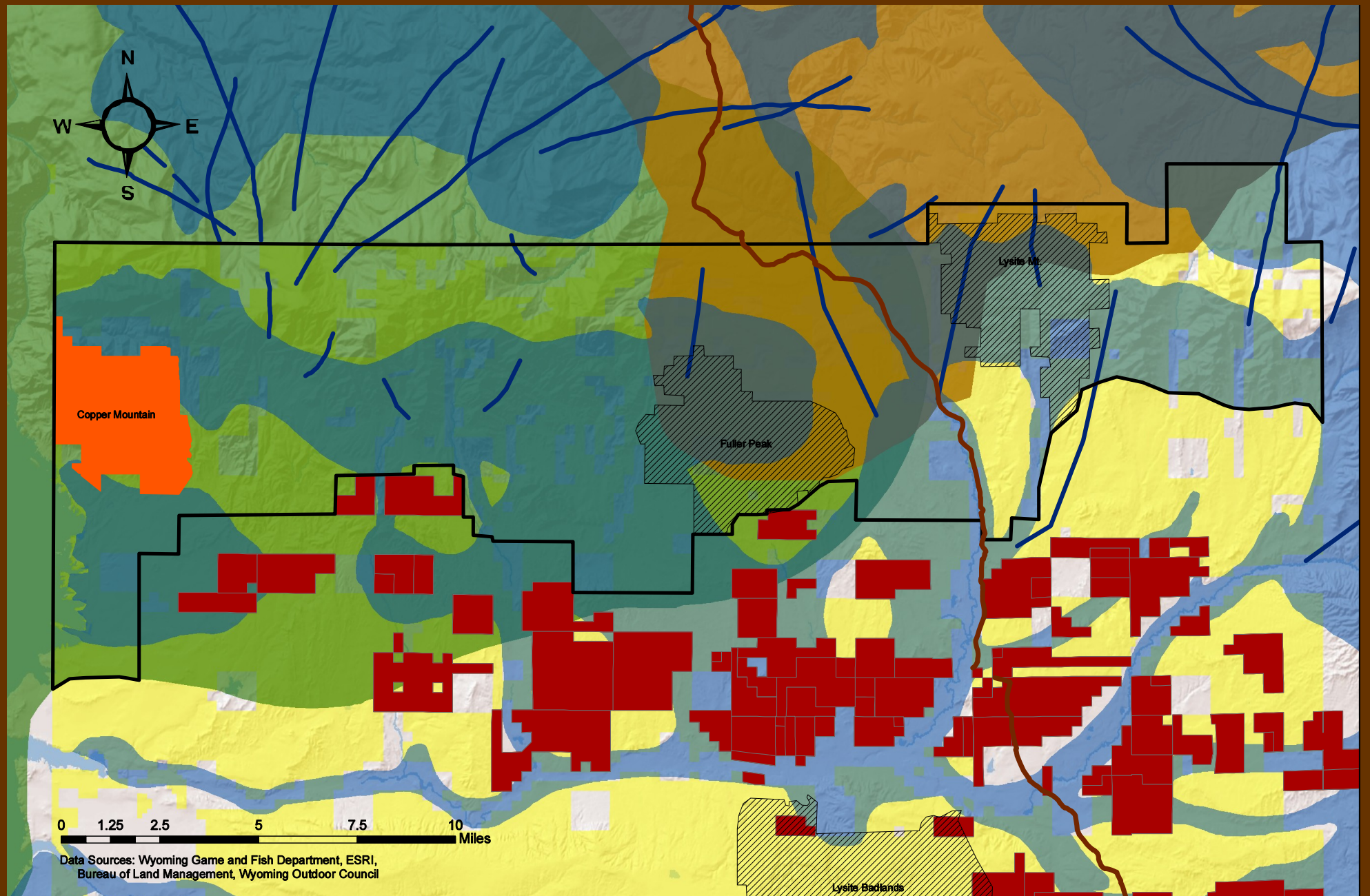


The Bridger Mountains

Extraordinary Solitude, Geology, and Wildlife



- Proposed Bridger Mountains Conservation Area
- Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area
- Key Nongame Wildlife Area
- Big Game Migration Route
- Elk, Deer, and Pronghorn Winter Range
- Historic Bridger Trail
- Wilderness Study Area
- Citizens' Proposed Wilderness
- Producing Oil and Gas Leases
- BLM Managed Federal Minerals





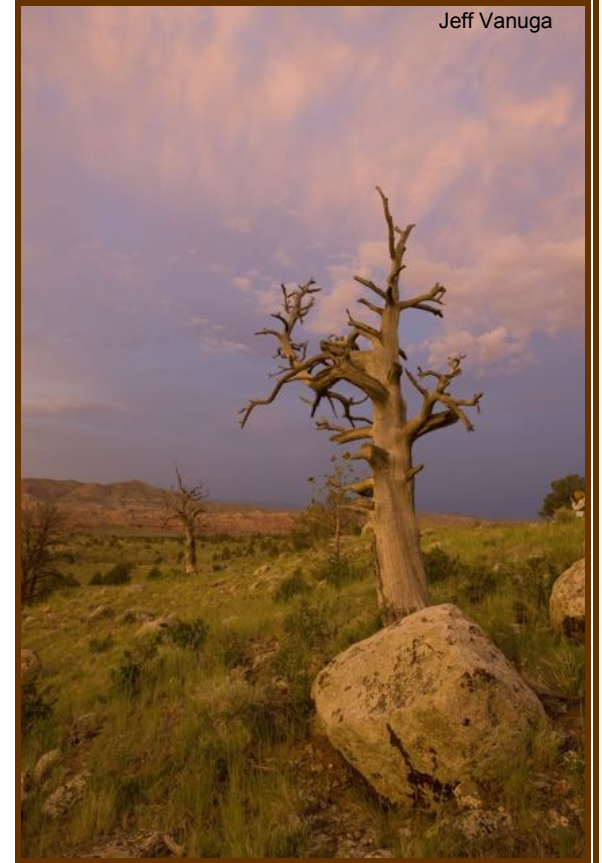
Tim Chestnut

The Bridger Mountains

- A place of solitude where backcountry hunters can pursue mule deer, elk, and pronghorn.
- A Wilderness Study Area and two Citizens' Proposed Wildernesses provide rare opportunities for solitude.
- Home to the most complete stratigraphic record in Wyoming of the Cenozoic epoch—a true geologic treasure.
- Home to six rare plant species and one of Wyoming's most important areas for roosting and hibernating bats.
- To avoid attacks from Sioux warriors along the Bozeman Trail, Jim Bridger led a rush of emigrants along the Bridger Trail through these mountains to Montana's gold fields in 1864.
- Expansion of adjacent oil and gas development would disturb the wild tranquility of this area.

A lonely, stark, and windswept mountainous uplift known only by a handful of hunters, cattlemen, and explorers rises above the vast arid sagebrush hills of Central Wyoming near Boysen Reservoir. With incredible opportunities for solitude, even for Wyoming, the Bridger Mountains are one of few places where one is surprised to see another person. A variety of habitats including sagebrush steppe, salt desert scrub, grasslands, juniper woodlands, and lush riparian corridors provide an important refuge for a number of sensitive species and big game.

The Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and two Citizens' Wilderness Proposals (CWP) that lie within this relatively small region are indicative of its wild nature. The Copper Mountain WSA is a stunning area of high topographical relief characterized by sheer cliff faces and narrow granite slot canyons that ensure seclusion and offer exceptional recreational challenges. East of the WSA lies the Fuller Peak CWP, which is a precipitous and jagged landscape drained by clear streams that over the eons have scoured deep tranquil pools into the granite. East of Fuller Peak sits the Lysite Mountain CWP, a rugged badland canyonland where one can find solitude, fascinating geology, beautiful displays of unusual wildflowers, and of course, a vast array of wildlife. The late David Love, Wyoming's most celebrated geologist, said "Lysite Mountain is one of the most significant areas in [Wyoming] because it is the only place where the late Cenozoic record is preserved." Within this tiger-striped mountain, lies a one-thousand foot cross-section of the Cenozoic sedimentary strata that once filled the Wind River and Bighorn basins before they were excavated by the Wind River and its tributaries.



Jeff Vanuga

A diverse assemblage of plants and animals provides a fitting complement to the incredible wild lands of the Bridger Mountains. At least six rare plant species are found here, including: Porter's sagebrush, Owl Creek miner's candle, bun milkvetch, hairy princes-plume, Watson's prickly-phlox, Hapeman's sullivantia, and tomentose balsamroot. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has designated a substantial portion of this region as a Key Nongame Wildlife Area because of the area's importance to rare species of bats such as the Townsend's big-eared bat and birds including the peregrine falcon. Much of the area is also classified as crucial winter range for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn and as core or

"priority" habitat for the Greater sage-grouse. The area also supports many common Wyoming species such as badgers, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, and golden eagles.

Ensuring Future Opportunities for Solitude

Significant oil and gas development is already occurring to the south of this area. We are asking for proactive management under the forthcoming Bureau of Land Management's Lander Resource Management Plan to ensure that the scenic, wild-land, and wildlife values of this area are protected. According to the BLM, this relatively small area has low potential for conventional oil and gas resources. Because of this low potential and because most of this area remains unleased, we believe it should be administratively withdrawn from future leasing in the Lander RMP to protect its wildlife and its remarkable wild and scenic character.



Jeff Vanuga



Scott Copeland