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BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF 1983 WESTERN SPRUCE BUDWORM
SUPPRESSION PROJECT

by

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INTRODUCTION

The first indication of the current western spruce budworm (WSBW), *Choristoneura occidentalis* Freeman outbreak in eastern Oregon was 2,300 acres of defoliation noted during the annual aerial detection survey in 1980 (McConnell et al 1980). In 1981, 310,000 acres of defoliation were mapped during the annual survey of eastern Oregon, a 130-fold increase over that detected in 1980. This prompted Forest Pest Management, National Forest, and State personnel to conduct an environmental analysis of the situation. The analysis indicated that 200,000 acres qualified for direct treatment with insecticides. Because of budget constraints, only 178,000 acres were treated in 1982. The aerial detection survey in July of 1982 indicated that the area defoliated had increased to over 1.5 million acres. Another environmental analysis was made in 1982-1983. The Environmental Assessment, which resulted from the analysis, proposed insecticide treatment of approximately 1.4 million acres of WSBW-infested mixed-conifer type and pine type on the Umatilla, Ochoco, Wallowa-Whitman, and Malheur National Forests and adjacent BLM, State, and private lands. The principal host species involved were Douglas-fir, grand fir, and white fir. During June and July 1983, a total of 524,561 acres were treated--501,994 acres were treated with carbaryl, 10,095 with mexacarbate, and 12,472 with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.).

The objective of this project was to reduce WSBW populations so that they remain at nondamaging levels throughout the current outbreak period. A 14-day post treatment count of 1.5 larvae per branch or less was the level that we felt could accomplish this objective. Meeting this target was expected to allow achievement of the objective of this project.

In addition to the operational project, three units were treated to compare B.t. and mexacarbate with the standard carbaryl treatment and an untreated check area under Pacific Northwest conditions.

PROJECT AREA

Seventeen entomological units (EU's)^{1/} were treated in 1983 in eastern Oregon on or adjacent to portions of the Umatilla and Malheur National Forests and adjacent intermingled BLM, State, and private lands (see Figures 1 through 15). The EU's on the Umatilla National Forest ranged in elevation from 3200 to 6500 feet. The EU's on the Malheur National Forest had an elevational range of 3500 to 7000 feet. All EU's contained a mixture of mixed-conifer stands, pine stands, and open meadows.

^{1/} An area distinctly separated from other areas where treatment or lack of treatment will not have an effect on WSBW in other areas.

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Each EU was divided into spray blocks to insure uniformity of insect and foliage development when released for treatment. Each spray block had a maximum elevational range of about 1000 feet and varied in size from 5 to 9380 acres.

SAMPLING DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Larval Development and Density

Larval development plot locations were selected to represent differences in elevation and aspect within a particular block. If an elevation and/or aspect was not represented by a plot within a block, larval development information from the nearest plot at or near the same elevation and aspect was used. Larval samples from these plots were also counted to determine if levels were high enough to justify treatment.

A plot consisted of two open-grown Douglas-firs or true firs, the midcrowns of which could be reached with a 14-foot polepruner equipped with a catchbasket. Two midcrown (14-16 feet from ground level) 45 cm apical branches were collected from opposite sides of each tree on each collection date. When possible, sample collections were made only once from any tree at a plot site. Samples were placed into paper bags and transported to the laboratory where they were held in a walk-in cooler until they could be examined. All larvae from each branch were collected and examined for density, instar, and species determination. The threshold for treatment was at least 3.5 larvae/branch. When at least 50 percent of the WSBW larvae from development plots representing a spray block were in the 4th instar or later and the new buds had unfurled, the block was released for treatment.

Prespray and Postspray Treatment Larval Population

1. Operational Project

One or more larval population evaluation plots were established for each 1500 acres, with at least one plot per block. The proportion of plots to acres for each EU varied from 1:150 to 1:1200.

A plot consisted of five open-grown trees (Douglas-fir or true fir), the midcrowns of which could be reached with a 14-foot polepruner equipped with a catchbasket.

Since percent mortality was not being used to measure treatment effectiveness, prespray samples just prior to treatment were not taken on 14 of the EU's. Postspray samples were collected 14 days after treatment. They consisted of two 45 cm midcrown, apical branches (one each from opposite sides) from each of the plot trees. All larvae and pupae from each sample branch, as well as those that had fallen into the catchbasket, were counted and recorded in the field.

2. Evaluation of B.t. and Mexacarbate

Three EU's and a check area were used to evaluate these insecticides. Pogue 1 was treated with carbaryl, the standard; Pogue 2 was treated with mexacarbate, and Pogue 3 was treated with B.t. (Figure 2). The check plots were established in an untreated area around these units.

A plot consisted of five open-grown trees (Douglas-fir or true fir), the midcrown of which could be reached with a 14-foot polepruner equipped with a catchbasket. Prespray samples were collected just prior to treatment. One 45 cm midcrown, apical branch was collected from each plot tree during the prespray sampling period. Care was taken so that larvae from other branches were not knocked into the catchbasket and that all larvae from each sample branch, as well as the branch itself, were caught in the catchbasket. Each sample branch and all larvae within the catchbasket were put into a separate paper bag and labeled. Samples were transported to the laboratory and stored in a walk-in cooler until they could be examined.

Postspray samples were collected 14 and 21 days after treatment. The purpose of the 21 day sample was to measure possible delayed mortality from B.t. They consisted of two 45 cm midcrown, apical branches (one each from opposite sides) from each of the five previously sampled plot trees. When possible, branches were clipped from above those collected during prespray sampling to lessen the chance of larvae having been dislodged from the postspray sample branches during the prespray collection period. All larvae and pupae from each sample branch, as well as those that had fallen into the catchbasket, were counted and recorded in the field.

INSECTICIDE APPLICATION

During this project, three insecticides were used. Sevin 4-Oil® was used over most of the area, while Thuricide 32LV® and Zectran DB® were applied to smaller areas and compared with a standard carbaryl treatment and an untreated check area to evaluate these two formulations.

Sevin 4-Oil® was mixed with diesel oil at a volume-to-volume ratio of 1:1 and applied at a rate of 1/2 gallon per acre (1 pound active ingredient/acre). This mixture was applied with helicopters equipped with either Beecomist® or flat fan spray nozzles. Both spray systems were calibrated to release spray droplets with a mass median diameter (MMD) of 140 μ with Beecomist® and 190 μ with flat fan nozzles.

Thuricide 32LV® was mixed with water at a volume-to-volume ratio of 1:1 and applied at a rate of 3/4 of a gallon per acre (12 Billion International Units per acre). The spray system was equipped with flat fan nozzles and calibrated to release droplets with a volume median diameter (VMD) of 180 μ .

Zectran DB® was mixed with diesel oil at a volume-to-volume ratio of 1:9 and applied at a rate of 1 gallon per acre (.125 pound active ingredient per acre). The spray system was equipped with Beecomist® nozzles and calibrated to release droplets with an MMD of 100-130 μ .

The size of application helicopters used on the project varied from a Bell 214 with an application rate of 1400 acres per hour to a Hiller 12E, which had an application rate of 350 acres per hour.

RESULTS

Larval Development and Density

Larval development was earlier and more rapid on the lower elevation EU's than on those at generally higher elevations. All insect development blocks were released for treatment within a span of 19 days on the Umatilla National Forest and surrounding lands, as compared to a 30-day span on the Malheur National Forest and surrounding lands. The greater development span on the Malheur National Forest was caused by greater elevational differences there and the slower insect and tree development at the higher, cooler elevations.

Prespray samples just prior to treatment were taken only in the four areas used to evaluate mexacarbate and B.t. All other areas considered for treatment were qualified for treatment by early larval density estimates when they were predominantly in the third and fourth instar. The threshold for treatment was 3.5 larvae/branch. The average early instar larval density sample and range for each EU is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Larval Density/Branch and Ranges by Unit

Unit	Mean Population Density Larvae/Branch	Range
Miller Prairie 2	31.7	3.5-110.5
Miller Prairie 1	31.7	1.0-103.8
Matlock	34.6	3.0-114.5
Putney	25.6	2.3-82.3
Rudio Mtn.	16.5	1.8-37.3
P.A.	19.7	1.5-67.8
Pogue Point 1	15.8	8.5-87.5
Pogue Point 2	20.0	1.8-58.3
Pogue Point 3	12.4	1.5-36.0
Logan North	26.3	0.8-110.0
Logan South	14.8	1.8-60.8
Logan South 2	12.7	0.5-48.8
Butte	37.5	3.0-79.0
Aldrich	19.1	0.0-84.3
King	16.7	1.0-35.3
Snow	17.2	6.3-37.3
Pearson	24.1	3.5-53.8

Prespray and Postspray Larval Population

1. Operational Project

The postspray larval sampling showed residual populations ranging from 0.3 larvae per branch on the P.A. Unit to 3.1 on the Pearson Unit.

As noted in Table 2, four of the 14 EU's did not meet the target.

Table 2. Postspray Average Larvae/Branch by Unit, the Ranges, and Acreages

Unit	Treatment	14-Day Postspray (Range)	Acreage
Miller Prairie 2	carbaryl	0.8 (0.0-4.6)	41,136
Miller Prairie 1	carbaryl	1.0 (0.0-5.8)	75,434
Putney Mtn.	carbaryl	1.5 (0.0-7.9)	33,642
Rudio Mtn.	carbaryl	1.5 (0.0-11.1)	20,577
P.A.	carbaryl	0.3 (0.0-2.6)	17,560
Logan South 1	carbaryl	0.7 (0.0-5.5)	58,528
Logan South 2	carbaryl	0.6 (0.0-3.6)	35,259
Butte	carbaryl	0.9 (0.0-3.9)	5,596
King	carbaryl	1.3 (0.1-6.1)	16,376
Snow	carbaryl	1.3 (0.0-7.4)	4,950

Aldrich	carbaryl	1.7 (0.0-9.1)*	88,577
Matlock	carbaryl	1.9 (0.0-12.6)*	61,174
Logan North	carbaryl	2.1 (0.0-8.3)*	8,010
Pearson	carbaryl	3.1 (0.0-14.8)*	20,436

*EU's not meeting the 1.5 larvae/branch target

2. Comparison of Carbaryl, Mexcarbate, and B.t.

None of the three small-scale evaluation units designated to compare carbaryl, mexacarbate, and B.t. met the Project target of an average of 1.5 larvae/branch or less.

Prespray and postspray larval densities are summarized in Table 3. Table 4 shows the relative population reduction by the three materials.

Table 3. Pre- and Postspray Average Larvae/Branch by Unit and the Ranges

Unit	Treatment	Prespray (Range)	14-Day Postspray (Range)	21-Day Postspray (Range)
Pogue Point 1	carbaryl	21.6 (9.8-44.8)	2.7 (0.1-11.5)	1.6 (0.1-6.2)
Pogue Point 2	mexacarbate	26.1 (7.6-46.6)	2.9 (0.1-7.6)	2.4 (0.1-9.7)
Pogue Point 3	B.t.	10.8 (1.8-34.0)	3.3 (0.5-9.1)	2.1 (0.4-6.3)
Check	untreated	13.1 (1.4-40.8)	6.9 (0.6-21.9)	4.9 (0.8-19.1)

Table 4. Percent Uncorrected Mortality (and Corrected Mortality^{1/})
for the Pogue Point Units

Unit	14 days	21 days
Pogue Point 1	87 (76)	93 (81)
Pogue Point 2	89 (79)	91 (75)
Pogue Point 3	69 (42)	81 (48)
Check	47	63

^{1/} Abbott's formula used to correct treatment mortality for natural mortality.

DISCUSSION

Larval Development

Larval development was quite variable between the spray blocks in the southern treatment units with the release of blocks for treatment being spread over 30 days. These time spans were expected to be longer than those of the northern units (19 days) because of the greater elevational ranges of the southern units. However, they were not expected to be as long as they were. This was due in part to the cool and rainy weather experienced in the area during late June and July after the northern units had been treated.

Larval Population Density

Prior to 1983, the target density was expressed as larvae/100 buds. This was based on work by Carolin and Coulter 1972. In 1983, the target density was expressed as larvae/branch, and was also based on Carolin and Coulter (1972). By using larvae/branch, one does not have to count buds and eliminates questions concerning which buds to count. The result is the same, but the latter method speeds up lab and field work and reduces potential for error.

Postspray larval population densities for 10 of the 14 EU's in which only carbaryl was used were at or below the density threshold of 1.5 larvae/branch. Budworm populations in these areas are expected to remain at nondamaging levels throughout the current outbreak period.

Considerable variability existed between sample plots in most of the units. An analysis of the plots with ≤ 1.5 larvae/branch and plots with > 1.5 larvae/branch showed that the average densities on plots with 1.5 or less larvae ranged from 0.2 to 0.8 larvae/branch. However, the average densities on the plots with more than 1.5 larvae ranged from 2 to 5 larvae/branch. These densities were similar to those of plots in untreated areas. This suggests that plot densities above the threshold level were due to problems in insecticide application and not poor insecticide efficacy.

Postspray larval densities in the remaining four units, while much reduced, did not meet the threshold of 1.5 larvae per branch. While it is not known what these populations will do throughout the remainder of the current outbreak, at least some resurgence may occur in the areas of poor treatment.

All treated areas will be monitored until budworm populations in surrounding untreated areas collapse. This monitoring will involve annual sampling within treated areas to estimate budworm population densities and/or host-tree defoliation intensities. This information will be augmented by that gained from the annual aerial forest insect detection survey.

Carbaryl, mexacarbate, and *B.t.* have been effective in the past in reducing western spruce budworm populations. However, postspray larval densities in all three evaluation areas in the Pogue Point Units, while much reduced, did not meet the threshold of 1.5 larvae per branch.

As with the operational portion of the project, the carbaryl and mexacarbate units had considerable variability between sample plots. The results suggest inadequate treatment.

Population reduction in the areas treated with carbaryl and mexacarbate were essentially the same. In the area treated with *B.t.*, the variation between plots was less, but the percent mortality was also lower. This could be due to a more uniform spray application, but reduced efficacy or delayed mortality which was not measured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LITERATURE CITED

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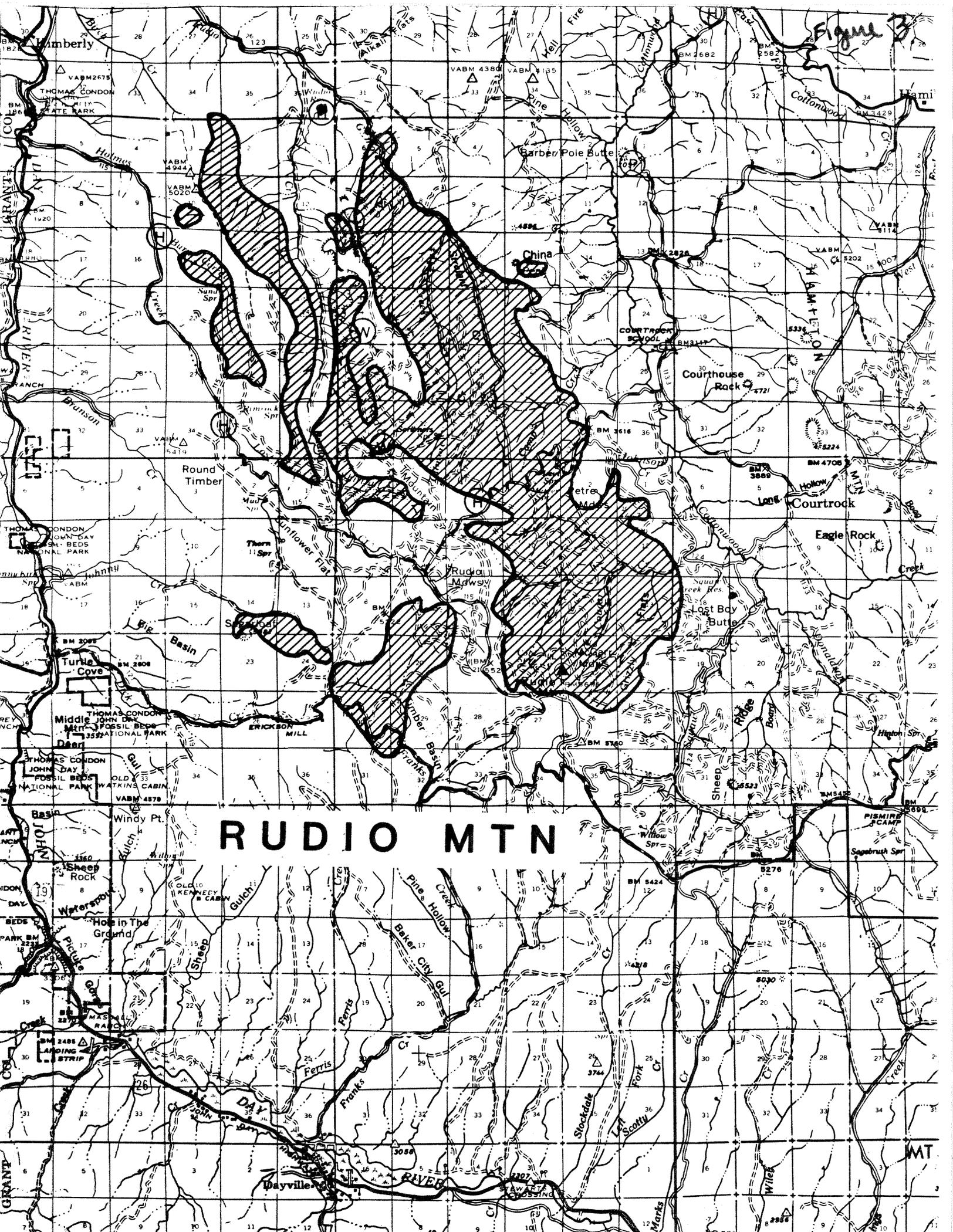
1983 WESTERN SPRUCE BUDWORM

Figure 1.

CONTROL PROJECT ENTOMOLOGICAL UNITS

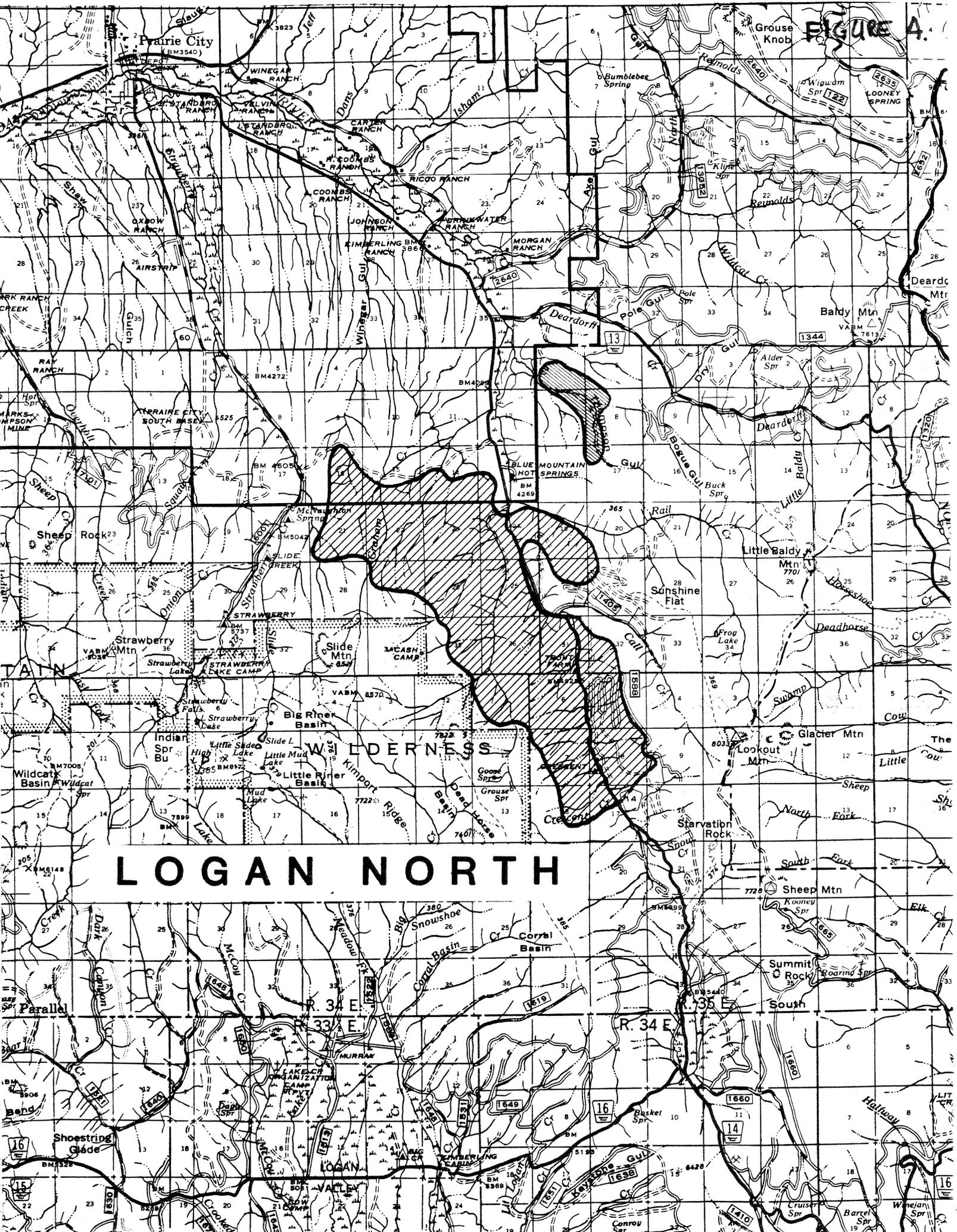


Figure 3



RUDIO MTN

MT



LOGAN NORTH

R. 31 E.
100'

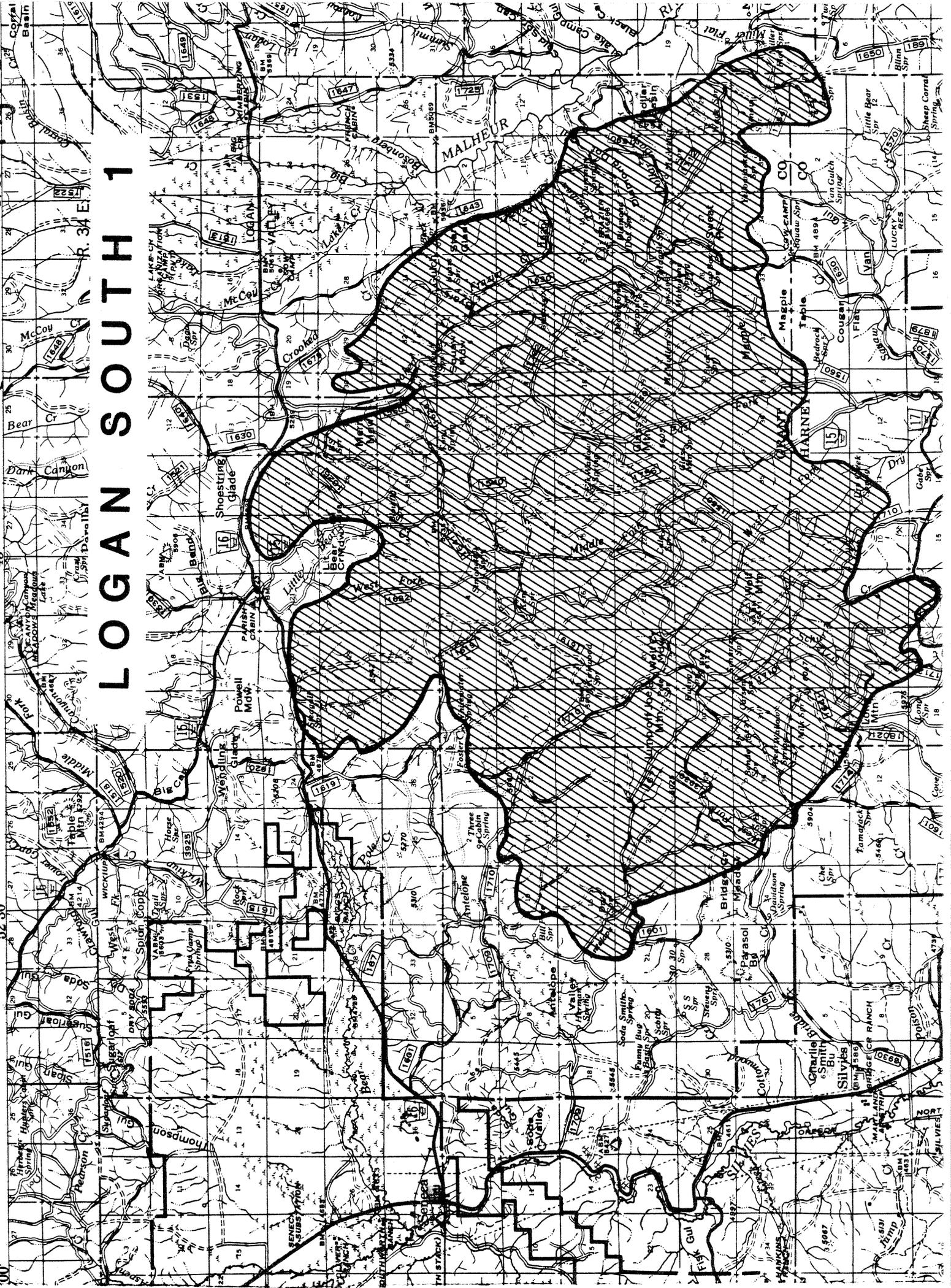
R. 32 E.
52'30"

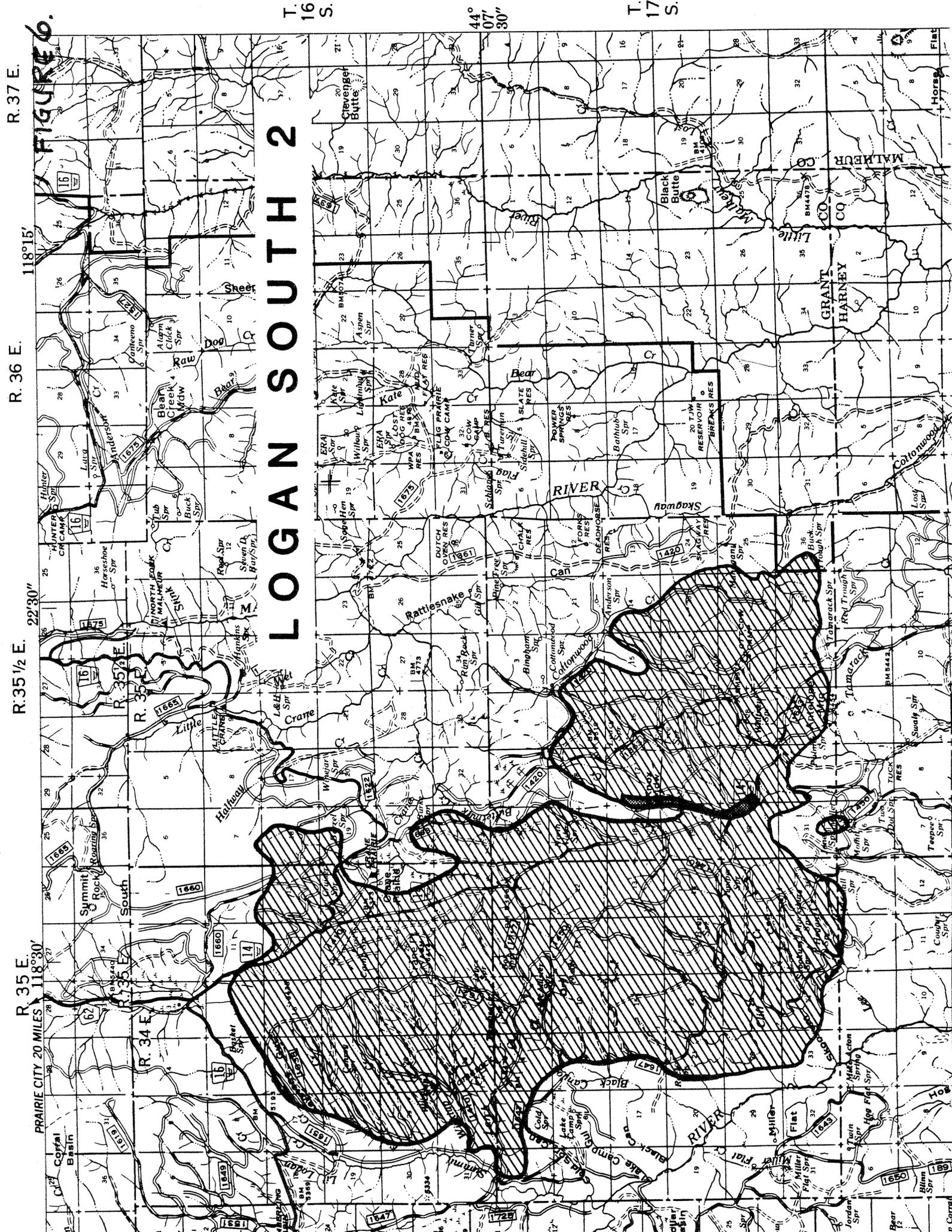
R. 33 E.
45'

R. 34 E.
37'30"

Figure 5

LOGAN SOUTH 1





LOGAN SOUTH 2

PRAIRIE CITY 20 MILES. R. 35 E. 118°30'. R. 35 1/2 E. 22°30'. R. 36 E. 118°15'. R. 37 E.

FIGURE 6.

T. 16 S.

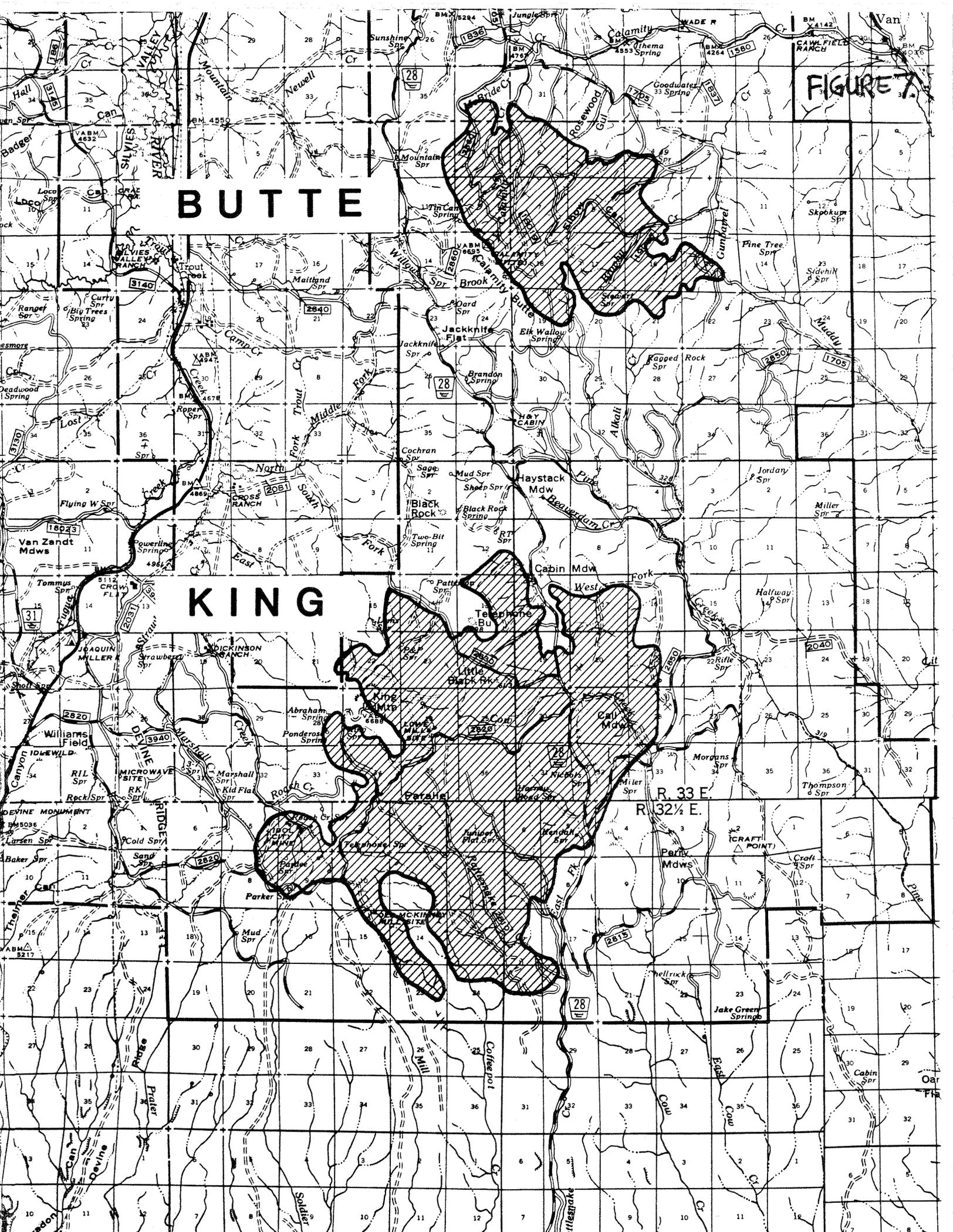
44° 07' 30"

T. 17 S.

FIGURE 7

BUTTE

KING



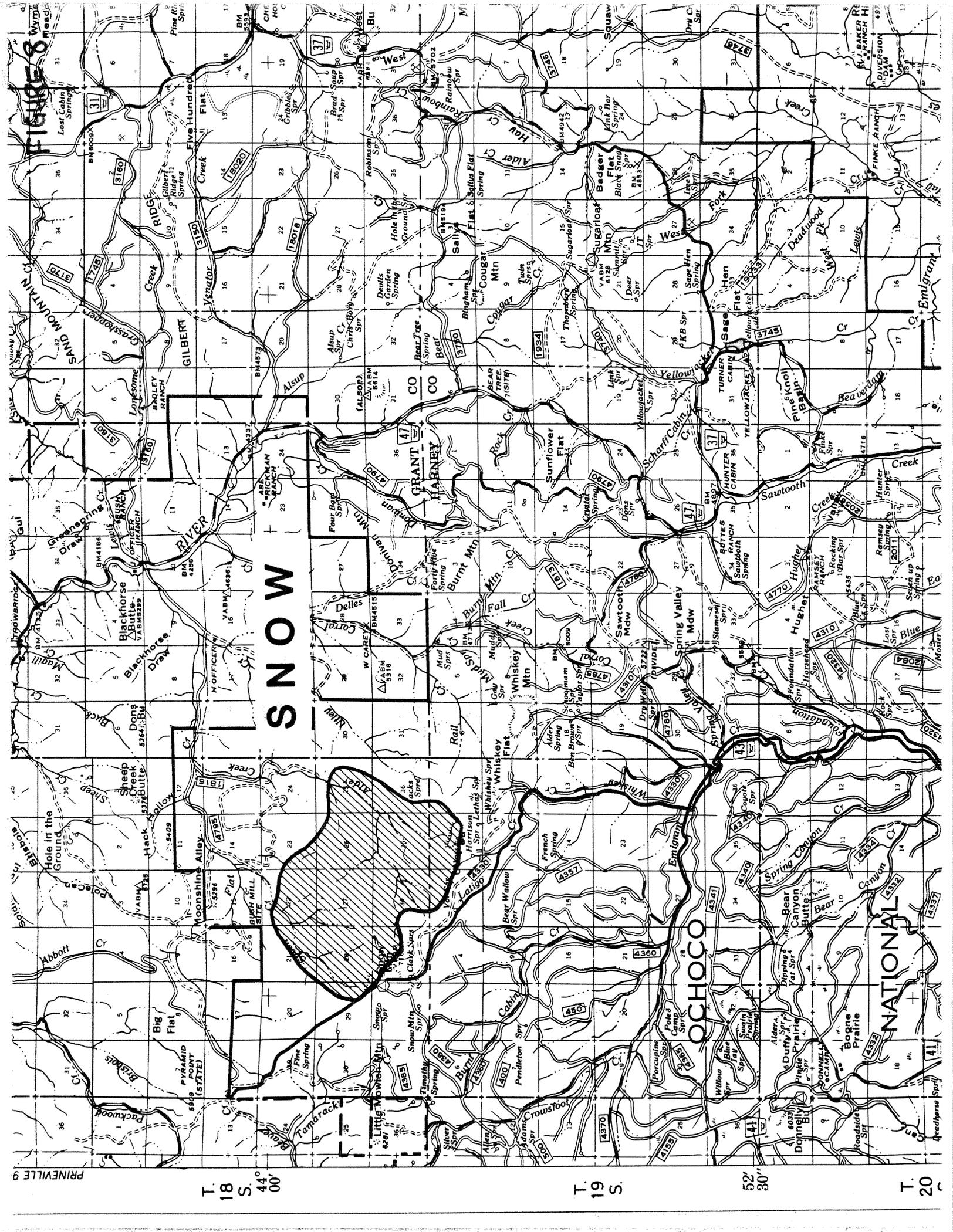


FIGURE 8

SNOW

OCHOCHO

NATIONAL NATIONAL

PRINEVILLE 9

T. 18 S. 44° 00'

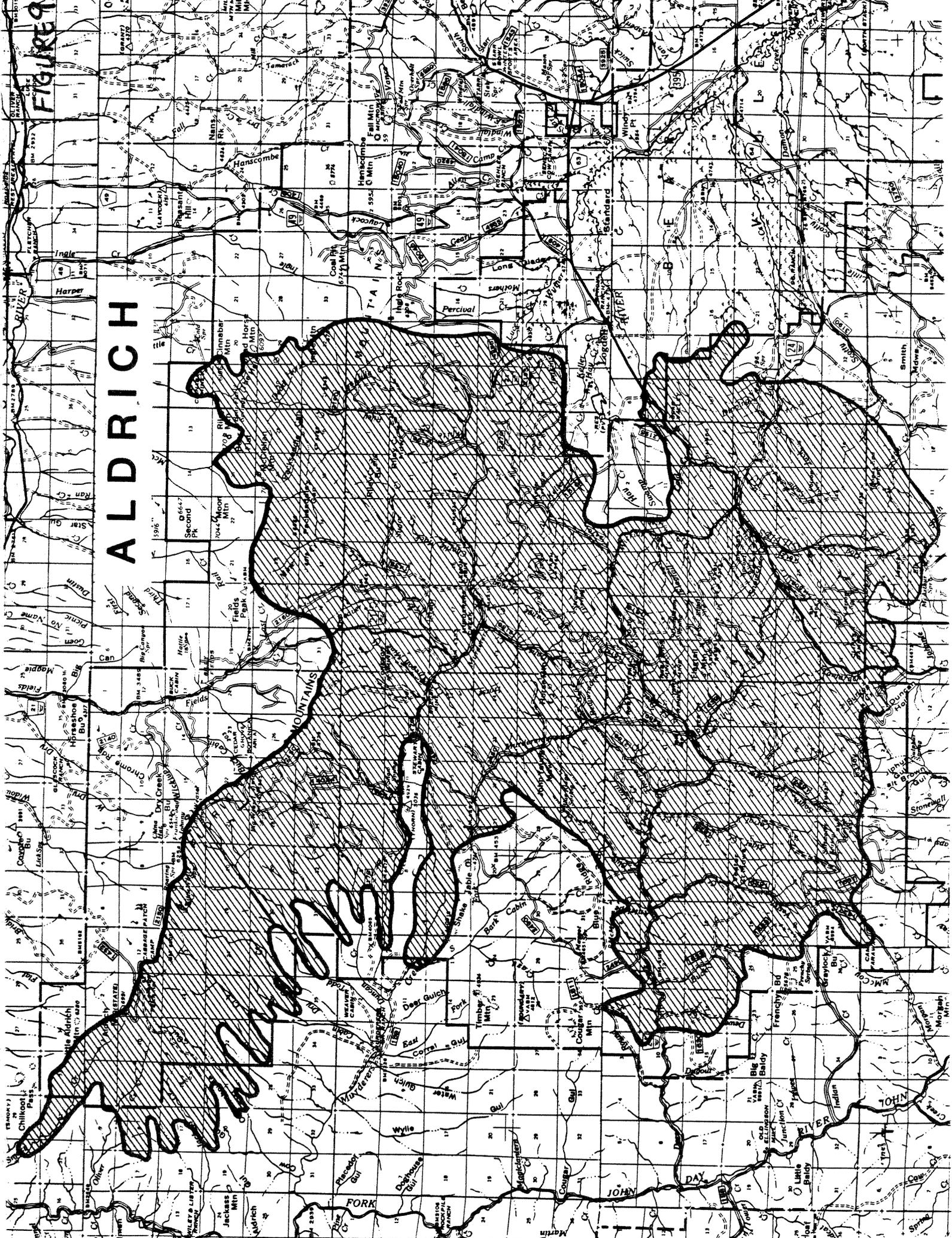
T. 19 S.

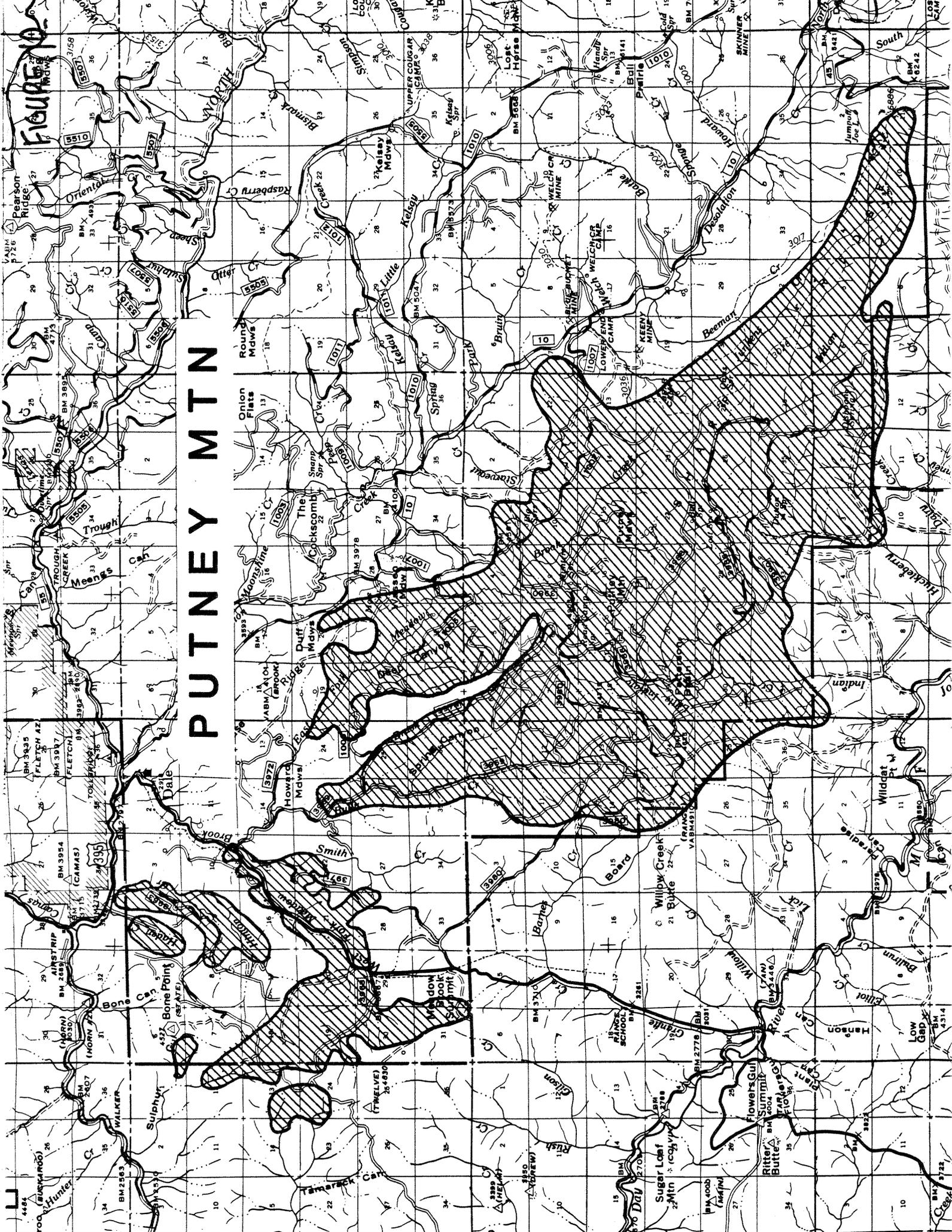
52' 30"

T. 20 S.

FIGURE 9

ALDRICH





PUTNEY MTN

LI

FIGURE 1

PEARSON RIDGE

ORIENTAL

MEANINGS

TROUGH

SMITH

SMITH

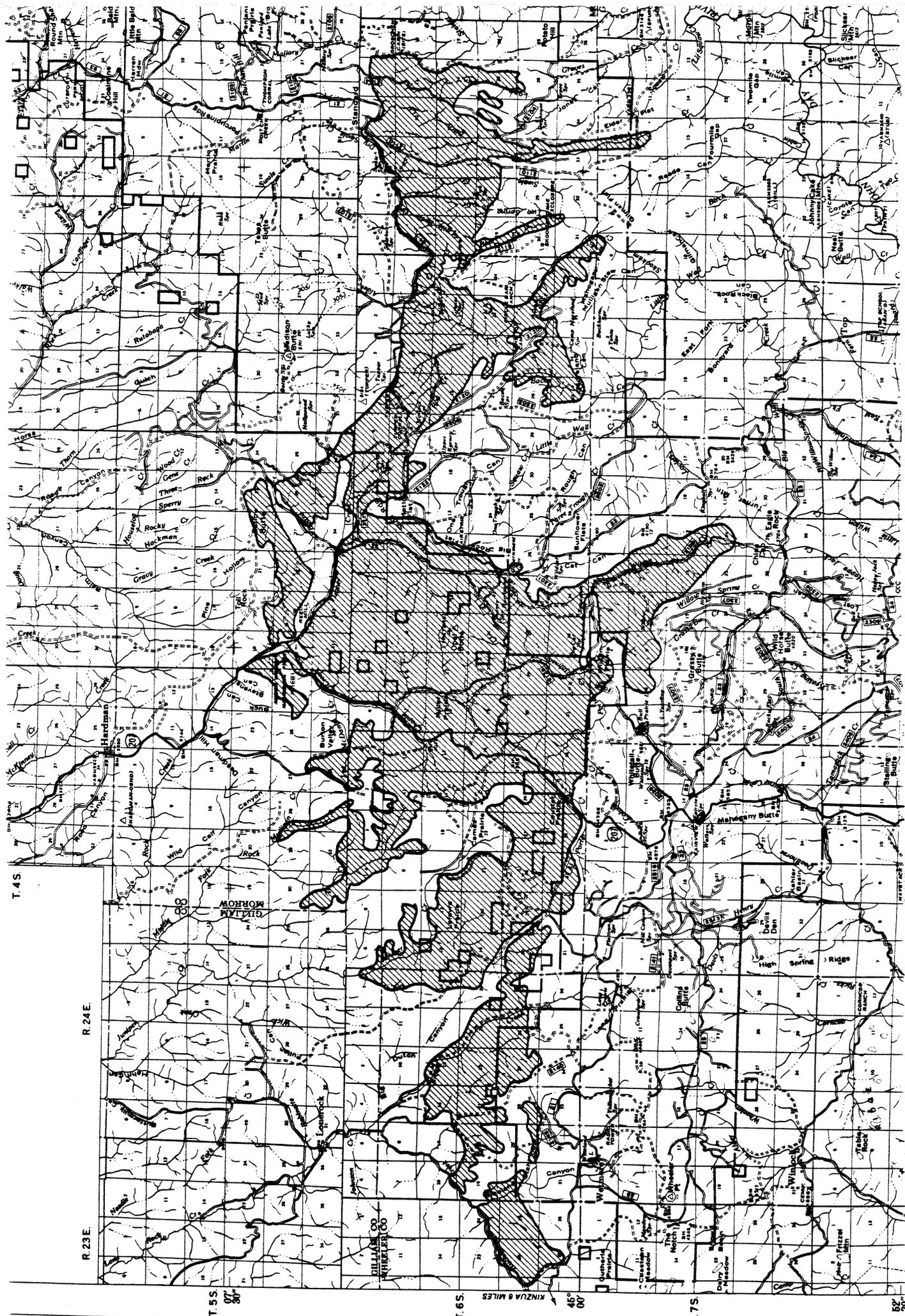
SMITH

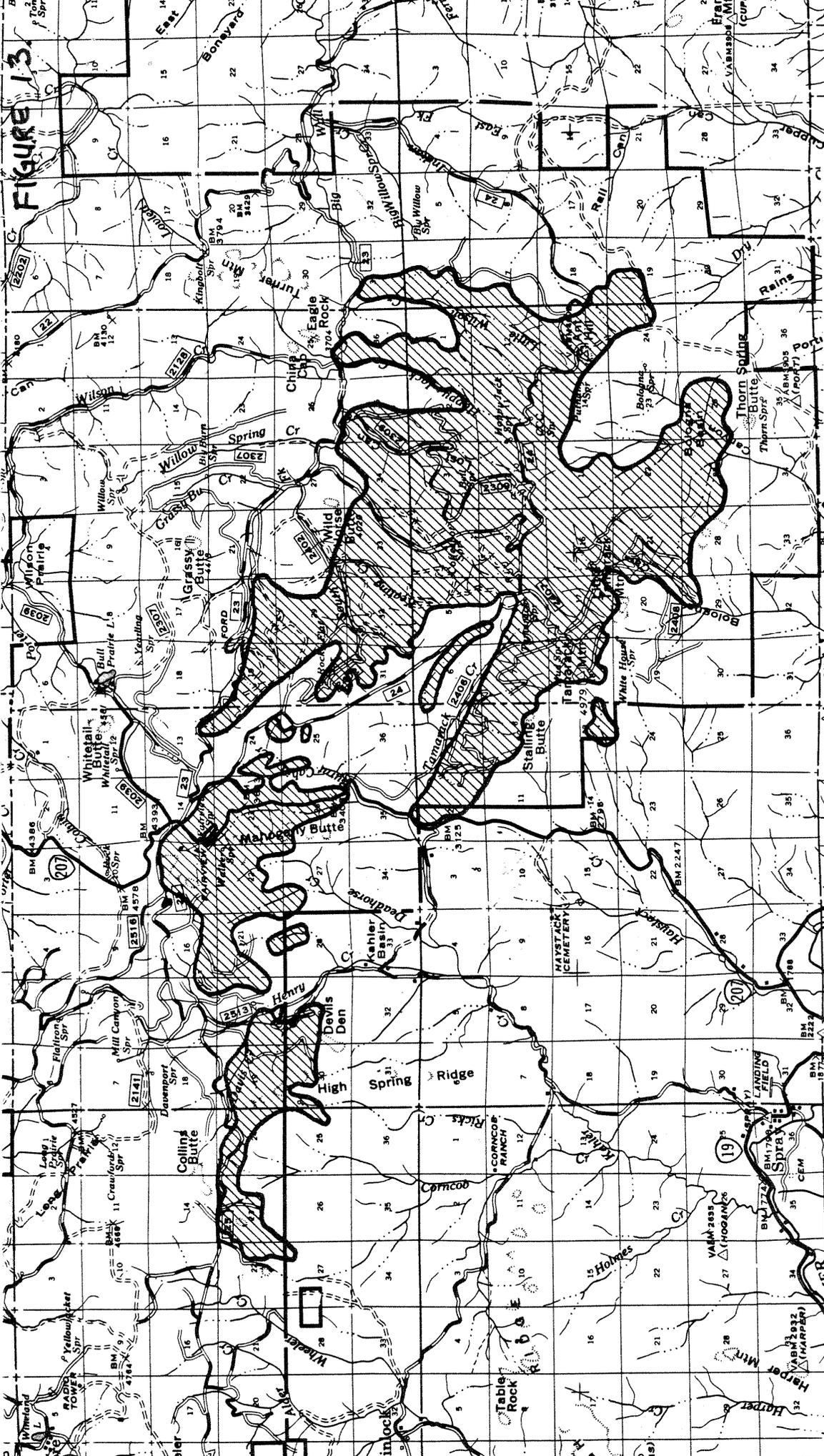
SMITH

SMITH

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MILLER PRAIRIE 1 (N)





MILLER PRAIRIE 1(S)

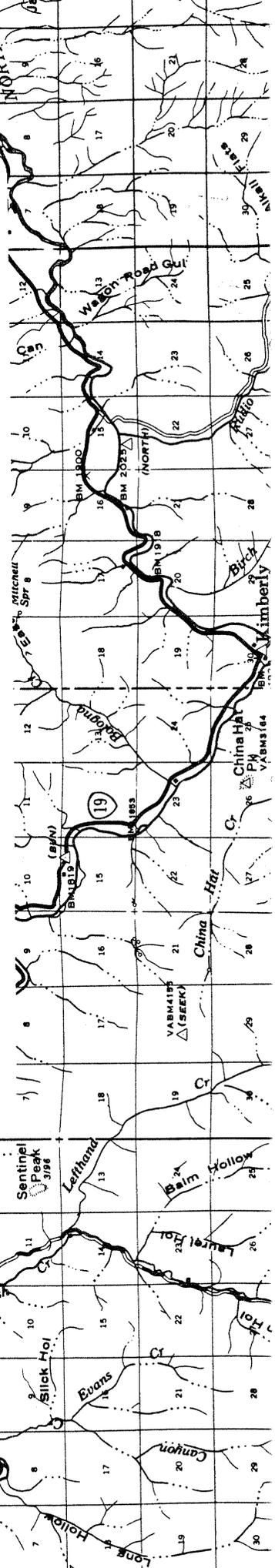


FIGURE 13

FIGURE 15.

