

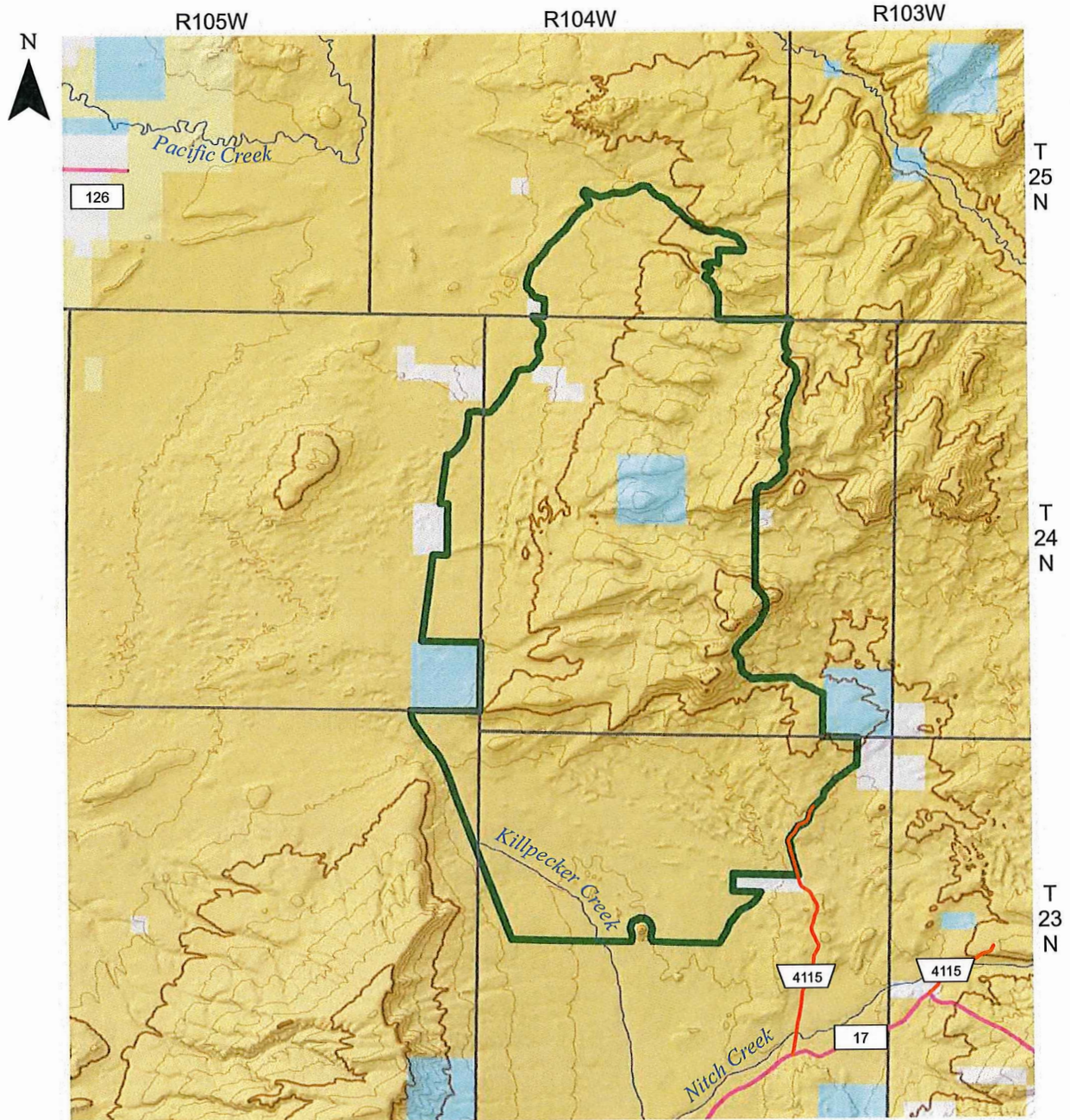
SAND DUNES WSA

WSA AREA: 27,109 acres



Wyoming Outdoor Council

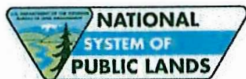
SAND DUNES WSA



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 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
- Bureau of Reclamation
- State
- Private
- WSA Boundary
- 19S County Road
- 4412 BLM Road

Sand Dunes WSA
 United States Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Land Management



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BLM>Wyoming>Programs>NLCS>Wilderness Study Areas>Sand Dunes

Rock Springs Field Office

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Sand Dunes WSA

Location: Sweetwater County

Nearest Town: Farson (13 miles)

BLM Acreage: 27,109 acres

Recommended for Wilderness: 21,304 acres

Primitive & Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for primitive unconfined recreation are readily available. Hiking in the dunes is strenuous but can be a rewarding experience. Other activities include bird-watching, hunting, sightseeing and photography.

Birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds and killdeer, are relatively abundant in parts of the area. This provides an unusual opportunity for viewing and photography in nearby areas of the high desert.

The outstanding scenic quality of this WSA enhances the recreational values. The moving sand dunes provide for a dynamic rather than static viewshed.

Features:

The Sand Dunes WSA encompasses 27,109 acres, including 600 acres of split estate land, 640 acres of state land and 160 acres of private land. The study area comprises a large part of the Killpecker Sand Dunes. There are large areas of barren active dunes with superb draws and valleys, wet meadows and interspersed greasewood, sagebrush and rabbitbrush communities.

Naturalness:

The WSA is essentially in a natural condition. The intrusions found in the WSA are considered minor and do not detract from the apparent naturalness of the WSA. These intrusions include three producing wells in the eastern part of the WSA, two abandoned well sites within 509 feet of the WSA boundary, an old corral in the southwestern part, and a deteriorating barbed wire fence in the northern part of the WSA. There are also intrusions due to motorized vehicles in the northern part of the WSA.

The large dunes in parts of the WSA make it possible for a visitor to experience the naturalness of the area because man-caused disturbances are not apparent. The constantly changing nature of the dunes adds to this feeling.

The rails of the abandoned U.S. Steel railroad were removed from the railroad bed at the western boundary of the WSA. The bed is about 3 feet above the rest of the original right-of-way. Currently the railroad bed is used by four-wheel drive and some two-wheel drive vehicles. Drifting sands have already obliterated some portions of the railroad bed.

Solitude:

Many wind-blown basins exist within the WSA. The draws, valleys and ridges in the northern and eastern sections also provide outstanding opportunities for solitude due to the screening effect they offer. The size of the WSA and the large amount of active sand dunes create further opportunities for solitude. The variety of dunes, from active to stabilized, adds to the uniqueness of the area.

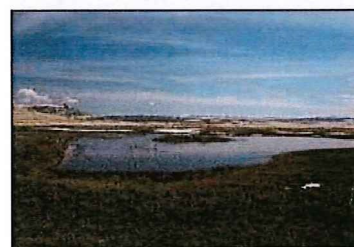
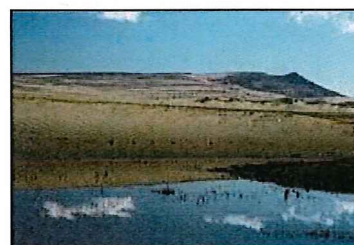
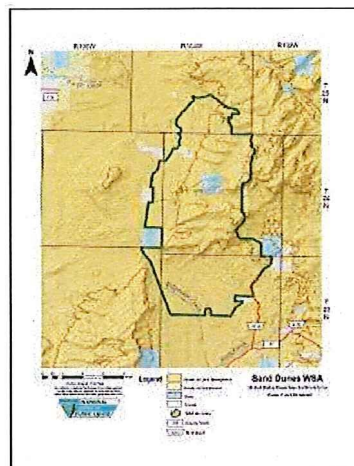
Special Features:

Ecologically, the most unique feature of the Sand Dunes WSA 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 range in depth from a few inches to 10 feet deep. Some are crystal clear and almost devoid of life, while others are muddy, murky and alive with tadpoles, salamanders, insects, waterfowl and various grasses and algae. The dunes help support the only desert elk herd in Wyoming.

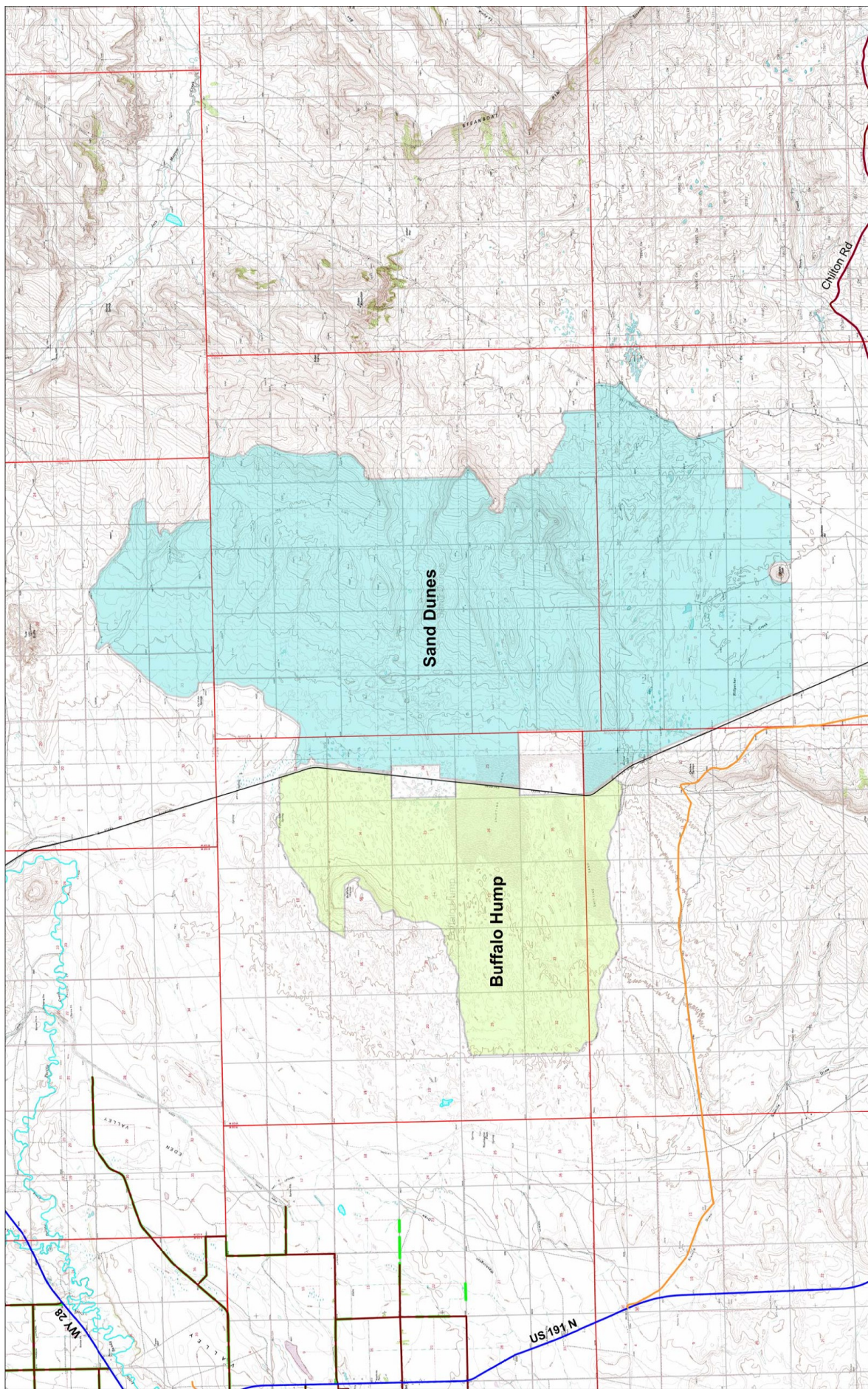
The Sand Dunes WSA lies within a short distance of two very important archaeological sites. These are the Finley site and the Eden-Farson site where a distinctive projectile point gave evidence of one of man's earliest inhabited sites in North America. Therefore, it is highly probable that other significant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

The area is home to wild horses, mule deer, elk and large numbers of pronghorn antelope. Raptors and coyotes frequent the area, and there are reports of cougar use.

Part of the Sand Dunes 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.



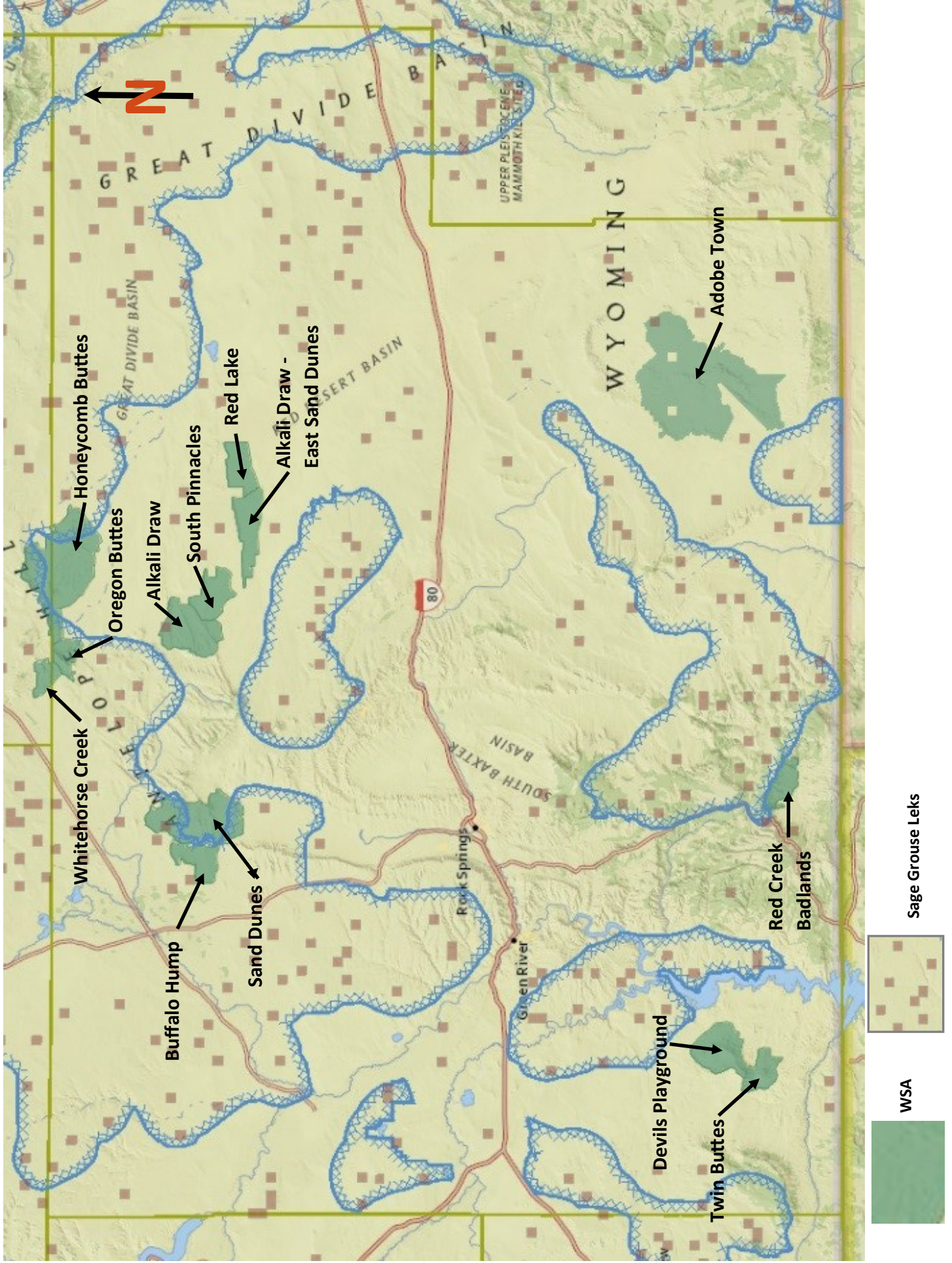
Sand Dunes and Buffalo Hump WSAs



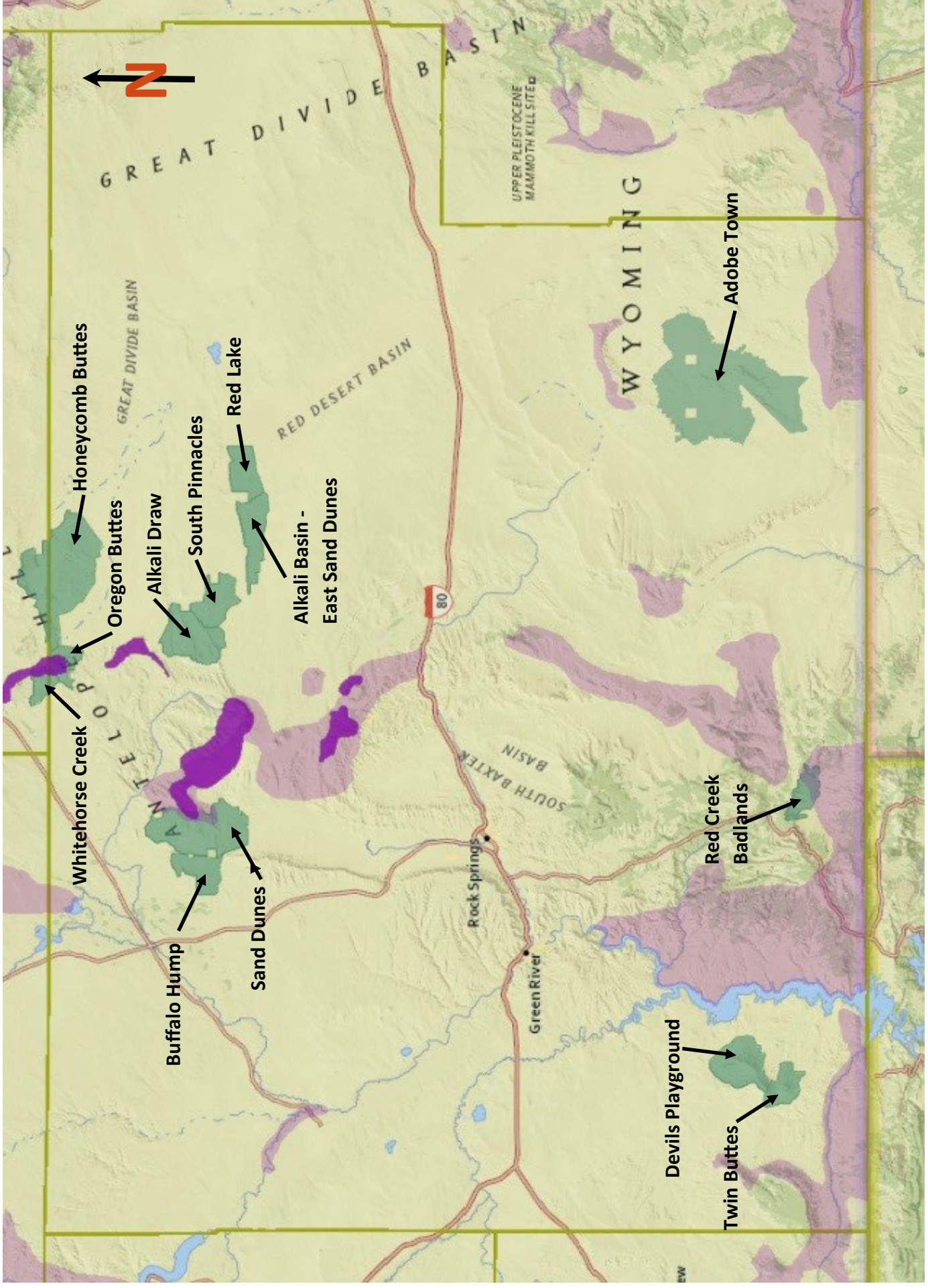
Sand Dunes and Buffalo Hump WSAs



Sweetwater County WSA and Sage Grouse Core Version IV



Sweetwater County Mule Deer Parturition Areas and Crucial Winter Range



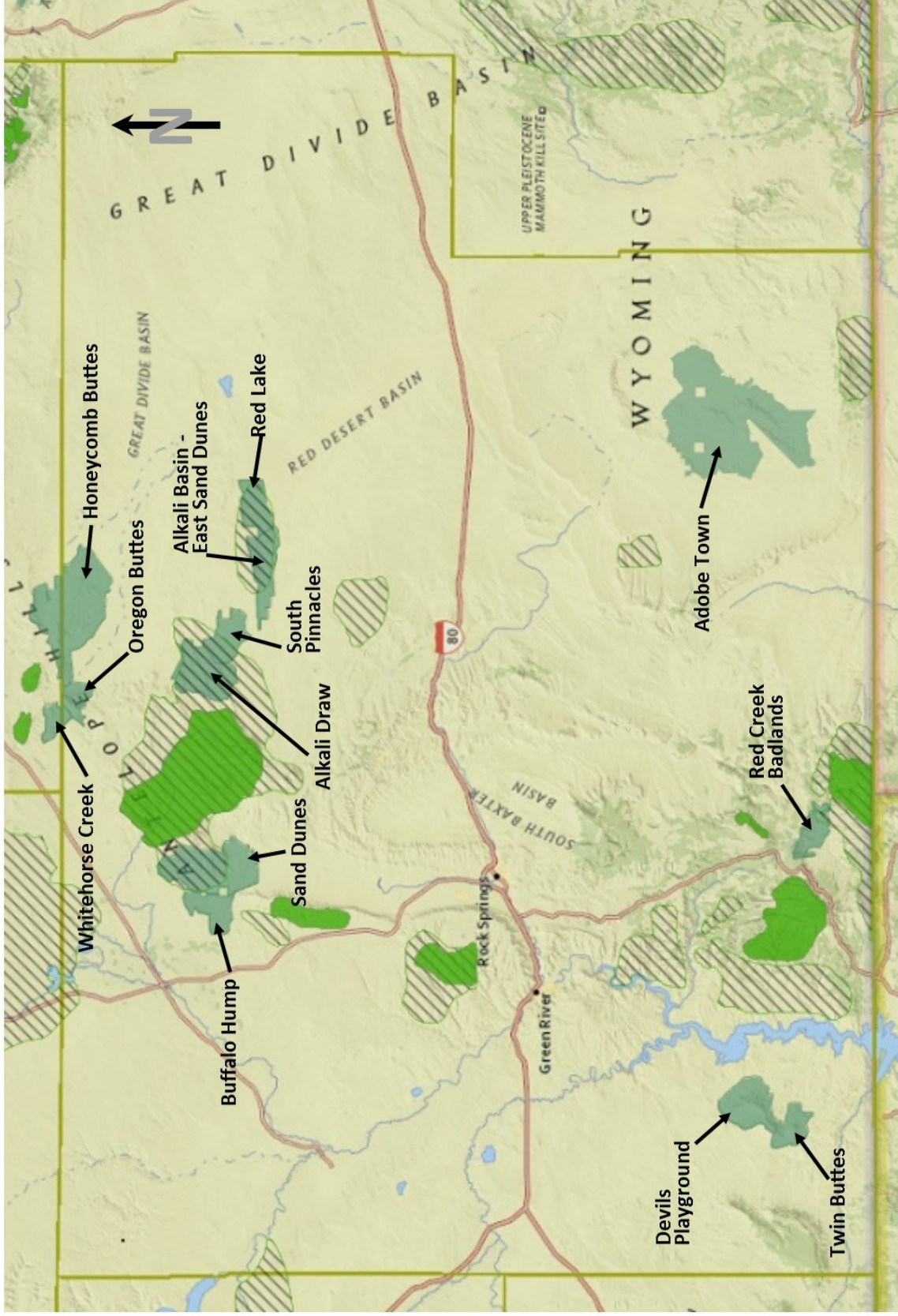
WSA

Mule Deer Parturition Areas

Mule Deer Crucial Winter Range

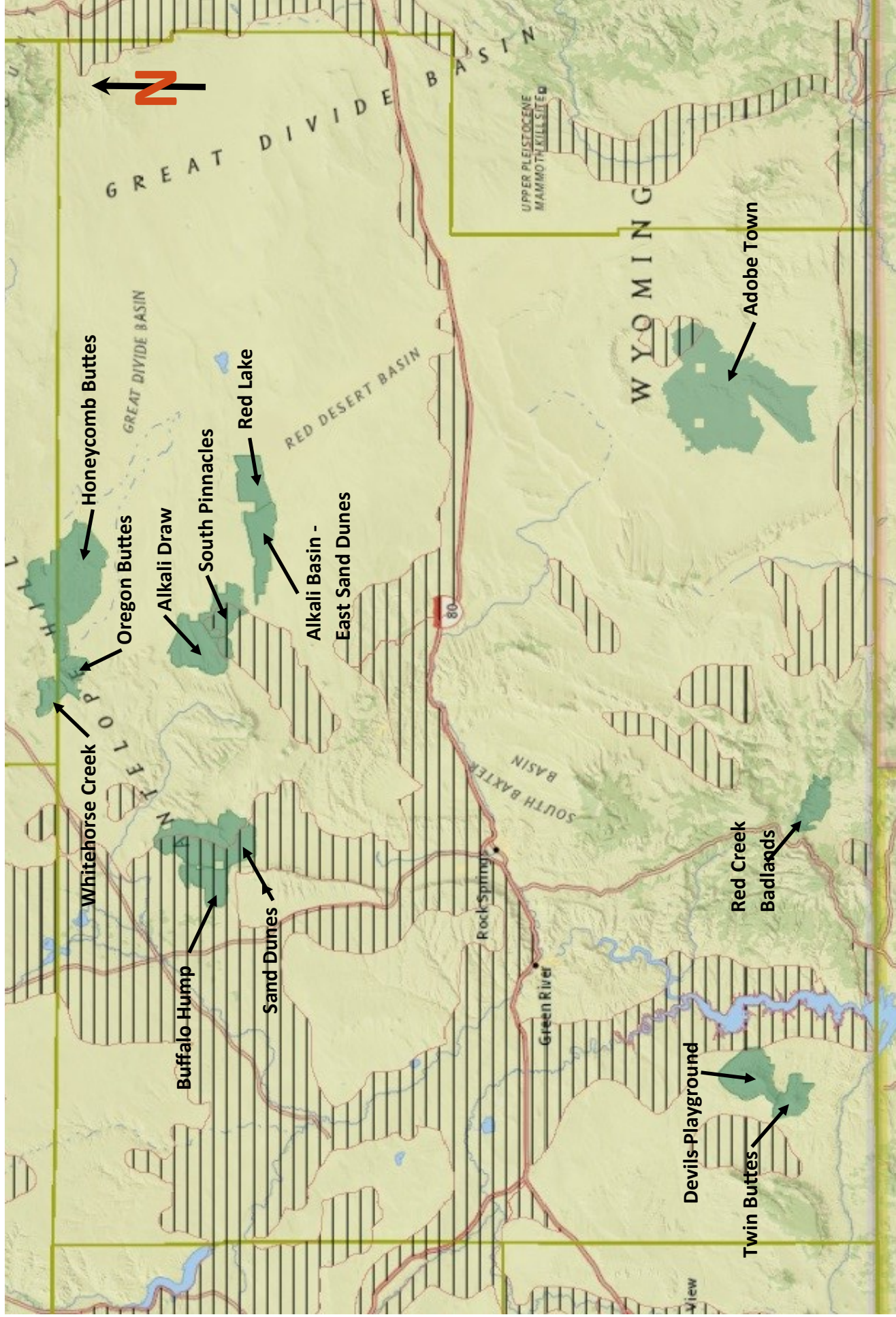
Data and map shapes from NREX.
SWCO May 23, 2017

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

Sweetwater County WSA and Antelope Crucial Winter Range



WSA

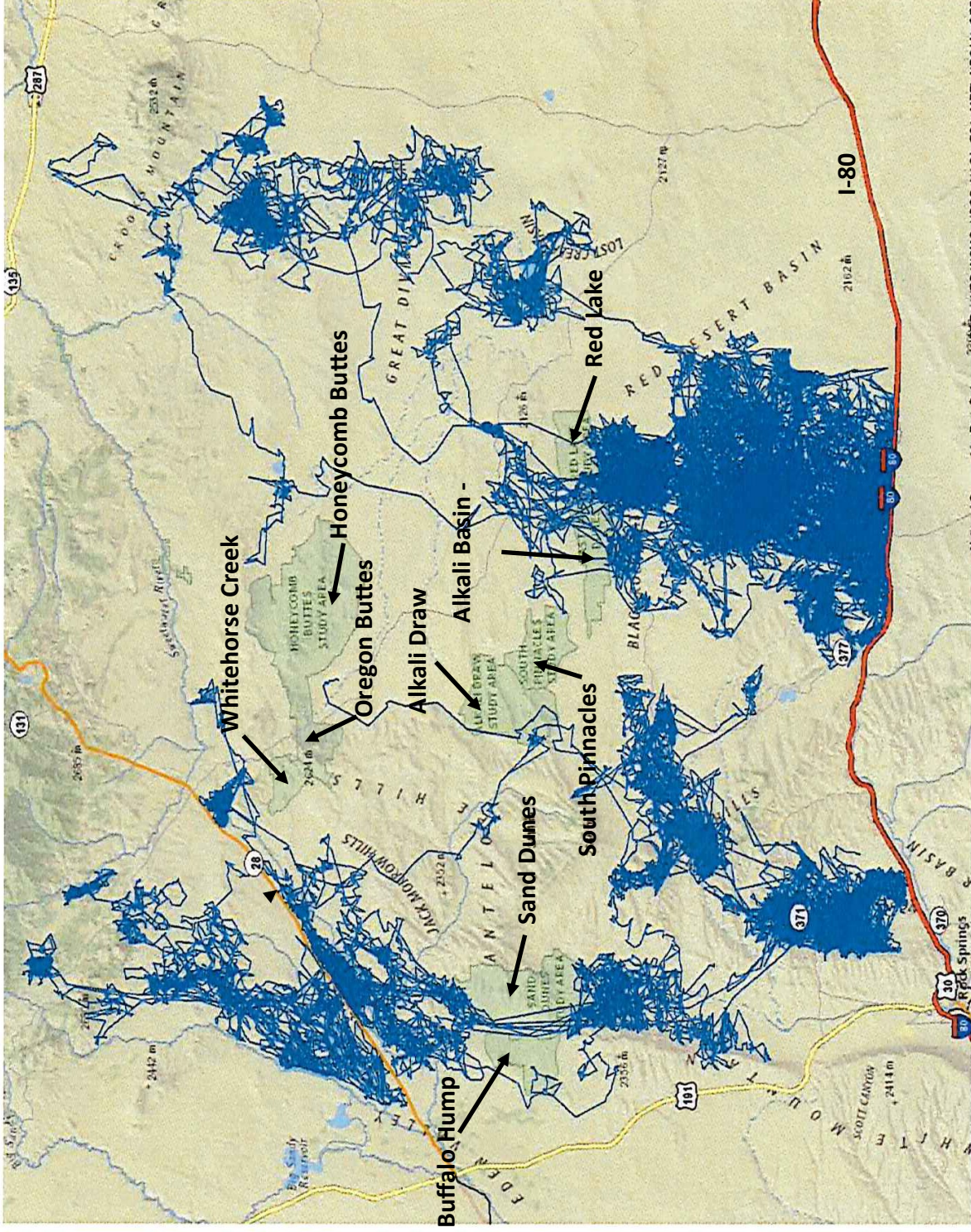
Mule Deer Parturition Areas

Antelope Crucial Winter Range

UPPER PLEISTOCENE MAMMOTH KILLS SITE

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

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 -

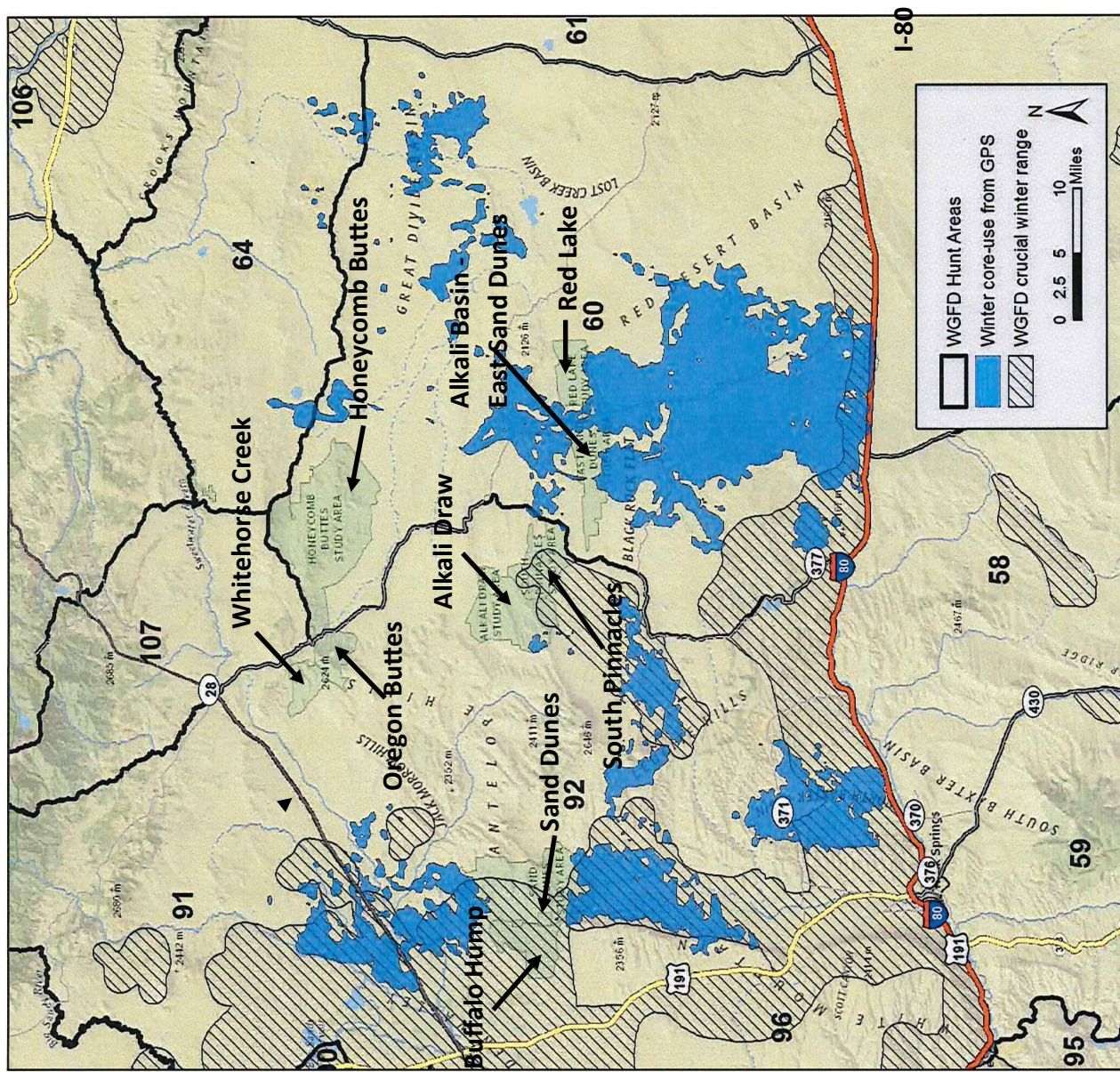
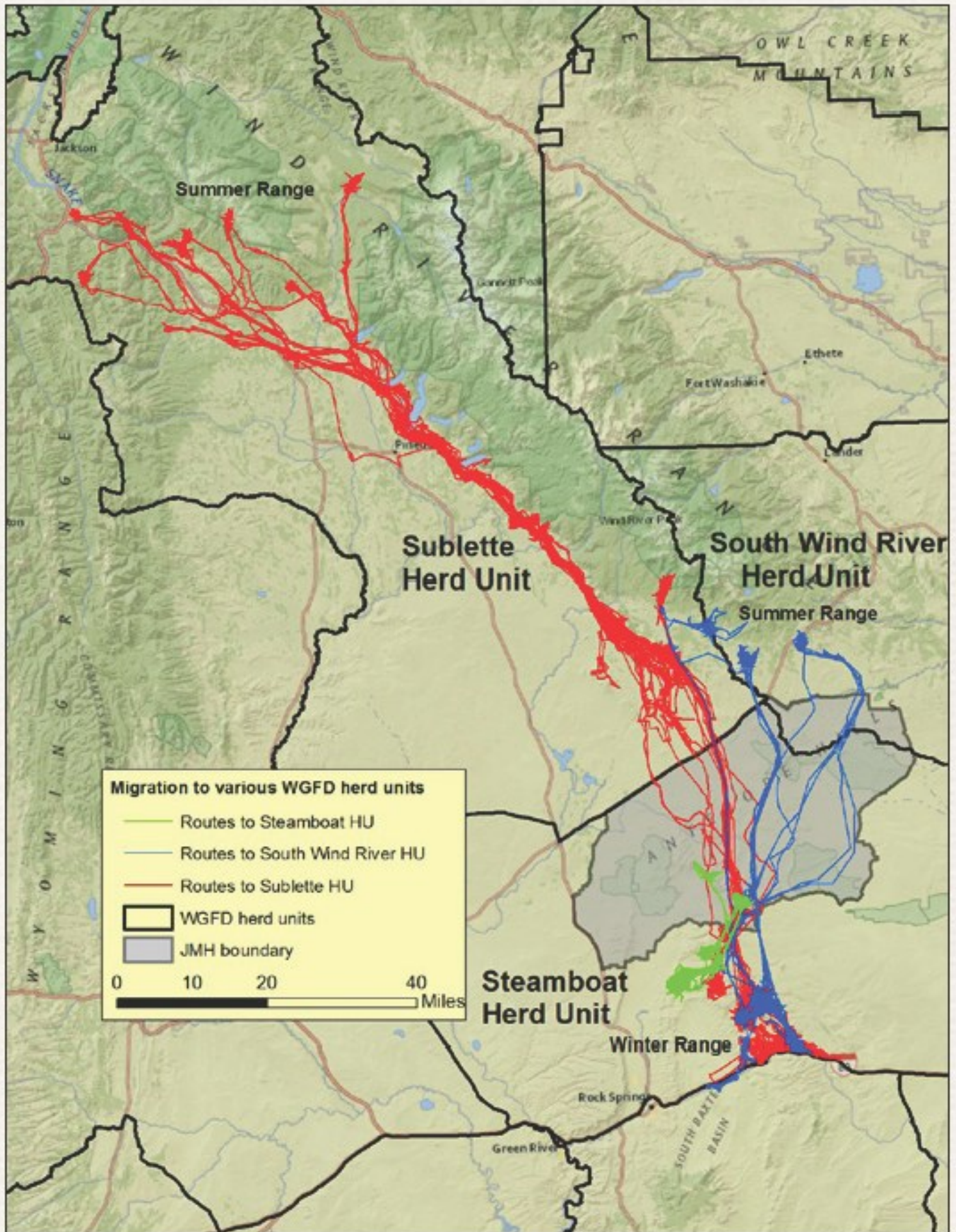
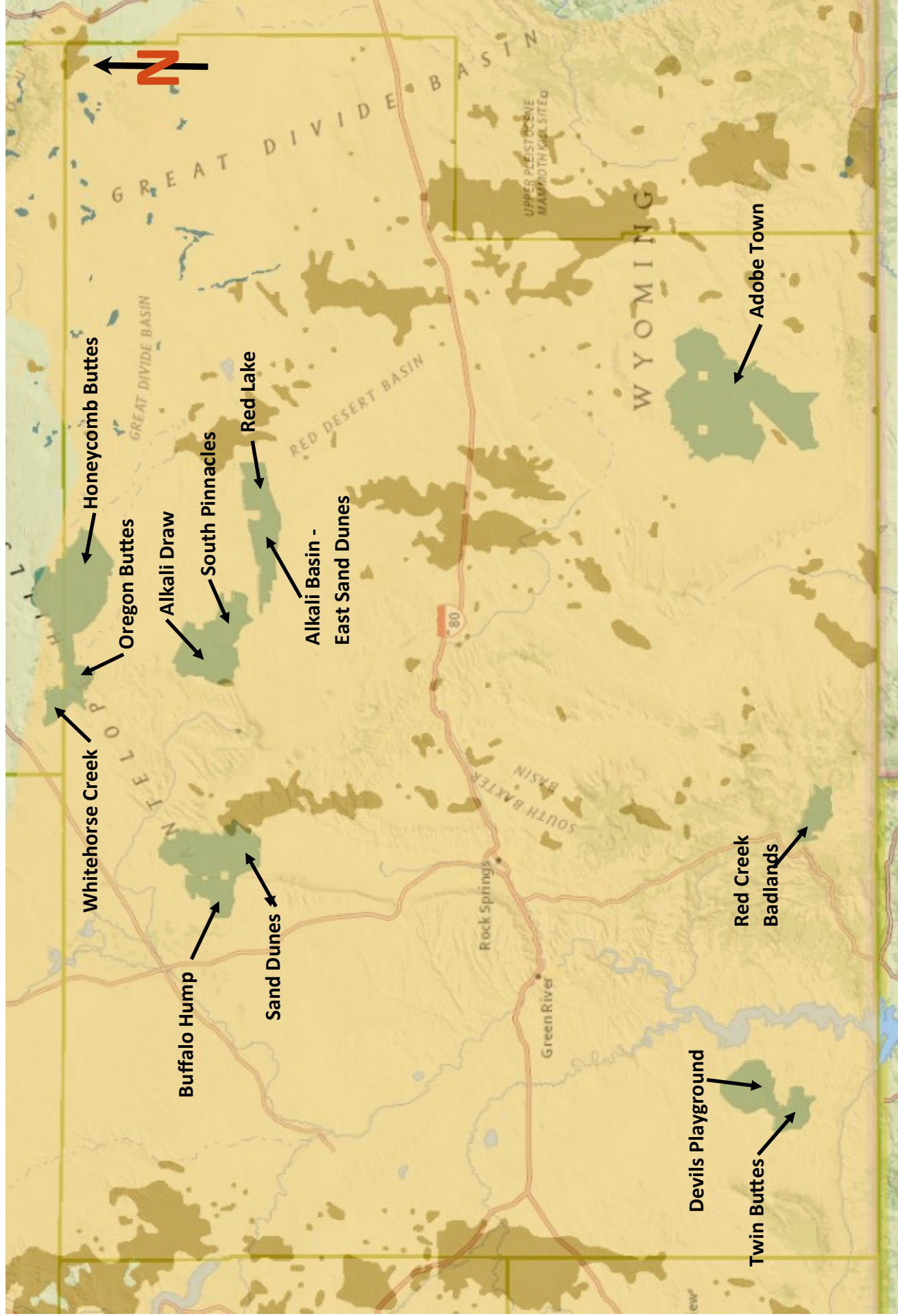


Figure 4. Winter core-use areas estimated from 28,892 locations collected from 25 GPS-collared pronghorn across winters (2012-13, and 2013-14), relative to crucial winter range designated by Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

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



Data and map shapes from the State of Wyoming Natural Resource and Energy Explorer. SWCO May 25, 2017

Potential for Uranium Development

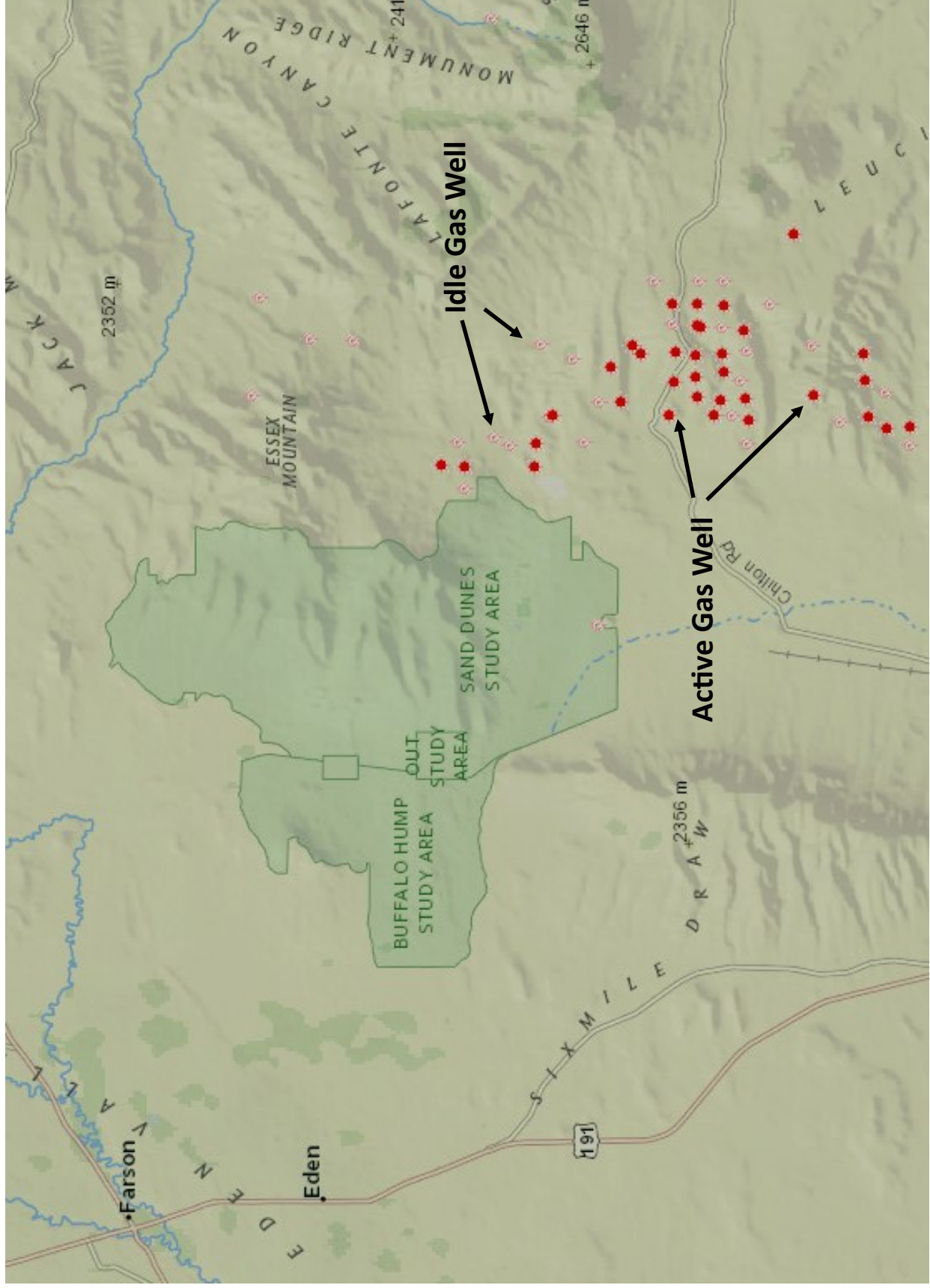
Oil and Gas - Moderate Development Potential

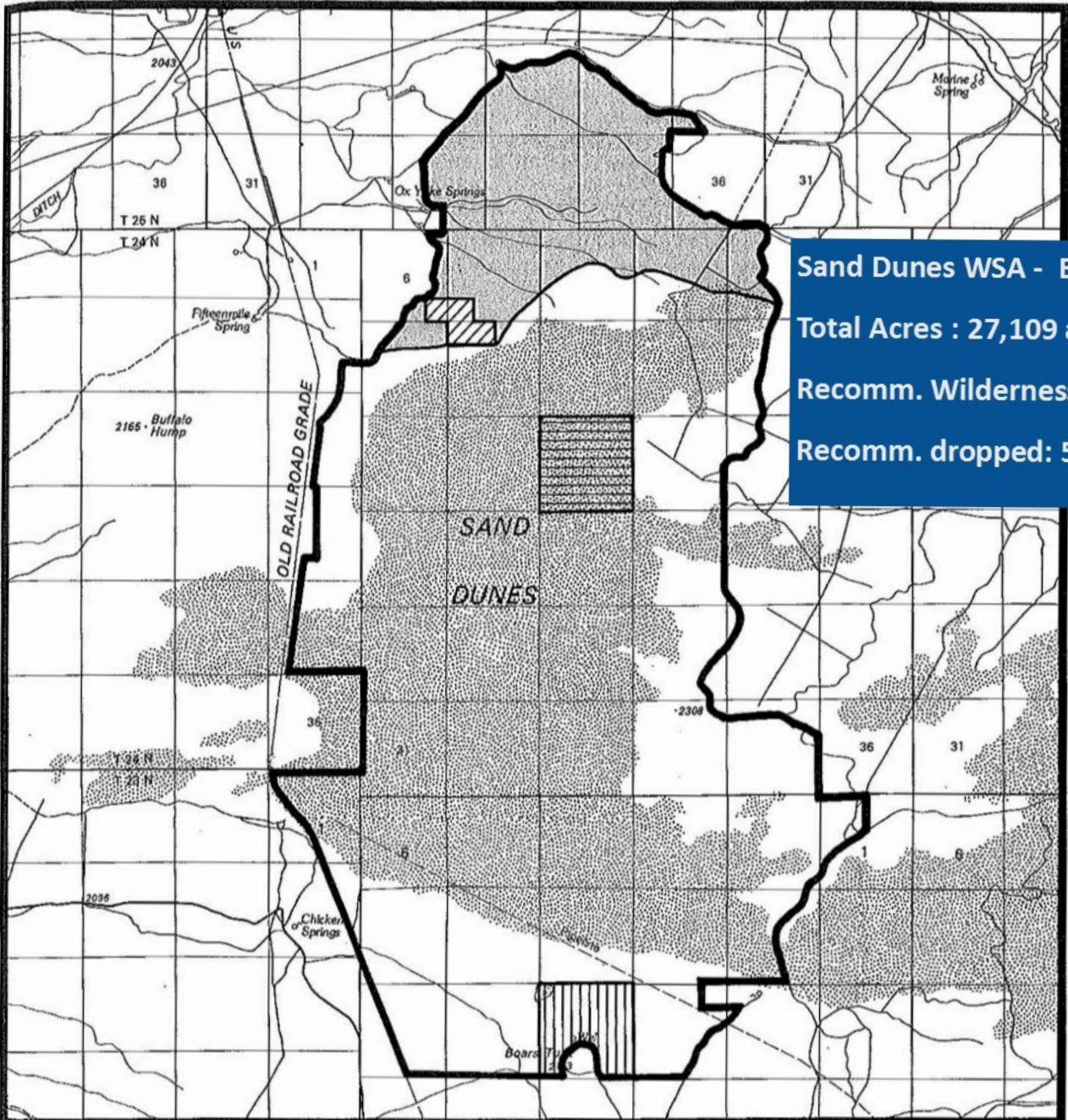
Oil and Gas - High

WSA

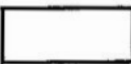


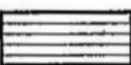
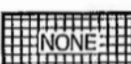

Buffalo Hump and Sand Dunes WSAs

NREX - Active Oil and Gas Wells - July 2017





Sand Dunes WSA - BLM 1991
Total Acres : 27,109 ac
Recomm. Wilderness: 21,304 ac
Recomm. dropped: 5,805 ac

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | Recommended for Wilderness |  | Split Estate |
|  | Recommended for Nonwilderness |  | State |
|  | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |  | Private |



Sand Dunes Proposal



WY-040-307
June, 1990

SAND DUNES 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 Sand Dunes WSA encompasses 27,109 acres, including 600 acres of split estate land, 640 acres of state land and 160 acres of private land. The WSA is entirely within the BLM Rock Springs Field Office.

This WSA comprises a large part of the Killpecker Sand Dunes which include barren dunes with superb draws and valleys containing wet meadows with desert plant communities. Boar's Tusk is a prominent landmark just outside the southern edge of this WSA.

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 six inches to eight feet deep, some being crystal clear and almost void of life. Others are muddy, and alive with tadpoles, salamanders, insects, waterfowl and various grasses and aquatic vegetation.

These sand dunes help support the only desert elk herd in Wyoming.

From a cultural perspective, the Sand Dunes WSA lies a short distance from the Finley and Eden-Farson Archaeology sites where a distinctive projectile point gives evidence of one man's earliest inhabited sites in North America.

Access:

The Sand Dunes WSA is accessible off of Sweetwater County Road 4-17 (Chilton Road) via a BLM road that goes to Boars Tusk or BLM Road 4115 that runs north from Co. Rd. into the sand dunes. The Boars Tusk access is located approximately 20 miles north of Rock Springs via U.S. Highway 191, County Road 4-17 and a BLM two track. Generally, the access to this WSA is considered good except in wet weather.

1991 BLM Recommendation:

In 1991, the BLM recommended releasing 5,805 acres from wilderness consideration leaving 21,304 acres for potential wilderness designation. The released acreage was located in the northern end of the study area. The recommendation to release this acreage was based primarily on the high oil and gas potential of the area. ORV intrusions and manageability also factored into the recommended release of this northern portion. The 1991 oil and gas and ORV road information should be rechecked to ensure its relevancy and validity.

Other Notes:

Because of its accessibility to Rock Springs, the outstanding naturalness of the dunes, the unique dune ponds, the habitat and cover for big game, its location to Boar's Tusk and the famous archaeological sites in the vicinity of the Sand Dunes WSA, the residents of Sweetwater County may support designating the entire 27,109 acres of the Sand Dunes WSA as wilderness.

The 27,109 acre Sand Dunes WSA abuts the 10,300 acre Buffalo Hump WSA. With the exception of the abandoned U.S. Steel RR Line, these two WSAs could be combined to make a substantial Wilderness Unit.