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ANALYSIS OF ACREAGES AND RESERVATIONS
NATIONAL RESOURCES LANDS
WYOMING

BY
Linda Witherbee

Sponsored by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
Cheyenne, Wyoming

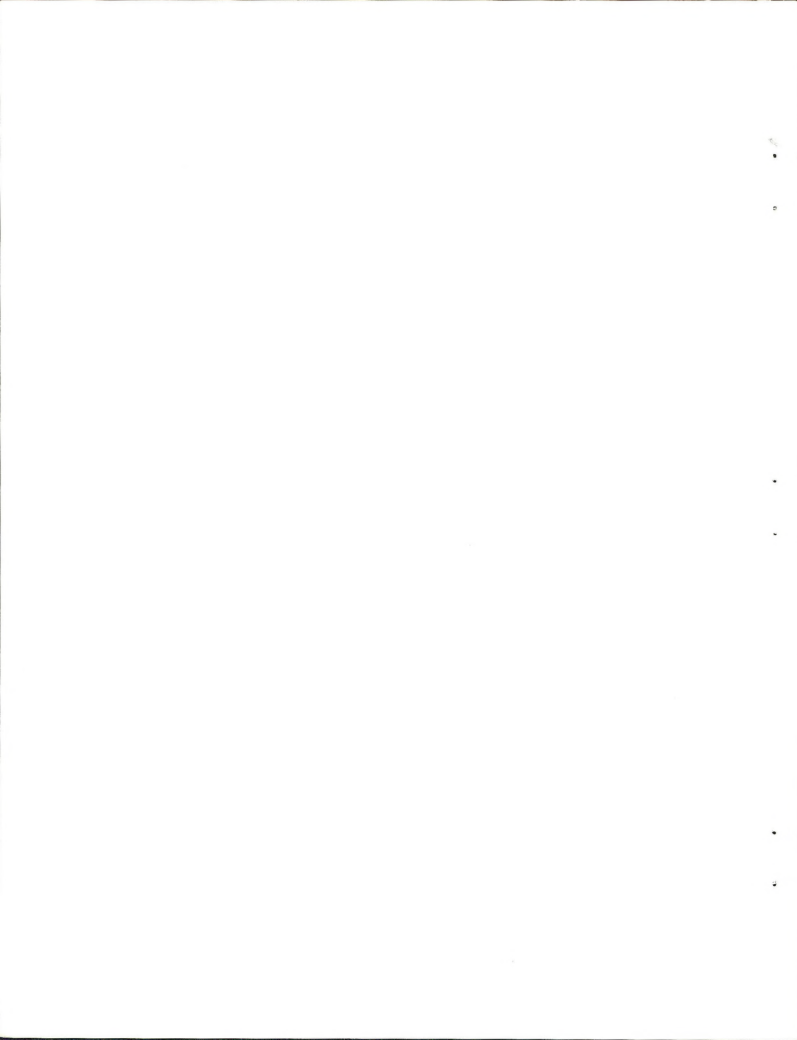
June 1976 - March 1977

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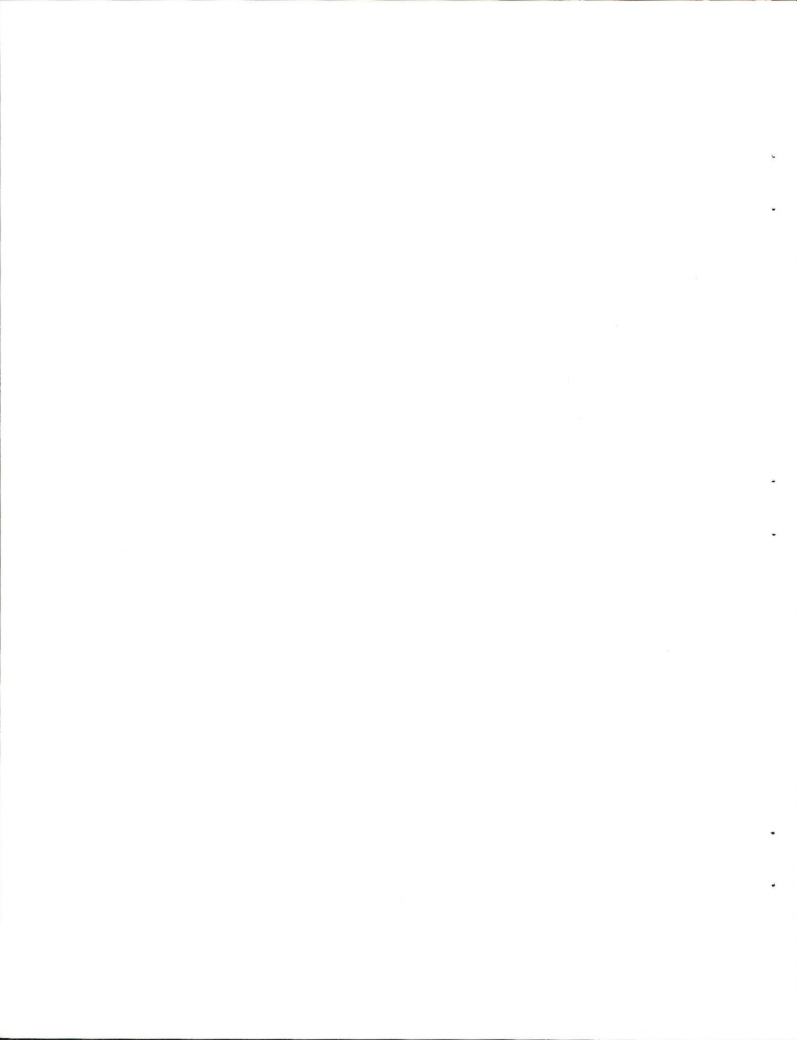
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Forward

The WICHE History:

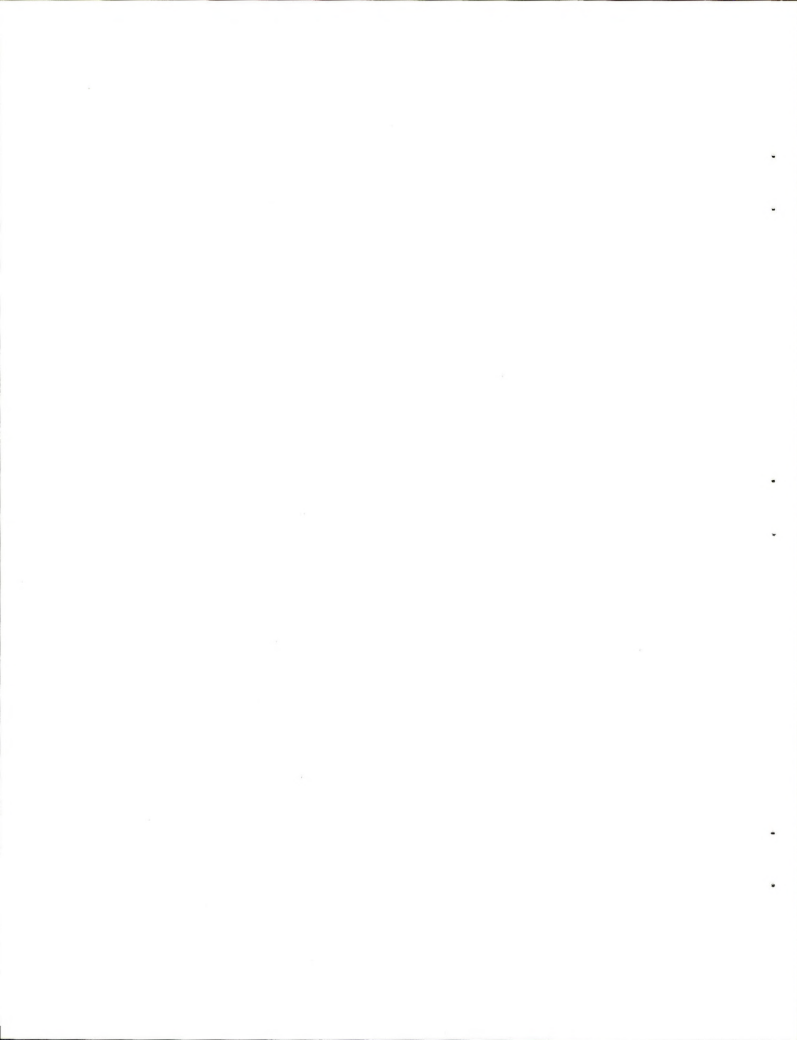
The intern idea began in the early 1960's by Bill Ramsay at the Oak Ridge Labs. His goal was to introduce new employees to jobs in a way that would be more productive to the agency. Since the method of orienting employees by rotating them through departments as observers had proven a failure, Mr. Ramsay hit on the idea of assigning each employee to a specific "short-term" task in different areas, as the best way for the employee to understand his or her future job and the total processes involved.

These interns were so productive that the program was expanded to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, in Atlanta, the New England Board for Higher Education and recently to the Midwestern Higher Education Committee. In all, several thousand internships have been developed by these programs even though some Federal support has been reduced.

With each of the programs developed the basic concept which is "service-learning." The agencies that utilize the interns thus identify the services to be needed and can then thoroughly use those interns to fulfill their goals. Thus the interns come from a variety of fields and educational standings. Those interns that worked with this particular project came from areas such as psychology, political science, geology, geography, mathematics and pre-law. The range of education varied from college sophomore to graduate students, but all with the skill and education required to complete the task efficiently. These interns and others in the Wyoming, Colorado area may also have the opportunity to serve the Western Regional Compact in which the thirteen western states are included. Each of these states will develop a new project and provide future interns better opportunities.

We, the interns of BLM, wish to thank WICHE for the opportunity of serving the public in a useful manner and the Bureau of Land Management for sponsoring us and allowing us to gain further knowledge and work experience. Our special thanks to Eddie Kassahn for all his help and understanding in aiding us, and to the draftsmen and personnel of the 3rd floor for their cooperation and help.

Orlando Gonzalez



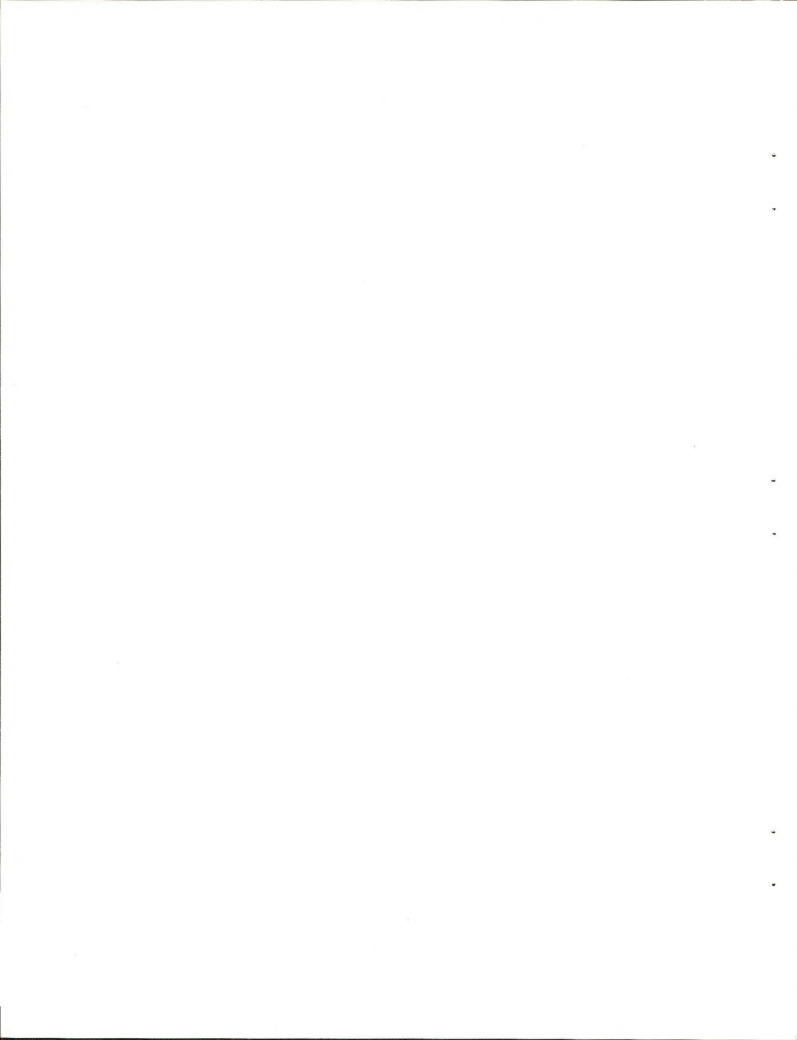
Abstract

Increasing demands on National Resource lands for recreation, mineral development, and environmental quality require knowledgeable and considered management planning. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), for whom this study was principally carried out, is charged with administering the greatest portion of these public lands on a multiple use, sustained yield basis.

BLM activities are financed through the general fund, it collects fees for all mineral leases and permits, sales of land and timber, and grazing leases, licenses and permits. With the passage of Public Law 94 - 377 on August 4, 1976, fifty per cent of these revenues collected within the State were to be redistributed to Wyoming.

Previously, all management plans and reparation payments were based only on estimates of public land acreage under various jurisdictions. Totals for original State and private land, land over which the Federal government retained mineral reservations, and acreage under withdrawal were unavailable even as estimates.

This inventory of acreages and reservations from which totals are included in this report, was designed to provide an accurate status analysis of all the land in Wyoming and identify the mineral resources under Federal control. It is hoped that the extensive, detailed inventory produced by this project will become a valuable planning tool for government and the public sector alike.



Purpose Statement

The justification for, and importance of, this project has grown from the increasing need to manage our National Resource Lands with wisdom and concern for the future. To fully appreciate the significance of the inventory, one must be aware of the development of the philosophy of land management.

The Land Ordinance Act of 1785 provided for all Federal lands within the original thirteen states to come under public jurisdiction. They were to be a source of revenue for the impoverished, young nation and to encourage settlement in sparse or unsettled areas. Following this period of easy credit for land, came a period of land grants to states, individuals, and corporations. The last half of the 19th century saw a great settlement drive, encouraged by the railroad land grants, the Homestead Acts, and growth of the cattle industry. Accompanied by fierce competition for grazing land and water, the notorious sheep and cattle wars which followed damaged the vegetation and encouraged erosion. Public support for government regulation grew until the Taylor Grazing Act was passed in 1934 (Penny, 1974).

The Grazing Act was popularly thought to apply only to ranchers, not considered as the intended charter for multiple use management. Even as late as the mid-twentieth century, the prevailing public attitude was that public land management was a temporary expedient until the land was sold into private ownership, or assigned to a special use reservation. Passed to deal with localized problems, earlier land laws were encouraging the better agricultural lands to come under private ownership. Mostly west of the 104th meridian, the public lands were of a marginal quality, primarily arid, geologically young and highly susceptible to erosion. They were generally considered as valuable only for grazing, mineral production and recreation (O'Callaghan, 1972).

Nevertheless, the Taylor Grazing Act marked a conservation landmark. It gave administrative control over the public domain to the Department of the Interior, and provided authority to classify land according to its highest and best use, and reject applications for other uses. The act also created grazing districts which were established with the aid of public advisory boards. To consolidate Federal lands, authority was granted to make land exchanges with states and private owners. Provisions were made for conservation and wildlife propagation, erosion and flood control, water development, and general land improvement (Penny, 1974).

In 1946 the General Land Office and the Grazing Service, both under the Department of the Interior, were combined to form the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and charged with land disposition and resource management (O'Callahan, 1972).

Following World War II, increased population and affluence led to an even greater use of, and pressure on, the public lands. In an attempt to deal with this problem, the Classification and Multiple Use Act of 1964 required the classification of public lands for disposal or retention under Federal ownership and multiple use management. This was important because it was the first official recognition that some public lands should remain forever under Federal control. On December 23, 1970, the Classification and Multiple Use Act expired, along with the Public Land Law Commission Act, and the Public Land Sale Act, which had been passed at the same time. This left the country with no comprehensive management act in affect (O'Callaghan, 1972).

For over 150 years, the BLM and its predecessors labored under approximately 3,000 outmoded land laws, some dating back to pre-Revolutionary times (Dept. of the Interior, 1977). The first definitive mandate Congress has ever given the BLM for its administration of the 473 million acres under its jurisdiction came with the approval of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The provision in this act requiring the inventory and identification of public lands is one of the major reasons for carrying out an analysis such as this. (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1976 and U.S. Senate & House of Representatives, 1976).

Adopted to stop the best lands from passing into private ownership and to respond to the growing concern for environmental quality and open space, the public land retention policy is to be continued. But the Act provides for the disposal of individual tracts in the national interest, with public participation required in the decision (U.S. Dept. of Interior, 1976 and U.S. Senate & House of Representatives 1976).

The Act repeals many of the old public land laws, including the Homestead Acts, and calls for a comprehensive program of land management to promote multiple use and sustained yield. It directs that certain public lands must remain in their natural condition. The Federal government is required to protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values. Also, to provide for outdoor recreation, human occupancy, and use of the public lands.

A provision important to States, such as Wyoming, that have a lot of Federal land within their boundaries, provides that loans shall be made to State and local governments against their share of anticipated mineral revenues to relieve the impact of mineral development (U.S. Dept. of Interior, 1976 and U.S. Senate & House of Representatives, 1976). Already, the Federal government makes payment to the states, based on the number of acres of Federal land within the State, to make up for removing this land from the tax rolls.

The BLM administers one of the most complex land management programs of any agency in the Federal government, and has authority over the greatest portion of public land. Among its many responsibilities, the BLM has custody of the original patent and survey records for 30 of the 50 states, and has authority over the cadastral survey. It manages recreational resources,

protects and develops cultural resources on public lands, manages wild-life habitat and timber, and conducts an active fire protection program. To support its conservation activities, the BLM handles all mineral leases and permits, sales of land and timber, as well as grazing leases, licenses and permits (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1976).

To carry out such a complex management program and to comply with the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau must first have an accurate, up-to-date accounting of all the resources under its authority. This inventory was designed to partially fulfill this need.

The System of Rectangular Surveys

Before one can undertake any kind of analysis of acreages and reservations, an understanding of the system of rectangular surveys is essential. This system was devised to provide a reliable and simple means by which lands could be identified, measured, and described, much unlike the confusing system of metes-and-bounds used in the colonial states. Begun in 1785, the survey of public domain in Ohio, using the system of rectangular co-ordinates, served to refine and improve the new system as the survey progressed westward. Public domain, known today as National Resource Land, refers to any land now under public ownership, irregardless of whether it was acquired from the colonial states, by treaty with the Indians or foreign powers, or conveyed to the United States after acquisition by private ownership (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1973).

Without going into great detail, the system of rectangular survey provides that the public lands be divided by north and south lines run according to the true meridian, and by other lines crossing them at right angles and run parallel to the lines of latitude, so as to form basic units known as townships, each approximately six miles square. The boundaries oriented north and south are called "range lines," and are great circles of the earth which would converge at the poles, if extended. In order to make allowance for this convergence, and to make the rectangular system fit on a round globe, standard parallels, or "correction lines," are extended east and west, occurring at average intervals of 24 miles. At the standard parallels, range lines are offset to take up the convergence and restore a full measure. The boundaries running east and west are called "township lines" (U.S. Dept of the Interior, 1973).

Each township is to be further divided into sections by running lines north/south and east/west through the township at one mile intervals so as to form 36 sections, each containing approximately 640 acres, where practicable. The sections are to be numbered consecutively, beginning with number one in the northeast corner, west to section six, south to seven, east to twelve, etc., until 36 is reached in the southeast corner. Where the exterior boundary lines of a township exceed, or are less than, six miles, this deficiency must be noted in the surveyor's field notes and added or subtracted from the northern or western boundaries of the township, depending upon whether the survey is progressing from south to north, or east to west. Townships are apt to have considerably less than 640 acres per section if their boundaries intersect the line of an Indian reservation, or of tracts of land surveyed or patented before May 18, 1976, or the course of navigable waterways. Navigable waterways are to be forever kept as public highways, though their streambed generally belongs to the state (Dept. of the Interior, 1973).

The corners of each township and each section must be marked with some sort of permanent marker. As provided for in the Act of May 27, 1908, the Bureau of Land Management has adopted a regulation post of alloyed iron pipe, zinc coated, with a 2½" outside diameter, 30 inches long, and a brass cap on top for this purpose. Brass tablets, 3½" diameter, are available for placing in rock outcrops or embedding in concrete monuments. When a corner falls in an area unsuitable for the regulation markers, stone monuments or witness trees may be used. These markers represent the location of the official corners, and are not to be tampered with under penalty of law. The locations of these markers, and the distances between them, are recorded in the field notes of the surveyor, along with the locations of mines, salt licks, salt springs, mill sites, watercourses, and a description of the land. After acceptance by the Director of BLM, these field notes and their accompanying plats are considered as part of the legal deed, or grant, to the land as regards location. Even if through technical error these corners were mislocated by the original survey, their position can not be changed after title is passed (Dept. of the Interior, 1973).

Although the survey of waste, or useless lands, is not required, public surveys must extend over all mineral lands. Mineral surveys, usually described by metes-and-bounds and not conforming to the regular land subdivisions, are made to mark the legal boundaries of mineral deposits or ore-bearing formations on public land (Dept. of the Interior, 1973).

The survey of land begins by the establishment of several independent "initial points," each of which serves as the point of origin for surveys in different localities. The survey progresses from these initial points by running "base lines," in an east/west orientation, and "principle meridian," oriented north/south from these points. Guide meridians are run parallel to the principle meridian and are numbered consecutively either east or west. Standard parallels are run parallel either north or south of the base line and are numbered consecutively. Within this framework the townships are laid out and subdivided, as in Fig 1. Whenever possible, township exteriors are laid out successively through a quadrangle in ranges, working from south to north, and developing ranges from east to west (Dept. of the Interior, 1973). Due to this practice, partial or irregularly shaped townships, or tracts, are most apt to be concentrated in the northern and western parts of the state.

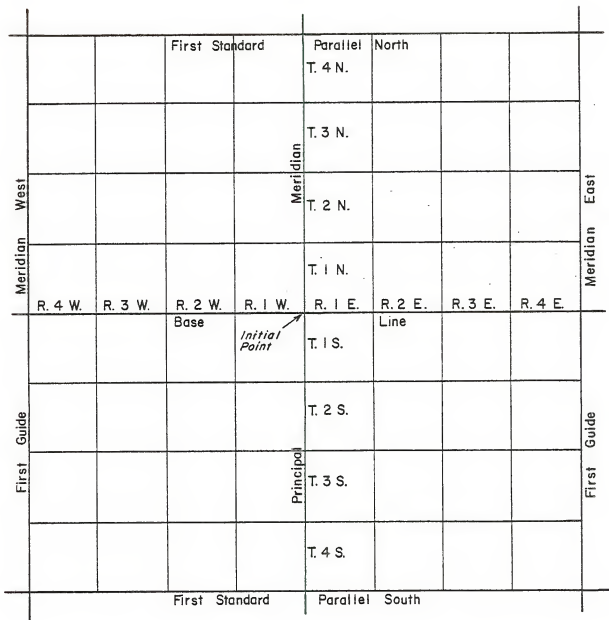


FIG. 1 Survey of quadrangles, each embracing 16 townships bounded by standard lines, showing the coordinate system of numbering Townships

Sources of Information

Most of the information needed for this inventory was taken from the Master Title (MT) plats on file in the Wyoming State Office. A plat is a line drawing, reproduced as closely as possible to scale, representing the lines, distances and directions of the survey, showing the boundaries of the land parcels, as well as some topographic detail, culture or land improvements (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1973). The MT plats that were used provided information on subdivision boundaries, land status, patent numbers, rights-of-ways, withdrawals, reservations, mineral surveys, and other actions.

As an important cross reference to the MT plats, the Historical Index (HI) sheets serve as a chronological narrative of all the past and present actions which have affected the use of, or title to, lands and resources within a particular township (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, New Land Office Records).

The Master Title plats, Use plats, their accompanying supplements and the Historical Index comprise the primary elements of the new land record system in use in the Wyoming State Office since 1965.

An additional resource relevant to this analysis was the Controlled Document Index (CDI). This mammoth file of microfilmed patent information provided immediate access to original land orders, patent documents, and land descriptions. Use of this index provided a check of acreages and jurisdictions whenever the MT plats were unclear, insufficiently detailed for accurate land identification, or tracts were too irregularly shaped for accurate acreage measurement from the plats.

Occasionally recourse was sought with the original survey plats, most of which were completed in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Methods of Analysis

To complete an inventory of such large scope involving the entire State of Wyoming and requiring the analysis of MT plats for over 2,760 townships, it was decided to work range by range, beginning with the western part of the state and working toward the eastern boundary. Paper work-copies were made of the MT plats and their accompanying supplements for each range from the permanent mylar copies retained on file at the State Office. Beginning with the southern most township in a particular range, analysis proceeded north through the range, taking each township in consecutive order, to reduce the possibility of omitting townships.

After the information from each township had been recorded on the corresponding inventory sheet, the sheets were checked for accuracy by the Land and Minerals Clerk, then filed by county in large hardcover books to form a permanent record. After county totals were obtained, these inventory sheets were rearranged into Districts. Eventually, this information will be computerized. It will be continually updated as land actions and changes in status occur, forming a valuable tool for future land management.

In the analysis of a single township, the plat was examined section-by-section. All of the acreage in each section had to be accounted for under at least one of the possible categories listed on the inventory sheets. This discussion will be more meaningful to the reader if the inventory sheets in figures 2 and 3 are referred to occasionally. It was necessary to identify whether the land surface was under public, State, or private ownership, according to the plat. This information, along with the department of the Federal government which has jurisdiction over any public land in that section, was recorded in the first four columns of the inventory sheet, after section and district.

In the next seven columns were recorded the totals of any acreage in a particular section where title to surface ownership was granted to State or private parties, but under which the Federal government reserved the mineral rights. Unless otherwise noted, all the mineral rights are assumed to belong to the Federal government where the surface is public. In cases where the government retained rights to only leasable or locatable minerals, it was noted under remarks, and the acreage was recorded in the all minerals column.

STATUS INVENTORY - WYOMING

T. 14 R. 94 COUNTY SUBBITTER

LOCATION		PUBLIC LANDS		FEE SURFACE (Acreages)							MINING CLAIMS	WITHDRAWALS					REMARKS
Sec.	District	Acreage	Juris.	Orig. State	Orig. Private	All Min	RESERVATIONS - U.S. MINERALS			(PAT.) Acreage	Type	Acreage	Type	Acreage	Type	Acreage	
							O&G	Coal	OG/Coal	Others							
1	0-3	640.71	BLD								US	640.71					
2		640.71	BLD									640.71					
3		640.71	BLD									640.71					
4		640.71	BLD									640.71					
5		640.71	BLD									640.71					
6		640.71	BLD									640.71					
7		640.71	BLD									640.71					
8		640	BLD									640					
9		640	BLD									640					
10		640	BLD									640					
11		640	BLD									640					
12		640	BLD									640					
13		640	BLD									640					
14		640	BLD									640					
15		640	BLD									640					
16		640	BLD									640					
17		640	BLD									640					Recon to U.S. to 640
18		291.36	BLD			36.46						637.72					36.46 A. State in Manual
19		640.72	BLD									640.72					
20		640	BLD									640					
21		640	BLD									640					
22		640	BLD									640					
23		640	BLD									640					
24		640	BLD									640					
25		640	BLD									640					
26		640	BLD									640					
27		640	BLD									640					
28		640	BLD									640					
29		640	BLD									640					
30		640.64	BLD									640.64					
31		640.52	BLD									640.52					
32		640	BLD									640					
33		640	BLD									640					
34		640	BLD									640					
35		640	BLD									640					
36		640	BLD									640					Recon to U.S.
TOTALS		22,256.77	BLD	36.46	-0-						-0-	22,291.94					
Grand Total of Reserved Minerals										-0-	Grand Total of Withdrawals						22,291.94

Juris. Totals BLD 22,256.77

COUNTY SUBBITTER
T. 14 R. 94
PAGE _____

STATUS INVENTORY - WYOMING

Page _____

T. 52 R. 102 COUNTY Park

LOCATION		PUBLIC LANDS		FEE SURFACE (Acreages)						MINING CLAIMS (PAT.) Acreage	WITHDRAWALS					REMARKS
				RESERVATIONS - US MINERALS												
				Orig. State	Orig. Private	All Min	O & B	Coal	Oil/Gas/Coal		Others	Type	Acres	Type	Acres	
1	01	612.21	214							Res. Bldg.	182.54					sold minutes 12.6.4 water
2		622.22	214													
3		680.71	214		160											
4		122.23	214		168.22											
5		122.23	214		171.23											
6		122.23	214		182.24											
7		122.23	214		192.25											
8		122.23	214		202.26											
9		122.23	214		212.27											
10		122.23	214		222.28											
11		122.23	214		232.29											
12		122.23	214		242.30											
13		122.23	214		252.31											
14		122.23	214		262.32											
15		122.23	214		272.33											
16		122.23	214		282.34											
17		122.23	214		292.35											
18		122.23	214		302.36											
19		122.23	214		312.37											
20		122.23	214		322.38											
21		122.23	214		332.39											
22		122.23	214		342.40											
23		122.23	214		352.41											
24		122.23	214		362.42											
25		122.23	214		372.43											
26		122.23	214		382.44											
27		122.23	214		392.45											
28		122.23	214		402.46											
29		122.23	214		412.47											
30		122.23	214		422.48											
31		122.23	214		432.49											
32		122.23	214		442.50											
33		122.23	214		452.51											
34		122.23	214		462.52											
35		122.23	214		472.53											
36		122.23	214		482.54											
37		122.23	214		492.55											
38		122.23	214		502.56											
39		122.23	214		512.57											
40		122.23	214		522.58											
41		122.23	214		532.59											
42		122.23	214		542.60											
43		122.23	214		552.61											
44		122.23	214		562.62											
45		122.23	214		572.63											
46		122.23	214		582.64											
47		122.23	214		592.65											
48		122.23	214		602.66											
49		122.23	214		612.67											
50		122.23	214		622.68											
51		122.23	214		632.69											
52		122.23	214		642.70											
53		122.23	214		652.71											
54		122.23	214		662.72											
55		122.23	214		672.73											
56		122.23	214		682.74											
57		122.23	214		692.75											
58		122.23	214		702.76											
59		122.23	214		712.77											
60		122.23	214		722.78											
61		122.23	214		732.79											
62		122.23	214		742.80											
63		122.23	214		752.81											
64		122.23	214		762.82											
65		122.23	214		772.83											
66		122.23	214		782.84											
67		122.23	214		792.85											
68		122.23	214		802.86											
69		122.23	214		812.87											
70		122.23	214		822.88											
71		122.23	214		832.89											
72		122.23	214		842.90											
73		122.23	214		852.91											
74		122.23	214		862.92											
75		122.23	214		872.93											
76		122.23	214		882.94											
77		122.23	214		892.95											
78		122.23	214		902.96											
79		122.23	214		912.97											
80		122.23	214		922.98											
81		122.23	214		932.99											
82		122.23	214		942.00											
83		122.23	214		952.01											
84		122.23	214		962.02											
85		122.23	214		972.03											
86		122.23	214		982.04											
87		122.23	214		992.05											
88		122.23	214		1002.06											
89		122.23	214		1012.07											
90		122.23	214		1022.08											
91		122.23	214		1032.09											
92		122.23	214		1042.10											
93		122.23	214		1052.11											
94		122.23	214		1062.12											
95		122.23	214		1072.13											
96		122.23	214		1082.14											
97		122.23	214		1092.15											
98		122.23	214		1102.16											
99		122.23	214		1112.17											
100		122.23	214		1122.18											
TOTALS				Grand Total of Reserved Minerals _____						Grand Total of Withdrawals _____						

CONT. ON NEXT PAGE!

Juris Totals _____

STATUS INVENTORY - WYOMING

T. 23 R. 103 COUNTY Park

LOCATION		PUBLIC LANDS		FEE SURFACE (Acreages)						MINING CLAIMS (PAT.) Acreage	WITHDRAWALS				REMARKS
Sec	District	Acreage	Juris.	Orig State	Orig Private	RESERVATIONS - US MINERALS					Type	Acreage	Type	Acreage	
						All Min	O & G	Coal	UG/Coal	Others					
Lot 57	or				162.87						Res Proj	162.87			
Lot 58		123.33	BR		50.11							50.11			sect 164.81 A private
Lot 59		202.8	BR									123.33			sect 50.13 A private
Lot 60					162							202.8			Reven to US
Lot 61					162.85							162			sect 162.85 A private
Lot 62					160.76							162.87			sect 162.85 A private
Lot 63					202.86							160.76			sect 202.86 A private
23			BR									321.96			sect 131.95 A private
24		181.22	BR									162.87			sect 131.95 A private
Lot 67		21.53	BR		62.87							131.72			sect 131.95 A private
Lot 68					317.8							11.87			Lot 57 Tr 2-16 / null Lot 57 2, 3, 4, 6
Lot 69					81.33	78.33									
Lot 70					316.57	226.77									
Lot 71					516.57										
Lot 72					622.21										
Lot 73					530.65										
Lot 74					91.26	91.26					Res Proj	530.65			sect 520.65 A private
Lot 75					122.17							6			sect 520.65 A private
27			BR												
Lot 78		16-51.91	BR								Res Proj	20.53			sect 520.65 A private
Lot 79			BR									20.53			sect 520.65 A private
Lot 80					31.53										Reven to US
Lot 81															Reven to US
28			BR												sect 520.65 A private
Lot 82					300.63										sect 520.65 A private
Lot 83					300.91										sect 520.65 A private
29			BR		260	260									
30			BR		102.16	102.16									
31			BR		372.5	372.5									Reven to US
Lot 86					187.58										sect 520.65 A private
Lot 87					232.51	232.51									sect 520.65 A private
Lot 88					128.21										
Lot 89					128.91										
32			BR		717.21	70	76.85								
33			BR		37.35		22.85								
34					162.13										
Lot 91					621.27										
35					20.96										
36					21.25										
TOTALS		1,823.93		1,202.76	15,202.52	3,016.7	117.7				0	1,938.27			
Grand Total of Reserved Minerals 3,202.1											Grand Total of Withdrawals 2,235.27				

Juris. Totals BR 7,372.17
BR 5,412.17

The next column contains any acreage in a particular section that is part of a patented mining claim. The Mineral Survey number (MS) and the patent number for each claim were recorded in the section for remarks. Some of the plats show small sections of land whose boundaries do not conform to the regular subdivision lines and which do not have accompanying MS numbers, only patent numbers. From the plat it would appear that these parcels are private land, with no reservations. Referral to the HI sheets reveals that they are actually patented mining claims for which the MS numbers have been accidentally taken off the plat. These acreages were recorded as private land, thus causing the totals for patented mining claims to be slightly low. This will also affect private land totals.

The last six columns on the inventory sheet were designed to record, by section, the types of withdrawals in affect and the acreage involved. Any conflicts of acreage were recorded under remarks. The total State and private acreage included on each withdrawal was also noted. Any remaining acreage is under public jurisdiction. In those cases where a withdrawal included the entire township, the type of withdrawal was entered and only total acreage was listed. For a breakdown of acreage, on a section-by-section basis, within the withdrawal the first few columns may be referred to. A withdrawal reserves an area of land for a particular use or removes an area from sale, settlement, location or entry under the general land laws.

By adding each column of a particular category, totals were arrived at for each township and recorded at the bottom of the inventory sheet. The total public acreage, as well as a breakdown showing the acreage under each jurisdiction was recorded. In those sections where there was split jurisdiction, acreage for each agency was recorded separately.

The grand total of reserved minerals represents the total number of acres that have state or private surface ownership, but to which the Federal government has retained some mineral rights. The subtotals just above this figure give a breakdown for each specific type of reservation.

The subtotals at the bottom of the withdrawal section represent the total acreage for each type of withdrawal. The figure listed as grand total of withdrawals represents the total number of acres withdrawn for any purpose in that particular township, with the conflicts subtracted out.

Some of the townships have more complicated patterns of land ownership than do others, as illustrated by the sample townships of figures 4 and 5. An explanation of the representations on the plats, taken from the BLM's circular, New Land Office Records, can be found in figure 6.

Land which was shown on the plats as a tract (Tr), homestead entry (HES), lot, or other discrete survey unit, and that often did not conform to regular subdivision units, was recorded as a separate unit, not part of a section. Where a tract, patented mining claim, homestead entry, or other such unit lay within the boundaries of more than one township, the entire acreage for the unit was recorded in the township where the major portion of the unit lay. This procedure caused somewhat of a problem as it was difficult to be sure if all these units were counted, and counted only once. On looking back, it might have been better to have recorded only that acreage with each township's boundaries, since these acreages were often available.

Results

Before this inventory of Wyoming acreages and reservations was undertaken, federal payments and land management planning were based on estimated figures. The total acreage under BLM jurisdiction arrived by this inventory shows 262,000 acreages more than were being reported in the 1977 BLM Wyoming annual report. Forest Service totals came out about 375,000 acres less than were expected. These two agencies have jurisdiction over approximately 90% of the public land in Wyoming. Table 1 may be referred to for exact totals arrived at by this inventory. (Table 1 omitted, totals will be release Oct. 1, 1977)

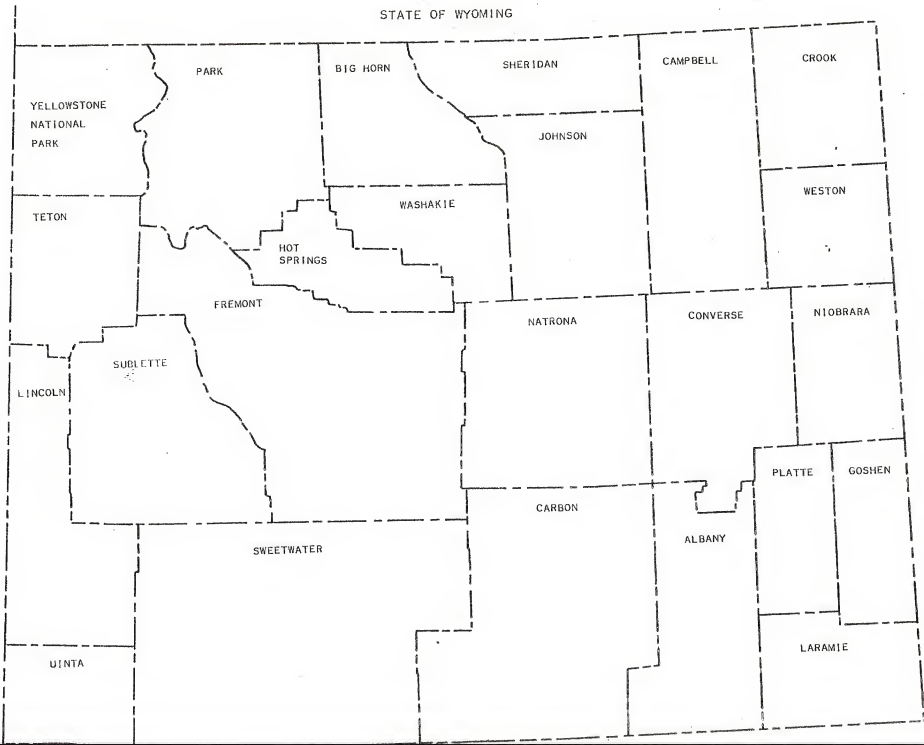
In comparing totals for the Bureau of Reclamation (BR) with the reported estimated figures, it should be remembered that the actual total acreage under that jurisdiction is higher than the figure this inventory reports. The plats this information was derived from often showed private and state land with in the boundaries of BR withdrawals. In fact, this land is probably now all under BR jurisdiction, since most such withdrawals are for reservoirs, and the land will be flooded. In some cases the BR has not reported these land status changes to the BLM so the that the plats could be updated. This will also have an effect on the totals reported for State and private acreage.

The figures reported for original State and private land should not be accepted as exactly correct and up-to-date. Once lands pass from public status and come under either state or private ownership, the BLM no longer keeps records on change of status, unless the land again comes under public ownership. The plats continue to show the status of the land as whatever it first became after it left public ownership. So, in fact, some land listed as State may now have been sold to the private sector, or vice versa. To accurately determine the status of all land shown as original state or private, one would have to go to the local County offices and search those records.

In spite of the above, or other, slight discrepancies this inventory probably comes very close to reporting true totals as they exist in Wyoming today. It is the first such detailed accounting ever undertaken, providing figures for state and private land, mineral reservations and acreage under withdrawal for which even estimates were previously unavailable. As it is used, slight mistakes that have been overlooked will be questioned and corrected. If kept up-to-date, this inventory has the potential to provide a use for tool for government and the public alike.

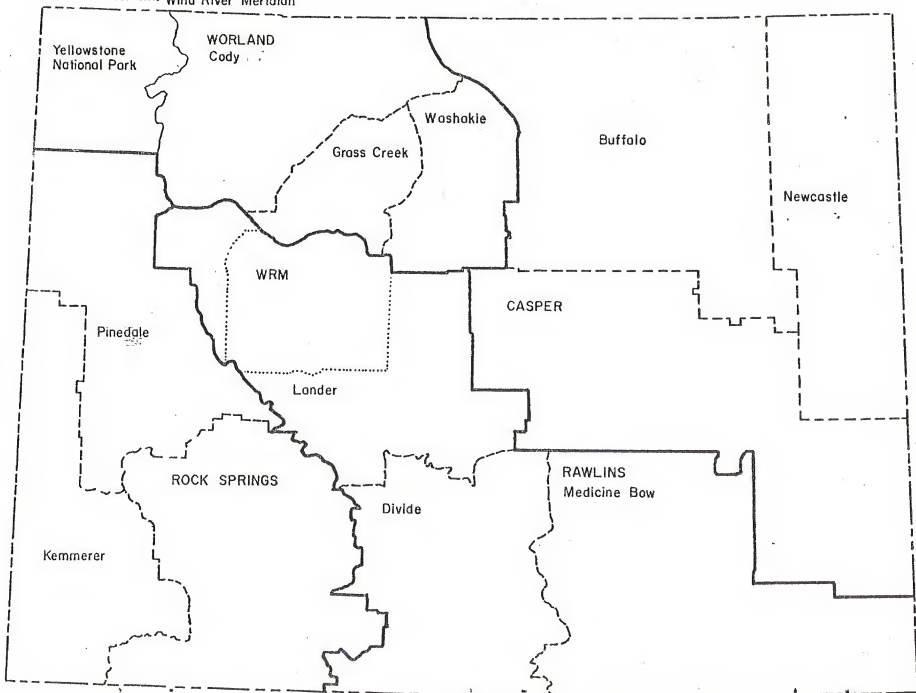
Table 1. - Acreages and Réservations Totals
(Table 1 omitted, totals will be release Oct. 1, 1977)

STATE OF WYOMING



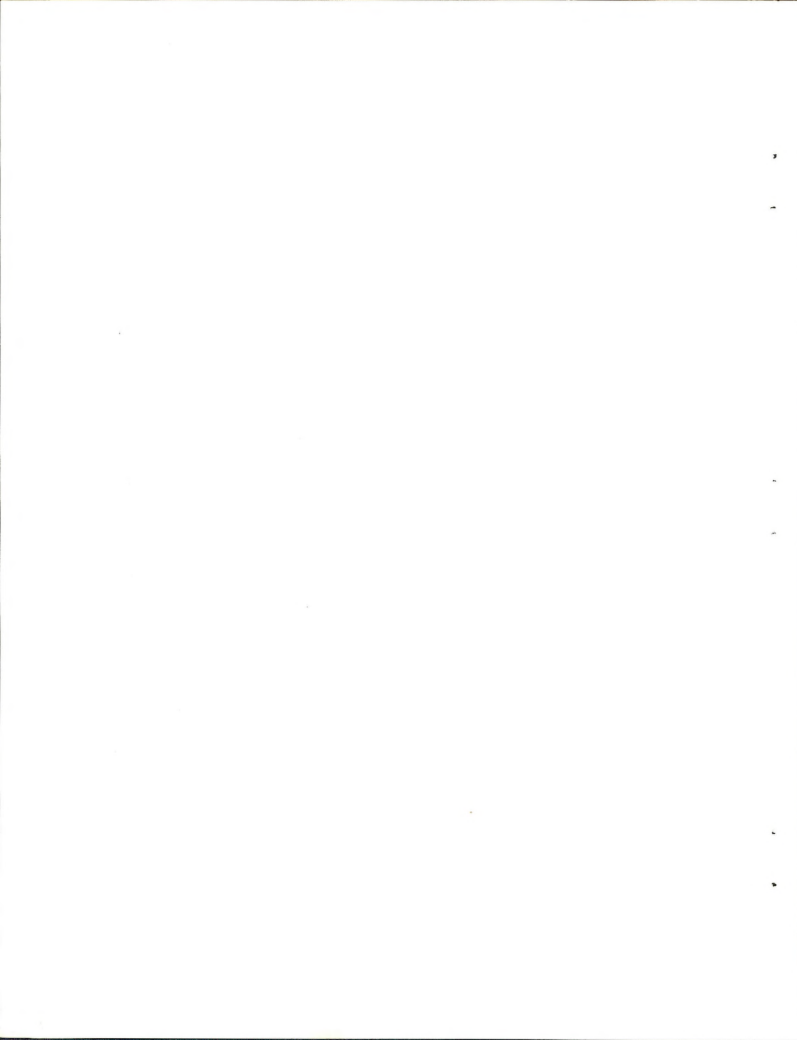
WYOMING

- Dist. Boundaries
- - - R. A. Boundaries
- Wind River Meridian



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This report was completed by a WICHE intern. This intern's project was part of the Resources Development Internship Program administered by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

The purpose of the internship program is to bring organizations involved in community and economic development, environmental problems and the humanities together with institutions of higher education and their students in the West for the benefit of all.

For these organizations, the intern program provides the problem-solving talents of student manpower while making the resources of universities and colleges more available. For institutions of higher education, the program provides relevant field education for their students while building their capacity for problem-solving.

WICHE is an organization in the West uniquely suited for sponsoring such a program. It is an interstate agency formed by the thirteen western states for the specific purpose of relating the resources of higher education to the needs of western citizens. WICHE has been concerned with a broad range of community needs in the West for some time, insofar as they bear directly on the well-being of western peoples and the future of higher education in the West. WICHE feels that the internship program is one method for meeting its obligations within the thirteen western states. In its efforts to achieve these objectives, WICHE appreciates having received the generous support and assistance of the Economic Development Administration; the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Wyoming Office of Manpower Planning; and of innumerable local leaders and community organizations, including the agency that sponsored this intern project.

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