

august, 1979

PROPOSED DECISIONS
for wilderness inventory units
in the overthrust belt
and certain other units

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WYOMING STATE OFFICE

Introduction

Four units of public land containing 61,380 acres are being recommended as Wilderness Study Areas by the Bureau of Land Management.

The units were among 13 inventory units considered in an accelerated intensive inventory conducted for lands in the "Overthrust Belt" as well as certain other units in the state.

The proposed decision recommending the four units as Wilderness Study Areas appeared in the August 15, 1979 issue of the Federal Register. A 90-day comment period on this proposed decision will close on November 16, 1979. All public input will be evaluated and a final decision will be issued.

Seven of the inventory units for which a decision has been proposed are in the Overthrust Belt of the Rock Springs district. The Secretary of the Interior had directed that the wilderness inventory for all units on the Overthrust Belt, which is a geologic formation with high oil and gas potential, be completed by December 31, 1979.

The other six inventory units for which the intensive inventory has been completed are located in the Rawlins district. One of the units, WY-030-303 Prospect Mountain, was found to have part of the unit with wilderness characteristics and part without; therefore, it has been divided into two subunits.

The following four units or parts of units are proposed as Wilderness Study Areas to be further evaluated, along with all other resource values, in the Bureau planning system.

Rawlins District

WY-030-303a Prospect Mountain 1,000 acres

Rock Springs District

WY-040-110 Lake Mountain 13,970 acres

WY-040-221 Raymond Mountain 33,236 acres

WY-040-223 Coal Creek 13,174 acres

The following ten units or parts of units do not appear to possess wilderness characteristics as set forth in section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act and are, therefore, proposed to be dropped from further consideration and released from interim management as specified in section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Rawlins District

WY-030-114 Copper Mountain 8,704 acres

WY-030-115 Lysite Badlands 14,272 acres

WY-030-116 Moneta Sand Dunes 8,640 acres

WY-030-117 Moneta Sand Dunes 10,048 acres

WY-030-134 Agate Flats 22,544 acres

WY-030-303b Prospect Mountain 4,700 acres

Rock Springs District

WY-040-109 Cabin Creek 7,040 acres

WY-040-111 Beaver Creek 4,000 acres

WY-040-126 Red Canyon 5,300 acres

WY-040-222 IGO Speedway 6,646 acres

Wilderness Review

The Bureau's wilderness review process has three phases: inventory, study and submission of a report to Congress. Public involvement is provided for in all phases of the process, including opportunity for comment, participation and review.

Inventory. First, BLM inventories the public lands to identify areas that meet the definition of wilderness established by Congress. Such areas are identified as Wilderness Study Areas.

Study. Next, BLM studies each WSA using the BLM land-use planning system to analyze all values, resources and uses within the WSA. The findings of the study determine whether the area will be recommended as suitable or unsuitable for designation as wilderness.

In this phase wilderness, other uses, resources and values will be thoroughly examined. During the study BLM will actively solicit comments on these topics.

Reporting. When the study has been completed, a recommendation as to whether the WSA is suitable or unsuitable for designation as wilderness is submitted through the Secretary of the Interior and the President to Congress. Reports on all WSAs must be submitted by October 21, 1991.

Only Congress can designate an area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Interim Management

Congress requires that BLM manage all public lands which meet the wilderness criteria in such a way as to not impair their suitability for wilderness preservation until Congress designates such areas as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, or denies such wilderness designation by legislative action.

BLM's Draft Interim Management Policy and Proposed Surface Management Regulations were issued for public review and comment on January 12, 1979. Two key features are: (1) BLM will manage the public lands so that other resource use activities may continue with minimum interruption during the wilderness review process; (2) Lands identified as meeting the roadless and wilderness characteristics criteria will be managed in accordance with the law to prevent their impairment for potential wilderness designation.

The guiding principle of this management is that the impact an activity has on the land's potential for wilderness designation, and not a particular activity, will be measured to determine if the activity will be allowed or regulated.

Copies of the Draft "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Wilderness Study Areas" and proposed Surface Management Regulations are available from the Wyoming State Office and BLM District Offices. The Bureau's Interim Management Policy is scheduled to be issued in mid-summer 1979.

Units Recommended As Wilderness Study Areas

Rawlins District

WY-030-303a Prospect Mountain 1,000 acres. This unit lies southeast of the town of Encampment adjacent to the Medicine Bow National Forest. It was included for intensive inventory because the adjacent Forest Service lands were being studied for possible Wilderness designation through the RARE II process. Those Forest Service lands are being recommended for Wilderness designation.

The unit consists of two distinct vegetative and physiographic types. The first is a sagebrush vegetative type on rolling hills which lies west of the second type which is an aspen-coniferous forest type in canyons immediately adjacent to the North Platte River Canyon.

An appearance of naturalness dominates the aspen-coniferous forest area while the works of man are readily apparent in the sagebrush hills. Therefore, the unit is being divided into two subunits.

In subunit WY-030-303a, which is adjacent to the USFS RARE II Wilderness Proposal, an outstanding opportunity for solitude would be available to the visitor.

Primitive recreation opportunities present in the unit are hiking, backpacking and hunting. Opportunities for sightseeing and photography exist because of diverse botanical, zoological and geological features.

This subunit, which meets the criteria for wilderness, consists of approximately 1,000 acres. Since the area is adjacent to another agency's lands which qualify for wilderness, the size criterion does not apply.

WY-040-110 Lake Mountain 15,960 acres. This unit has several intrusions such as timber sale areas, a bladed fence line and maintained reservoirs. The boundary of the unit has been redrawn to eliminate these intrusions. The present acreage of the proposed Wilderness Study Area is 13,970 acres which is all public land.

The unit is located within the Wyoming Range in western Wyoming. It is typified by an irregular series of steep-sided ridges ranging in elevation from 7,400 feet to over 9,600 feet. Vegetation is primarily forest cover of fir, spruce, pine and aspen, but the lower elevations on the south open into sage-grass slopes.

Man-made intrusions remaining in the unit are minor and substantially unnoticeable. The intrusions consist of a buck and pole fence, a fish barrier in Rock Creek and several "ways" which are not considered roads. The high topographic variance and diverse vegetative cover within the unit enable it to offer an outstanding opportunity to experience solitude.

The presence of steep mountain slopes, deep drainages, forested areas and meadow-like openings supplies a diversity that is able to offer a broad base for a variety of recreation activities. Activities for which outstanding opportunities exist include hiking, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife observation, ski touring and general sightseeing.

WY-040-221 Raymond Mountain 33,236 acres. This unit is approximately 19 miles long and four miles wide. The terrain is mountainous with numerous canyons and draws. Several drainages have perennial streams, one of which contains a pure strain of Utah Cutthroat Trout.

In addition to the 33,236 acres of public lands, there are 200 acres of private land and 1,320 acres of state land located within the boundary of the unit.

An appearance of naturalness dominates the unit with imprints of man's activities being substantially unnoticeable. There are several intrusions in the area but they do not make the area unnatural.

The size, topographic variation, vegetative screening and configuration combine to provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

There are several primitive recreation opportunities in the unit which are considered outstanding. The topography is suitable for hiking and backpacking and rock outcrops provide opportunities for climbing. Opportunity for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, birdwatching, horseback riding and hunting are considered outstanding in the region.

WY-040-223 Coal Creek 13,174 acres. The Coal Creek unit also contains 320 acres of state land and 40 acres of private land which make a total of 13,534 acres within the unit. The 13,174 acres of public land meet the size criteria and are in an essentially natural condition. There are several "ways" which provide access to five tracts of state land within the unit.

The opportunity for outstanding solitude or primitive recreation has been particularly difficult to determine for this unit. While opportunity for solitude does exist in many locations throughout the unit, the quality of that opportunity is not clearly outstanding. The opportunity for outstanding primitive recreation seems more possible since several types of primitive recreation are suited to the area. Such activities as hiking, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and photography could be readily engaged in. The quality of these recreation activities appears to be high.

The unit also possesses several supplemental values such as rare trout, beaver ponds with their interesting ecological interrelationships and good scenery values. These supplemental values tend to enhance the unit's wilderness characteristics. Since it could not be clearly determined that this unit was deficient in wilderness characteristics, the public is particularly encouraged to help determine if this unit should be a Wilderness Study Area.

Units Not Recommended for Further Consideration

Rawlins District

WY-030-134 Agate Flats 22,544 acres. The unit was originally estimated to contain roughly 20,500 acres but a more accurate measurement done during the intensive inventory indicates the unit contains 22,544 acres. The unit lies northeast of Jeffrey City, Wyoming. It consists of gently rolling hills covered by sagebrush and grasses. Since it is in excess of 5,000 acres it meets the criterion for size.

Roads, fences, an old airstrip and an intense network of seismograph trails totally blanket the area. These combine with water developments to place the area in an unnatural condition. Man is clearly not a casual visitor to the area.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not available due to the lack of topographic or vegetative screening.

Primitive recreation opportunities are available but none is considered outstanding. No opportunities exist to specifically draw the visitor to this area for the purposes of primitive recreation. Current activities consist primarily of agate hunting accomplished with the use of off-road vehicles.

WY-030-114 Copper Mountain 8,704 acres. The unit was originally estimated to contain roughly 7,000 acres but a more accurate measurement done during the intensive inventory indicates the unit contains 8,704 acres. The unit lies northwest of the town of Lysite. It consists of rugged mountainous terrain cut by numerous drainages. At the southern end the terrain flattens out to rolling hills and drainages.

The mountainous northern half of the unit is in a natural condition but throughout the south and eastern sections man's works are substantially noticeable. Man's works consist of fences, roads, ways, wells and extensive mineral exploration activity. Extensive impacts cover about half of the area.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude do not exist in a large enough area to qualify under the criterion for solitude. Opportunities exist for such types of primitive recreation as hiking, hunting, backpacking, rockhounding and rock climbing. The small amount of suitable area places the recreation in a less than outstanding category.

WY-030-115 Lysite Badlands 14,272 acres. The unit was originally estimated to contain approximately 11,000 acres but a more accurate measurement done during the intensive inventory indicates the unit contains 14,272 acres. The unit lies northwest of the town of Moneta, Wyoming. It consists of gently rolling grasslands incised by canyons and draws which serve to break up the area extensively. Badland type canyons cover a large part of the area while flat areas occupy approximately one-third of the unit.

Man's works are visible in a large part of the unit. Fences traverse the area in several locations and are readily visible due to terrain and vegetation. A system of ways and old roads is found in the area. Along the southern and western boundary, a powerline is clearly visible throughout a large part of the unit. Due to its size and location, its presence could not be ignored by the visitor. These factors combine to show that man is not a "casual" visitor to the area. The area, then, does not meet the criterion for naturalness.

Opportunities for solitude exist only in the draws and washes. From anywhere but the draws, one could clearly see other visitors at great distances. Secluded spots exist but are the exception in the unit rather than the rule.

Primitive recreation in the form of sightseeing, hiking, hunting, backpacking, and rockhounding could be enjoyed within the unit. Such opportunities are neither unique nor outstanding, however.

WY-030-116 Moneta Sand Dunes 8,640 acres. The unit was originally estimated to contain 5,100 acres but a more accurate measurement indicates that the unit contains 8,640 acres. This unit lies south-east of the town of Shoshoni, Wyoming. It consists of gently rolling hills covered by low sagebrush and grasslands. Some badland features are found in the area, however, rolling hills are the dominant topographic feature.

The unit is traversed by ways and seismograph trails. A fenceline crosses the unit. Highway 26 is clearly visible from the unit. The cumulative effect of the intrusions is to ensure that the visitor could not escape the works of man in the unit.

Solitude may be found only occasionally in draws or along slopes. Therefore, the area does not meet the criteria for solitude.

Opportunities for primitive recreation in the form of hiking, rockhounding, hunting and camping exist in the area but none is outstanding.

WY-030-117 Moneta Sand Dunes 10,048 acres. The unit was originally estimated at 8,000 acres but a more accurate measurement done during the intensive inventory indicates the unit contains 10,048 acres. This unit lies southeast of Shoshoni. It is made up of gently rolling hills and stabilized sand dunes. The vegetative types are sagebrush and grasslands.

The area meets the criterion for size as it consists of in excess of 10,000 acres.

The area does not meet the criterion for naturalness. Roads, ways and seismograph trails traverse the area. The effect of these activities is such that the visitor is never free from the influences of man.

Solitude may be found throughout the area due to the gently rolling hills and bottom lands. The solitude one would find is not outstanding, however, as the visitor would be readily visible from most vantage points in the unit. Visitors would not be well screened from one another.

Opportunities for primitive recreation exist but they are not outstanding. The opportunities include hunting, hiking, photography and birdwatching, and are not unique or any different than those opportunities in the surrounding area.

WY-030-303b Prospect 4,760 acres. This subunit is southeast of Encampment and contains 4,760 acres which are not recommended for designation as a Wilderness Study Area. The area is characterized by sagebrush on rolling hills, which do not provide an outstanding opportunity for solitude. There is a lack of screening from vegetation or topographic features. Man-made intrusions in the subunit consists of developed springs and reservoirs, fences, roads and ways and small mineral prospect pits.

Rock Springs District

WY-040-109 Cabin Creek 7,040 acres. The original acreage figure of 4,880 acres was increased by 2,240 acres when field investigation found that a four-mile road into the unit did not connect with the Miller Creek road. Even though the unit has sufficient acreage to meet the size criteria, the presence of several jeep trails, a bladed seismic line, a switch-back road ascending a steep, bare slope, render the unit sufficiently impacted to appear unnatural. Man's activities in the unit are, therefore, substantially noticeable.

The broad, open character of the unit and its narrow configuration, combine to severely limit the opportunity for solitude.

Recreation opportunity in the unit includes hunting, hiking and horseback riding, none of which are of an outstanding nature.

WY-040-111 Beaver Creek 4,000 acres. Field investigation of two routes has determined that they are roads. This determination has reduced the size of the unit to 3,500 acres which is substantially below the 5,000 acres minimum.

The Narrow Ridge road in the southern portion of the unit has cut banks, gravel surfacing and other obvious signs of construction. The Trail Ridge road in the northeast corner of the unit also has cut banks and other evidence of construction.

Within the remaining 3,500 acres of the unit, jeep trails further reduce the natural appearance. The inadequate size of the unit, along with the effect of jeep trails, preclude the opportunity for outstanding solitude or primitive recreation.

Within this unit, North Beaver Creek contains a genetically pure population of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. Other streams within the area also support populations of this fish species which is designated "rare" by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and "sensitive" by the Bureau of Land Management.

WY-040-126 Red Canyon 5,300 acres. The unit originally contained 5,300 acres of public land. However, a more accurate acreage measurement and identification of a road which became the north boundary, reduced the acreage to 4,460 acres. The small size, numerous jeep trails and seismic lines preclude the opportunity for outstanding solitude. Hunting and wildlife observation opportunity are considered outstanding within the unit. Because the unit does not have minimum size of 5,000 acres and it lacks naturalness, it is proposed to be dropped from the inventory.

WY-040-222 IGO Speedway 6,646 acres. Total acreage of the unit is 6,846 acres which includes 160 acres of state land and 40 acres private land. A small area in the southeast part of the unit was eliminated due to a recently discovered road; this reduction resulted in a total of 6,244 acres of public lands which were evaluated for wilderness characteristics.

The naturalness of the unit is substantially reduced by the presence of seismic scars and roads along the eastern and western boundaries. Due to the bowl shape of the unit, traffic on these roads is readily visible from most locations in the unit.

The combination of lack of interior topographic variation and lack of adequate vegetative screening make it difficult to find solitude. This unit offers opportunity for a variety of outdoor recreation activities but none of them are considered to be outstanding. There are no supplemental values identified in the unit.

Maps Available

The following maps are available for purchase from the Wyoming State Office of BLM.

1:500,000 scale colored status map . . .
..... \$5.00 each copy
Transparent overlay No. 3 dated August,
1979 \$4.00 each copy
Paper copy of overlay No. 3 .. \$2.50 each
copy

Anyone wishing to review the intensive inventory files for the units listed in this document may do so at the appropriate district office or at the Wyoming State Office in Cheyenne.

Who to Contact

These Wyoming BLM managers are available for contact regarding input to the wilderness inventory or to answer questions about BLM's wilderness review process.

STATE DIRECTOR, Bureau of Land Management, 2515 Warren Avenue, P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001.

WORLAND DISTRICT MANAGER, P. O. Box 119, 1700 Robertson Avenue, Worland, Wyoming 82401.

AREA MANAGER, Washakie Resource Area, P. O. Box 119, 1700 Robertson Avenue, Worland, Wyoming 82401.

AREA MANAGER, Cody Resource Area, P. O. Box 528, Federal Building, 1131-13th, Cody, Wyoming 82414.

RAWLINS DISTRICT MANAGER, P. O. Box 670, 1300 Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301.

AREA MANAGER, Divide Resource Area, P. O. Box 670, 1300 Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301.

AREA MANAGER, Medicine Bow Resource Area, P. O. Box 670, 1300 Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301.

AREA MANAGER, Lander Resource Area, P. O. Box 589, Lander, Wyoming 82520.

ROCK SPRINGS DISTRICT MANAGER, P. O. Box 1869, Highway 187 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901.

AREA MANAGER, Green River Resource Area, P. O. Box 1869, Highway 187 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901.

AREA MANAGER, Salt Wells Resource Area, P. O. Box 1869, Highway 187 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901.

AREA MANAGER, Pinedale Resource Area, P. O. Box 768, Molyneux Building, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941.

AREA MANAGER, Kemmerer Resource Area, P. O. Box 632, Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101.

Boulevard, Casper, Wyoming 82601.

AREA MANAGER, Platte River Resource Area, 951 Union Boulevard, Casper, Wyoming 82601.

AREA MANAGER, Buffalo Resource Area, P. O. Box 670, Buffalo, Wyoming 82834.

AREA MANAGER, Newcastle Resource Area, Highway 16 Bypass, Newcastle, Wyoming 82701.

Public Comment

To facilitate public review and comment on this proposal, the following schedule of open houses and public meetings is established:

Open Houses

Pinedale—October 3, 1979, Pinedale Area Office, Molyneux Building, 1-4:30 p.m., 7-9 p.m.

Kemmerer—October 4, 1979, Kemmerer Area Office, 1-4:30 p.m., 7-9 p.m.

Rawlins—October 2, 1979, Rawlins District Office, 1300 Third Street, 1-4 p.m., 7-9 p.m.

Lander—October 3, 1979, Lander Resource Area Office, Jett Building, Highway 287 South, 1-4 p.m., 7-9 p.m.

Public Meetings

Rawlins—October 24, 1979, Rawlins District Office, 1300 Third Street, 7 p.m.

Lander—October 25, 1979, Lander Resource Area Office, Jett Building, Highway 287 South, 7 p.m.






Pinedale—October 30, 1979, Pinedale Resource Area, Molyneux Building, 7 p.m.

Kemmerer—November 1, 1979, Kemmerer Resource Area Office, 7 p.m.





Persons or organizational representatives planning to participate and make oral comment at one or more of the above public meetings are urged to also submit written comments. Those wishing to submit comments other than at the public meetings are requested to send their comments to the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, P. O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001.

BLM Inventory Units

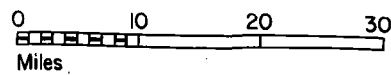
Inventory unit number:
 Refer to unit within District
 WY-010-100 Refer to unit within State
 Refer to State

-  Instant study area
-  Intensive inventory in progress
-  Proposed as a wilderness study area - WSA
-  Proposed to be dropped from the wilderness inventory due to lack of wilderness characteristics
-  125 Roadless island

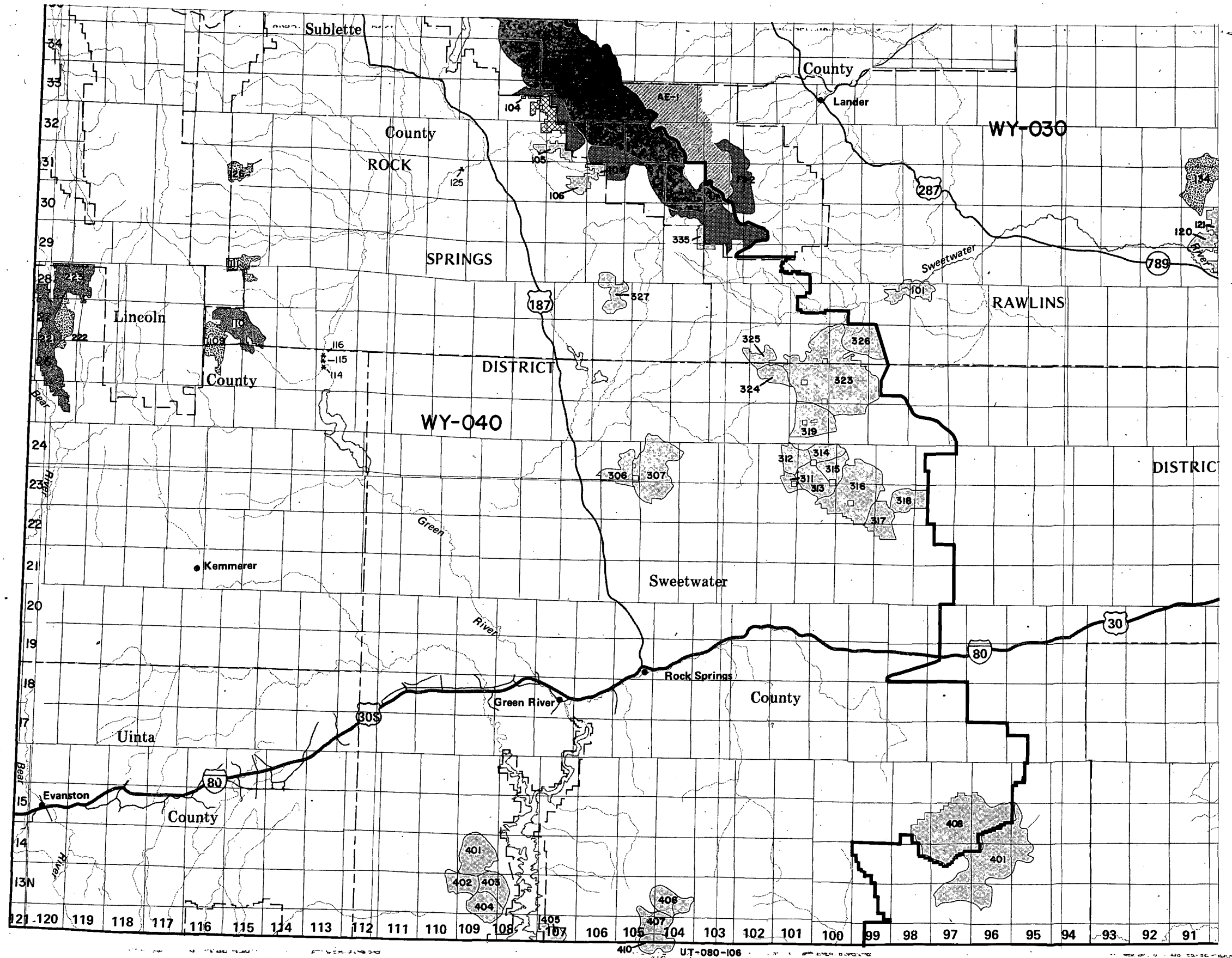
Other Federal Agencies

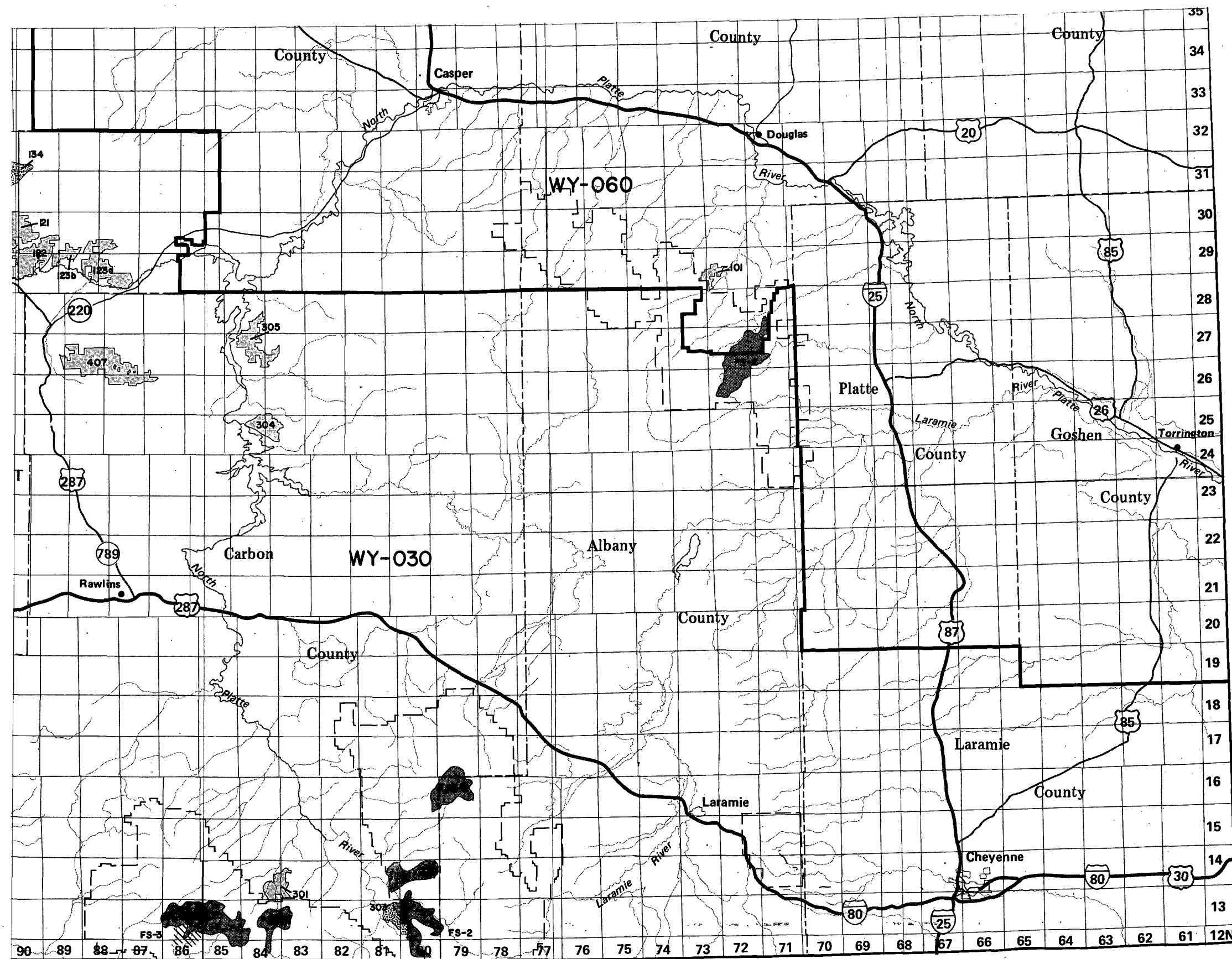
-  Designated wilderness (USFS)
-  Proposed for wilderness (USFS)
-  Further planning (USFS)
-  Administratively endorsed wilderness area

Scale 1:1,000,000







Southwest Wyoming







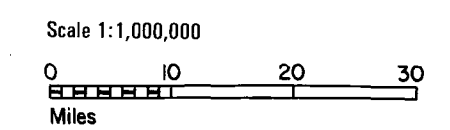


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- Other Federal Agencies**
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Southeast Wyoming

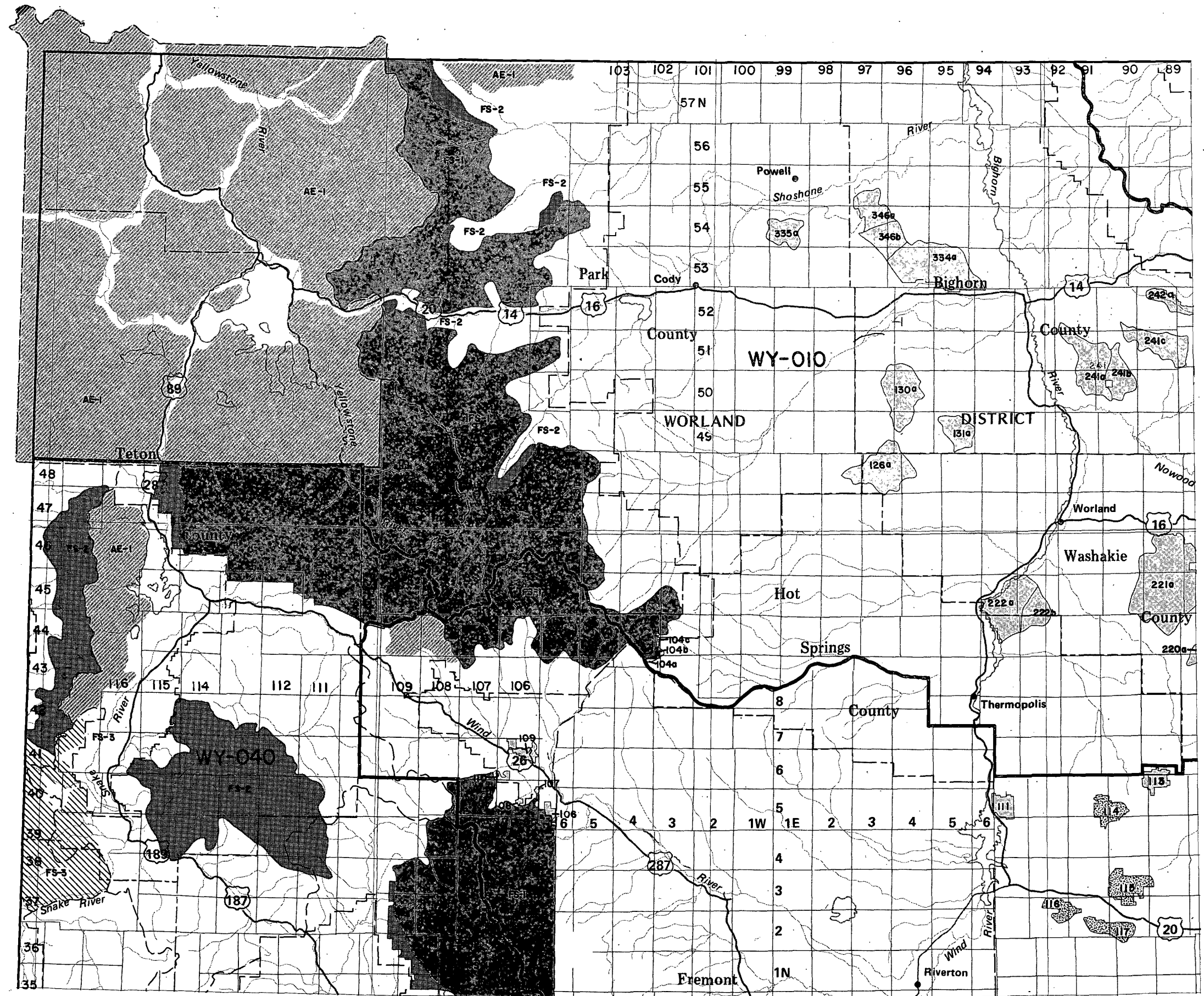
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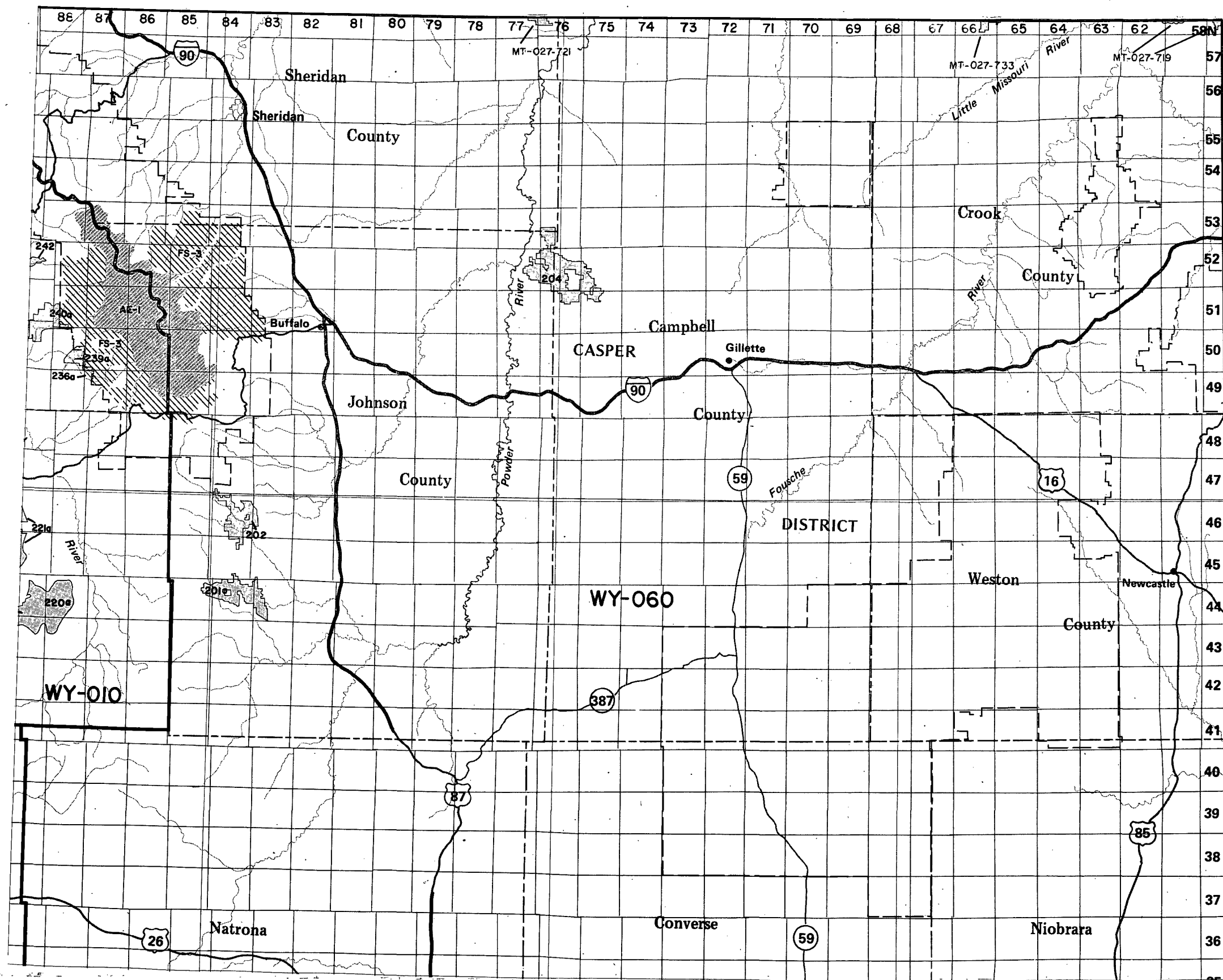
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-  Further planning (USFS)
-  Administratively endorsed wilderness area







Northwest Wyoming



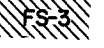



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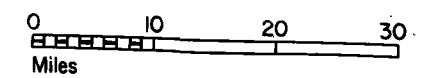
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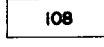
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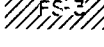

Northeast Wyoming

BLM Inventory Units

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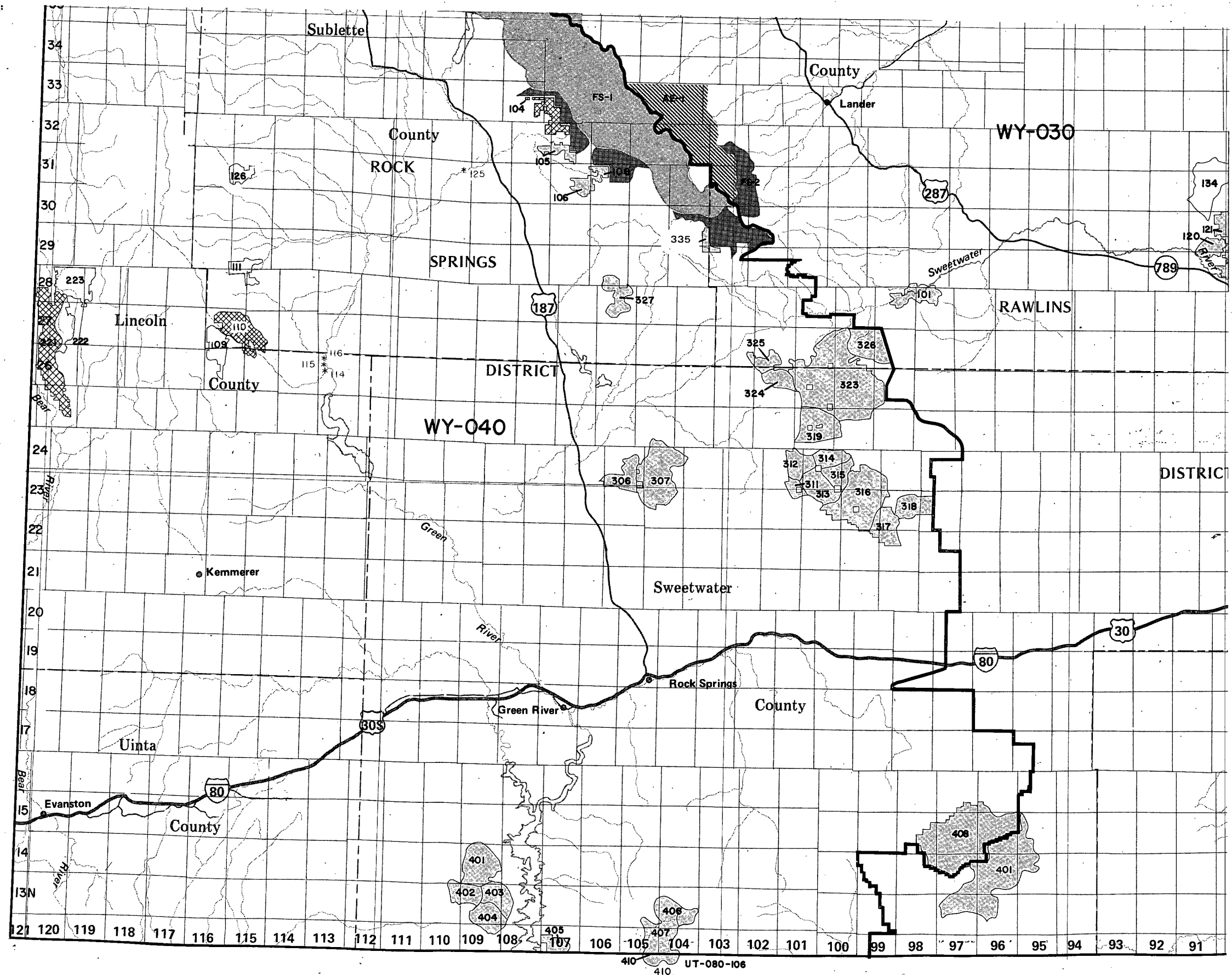
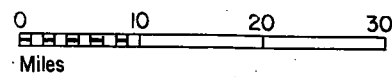
-  Instant study area or wilderness study area.
-  Intensive inventory in progress
-  Dropped from the wilderness inventory due to lack of wilderness characteristics and from interim management.
- * 123 Roadless island, inventory in progress

Other Federal Agencies

-  FS-1 Designated wilderness (USFS)
-  Proposed for wilderness (USFS)
-  Further planning (USFS)
-  Administratively endorsed wilderness area

Revision as of December, 1979



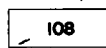
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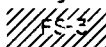

Southwest Wyoming

BLM Inventory Units

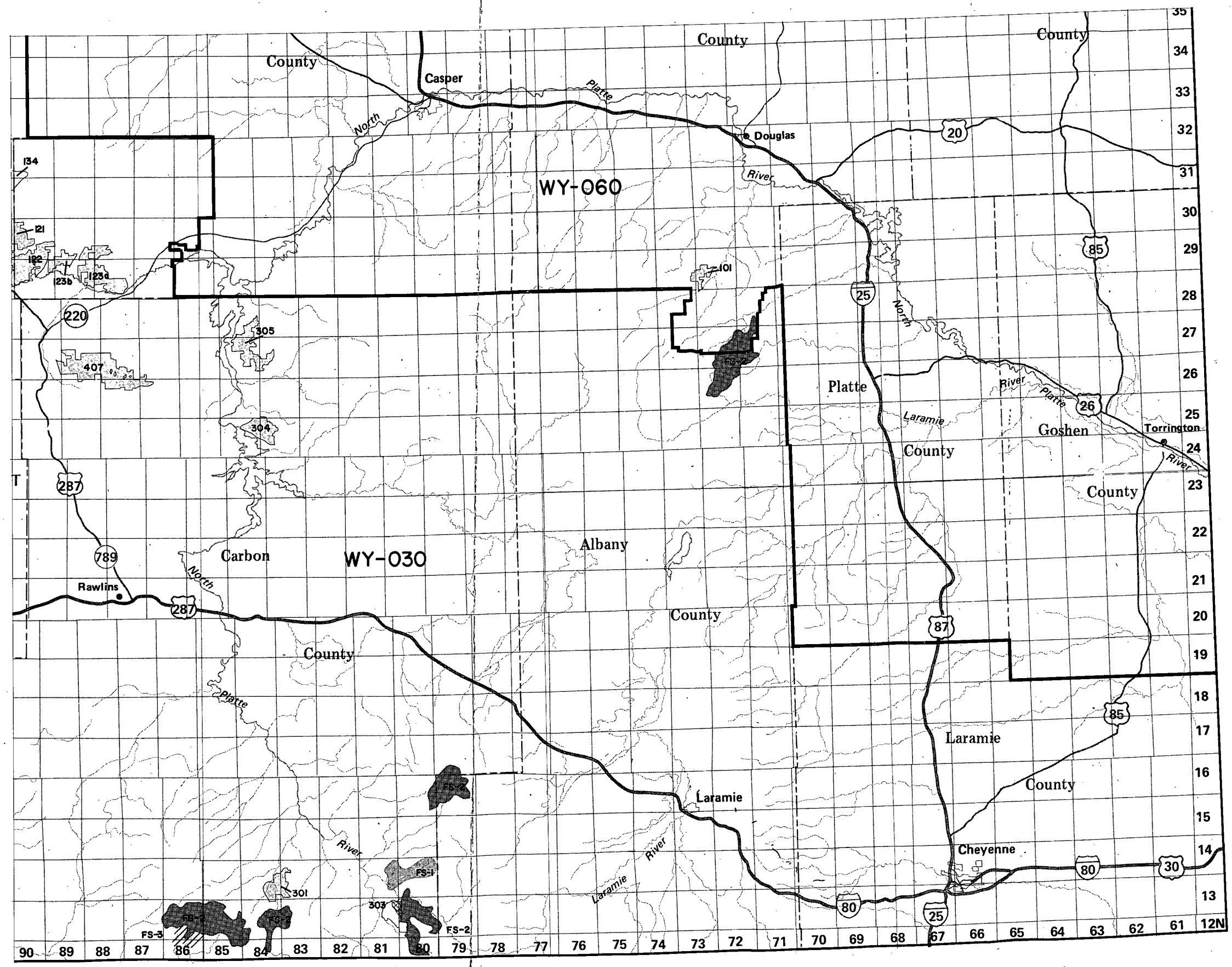
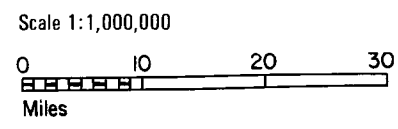
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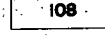
Revision as of December, 1979





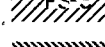

Southeast Wyoming

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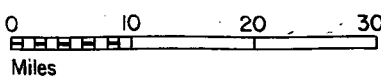
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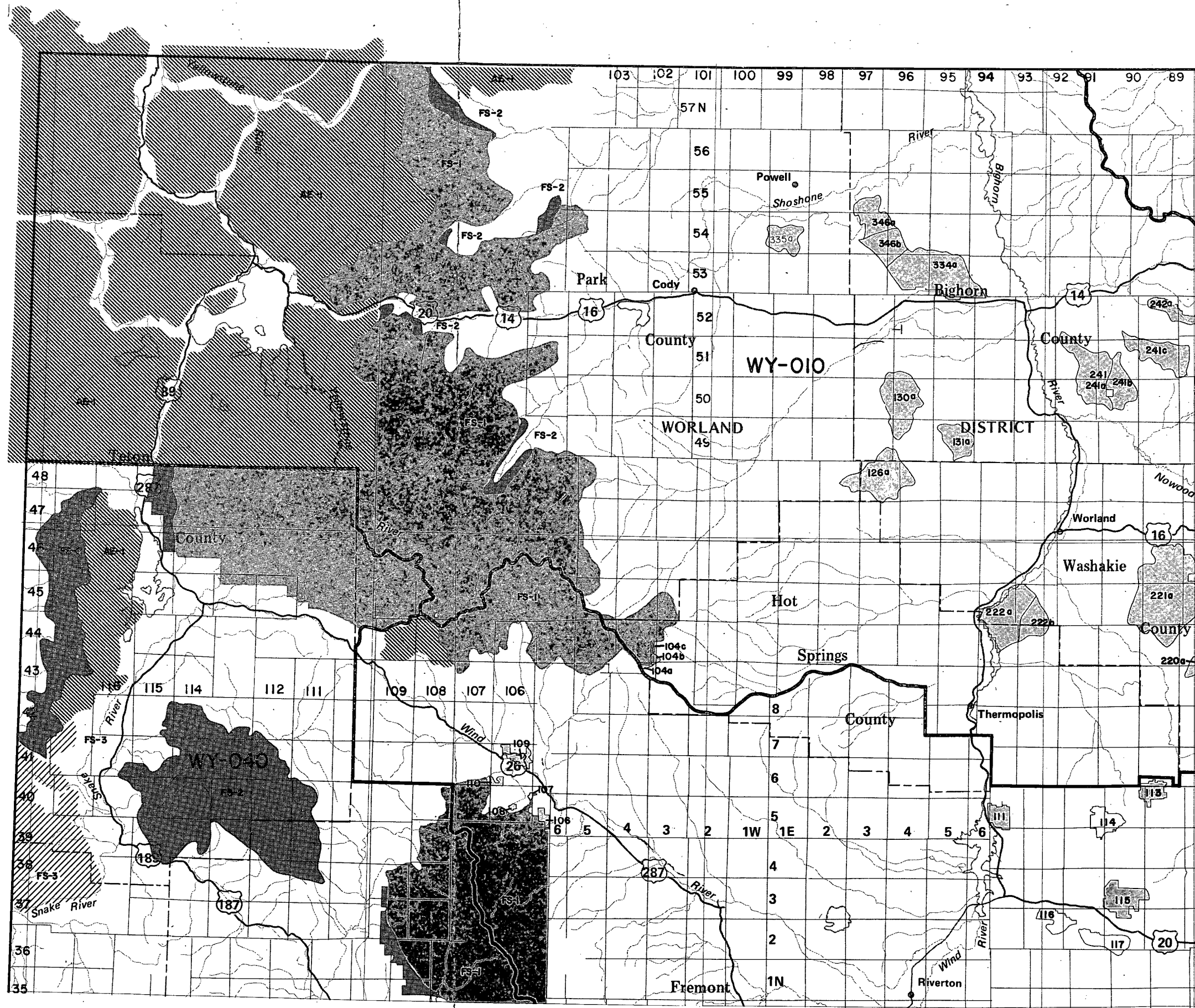
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-  Further planning (USFS)
-  Administratively endorsed wilderness area

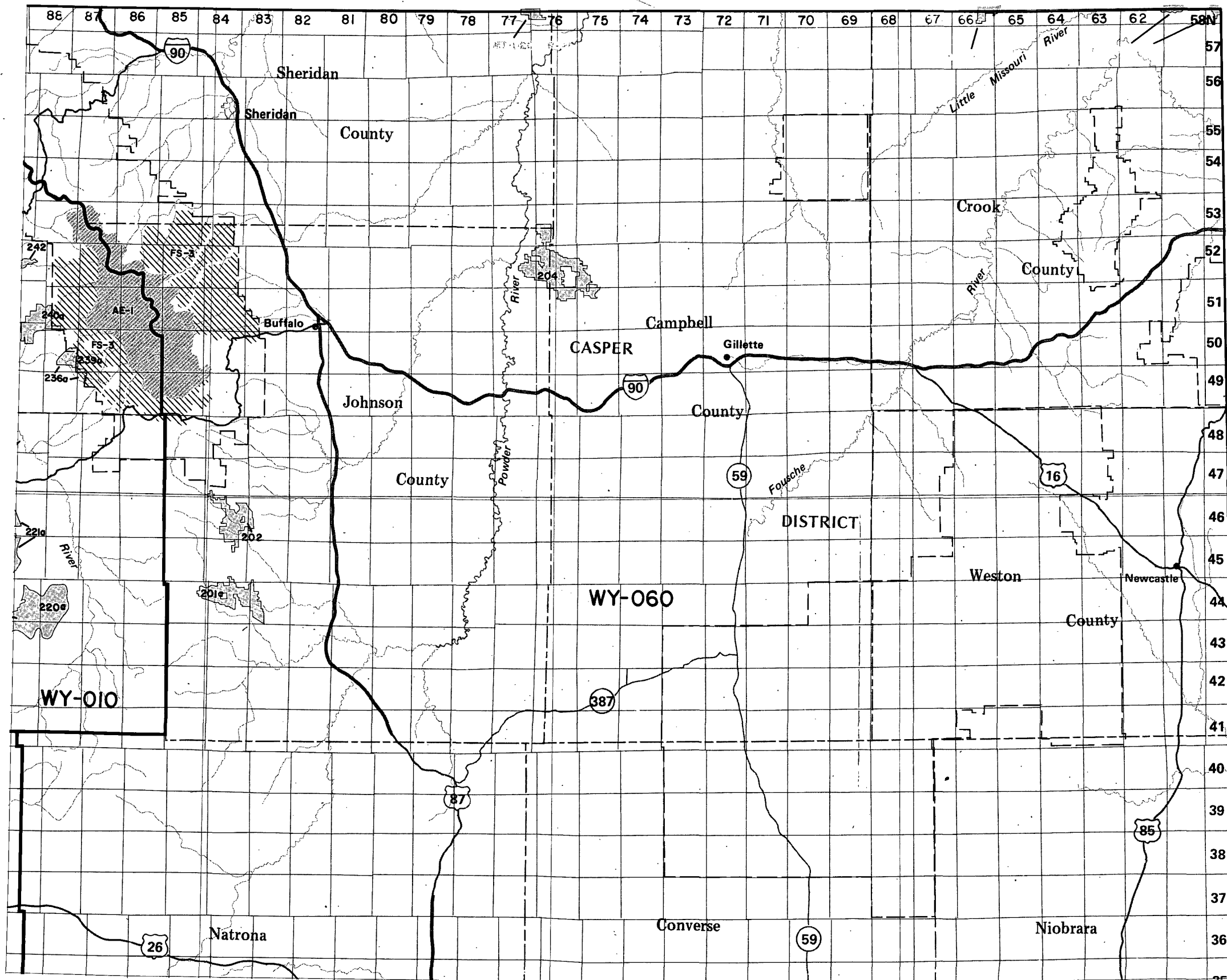
Revision as of December, 1979

Scale 1:1,000,000





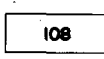
Northwest Wyoming









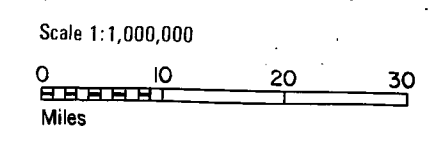
BLM Inventory Units

Inventory unit number:
 Refer to unit within District
WY-010-100 Refer to unit within State
 Refer to State

-  Instant study area or wilderness study area.
-  Intensive inventory in progress
-  Dropped from the wilderness inventory due to lack of wilderness characteristics and from interim management.
- * 123 Roadless island, inventory in progress

- Other Federal Agencies**
-  Designated wilderness (USFS)
 -  Proposed for wilderness (USFS)
 -  Further planning (USFS)
 -  Administratively endorsed wilderness area

Revision as of December, 1979



Northeast Wyoming