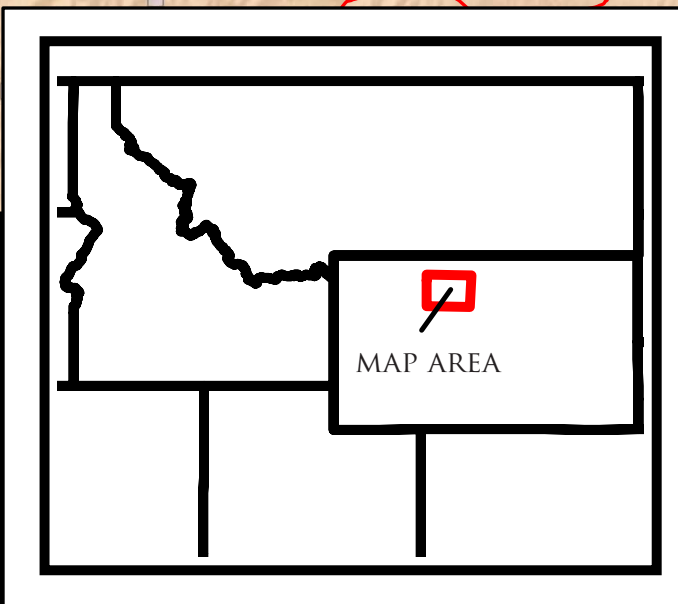
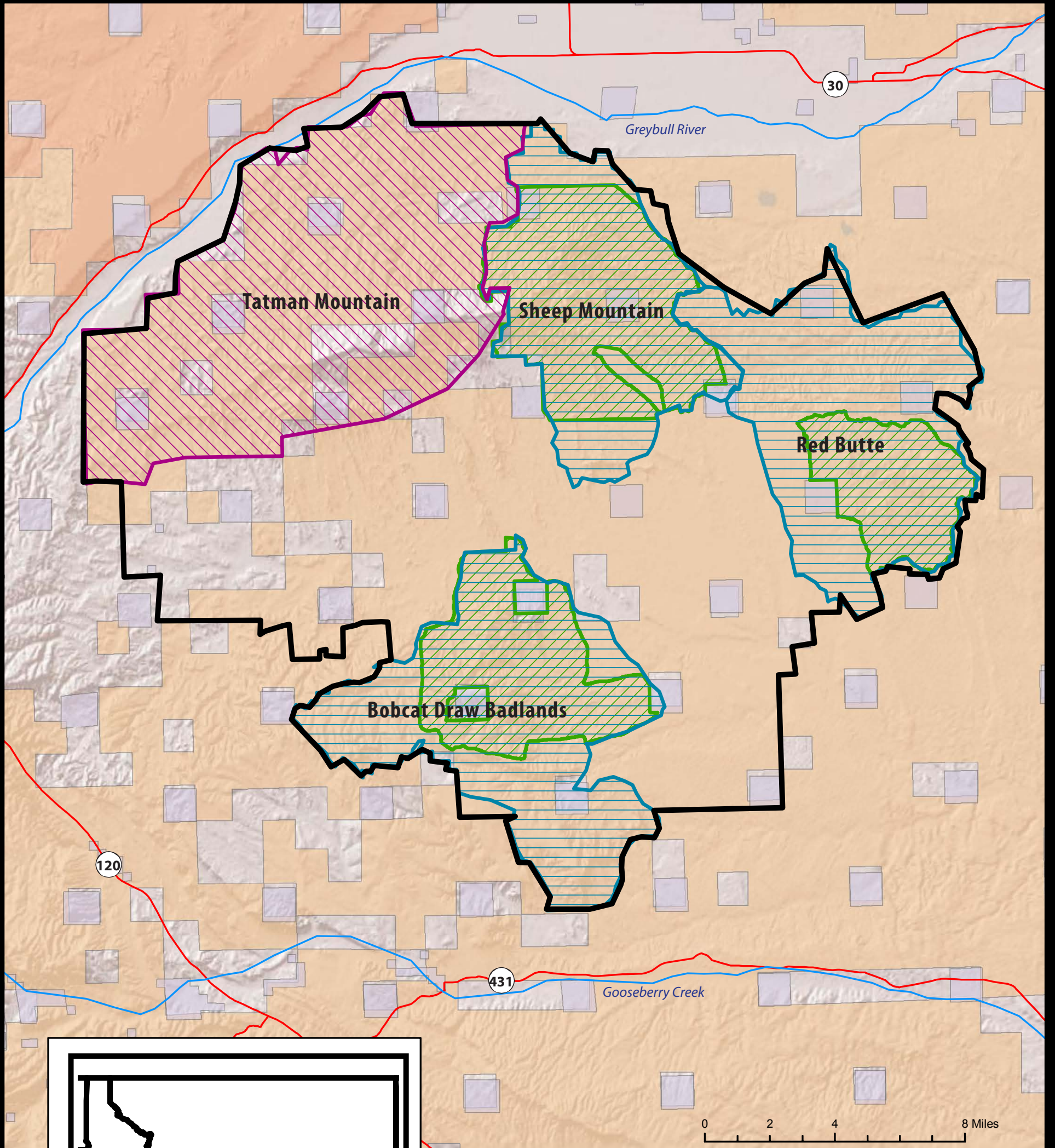








THE 15 MILE BASIN



LAND JURISDICTION AND SPECIAL PLACES

- | | |
|---|--|
|  State Lands |  Wilderness Study Areas |
|  BLM |  Citizens Proposed Wilderness Areas |
|  BOR |  Citizens Proposed Special Recreation Management Area |

THE FIFTEEN MILE BASIN lies in the center of the Bighorn basin and is a uniquely Wyoming ecosystem. This scenic, remote, and delicate area is a vast sagebrush, salt desert, and badland basin and is the last large, unleased, and largely pristine



example of the Wyoming Basin Province Ecoregion in the Bighorn Basin. Around the periphery of this basin, weathering by wind and water has created a rugged western landscape with rock mushrooms, spires, arches, goblins, hoodoos, castles, and mud caves. Found here is the Willwood formation which contains the most comprehensive

vertebrate fossil layer of any strata in the world. Fish, turtle, and early Eocene mammal fossils are represented in this formation. Streams in the bottom of the Fifteen Mile basin support broad grassy meadows and cottonwood galleries. Mule deer and pronghorn rely on this area to survive the winter. White-tailed prairie dog complexes found in this area support ferruginous hawks, burrowing owls, golden eagles, badgers,



bobcats, foxes, and coyotes. This area is a favorite among mule deer, pronghorn, and chukar hunters who seek solitude and a true adventure in a high-desert environment. The value of this area cannot be overstated. Protecting this area would link together three Wilderness Study Areas and provide a large wild place for citizens to explore and seek solitude. More than any other wild and intact area in the Bighorn Basin, the Fifteen Mile basin is uniquely Wyoming.

CONSERVING THE WILD AND SCENIC VALUES OF THE FIFTEEN MILE BASIN

The majority of the Fifteen Mile Basin remains unleased and is largely in pristine condition. Mineral exploration and development in this area would likely eliminate opportunities for solitude and would undermine its scenic value. Because this area is almost entirely under federal ownership, BLM should render it unavailable for oil and gas exploration and development. In addition, due to a proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails in this area we suggest that the BLM prioritize this area for “travel on designated routes only” as it moves forward with the implementation of its travel management plan.



THE 15 MILE BASIN

- The Fifteen Mile Basin is the last large and unleased area in the Bighorn Basin that is representative of the Wyoming Basin Province Ecoregion.
- Sedimentary strata found here contain the most comprehensive fossil zonation of any formation in the world.
- Rendering the Fifteen Mile Basin unavailable to oil and gas leasing would link together three Wilderness Study Areas and provide a large wild area for citizens to explore, hunt, and find solitude.

