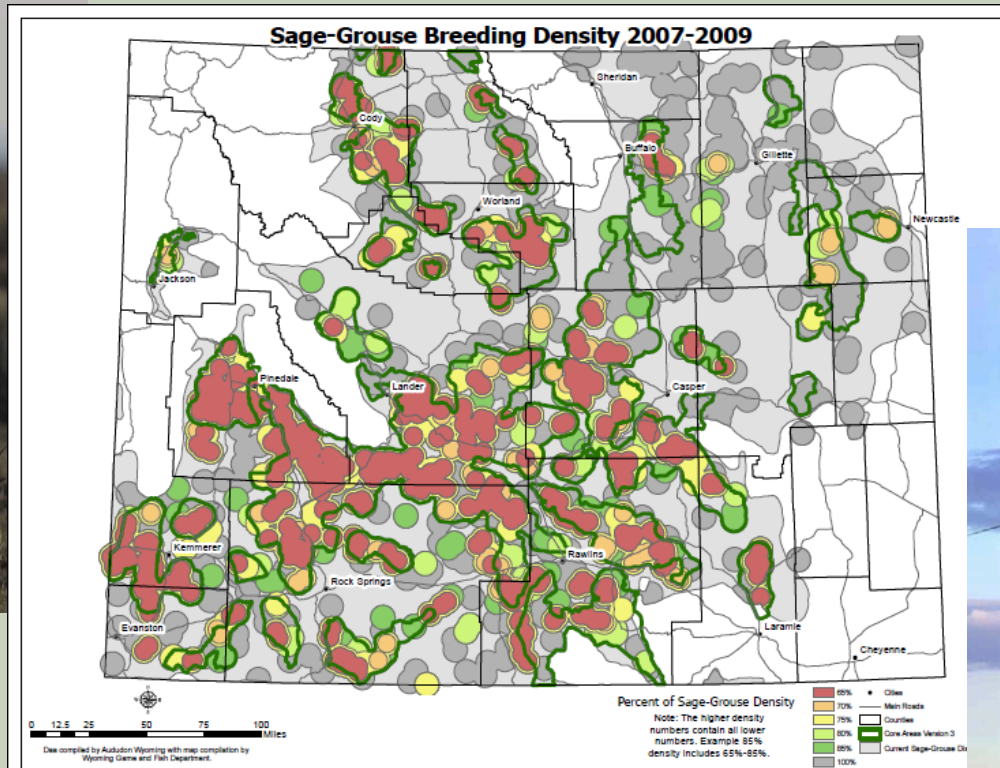
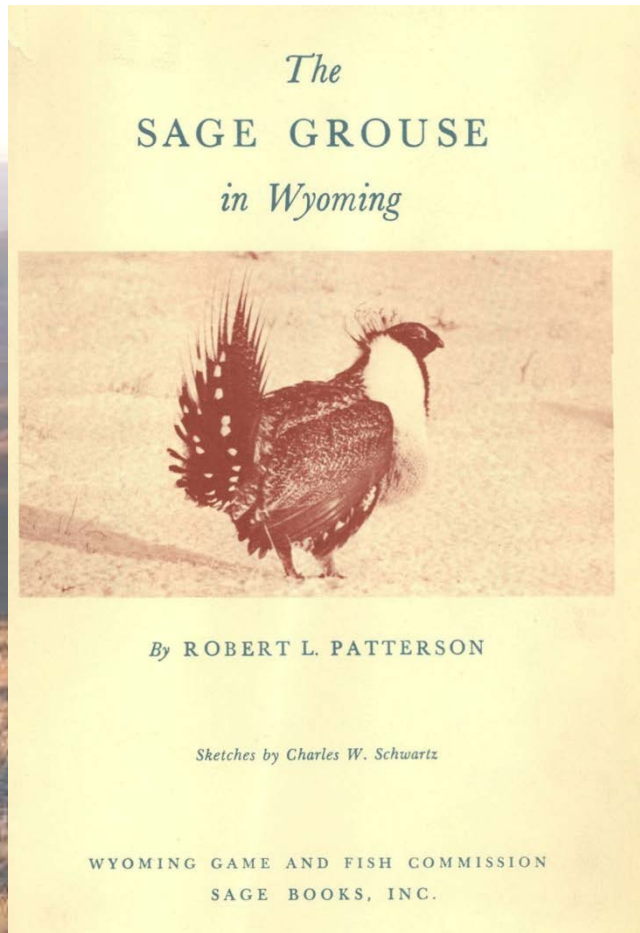


# Wyoming's Approach to Sage-Grouse Conservation



Tom Christiansen  
Sage-Grouse Program Coordinator

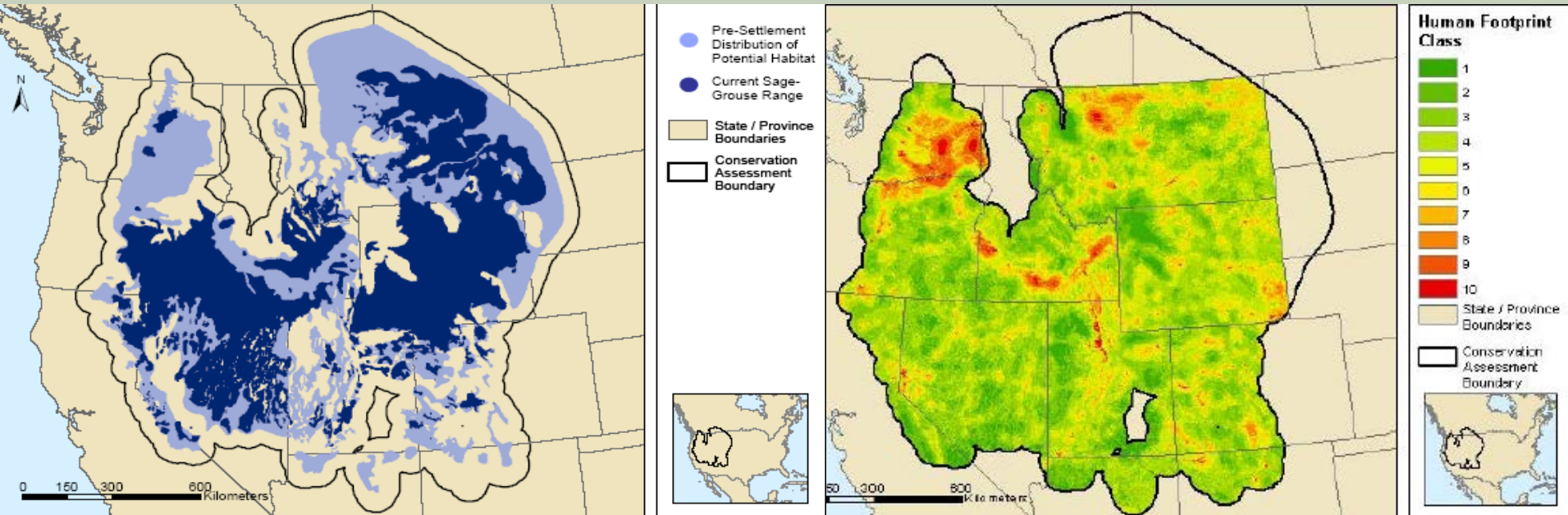
# Historical perspective...



In his 1952 book, *The Sage Grouse in Wyoming*, Robert L. Patterson called for the preservation and maintenance of extensive and contiguous areas of native vegetation in order to conserve sage-grouse.

# Current/Historic Sage-grouse Range

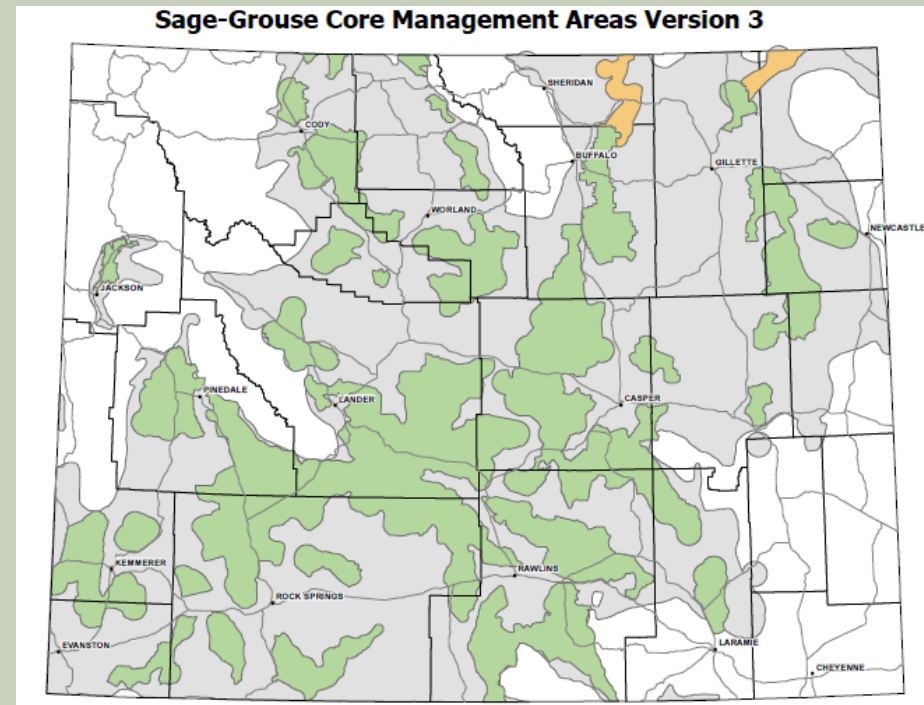
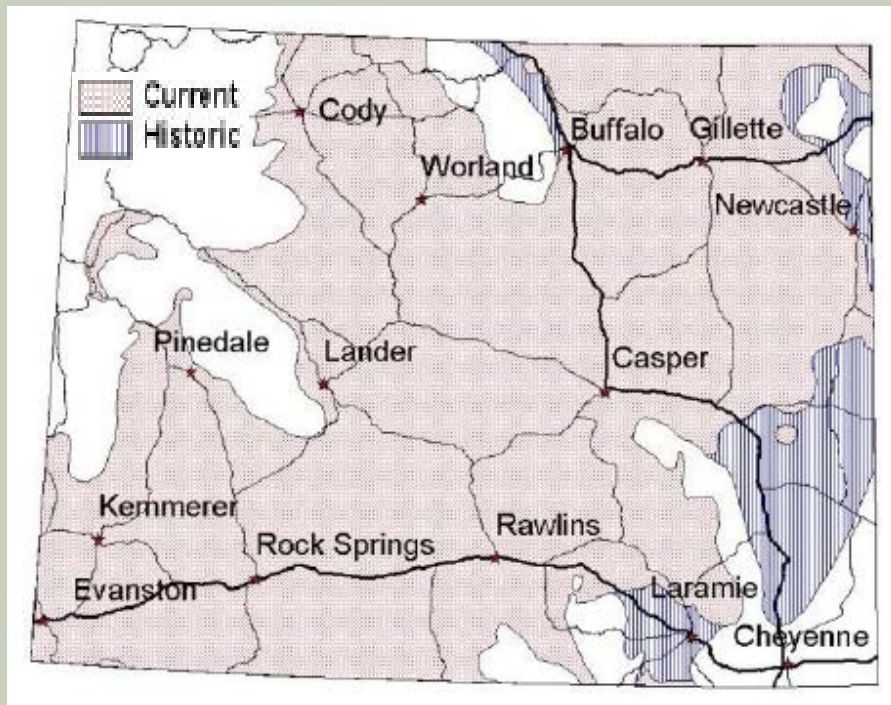
# Human Footprint



- Wyoming has 26% of the current rangewide habitat occupied by 37% of the rangewide grouse population (Doherty et al. 2010).
- 90% of historic range in Wyoming is still occupied – compared to 56% rangewide
- Wyoming habitats are generally more intact

# Wyoming Sage-grouse - By the Numbers

- 62 million acres in Wyoming
- 48 million acres of historic range
- 43.5 million acres now occupied (90%)
- 25% of the state is “core” habitat
- 83% of Wyoming’s sage-grouse population is in core



# Process

- **2007: Governor's Sage-Grouse Summit & Implementation Team (SGIT)**
- **2008 Multi-State Science document**
- **2008: Governor's Executive Order – "Core Area" emphasis.**
- **2010: Core Areas and EO revised**



# Wyoming's Core Area Strategy

- **The upshot - while existing land use rights should be recognized and respected, new development within core areas should be authorized only when it can be shown that the activity will not cause declines in sage-grouse populations.**

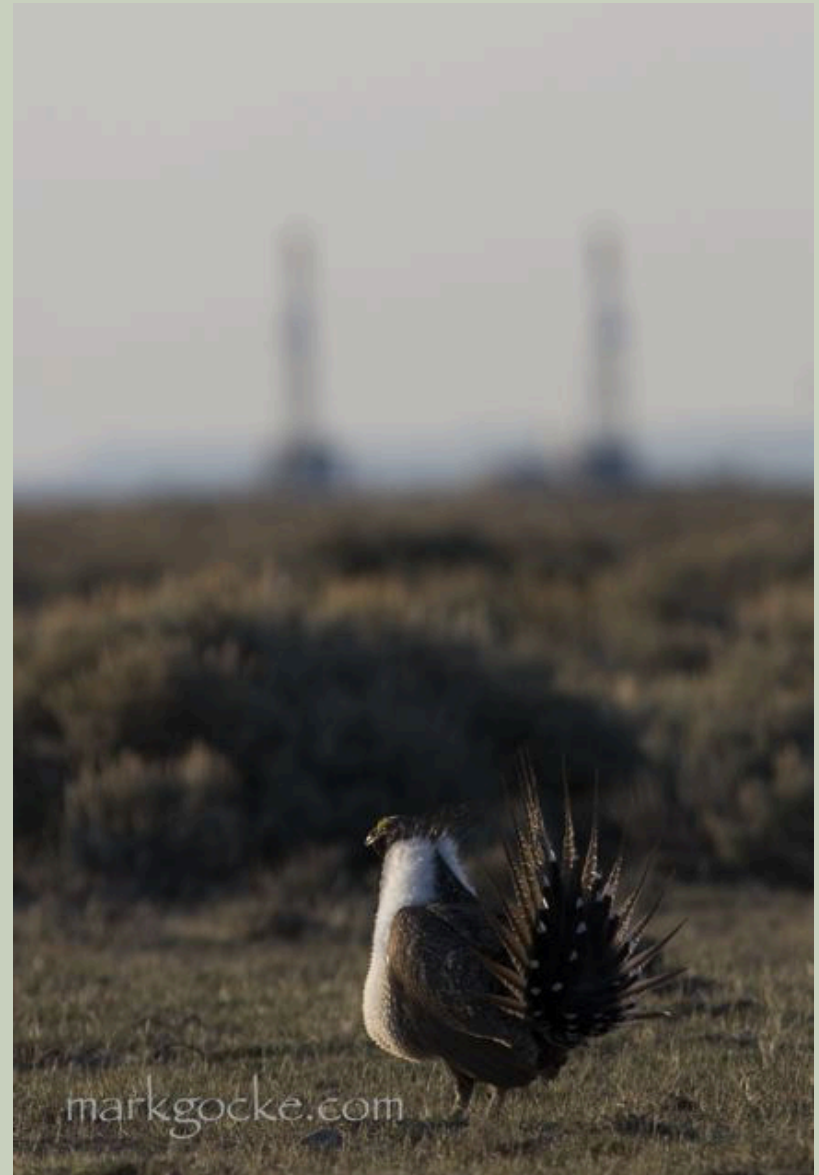
<http://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/wildlife-1000817.aspx>

# USF&WS Threat...

- Existing regulatory mechanisms have not effectively addressed the threats.

## But...

- The USFWS listing decision document supports Wyoming's Core Area Policy as a potentially effective regulatory mechanism if it is implemented as planned.



# 2011 - a change at the helm...

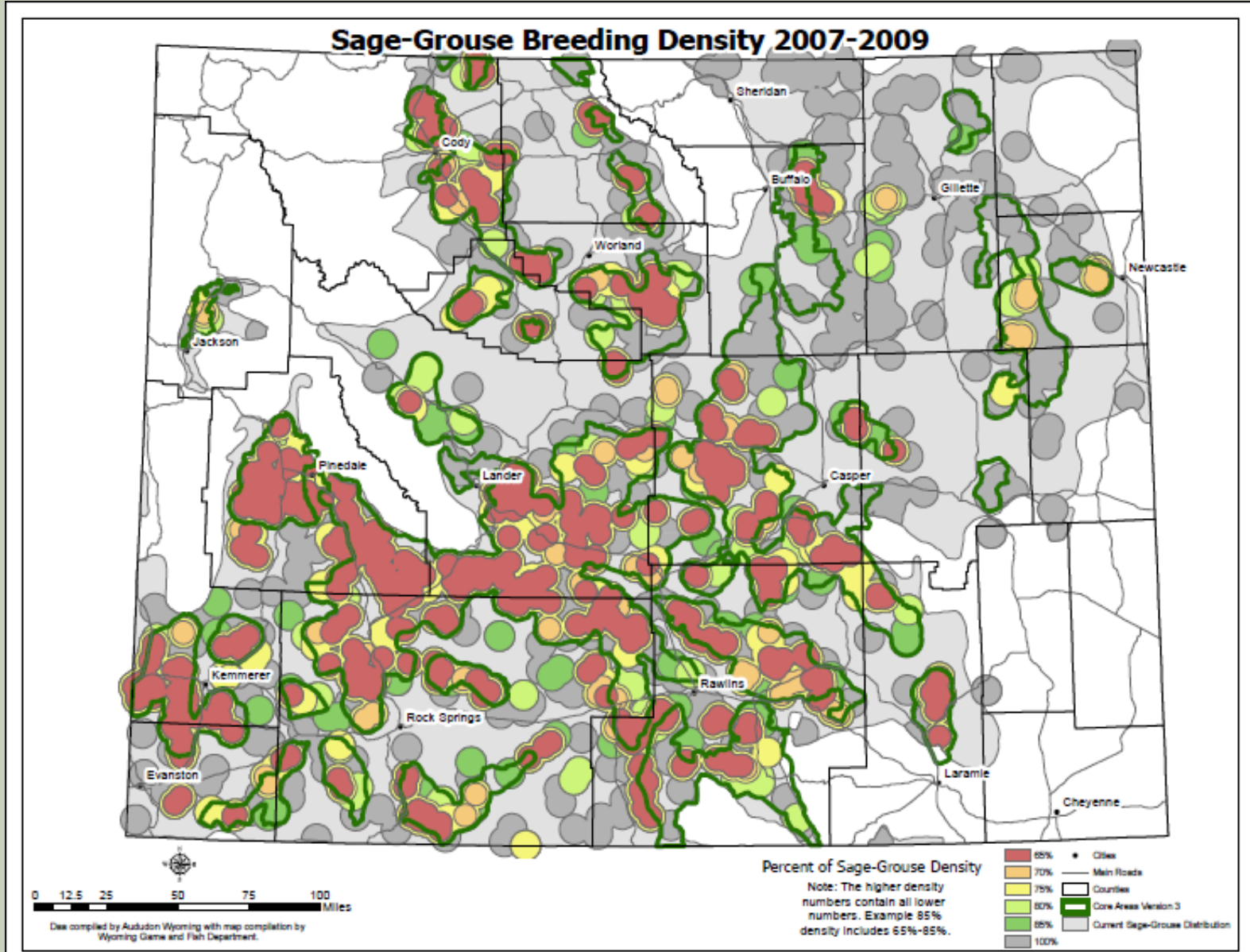


Newly elected Gov. Matt Mead (R) evaluated former Gov. Dave Freudenthal's (D) EO in his first few months in office.

Mead issued a new EO in June 2011 that clarified details of the former EO but the goal of keeping the bird off the list of T&E Species, utilizing a process of science-based regulations and incentives, remained unchanged.

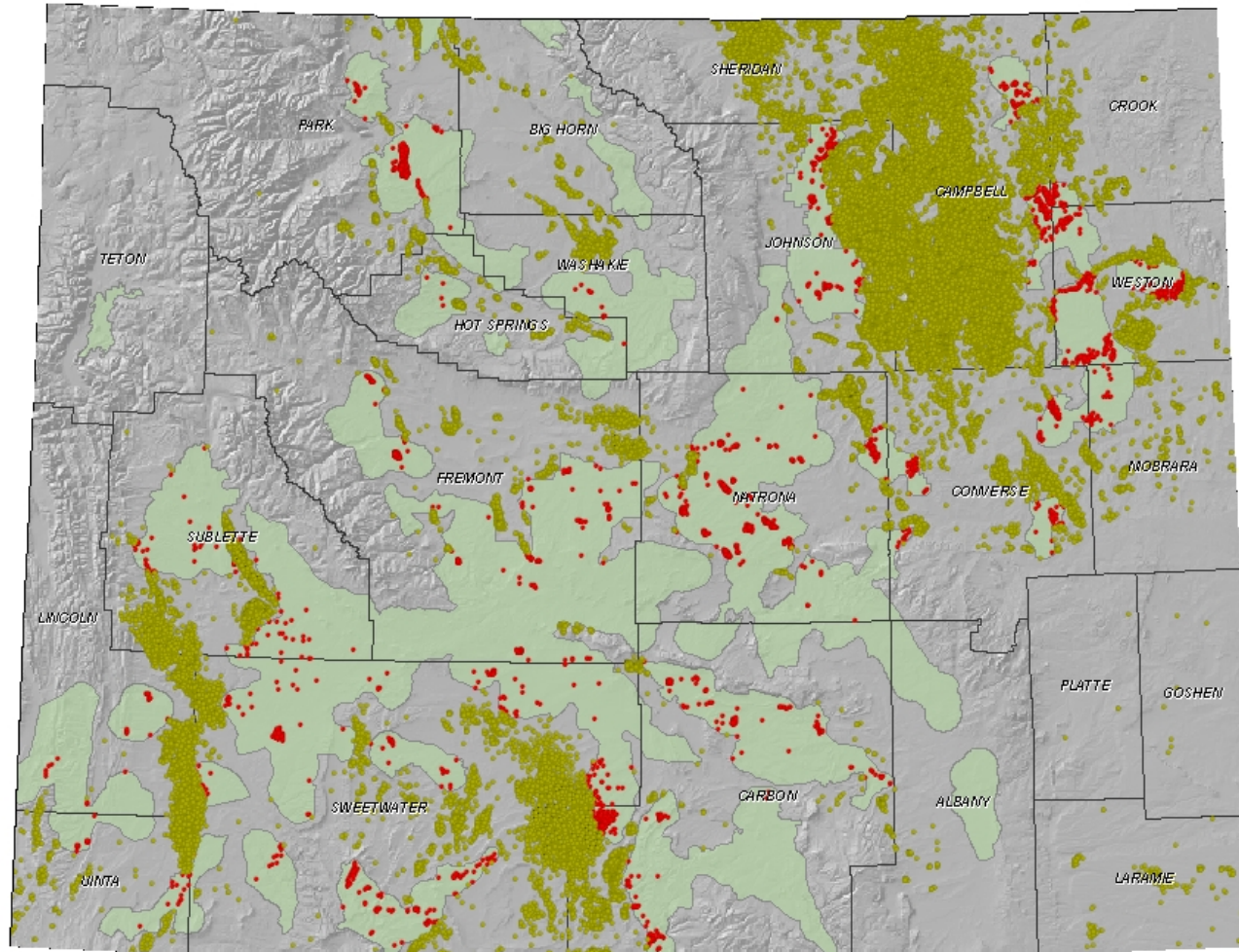






**Core Area V.3 captures 83% of males on leks and associated nesting habitat on <25% of the surface area of the state.**

# Oil and Gas Wells and Sage-Grouse Core Areas



Nyssa Whitford  
Sage-Grouse GIS Analyst  
Lander Regional Office  
07.08.10

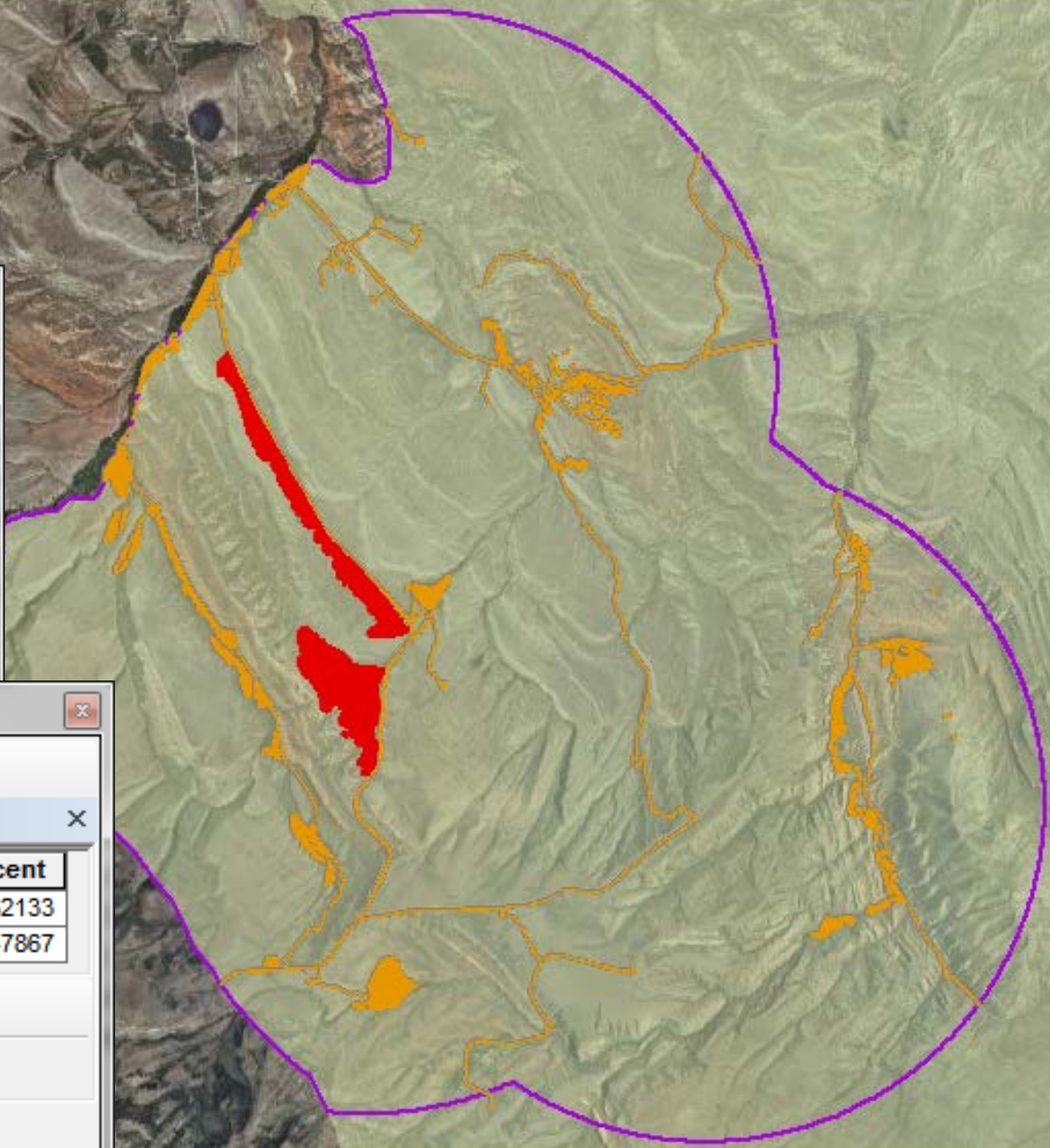


0 15 30 60 90 120 Miles

- Counties
- Core Areas Version 3
- Producing Oil and Gas Wells Outside Core 01.11.10
- Producing Oil and Gas Wells Within Core 01.11.10

**Oil & Gas Wells – 7.7% in core V.2.; down to 4.9% in V.3.**

- Proposed Surface Disturbance
- Existing Surface Disturbance
- DDCT Boundary
- Core Areas V3



Table

Disturbance Calculation

OBJECTID *	COUNT_Disrupt
1	89

(0 out of 1 Selected)

Disturbance Calculation

Table

Density Calculation

	Final	Acres	Percent
▶ Disturbed		2539.604036	3.652133
Undisturbed		66997.956638	96.347867

(0 out of 2 Selected)

Density Calculation

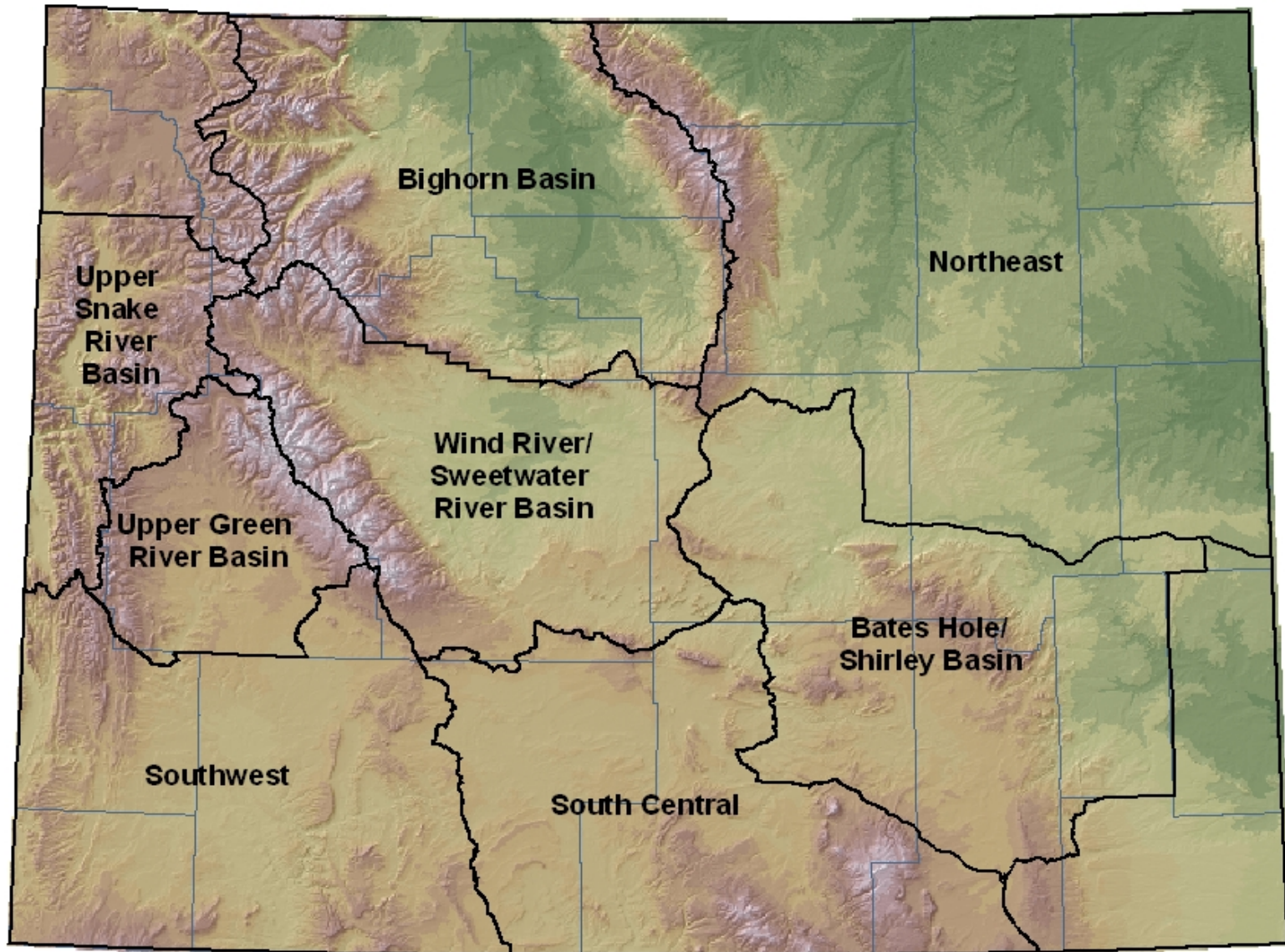
# Executive Order Compliance





- **84% compliance rate with the Sage-grouse Executive Order stipulations in 2013.**
- **Non-compliant projects were those with valid and existing rights. Other minimization and/or mitigation efforts were implemented for these projects.**



# Wyoming Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups - October 2007



-  Local Working Group Boundaries
-  County Boundaries

# Local Working Group Projects

- **Habitat manipulation**
  - Sagebrush manipulation, weed/cheatgrass control, juniper removal, salt cedar removal, spring protection
- **Habitat restoration**
  - Wildfire, disturbed sites
- **Grazing**
  - Workshops, grazing plan implementation
- **APPLIED research**
  - Energy development (wind, oil/gas) impacts, habitat treatment effectiveness, predation, West Nile virus, reclamation, raven ecology and management
- **Education**
  - Schools, events, publications, landowner workshops



**2005-2014:  
160 projects  
~\$5.2 million  
via Wyoming  
General Fund  
appropriations**



# Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust (WWNRT)

- **\$25 million spent since 2006 on habitat projects with projected benefits to sage-grouse.**
- **\$1.2 million in research efforts now underway to determine effectiveness of Wyoming's strategy.**





**“Largest conservation effort ever.”**