

Castaways - Stranded Parcels and the Developing Issues of Corner-Crossing

Julius H., Robert J., Quaye K., Nyomi M.
University of Wyoming

Background

Wyoming's checkerboard ownership pattern creates "stranded parcels" of State Trust Lands that remain inaccessible despite their public benefit purpose. Recent federal court decisions on corner-crossing offer a potential model for addressing these access challenges while respecting the unique legal status and revenue requirements of state trust lands.

Hypothesis/Thesis Statement

By creating a framework through which the public, private landowners, and state legislators can communicate on the issue of corner-crossing, we can enhance the public's access to Wyoming's state trust lands while respecting their revenue-generating mandate.

Project Design/Purpose

The goal of this project is ultimately to raise awareness about stranded parcels, to help lessen the worries of individuals seeking to use our state trust lands, and to provide a visual aid to demonstrate the issue.

- Our final deliverable will be an executive summary which will provide a clear synopsis of our findings.
- By compiling our findings into a map showing state trust and private lands, we can better demonstrate which parcels are currently accessible.

Procedure/Methods

Created a map using publicly available data from Wyoming OSLI and the US Census Bureau.
ArcGIS Pro Tools:

- Select By Location/Attributes
- Polygon Neighbors
- Merge
- Summary Statistics

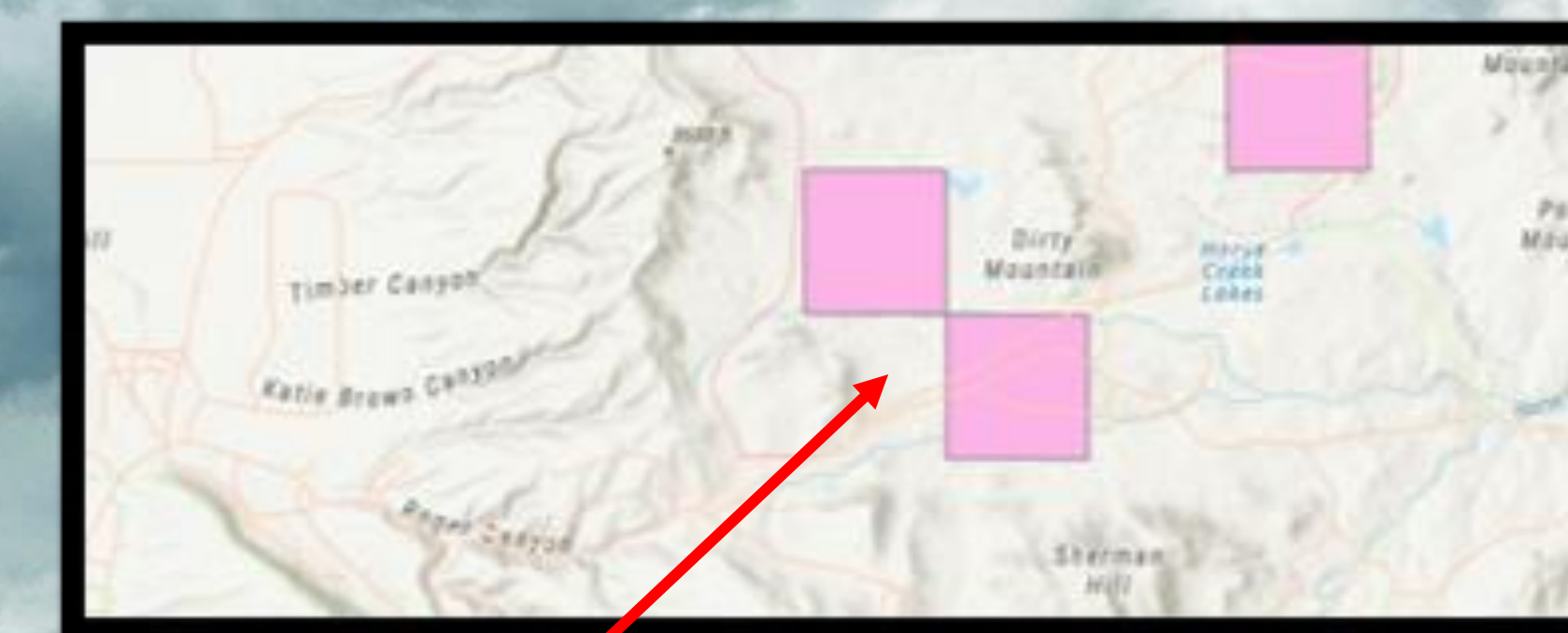
Analysis & Results

Analysis:

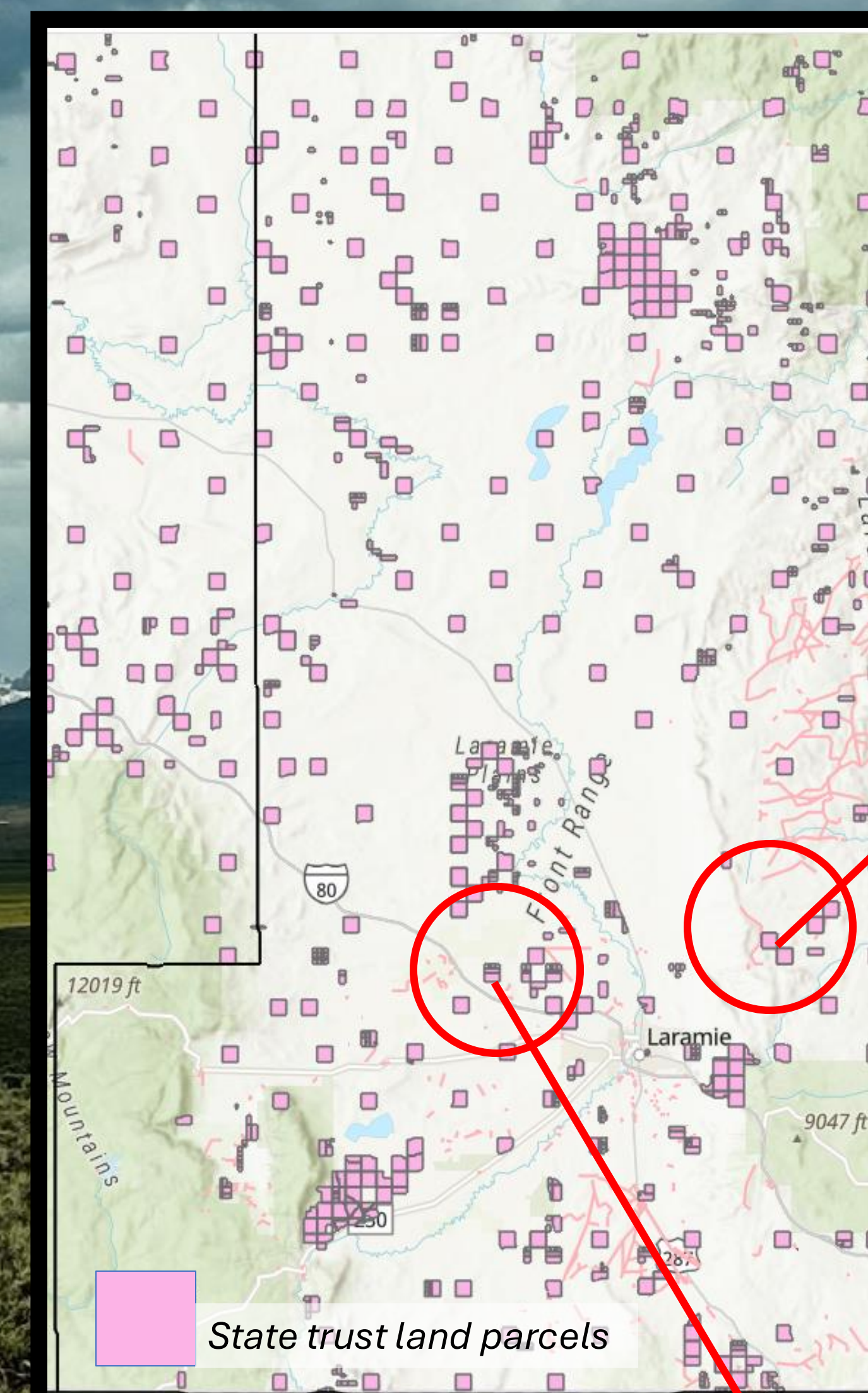
- Secondary Research & Data Compilation
- Interviews with stakeholders and mentors

Results:

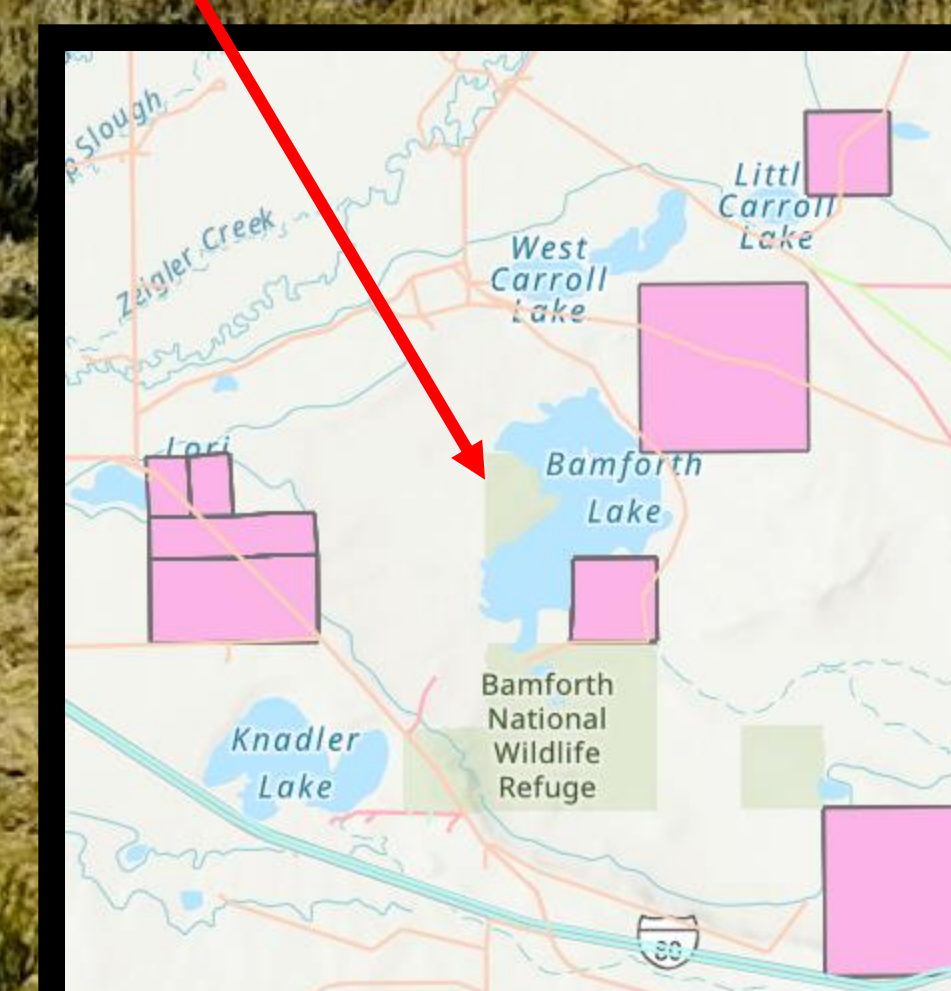
- Much of Wyoming's state trust land is inaccessible except through corner crossing. Through new developments there are a various ways of accessing these parcels and we've been able to identify them.



Map 3: Parcels Only Accessible by Corner Crossing



Map 1: Map of Albany County Showing State Trust Lands



Map 2: Parcels Accessible by Public Roads

Data

2.6 million acres of Wyoming STL is accessible using **public roads**.

77,266 acres of Wyoming STL could potentially be accessed through **private roads**.

177,737 acres of Wyoming STL could be accessed through **corner crossing**.

	Corner Crossing	Public Roads	Private Roads
Accessible Acreage	177,737	2,635,781	77,266
Non-Accessible Acreage	35,716	974,483	897,217

Conclusion/Reflection

Next steps:

- Give an economic value to stranded parcels to determine best uses for the land, such as resource, migration, or recreation easements
- Determine current/historical lease statuses

Takeaway:

- Corner crossing is a very complex issue with many moving pieces attached, but it can be simplified through better communication and clearer legal precedents.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Richard Vercoe (professor), Birch Malotky Ruckelshaus Institute), Temple Stoellinger (academic mentor/ UW Advisor), and Angus Thuermer Jr. for their contributions on this project. Additional thanks to the Wyoming OSLI and US Census Bureau for the road and land ownership data.