-FLPMA leases.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values:

If the entire Sand Dunes WSA (26,509 acres) were designated as wilderness, a significant impact on energy and mineral resource development could occur. This impact would be reduced only if the modified boundary (area "A" - 16,280 acres) for wilderness were designated as recommended in the EIS.

By recommending area "B" (10,229 acres) as nonsuitable for wilderness designation, much of the high potential oil and gas area and pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases are eliminated. This reduces greatly the impacts that wilderness designation (area "A") would have on the oil and gas industry.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of a portion (area "A" - 16,280 acres) of the Sand Dunes WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on any resource values.

Map SD-3
Sand Dunes WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC
- Proposed Wilderness Boundary
Proposed Action
- Essex Mountain Unit
- Boars Tusk Unit
- Nitchie Gulch and Pine Canyon KGS
- Producing Oil and Gas Wells

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map SD-4
Sand Dunes WSA
MINERAL ACTIVITY

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation of the modified boundary area (area "A") would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with management of state lands within and adjacent to the WSA.

Impacts of wilderness designation of the entire (26,509 acres) Sand Dunes WSA would be the same as for partial wilderness designation (16,280 acres) except for wilderness values.

Wilderness Values - The larger area proposed for wilderness would favor wilderness values in 10,299 more acres than the partial wilderness proposal. However, of these acres, only about 3,000 could have mandatory nonimpairment criteria applied to protect the wilderness values. Pre-FLPMA leases cover approximately 43 percent of the area under these alternatives, whereas under partial designation only 25 percent of the area is pre-FLPMA leased. Therefore, the wilderness area proposed would pose the same management problems as partial designation but to a greater degree. In addition, the larger wilderness area would encompass more of the high development potential oil and gas area.

(3) Impacts of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values:

Under nondesignation highly adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Although the management prescriptions of the Greater Sand Dunes Recreation ACEC Management Plan would mitigate many of the adverse impacts associated with oil and gas activity, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be virtually non-existent until oil and gas development was completed in the very long term.

(4) Public Comment: (This standard is covered in section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Partial wilderness designation (area "A") is not expected to have a major impact on the livestock industry. Recreation use of the WSA is expected to incur a minor decrease, although this is not anticipated to have a significant impact on expenditures in the region.

Under partial wilderness designation moderately beneficial impacts would occur to the oil and gas industry. Designation of the WSA (modified boundary-see Map SD-1) as a wilderness area would serve to eventually eliminate this smaller area from oil and gas exploration and development. Although the Sand Dunes WSA has been

classified as having both high and moderate development potential for oil and gas; this smaller wilderness area has considerably less high potential area within its boundaries and is primarily post-FLPMA leased or unleased. Partial designation could preclude development of most of the moderate potential area but would not preclude development of the high potential area. It is assumed that the oil and gas resources in that small portion of the high potential area within the modified boundary wilderness area could probably be extracted through offsite directional drilling. If it is not feasible to obtain the oil and gas resources through directional drilling, then onsite development of these leases would be unavoidable.

Using the original boundaries (see Map SD-1), approximately 43 percent of the Sand Dunes WSA is pre-FLPMA or state leased for oil and gas, and approximately 57 percent of the area (approximately 15,000 acres) is post-FLPMA leased or unleased. Using the modified boundaries (see Map SD-1), 25 percent of the WSA is pre-FLPMA or state leased for oil and gas, and 75 percent (approximately 12,000 acres) is post-FLPMA leased or unleased.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans

The recommendations in this report for Sand Dunes WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. The WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives:

- a. Three alternatives were analyzed for Sand Dunes WSA in the DEIS:

Partial Wilderness - Wilderness designation of part of the WSA (area "A" - 16,280 acres).

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (26,509 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA.

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is wilderness designation of the modified boundary (area "A"). In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations contained in 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, 40 comments were received on this unit-36 from Wyoming and four from other states. Nineteen favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, and twenty opposed it being included. The remaining comment was an in-between position. A law firm in Washington, D.C., provided a thorough examination of the unit, noting several intrusions in the area. Most of the intrusions were in the portion of the unit dropped during the intensive inventory phase; the others were determined to be of minor importance to the naturalness and solitude criteria for this unit. An appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals concerning the Sand Dunes' WSA status was dismissed.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 587 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the DEIS. Those opposing wilderness designation were especially concerned about the loss of the area for recreational off-road vehicle use. Opponents to wilderness designation also expressed concern about constraints to mineral development, especially oil and gas. Those favoring wilderness felt such designation would protect the unique desert elk herd and other wildlife values and the outstanding scenic and natural wilderness values of the Sand Dunes. Table SD-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Sand Dunes WSA.

Table SD-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Sand Dunes WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Proposed Action</u>	<u>Support More Wilderness Than Proposed</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	27	1	14	12
WRITTEN	560	6	176	378
TOTALS	587	7	190	390

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to state lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported designation of the area as wilderness, noting such designation would protect its important wildlife values. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming opposed designation for similar reasons and also because of potential coal development in the area. Wilderness designation was opposed by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and State Engineer. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of mineral development conflicts. The Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal. The Corps of Engineers supported BLM's proposed action. The National Park Service recommended the area be designated as wilderness because it contains an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and potential cultural resources.

Table SD-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Sand Dunes All - Wilderness	26,509 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 39% of the area. (39% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor adverse impacts to soil and vegetation due to oil and gas exploration and development on pre-FLPMA leases turning stabilized dunes into active dunes.	No impacts.
Sand Dunes Partial - Wilderness (Area "A")	16,280 acres would be designated.	80% of the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 20% of the area. (20% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	16,280 acres VRM Class I. 10,229 acres in VRM Classes II, III, and IV.	Same as All-Wilderness	No impacts.
Sand Dunes No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to recreation due to oil and gas development and increased vehicular disturbance to wildlife.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to vegetation due to oil and gas exploration and development.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to oil and gas exploration and development.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
ALKALI DRAW WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Alkali Draw WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-311, ALKALI DRAW, 16,990 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Alkali Draw WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

There has been little public support for wilderness designation of Alkali Draw. There have been significant natural gas discoveries on the west boundary. It appears there will be more drilling on pre-FLPMA leases in the Alkali Draw WSA. While the area would add some diversity to the wilderness system, the area is typical of hundreds of thousands of acres of western rangeland.

It appears there would be little difference in the impacts that would occur if a wilderness recommendation were made. The large number of pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases combined with recent discoveries make it likely that wilderness characteristics will be impaired before Congress can act.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Alkali Draw (WY-040-311).....	16,990
Also within WSA boundary:	
State	640
Gross Total	17,630

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	16,990
Also within nonsuitable boundary:	
State	640
Gross Total	17,630

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

This unit contains a portion of the Great Divide Basin-Red Desert area and is located 25 miles north of Point of Rocks, Wyoming.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at a point on County Road 4-21 south of Bush Creek, thence east along said road to an unnamed road, thence east and south on said unnamed road to a fork 3/4 miles west of the Pinnacles, thence west and south along said fork to another fork, thence south and west on said

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map AD-1
Alkali Draw WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

fork for 2 1/4 miles to a point 3 miles east of Freightier Gap, thence north and west to an unnamed road east of alkali Creek, thence north along said road to the point of beginning. All state lands along the WSA boundary are excluded. See Map AD-1 on page 60.

C. General Environment

The unit contains a remnant of the Great Divide Basin-Red Desert area. Two ecosites lie within the Alkali Draw WSA. One of these is Alkali Draw which is dominated by the Draw and its tributaries draining eastwardly from the Bush Rim and Steamboat Mountain portions of the Continental Divide. A series of draws or canyons extend west-east through the unit to create a "washboard" topographic effect. Alkali Rim is the second ecosite, and the "washboard" topographic effect is more tightly confined and rugged versus the first ecosite to the north.

The rim dominates the site's southern aspect and exhibits colorful blue rock escarpments. Big sagebrush is the dominant vegetation community over much of the area, along with the saltbush vegetation type. The greasewood vegetation type is common along the major drainages. Valuable habitat for mule deer and elk is found within the area.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 16,990 acres of public land and 640 acres of state land.

Naturalness: This WSA is in a natural condition. There are some minor intrusions but they are substantially unnoticeable and are undergoing natural revegetation.

Solitude: This WSA offers opportunity for solitude, but these are not outstanding. The topographic screening provided by the numerous draws or canyons helps contribute to these opportunities.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: This area offers primitive and unconfined recreation such as hiking, horseback riding, camping, photography and sightseeing. Some small caves are also located in the area and offer opportunity for recreation. There are also some nontechnical climbing opportunities available.

(2) Special Features: This WSA is one of the few, rare undisturbed portions of the Red Desert where scientific studies can be accomplished.

Ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, and historic special features enhance the wilderness characteristics

of the WSA. Paleocene fossils can be seen in several layers of geologic strata, suggesting a former riparian habitat.

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

There would be little or no beneficial impact to any resource as a result of wilderness designation.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of the WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA would add a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Alkali Draw WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Alkali Draw WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin. This WSA is located southeast of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The Alkali Draw WSA contains numerous man-made intrusions. Extensive drilling activity has been conducted adjacent to the southern portion of the WSA (see Map AD-2). Woods Petroleum Corporation has a producing well (shut-in) just inside the southwest boundary of the WSA and is drilling a well one-half mile within the western boundary. Woods Petroleum also has a producing well one-half mile outside of the southwest boundary. Mineral industry interest and producing wells indicate that this area has potential for oil and gas development. Part of the WSA's southern portion lies with a Known Geologic Structure (KGS). Nearly all of the WSA is covered by pre-FLPMA leases for oil and gas which gives the leasees a "valid existing right" to explore for and develop the oil and gas resource (see Map AD-3). This would severely limit the wilderness manageability of the Alkali Draw WSA.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- ***** Proposed Pipelines
- ▲ Approved Application for Permit to Drill (Woods Petroleum)
- Currently Drilling (Woods Petroleum)
- Producing Well (Woods Petroleum)
- Treasure Unit
- ▨ Known Geologic Structure

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map AD-2
Alkali Draw WSA
OIL AND GAS ACTIVITY

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not Presently Leased
- State Minerals

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map AD-3
Alkali Draw WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Leasable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas (Maps AD-2 and 3). Mineral industry interest and producing wells indicate that this area has potential for oil and gas development. Nearly all of the WSA is covered by pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases. No other mineral resources are known to occur within the WSA. The proposed action would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Nondesignation would have no significant impact on the oil and gas industry.

- (2) Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Alkali Draw WSA would cause no significant adverse impact on any resource values.

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the current management direction on adjoining state lands. Wilderness designation would conflict with the proposed routing of the Panhandle Eastern pipeline, which would cross a one-half mile long area in the western portion of the WSA. If the WSA is designated as wilderness, the pipeline would be rerouted outside the area.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values:

Under nondesignation moderately adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Nondesignation would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin as wilderness. This area would have added to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. At least half of the natural character of the area would be lost as a result of oil and gas exploration and development activities.

The primitive or wilderness type recreation values and opportunities for solitude would be severely impacted or lost if full development were to occur. If development does not occur, however, these values would remain essentially as they are at present. Although this WSA is almost 17,000 acres in size and oil and gas activity is presently taking place, with even more activity proposed, this activity is concentrated in the southwest portion. It may be possible to allow development in this area without destroying the wilderness potential of a portion of the WSA. The unique scientific assets of the WSA would be devalued if full development occurs.

Individually, most impacts to wilderness values can be mitigated, but when considered in total, extensive development of this area would result in a loss of wilderness character which could not be regained.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or nowilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management increases in proprietor's income could accrue to the livestock industry. This would be due to the possible development of new water sources as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

Under wilderness management there would be a minor decrease in the number of visitor-days expected in the WSA, due to a decrease in hunter use and sightseeing, which are the primary recreation uses at present. However, a significant impact is not expected on recreation expenditures in the region. Wilderness management would allow development of mineral resources on over 75 percent of the WSA, increasing employment, income, revenues, and taxes.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Alkali Draw WSA are consistent with local, state and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives

a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Alkali Draw WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (16,990 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (16,990 acres).

b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.

c. The BLM's preferred alternative is the no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.

d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, sixty-six comments were received on this unit-fifty-nine from Wyoming and seven from Colorado, Missouri, and Utah. Forty-seven opposed inclusion of this unit as a wilderness study area, and nineteen favored its inclusion. Only three comments were specific enough to help determine wilderness qualities and characteristics: Two of these objected to the proposed WSA and the other dealt with oil and gas exploration, livestock uses, and supplemental values. The decision to include Alkali Draw as a WSA was appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA). In its ruling on the appeal in 1983, the IBLA upheld the Bureau's decision to include the area as a WSA.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the draft wilderness EIS. Those opposed to wilderness designation were concerned with wilderness conflicts with livestock grazing and oil and gas development. Supporters of wilderness designation felt it is an integral part of the larger Red Desert area and thus important for preservation as wilderness, as well as protection of wildlife, watershed values, and ecological values. Table AD-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Alakli Draw WSA.

Table AD-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Alkali Draw WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	18	5	13
WRITTEN	188	20	168
TOTALS	206	25	181

- d. County: Sweetwater County Officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, but he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within or bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts.

Table AD-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Alkali Draw All - Wilderness	16,990 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights may be exercised on 75% of the area. (75% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Minor adverse impact to recreation due to elimination of vehicle use. Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor adverse impacts would occur to vegetation, soil, and water due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to disturbance by oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
Alkali Draw No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact. Entire area VRM Class III.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to soils and vegetation and minor adverse impacts would occur to water due to oil and gas activity.	Highly adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to disturbance by oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
SOUTH PINNACLES WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

South Pinnacles WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-314, SOUTH PINNACLES, 10,800 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire South Pinnacles WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The openness of the South Pinnacles WSA and common character of the vegetation and topography limit the area's manageability. While the area does possess the basic wilderness characteristics, they are not of a quality that would suggest wilderness designation.

There has been little public support for wilderness designation of South Pinnacles. There have been significant natural gas discoveries in the area. It appears there will be more drilling on pre-FLPMA leases in the South Pinnacles WSA. While the area would add some diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System, it is typical of hundreds of thousands of acres of western rangeland.

It appears there would be little difference in the impacts that would occur if a wilderness recommendation were made. The large number of pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases combined with recent discoveries make it likely that wilderness characteristics will be impaired before Congress can act.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
South Pinnacles (WY-040-313).....	10,800
Gross Total 10,800	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended nonsuitable.....	10,800
Gross Total 10,800	

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in northeastern Sweetwater County about 30 miles northeast of Rock Springs.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the point where two roads intersect one mile west of the Pinnacles, thence south and east along the east unnamed road to County

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map SP-1
South Pinnacles WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

Road 4-15, thence south and west along County Road 4-15 to a fork in the road, thence along the north fork keeping to all easterly forks to the point of beginning. All state lands along the WSA boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map SP-1 on page 71.

c. General Environment

This unit contains mostly flat topography, with an exposure of broken rimrocks and ridges running west to east. Rough rocky crags and unusual escarpments are prominent in this rimrock area. Greasewood communities occupy the draws while big sagebrush and Nuttall's saltbush dominate the open areas. Wild horses, deer, elk, and antelope utilize the area. It also contains some large prairie dog towns.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The South Pinnacles WSA contains 10,800 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The South Pinnacles WSA is essentially natural in character. There are some seismic trails and two-track trails, although faint and obscure. Overall, most of the WSA shows very few signs of human activity and the intrusions do not detract from the natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: The rimrock area of the South Pinnacles WSA provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The numerous pockets and small draws provide excellent opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of other people.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities do exist mainly in the rimrock portion of the unit. These include wildlife observation and photography, rockhounding, horseback riding, hiking and backpacking.

(2) Special Features

The South Pinnacles WSA provides opportunity for observation and photography of the many geologic ecosites within the rimrock area. Camping among the rocky crags is another form of outstanding recreation.

Wildlife is another special feature found throughout the WSA. The WSA contains mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope. Some rather large prairie dog towns are also located within the WSA.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple-resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

There would be no impacts to resource values as a result of wilderness designation.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province, sagebrush steppe.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The South Pinnacles WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The South Pinnacles WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin. This WSA is located south of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The South Pinnacles WSA, recommended as nonsuitable, is not manageable as wilderness. Manageability is limited by the area's openness and common character of both topography and vegetation. The existence of pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases with their inherent "valid existing rights" on over 90 percent of the area removes any possibility of manageability as wilderness.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Leasable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas and although their potential is unknown, it is an area of high industry interest (Maps SP-2 and 3). Over 90 percent of the area is pre-FLPMA leased which gives the leases a "valid existing right" to explore for and develop the oil and gas resource. Due to this fact there would be no significant difference between wilderness or nondesignation to either the resource involved or the oil and gas industry.

— Wilderness Study Area Boundary

--- Proposed Pipeline (Frontier)

▲ Dry Hole (Davis Oil)

○ Approved Applications for Permit to Drill (Woods Petroleum)

● Currently Drilling (Woods Petroleum)

Map SP-2
South Pinnacles WSA
OIL AND GAS ACTIVITY

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not Presently Leased

Map SP-3
South Pinnacles WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

- (2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire South Pinnacles WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on resource values.

- (3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation highly adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. This action would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin as wilderness. This area would have added to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The natural character of the area would be lost as a result of oil and gas exploration and development activities.

The primitive or wilderness type recreation values and opportunities for solitude would be severely impacted or lost if full development were to occur. If development does not occur, these values would remain essentially as they are at present. Although the WSA contains 10,800 acres, there is so little topographic relief that the opportunity to retain these values is limited. If even minimal development occurred within or adjacent to the WSA, the wilderness recreation opportunities of this area would be severely impacted.

- (4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)
- (5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data was not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under nondesignation increases in proprietor's income could accrue to the livestock industry. This would be due to the possible development of additional water sources as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

Under nondesignation there would be no impacts on recreation expenditures in the region from recreational use of the WSA. Hunting and sightseeing, the primary recreation uses, would continue at present levels.

Nondesignation would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA.

Wilderness designation would not preclude oil and gas exploration and development on over 90 percent of the WSA. Oil and gas industry activity is expected to increase employment, income, revenues, and taxes as a result of exploration and/or development.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for South Pinnacles WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for South Pinnacles WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (10,800 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA.

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the Regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. Three comments, all from Wyoming, were received during the inventory phase. The comments supported inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, noting that the unit offered outstanding scenic values and that intrusions in the area were minor and would not detract from the unit's wilderness characteristics.
- b. No comments were received on this WSA during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment periods on the Draft Wilderness EIS. Those opposed to wilderness designation were concerned about conflicts between wilderness and the livestock and oil and gas industries. Most of those in favor of the area's designation felt it was an integral part of the Red Desert Conservation Area and that wilderness designation would be the best way to preserve its ecological, historic, and wildlife values. Table SP-1 displays the comments as they pertain to the South Pinnacles WSA.

Table SP-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - South Pinnacles WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	18	5	13
WRITTEN	<u>188</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>168</u>
TOTALS	206	25	181

d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed. J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area as wilderness because of its oil and gas development potential. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because of its historic and paleontological resource potential.

Table SP-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
South Pinnacles All - Wilderness	10,800 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 90% of the WSA. (90% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Entire area VRM Class I.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to vegetation and soil, and minor adverse impacts would occur to water due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to disturbance by oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
South Pinnacles No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact. Entire area VRM Class III.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to soils and vegetation and minor adverse impacts would occur to water due to oil and gas activity.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to disturbance by oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
ALKALI BASIN—EAST SAND DUNES WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-316/317, Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes, 12,800 acres.

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. This area is a relatively narrow (1-2 miles) but long (11 miles) strip of the Killpecker Sand Dunes. The contrast between sand and the surrounding vegetation provides an easily distinguished boundary. The narrowness limits wilderness experience opportunities because of the nearness of developed sites, noise, and the visibility of man's activities outside the area. Pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases on approximately half the area would increase management difficulties.

There has been some oil and gas activity in the vicinity and some dry holes have been drilled in the WSA in the past. It appears that the potential for an oil and gas reserve occurring in significant quantities is low.

This WSA would add to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System of the region, since presently the system contains no cold desert sand dune ecosystem. The Sand Dune WSA is a better example of this ecosystem and has been recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres BLM</u>
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes (WY-040-316/317).....		12,800
Gross Total	12,800	
<u>Recommendation</u>		
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>		12,800
Gross Total	12,800	

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

3.

a. Location

The unit is located in east-central Sweetwater County about 21 miles northeast of Point of Rocks.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the intersection of County Roads 4-21 and 4-20, thence south on County Road 4-21 to first unnamed road heading west, thence

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Public Water Reserve
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map AB-1
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

west on said road to its end, thence west and north along southern edge of active sand dunes to an unnamed road, thence east on said road to its end, thence east along the northern edge of active sand dunes to County Road 4-21, thence south along said road to point of beginning. All state and private lands along the boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map AB-1 on page 82.

c. General Environment

The Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes wilderness study area includes a portion of the Killpecker Sand Dunes. These dunes traverse the unit from west to east. The area also comprises an unspoiled remnant of the Red Desert within the Great Divide Basin. The sand dunes themselves impact a rolling topography and draws and ridges of Alkali Creek provide topographic relief. Vegetation is limited to big sagebrush and bunchgrass covered plains between sand dunes. These dunes help support a unique herd of desert elk, along with antelope, wild horses, coyotes, raptors, and numerous other wildlife species.

4. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: This WSA contains 12,800 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA is in a natural condition. There are some minor intrusions--an old drill pad, a shut-in gas well, and two vehicle trails. However, these intrusions are slight and insignificant on the overall natural character.

Solitude: There is opportunity for solitude in the southern portion of the WSA but it is not outstanding. Many large sand dunes, draws and ridges in this area provide natural screening from sights and sounds of others. Opportunities for solitude in other portions of the WSA is marginal since there is little natural screening from topography and vegetation.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: This area is conducive to unconfined recreation such as horseback riding, hiking, backpacking, nature study and wildlife photography.

(2) Special Features

This WSA is located within the Killpecker Sand Dunes, the largest active sand dune region in North America. This region may be of significant scientific value for the study of active sand dunes, their movements, and how they are stabilized.

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

Under wilderness designation, there would be little or no impacts to resource values.

- (4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA would add a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin. This WSA is located southeast of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA, recommended as nonsuitable, is not manageable as wilderness. Manageability is severely limited by the area's size, openness, lack of topographic relief, and common character of vegetation. About 50 percent of the WSA is pre-FLPMA leased for oil and gas, which gives the leasees a "valid existing right" to explore for, and develop the oil and gas resource (Map AB-3). This factor would add to the aforementioned problems in managing Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes for wilderness.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Dry Hole
- Producing Well (Shut-In)
Anadarko Black Rock Federal A-1
- Sinkhole Known Geologic Structure

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map AB-2
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA
OIL AND GAS ACTIVITY

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not Presently Leased

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map AB-3
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The oil and gas potential for the WSA is unknown. Approximately 50 percent of the WSA is under pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases (Maps AB-2 and 3). No other mineral resources are known to exist within the WSA. The proposed action would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Oil and gas industry activity is expected to increase employment, income, revenues, and taxes as a result of exploration and/or development.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA would cause no significant adverse impact on resource values.

Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it would conflict with the management on adjoining state lands.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation moderately adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Nondesignation would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin as wilderness. This area would have added to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The natural character of the area would be impaired as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

The primitive or wilderness type recreation values and opportunities for solitude would be impaired. Although the WSA contains 12,800 acres, it is relatively flat and the opportunities for solitude are limited. If even minimal development occurred on the adjoining lands, the wilderness recreation opportunities of this area would be severely impacted.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below).

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management increases in proprietors' income could accrue to the livestock industry. This would be due to the possible development of water sources as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

Under wilderness management there would be a minor decrease in the number of visitor-days expected in the WSA, due to a decrease in

hunter use and sightseeing, which are the primary recreation uses at present. However, expenditures for recreational use of the WSA are not expected to change.

Under wilderness management no change from the present employment, income, revenues, and taxes attributable to the WSA are anticipated. Exploration would be allowed to occur on pre-FLPMA leases with nondegradation requirements applied.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for the Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (12,800 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA.

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, 68 comments were received on this unit - 64 from Wyoming and four from other states. Eighteen favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, 44 opposed its inclusion, and five were in between. One comment included locations of oil and gas wells that were used to evaluate intrusions; the others were a general vote for or against wilderness, addressed supplemental values, or addressed livestock use, recreational use, or energy developments.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.

- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. Those against designation were concerned with wilderness conflicts with oil and gas development and livestock grazing. Those supporting designation felt it was an integral part of the larger Red Desert area, with important scenic, wildlife, and cultural values that need protection. Table AB-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes WSA.

Table AB-1
PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Wilderness</u>
ORAL	18	5	13
WRITTEN	188	20	168
TOTALS	206	25	181

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Hershler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to state lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported designation of the area as wilderness, noting such designation would protect its important wildlife values. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal.

Table AB-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes All - Wilderness	12,800 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 50% of the area. (50% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Minor adverse impacts due to elimination of vehicle use. Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor adverse impacts would occur to soil and vegetation due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
Alkali Basin-Est Sand Dunes No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact. Entire area VRM Class III.	Moderately adverse impacts to soil and minor adverse impact to vegetation due to oil and gas activity.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
RED LAKE WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Red Lake WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-318, RED LAKE, 9,515 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Red Lake WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The size and topography of the area limits wilderness experience opportunities because of the nearness of developed sites, noise, and the visibility of man's activities outside the area. Pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases on approximately half the area would increase management difficulties.

Public comment did not generally support wilderness designation for the area. This WSA would add to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System of the region, since presently the system contains no cold desert sand dune ecosystem. The Sand Dune WSA is a better example of this ecosystem and has been preliminarily recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Red Lake (WY-040-318).....	9,515
Gross Total	9,515
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	9,515
Gross Total	9,515

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in east-central Sweetwater County about 21 miles northeast of Point of Rocks.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the point of intersection of County Roads 4-21 and 4-20, thence east along County Road 4-20 to the Rock Springs District boundary fence, thence north along said fence to an unnamed east-west road, thence west along said road to its end, thence along the northern edge of active sand dunes to County Road 4-21, thence south along said road to point of beginning. All state lands along the boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map RL-1 on page 93.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- State Land
- Private Land
- Federal Minerals

Map RL-1
Red Lake WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

c. General Environment

This unit is characterized by rolling brush covered hills and stabilized dunes in its western portion, active and partially stabilized sand dunes throughout the central, eastern, and southern sections and the flat, dry lake bed of Red Lake in the north. These dune areas form a portion of the Killpecker Sand Dunes. Vegetation consists of sagebrush species, rabbitbrush, and greasewood within the draws and grassy wet meadows between the dunes.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 9,515 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Red Lake WSA is in a natural state. There are a few minor intrusions -- two-track trail, a well and accompanying water trough and a few tracks from off-road vehicles. These intrusions are slight and do not take away from the natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: Opportunities for solitude in the WSA are not outstanding. The size of the unit, combined with the unbroken topography, provide the visitor little natural screening from other visitors and/or outside influences.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: This area is conducive to primitive and unconfined recreation. Raptors, wild horses, antelope, coyotes, and a variety of small mammals challenge the wildlife photographer. Hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, hunting, and sightseeing for botanical, zoological, geological, and archeological features are other experiences available to the visitor.

(2) Special Features

The Killpecker Sand Dunes traverse the WSA from west to east. This region may be of significant scientific value for the study of active sand dunes, their movements, and how they are stabilized.

This WSA has valuable pronghorn antelope habitat. The animals use the area yearlong. The Sands elk herd occasionally inhabits the WSA during the winter months. Coyotes are common throughout the WSA and bobcats occur as uncommon residents.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation on the area would ensure).

Under wilderness management there would be no significant impact to resource values.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA would add a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Red Lake WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas:

The Red Lake WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is a typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin. This WSA is located southeast of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability:

The Red Lake WSA, recommended as nonsuitable, is not manageable as wilderness. Manageability is severely limited by the area's size, openness, lack of topographic relief, and common character of vegetation. While the area is only 30 percent pre-FLPMA leased, post-FLPMA leases adjoin a present production unit (see Map RL-2). The area also adjoins the Red Lake Known Geologic Structure on the north. These oil and gas lease patterns found in conjunction with a known resource have a tremendous impact on the area's wilderness manageability.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Leaseable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas and although their potential is unknown, it is an area of high

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Hay Reservoir Production Unit
- Red Lake Known Geologic Structure

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map RL-2
Red Lake WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

industry interest. It is adjoined on the north and east by a known geologic structure and a unitized production field, respectively (Map RL-2). About 30 percent of the area is pre-FLPMA leased which gives the leasees a "valid existing right" to explore for and develop the oil and gas resource. Under wilderness designation some oil and gas exploration and development would occur, although a greater amount would be limited to off-site.

- (2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Red Lake WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on resource values.

- (3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Nondesignation would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this typical example of the Red Desert area of the Great Divide Basin as wilderness. This area would have added to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The natural character of the area would be impaired as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

The primitive or wilderness type recreation values and opportunities for solitude would be severely impacted or lost, if even minimal development were to occur within or adjacent to the WSA.

- (4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

- (5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management increases in proprietors' income could accrue to the livestock industry. This would be due to the possible development of new water sources as a result of oil and gas exploration activities.

Under wilderness management there would be a minor decrease in the recreation expenditures, due to a decrease in hunter use and sightseeing, which are the primary recreation uses at present.

However, the adverse effect on the recreation industry would be negligible.

Under wilderness management oil and gas activities would be allowed to occur on pre-FLPMA leases with at least nondegradation requirements applied; oil and gas activity would be allowed on some

post-FLPMA leases with nonimpairment requirements applied. Minor increases in employment, income, revenues, and taxes attributable to oil and gas activities in this WSA are expected.

Under the proposed action, highly beneficial impacts would occur to present socioeconomic conditions and the oil and gas industry is expected to increase employment, income, revenues and taxes as a result of exploration and/or development.

No significant social effects would occur as a result of nondesignation.

(6) Consistency with Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Red Lake WSA are consistent with local, state and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Red Lake WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (9,515 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (9,515 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, fourteen comments were received on this unit-thirteen from Wyoming and one from Colorado. Six favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, seven opposed its inclusion, and one was in between. Three comments which included specific details on intrusions were used to evaluate wilderness criteria; the others were general votes for or against wilderness or addressed values covered during the inventory phase.

- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the draft wilderness EIS. Those against designation were concerned with wilderness conflicts with oil and gas development and livestock grazing. Those supporting designation felt it was an integral part of the larger Red Desert area, with important scenic, wildlife, and cultural values that need protection. Table RL-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Red Lake WSA.

Table RL-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Red Lake WSA

	<u>Total Comment Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	18	5	13
WRITTEN	188	20	168
TOTALS	206	25	181

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and adjoining WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Red Lake All - Wilderness	9,515 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 30% of the area. (30% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Minor adverse impacts due to elimination of vehicle use and oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases. Entire area VRM Class I.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to vegetation and soil due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Minor adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
Red Lake No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact. Entire area VRM Class III.	Highly adverse impacts would occur to soils and moderate adverse impacts would occur to vegetation due to oil and gas activity.	Moderate adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
HONEYCOMB BUTTES WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Honeycomb Buttes WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-323, HONEYCOMB BUTTES, 40,764 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

A portion (area "A" - 36,647 acres) of Honeycomb Buttes WSA is recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation. The area recommended as suitable meets all wilderness criteria.

It would add an ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System which is not found in any designated wilderness of the region. Honeycomb Buttes represents one of the best examples of badland topography in Wyoming.

The 4,117-acre area recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation is a result of the public comment process. In order to avoid undue impacts to livestock grazing, and oil and gas exploration (identified during the wilderness public hearings), this area (4,117 acres) is not recommended for wilderness designation. Elimination of this area from wilderness recommendation greatly improves manageability of the recommended area.

2b. Statistical Table

Wilderness Study Area

Acres BLM

Honeycomb Buttes (WY-040-323)..... 40,764

Also within WSA boundary:

State 640

State - Subsurface 640

Gross Total 42,084

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended nonsuitable..... 4,117

Gross Total 4,117

BLM acres preliminarily recommended suitable..... 36,647

Also within preliminarily suitable boundary:

State 640

State - Subsurface 640

Gross Total 37,967

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit lies in northeastern Sweetwater County about 52 miles northeast of Rock Springs.

Wilderness Study Area Boundary
Proposed Wilderness Study Area Boundary

Public Land (Administered by BLM)
Private Land
State Land
Federal Minerals

Map HB-1
Honeycomb Buttes WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the Fremont/Sweetwater County line on County Road 4-74, thence south on said road to an unnamed road bearing east, thence in a generally easterly direction on said unnamed road to the Rock Springs District boundary fence, thence north along said fence to an unnamed road bearing west, thence west and north along said road to Red Creek, thence west and north along the Sand Creek drainage to the intersection of two unnamed roads, thence following the north road past the Continental Divide, thence west on said road to the point of beginning. A road and 40 acres of private land are cherrystemmed out of the WSA along the Sand Creek drainage. All state and private lands along the boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map HB-1 on page 103.

c. General Environment

The unit contains several terrain types ranging from sagebrush hills and greasewood flats surrounding the badlands to the eroding buttes themselves with their many bluffs, small draws and side canyons. The Honeycomb Buttes are one of the best examples of badland topography in Wyoming and although not as extensive or quite as spectacular, they compare favorably with the Badlands National Monument in South Dakota.

4. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The Honeycomb Buttes WSA contains 40,764 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Honeycomb Buttes is natural in character. There are some minor intrusions, but these are considered insignificant. Due to the high erodibility of the area, surface impacts fade into obscurity.

Solitude: This WSA offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The many cliffs, ridges, draws, and secluded grottos provide numerous areas where a person could experience solitude. The superb coloration of the buttes enhances one's appreciation for the undisturbed natural setting of the Honeycombs.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: This area is conducive to primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities are available for camping and rockhounding as well as hunting and photography. Nontechnical climbing on the clay and rocky buttes is an outstanding experience. Caving in the many erosion caves found in the buttes is an unusual experience.

(2) Special Features:

The Honeycomb Buttes WSA is unique in that a wide variety of wildlife species are found in the area. Pronghorn antelope, deer, and elk use the area at different times of the year. The agates, jade, and petrified wood found in the WSA provide outstanding rockhounding opportunities.

A portion of the old Point of Rocks-South Pass Stage Route runs through the western portion of the WSA. At one time this was a major transportation corridor which helped settle the west. Certain sections of this route still exhibit the original wagon ruts although most of the "road" is now occasionally used by motor vehicles. Trail preservation along this route is variable.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits: (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation of this area would ensure benefits to soils, water, and vegetation by decreasing surface disturbance related to oil and gas activities.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

(a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem and landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This WSA is a representative of the Wyoming Basin Province-saltbush greasewood.

(b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Honeycomb Buttes is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently 15 wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

(c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Honeycomb Buttes WSA could contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is located southeast of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. No other designated wilderness is within close proximity of this WSA.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability

The portion (area "A") of the Honeycomb Buttes WSA recommended as suitable is manageable as wilderness. The oil and gas potential for this portion of the WSA is rated as low. In addition, the wilderness public comment process revealed few (if any) potential impacts to oil and gas exploration, or livestock grazing.

The boundary of the Honeycomb Buttes WSA recommended as unsuitable for wilderness may not be manageable as wilderness. This would depend on developments in the oil and gas, and livestock industries. During the public comment process potential problems to wilderness manageability in this area were brought to light. For these reasons, the northernmost area of the WSA is being recommended as unsuitable.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

If the entire Honeycomb Buttes WSA (40,764 acres) were designated as wilderness, a significant impact could occur to the energy industry. This impact would be eliminated if the modified boundary (area "A" - 36,647 acres) for wilderness were designated as recommended.

The area has been staked quite extensively for uranium, but at present there is no development in the area.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of a portion (area "A" - 36,647 acres) of the Honeycomb Buttes WSA would cause no significant adverse impact on resource values.

Land Use Constraints - Partial (area "A") wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the management of the state lands within and adjoining the WSA. The area would remain an agricultural zone. No developments (factories, plants, etc.) would be permitted in the WSA, unless associated with pre-FLPMA lease development. Most rights-of-way for roads, pipelines, etc., would not be allowed unless wilderness values were unimpaired. These rights-of-way would be considered on a case-by-case basis. In the event of designation, an exchange of state lands would be initiated.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation minor adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Wilderness values in the WSA would generally

Wilderness Study Area Boundary

Proposed Wilderness Study Area Boundary

Pre-FLPMA Leases

Post-FLPMA Leases

Not Presently Leased

State Minerals

Map HB-2
Honeycomb Buttes WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

be diminished in the short term. However, due to the minimal amount of disturbing activities anticipated, and the possible expiration of leases if oil or gas is not discovered, the wilderness values may recover in the long term. The unique geological formations would continue to provide refuge, primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities, and opportunities for solitude. The large area of the WSA makes it easy to "hide" manmade intrusions. Site-specific mitigation requirements would be applied to prevent drilling on butte tops.

Public Comments: (This standard is covered in section 6 below.)

- (4) Local Social and Economic Effects:
- (5) Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or nowilderness management of this WSA.

The level of livestock grazing and recreation use of the WSA are not expected to change as a result of the revised proposed action (partial wilderness designation). Therefore, receipts from livestock production and recreation expenditures are not expected to be impacted.

Under the revised proposed action oil and gas exploration and development would be allowed, primarily on pre-FLPMA leases in the WSA. If discoveries are made (the WSA is classified as having low potential for oil and gas), the level of regional employment, income, revenues, and taxes would be expected to increase.

- (6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Honeycomb Buttes WSA are consistent with local, state and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning district and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA Alternatives

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Honeycomb Buttes WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (40,764 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (40,764 acres).

Partial Wilderness Designation - Wilderness designation of 36,647 acres.

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.

- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is the partial wilderness designation alternative (area "A"). In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, twenty-four comments were received on this unit. Fourteen favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, nine opposed its inclusion, and one was in between. Only one comment was specific enough to help determine wilderness qualities and intrusions. The area was reduced in size from the original 75,123 acres due to intrusions in the northern hills and southern flatlands sections of the unit.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 263 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. Major conflicts between wilderness and the livestock and mineral industries in the northern portion of the WSA surfaced during the public hearing. Wildlife and scenic values were the major issues for those supporting wilderness designation. Table HB-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Honeycomb Buttes WSA.

Table HB-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Honeycomb Buttes WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Proposed Action</u>	<u>Support Less Wilderness Than Proposed</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	27	14	1	12
WRITTEN	<u>236</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>54</u>
	263	195	2	66

- d. County: Fremont and Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Hershler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at the time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to state lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department supported designation of the area as wilderness, noting such designation would protect its important wildlife values. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas

potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The Fish and Wildlife Service supported the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's proposal. The Corps of Engineers supported the BLM's proposed action. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because of its cultural and paleontological resource potential.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Honeycomb Buttes All - Wilderness	40,764 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 90% of the area. (90% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	No impact. Entire area VRM Class I.	Minor beneficial impacts would occur due to elimination of vehicle use.	Minor beneficial impacts would occur to wildlife due to reduced disturbance.
Honeycomb Buttes Partial Wilderness	36,647 acres would be designated.	The area (area "A") would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 94% of the area. (94% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	No impact. 36,647 acres would be VRM Class I. 4,117 acres would be VRM Class II, III, and IV.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Honeycomb Buttes No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact. Entire area would remain VRM Class II, III, and IV.	Minor adverse impacts would occur to soils and vegetation due to oil and gas activity and ORV use.	No impact.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
OREGON BUTTES WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Oregon Buttes WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-324, OREGON BUTTES, 5,700 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Oregon Buttes WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The WSA contains numerous manmade intrusions, including two seismograph lines and thirteen two-track trails.

Approximately seventy-five percent of the area is covered by pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases. A BLM mineral report addressing the mineral potential of Oregon Buttes WSA assigns a moderate to high potential rating for oil and gas development. Successful drilling activities (1981) on the periphery of the WSA indicate that future drilling is likely within and adjacent to the WSA.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Oregon Buttes (WY-04-324).....	5,700
Gross Total	5,700
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	5,700
Gross Total	5,700

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in northcentral Sweetwater County about 30 miles northeast of Farson.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the point where County Road 4-74 intersects the Sweetwater/Fremont County lines, thence south on County Road 4-74 to the Kinch McKinney Hill Road, thence north and west on an unnamed road at McKinney Hill over the Continental Divide to an intersection with an unnamed road, thence north on said unnamed road following all eastern forks to the point of beginning. All state and private land along the boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map OB-1 on page 114.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC
- Public Land(Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map OB-1
Oregon Buttes WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

c. General Environment

The Oregon Buttes are a prominent landmark rising out of the northwestern part of the Red Desert to a height of 8,612 feet above sea level and 1,200 feet above the desert floor. The buttes possess a wide variety of vegetation types, most notably limber pine stands. Small, thick isolated stands of aspen are also present. Numerous springs display lush, green, wet meadows. The area contains excellent raptor habitat.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 5,700 acres and is comprised entirely of public land.

Naturalness: The Oregon Buttes WSA is in a natural condition. There are two seismograph trails and various two-track trails which reduce the naturalness of the area. However, these intrusions are considered minor and fade into obscurity.

Solitude: Opportunities for outstanding solitude in the WSA are good. There are tiny pocket forests scattered around the buttes which provide opportunities for solitude. Much of the surrounding countryside is undeveloped and enhances the solitude of the area.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding in the WSA. Being prime raptor habitat, the buttes provide bird watchers with a variety of species and uninterrupted observation. The WSA is also a prime area for scenic and wildlife photography, offering a unique variety of settings and subjects. Other recreation opportunities include hiking, rock climbing, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, and sightseeing. The WSA also offers a wide variety of materials of interest to rockhounds.

(2) Special Features

The Oregon Buttes WSA is of historical significance. The buttes were a major landmark for travelers of the Oregon Trail, which is located less than seven miles to the north of the WSA.

The area is characterized by an abundance of petrified wood, varying in size from chips to stumps. Another special feature of the Oregon Buttes is that they are presently used as a calving area by the only herd of desert elk in Wyoming. The area is important raptor habitat for marsh hawks, golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, various owls, and possibly peregrine

falcons. The area is significant winter range for deer and elk, and cougars and coyotes may be seen along with numerous antelope and sage grouse.

Part of the Oregon Buttes WSA is within an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC Management Plan provides protection for the cultural, historical, and wildlife values of the area as well as ensuring preservation of its scenic qualities.

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation on the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation would have little significant impact on any resources values.

- (4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province, sagebrush steppe.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Oregon Buttes WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently 15 wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas:

The Oregon Buttes WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is located south of the Bridger Wilderness in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability:

The Oregon Buttes WSA contains numerous man-made intrusions, including two seismic lines and thirteen two-track trails. Their locations and historic use reduce wilderness manageability. About 75 percent of the WSA is pre-FLPMA leased for oil and gas which gives the leasees a

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not Presently Leased
- Abandoned Well

Map OB-2
Oregon Buttes WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

"valid existing right" to explore for and develop the oil and gas resource (Map OB-2). This would severely limit the wilderness manageability of the Oregon Buttes WSA.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Leaseable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas and coal. The area has moderate to high oil and gas development potential. There has been some successful drilling on the periphery of the WSA. Nondesignation would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Nondesignation would have no significant impact on the oil and gas industry. Under wilderness designation, oil and gas exploration and development is still likely to occur over the 75 percent of the area under pre-FLPMA leases. The WSA has low potential for economic development of the coal resource.

Some oil shale and sand and gravel occur in the area. However, neither have been developed and are seen as having low development potential.

The area also has numerous uranium claims, but no development has occurred and none is foreseen in the immediate future.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Oregon Buttes WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts to any resource values.

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the management on adjoining state lands. Rights-of-way, structures, etc., would not be allowed within the WSA unless associated with development of pre-FLPMA leases.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation moderately adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Wilderness values of the WSA would be lost, at least until oil and gas development operations were completed. The ACEC management prescriptions will not protect many wilderness values of the area. The ACEC is small and disrupting sights and sounds carry very easily into the elevated lands surrounding the buttes. Therefore, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be limited.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or nowilderness management of this WSA.

The level of livestock grazing in the WSA is not expected to change as a result of wilderness designation. Therefore receipts from livestock production are not expected to be affected by wilderness designation.

Under wilderness designation there would be a minor decrease in the number of visitor-days expected in the WSA, due to a decrease in hunter use, sightseeing, and rockhounding. However, a significant impact is not expected on recreation expenditures in the region.

Under wilderness designation oil and gas activities on pre-FLPMA leases would be expected to result in increased employment, income, revenues, and taxes. Wilderness designation would allow development of mineral resources on over 75 percent of the WSA, with at least nondegradation requirements applied.

No significant social effects would occur as a result of nondesignation.

(6) Consistency with Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Oregon Buttes WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District, and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Oregon Buttes WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (5,700 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (5,700 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, nine comments were received - eight from Wyoming and one from out-of-state. Several comments stated the unit has outstanding scenery, wildlife, and historical values, and it should be studied. Some felt the intrusions found in the unit were minor, and that the unit offers an outstanding wilderness experience. One commenter noted that the intrusions in the area would heal rapidly if it were protected. The out-of-state comment noted that people from Texas visited the area every year because they enjoyed the area's incomparable beauty. Public comment resulted in identification of a road in the unit; thus the area was reduced in size from 7,578 acres, including 422 acres of state land, to 5,700 acres of federally owned land.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 247 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. The primary concern of those opposed to wilderness designation was the potential conflicts with oil and gas development. Those supporting wilderness designation felt it would protect the area's important scenic, wildlife, and cultural values. Table OB-2 shows the tabulation of these comments as they pertain to the Oregon Buttes WSA.

Table OB-1
PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Oregon Buttes WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Supports Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Does Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	26	15	11
WRITTEN	<u>221</u>	<u>176</u>	<u>45</u>
TOTAL	<u>247</u>	<u>191</u>	<u>56</u>

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, but he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to state lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and potential paleontological values.

Table OB-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Oregon Buttes All - Wilderness	5,700 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 75% of the area. (75% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activities on pre-FLPMA leases. Entire area VRM Class I.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to soil and minor adverse impacts would occur to vegetation due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Minor adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
Oregon Buttes No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity. Entire area VRM Class II.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to soils and minor adverse impacts to vegetation due to oil and gas activity.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
WHITEHORSE CREEK WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Whitehorse Creek WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-325, WHITEHORSE CREEK, 4,002 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Whitehorse Creek WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

This WSA does not meet the minimum acreage requirement of 5,000 acres. It remained under study because it adjoins the Oregon Buttes WSA which is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation and because it had already been included in the Draft Wilderness EIS and subjected to public comment.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Whitehorse Creek (WY-040-325).....	4,002
Gross Total 4,002	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	4,002
Gross Total 4,002	

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit lies primarily in southeastern Fremont County with some of the area extending into Sweetwater County. It is about 30 miles northeast of Farson.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at the point where the jeep trail crosses the Continental Divide to the north of Oregon Buttes, thence west on said trail following all northern forks until it bears to the east, thence east cross-country to the Continental Divide, thence along said divide to the point of beginning. All state and private lands along the boundary are excluded from the WSA. See Map WH-1 on page 124.

c. General Environment

The unit contains a multitude of habitats and landscapes, such as lush aspen and pine groves, high, sheer sandstone cliffs and an area of magnificent badland topography. A major portion of this unit is made

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map WH-1
Whitehorse Creek WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

up of a group of eroding red, green, and gray buttes. Topography in the central and western sections consist of a flat, sage covered basin, rimmed by sheer mud and clay escarpments rising to 100 feet above the valley floor. The unit contains important raptor habitat.

4. Application of Wilderness Planning Criteria and Quality Standards

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The Whitehorse Creek WSA contains 4,002 acres of public land. Though the acreage, 4,002 acres, is too small to meet the minimum size criteria, it remained due to public comment and the fact that it is only separated from Oregon Buttes WSA by a two-track trail.

Naturalness: The Whitehorse Creek WSA is in a natural state. There are a few minor intrusions but these are considered insignificant.

Solitude: Opportunities for outstanding solitude abound throughout the WSA. The rugged terrain and the eroded escarpments provide opportunities to avoid the sites and sounds of others.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The main type of recreation activity in the area is rock climbing. Other excellent recreational opportunities include nature and wildlife photography, bird watching, and big game hunting.

(2) Special Features

The Whitehorse Creek WSA contains a wide variety of wildlife species. These badlands also contain petrified wood, agate beds and fossils of snails and clams, which provide outstanding rockhounding values.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure:)

Under wilderness designation, there would be no significant impact to resource values.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

(a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System

(NWPS). This WSA is a representative of the Wyoming Basin Province--sagebrush steppe.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Whitehorse Creek WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)--Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The Whitehorse Creek WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is to the south of the Bridger Wilderness which is in the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability,

The Whitehorse Creek WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation, although it is manageable as wilderness. Size (4,002 acres) is the primary manageability problem, but if it is considered with the adjacent Oregon Buttes WSA the problem of size is eliminated.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

Leaseable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas and coal. The area is almost totally under pre-FLPMA leases and a producing gas well is located south of the WSA boundary (Map WH-2). Nondesignation would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Nondesignation would have no significant impact on the oil and gas industry. The WSA has low potential for economic development of the coal resource.

A large portion of the WSA has been staked for uranium and most of these claims are pre-FLPMA. However, at present there is no development of uranium and potential is low for economic deposits of uranium.

Several placer gold claims have been staked in the WSA, but no gold production has been reported.

- (2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Whitehorse Creek WSA would cause no significant adverse impact to resource values.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- State Minerals
- Producing Well (Davis Oil Buccaneer No.1)
- Abandoned Well

Map WH-2
Whitehorse Creek WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the management of adjoining state lands. Rights-of-way, structures, etc., would not be allowed within the WSA unless associated with pre-FLPMA or state lease development.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation highly adverse impacts would occur to the wilderness values in the WSA. The wilderness values would be lost, at least until oil and gas development operations were complete. The naturalness of the WSA, as well as opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, would be virtually nonexistent.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects

Quantitative resource data was not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management no change in proprietors' income would accrue to the livestock industry. There would be a moderate decrease in the number of visitor-days expected in the WSA, due to a decrease in hunter use and sightseeing. However, expenditures for recreational use of the WSA are not expected to change.

Under wilderness management oil and gas exploration and development would be allowed on 95 percent of the WSA. Oil and gas industry activity is expected to increase employment, income, revenues, and taxes as a result of exploration and/or development.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans

The recommendations in this report for Whitehorse Creek WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. The northern portion of the WSA is within Fremont County. This county has elected not to adopt the traditional zoning approach. General land use districts are established which recognize the capability and suitability of the land. The southern portion of the WSA is located within Sweetwater County, and is zoned as an agricultural district. The existing plans or policies do not conflict with either a wilderness or nonwilderness designation of the WSA.

5. WSA Alternatives

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Whitehorse Creek WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (4,002 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (4,002 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. Two comments, both from Wyoming, were received during the inventory phase. Both supported retention of the unit as a wilderness study area. Public comment and field inspection revealed a road leading to a reservoir and a large number of jeep trails, reducing the acreage of the WSA to 4,002 acres. Although the area fell below of the 5,000-acre minimum, its topography was found to be an extension of Oregon Buttes and the area was retained for study in conjunction with Oregon Buttes.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 261 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. The primary concern of those opposed to wilderness designation was the potential conflicts with oil and gas development. Those supporting wilderness designation felt it would protect the area's important wildlife and cultural vlaues. Table WH-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Whithorse Creek WSA.

Table WH-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Whitehorse Creek WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	25	14	11
WRITTEN	236	175	61
TOTALS	261	189	72

- d. County: Fremont and Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within and bordering WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation

of the area because of its oil and gas development potential. The Geological Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an area of critical environmental concern and it has potential archeological and paleontological values.

Table WH-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Whitehorse Creek All - Wilderness	4,002 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 95% of the area. (95% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	Moderately adverse impacts due to oil and gas activities on pre-FLPMA leases. Entire area VRM Class I.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to vegetation and minor adverse impacts would occur to soil due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to wildlife due to oil and gas activity on pre-FLPMA leases.
Whitehorse Creek No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Moderately adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity. Entire area VRM Class III and IV.	Moderately adverse impacts would occur to vegetation and minor adverse impacts to soil due to oil and gas activity.	Moderately adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity.

Rock Springs District
 Wilderness Study Report
DEVILS PLAYGROUND -- TWIN BUTTES WSA
 Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-401/402, DEVILS PLAYGROUND-TWIN BUTTES, 22,561 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

This WSA only minimally meets the basic wilderness criteria and possesses no attractive qualities to stimulate visitation; nearby Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, with its nationally renown record trout fisheries, attracts almost all of the non-hunting recreation south of Interstate Highway 80 in Sweetwater County. The badland portion would not add significantly to the National Wilderness Preservation System, since other areas of better quality are receiving a suitable wilderness recommendation (Honeycomb Buttes).

The unit further contains numerous man-made intrusions, including 17 reservoirs and over 23 seismic and two-track trails.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Devils Playground-Twin Buttes (WY-040-401/402).....	22,561
Also within WSA boundary:	
State - Subsurface	1,280
Gross Total	23,841
<u>Recommendation</u>	
BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	22,561
Also within nonsuitable boundary:	
State - Surburface	1,280
Gross Total	23,841

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located in southwestern Wyoming, approximately 28 miles southeast of Green River, Wyoming, eight miles north of Manila, Utah, and three miles west of Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at a point where a two-track trail crosses Pine Spring, thence south and west on said trail south of Black Spring Reservoir, thence south on said trail around Twin Buttes, thence north on said trail to

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- None State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map DP-1
 Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

Anvil Wash, thence west to the south end of Black Mountain, thence northeast along the ridgetop to Devils Playground, thence north on a two-track trail to Squaw Hollow, thence northwest on said trail to Buckboard Wash, thence southwest to the point of beginning. See Map DP-1 on page 134.

c. General Environment

This unit is characterized by highly eroded badland areas largely devoid of vegetation and by high outcrops with scattered patches of juniper and sparse grasses. The most prominent points are Black Mountain and Twin Buttes, located in the westcentral and southern portions of the unit.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 22,561 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA is essentially natural in character. There are some seismic trails, and two-track trails, although faint and obscure. Some bladed scars are substantially noticeable. However, these intrusions do not detract from the overall natural character of the WSA.

Solitude: The WSA's diverse topography and size combine to screen and disperse use and provide ample opportunities to experience outstanding solitude. It is characterized by highly eroded badlands.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area has opportunities for hiking, camping, horseback riding, photography, and sightseeing. Antelope hunters utilize the WSA and there is some opportunity for hunting predators (coyotes). Rockhounding and a small amount of overnight camping occur occasionally around the periphery of the WSA. Overall use of the WSA at present is light because of steep topography, a lack of potable waters, and the close proximity of Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, which has a national reputation for its trophy trout.

(2) Special Features

The Devils Playground-Twin Buttes area has interesting and unusual geologic features. Fossil deposits and evidence of early man can be found throughout the WSA. The area is characterized by abundant prehistoric remains. Indians pursuing a nomadic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle occupied this area continuously for 9,000 years. The Pine Spring cultural site adjacent to the WSA has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

- (3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation on the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation would help to protect the fossil deposits and evidence of early man.

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently fifteen wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is not located far from the Lone Peak Wilderness Area (to the southwest) in the Wasatch National Forest, the Dinosaur National Monument (to the southeast), or the Uinta National Forest (to the south) which also offer opportunities for wilderness recreation.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability:

The boundary around most of the WSA is a dirt road; the road and the internal seismic trails are used by hunters for access to the area during hunting seasons. Signing of the boundaries would be necessary along with periodic patrols to manage the area as wilderness. All of two sections of state-owned minerals (Map DP-2) are situated within the WSA boundary. In order to retain the integrity and size of the unit, it would be necessary to acquire the mineral estate from the state.

- Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- Not presently leased
- State Minerals

Map DP-2
OIL AND GAS LEASES

Approximately 20% of the WSA is covered by pre-FLPMA oil and gas leases. Pre-FLPMA leases have valid existing rights of the lease subject to unnecessary or undue degradation. All post-FLPMA leases are subject to the Bureau's nonimpairment criteria.

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values:

Leaseable minerals known to occur in the WSA include oil and gas, oil shale, trona (sodium), coal and phosphate. There is no oil and gas production in the WSA at present. The proposed action would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Nondesignation would have no significant impact on the oil and gas industry.

The potential for oil shale, trona, coal, and phosphate production is low.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: The extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on any resource values.

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it could conflict with the management of state minerals and adjoining state lands. Under wilderness management the area would remain an agricultural zone. No developments (factories, plants, etc.) would be permitted in the WSA, unless associated with pre-FLPMA lease development. Most rights-of-way for roads, pipelines, etc., would not be allowed unless wilderness values were unimpaired. These rights-of-way would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values:

Under nondesignation minor adverse impacts could occur to wilderness values due to anticipated oil and gas activities. However, since only minimal oil and gas exploration activity is anticipated, many of the wilderness values would be retained. Nondesignation would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this WSA as wilderness. However, there are better examples of badlands with wilderness characteristics, such as Honeycomb Buttes WSA in the Rock Springs District, which has been recommended for wilderness designation.

(4) Public Comments: (This standard is covered in Section 6 below.)

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management oil and gas activities would be allowed onsite on pre-FLPMA leases in the WSA. If discoveries are not made (the area has low potential for oil and gas), the level of regional employment, income, revenues, and taxes would be expected to remain unchanged. No changes in proprietor's income would accrue to the livestock industry.

Under nondesignation no changes to proprietor's income would accrue to the livestock industry. Nondesignation would allow oil and gas exploration and development throughout the WSA. Activity by the oil and gas industry is expected to increase employment, income, revenues, and taxes as a result of exploration and/or development.

Increases in employment, income, revenues, and taxes are not expected from possible sodium development, due to the large quantity of sodium reserves closer to the existing mines and soda ash plants.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA are consistent with local, state and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (22,561 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the WSA of the entire WSA (22,561 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.
- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted, and residual adverse impacts are considered to be insignificant.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, six comments were received-four from Wyoming and two from other states. Four favored inclusion of the unit as a wilderness study area, but none provided any new information concerning the unit's wilderness qualities and intrusions. Two disagreed with the BLM's report which found the area having naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. One comment identified a dry hole well that had not been previously identified in the unit. A supplemental evaluation confirmed a special evaluation team's findings that several mapping errors and omissions had been made and that man's work in the unit had been understated. Subsequently 2,329 acres of the unit were excluded from the WSA due to numerous intrusions.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 262 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. Mineral development was the major concern of those opposing wilderness for this area; supporters felt wilderness designation would preserve the area's unique badlands and wilderness values. Table DP-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA.

Table DP-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY - Devils Playground-Twin Buttes WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	26	14	12
WRITTEN	<u>236</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>61</u>
TOTALS	262	189	73

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within or adjoining WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas development potential, and the Geological Survey of Wyoming cited mineral development potential (especially trona) in opposing designation. The Wyoming Department of Agriculture and State Engineer also opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of mineral development conflicts.

Table DP-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Devils Playground-Twin Buttes All - Wilderness	22,561 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 20% of the area. (20% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	No impacts. Entire area VRM Class I.	No impacts. Minor adverse impacts to soil vegetation due to oil and gas activity.	No impacts.
Devils Playground-Twin Buttes No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	No impact.		No impacts.
			Entire area VRM Class II.

Rock Springs District
Wilderness Study Report
RED CREEK BADLANDS WSA
Location Map

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Red Creek Badlands WSA

1. WSA NUMBER, NAME, and ACREAGE UNDER STUDY

WY-040-406, RED CREEK BADLANDS, 8,020 acres

2a. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE

The entire Red Creek Badlands WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

A State of Wyoming section in the northern portion of the WSA, several old seismic lines, and an old drill road that nearly bisects the area limit this WSA's potential as wilderness.

The badlands are part of a fragile watershed with excessive natural erosion. A watershed management plan has been prepared to slow down erosion attributable to man's activities in the watershed, and the Salt Wells Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan has limited vehicular use to designated roads and trails. Since this area is a major contributor of silt to the Green River, it is important that proposed watershed treatment projects be done.

2b. Statistical Table

<u>Wilderness Study Area</u>	<u>Acres BLM</u>
Red Creek Badlands (WY-040-406).....	8,020
Also within WSA boundary:	
State 640	
Gross Total 8,660	

Recommendation

BLM acres recommended <u>nonsuitable</u>	8,020
Also within nonsuitable boundary:	
State 640	
Gross Total 8,660	

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WSA

a. Location

The unit is located approximately five miles north of the Wyoming-Utah-Colorado state lines and 35 miles south of Rock Springs, Wyoming, and 15 miles east of Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area.

b. Boundaries

Beginning at a point north of Beef Steer Spring, thence east and south along the ridgetop to an unnamed two-track road, thence east on said road to the Red Creek Road, thence south on Red Creek Road to Red Creek Basin near the Red Creek Ranch, thence west and north from the Red Creek

- Incorrect Boundary as shown in Wyoming Wilderness Study Areas Final Inventory Report
- Red Creek Watershed ACEC
- Revised Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Public Land (Administered by BLM)
- Private Land
- State Land
- Federal Minerals

Map RC-1
Red Creek Badlands WSA
LAND AND MINERAL STATUS

Ranch following Red Creek to Ely Creek, thence northwest along Ely Creek to the ridgetop, thence northeast along the ridgetop to the point of beginning.

See Map RC-1 on page 144.

c. General Environment

This unit ranges in elevation from 7,000 to 7,900 feet and contains badlands of highly erodible red shales and sandstones. Vegetation varies from greasewood in the draws and sagebrush on the bench areas to juniper on the upper slopes.

4. APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS

a. Criterion No. 1 - Evaluation of Wilderness Values

(1) Quality of the Area's Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

Size: The WSA contains 8,020 acres of public land.

Naturalness: The WSA is essentially natural in character. There are two old seismic lines, two two-track trails, and an abandoned road to an old well site. These intrusions are faded and are no longer considered noticeable.

Solitude: The rugged terrain and vegetative screening of the badlands provides numerous opportunities for outstanding solitude. The isolation possible in this unit is sufficient to give a person a sense of remoteness.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Recreation opportunities in the WSA include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, rockhounding, wildlife observation, and hunting. The WSA's steep topography, unstable soils and the lack of potable water limit recreation activities, and nearby Flaming Gorge NRA attracts most people.

(2) Special Features

The Red Creek Badlands WSA contains highly erodible red shales and sandstones. The coloration of the rocks and cliffs, mixed with the various shades of vegetation, provides an interesting landscape.

The Red Creek WSA provides habitat for pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and elk.

The Red Creek drainage has also been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern because of its fragile soils and high erodibility problems.

(3) Multiple Resource Benefits (benefits to other multiple resource values which wilderness designation of the area would ensure).

Wilderness designation would help to protect the scenic quality of the area.

- Incorrect Boundary as shown in Wyoming Wilderness Study Areas Final Inventory Report
- Red Creek Watershed ACEC
- Revised Wilderness Study Area Boundary
- Pre-FLPMA Leases
- Post-FLPMA Leases
- State Minerals
- Not Presently Leased
- Edwards Ranch Exploratory Unit
- Dry Hole

0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
1/2" = 1 mile

Map RC-2
Red Creek Badlands WSA
OIL AND GAS LEASES

(4) Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- (a) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms:

Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem or landform to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The NWPS does not have representation within the Wyoming Basin Province.

- (b) Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers:

The Red Creek WSA is within a day's driving time of two major population centers (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of 100,000 or more)-Salt Lake City-Ogden and Provo-Orem. There are currently 15 wilderness areas and three primitive areas within a day's driving time of these population centers.

- (c) Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas:

The Red Creek Badlands WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This WSA is not located far from the Lone Peak Wilderness Area (to the southwest) in the Wasatch National Forest.

b. Criterion No. 2 - Manageability:

The Red Creek Badlands WSA is not readily manageable as wilderness. Boundaries around most of the unit are on old seismic lines or abandoned roads which would be indistinct and confusing to the public. These old routes are used by hunters for access to the area during hunting seasons. Signing of the boundaries would be necessary along with periodic patrols to manage the area as wilderness.

Section 16 on the north side of the unit is state land. Due to topography, the most logical access to this section is from the south, along an old drill road which was constructed in 1959. In order to retain the integrity and size of the unit, it would be necessary to acquire Section 16 and obliterate the old drill road. A tract of private land borders the unit along the southeastern boundary.

There are twenty pre-FLPMA and six post-FLPMA oil and gas leases all or part of which lie within the study area boundary (Map RC-2). Pre-FLPMA leases have valid existing rights of the lease subject to unnecessary or undue degradation. All post-FLPMA leases are subject to the Bureau's non-impairment criteria. Previous oil and gas exploratory drilling (unsuccessful) within the WSA was at depths of less than 9,000 feet. Renewed interest in the oil and gas potential of the area has resulted in exploratory drilling to greater depths. Although no deep exploratory wells have been drilled in the WSA, the 1981 Edwards Ranch Unit Agreement (exploratory agreement, see Map RC-2) proposes to drill at least one well to 13,000 feet to explore the Weber Formation. This well

may fall within the WSA boundaries. Southwest of the WSA an unsuccessful exploratory well of similar depth (14,800 feet) was drilled by Exxon in 1977 (Map RC-2--southeast quarter of the northeast quarter, section 25, T. 13 N., R. 105 W.).

c. Quality Standards

(1) Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The Red Creek Badlands WSA is underlain by coal of unknown extent, and most of the WSA is within a coal land withdrawal established by Executive Order on July 13, 1910. Carbonaceous shale and lenticular beds of subbituminous coal are common in the upper 3,000 feet of the Wasatch formation. In a few places these coal beds have been mined for domestic use, but coal development in the WSA is considered to have low potential.

Part of the WSA falls within an oil shale withdrawal (Executive Order 5327 and Public Land Order 4522) which closes that area to mining claim location. This withdrawal is under review by BLM for revocation. Expressions of public interest in oil shale development within the Rock Springs District (largely from Rocky Mountain Energy Company) indicate development interest focuses on deposits outside of the WSA.

The oil and gas potential in the WSA is unknown. Drilling activity within the Edwards Ranch Unit should provide some indication of oil and gas potential at greater depths.

There are no indications of other mineral values or public interest in other mineral values within the WSA.

(2) Impacts on Other Resources: the extent to which other resource values or uses would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Wilderness designation of the entire Red Creek Badlands WSA would cause no significant adverse impacts on any resource values.

Land Use Constraints - Wilderness designation would not conflict with county zoning, but it would conflict with the management of the state lands within and adjoining the WSA. The area would remain an agricultural zone. No developments (factories, plants, etc.) would be permitted in the WSA, unless associated with pre-FLPMA or state lease development. Most rights-of-way for roads, pipelines, etc. would not be allowed unless wilderness values were unimpaired. These rights-of-way would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

Under nondesignation minor adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values. Some of the wilderness characteristics unique to the Red Creek area would remain intact. The implementation

of the Red Creek Watershed Management Plan would help to protect some of these qualities, but some adverse impacts would occur to wilderness values, due to possible oil and gas exploration and development.

Nondesignation would result in the loss of the opportunity to establish this WSA as wilderness. However, the WSA's overall ecological uniqueness and contribution to the regional diversity of the wilderness system is somewhat limited. Furthermore, there are better examples of badlands with wilderness characteristics, such as Honeycomb Buttes WSA in the Rock Springs District, which has been recommended for wilderness designation.

(5) Local Social and Economic Effects:

Quantitative resource data were not available on a site-specific basis to analyze the specific socioeconomic impacts of wilderness or no wilderness management of this WSA.

Under wilderness management no changes in proprietors' income would accrue to the livestock industry or the recreation industry. There would be a minor decrease in the number of visitor-days expected in the WSA, due to a decrease in vehicle-dependent recreation use, such as hunting. However, expenditures for recreational use of the WSA are not expected to change.

Under wilderness management onsite oil and gas activities would be allowed on approximately 58 percent of the WSA. Offsite drilling may be required to develop oil and gas resources on post-FLPMA leases. No changes in employment, income, revenues, and taxes are anticipated as a result of wilderness management of this WSA.

(6) Consistency With Other Plans:

The recommendations in this report for Red Creek Badlands WSA are consistent with local, state, and federal plans. This WSA falls within an Agricultural Zoning District and there would be no conflict with the management on the adjoining state lands.

5. WSA ALTERNATIVES

- a. Two alternatives were analyzed for Red Creek Badlands WSA in the DEIS:

All Wilderness - Wilderness designation of the entire WSA (8,020 acres).

No Wilderness - Nondesignation of the entire WSA (8,020 acres).

- b. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative.

- c. The BLM's preferred alternative is no wilderness alternative. In its selection, all practical means to avoid environmental impacts have been adopted, and residual adverse impacts are considered to be insignificant.
- d. To mitigate impacts in the lands not designated as wilderness, after Congress has acted, the BLM will manage mining activities under the regulations 43 CFR 3809 to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

6. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

- a. During the inventory phase, fourteen comments were received on this unit-ten from Wyoming and four from out-of-state. Ten agreed with inclusion of this unit as a wilderness study area, three disagreed, and one comment was in between. One comment from a rancher gave new information regarding use and maintenance of one of the routes in the unit. Omissions of manmade structures, failure to adequately analyze routes, and overstatement of supplemental values were discovered during the inventory review. The unit was reinventoried and a public field tour conducted; as a result of all comments, the unit was reduced in size from 34,405 acres to 8,020 acres.
- b. No comments were received during the MFP comment period.
- c. A total of 206 written and oral comments were received during the public hearing and public comment period on the Draft Wilderness EIS. Those opposed to wilderness designation cited potential conflicts with oil and gas development. Protection of watershed and wildlife values were the major items discussed by those supporting designation of the area as wilderness. Table RC-1 shows the results of the comments as they pertain to the Red Creek WSA.

Table RC-1

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY- RED CREEK BADLANDS WSA

	<u>Total Comments Received</u>	<u>Support Wilderness Designation</u>	<u>Do Not Support Designation</u>
ORAL	26	6	20
WRITTEN	182	20	162
TOTALS	206	26	182

- d. County: Sweetwater County officials did not comment on this WSA.

State: Governor Ed J. Herschler of Wyoming took no position on wilderness designation at this time, although he continued to express concern about adverse impacts to State lands contained within or adjoining WSAs. The Wyoming Oil and Gas commission opposed designation of the area because of its oil and gas potential. The Geological

Survey of Wyoming, Department of Agriculture, and Wyoming State Engineer opposed wilderness designation. State Senator Jack Pugh supported wilderness designation, noting that the significance of the WSA to the national energy picture was "negligible".

Federal: The Bureau of Mines opposed wilderness designation because of oil and gas development conflicts. The National Park Service recommended further consideration of the area as wilderness because it contains an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Table RC-2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE ALTERNATIVES

WSA/Alternative	Wilderness Resource	Mineral Resources	Recreation and Visual Resources	Vegetation/Water Soils	Wildlife
Red Creek Badlands All - Wilderness	8,020 acres would be designated.	The area would be withdrawn from mineral leasing. Valid existing rights could be exercised on 50% of the area. (50% is pre-FLPMA leased.)	No impacts. Entire area VRM Class I.	Beneficial impacts due to implementation of the Red Creek Watershed ACEC Management Plan.	No impacts.
Red Creek Badlands No - Wilderness	Mineral development could significantly adversely alter the wilderness values.	Entire area open to mineral entry.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activity. Entire area VRM Class II.	Highly beneficial impacts to soil and water due to implementation of the Red Creek Watershed ACEC Management Plan. Moderately beneficial impacts due to ACEC Management Plan implementation.	Minor adverse impacts due to oil and gas activities.

GLOSSARY

ACTIVE DUNE. A dune is any hill or accumulation of sand shaped by the wind. A dune is active, or "live", when constantly changing form under wind currents. Generally an active dune is bare of vegetation.

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC). Areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources; or other natural systems or processes; or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

BADLAND TOPOGRAPHY. A surface configuration characterized by intricate and sharp erosional sculpture of generally weak rocks, forming steep, furrowed, and fantastically shaped hills, labyrinth-like drainage patterns, and normally dry watercourses.

CHERRYSTEM. A boundary configuration in which the boundary of a wilderness study area or proposed wilderness is drawn around a dead-end road or other linear feature so as to exclude that road or feature from the wilderness study area or proposed wilderness.

COLD DESERT. A climatically arid area averaging less than 10 inches of precipitation and characterized by very cold winters and relatively cool summers.

CRUCIAL HABITAT. A portion of the habitat of a wildlife species that, if destroyed or adversely modified, could result in the population being listed as threatened or endangered pursuant to Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act, or in some category implying endangerment by a state agency or legislature. Examples of crucial habitat include nesting areas, broodrearing areas, winter ranges, migration routes, etc.

ECOSYSTEM. A complex, self-sustaining natural system which includes living and nonliving components of the environment and the interactions that bind them together, especially the circulation of matter and energy between the components.

EOLIAN ICE-CELLS. Perennial ice formed from snowfall and insulated by a cover of windblown sand from summer heat. This ice field feeds small ponds within the dunes.

FLPMA. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579, 90 Stat. 2743, 43 USC 1701) by which Congress gave the Bureau of Land Management a comprehensive mandate on how the public lands should be managed. Management decisions are to be made through a land-use planning process that considers all potential uses of each land area. Wilderness preservation is part of the BLM's mandate, and Section 603 of the Act provides for a wilderness review and management program.

HUNTER-DAY. In State of Wyoming, any time spent by a hunter during a given day (unit effort).

LANDFORM. A distinctive geometric configuration of the earth's land surface; a topographic relief feature.

LEASABLE MINERALS. Those minerals subject to lease by the Federal Government; include oil and gas, coal, phosphate, sodium, potash, and oil shale, as well as geothermal resources.

LOCATABLE MINERALS. Minerals subject to disposal and development through the Mining Law of 1872 (as amended). Generally includes metallic minerals such as gold and silver and other materials not subject to lease or sale. See LEASABLE MINERALS and SALABLE MINERALS.

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (MFP). A plan for the use of public lands that provides a set of goals, objectives, and constraints to be used in developing detailed plans for the management of each resource with a specific area (planning unit). The plan includes three steps: (1) specialists prepare management recommendations for their respective resources; (2) the manager, through a conflict resolution process, develops a proposed plan for the recommendations; and (3) the final decision to adopt a plan is made. An amendment to the MFP is initiated when there is a need to consider monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances, or an applicant's proposed action which may result in a significant change in a portion of the approved plan.

MULTIPLE USE. As noted in Section 103 of FLPMA, "...the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some land for less than all the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific, and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with relative consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest return or the greatest unit output."

NATURAL EROSION. The wearing away of the land surface by running water, waves, moving ice and wind, or by such processes as mass wasting and corrosion (solution and other chemical processes) as a result of natural, vs. manmade, processes.

NATURALNESS. As noted in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act, the wilderness characteristic in which an area "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable."

NONDEGRADATION REQUIREMENTS. Measures designed to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of area's wilderness character from a proposed mineral operation.

Such measures could include requirements to prevent water pollution through contamination or siltation of streams; scalping and stockpiling of sod from the area to be disturbed so that it may be used to aid in reestablishing vegetation over the area; minimizing air and noise pollution; trenching of disturbed slopes; placing retaining walls to prevent tailings from entering stream channels, etc.

NONIMPAIRMENT CRITERIA. The stipulations that temporary impacts in a wilderness study area can be rehabilitated to the point of being substantially unnoticeable; the damaged environmental systems are capable of being rehabilitated to essentially the condition which existed on the date the activity was approved by BLM; and rehabilitation can be practically and economically accomplished by the time of Congressional designation of the area as wilderness or, in the case of new mineral activities, within five years of designation.

PALEOCENE. An epoch of the Tertiary geologic time period, occurring about 63 to 58 million years ago, following the Laramide mountain-making episode (Rocky Mountains).

POST-FLPMA. Occurring after the enactment of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976. PRE-FLPMA. Occurring on or before October 21, 1976.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION. Nonmotorized and nondeveloped types of outdoor recreational activities.

RAPTORS. Birds of prey.

RARE SPECIES. Wildlife species whose populations are consistently small and widely dispersed, or whose ranges are restricted to a few localities, such that any appreciable reduction in numbers, habitat availability, or habitat condition might lead toward extinction.

RIPARIAN. Situated on or pertaining to the bank of a river, stream, or other body of water. Normally used to refer to the plants of all types that grow rooted in the water table or streams, ponds, springs, etc.

SEISMIC LINES. Surface disturbance resulting from geophysical exploration for oil and gas. Generally two methods are employed: The explosive method in which shot holes are drilled to a depth of 50 to 200 feet, loaded with 5 to 110 pounds of explosives, and the charge detonated; and the thumper or vibrator method in which truck-mounted equipment is used to pound or vibrate the earth.

SENSITIVE SPECIES. Wildlife species whose numbers are declining so rapidly that official listing as threatened or endangered pursuant to Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act may become necessary as a conservation measure. Declines may be due to one or more factors, including: destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species' habitat or range; overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational purposes; disease or predation; the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and/or other natural or manmade factors adversely affecting the species' continued existence.

SOLITUDE. 1. The state of being alone or remote from habitations; isolation.
2. A lonely, unfrequented, or secluded place.

STABILIZED DUNE. A dune protected from further wind action by a cover of vegetation or by cementation of the sand; known also as a "fixed" or "anchored" dune.

STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (SMSA). A county which contains at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more plus as many adjacent counties as are metropolitan in character and are socially integrated with that central city or cities.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES. Values that may be present in an area under consideration for wilderness, such as ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. They are not required for wilderness designation, but their presence would enhance an area's wilderness quality.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES. As defined by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (P.L. 93-205; 87 Stat. 884), an endangered species means "any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range" and a threatened species means "any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range". Whether any species is threatened or endangered is determined by any of the following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

TOPOGRAPHIC RELIEF. The positions and elevations of the natural or manmade features of an area that describe the configuration of its surface.

VEGETATION MANIPULATION. Land treatment projects designed to improve the growth of more desirable plant species on a given area. Biological, chemical, or mechanical methods of vegetation removal, including prescribed burns, are used.

VISITOR-DAY. A day in which the visitor-hours contained therein have been spent by a person in any activity except those which are part of or incidental to the pursuit of a gainful occupation. Twelve visitor-hours aggregated by one or more persons constitute a visitor-day.

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES (VRM). A BLM classification system containing specific objectives for maintaining or enhancing visual resources, including the kinds of structures and modifications acceptable to meet established visual goals.

WITHDRAWAL. Removal or withholding of public lands, by statute or Secretarial order, from operation of some or all of the public land laws. A mineral withdrawal for classification includes public lands which are potentially valuable for leasable minerals, precluding the disposal of the lands except

with a mineral reservation clause unless the lands are found not to contain a valuable deposit of minerals. A recreational withdrawal reserves public lands which have been designated as chiefly valuable for recreational purposes and as suitable for state exchange, recreational entry, or recreational lease.

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With a general reservation clause which the land is to contain a
valuable deposit of minerals. A reservation without reserve for the lands
which have been designated as chiefly valuable for recreational purposes and
as suitable for state exchange, recreational, scientific, or historical purposes.

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