

# Oregon Buttes WSA

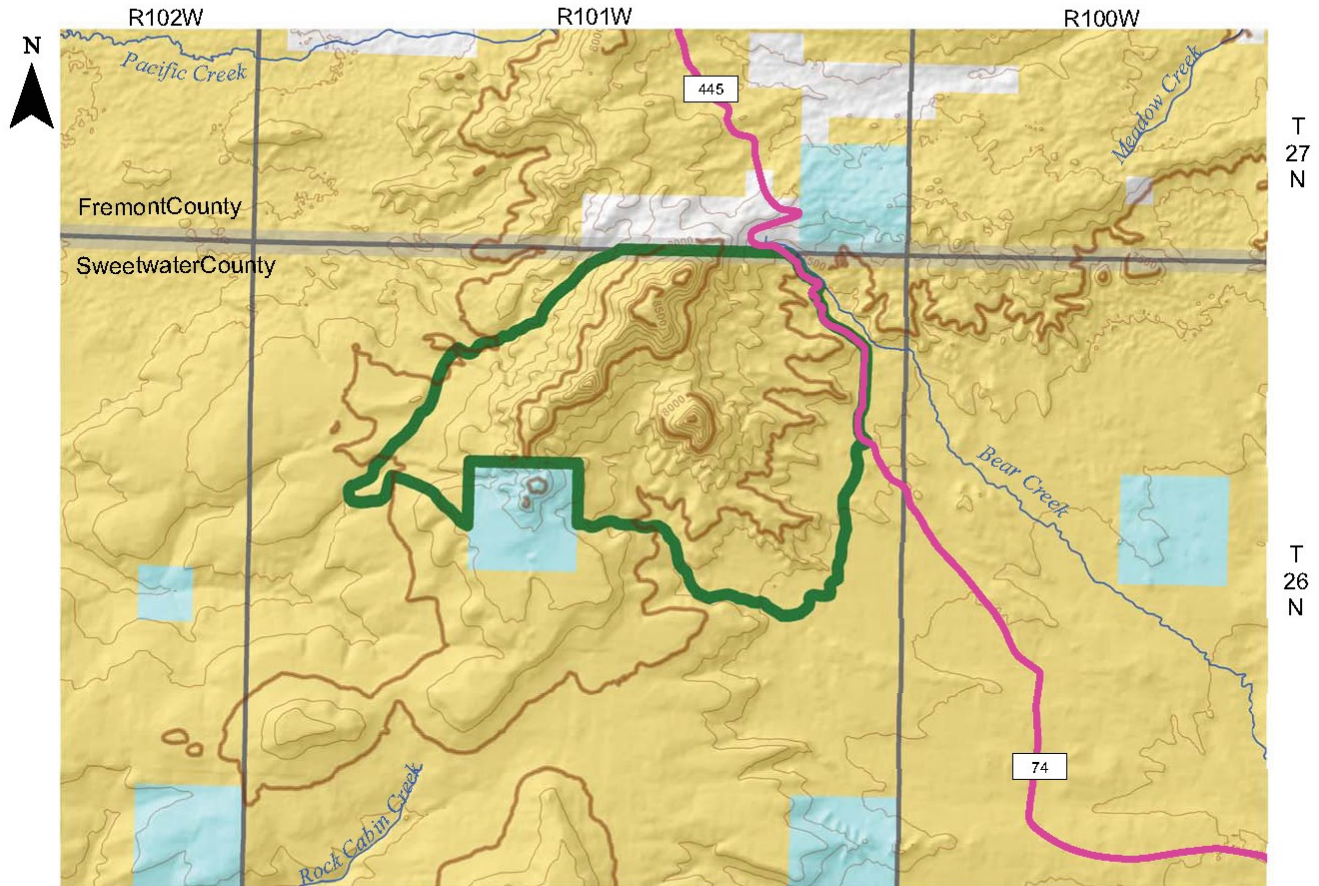
**WSA AREA: 5,700 acres**



Photo compliments of Wyoming Outdoor Council

# Oregon Buttes WSA

WSA AREA: 5,700 acres



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles  
Contour Interval = 100 Feet

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for use of the data for purposes not intended by BLM. Land Status data is from 2009. Map generated June 2010.



## Legend

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Private
- WSA Boundary
- 19S County Road

## Oregon Buttes WSA

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

  
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## Oregon Buttes WSA

**Location:** Sweetwater County  
**Nearest Town:** Farson (30 miles)  
**BLM Acreage:** 5,700 acres  
**Recommended for Wilderness:** 5,700 acres

**Primitive & 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, rock hounding, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding and sightseeing.

**Features:**  
The Oregon Buttes WSA encompasses 5,700 acres of BLM-administered land with no private or state inholdings. The buttes are a prominent landmark, rising out of the northwestern portion of the Red Desert to an elevation of 8,612 feet. The area includes a wide variety of vegetation types including limber pine stands, thick aspen stands and wet meadows. The Oregon Buttes are an island in the Red Desert and were a landmark for settlers traveling the Oregon Trail.

**Naturalness:**  
The Oregon Buttes WSA appears to be in an essentially natural condition. The buttes are a remarkable landmark. They dominate the surrounding countryside with their grandeur and diversity. Visibility from the butte tops is outstanding, offering miles of scenic vistas including the Wind River Mountains on the north to the Unitah Mountain Range to the southwest.

There are two seismograph trails and 13 two-track trails, which slightly reduce the naturalness of the WSA. However, all of these intrusions become obscure; some end as haphazard tire tracks across the hills and dry clay-like soil, others end abruptly at the top of a bench or saddle ridge, and others are overgrown with sagebrush and grass.

**Solitude:**  
Opportunities for solitude are good. However, much of this is due to the undeveloped nature of the surrounding countryside. The tops of the Buttes are relatively inaccessible. This plus the scattered stands of limber pine on top provide screening from the immediate surrounding terrain, providing solitude and immense vistas of the surrounding countryside.

**Special Features:**  
A great number of special features are found in this WSA. Small pieces of petrified wood are abundant. The Oregon Buttes is a major landmark for travelers of the Oregon Trail, which is located less than seven miles to the north of the WSA. Emigrants viewed the Buttes as the halfway point on their journey from Independence, Mo., to the Pacific Ocean. The Buttes also denoted the point where the emigrants passed over the Continental Divide and into the Pacific watershed. Nearly 300,000 emigrants passed this way between 1843 and 1863.

The western portion of the Oregon Buttes WSA is used as a calving area by the only desert elk herd in Wyoming. The WSA contains excellent raptor habitat and several known nest sites. There are historic peregrine falcon aeries on the west face of Oregon Buttes. Immature peregrine falcons are infrequently seen there during raptor surveys.

The remains of Indian tipi rings can be found in the Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC portion of the WSA.

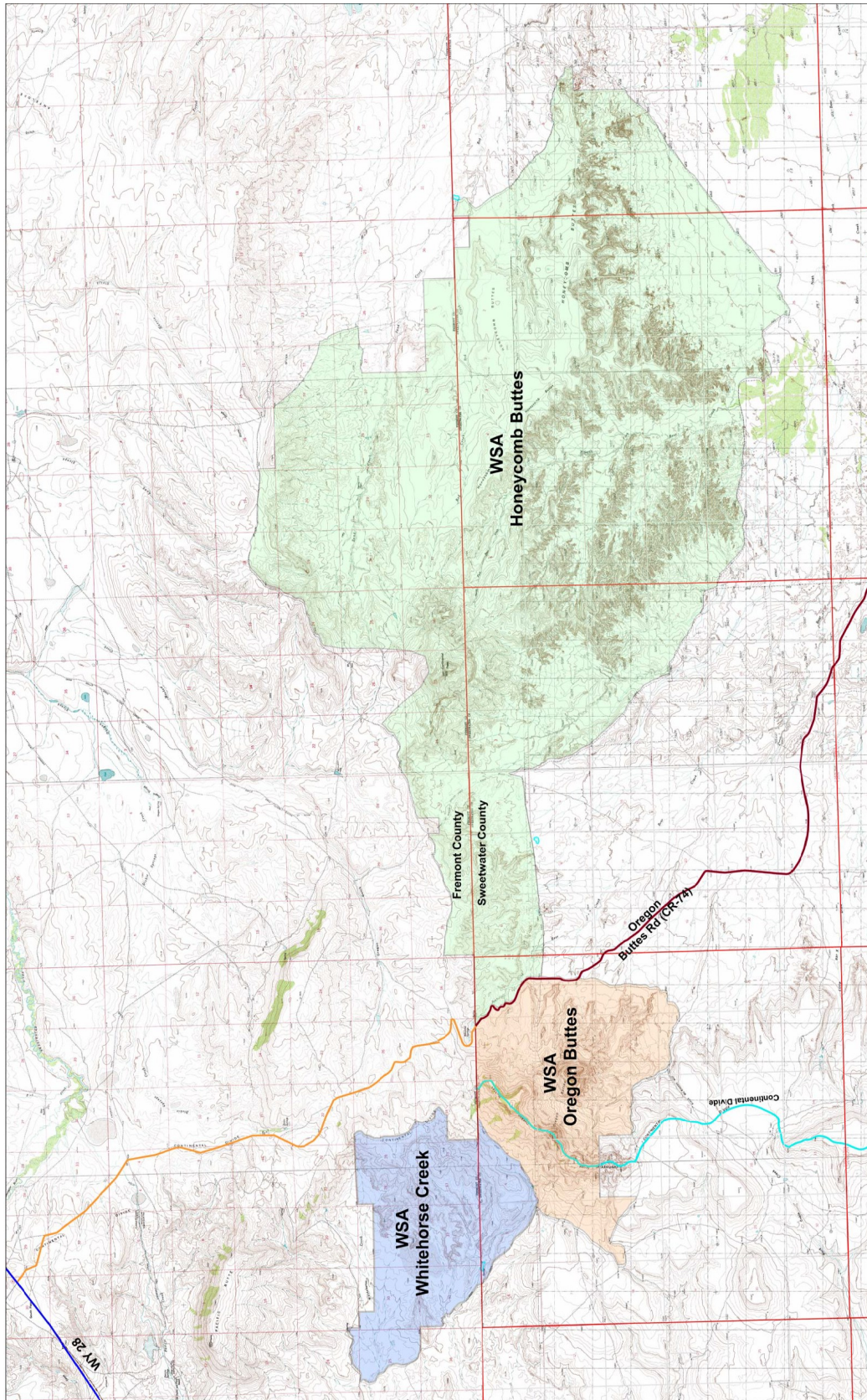
The objectives for managing the Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC (3,360 acres of which are in the 5,700 acre Oregon Buttes WSA) include the protection of the area's scenic integrity as a historic landmark.



Rock Springs Field Office | 280 Highway 191 North | Rock Springs, WY 82901  
Phone: 307-352-0256 | Fax: 307-352-0329 | Office hours: 7:45am - 4:30pm, M-F

Last updated: 12-21-2010

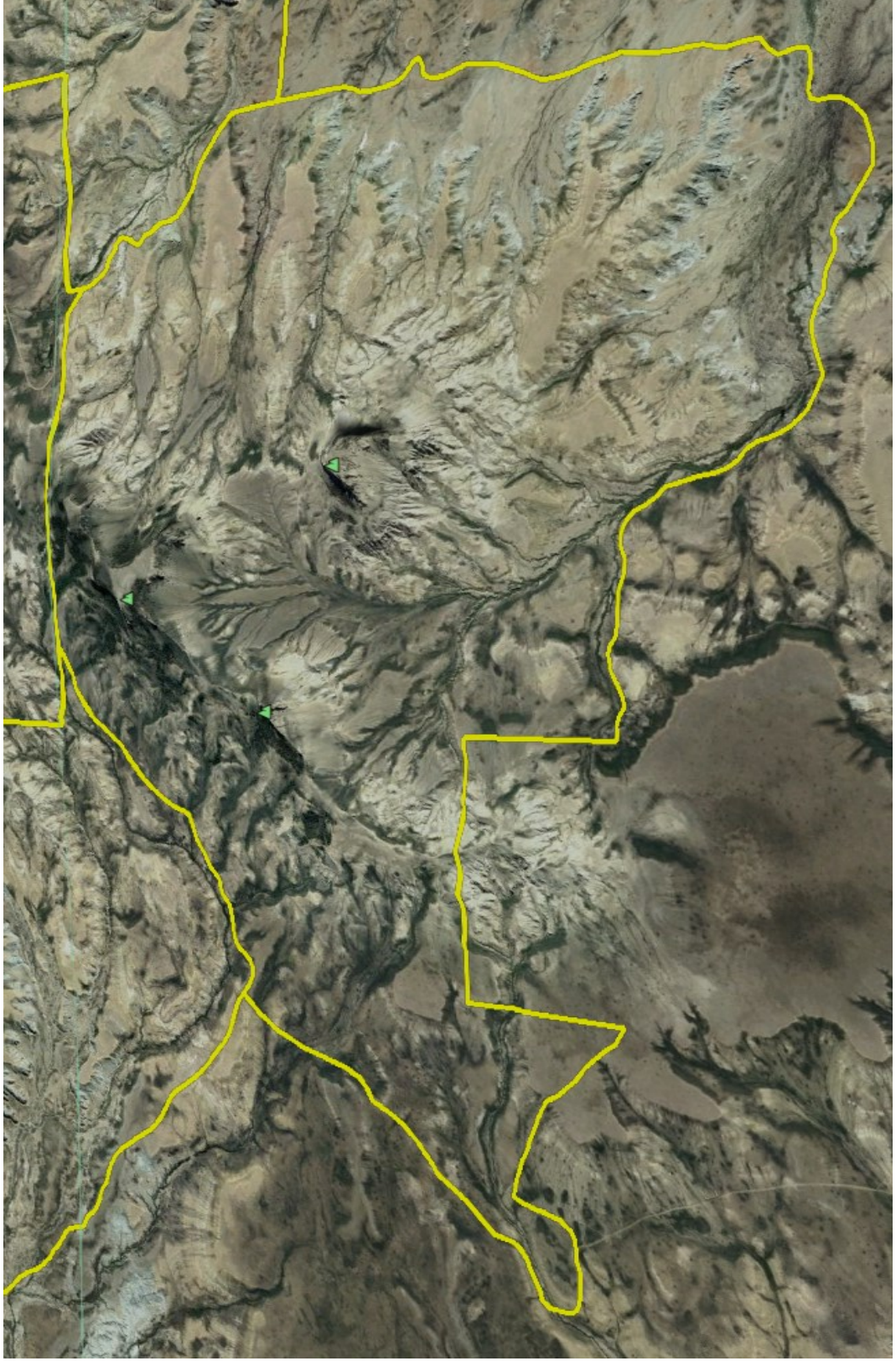
# Honeycomb Buttes WSA Complex



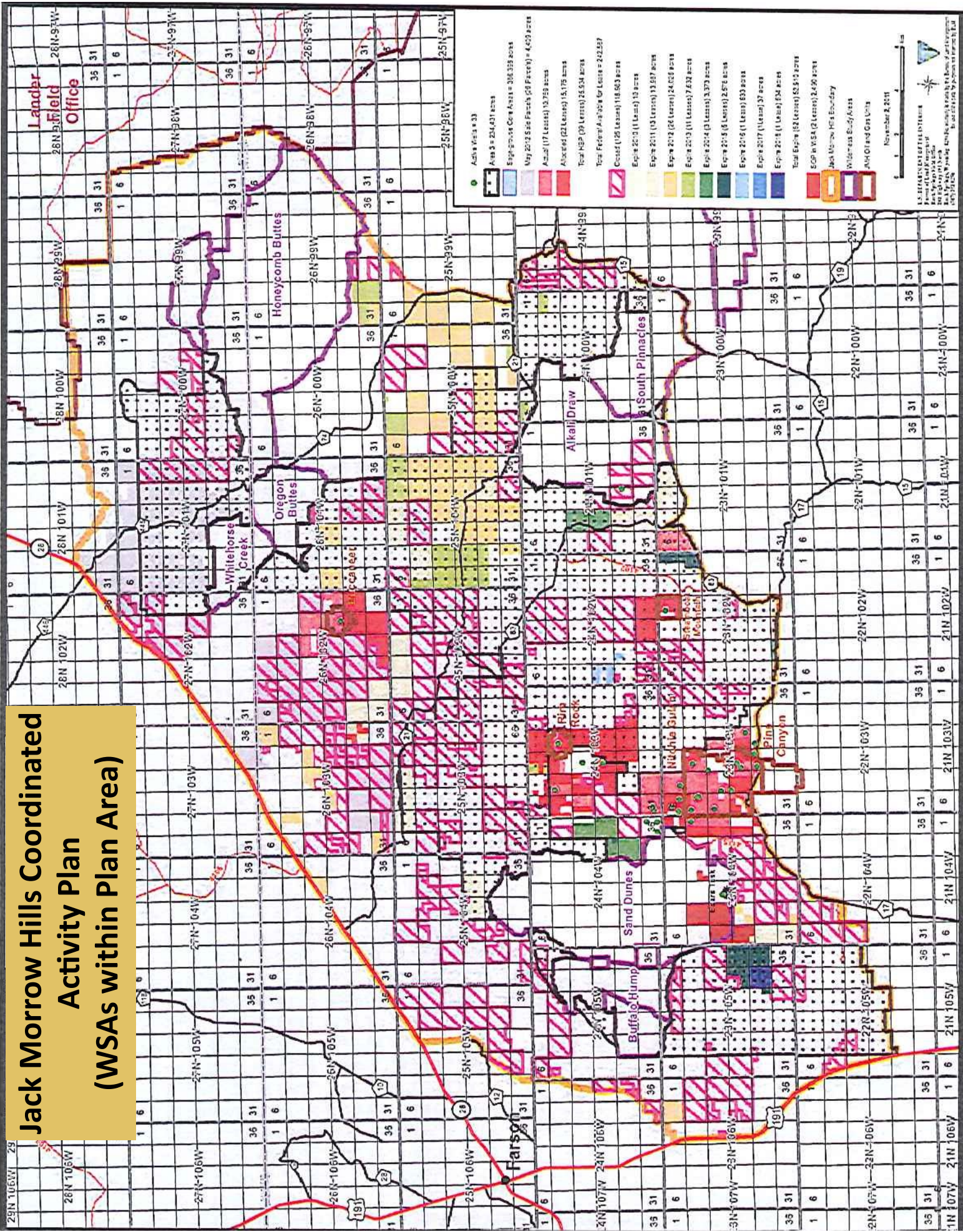
# Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes and Whitehorse Creek WSAs



# Oregon Buttes WSA



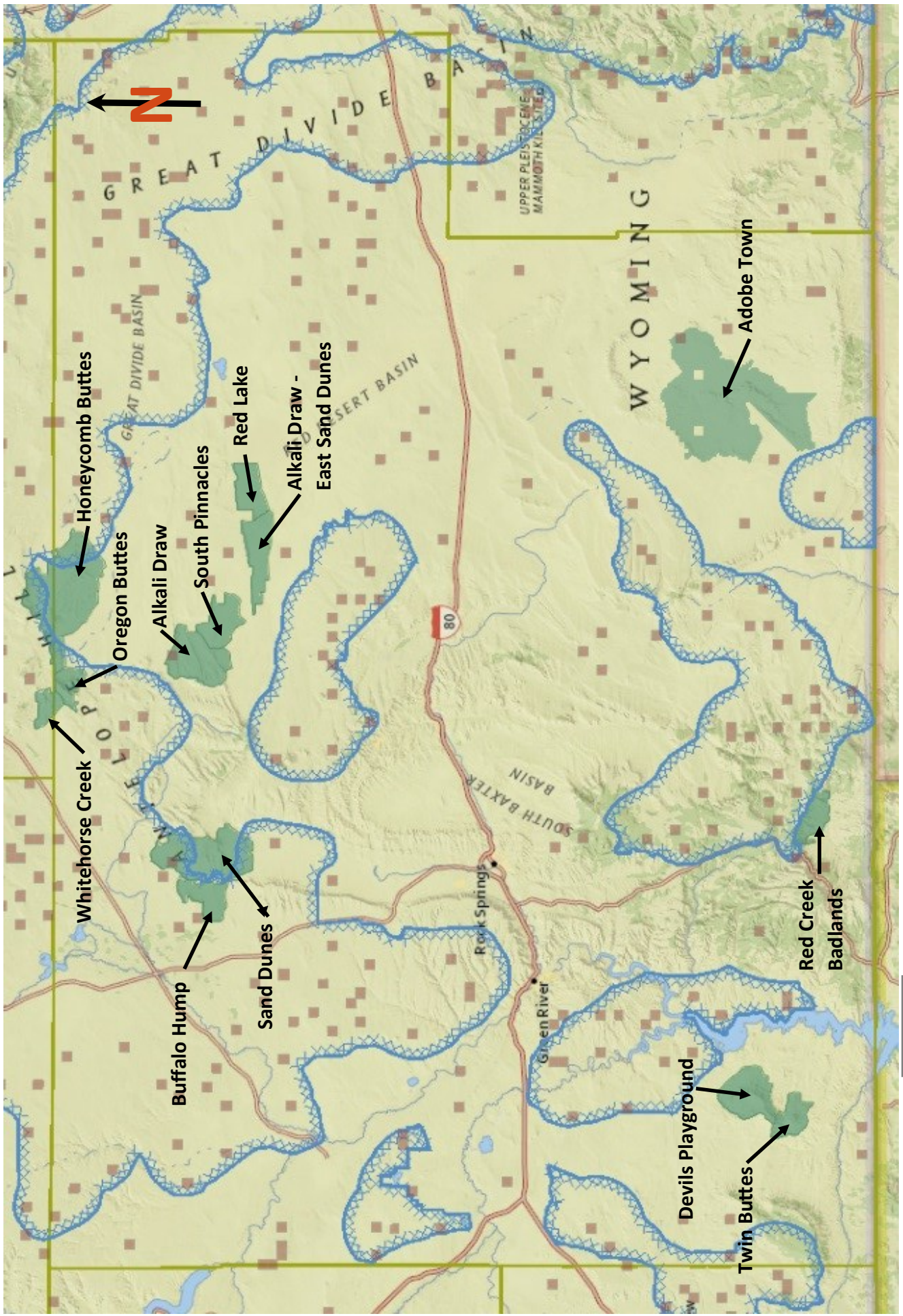
# Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (WSAs within Plan Area)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
1500 W. 10th Street  
Billings, Montana 59102  
Phone: (406) 526-7000  
Fax: (406) 526-7001  
www.blm.gov

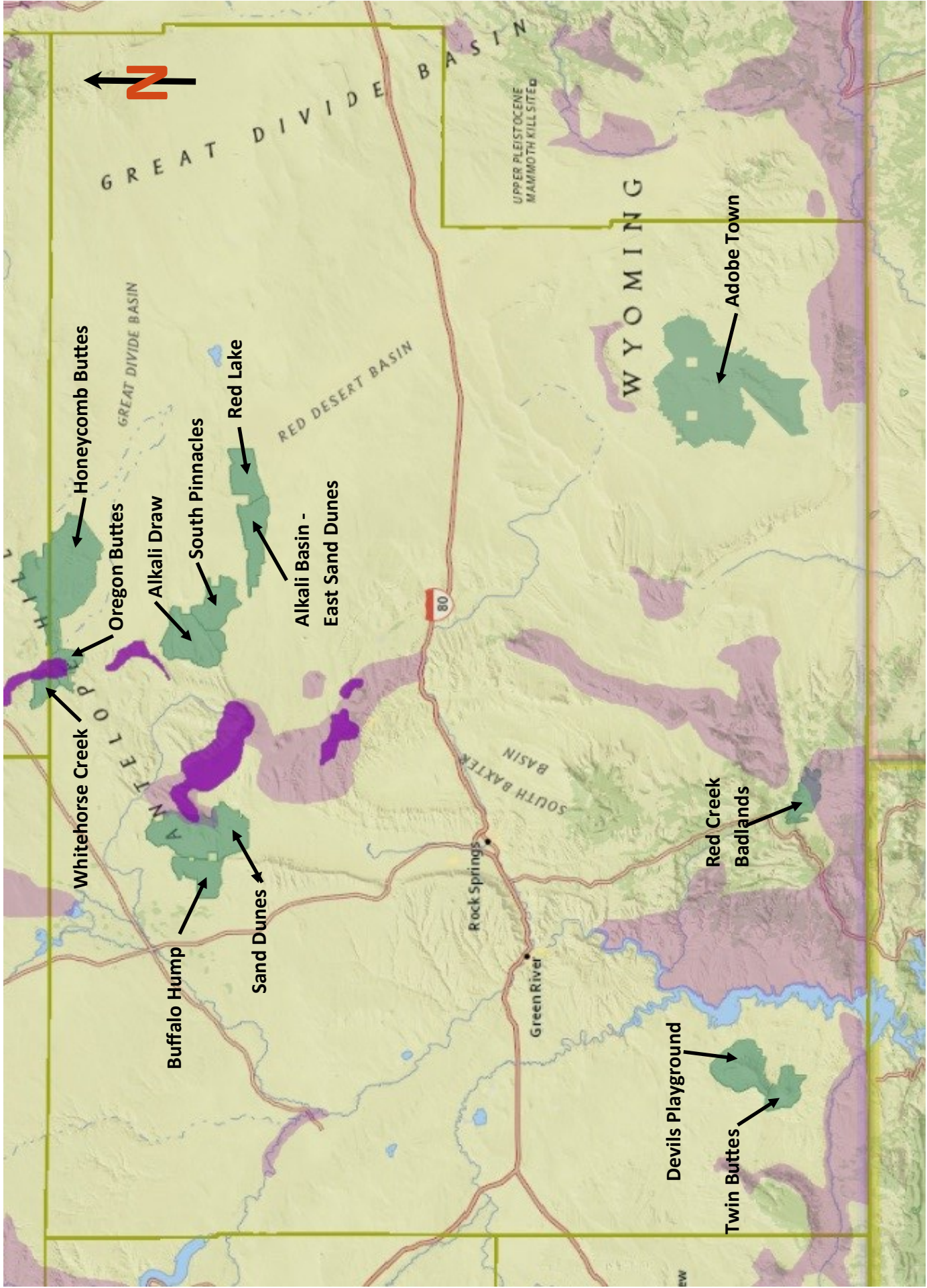
November 4, 2019

# Sweetwater County WSA and Sage Grouse Core Areas Version





# Sweetwater County Mule Deer Parturition Areas and Crucial Winter Range



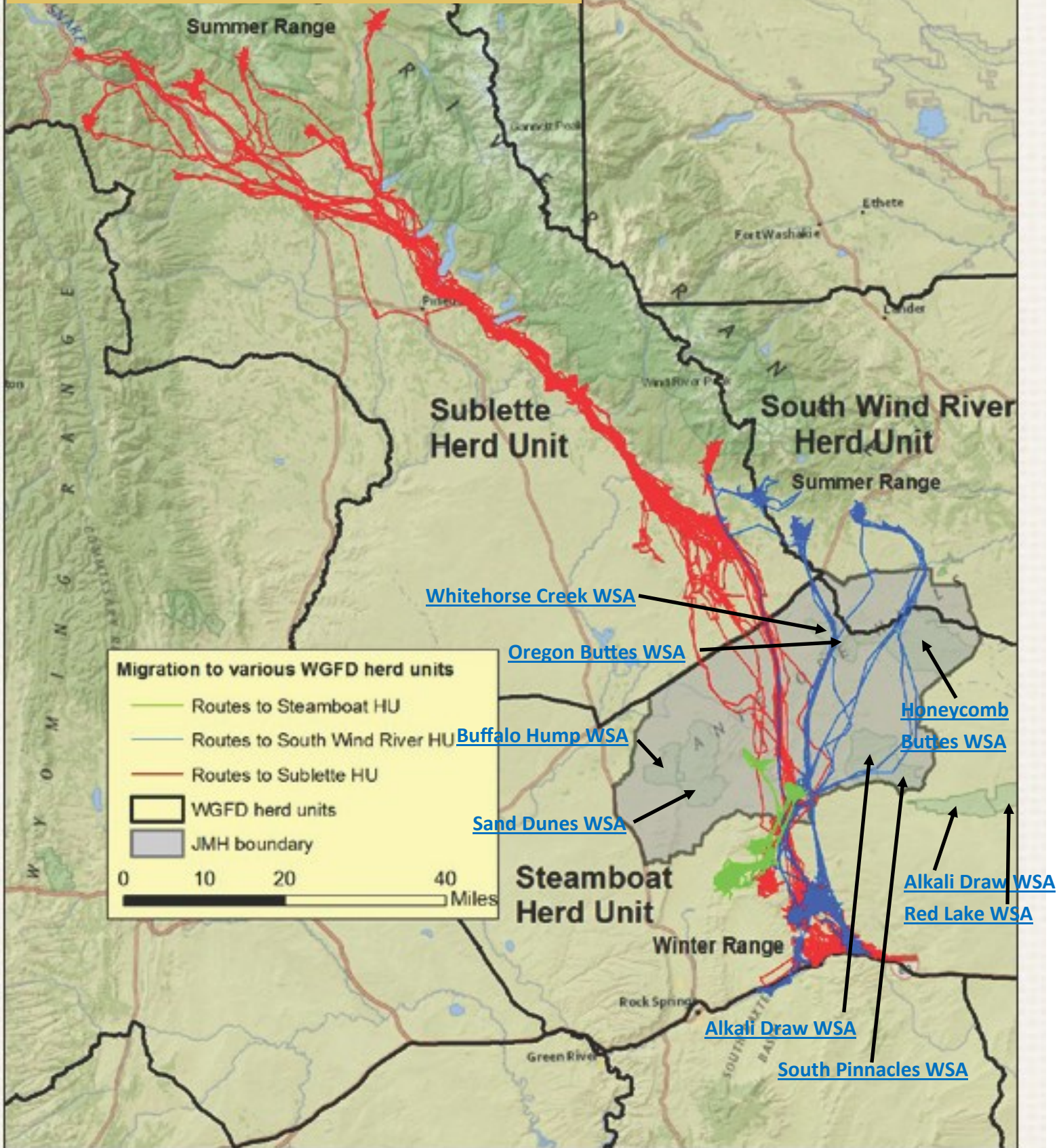
WSA

Mule Deer Parturition Areas

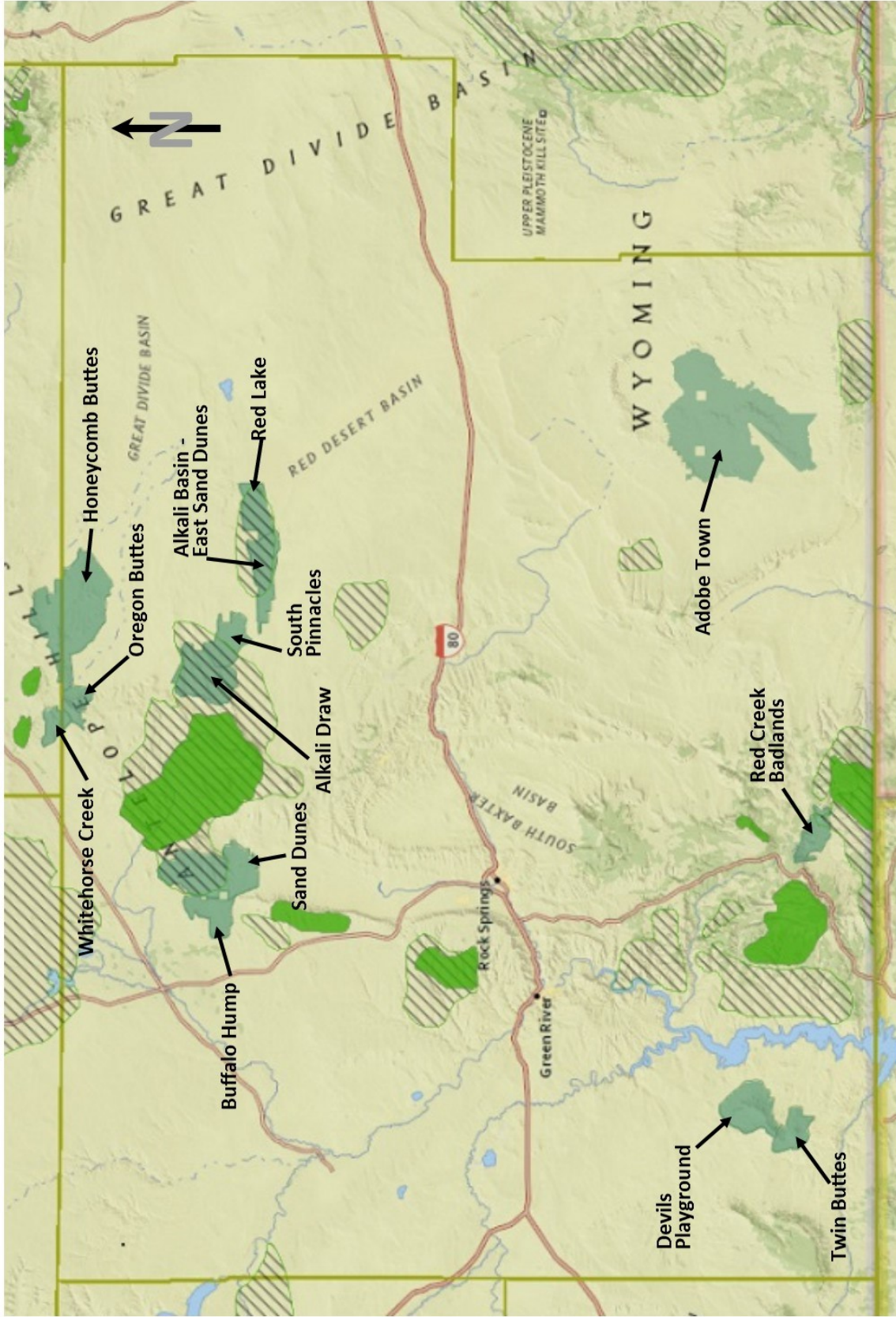
Mule Deer Crucial Winter Range

Data and map shapes from NREX.  
SWCO May 23, 2017

# Mule Deer Migration and WSAs



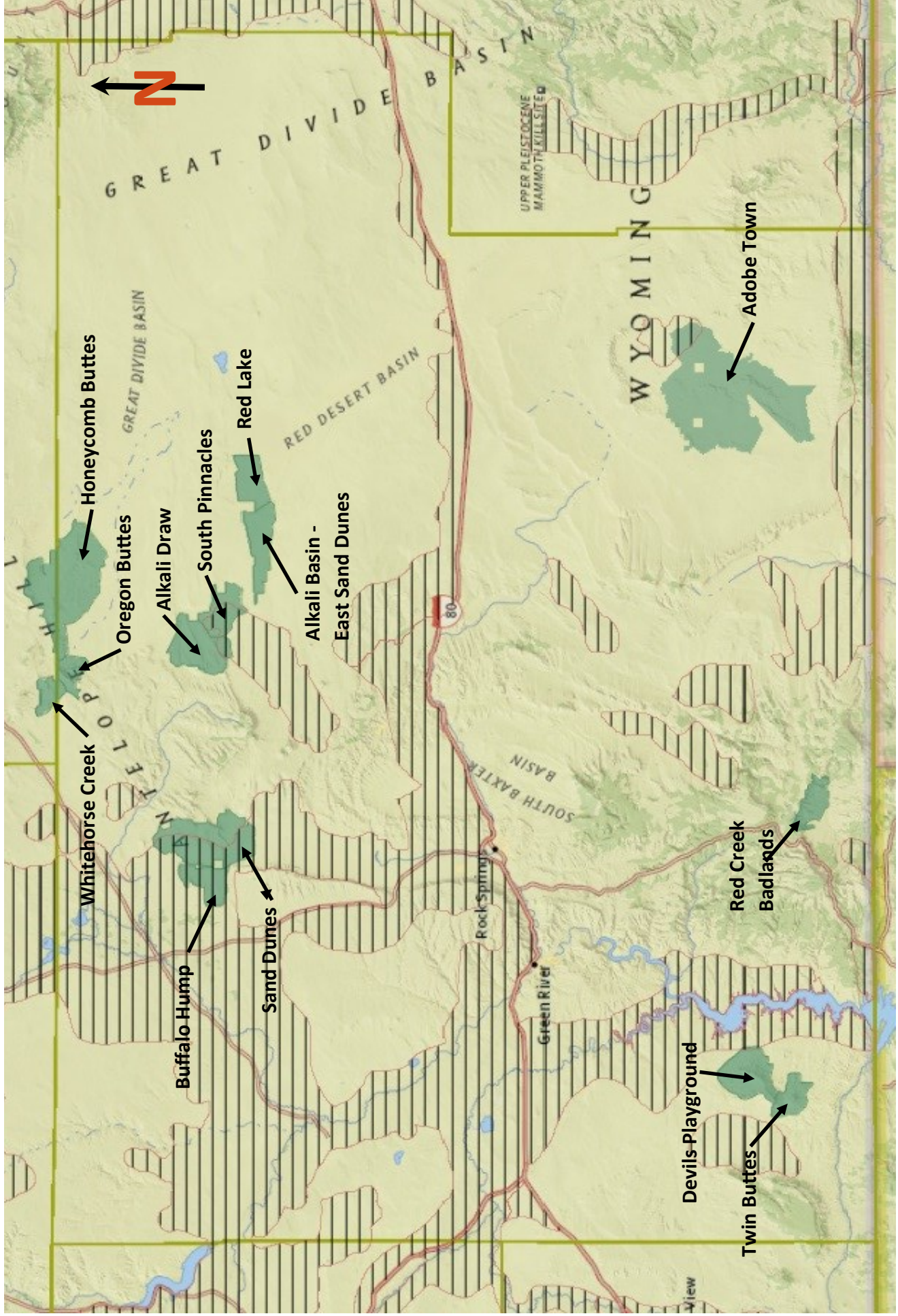
# Sweetwater County WSA Elk Parturition and Crucial Winter Range



Data and map shapes from State of Wyoming Natural Resource and Energy Explorer. SWCO - May 22, 2018

WSA Elk Parturition Area Elk Crucial Winter Range

# Sweetwater County WSA and Antelope Crucial Winter Range



Data and map shapes from the State of Wyoming Natural Resource and Energy Explorer. SWCO May 23, 2017

Antelope Crucial Winter Range



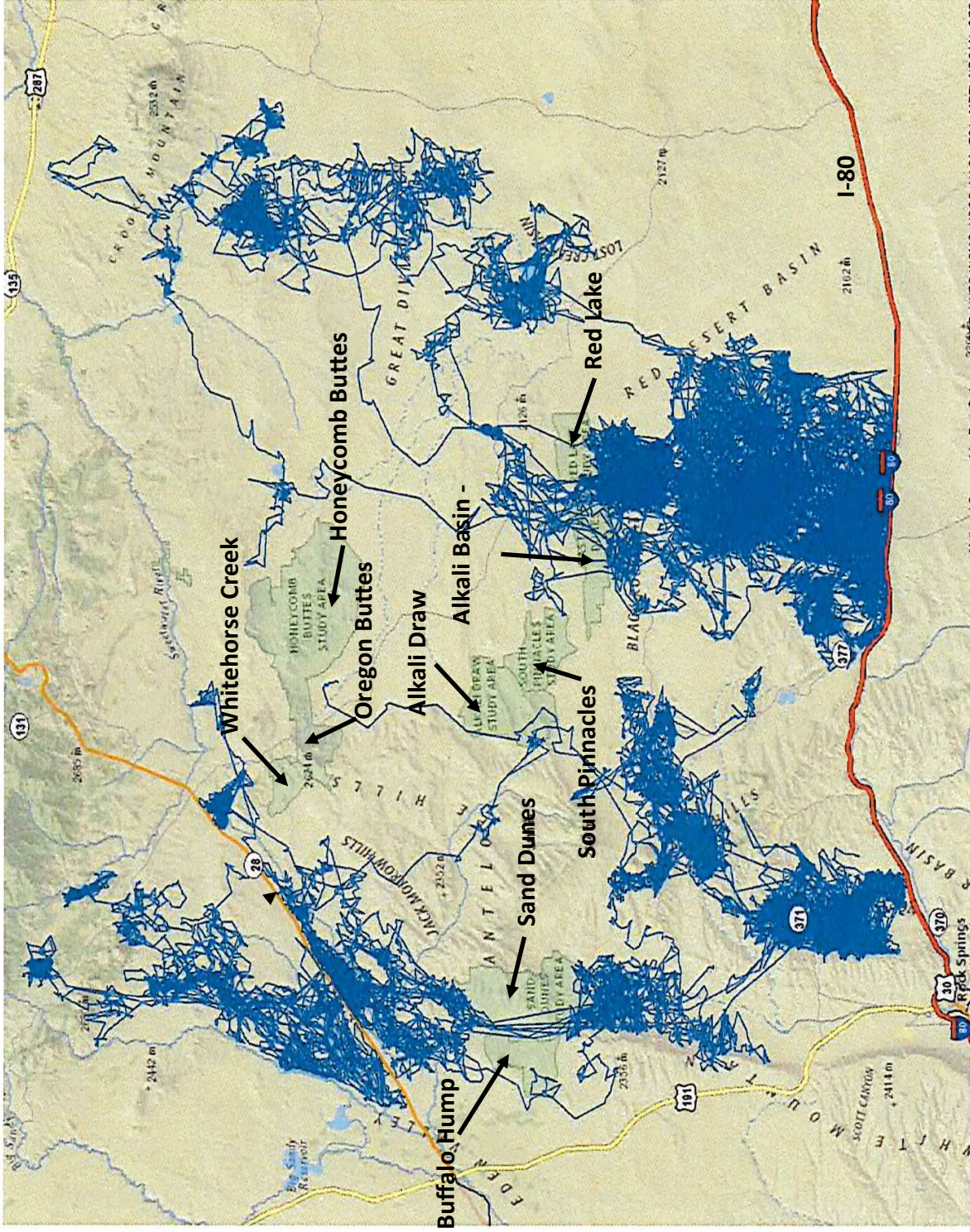
Mule Deer Parturition Areas



WSA



# Pronghorn movement relative to northern WSAs - Hall Sawyer Report



Data and map shapes from Hall Sawyer  
 "Seasonal distribution and movement  
 Patterns of pronghorn northeast of Rock  
 Springs, Wyoming. August 20, 2015

# Pronghorn Winter Core Use and WGFD Crucial Winter Range relative to northern WSAs -

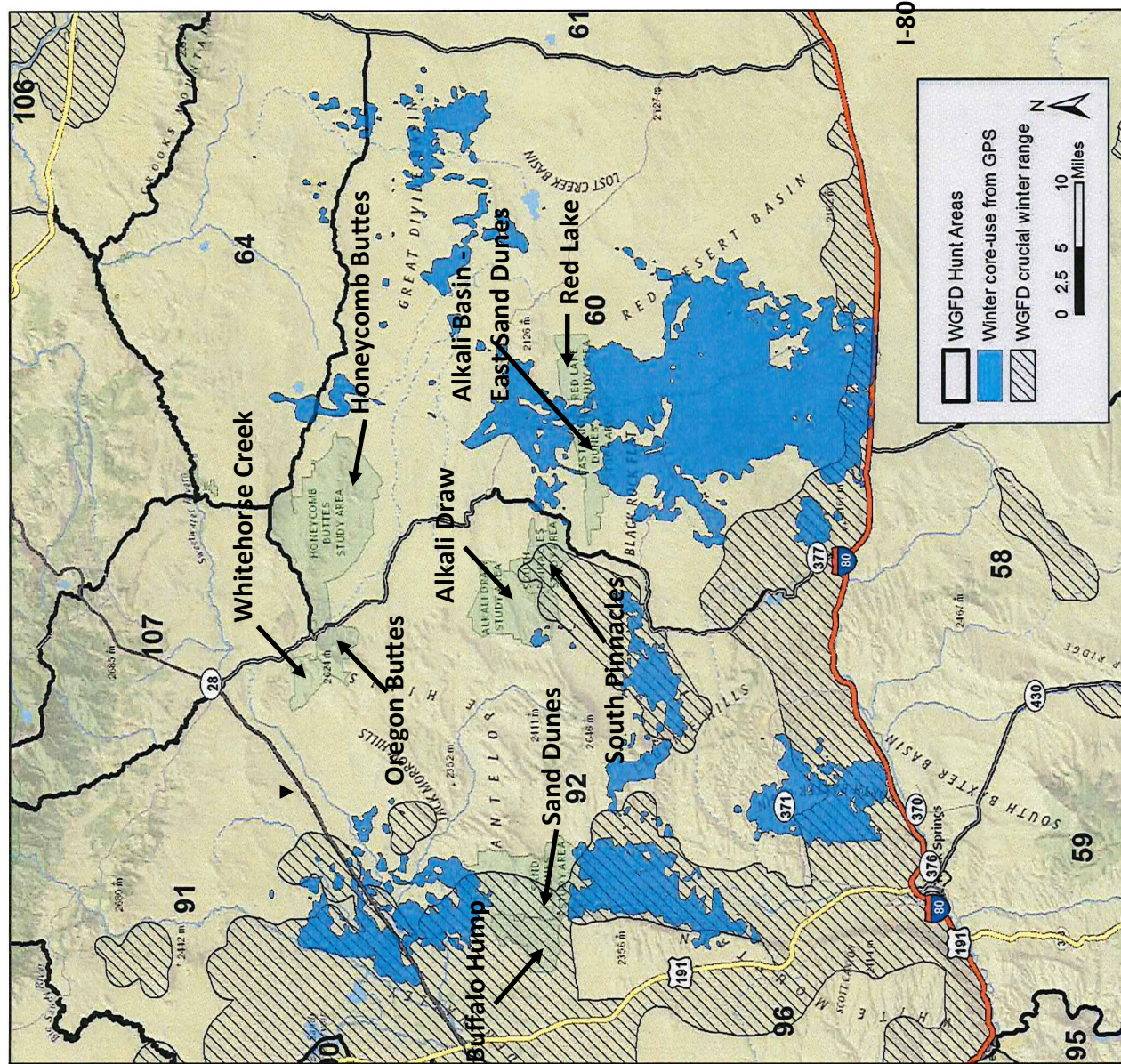
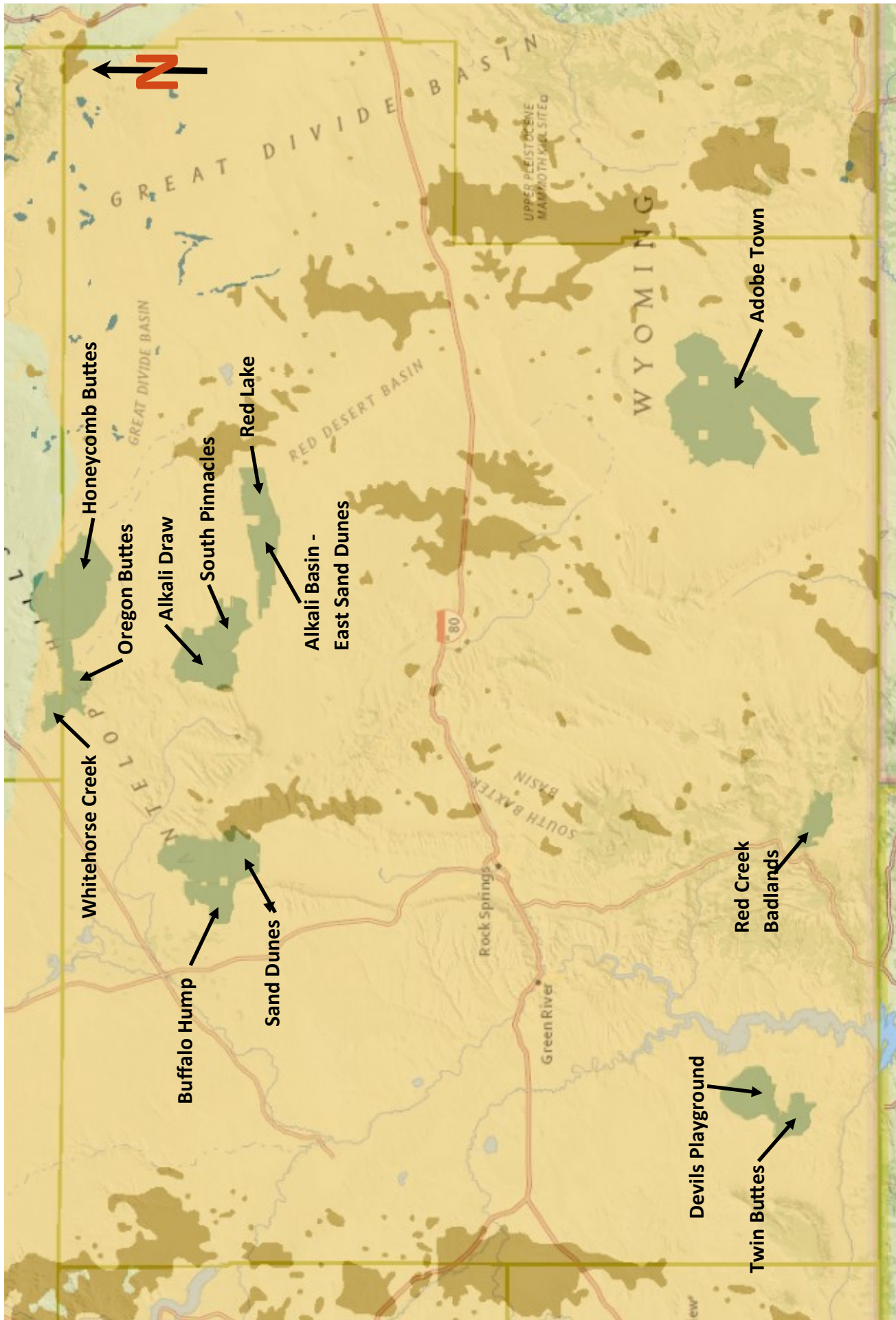


Figure 4. Winter core-use areas estimated from 28,892 locations collected from 25 GPS-collared pronghorn across winters (2012-13, and 2013-14), relative to crucial winter range designated by Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Data and map shapes from Hall Sawyer "Seasonal distribution and movement Patterns of pronghorn northeast of Rock Springs, Wyoming. August 20, 2015

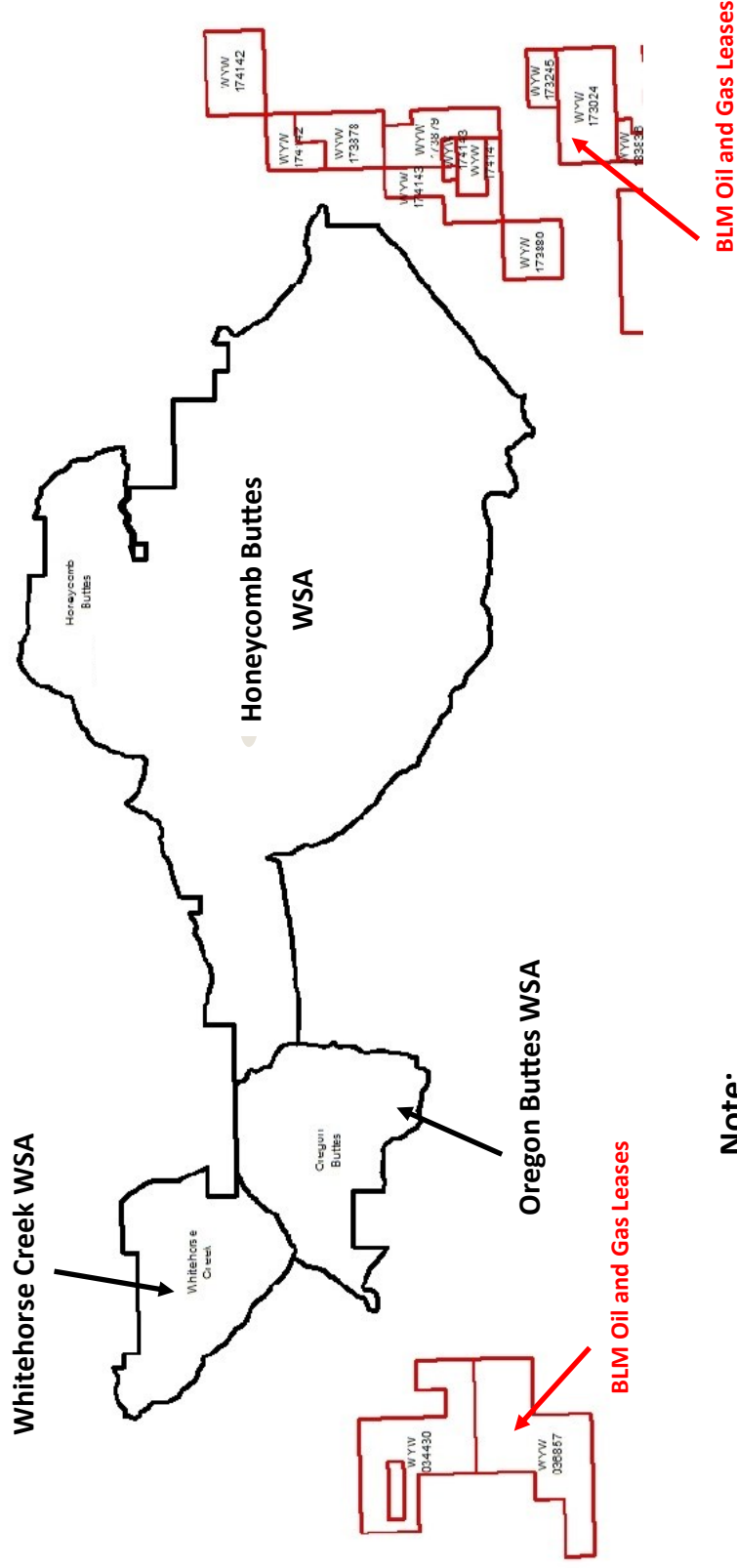
# Sweetwater County WSA - Oil, Gas and Uranium Development Potential



	<b>WSA</b>		<b>Oil and Gas - High Development Potential</b>		<b>Oil and Gas - Moderate Development Potential</b>		<b>Potential for Uranium Development</b>	Data and map shapes from the State of Wyoming Natural Resource and Energy Explorer. SWCO May 25, 2017
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# Existing BLM Oil and Gas Leases Inside and Outside of Sweetwater County WSAs

Source: BLM Rock Springs Field - May 19, 2017



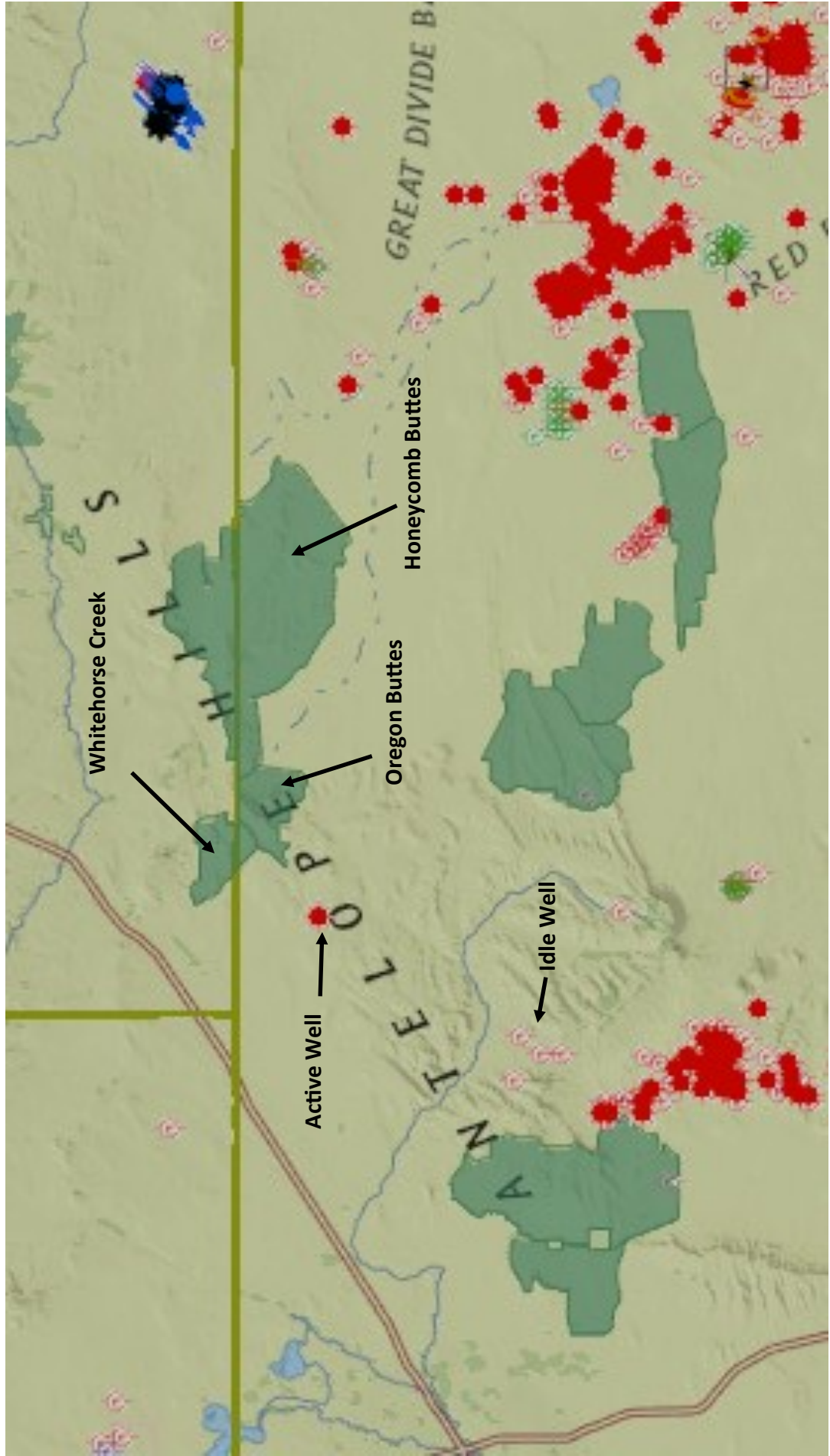
## Note:

From review of information provided by the Wyoming Reservoir Information Tool, June 21, 2017, it appears there are no oil and gas permits, wells or leases within the three WSAs shown above.



# Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes Whitehorse Creek WSAs

## NREX - Active Oil and Gas Wells - July 2017



# ADVENTURES ABOUND IN WIND RIVER COUNTRY

After a day hiking, or a weekend camping, in the Northern Red Desert, be sure to check out:

- South Pass City State Historic Site
- Red Canyon Overlook
- Sinks Canyon and the Loop Road

**More information on these driving tours is available at [windriver.org](http://windriver.org)**



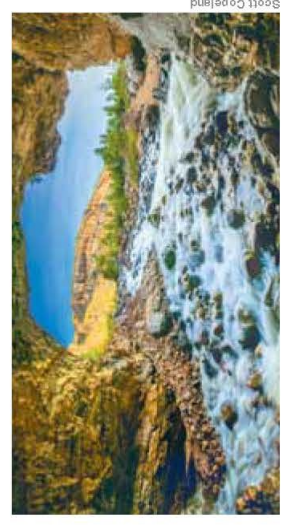
Jennie Hutchinson

South Pass City State Historic Site



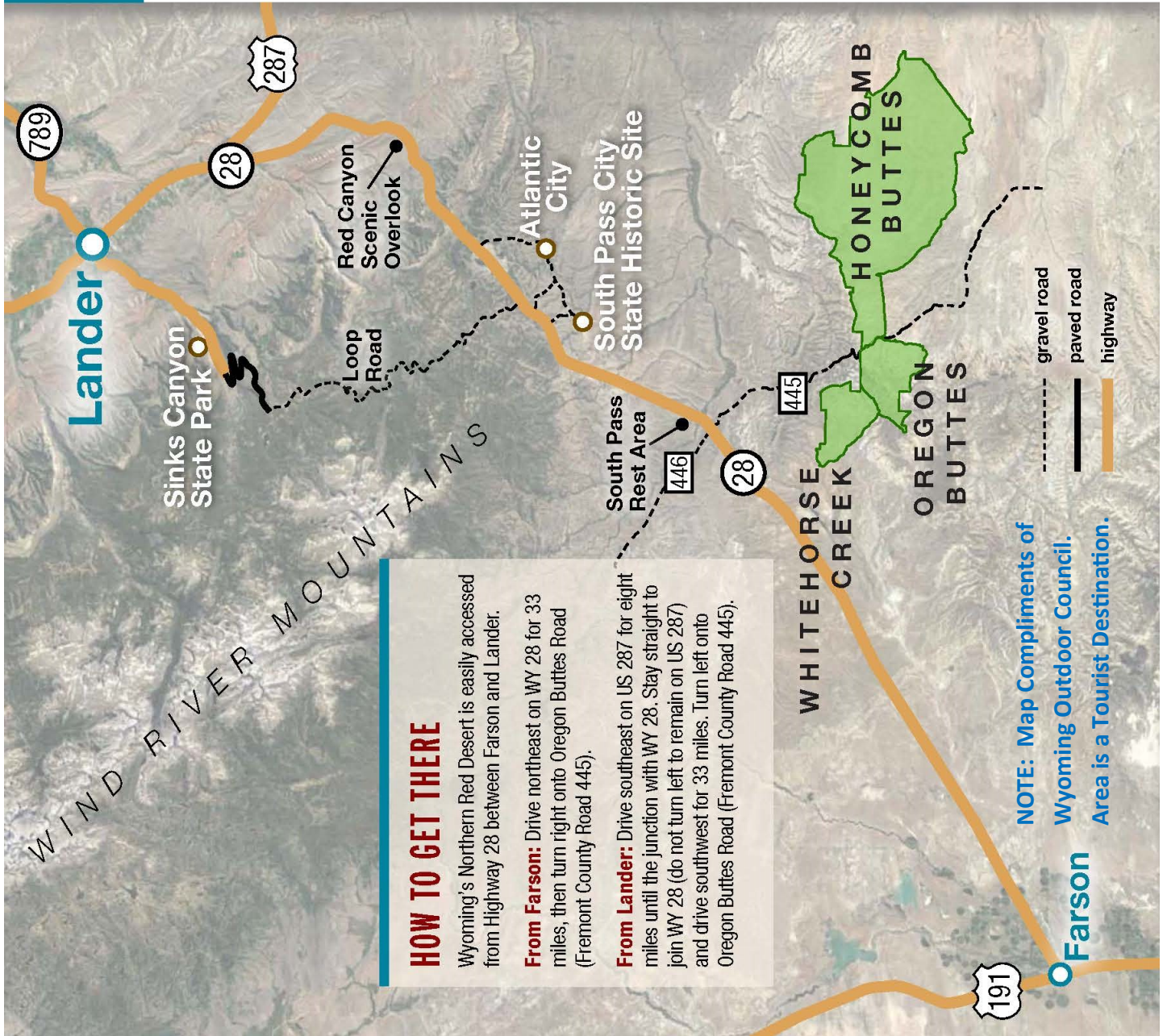
Scott Copeland

Red Canyon Scenic Overlook

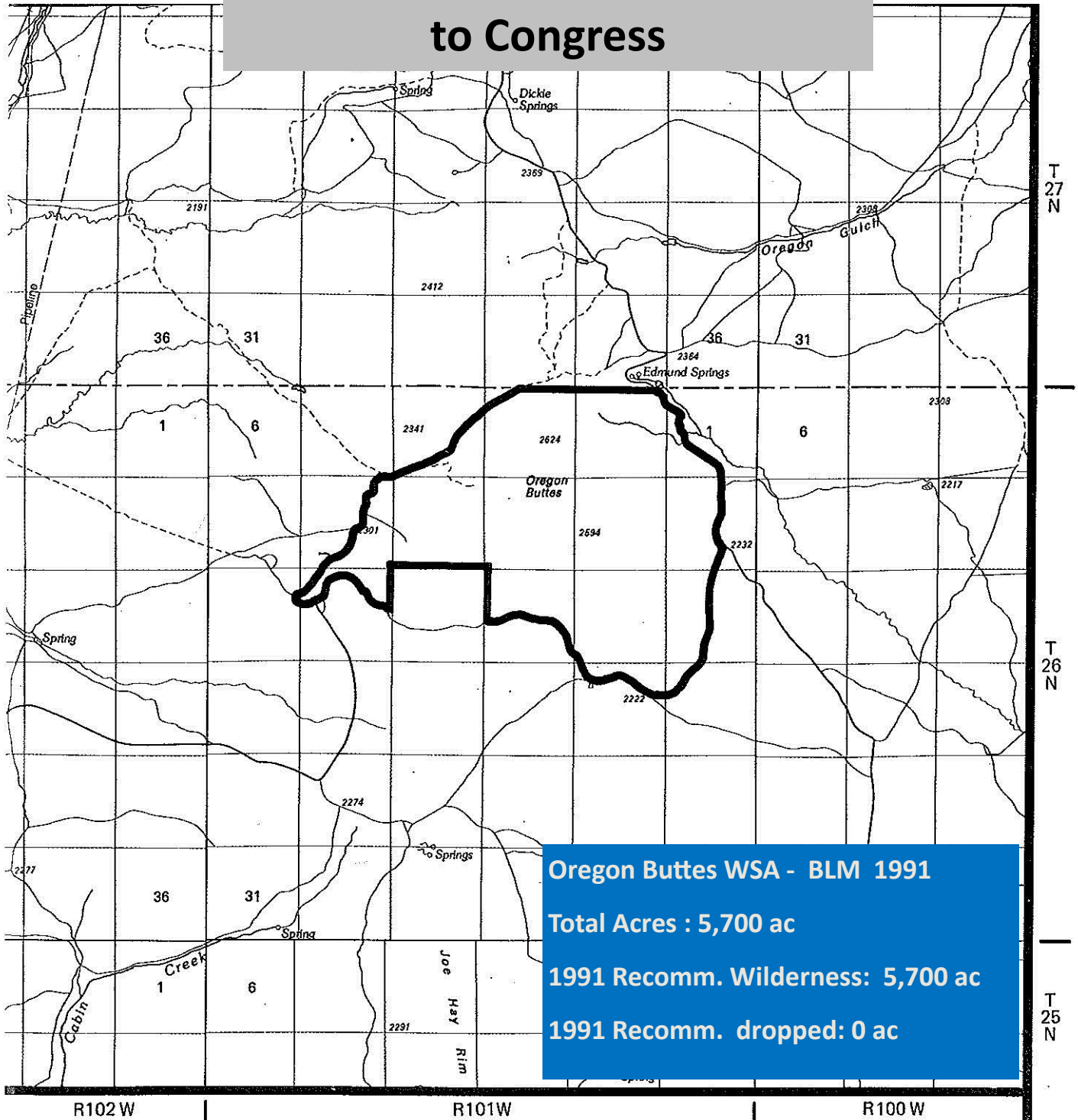


Scott Copeland

Sinks Canyon's Disappearing River



# BLM 1991 Recommendation to Congress



**Oregon Buttes WSA - BLM 1991**  
**Total Acres : 5,700 ac**  
**1991 Recomm. Wilderness: 5,700 ac**  
**1991 Recomm. dropped: 0 ac**



Recommended for Wilderness



Recommended for Nonwilderness



Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness



Split Estate



State



Private



Oregon Buttes Proposal



WY-040-324  
June, 1990

**Oregon Buttes WSA Notes:** Provided by Sweetwater County staff. Sources include: state and federal documents, comments from WSA knowledgeable managers/individuals, on line information, staff experience and other sources.

**Key Features:**

The Oregon Buttes WSA encompasses 5,700 acres of BLM land, and there are no private or state lands within the WSA. It is entirely located within Sweetwater County. The county line forms the northern WSA boundary. The area is bounded on all sides by unimproved two track roads. The 1991 BLM Wilderness Recommendation Report recommended to designate the entire Oregon Buttes WSA as wilderness. It was one of three Sweetwater County WSAs that were recommended in their entirety for wilderness designation. The other two WSAs were Devils Playground and Twin Buttes which are located approximately 20 miles south of the City of Green River.

As stated in the 1991 BLM Final Recommendation, the Oregon Buttes is a prominent landmark, rising out of the northwestern portions of the Red Desert to an elevation of 8,612 feet above sea level and 1,200 feet above the desert floor. The Buttes possess numerous seeps that have developed wet meadows and a wide variety of vegetation types, including limber pine stands, and small thick isolated stands of aspen. The WSA contains valuable big game habitat (elk, mule deer and pronghorn) and is also an important elk calving ground. The WSA includes 3,360 acres of the Oregon Buttes Cultural Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

In regard to the Oregon Buttes wilderness characteristics, the 1991 report stated “The Oregon Buttes WSA appears to be in an essentially natural condition. The buttes are a remarkable landmark. They dominate the surrounding countryside with their grandeur and diversity. Visibility from the butte tops is outstanding offering miles of scenic vistas including the Wind River Mountains on the north and the Uinta Mountains to the southwest. “

Within the WSA are good opportunities for solitude and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The recreation opportunities in this WSA include: wildlife and bird watching, photography, hiking, backpacking, hunting, rock climbing, rock hounding, horseback riding and sightseeing.

As stated in the 1991 report, the special features in the WSA include: “Small pieces of petrified wood are abundant. The Oregon Buttes were a major landmark for travelers of the Oregon trail, which is located less than seven miles to the north of the WSA. Emigrants viewed the Buttes as the halfway point on their journey from Independence, Missouri, to the Pacific Ocean. Also, the Buttes denoted the point where the emigrants passed over the Continental Divide and into the Pacific watershed.”

In regard to wildlife, the western portion of the Oregon Buttes WSA is used as a calving area by the only desert elk herd in Wyoming. The WSA contains excellent raptor habitat with several known nest sites. There are historic peregrine falcon aeries on the west face of Oregon Buttes. Immature peregrine falcons are infrequently seen there during raptor surveys. The WSA is located entirely within sage grouse core and is part of the migration corridor for the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd.

The remains of Indian tipi rings can be found in the Oregon Buttes Cultural ACEC portion of the WSA.

According to the Wyoming Natural Resource and Energy Exploration Tool (NREX) the Wyoming Reservoir Information Tool and other information provided by the Rock Springs Field Office, the Oregon Buttes WSA is currently unleased and does not contain any oil and gas permits or wells. Within the WSA, there is a moderate coal potential and some potential for uranium; although, there has been no mining or production of these minerals.

**Key Features Continued:**

Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes and Whitehorse Creek form one large WSA complex that is actively used by recreationists especially from the Lander / Riverton area. See attached tourism brochure published by the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes and Whitehorse Creek WSAs along with Buffalo Hump, Sand Dunes, Alkali Draw and South Pinnacles are all a part of the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan.

**Access:**

The Oregon Buttes WSA is most easily accessed from Wyoming Highway 28 via Fremont County Road 445. The WSA may also be accessed from the south via various Sweetwater County Roads connecting into Sweetwater County Road 4-74, the Oregon Buttes Road. Access from the south requires 50 plus miles of driving gravel county roads that connect into unimproved two track roads that access the WSAs.

**1991 Recommendation:**

In 1991, the BLM recommended designating the entire 5,700 acres of the Oregon Buttes ACEC as wilderness. This recommendation was based on the following as stated in the 1991 Wyoming Statewide Wilderness Report and Wilderness Study Area Specific Recommendations:

“Key considerations for recommending this WSA to the wilderness system are the exemplary quality of the area’s wilderness values, a lack of man-made intrusions, its natural appearance and historical significance associated with the Oregon Tail. Opportunities for outstanding solitude in the WSA are good. Recreational values of the WSA are outstanding. A wilderness designation would not conflict with other resource uses in the area.”

**Comments and Notes:**

The Oregon Buttes WSA was one of three WSAs with all acreage recommended for Wilderness designation by the 1991 Wyoming Statewide Wilderness Study Report Wilderness Study Area Specific Recommendation.

The Whitehorse Creek, Oregon Buttes and Honeycomb Buttes WSAs form a WSA complex that attracts recreational users from Lander and Riverton and beyond. This WSA region may receive the highest recreational use of any of Sweetwater County WSAs. From an economic perspective, the future of this WSA complex may be best served by designating it as all Wilderness or as a Wilderness / National Conservation Area Complex.

This region has strong potential for supporting the growing recreational industry in our county.