

8-9-88



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
WINNEMUCCA DISTRICT OFFICE  
705 EAST 4TH STREET  
WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA 89445

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4700  
(NV-023.5)

August 9, 1988

Commission for the Preservation  
of Wild Horses and Burros  
Stewart Facility  
5500 Snider Avenue, Bldg. 6, Room 137  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Ms. Jay:

Enclosed is a copy of the final Wild Horse Removal Plan for Five Herd Management Areas for your records.

Based upon comments and suggestions our office received about the draft removal plan, the following changes/additions were incorporated into the enclosed final plan.

A. Trapping and Care of Animals - Page 4.

The word "general" was added to the last sentence of A.2.

The words "specific" and "sitings" were added to the first sentence of A.3.

A reference was added to A.5. regarding foals not being separated from their mothers.

The following two paragraphs were added to IV.A.

The on site Project Inspector (PI) and Contracting Officers Representative (COR) will have clear lines of authority and responsibilities, and will have the ability to communicate on a moments notice with management, and the Contracting Officer. This provision is intended to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.

The District Manager will be responsible for establishing communication procedures which provide a clear course of action to prevent contracting problems when situations which are beyond the PI's and COR's authority occur, particularly when such problems involve the safety and welfare of the wild horses.

If you have any questions, please contact our office.

Sincerely yours,

*Robert J. Neary*  
Robert J. Neary  
Acting District Manager

Enclosure

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office

Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Resource Areas

WILD HORSE/BURRO MANAGEMENT

WILD HORSE REMOVAL (GATHERING) PLAN  
FOR FIVE HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS

## I. Introduction

The intent of this removal (gathering) plan is to outline the methods and procedures to be used in removing approximately 1,117 excess wild horses from five Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The proposed action would result in the attainment of Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for these five HMAs.

The excess animals would be removed from the Fox and Lake Range, Calico Mountains, Granite Range, Jackson Mountains, and the North Stillwater Range HMAs. Refer to the attached maps for specific locations and to II. C. for additional specifics.

The proposed removal operation would begin about November 14, 1988, and be completed by January 20, 1989.

## II. General Area Description-Background Data

### A. Location and Land Status

The Calico Mountains, Fox and Lake Range and the Granite Range HMAs are within close proximity to each other, and are located near the town of Gerlach, Nevada. The Jackson Mountains HMA is located about 45 air miles northwest of Winnemucca, Nevada. The North Stillwater HMA is located about 66 air miles southwest of Winnemucca, Nevada.

#### Land Status

| HMA<br>Name        | Public<br>Land | Private<br>Land | Total   | Percent of<br>Public Land |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Fox and Lake Range | 207,279        | 5,373           | 212,652 | 97                        |
| Calico Mountains   | 80,500         | 100             | 80,600  | 99                        |
| Jackson Mountains  | 274,510        | 13,828          | 288,338 | 95                        |
| Granite Range      | 88,506         | 13,144          | 101,650 | 87                        |
| North Stillwater   | 131,104        | Unknown         | Unknown | --                        |

### B. Reference to Land Use Plans (LUPs)

The LUP for the Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Resource Areas (RAs) were approved on July 9, 1982. The LUP (Management Framework Plan-Step III) decision was to manage for wild horses and burros in those HMAs where they existed prior to 1971, and to remove all wild horses and burros from the checkerboard Herd Areas (HAs).

The AML (30 wild horses) for the portion of the North Stillwater HMA located in the Carson City District, but administered by the Winnemucca District, was established through the Carson City District's LUP process and specifically by the Lahontan Resource Management Plan.

The proposed removal of excess animals would occur in non-checkerboard HMAs.

### C. Population and Removal Data

The proposed removals of excess wild horses would occur in the following HMAs, and in the priority as listed in descending order.

| HMA Name          | 1988 Estimated Population Horses/Burros | Appropriate Management Level (AML) Horses/Burros | Proposed Number to be Removed Horses/Burros |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Granite Range     | 456/0 2/                                | 176/0  | 280/0                                       |
| Calico Mountains  | 1006/0 2/                               | 514/0  | 492/0                                       |
| Fox & Lake Range  | 608/0 2/                                | 434/1  | 174/0                                       |
| Jackson Mountains | 279/0 1/                                | 215/0  | 64/0  |
| North Stillwater  | 189/0 3/                                | 82/0   | 107/0                                       |
| Total =           |   |  | 1117/0                                      |

- 1/ Based upon an aerial census conducted by a B-1 helicopter in July of 1986.
- 2/ Based upon an aerial census conducted by a B-1 helicopter in June of 1986.
- 3/ Based upon an aerial census conducted by a B-1 helicopter in October of 1986.

A pre-removal census will be conducted in August of 1988 using a B-1 helicopter.

### III. Justification

Section 14 of Public Law 95-514, the "Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978," states that the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture shall "determine appropriate management levels of wild free-roaming horses and burros on areas of public lands; and determine whether appropriate management levels should be achieved by the removal or destruction of excess animals, or other options (such as sterilization or natural controls on population levels)."

A land use plan was completed for the Sonoma-Gerlach and Paradise-Denio Resource Areas in 1982. A major portion of this plan was the preparation and publication of a Grazing Environmental Impact Statement which analyzed five different alternatives to manage public lands: (1) distribute available vegetation to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses/burros; (2) no action; (3) no livestock grazing, (4) maximize livestock; and (5) maximize wild horses/burros. The final analysis culminated with the issuance of the Winnemucca District Manager's Management Framework Plan (MFP) Step III Decisions on June 30, 1982. The decisions received the State Director's concurrence on July 9, 1982. The MFP III (LUP) WH/B decision number 1.1 provides for the retention and management of wild horses/burros on non-checkerboard lands in the resource area. The decision stated that existing/current numbers (as of July 1, 1982) would be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes except where one of the following conditions exist:

1. Numbers are established by adequate and supportable resource data.

2. Numbers are established through the CRMP process as documented in CRMP recommendations and agreed to by the District Manager.
3. Numbers are established by formal signed agreement between affected interests.
4. Numbers are established through previously developed interim capture/ management plans. Plans are still supportable by parties consulted in the original plan. EAs (EARs) were prepared and are still valid.
5. Numbers are established by court order.

None of the above five conditions are applicable to this proposed plan of removal, and the existing/current numbers (as of July 1, 1982) will be used as a starting point for monitoring purposes.

#### IV. Removal Plan and Methods

The excess wild horses will be removed (gathered) by the use of a helicopter.

Prior to the pre-work conference, BLM personnel will inspect the condition of the animals; locate and record the major concentration of animals; note the condition of all roads; presence of fences and other hazardous barriers; location of water sources; record prevailing temperature and soil conditions; drought conditions; and make note of the parent material. An evaluation of these conditions will then determine whether to proceed with the removal, delay the removal, or to proceed with the removal but with modifications (such as relocating trap sites, upgrading road conditions, etc.).

If a decision is made to proceed with the removal, a veterinarian will be present at the trap site the very first day of gather operations to check the condition of the animals. Experience gained from past removals in these HMAs indicate the proposed action may cause undue stress to the animals. It is difficult to remove animals from these HMAs without some concern for the welfare of the animals due to the following reasons:

1. The parent material is composed almost exclusively of flood basalts. This volcanic material is very sharp, and as a result, there is concern that some animals hoofs and fetlocks may become injured - especially the younger animals.
2. The presence of thick stands of juniper allows some animals to seek cover during removal operations. As a consequence, these animals have to travel further before they are captured.
3. There are steep and extensive escarpments in the Granite Range, Calico Range, and North Stillwater Range HMAs. These geological features limit areas where animals can be brought into the trap.

4. Except for the Granite Range HMA, there are Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in all of the HMAs. A WSA designation restricts the choices for suitable trap sites constrains removal operations. Refer to IV.A.15.

If the decision is made to proceed with the removal, a pre-work conference will be conducted at the Winnemucca District Office. During the pre-work conference, BLM personnel will give the contractor a topographic map of the removal area that shows desirable trap locations, and existing fences. The contractor will also be apprised of all of the above conditions, and how these conditions could affect the health and welfare of the animals.

Other agenda items of the pre-work conference will be contract specifications, responsibilities of BLM/contractor, helicopter operations, lines of authority, communications, contract procedures, and most of all, the health and welfare of the animals will be the main topic of discussion.

Before the Notice-to-Proceed is issued to the contractor, an assessment of the contractor's ability to perform will be made, and all of the equipment will be inspected.

A. Trapping and Care of Animals

1. The excess animals will be directed toward temporary capture corrals by means of a helicopter. Wings (from 1/8 to 1/4 mile) will be constructed leading into the corral. When the horses have been driven to within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the trap, riders on horseback may then flank the animals and guide them into the trap. Once the horses are in the trap the gate will be closed by hand. Should a horse break back at the trap, it may be roped, if possible, by the riders. Roping will be done only when necessary, with prior approval by the Contracting Officers Representative (COR). Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down more than one hour.

It is expected that the number of animals that are driven into the traps will vary from one to 35 horses at a time.

2. It is estimated that a minimum of ten temporary trap and corral sites (see map) will be required to remove the 1,117 excess wild horses. Additional temporary trap sites may be necessary if the animals disperse from their home ranges once removal operations start. The removal operations will start in the Granite Range, then move to the Calico Mountain Range, then to the Fox and Lake Range, then to the Jackson Mountains, and finally to the North Stillwater Range HMA. Refer to attached maps for specifics. All general temporary trap locations will be selected by the COR.

3. All specific trap sitings and holding facilities must be approved by the COR prior to construction. The contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the COR. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.
4. All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained, and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner. Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design. All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of six feet high. All runways shall be a minimum of 20 feet long and a minimum of six feet high and shall be covered with plywood or like material a minimum of one foot to five feet above ground level. Wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the COR. All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways shall be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, etc.) and shall be covered a minimum of one foot to five feet above ground level. Floors of vehicles used for transporting the animals and the loading chute shall be covered and maintained with a non-skid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings to prevent injuries.
5. The contract helicopter shall be used in such a manner that bands or herds will remain together as much as possible, and foals do not become separated from their mothers.
6. The project helicopter actions may occasionally be observed by a Government-controlled helicopter. All actions of the Government helicopter will be coordinated with the contractor to prevent interference with the project helicopter and contract operations.

In the event an additional helicopter is not available to observe the project helicopter, other methods will be used to observe the removal operations such as using observers on horseback, in vehicles and placing stationary observers in strategic locations.
7. The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals, and other factors.

8. When excessive dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to wet down the ground with water at such location as directed by the COR.
9. Alternate pens, within the holding facility, shall be furnished by the contractor to separate mares with small foals, sick and injured animals, and estray animals from the other horses. Where required by the COR, animals shall be sorted as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition, when in the holding facility so as to minimize, to the extent possible, injury due to fighting and trampling.
10. Animals shall be transported to final destination from temporary holding facilities within 24 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the COR for unusual circumstances. Animals shall not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the COR.
11. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps and/or holding facilities shall be provided fresh clean water by the contractor, in an amount of a minimum of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.
12. It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide security to prevent loss, injury, or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.
13. The contractor shall restrain sick or injured animals so that they may be provided treatment by the COR. The COR will determine if injured or sick animals must be destroyed and provide for destruction of such animals. If the COR cannot determine the severity of the injury or illness, a veterinarian will be consulted before the animal is destroyed. The contractor shall dispose of the carcasses as directed by the COR.
14. Branded or privately-owned animals whose owners are known will be impounded by BLM, and if not redeemed by payment of trespass and capture fees, will be sold at public auction. If owners are not known, the private animals will be turned over to the State for processing under Nevada estray laws.
15. All temporary trap sites located within the WSA boundaries will be placed on existing roads and ways, not to exceed 50' either side of the access route. Cross-country travel would be allowed so long as it does not cause impacts inconsistent with the requirements of the non-impairment criteria outlined in the



IMP. Refer to maps labeled for a delineation of the WSA boundaries.

16. The on site Project Inspector (PI) and Contracting Officer Representative (COR) will have clear lines of authority and responsibilities, and will have the ability to communicate on a moment's notice with management, and the Contracting Officer. This provision is intended to assure that any contractual problems which may affect the animals or their habitat can be resolved with minimal delay.
17. The District Manager will be responsible for establishing communication procedures which provide a clear course of action to prevent contracting problems when situations which are beyond the PI's and COR's authority occur, particularly when such problems involved the safety and welfare of the wild horses.

B. Helicopter, Pilot, and Communications

1. The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State of Nevada, and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.
2. When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least a 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.
3. The COR shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the gather helicopter at all times.
4. The proper operation, service, and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the contracting officer or COR, violate contract rules, are unsafe, or otherwise unsatisfactory. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the contracting officer or his/her representatives.

C. Motorized Equipment

1. All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals.
2. Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk, injury, or delay.

3. Only stocktrailers shall be allowed for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities. Only Bobtail trucks, stocktrailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination. Sides or stockracks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of six feet six inches from vehicle floor. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two partition gates to separate animals. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate to separate the animals. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and shall not be allowed.
4. All vehicles used to transport animals to final destination shall be equipped with doors at the rear end of the vehicle. At least one of these rear doors shall be capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.
5. Floors of vehicles shall be covered and maintained with a nonskid surface such as sand, mineral soil, or wood shavings, to prevent the animals from slipping.
6. The number of animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle shall be as directed by the COR and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament, and animal condition.
7. The COR shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The COR shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.
8. If the COR determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor will be instructed to adjust speed. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt road is approximately 60 miles per load.

VI.

Signatures

Lead responsibility:

*Richard D. Wheeler*

Richard D. Wheeler, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist

*4/26/88*  
Date

*For Robert J. Neary*  
Gerald L. Moritz, Environmental Coordinator

*7/20/88*  
Date

*Scott Billing*  
Scott Billing, Area Manager  
Paradise-Denio Resource Area

*7-20-88*  
Date

*Gerald P. Brandvold*  
Gerald P. Brandvold, Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

*7/20/88*  
Date

Submitted to State Director by:

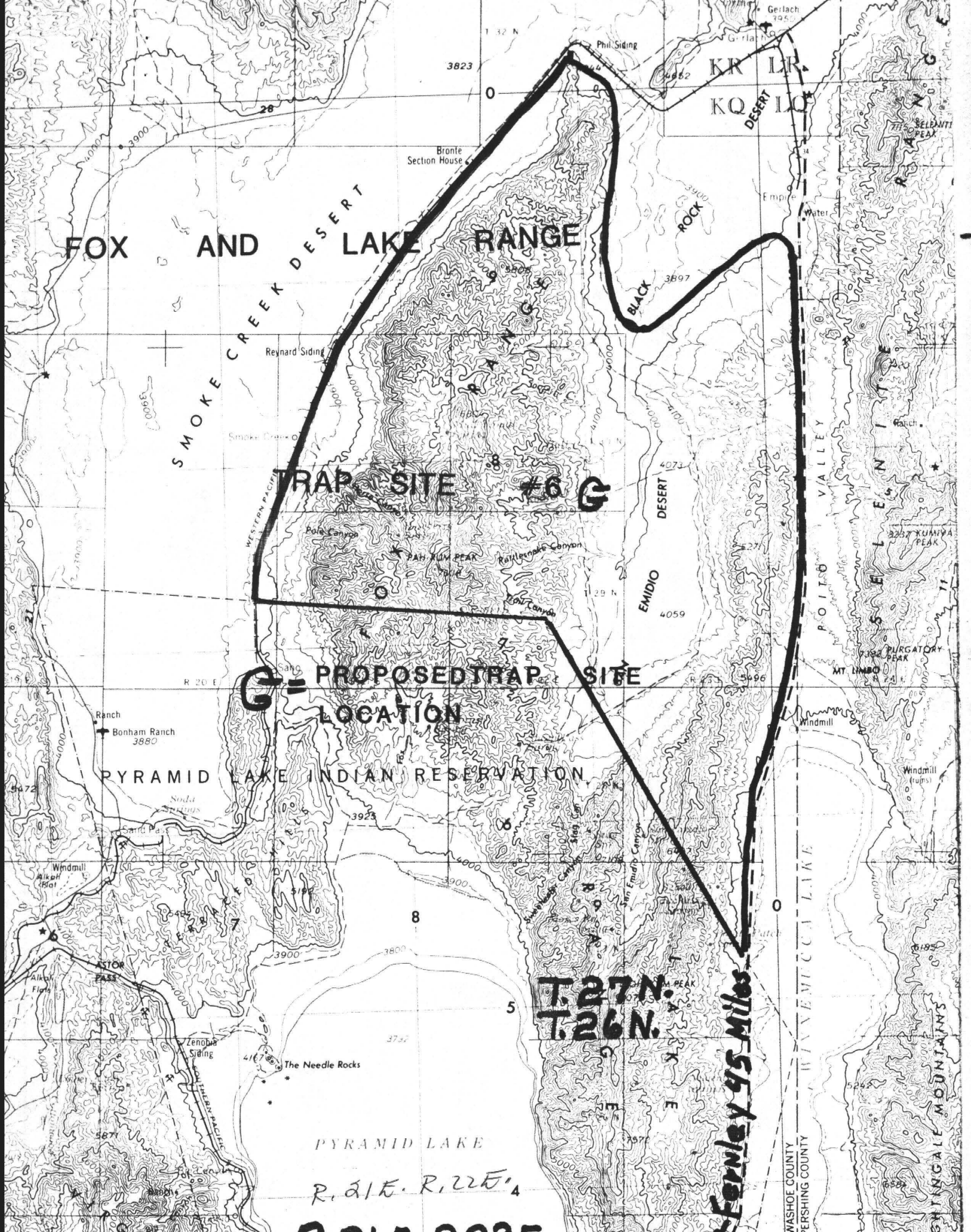
*Robert J. Neary*  
Robert J. Neary  
Acting District Manager, Winnemucca

*7/20/88*  
Date

Approved by:

*Edward F. Spang*  
Edward F. Spang  
State Director, Nevada

*7/22/88*  
Date



FOX AND LAKE RANGE

SMOKE CREEK DESERT

TRAP SITE #6 G

G = PROPOSED TRAP SITE LOCATION

PYRAMID LAKE INDIAN RESERVATION

T. 27 N.  
T. 26 N.

Referley 95 Miles

R. 21 E. R. 22 E.  
R. 21 E. R. 22 E.

WASHOE COUNTY  
PERSHING COUNTY

HIGHTWALE MOUNTAINS

WINEMCCU LAKE

EMIDIO DESERT

KR LR  
KQ LO  
DESERT

BLACK ROCK

PYRAMID LAKE

Bonham Ranch  
3880

Bronte  
Section House

Reynard Siding

Phil Siding

Empire

Water

POITON VALLEY

SELENTI

MT. LIMBO

PURGATORY PEAK

3257 KUMIYA PEAK

Gerlach  
3950

4852

3823

28

3900

3900

3697

4073

4059

3923

3900

8

3800

3732

3576

Windmill

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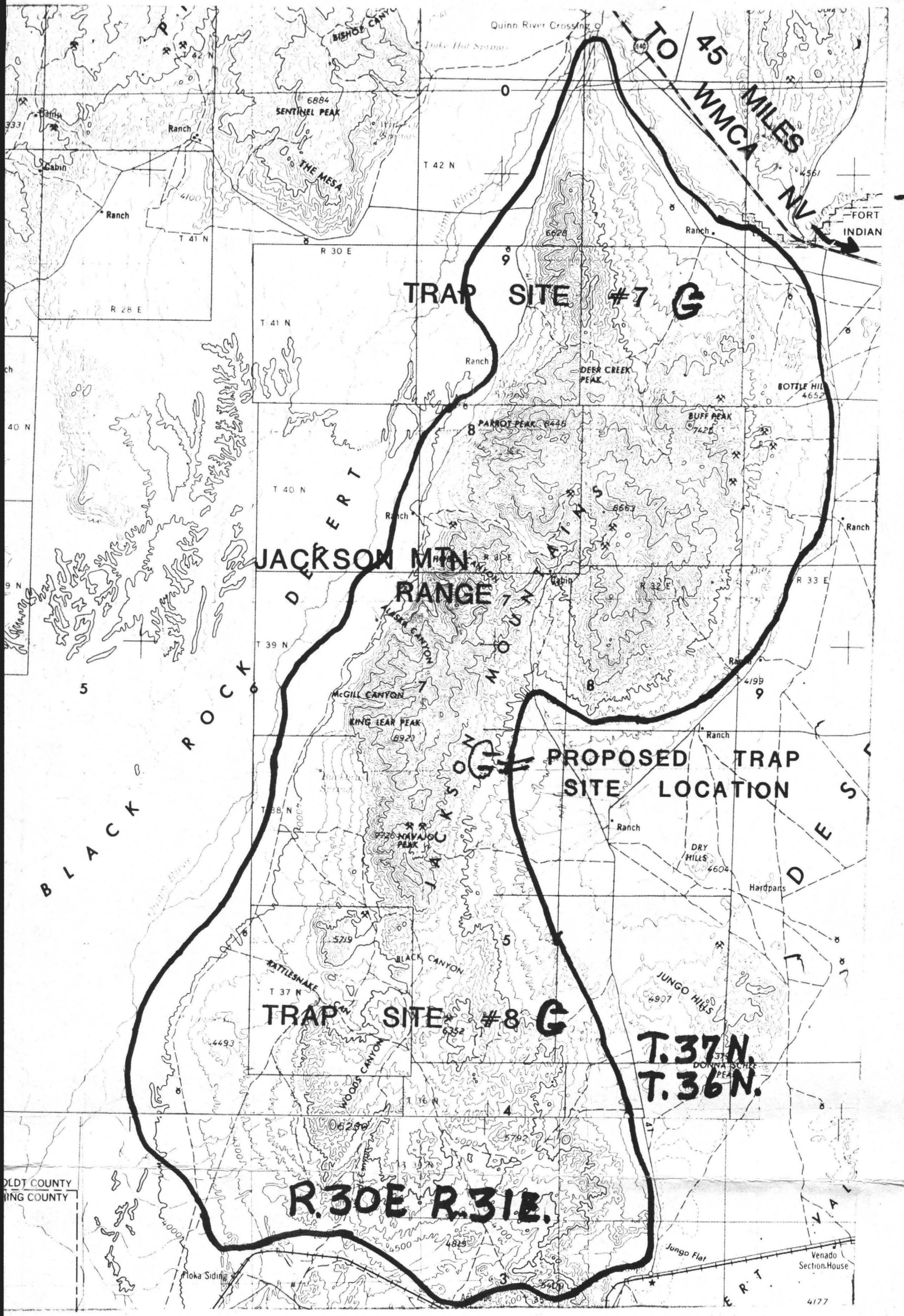
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TRAP SITE #7 G

JACKSON MOUNTAIN RANGE

PROPOSED TRAP SITE LOCATION

TRAP SITE #8 G

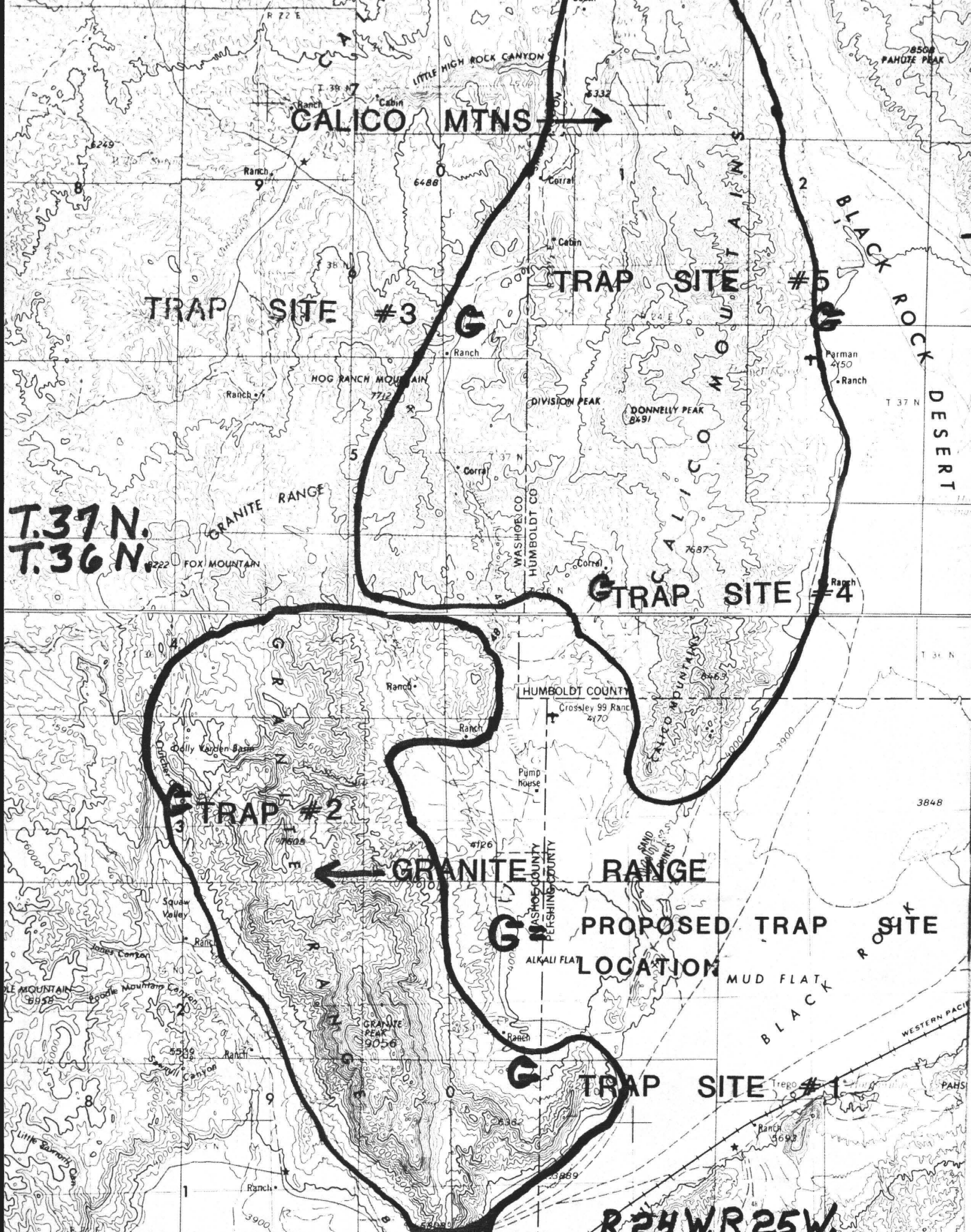
T. 37 N.  
T. 36 N.

R. 30 E R. 31 E

TO 45 MILES  
WMCA NV

OLDT COUNTY  
ING COUNTY

4177



**CALICO MTNS** →

**TRAP SITE #3**

**TRAP SITE #5**

**TRAP SITE #4**

**T.37 N.  
T.36 N.**

**TRAP #2**

**GRANITE RANGE**

**PROPOSED TRAP SITE  
LOCATION**

**TRAP SITE #1**

**R.24 W. R.25 W.**

**BLACK ROCK  
DESERT**

**HUMBOLDT COUNTY**

**GRANITE COUNTY**

**WASHOE COUNTY**

**PERKINS COUNTY**

**WASHOE COUNTY**

**PERKINS COUNTY**

**WASHOE COUNTY**

**PERKINS COUNTY**

Crossley 99 Ranch 2470

Pump house

4126

9056

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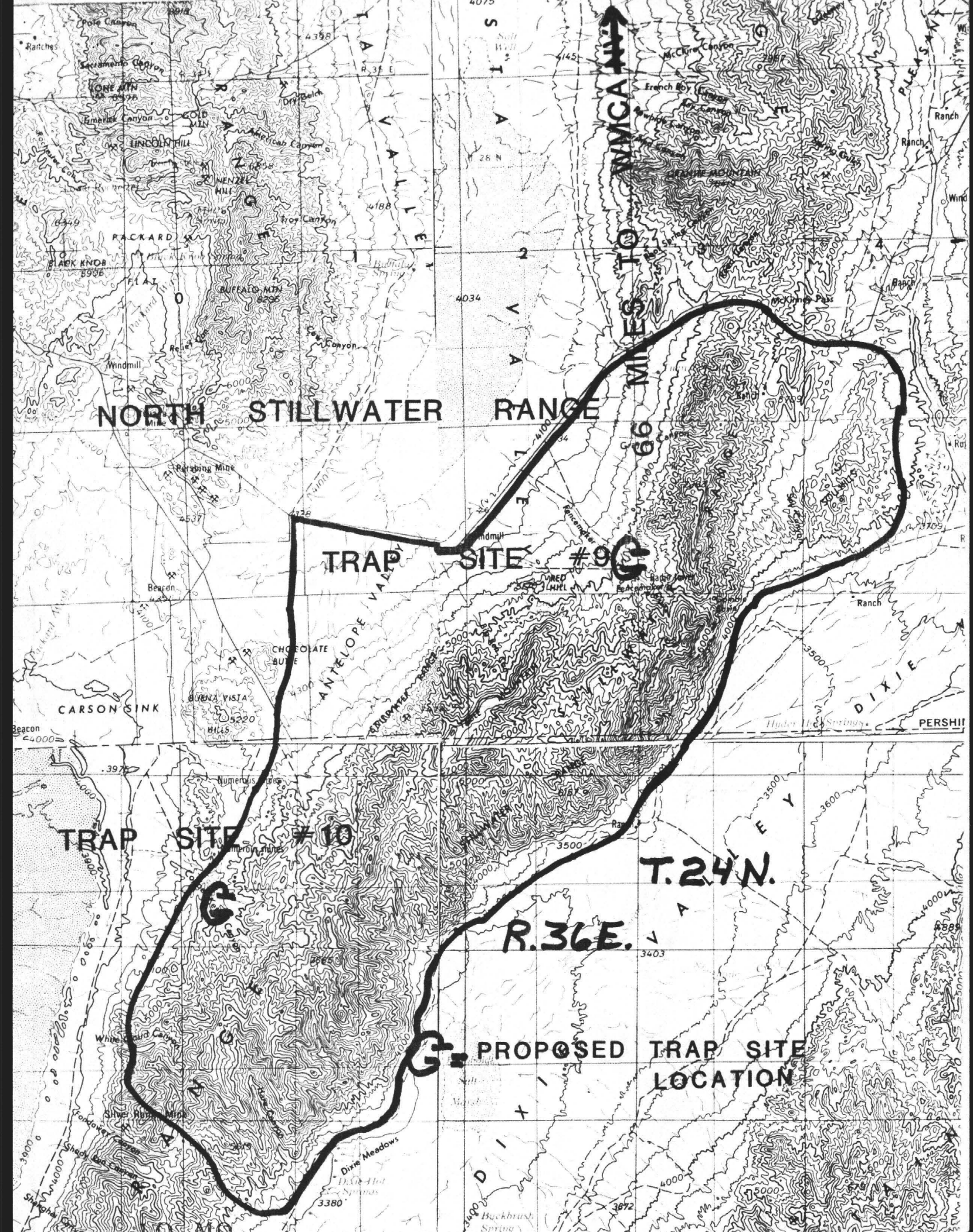
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41



**NORTH STILLWATER RANGE**

**TRAP SITE #9**

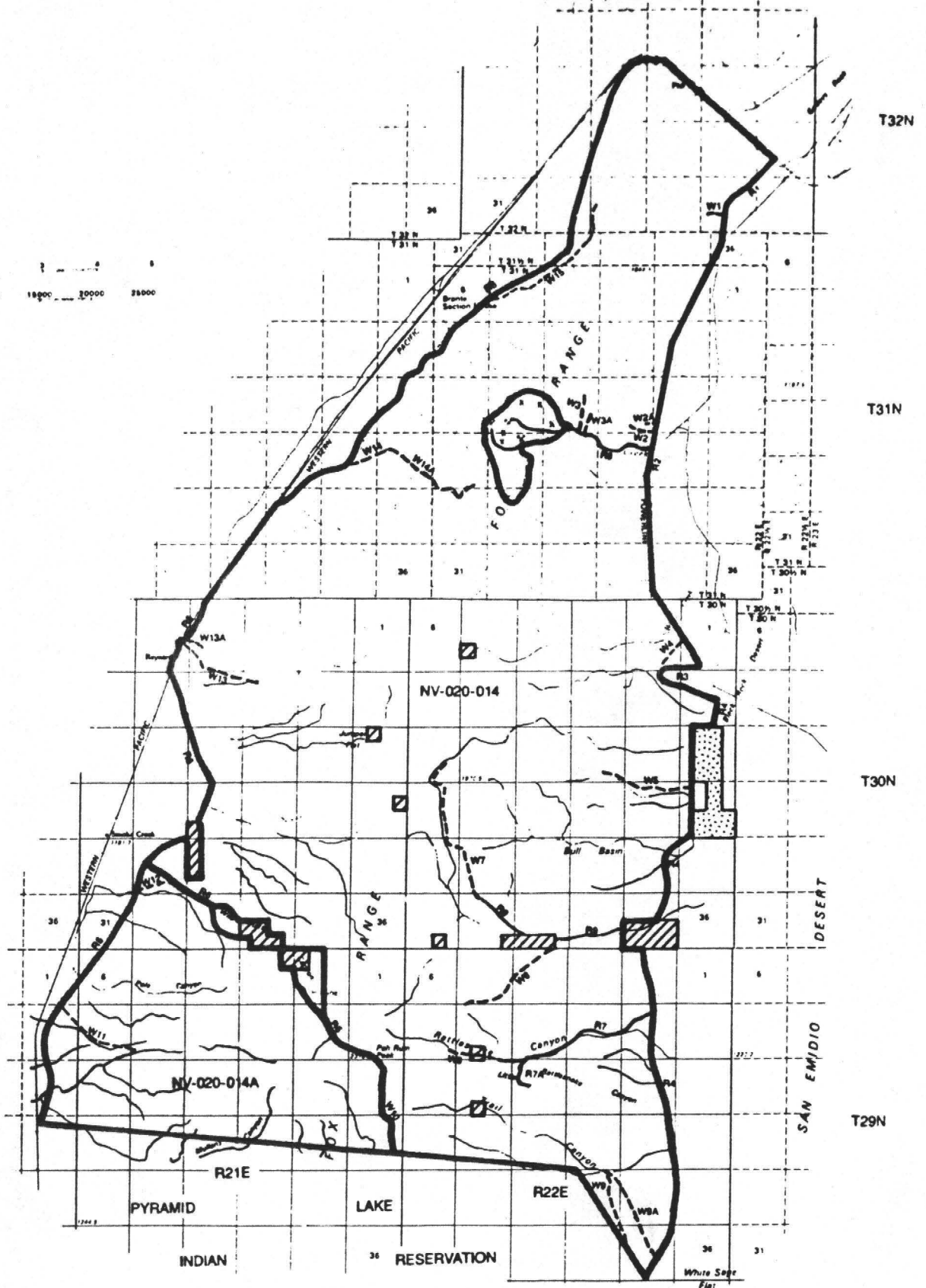
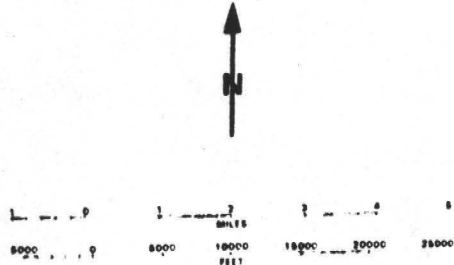
**TRAP SITE #10**








**T. 24 N.**

**R. 36 E.**

**G PROPOSED TRAP SITE LOCATION**

**66 MILES TO NMCA**



-  PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  PRIVATE SURFACE - PUBLIC MINERALS
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  PROSPECT
-  MINE

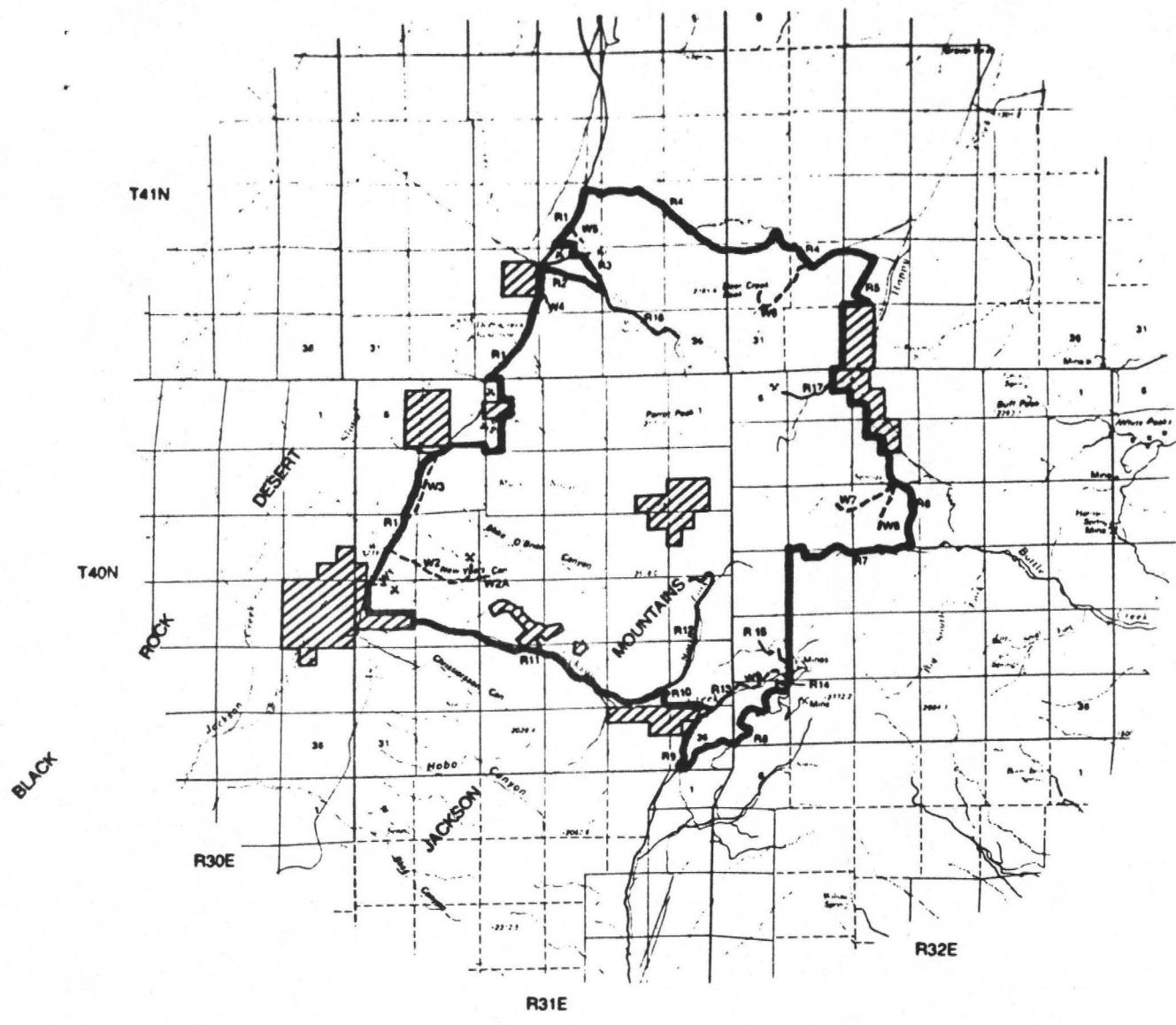
WSA LOCATED WITHIN THE FOX & LAKE RANGE HMA.



NV-020-014A FOX RANGE (POLE CREEK)














BLACK

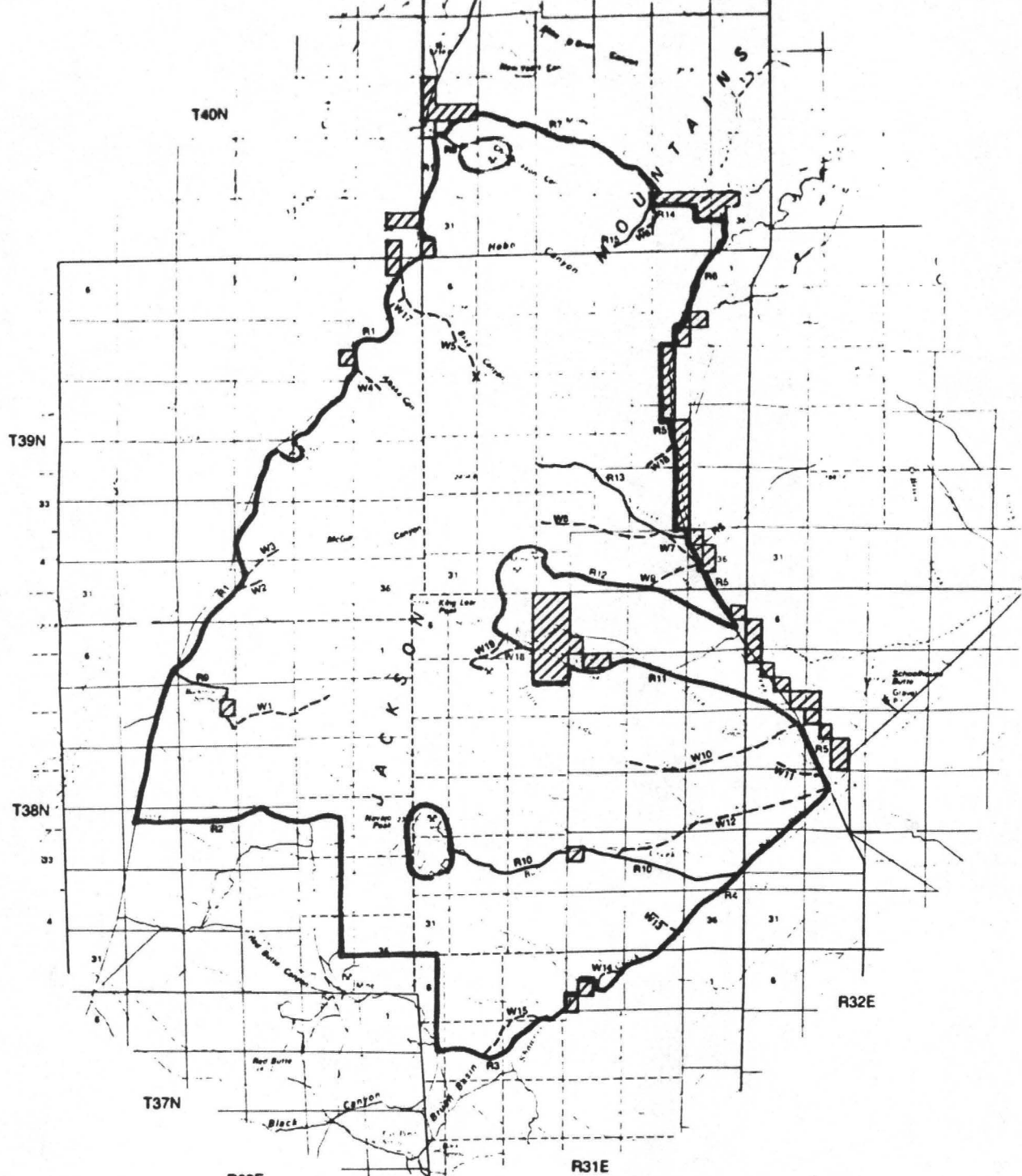









-  PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  PRIVATE SURFACE (PUBLIC MINERALS)
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  MINE
-  GRAVEL PIT

WSA LOCATED WITHIN THE JACKSON MTNS. HMA.



NV-020-606 NORTH JACKSON MTS.



-  PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)
-  PRIVATE SURFACE (PUBLIC MINERALS)
-  W.S.A. BOUNDARY
-  ROAD
-  WAY
-  PROSPECT
-  MINE

WSA LOCATED WITHIN THE JACKSON MTS. HMA.



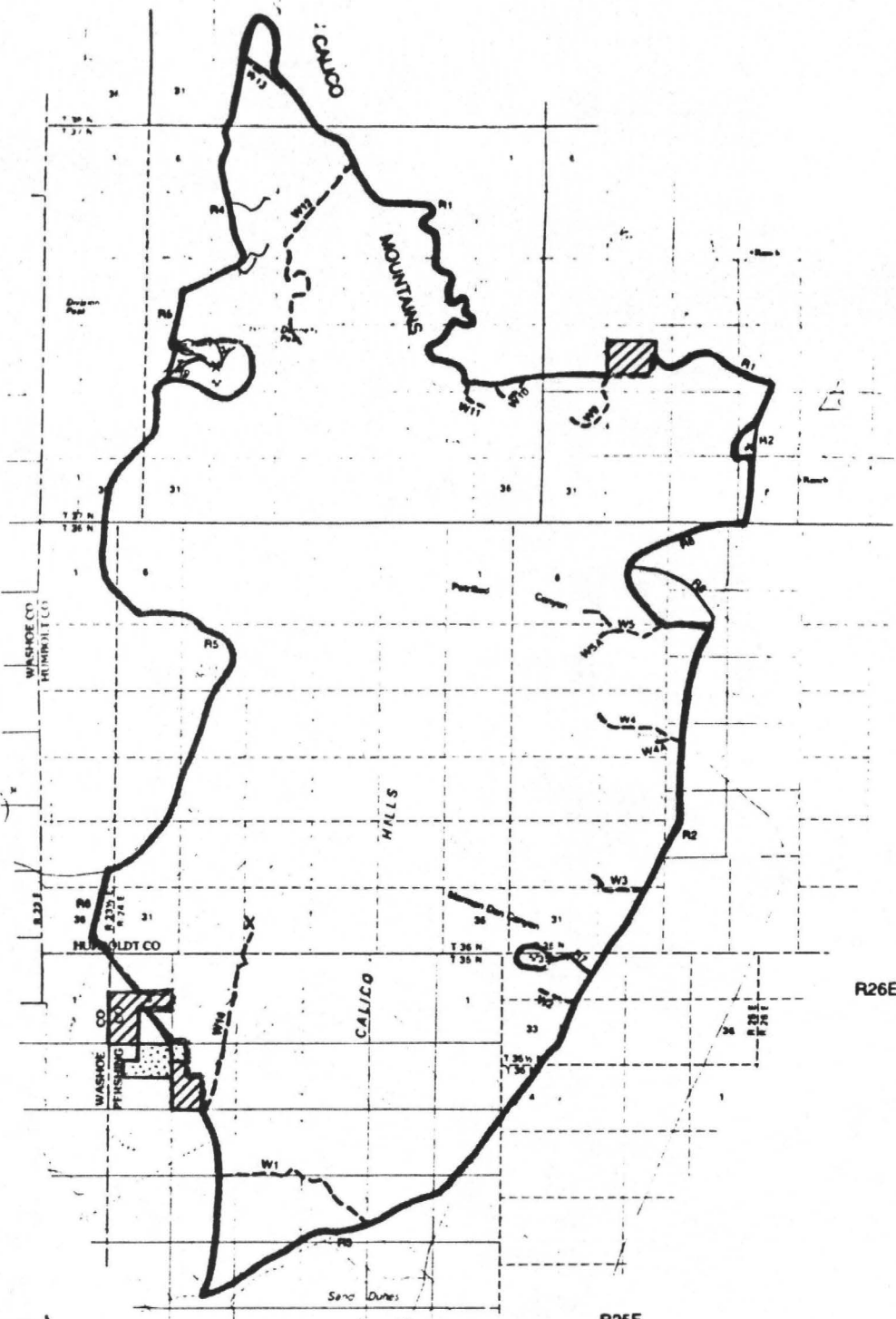
NV-020-603 SOUTH JACKSON MTS.

T38N

T37N

T36N

T35N



PRIVATE LAND (SURFACE & MINERALS)



PRIVATE SURFACE - PUBLIC MINERALS



W. S. A. BOUNDARY



ROAD



WAY



PROSPECT



MINE



GRAVEL PIT

WSA LOCATED WITHIN THE CALICO MTN. HMA.



NV-020-019 CALICO MOUNTAINS

R 33 E

R 34 E

R 35 E

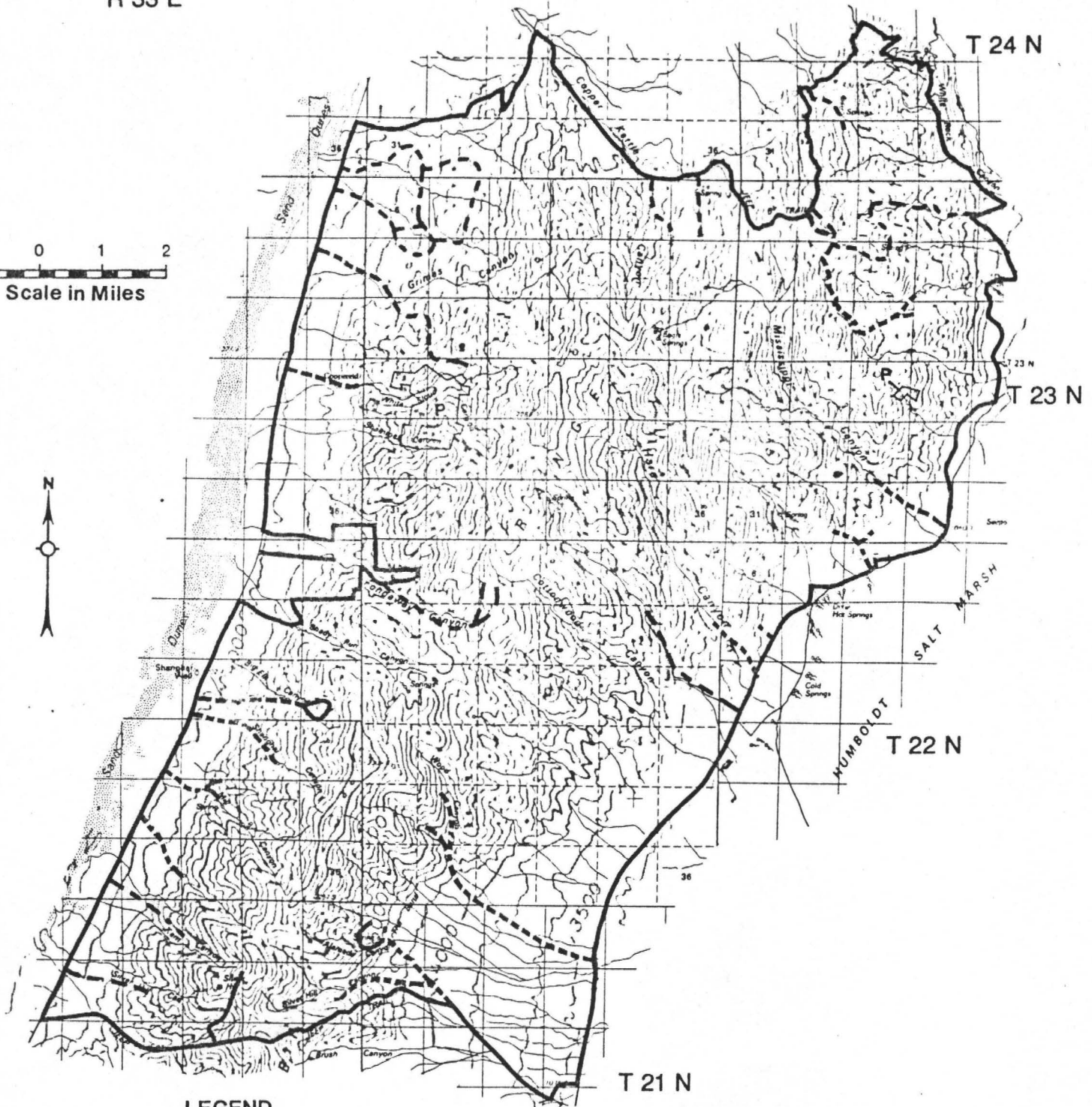
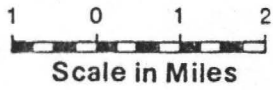
T 24 N

T 23 N

T 23 N

T 22 N

T 21 N



LEGEND

- WSA BOUNDARY
- ☐ NONE PRELIMINARILY SUITABLE
- ☐ NON SUITABLE
- ROADS
- - - WAYS
- ☐ P PRIVATE LAND

SUITABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS  
 STILLWATER RANGE NV-030-104  
 MAP 7