

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Environmental Assessment MT- -L070-2013-008-EA

**Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
Transportation System Implementation**



U.S. Department of the Interior
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to implement road designations throughout the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Approximately 201 miles of primarily user-created routes were designated as closed to public use by the approval of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) in December of 2008. In order to implement these closures, small segments of closed routes could be scarified, planted, seeded and stabilized to ensure rehabilitation of native vegetation. Signs would be installed as necessary to provide users with adequate on-the-ground orientation. Additionally, some portions of the routes that were closed to motorized use may also be retained as pedestrian trails to provide non-motorized access. The work would be accomplished using primarily youth labor crews (e.g. Montana Conservation Corps) and volunteers using hand tools and established arid land restoration methods. If approved, implementation would commence beginning in the summer of 2014 and would be continued over the course of several years depending on funding availability. Map 1 provides an overview of the National Monument that depicts open, closed, and seasonally closed routes.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the proposed action is threefold:

1. To construct on-the-ground closures to implement the approximate 201 miles of road closures designated in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Record of Decision and approved Resource Management Plan of December 2008. The Management Plan specifically identified which roads were to be closed, but did not specify the methods of closure and did not address site specific environmental issues and concerns of the ground disturbing activities required to close these 201 miles of roads. Thus it is necessary to complete an on-the-ground level analysis in a separate environmental assessment.
2. To construct on-the-ground closures of unauthorized routes that have been pioneered into the landscape since the Management Plan decision of December 2008. Since these unauthorized routes did not exist during the Management planning effort, there has been no environmental analysis of the effects of physically closing these unauthorized routes. Thus it is necessary to complete an on-the-ground level analysis in a separate environmental assessment.
3. To change the use of one closed road to a non-motorized trail. The Management Plan did not evaluate this specific proposal, but rather gave general direction to develop a system of non-motorized trails. Since there was no site specific analysis for this

conversion, it is necessary to complete an on-the-ground analysis in a separate environmental analysis.

The need for the proposed action is based on President Clinton's Proclamation of January 17, 2001 that created the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. The Proclamation states that, "The Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes." In addition, the Secretary "shall prepare a transportation plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects." After extensive public participation, in the final ROD for the Monument in December 2008, BLM committed to managing a limited motorized route system, which included route closures for resource protection. These road closures totaled 201 miles.

The proposed action is necessary to improve the success of implementing land-use plan decisions for travel management in the Monument, because the approach that has been taken for the past six years has not accomplished the objectives of the plan. Very few of the 201 miles of road designated as closed have been physically closed on-the-ground. New pioneered motorized travel routes have appeared and have not been closed on-the-ground. There has been no development of non-motorized hiking trails as directed by the Management Plan.

Many of the routes designated as closed by the RMP continue to receive use by the public, which has allowed them to persist in a condition much as they were at the time of designation. In order to protect the objects identified in the Proclamation, it is imperative that the BLM undertake a timely and strong effort to close these unauthorized routes identified in the RMP

CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN(S)

The proposed action is in conformance with the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument*, completed in 2008.

This action was specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

"The BLM roads designated closed will either be allowed to reclaim naturally or selected segments may require ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix to control surface runoff. (emphasis added)"

"The BLM's goal is to preserve or enhance the primitive characteristics of the wilderness study areas."

"The BLM's goal is to protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation."

“The BLM’s goal is to manage for a variety of sustainable visitor opportunities in mostly primitive and natural landscapes.”

“The recreation emphasis will be to develop and maintain opportunities for dispersed recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, scenic and wildlife viewing and driving for pleasure, consistent with current policies and practices and the Proclamation.”

“The BLM will emphasize dispersed recreation opportunities including hiking and development of non-motorized hiking trails.”

“Signing - Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel will be signed with small road number signs. Closed roads will not be signed unless necessary to prevent resource damage.”

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is tiered to the Monument RMP. The Monument RMP analyzed the environmental consequences of route designations and closures in the Monument. This action proposes an active restoration approach to implementing RMP decisions and direction for transportation management. The RMP is available for review at the Central Montana District Office in Lewistown, Montana, as well as the Montana/Dakotas State Office in Billings, Montana. The RMP included a full public process and was coordinated with private stakeholders and agencies that would be affected by management of the transportation system.

The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Update, which was completed in 1993, specifically supports the proposed action with the following decision:

“Existing trails and roads across the public lands leading into the corridor may be closed and rehabilitated, as shown in the ORV implementation plan. .” Note that the ORV implementation plan was revised through the RMP travel planning process

The proposed action also implements priority decisions from the recently completed National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) Strategy and implementation plan for the management of the NLCS areas, including National Monuments. The proposed action would address the following direction from the NLCS Strategy:

“ Implement an active route rehabilitation program in WSAs and other conservation lands with route designations.”

“Implement a pilot project in the Upper Missouri River Breaks

National Monument and wilderness study areas in 2013 using a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.”

CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Assessment analyzes two alternatives; the proposed action and a no-action alternative. The No-Action alternative is not substantially different, but is less specific in how restoration of routes would be implemented and relies primarily on signing, enforcement, and natural regeneration to implement route closures. The direction under current management would be to continue to allow routes to reclaim naturally without the proposed active restoration, or without conversion to non-motorized trails. The no-action alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts when compared to the proposed action.

COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

The following actions would be implemented under both the no-action and proposed action alternatives.

SIGN DESIGNATED ROUTES AS OPEN

All routes that are open to public use, year-round or seasonally, will be marked on the ground. Routes would be signed closed if necessary to prevent resource damage. The minimum necessary signage will be used to prevent sign clutter and minimize costs. At minimum each route will be marked with a “designated route” marker and the end of each spur road will be marked with a “routes end” marker. Directional signage or reassurance markers may be used to reduce confusion and prevent use of unauthorized trails. The goal of signing is to clearly identify open routes to the public and communicate penalties for non-compliance.

REMOVE FROM PUBLIC USE MAPS

All routes closed through the RMP will not appear on future travel maps for the Monument. In cases where the routes in question are unused or overgrown, or have already disappeared, they will simply be removed from the public travel map without the need for active restoration. Efforts would also be taken to coordinate internally to update 1:100,000 maps and to coordinate with commercial map providers and internet map resources to remove undesignated routes from public maps.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No-Action Alternative would not implement active restoration techniques as proposed in the action alternative. However it would include other actions identified in the Common to All Alternatives section. Over the past six years the primary action taken to implement the transportation system has been the installation of route markers for a portion of the system. Under the No-Action Alternative, the BLM would continue to mark roads as open; however, other restoration techniques that involve ground-disturbance would not be analyzed.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would take an active approach to implementing transportation management designations that were identified in the approved Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (2008). A variety of approaches would be used to close unauthorized roads permanently and seasonally, while also clearly identifying open roads and trails.

This action would also close any new routes that have come into existence since the Management Plan was signed in December of 2008. While not extensive, some new routes have been pioneered by user groups. Commonly, these new routes are short extensions of existing roads that have been created by hunters and others. The proposed action would use the same variety of closure methods as those taken to close unauthorized roads designated as closed in the Management Plan of December 2008.

The proposed action also would designate a two mile non-motorized hiking trail route, the Old Army Road/ Stafford Ferry Road. This historic road was closed for resource protection reasons in the Management Plan. This designation would result in the first non-motorized trail created in the National Monument and would follow specific implementation direction in the plan. There would be no disturbance of the historic road bed with this proposal. On-site disturbance would be limited to a gate, a walk-over style, and an interpretive sign that tells the story of the historic road.

A toolbox of management approaches would be conducted to implement route closures including education, signing, enforcement, and direct restoration/reclamation of routes. Portions of closed routes will be rehabilitated or in limited cases converted to non-motorized trails, in order to prevent continued unauthorized use and provide non-motorized access opportunities. The “Toolbox” is a series of options designed to effectively assure that routes closed are rehabilitated and revegetated. The minimum necessary, or “least impacting” treatment analyzed in the Toolbox will be applied to each closed route in order to achieve these outcomes.

Annual Work Plan

An annual work plan will be prepared each year in advance of any anticipated field work. This annual work plan will identify which route segments may be worked upon in the

coming field season. The purpose of the annual work plan is to provide staff specialists with the information and time necessary to do any needed field investigation, inventory collection, or any analysis or coordination that is needed prior to completing the work on the ground.

The annual work plan for 2015 would include:

To physically close roads designated as closed in the Management Plan of December, 2008, and the subset of those closed roads that have been inventoried and cleared as a result of the “Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Roads, Ways and Airstrips 2014 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Results.”

To physically close any unauthorized or pioneered routes associated with or in the near vicinity of the above subset of inventoried and closed roads.

To designate the Old Military/Stafford Ferry road as a non-motorized, interpretive trail, including the construction of minor improvements necessary.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

A variety of outreach methods would be used to raise awareness of the designated route system, vehicle regulations and on-going restoration activities. The following actions would be taken:

- A visitor access guide will be published and made available as full-size hard copy maps for sale~ smaller maps will be available for free and posted virtually on the internet
- News Releases will be developed to highlight implementation projects.
- Information will be developed for use in the visitor center, contact station and campgrounds to dissemination by staff and volunteers.
- Mailers will be developed for all hunters who draw tags for hunting in the monument.
- Entrance kiosks will be developed and installed at key entrances where the greatest number of people will be contacted. Kiosks will contain a detailed map, brochure racks for visitor access guides or travel maps, and will clearly articulate use regulations for motorized travel and recreation.

DISGUISE THE ROUTE WITH NATURAL MATERIALS

This method, sometimes referred to as “vertical mulching,” is used to hide the route from view. If the route is not on the travel map, and is not evident to Monument visitors, it will be unlikely to receive additional use. Often the first several hundred feet of the closed route will be disguised to look like the surrounding area by placing rocks, deadwood and

plants, and in some cases planting live vegetation, in a natural looking arrangement. Where possible, materials used, such as rocks, should be large enough and abundantly placed in order to deter persons familiar with the route location from easily removing them. Hand tools such as shovels, pick, rakes and other hand tools would be employed to scarify and decompact road surfaces, obliterate embankments, ruts, water-bars and ditches.

RIP AND RESEED THE ROUTE

This process mechanically removes the route from the landscape and revegetates it. Native seed mixes will be used as directed by the Monument RMP, unless approved by the monument manager to attain reclamation standards. Mechanical removal may be accomplished by hand, or in some cases, with the use of power equipment, harrow or seed drills, among other methods. Re-vegetation may be facilitated through the use of herbicides as well. Based on site-specific conditions, seeding, and planting treatments may include:

- prepare seedbed
- select appropriate seed mix
- apply seed
- cover seed.

Due to the broad spectrum of situations encountered, all possible treatment options and combination of treatments may be considered.

INSTALL NATURAL OR HUMAN MADE BARRIERS, INCLUDING FENCES AND GATES

In locations where it is impractical to employ any of the previous methods, such as extremely rocky areas, and in areas where administrative use may occasionally be required on a route closed to the public, it may be necessary to install natural or human made barriers such as large boulders, fences with gates or other barriers to physically prevent unauthorized use. Where possible and practical, these measures would be removed when the route is rehabilitated or fully disguised.

CONVERT CLOSED ROUTES TO NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

Roads identified to be closed could be converted to non-motorized hiking trails if they further the recreation experience, meet resource objectives and the specific direction included in the RMP to protect the objects identified in the Proclamation. A similar technique would be used as described above for disguising the routes, except that a single-track trail would be retained to support future pedestrian use.

CLOSE THE ROUTE USING INFORMATIONAL SIGNS

This measure would be employed in cases where the previous measures have failed, but ripping and seeding or the use of physical barriers is impractical or ineffective. It may also be used on routes to establish an administrative use only designation, or to identify seasonal closures. Signs would be removed when the route is rehabilitated and motorized use has been eliminated.

HERBICIDE SEEDBED TREATMENT

Herbicide pretreatment would be used when it is necessary to control non-native invasive plants and noxious weeds prior to utilization of other toolbox treatments.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Cultural Resources

To prevent disturbance of previously unrecorded cultural sites, all routes where active route restoration would create new surface disturbance would be assessed for the presence of archeological resources through a cultural survey. Any historic routes would be assessed for eligibility prior to reclamation.

If any unanticipated prehistoric and/or historic archaeological site or paleontological site is encountered during the proposed reclamation activities, work would immediately stop and the BLM would be contacted. If a site is found, it will be formally recorded and assessed for its National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. The BLM will assume responsibility for the evaluation and determination of significance of the location. All known NRHP eligible, unresolved, or un-evaluated cultural resources sites will be avoided or otherwise mitigated (i.e. data recovery, formal testing, etc.).

Decompaction of the route surface would be conducted to avoid affecting historic properties. Alternative closure methods, such as signing, gating, or barricading, would be used where decompaction would cause adverse effects. Collection of any cultural or paleontological artifacts, bones or fossils from Federal lands within the Monument is specifically prohibited.

Soils

Stabilization efforts shall be completed within 30 days of the initiation of construction activities. The disturbed lands shall have stable surface conditions and erosion rates and features similar to natural rates/features on adjacent undisturbed lands.

The appropriate erosion control and sediment containment Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be installed. Erosion control and sediment containment BMPs will be both temporary and permanent as identified by the BLM. The BLM shall be responsible for maintaining those BMPs for their intended function and shall inspect them on a regular schedule and within 24 hours of a rainfall event of 0.5 inches or greater.

Site reclamation shall initiate with the ripping of any compacted areas and grading to blend with the adjacent site characteristics and topography. In no instances will grading material and/or subsoil be placed over topsoil. The order of soil replacement shall be the reverse of removal, e.g. first off, last on.

Reclamation monitoring is required. Erosion of the site shall be equal to or less than similar adjacent undisturbed areas. Soil stability will be assessed by looking for indicators of accelerated erosion such as rills, gullies, pedestalling, and/or slumping/sliding. Within 1 growing seasons of the initial construction, vegetative cover shall be at least 30% or more of desirable species. Desirable species are those species specified in the seed mix. Within 3 to 5 years vegetative cover shall be at least 70% of that on similar adjacent undisturbed areas. If these standards are not met, additional reclamation measure such as re-seeding, applying soil amendments and/or additional erosion/sediment control BMPs, etc. shall be implemented.

Vegetation

Heavy ground disturbing activity such as the Rip and Reseed method will require use of an approved seed mix appropriate for the specific ecological site approved by the BLM. Where applicable, the seed mix will be comprised of native vegetation. Non-native vegetation may be used under certain circumstances such as stabilization of soil. The native vegetation seed mix will be comprised of vegetative species found within the specific project area. All seed mixes will be certified weed free.

Invasive, Non-Native Species

All routes would be assessed for the presence of non-native, invasive plants prior to commencing surface disturbing restoration activities. If the noxious weed assessment detects infestations along the closed routes segments, they would be treated using herbicide prior to scarification, seeding, or other restoration activities that could spread seeds or plant materials. This process may delay scheduled restoration activities for 3-5 years to allow for effective weed control to be attained prior to restoration. The following prevention practices would be followed to prevent activities from contributing to the spread of invasive plants:

- Seed used for re vegetation will be certified weed free
- Organic erosion control devises (bails, waddles, etc.) will come from weed free sources
- Fill material and/or gravel will come from weed free sources
- Vehicles & equipment will be thoroughly cleaned to remove potential weed seed prior to entering public lands.

Wildlife

Restoration activities would be conducted to minimize potential impacts to special status species. The following precautions would be taken:

- Avoid Bighorn Sheep lambing areas from May 1 through June 30.
- Avoid Greater Sage-Grouse nesting habitat from March 1 through June 15.
- Limit use from April 15 to July 15 to minimize/avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds. If any active migratory bird nests are found within the project area, the project will not continue within 300 ft of each nest until nesting activities have been completed. The activity may proceed if no nests are found.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING

The proposed action would implement route closures, signing, public outreach, and single-track conversion projects throughout the Monument, impacting a wide variety of resources. The best description of the affected environment can be found in Chapter 3 of the Final Resource Management Plan for the Monument. The RMP is available on-line at: http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process/rod.html and is hereby incorporated in reference.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

No Action Alternative

Impacts from the No Action

Potential impacts from continuing with current management are best described in Volume 1, Chapter 4 of the draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which disclosed impacts from the current management scenario; prior to route designations, signing and restoration. Very little has changed since the RMP was approved in 2008. The Draft RMP/EIS is available on-line at: http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process/rmp.html and is hereby incorporated in reference.

In addition to those impacts described in the EIS, additional impacts would be expected due to the expansion and degradation of the closed route segments in absence of active rehabilitation and successful closure of unauthorized routes.

PROPOSED ACTION

Direct and Indirect Impacts of the Proposed Action

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed action; some of which are incorporated by reference from the RMP and others that provide more site-specific potential impacts relating to the implementation actions described in the proposed action.

Impacts from road designations were identified for the following resources in the EIS:

- Cultural Resources
- Fish and Wildlife
- Geology/Paleontology
- Soils
- Riparian
- Vegetation – Weeds
- Watersheds
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Wilderness Study Areas
- Social Conditions
- Economics

This EA provides disclosure of additional impacts that may occur due to the enhanced level of restoration and active management that is proposed. The impacts described in the FEIS would still be expected from implementation of the proposed action, but many of the beneficial impacts could be greater and would occur sooner commensurate with BLM's ability to effectively educate land users, provide adequate signing, monitor and enforce vehicle use regulations to prevent continued use of the routes and successfully return unauthorized routes to a natural condition.

The following impacts were not specifically identified in the EIS:

Impacts to Access

The process of identifying and minimizing which routes would be open to administrative uses, with the exception of emergencies, will likely result in the elimination or less frequent use of many closed routes that would currently be available for use by permittees, State wildlife officials, and other authorized administrative uses. While the operators' freedom of choice in access routes could be impacted, permittees would retain access for purposes of administration of their grazing permits, including the use of closed road segments with prior notification by the Monument Manager.

Impacts to Cultural Resources

Both direct and indirect impacts to cultural resources would be expected from implementation of the proposed action. Indirect impacts would be expected from public outreach, signing or barricading of closed route segments. Where motorized use is successfully reduced or eliminated, physical alteration, looting, and other impacts related to human use would be reduced, thereby benefitting cultural resources. Direct impacts from the process of decompaction, and mulching could potentially impact buried or unknown cultural sites. Ground disturbance from decompaction could result in direct impacts to cultural resources where inventories did not identify resources prior to restoration work. Potential impacts include artifact displacement, breakage, compaction, and stratigraphic mixing of various cultural assemblages, site exposure, as well as potential looting by labor crews. These impacts are not eminent and would be minimized through the mitigation identified. For routes that are converted to non-motorized trails, there is potential for additional impacts such as looting and vandalism, and/or displacement and exposure due to potential for future erosion along trail surfaces.

Impacts to the Recreation Experience

Reducing the area accessed by motorized vehicles would benefit primitive recreation opportunities by reducing conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, as well as minimizing resource impacts associated with continued vehicular use. Allowing select routes to be maintained as non-motorized trails would provide new opportunities for hiking, backcountry hunting and exploration, and other quiet recreation uses. This action would retain some of the existing portions of the closed route, which facilitate continued use by visitors, but to a lesser degree than if motorized access were allowed.

Impacts to Soils

Soil functions (i.e. water storage/release, nutrient cycling, energy flow) and stability could be temporarily altered during project implementation. Soil productivity would be temporarily impeded. Long term vehicle disturbance would alter soil physical characteristics (aggregates) along the traveled-way, subjecting soils to water and wind erosion. Elimination of this long term disturbance would allow normal soil functions and productivity to return to the project areas.

Equipment and vehicles used to construct and maintain the project area could cause soil compaction and rutting. Soil compaction could alter the soil structure and decreases porosity, infiltration rate, air space and available water holding capacity. Ruts could provide a channel for concentrated flow to accelerate soil erosion. Soils are the most susceptible to compaction and rutting during moist or wet conditions, thus any construction or maintenance should be avoided during these periods. Proper compaction techniques and fill material along with any additional Best Management Practices (BMPs) or identified mitigation would reduce erosion on the traveled way and minimize the potential for future sliding or erosion of the roadway.

Impacts to Vegetation

Vegetation could be removed from undisturbed locations to provide material to implement vertical mulching on closed routes. The removal of these shrubs would potentially create short-term impacts in small areas. Brush would be taken from a broad area and would emphasize the use of previously disturbed areas, such as roadside berms and ditches to reduce impacts to intact plant communities. Without adequate public education and enforcement, some level of continued use or alternative route pioneering would be expected, which may create impacts to intact plant communities in the vicinity of closed routes, but continued use would be expected to occur primarily on the previously disturbed road bed. Where route closures are successful over time, these impacts would be offset by more rapid regeneration of native plant communities in the closed road bed when compared to the no-action, as well as reducing new impacts from continued pioneering of routes and expansion into undisturbed area, which has proven difficult to prevent under current management.

Impacts to Visual Resources

Retaining closed route segments as non-motorized trails would have the potential to create persistent man-made, linear features on the landscape. All routes would be evaluated to ensure that VRM objectives are met, and in most cases would not create visual contrasts that would impact scenic resources.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

Transportation and Access

Regional efforts to minimize impacts to sage grouse habitat and closure of many private roads to public use may exacerbate impacts to OHV users by limiting their opportunities to access portions of the Monument by motorized vehicles.

Cultural Resources

The proposed action would complement efforts to identify and protect historic resources. Together with inventory and stabilization efforts taken proactively or in support of other management actions, proactive efforts to reduce vehicle impacts would further minimize potential disturbance to cultural sites.

Soils

The proposed action would complement other on-going restoration projects in the Monument. Elimination of this long term soil disturbance offered by the proposed action would allow normal soil functions and productivity to recommence.

Vegetation

Recovery of soil resources combined with revegetation of the proposed action will allow native grasses and shrubs to resume normal physiological activity and ecosystem processes.

Wildlife Resources

The proposed action would complement other on-going restoration projects in the Monument, such as noxious weed eradication, fuels reduction, and fence removal, all of which reduce disturbance and physical hazards in wildlife habitat.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

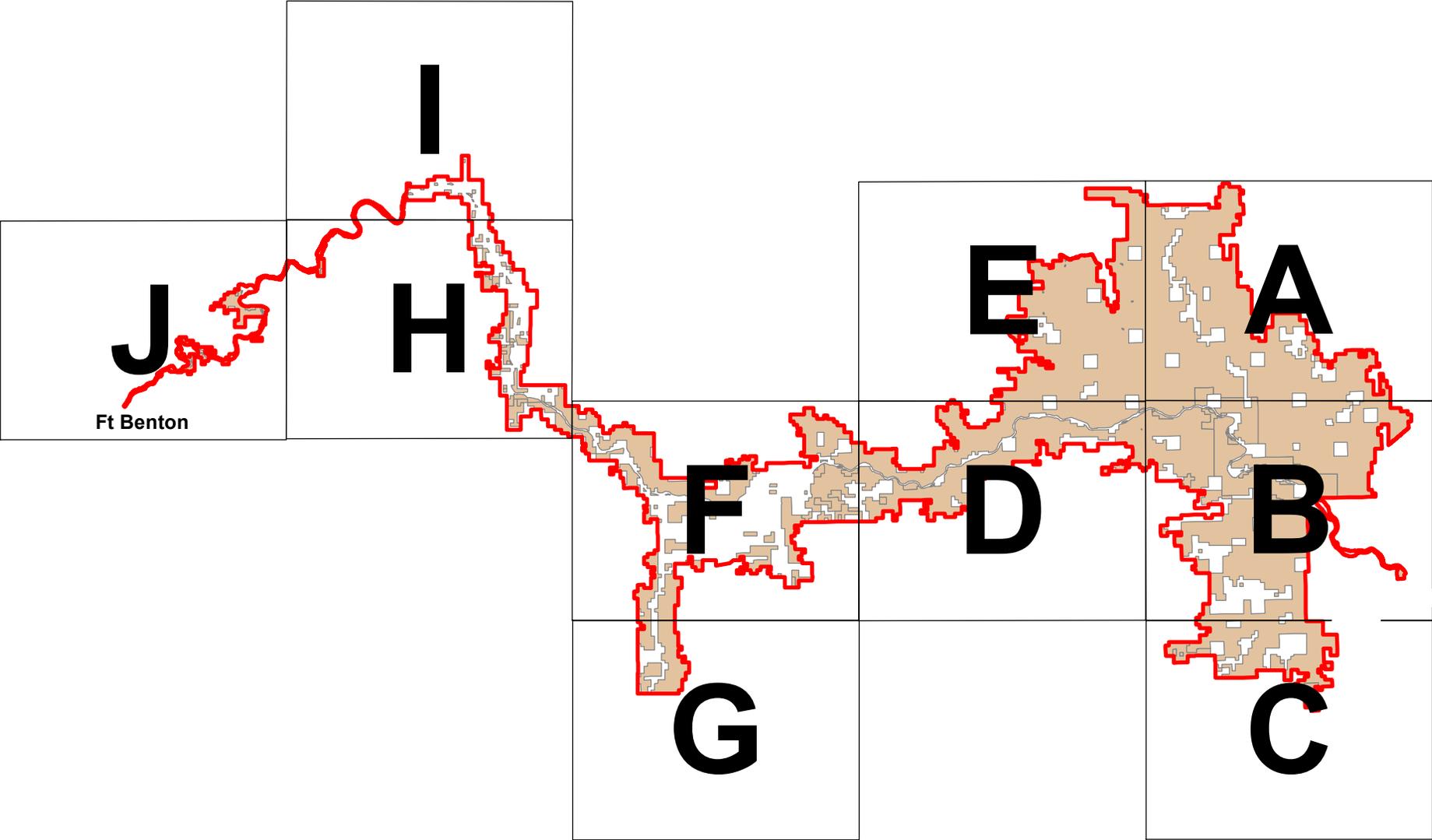
The no-action and proposed action were developed through a full and open public process during the development of the RMP. Refer to the RMP website to see which individuals, groups and agencies were consulted.

List of Preparers

Table 4.2. List of Preparers

Name (and agency, if other than BLM)	Title
Jody Peters	Wildlife Biologist
Zane Fulbright	Archeologist
Chad Krause	Hydrologist
Mark Schaefer	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Ben Hileman	Range Management Specialist
Tom Darrington	Range Management Specialist
Kenny Keever	Natural Resource Specialist

Location Map



Legend

- Landowner Permission Required on BLM roads within the Monument
- County Roads, Highways, and CMR National Refuge Roads
- Open BLM Roads within the Monument
- Limited BLM Roads within the Monument
- Closed BLM Roads within the Monument
- Open State Land Roads
- Closed State Land Roads within the Monument
- State Roads
- Other Roads (Landowner Permission Required)

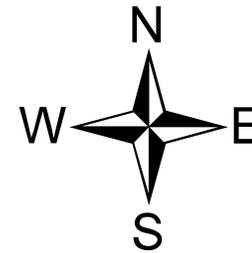
BLM Roads

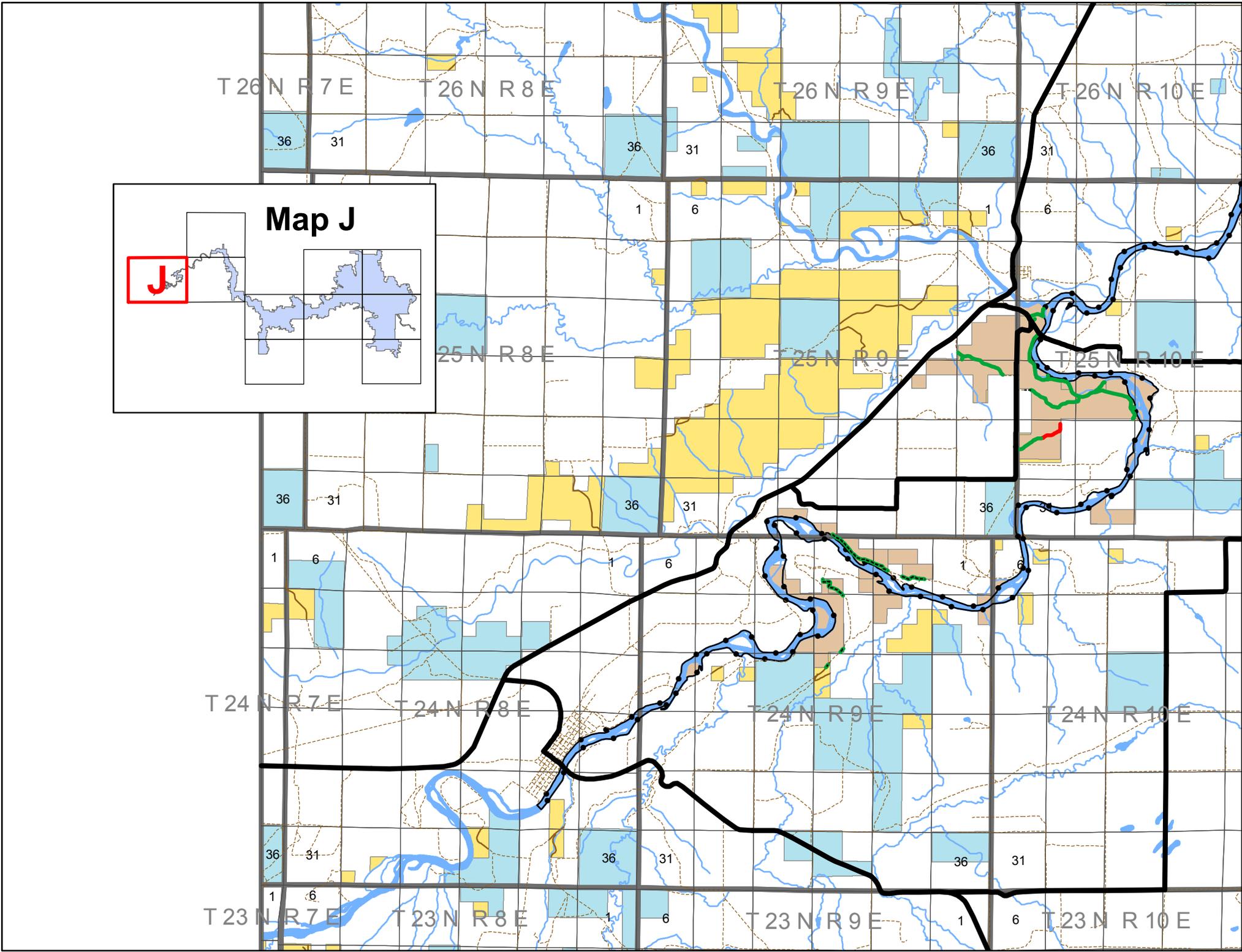
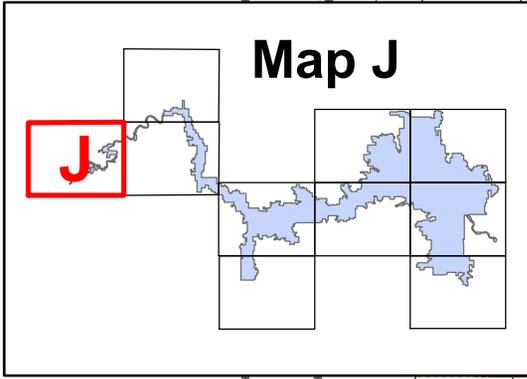
Road Classification

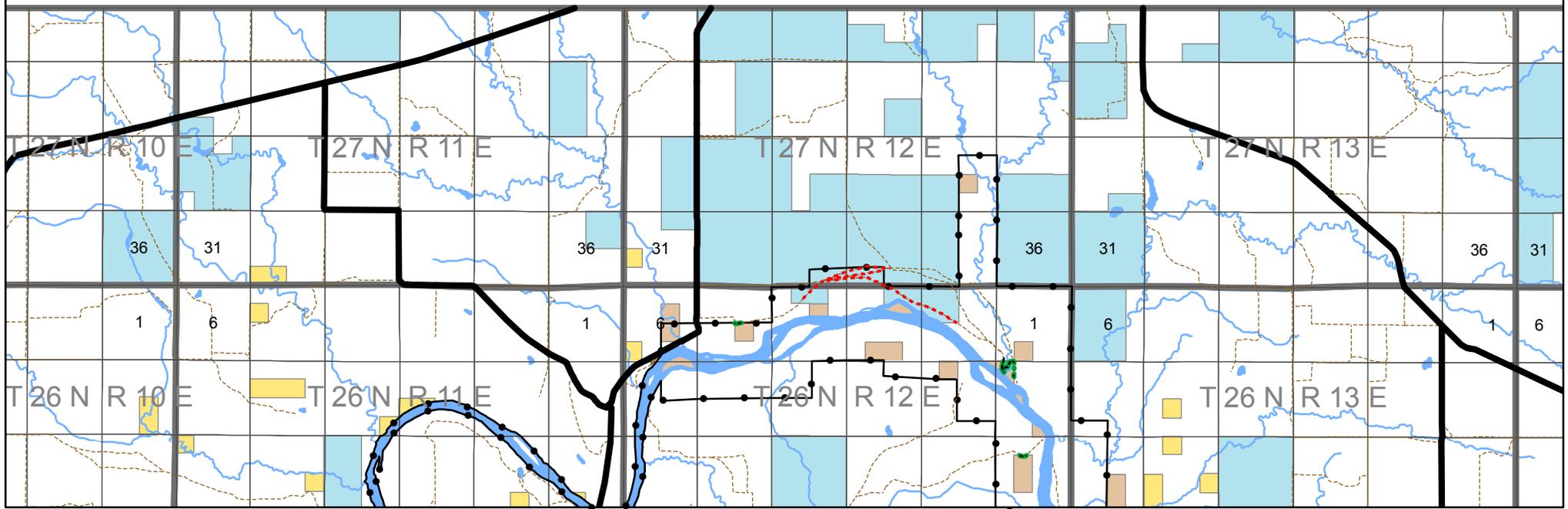
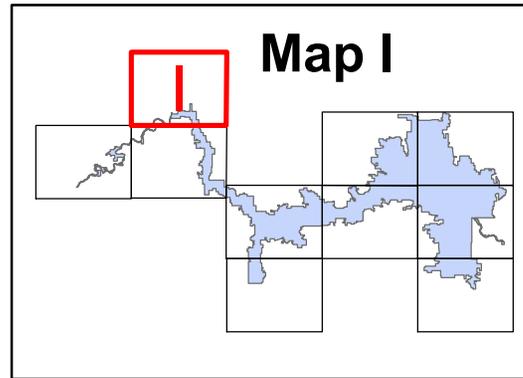
- Collector
- Local
- Resource
- County Boundary
- ▭ Wild & Scenic River Boundary
- ▨ Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- ▨ Wilderness Study Area

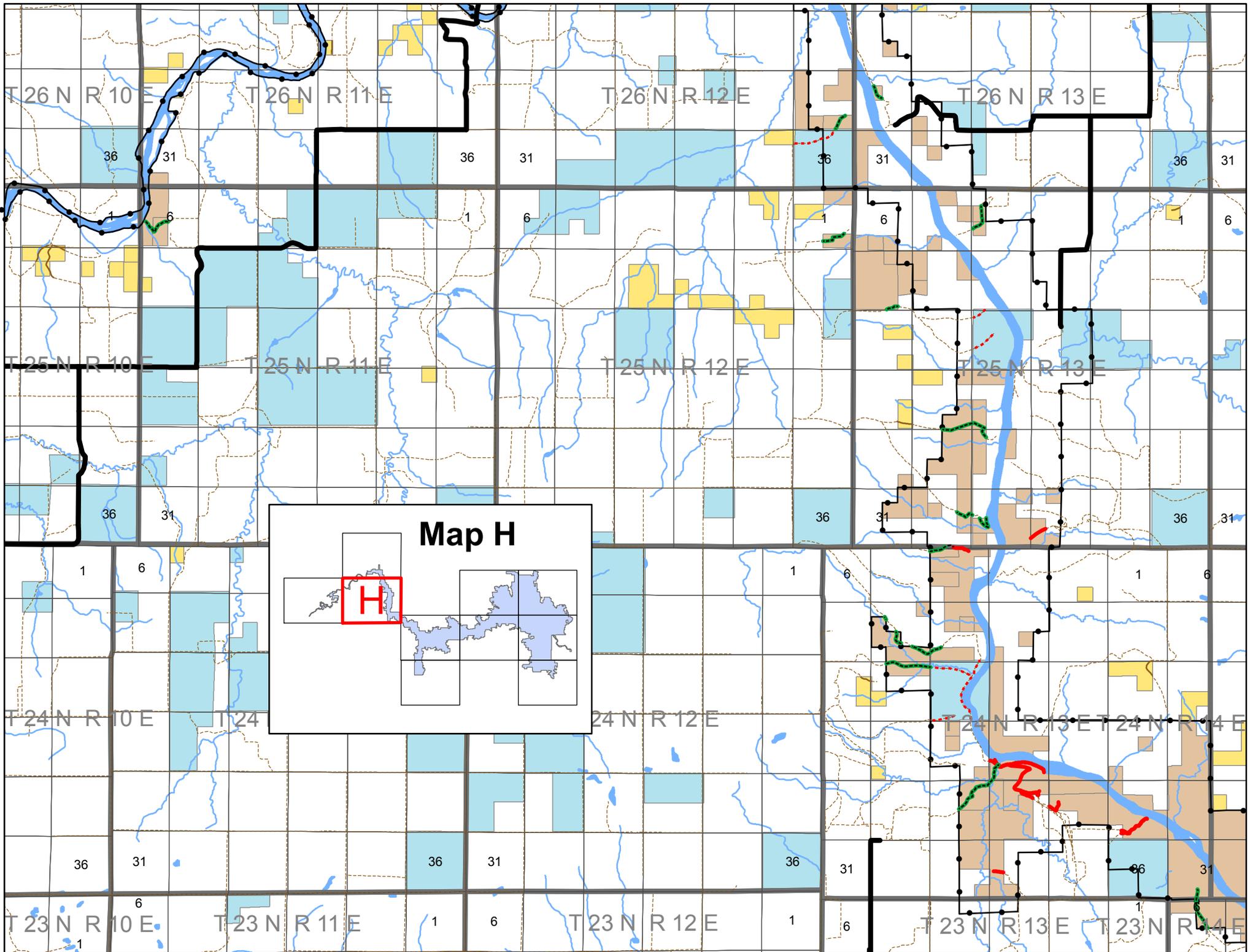
Surface Ownership

- ▭ Public Domain Land Administered by BLM
- ▭ Indian Land or Reservation
- ▭ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Land
- ▭ Bankhead-Jones Land Administered by BLM
- ▭ State Land
- ▭ Private Land
- ▭ Public Land within the Monument
- ▭ Water

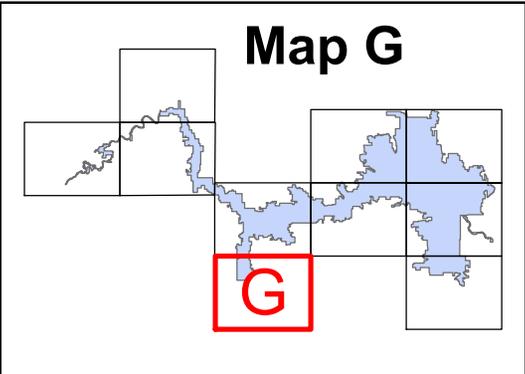
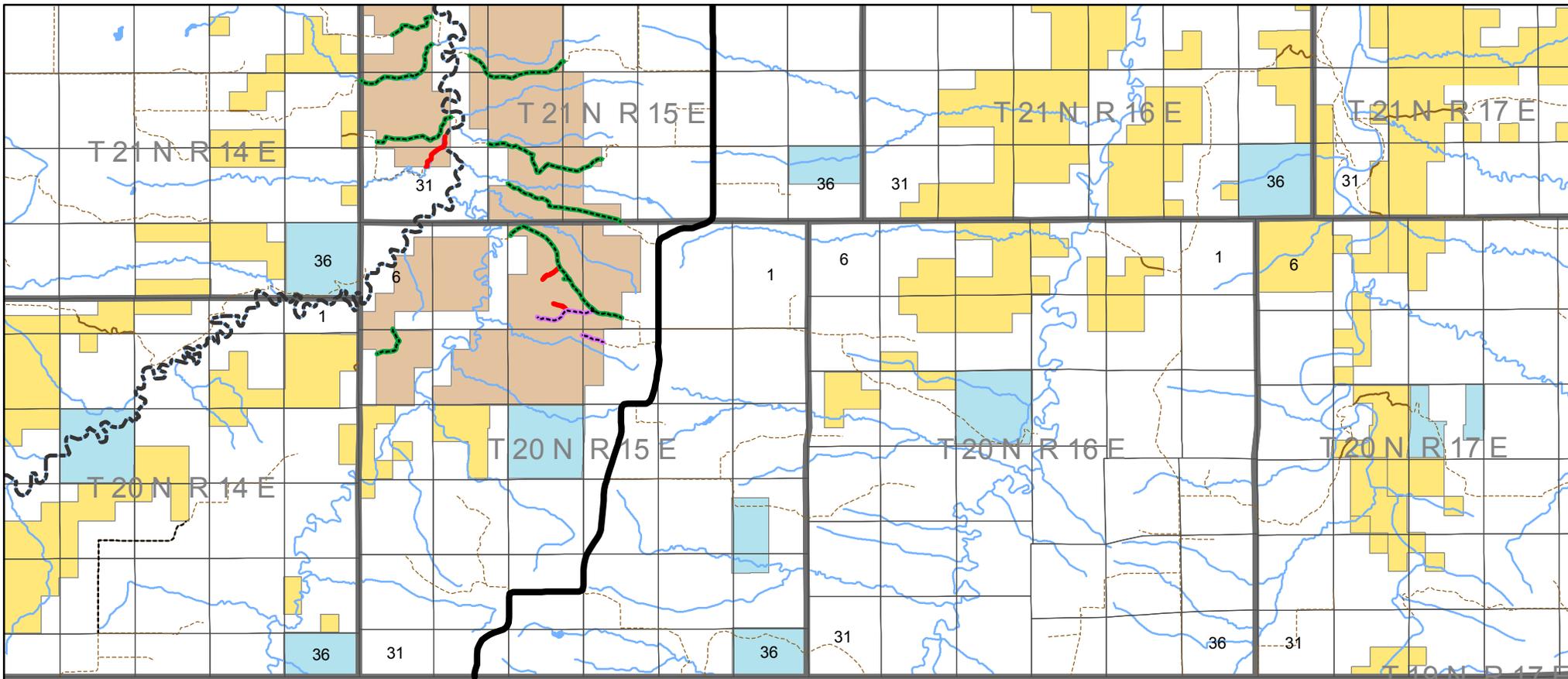


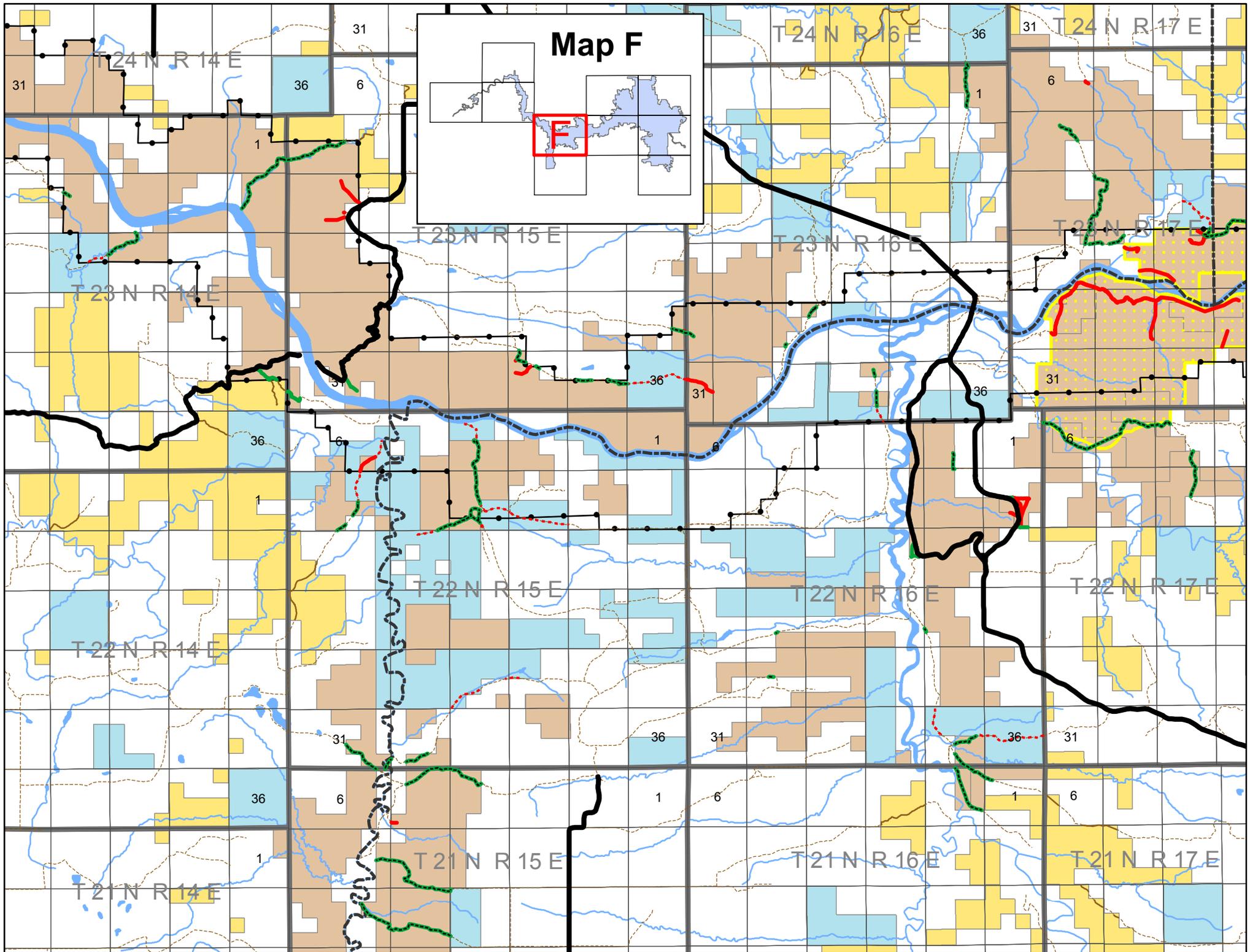


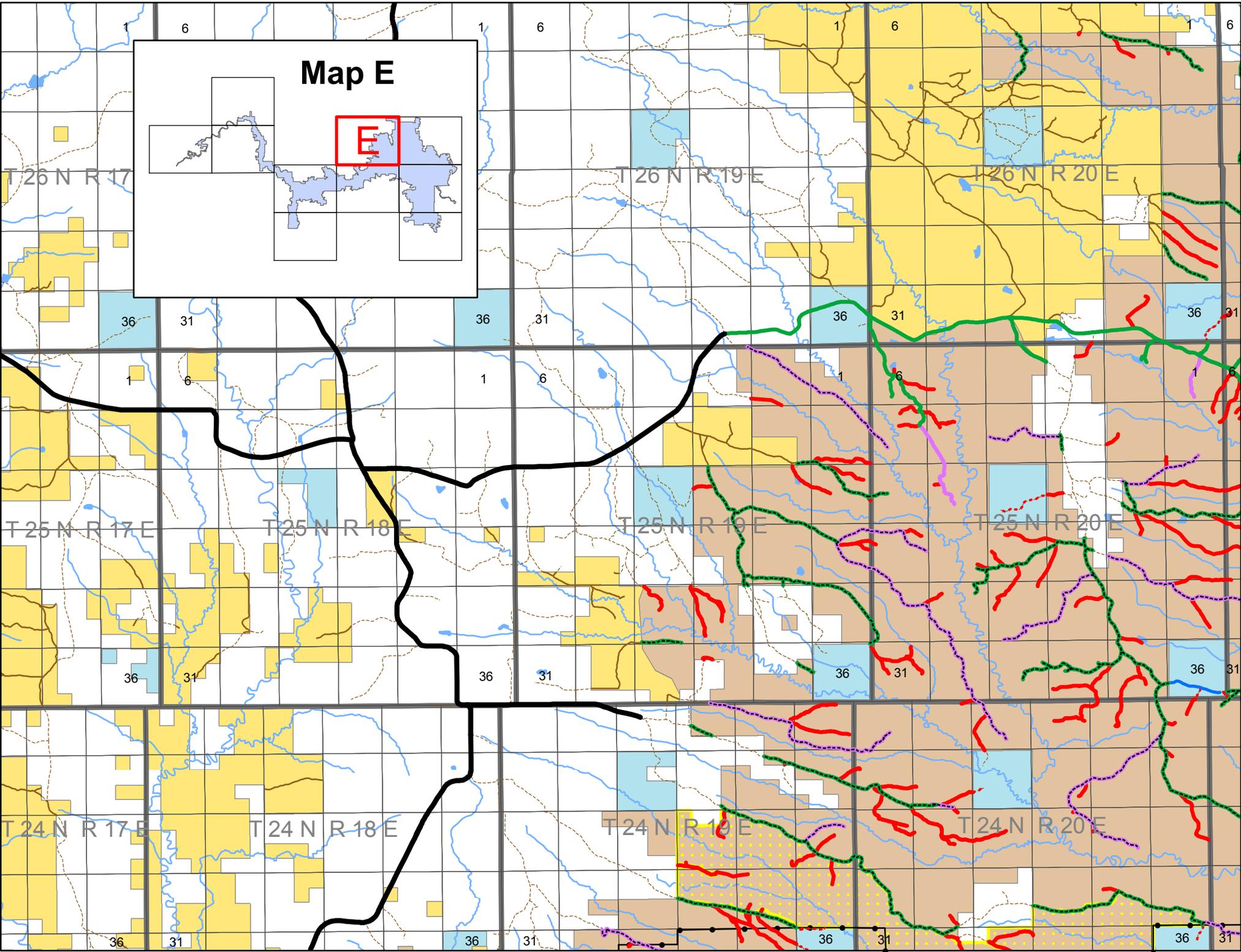
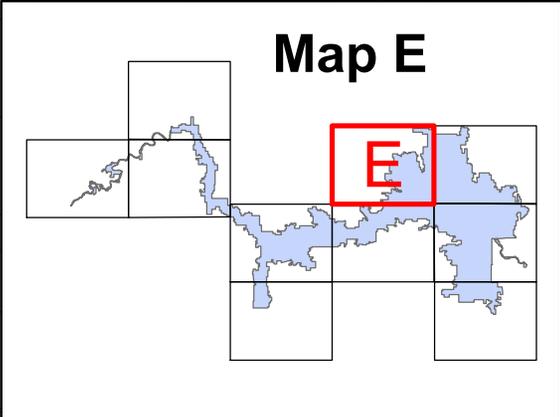


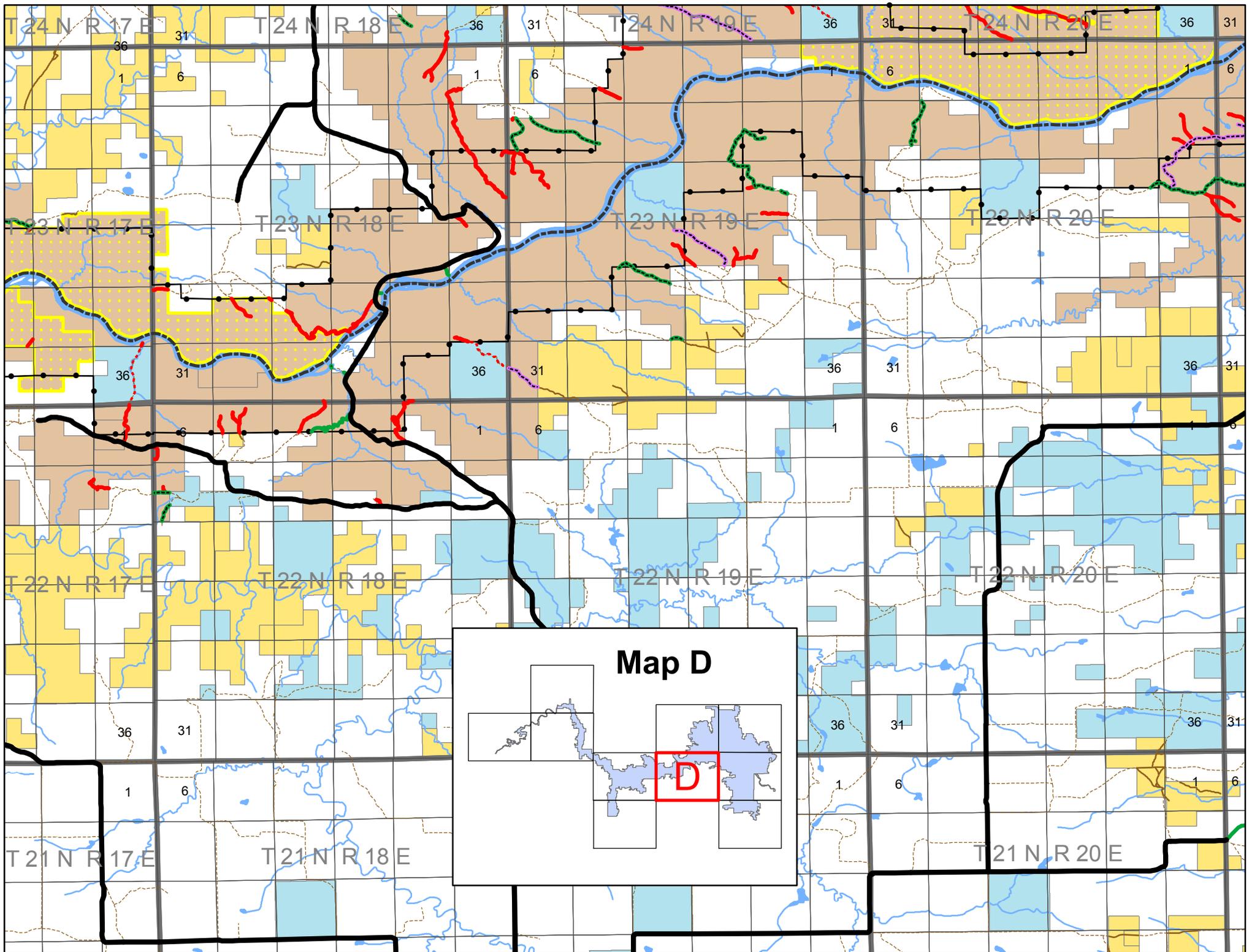


Map H

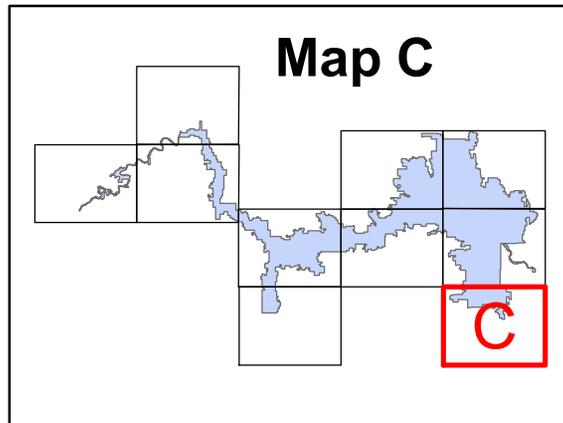
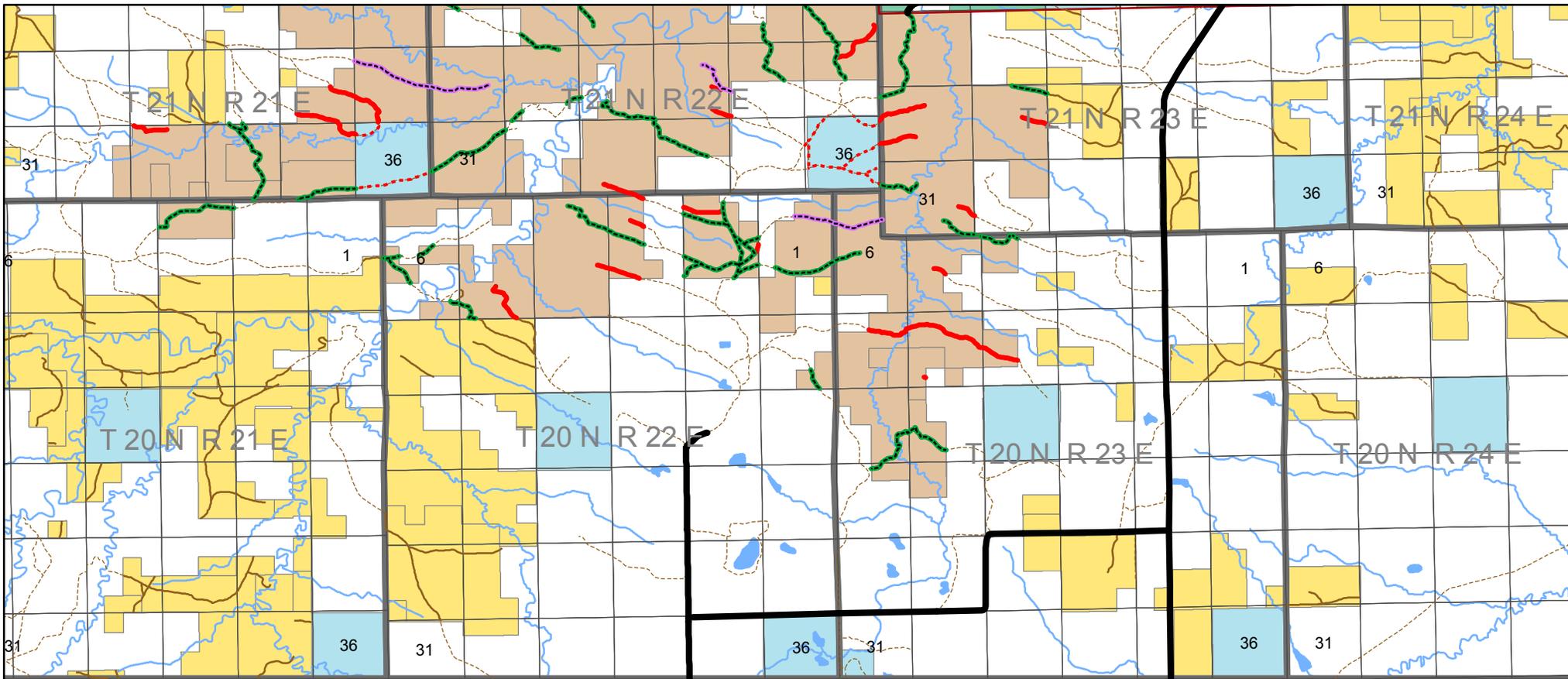


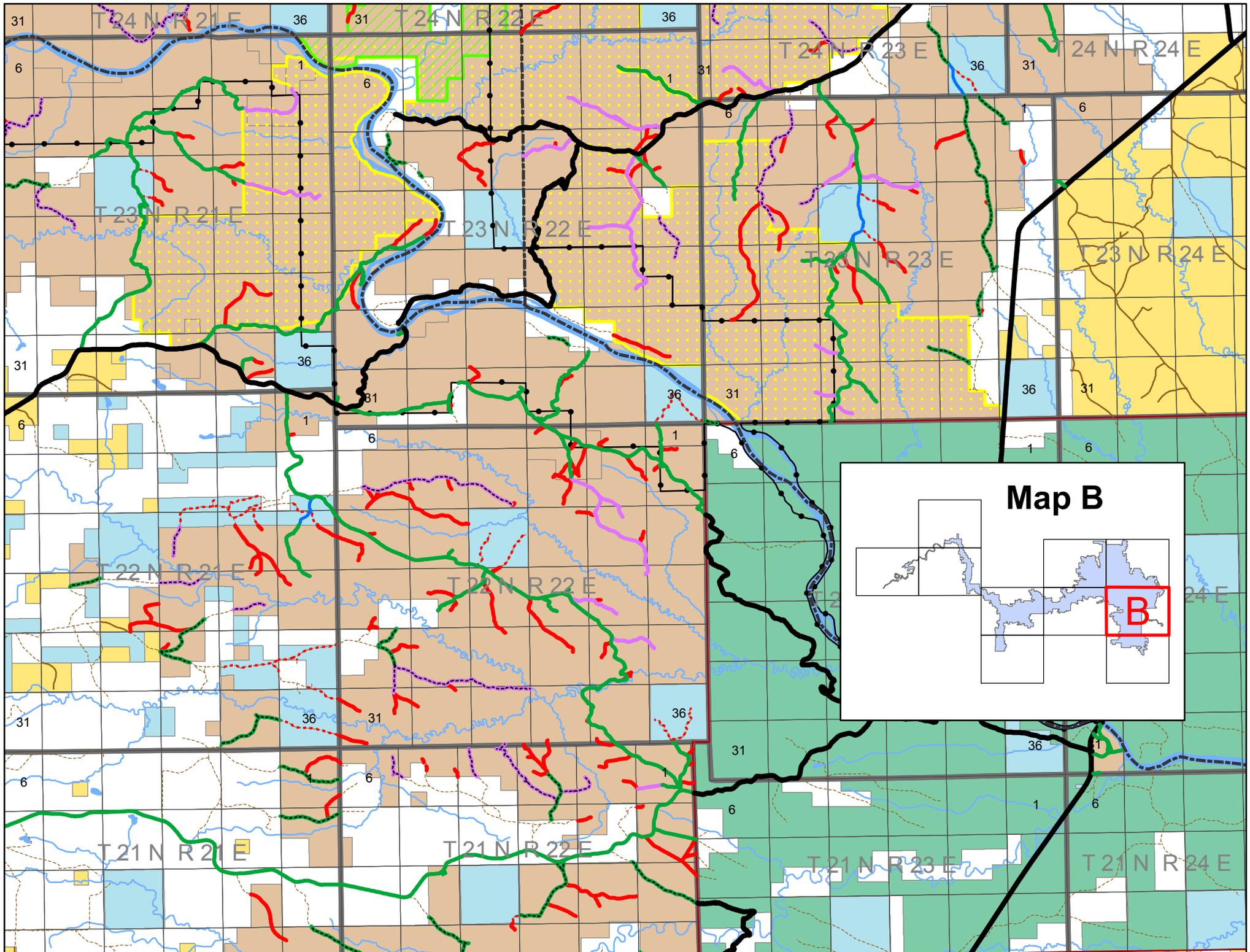


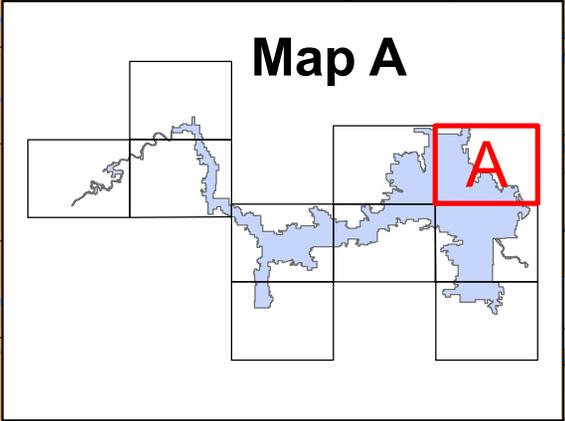
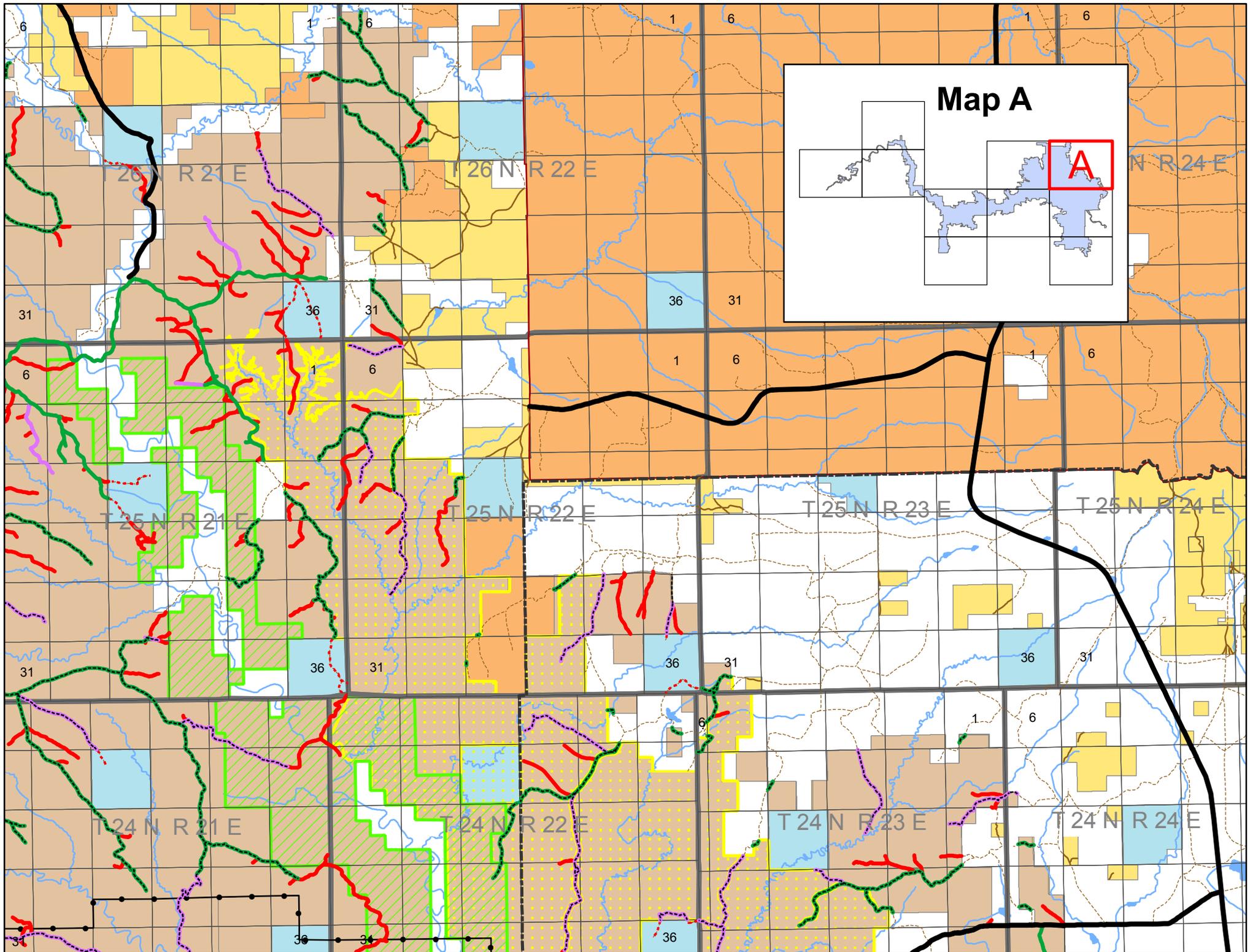




Map D







FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

AND

DECISION RECORD

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

Transportation System Implementation

DOI-BLM-MT-L070-2013-008-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Transportation System Implementation environmental assessment (MT-DOI-BLM-070-2013-008-EA), and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the expenditure of public funds to construct on-the-ground closures to implement the approximate 201 miles of road closures designated in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Record of Decision and approved Resource Management Plan of December 2008. It is my decision to authorize the expenditure of public funds to construct on-the-ground closures of any unauthorized routes that have been pioneered in the Monument since the Management Plan Decision of 2008. It is my decision to authorize the expenditure of public funds to change the use of one closed road (the Old Army Road near the Stafford Ferry) to a non-motorized trail.

Summary of the Proposed Action:

Approximately 201 miles of primarily user-created routes were designated as closed to public use by the approval of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) in December of 2008. In addition, a significant number of unauthorized motorized routes have been established by casual use since the Management Plan was approved. This action will establish an on-the-ground protocol that will physically close all these routes through a variety of methods and techniques. Small segments of these routes will be scarified, planted, seeded and stabilized to ensure rehabilitation of native vegetation. Signs will be installed as necessary to provide users on-the-ground orientation. If these methods do not deter unauthorized use, other methods will be used,

including but not limited to gates, rock barriers, and other means that will physically obstruct access. The work will be accomplished using primarily youth labor crews (Montana Conservation Corps) and volunteers using hand tools and established arid land restoration methods. In addition, the Old Army Road near the Stafford Ferry will be converted to a non-motorized interpretive trail.

This work will commence May 2015 and will continue until all unauthorized routes have been successfully closed and restored and the Interpretive Trail is in place.

This decision is contingent on meeting all stipulations and monitoring requirements listed below.

All routes where active route restoration would create new surface disturbance will be assessed for presence of archeological resources through a cultural survey. Any historic routes will be assessed for eligibility prior to reclamation.

If any unanticipated prehistoric and/or historic archaeological site or paleontological site is encountered during the proposed reclamation activities, work will immediately stop and the BLM will be contacted.

Soils stabilization efforts shall be completed within 30 days of the initiation of construction activities.

The appropriate erosion control and sediment Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be installed.

Site reclamation will blend with the adjacent site characteristics and topography.

Reclamation monitoring is required. Erosion of the site shall be equal to or less than similar adjacent undisturbed areas

Any seeding required will be of a seed mix appropriate for the specific ecological site and approved by the BLM.

All routes will be assessed for the presence of non-native, invasion plants prior to commencing surface disturbing reclamation activities. If noxious weeds infestations are detected, appropriate treatment will be undertaken by the BLM.

Bighorn Sheep lambing areas will be avoided from May 1 through June 30. Sage Grouse nesting habitat will be avoided from March 1 through June 15. Active migratory bird nests will be protected by a 300 foot radial buffer.

Rationale for the Decision:

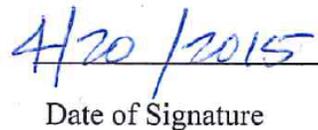
The proposed action is in conformance with the UMRBNM Resource Management Plan that specifically provides direction to close 201 miles of user created routes as identified on the Approved Resource Management Plan Map 4, sides A and B, West Half and East Half Transportation Map.

The Proclamation states: “The Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes.”

The Resource Management Plan provides direction: “The BLM will emphasize dispersed recreation opportunities including hiking and development of non-motorized hiking trails.”

During preparation of the EA, the public was notified of the proposed action through a posting on the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument NEPA Register on 3/17/2015. The Draft EA was posted on the UMRBNM website for the duration of the 30 day comment period. No comments on the Draft EA were received.


Michael Kania


Date of Signature

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument