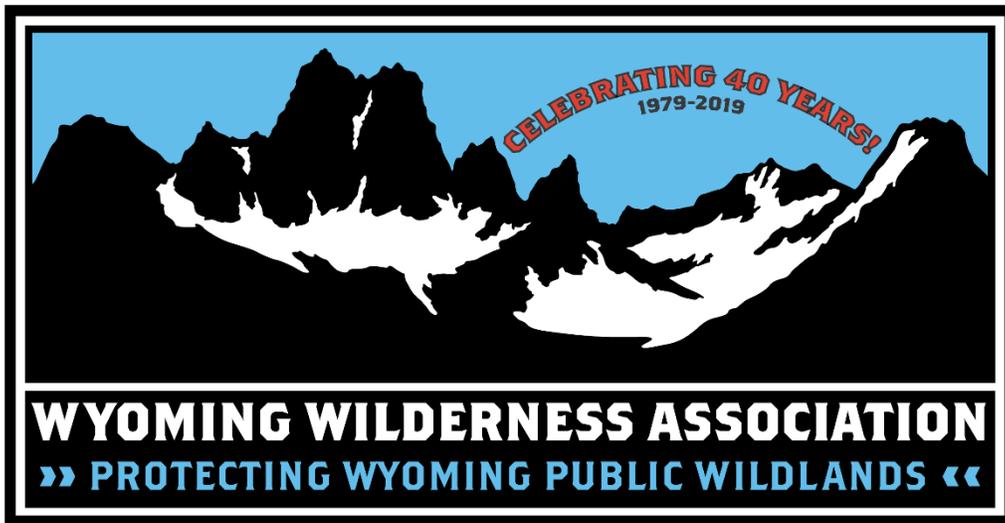
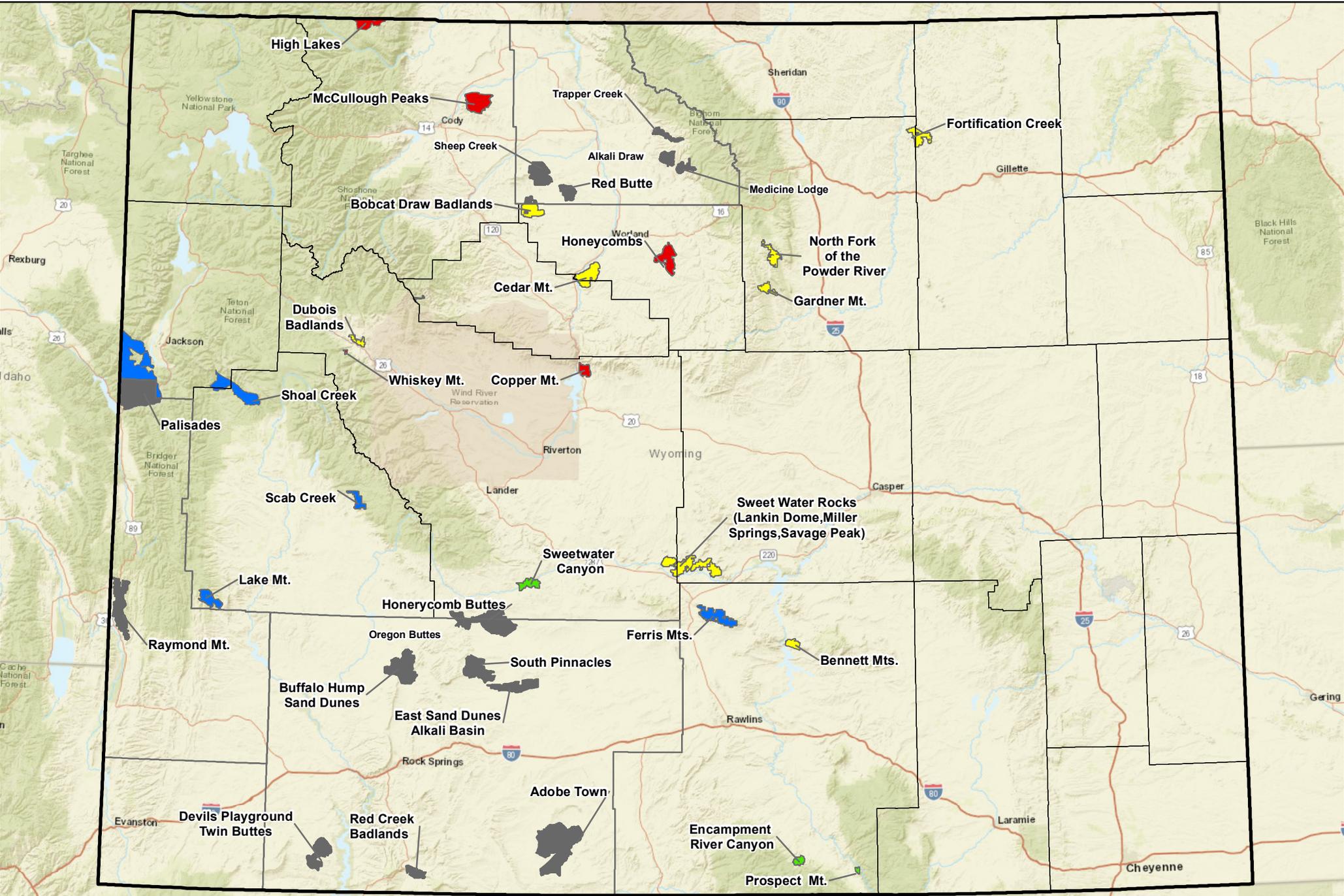


A Summary of the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative 2019





Map Explanation:

- | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
|  | Non-WPLI Counties |  | Wilderness Designation |  | Released without Protections |
|  | WSA's not part of WPLI |  | Released with Varying Protections |  | Remains WSA |

Purpose

This summary presents an objective review of the process and outcomes of the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative (WPLI) and the Wyoming Wilderness Association's (WWA) position on the final recommendations. This document is a resource for elected officials, media, and the public. We present this document on behalf of our organization's 3000 members and supporters who believe in the protection of Wyoming's public wildlands.

The Process

The Wyoming County Commissioners Association (WCCA) designed an initiative to make management recommendations for Wyoming's federally managed Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on a county by county basis. The process began in December of 2015 and was called the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative, or the WPLI. The desired outcome of the WPLI was the assembly of broadly supported recommendations for WSAs that were to be forwarded to Wyoming's congressional delegation. Counties willing to participate in the WPLI were to establish advisory committees comprised of public, agriculture and energy representatives, sportsman, motorized and non-motorized recreationists, and conservationists. Ten counties participated in eight different advisory committees. Meanwhile, three county commissions, Lincoln, Sweetwater and Bighorn, opted out of WPLI and instead worked with Congresswoman Liz Cheney on her two bills to remove protections from WSAs (HR 4697 and HR 6939).

The WPLI process was guided by a charter, which directed committees to make consensus-based decisions. The charter also identified the goal to remove all WSA protections by replacing them with new recommended management prescriptions, ranging from Wilderness to full release. Each committee was able to revise this charter, and only minor changes were made if any.

WSA Background

Wyoming has 45 WSAs that comprise over 700,000 acres of protected federal wildlands, belonging to all Americans. WSAs are undeveloped lands that were selected based on the results of in-depth inventories that identified their unique and primeval character. WSAs managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS) or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), were designated differently. The USFS currently manages three WSAs (Palisades, Shoal Creek, and High Lakes), designated by the Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984. The BLM currently manages 42 WSAs that resulted from the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). In November 1980, the BLM completed a 15-year inventory of roadless areas that resulted in the designation of these 42 WSAs.

Whether the BLM or USFS administer these lands, they have been managed for their *wilderness character* since their designation. They are not officially included in the National Wilderness Preservation System and cannot become official 'Wilderness' without an act of Congress. Until Congress makes a final determination on future management of Wyoming's WSAs, these areas will continue to be managed for their potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, established by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Final Results

Eight county committees participated in the WPLI process, deliberating the management of 22 WSAs comprising 341,497 acres (Appendix A). The WPLI resulted in recommendations from seven of the eight advisory committees, and Senator Barrasso's office is currently considering five of the eight recommendations for a WPLI bill. The other three participating counties are expected to be excluded for

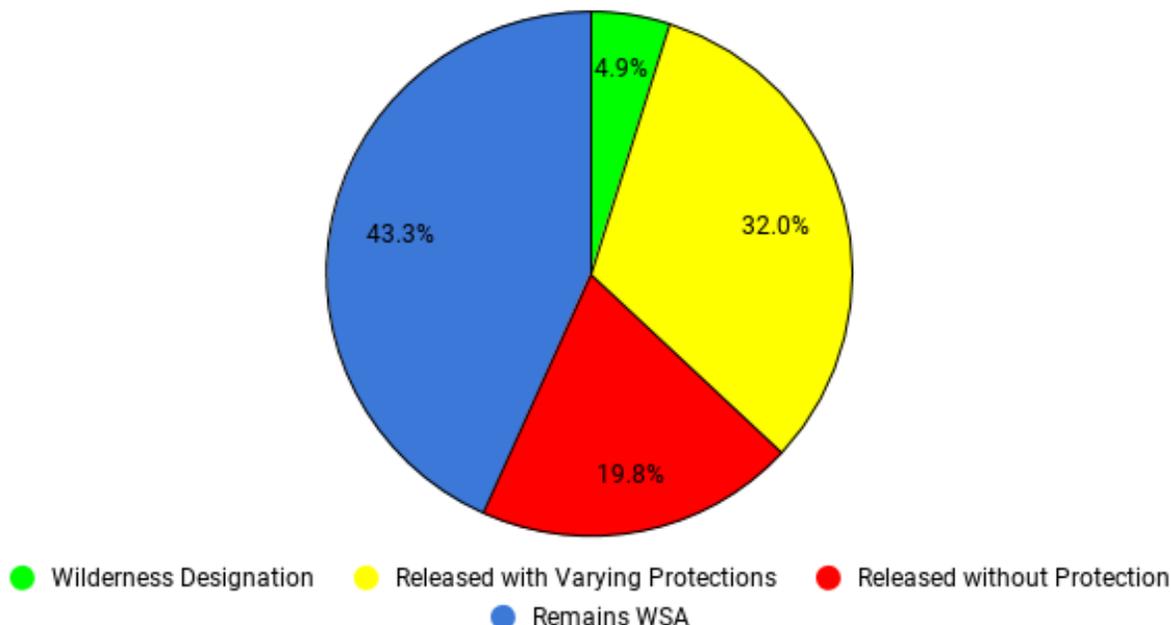
reasons explained in the county-by-county breakdown. (Note: this document considers the recommendations from all counties involved in the WPLI in order to analyze all outcomes independent of what is expected in the final WPLI bill.)

Of the 341, 497 acres considered in the WPLI a total of 16,692 acres were recommended for Wilderness (4.9%), 109,444 acres were released with varying degrees of protection (32%), 67,462 acres were released with no protections (19.8%), and 147,899 acres had no recommendations and will therefore remain as WSAs (43.3%) (Figure 1). A full breakdown of each WSA recommendation is provided in Appendix A and visually represented in the attached map.

The WPLI Charter emphasized the importance of including diverse interests, broad public support, and a decision model based on consensus, with everyone agreeing. Consensus was only achieved by Carbon County, but recommendations from Johnson, Campbell, Washakie, Carbon, and Fremont committees are expected to be included in the final WPLI bill. The bill excludes recommendations from Park, Sublette, and Teton County advisory committees. The Sublette and Park County advisory committee violated their charter (and the rules of the process), and the Teton committee drafted county-wide recommendations that WCCA did not feel belonged in a Congressional bill. Furthermore, Representative Cheney’s two bills (HR 4697 and HR 6939) had negative impacts on the success of this process, because it gave committees dominated by energy, and motorized and mechanized recreation the impetus to abandon the WPLI process. (Please see the county-by-county breakdown for more information.)

Figure 1. Recommended management for lands considered in the WPLI

WPLI Recommendation Outcomes (Acres)



Wyoming Wilderness Association's Position

WWA's mission is to protect Wyoming public wildlands. WWA entered into this process to work collaboratively towards broadly supported and locally generated recommendations and to ensure that wildlands values were protected. WSAs are already protected lands, which means the conservation interest had the most to lose in this process. WWA recognized this vulnerability from the onset of the WPLI, but agreed to participate because of the security that came with the consensus-based decision model outlined in the WCCA Principles & Guidelines document. In the end, all but one committee (Carbon) forwarded recommendations to WCCA that were not supported by all committee members. The interest that was typically ignored and that opposed these recommendations was conservation.

WWA supports the recommendations drafted by the Carbon County advisory committee because: 1) the committee drafted recommendations based on true consensus, and 2) the overall package had a no net loss in land protection. (No net loss means that equivalent or better protections (i.e. Wilderness and other strong management prescriptions) were given to the considered lands.) The Teton County recommendation, although supportable for its conservation outcomes, did not gain support from the motorized representatives. All other county processes failed to balance conservation against extractive uses and true consensus was not reached. In summary, the final WPLI recommendations failed to adequately protect wildlands.

All the federal lands in this process are managed for their potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and have been for decades. The recommendations resulting from this county level process did not consider all those who will be affected by these public land management decisions. None of these lands are county or state-owned; the lands considered within the WPLI are federal lands, belonging to all Americans. The WSAs are some of the last remaining wilderness quality lands in Wyoming, and make up only three percent of the state's public lands. However, only five percent of the WSAs considered in the WPLI received full Wilderness recommendation. WWA did not enter into this process with a "Wilderness or bust" mentality, but five percent of these lands recommended as Wilderness is an unacceptable outcome. Furthermore, 43.3% of the lands considered were left as WSAs. This can be viewed as a conservation win, since these WSAs retain their same protections, yet this outcome also indicates where committees could not reach a decision.

WWA supports the WPLI recommendation made by the Carbon County advisory committee, and does not support the WPLI recommendations for all other counties.

County-By-County Breakdown

Park County

- **Consensus:** The committee did not reach consensus
- **Outcome:** Commissioners wrote their own recommendations releasing the WSAs with no substantial protections for wildlands. This violated the committee charter. As a result of this violation, they could not forward the recommendations to WCCA. They intended to include their recommendation in the Cheney bill. The Park County recommendations will not be part of the WCCA bill.

Fortification Creek (Representing both Johnson and Campbell Counties)

- **Consensus:** No consensus reached per WPLI guidelines. A two-thirds supermajority vote favoring the recommendation trumped the charter's consensus requirement and the recommendation was forwarded to the WCCA
- **Outcomes:** Hard Release.
 - **Fortification Creek:** Renamed Fortification Creek Management Area stipulating:
 - No new surface disturbance unless for fire suppression
 - No new permanent roads
 - Maintain existing characteristics
 - Existing uses continued such as grazing, hunting, and recreation
 - No motorized or mechanized vehicles allowed other than for reasonable fire suppression, weed and pest control, wildlife and stock water, or emergency needs

Washakie County (Representing both Washakie and Hot Springs Counties)

- **Consensus:** The committee did not reach consensus.
- **Outcome:**
 - **Bobcat Draw:** 5000 acres Wilderness, the remaining stipulating:
 - No Surface Occupancy for fluid minerals
 - Withdrawal of solid, locatable and saleable minerals
 - Mechanized and motorized travel limited to existing trails and roads
 - **Cedar Mountain:** Special Management Area stipulating:
 - No Surface Occupancy for fluid minerals
 - Withdrawal of solid, locatable and saleable minerals
 - Improvements for wildlife habitat including water developments and wildlife friendly fencing
 - Mechanized and motorized recreation limited to existing roads and trails
 - Requested study to evaluate potential lands for developing mountain bike and ORV activities
 - **Honeycombs:** no specific direction for BLM management

Johnson County

- **Consensus:** No consensus reached per WPLI guidelines. Recommendation passed with a two-thirds supermajority vote.
- **Outcome:**
 - **North Fork:** Hard release¹. Renamed as the North Fork Management Area stipulating:

¹ Hard Release means that these lands can never be recommended for Wilderness in the future when the agency reviews lands as part of a land revision process.

- Motorized and mechanized vehicles used for the following purposes only:
 - Fire Suppression, livestock management and infrastructure, forest health and restoration, wildlife habitat management, emergency needs, control of noxious and invasive species
- No energy development or mining leases
- Maintain the area's non-motorized/backcountry recreational, cultural, ecological, watershed, grazing and wildlife values
- No development of new permanent roads
- No Recreational Development
- **Gardner Mountain:** Hard release. Renamed as the Fraker Mountain Management Area stipulating:
 - Motorized and mechanized vehicles used for the following purposes only:
 - Fire Suppression, livestock management and infrastructure, forest health and restoration, wildlife habitat management, emergency needs, control of noxious and invasive species
 - No energy development or mining leases
 - Maintain the area's non-motorized/backcountry recreational, cultural, ecological, watershed, grazing and wildlife values
 - No development of new permanent roads
 - No Recreational Development

Fremont County (also representing Natrona County in Sweetwater Rocks WSAs)

- **Consensus:** The committee did not reach consensus.
- **Outcome:**
 - **Copper Mountain:** Released from WSA protection and under review for motorized travel and oil/gas development.
 - **Whisky Mountain:** Released from WSA protection and managed in accordance with the latest Cooperative Management Agreement between the Wyoming Game and Fish, BLM, and USFS.
 - **Sweetwater Rocks** (Lankin Dome, Split Rock, Miller Springs, Savage Peak WSAs): Special Management Areas:
 - SMAs will maintain valid existing rights including agricultural uses, natural, historic, scenic resources, and primitive recreation protected; Livestock grazing and motorized use permitted to manage fences; NSO oil and gas leasing; Locatable mineral withdrawal excluding existing rights; Renewable energy, overhead transmission lines and cell towers prohibited; Beef Gap Corridor underground transmission lines authorized; explore and pursue land exchange with no net loss of public lands
 - **Sweetwater Canyon:** Recommended 6,000 acres of Wilderness east and west of existing road that shall remain outside of Wilderness designation and open to motorized travel
 - The remainder of the WSA will be managed by the surrounding management constraints:
 - Reduce the hazards from abandoned mine lands; Protect prehistoric sites; maintain and enhance recreational use; closed to geophysical

exploration/solid mineral leasing/ mineral material disposal; major ROWs are excluded, minor ROWs avoided

- **Dubois Badlands:** West of “Dump road” will be a “Motorized Recreation Area”. East of “Dump Road” will be “National Conservation Area” closed to motorized travel.

Sublette County

- **Consensus:** The committee did not reach consensus.
- **Outcome:** The County sent a letter to the WCCA explaining that they did not reach consensus, and therefore would not forward a WPLI recommendation. They instead plan to seek legislation with Congresswoman Cheney to release all of the county’s WSA’s.

Carbon County

- **Consensus:** The committee reached consensus.
- **Outcome:**
 - **Ferris Mountain:** Remain a WSA.
 - **Encampment River Canyon:** Wilderness
 - **Bennett Mountain**
 - Special Management Area stipulating:
 - Motorized and mechanized vehicles permitted on roads and trails designated for motorized and mechanized vehicles
 - Prohibit road construction
 - Prohibit commercial timber harvest
 - Prohibit oil and gas, geothermal, coal, and other mineral leasing
 - **Prospect Mountain**
 - Wilderness
 - Additional ~1,000 acres as Special Management Area for North Platte/Black Cat stipulating:
 - Motorized and mechanized vehicles permitted on roads and trails designated for motorized and mechanized vehicles
 - Prohibit road construction
 - Prohibit commercial timber harvest
 - Prohibit oil and gas, geothermal, coal, and other mineral leasing

Teton County

- **Consensus:** The committee did not reach consensus.
- **Outcome:** County-wide resolution forwarded to the WCCA stipulating:
 - No oil, gas or mineral extraction on USFS land in Teton County
 - No commercial Timber Harvest on USFS land in Teton County
 - No new roads on USFS land
 - WSAs will be managed in compliance with the 1984 Wyoming Wilderness Act

Appendix A

WPLI Acreage Chart						
County/Committee	WSAs	Total Acreage	Wilderness Designation	Released with Varying Protections	Released without Protection	Remains WSA
Park	McCullough Peaks	24,570	0	0	24570	0
	High Lakes	14,819	0	0	14819	0
Johnson & Campbell (Fortification Creek Committee)	Fortification Creek	13059	0	13059	0	0
Washakie	Cedar Mountain (Shared with Hot Springs)	21,560	0	21560	0	0
	Honeycombs	21,000	0	0	21000	0
	Bobcat Draw	17,150	5000	12,150	0	0
Johnson County	Gardner Mountain	6,423	0	6423	0	0
	North Fork Powder River	10,089	0	10089	0	0
Fremont	Dubois Badlands	4,520	0	4,520	0	0
	Sweetwater Canyon	9,056	6,000	3,056	0	0
	Copper Mountain	6,586	0	0	6,586	0
	Whiskey Mountains	487	0	0	487	0
	Sweetwater Rocks Complex (shared with Natrona):					
	Miller Springs	6,429	0	6,429	0	0
	Savage Peak	7,041	0	7,041	0	0
	Split Rock	12,798	0	12,798	0	0
	Lankin Dome	6,316	0	6,316	0	0
Sublette	Shoal Creek (Shared with Teton)	20,754	0	0	0	20,754
	Scab Creek	7,636	0	0	0	7,636
	Lake Mountain	13,865	0	0	0	13,865
Carbon	Encampment River Canyon	4,547	4547	0	0	0
	Bennett Mountains	6,003	0	6003	0	0
	Ferris Mountains	22,245	0	0	0	22245
	Prospect Mountain	1,145	1145	0	0	0
Teton	Shoal Creek (Shared with Sublette)	11,619	0	0	0	11,619
	Palisades	71,780	0	0	0	71,780
8 Committees, ~10 Counties	22 WSAs in process	341,497	16692	109444	67462	147899