

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

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Why this study was needed

Across the checkerboard landscape of private and public land is a complex challenge. State trust land (STL) parcels that, while available for use, are inaccessible. These isolated parcels present management challenges for state agencies, as well as access barriers for citizens. While state trust lands must be managed to generate revenue for beneficiaries like public schools, their fragmented nature and lack of legal access often prevents use and public benefit.

Recent federal court decisions on corner-crossing related to BLM lands offer a potential model for addressing these access challenges while respecting the unique legal status and revenue requirements of state trust lands.

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.

How it was done

The authors conducted interviews with stakeholders, held meetings with mentor Temple Stoellinger, and utilized available Wyoming OSLI (office of state lands and investments) and U.S Census Bureau data to form a model based on recent federal court decisions regarding corner-crossing on federal lands. When applied to state trust lands this model offers a visual of theoretical accessibility to state trust lands if the ruling were applied to them.

What the researchers discovered

Much of Wyoming's state trust land is inaccessible except through corner-crossing. By applying a ruling similar to that of federal lands regarding corner-crossing there would be various ways of accessing these currently inaccessible parcels.

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

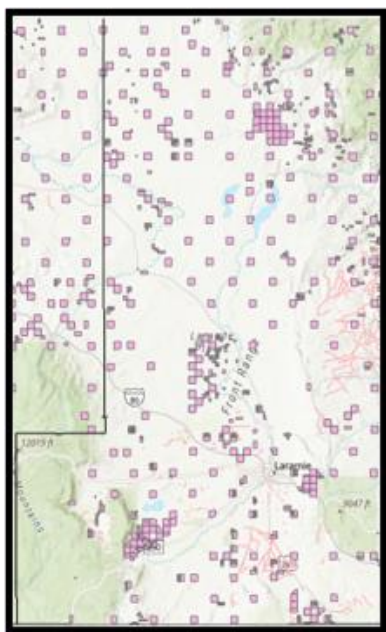
77,266 acres of Wyoming STL could potentially be accessed through private roads.

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

Why is it important?

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

- By compiling our findings into a map that visually represents state trust and private lands, we can better demonstrate which parcels are currently accessible.



Map 1: Map of Albany County Showing State Trust Lands

What is next?

This analysis cautions against potential side effects of recognizing nonuse rights and calls for additional research around the following potential problems.

- 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



Map 2: Parcels Accessible by Public Roads



Map 3: Parcels Only Accessible by Corner Crossing

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QR Code to ArcGIS Map

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