PINEDALE ANTICLINE PROJECT OFFICE (PAPO)

1625 West Pine
PO Box 768
Pinedale, Wyoming 82941
Attention: Project Coordinator 307-367-5386

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

(use additional sheets if necessary)

1. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

P*roject Name*: **MESA WINTER RANGE WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY FENCE CONVERSION**

General Location (distance and direction from nearest city/town, attach map at a scale not less than ½" = 1 mile):

The focus area of this project is wildlife crucial winter ranges on BLM administered lands located on the Mesa, which includes the northern portion of the Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA). Areas with high mule deer use in the winter and associated migration corridors as identified by WEST, Inc. in the 2010 and 2011 "*Mule Deer Monitoring in the PAPA"* annual reports will be used as guidance for identifying high priority areas for fence modification and installation of new seasonal access gates for mule deer. These high use areas and migration corridors primarily include the north end of the PAPA and associated flanks of the Mesa (Map 1). The project area ranges between 2 and 20 miles west and southwest of Pinedale, WY.

Legal Location of Project (attach map at a scale not less than 1" = 2,000').
Township: T 32, 33, 34 N
Range: R 109, 110, 111 W
Section(s): multiple
County: Sublette

Surface Ownership (check all that apply): Federal x State x Private

Ownership	Acreage
BLM	76,000

Contact Information for Affected Parties or Agencies: BLM Pinedale Field Office and Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Pinedale Office

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name/Organization: Theresa Gulbrandson, Josh Hemenway, Mark Thonhoff - Bureau of Land Management
Scott Smith – Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Mailing Address: PO BOX 768

City: Pinedale *State:* WY *Zip Code* : 82941

Daytime Phone # 307-367-5300	*Fax #* 307-367-5329
Email Address: tgulbran@blm.gov, jhemenway@blm.gov, mthonhof@blm.gov	
Point of Contact (if different from above)	

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

General Project Type (check all that apply):

Land Use/Livestock X	Land Use/Recreation
Cultural	Wildlife X
Air	Other

Describe Project Proposal (e.g., mechanical treatment, water improvement, etc.)

The Mesa area is of high importance for many species of wildlife year round. Approximately 59,263 acres of mule deer crucial winter range are located on the Mesa, 72,598 acres are designated as crucial winter range for pronghorn, 44,389 acres are delineated sage-grouse Core Area habitat, and 37,996 acres are known winter concentration areas for sage-grouse (Maps 2-5). The Mesa also has several mule deer and pronghorn migration corridors (Maps 2 & 3). Within these crucial winter ranges and migration corridors there are over 100-miles of BLM allotment fences that do not meet wildlife friendly fence specifications. BLM fence inventory efforts in 2011 identified six big-game mortalities directly attributable to fences within the project area.

This project will focus on modification of existing BLM allotment fences to meet BLM/WGFD wildlife friendly fencing standards within big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors on the Mesa. Fences located within sage-grouse winter concentration areas and those that are near lek locations will also be modified and/or marked with reflectors to increase visibility of the wires to flying grouse.

Due to number of miles of fence and the high cost of fence modification this project will be completed in different phases. Continuation of the project into subsequent phases will be highly dependent on funding. The first phase of this project is directed at benefiting mule deer, a species identified in the PAPA ROD matrix. For the past two years the matrix threshold for this species has been exceeded resulting in mitigation efforts being focused on mule deer. This project represents both an on-site and off-site mitigation effort directed at crucial winter range improvement for mule deer on the PAPA that would also lend to the protection of the function and effectiveness of migration routes on the Mesa. Results and benefits to mule deer in the Sublette Herd Unit would be immediate through reduction in obstacles along migration routes and within crucial winter range reducing stress on wintering animals and the likelihood of mortality.

The locations where mule deer regularly use the area, including daily and/or seasonal movement patterns, represent areas where fence modification would be of maximum benefit to the mule deer herd. High use areas and migration routes have been identified by WEST, Inc. in the 2010 and 2011 *"Mule Deer Monitoring in the PAPA"* annual reports. Using this information, sections of fence have been identified in areas that are known to be frequently used for foraging activity and cover for mule deer wintering on the PAPA (Map 2). Fence modification and the installation of seasonal gates that can be left open during the winter months will occur within these crucial high use areas during Phase One.

In addition, pronghorn crucial winter ranges and migration corridors overlap with mule deer ranges on the northern end of the Mesa. Pronghorn that migrate through the area in spring and fall and those animals that summer and/or winter on the Mesa will also benefit from wildlife friendly fences on and adjacent to the PAPA. Also included in Phase One, all

modified fencing near known sage grouse leks and within winter concentration areas will be outfitted with reflectors to increase visibility for grouse and limit the number of fence strikes.

Approximately 30 miles of fence line has been identified for conversion to wildlife friendly specifications during Phase I of the project (Map 6).

The current proposal would involve the following steps:

1.) Inter-agency collaboration (PAPO, WGFD, BLM, etc.) to determine fence lines to convert and location to install seasonal access gates to maximize benefit to impacted big game species (mule deer, pronghorn)
2.) Convert and/or reconstruct fences and install seasonal big-game access gates at locations identified in step 1 in order to facilitate mule deer and other big game movement to, from, and within known winter range habitat. Install reflectors on identified high risk fence-lines for sage-grouse.
3.) Monitor mule deer and other big game migration and access gate utilization to determine project effectiveness.

Future phases of the project will focus on modifying all of the existing BLM allotment fences on the Mesa that are located within big game crucial winter ranges, sage-grouse winter concentration areas and near sage-grouse leks.

Total Project Acres (if applicable)

±76,000 acres

Acres Indirectly Affected (if applicable, explain)

The *Jackson Hole Pronghorn Study 2000* and *Sublette Mule Deer Study (Phase II): Final Report 2007* highlight the importance of maintaining the utility of migratory and seasonal ranges. Management decisions made in important seasonal habitats such as winter range can affect ecosystem quality throughout the region. In order to maintain the viability of the migration pathways and other seasonal habitats fences built on federal lands should not present a significant barrier to movements. Therefore, the conversion of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications within delineated crucial winter range on the Mesa will have a positive indirect affect across the region.

The project will indirectly affect up to 18,000,000 acres by:

- Improving the viability of winter range habitat and subsequent physical condition of mule deer and pronghorn thereby increasing opportunities for these and other big game species to continue playing a role in the health of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (18,000,000-acres).

4. OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT, AND BENEFITS TO PAPO OFF-SITE MITIGATION STRATEGIC GOALS.

Fences have the potential to present a significant barrier to migration and can result in mortality of mule deer and pronghorn within crucial winter range on the PAPA. Big-game species are often at their weakest late in winter and are more vulnerable to being caught in wires while attempting to jump. Mule deer and pronghorn often travel along fence lines in an attempt to seek out an access point expending valuable energy reserves. The primary objective of the proposed project will address this fencing pressure through the improvement of access to and viability of crucial winter range habitat through the reduction of stress on animals as they migrate to, from, and forage on crucial winter range within and adjacent to the PAPA.

This objective is in line with several of PAPO's Strategic Goals and Objectives for wildlife:

- Maintain migration corridors sufficient to allow unimpeded seasonal movements of migratory wildlife.
- Maintain, conserve, restore and/or enhance habitat and habitat function both onsite and offsite for impacted species.
- Evaluate and respond to population trends to benefit wildlife species impacted by development on the PAPA.

This project is directed at benefiting mule deer, a species identified in the PAPA ROD matrix. For the past two years the threshold for this species has been exceeded resulting in mitigation efforts being focused on mule deer. The first step in the sequential mitigation response outlined in the SEIS ROD is on-site habitat enhancements across the core and flanks areas. This project is located specifically within the core and the flanks of the PAPA and represents an on-site mitigation effort directed at improving crucial winter range for mule deer and protecting the function and effectiveness of migration corridors on the PAPA. The project area also includes areas adjacent to the PAPA which would encompass off-site mitigation as well. Results and benefits to mule deer in the Sublette Herd Unit would be immediate through reduction in obstacles along migration routes and within crucial winter range reducing stress on winter animals and the chance of mortality. Fence modifications would also benefit other species including but not limited to pronghorn and sage-grouse.

5. DIRECT/INDIRECT EFFECTS ON OTHER RESOURCES. (if applicable)

Multiple Sublette County resources will be positively influenced:

- Seasonal movements of pronghorn and moose, whose migration routes and portions of their winter range overlap to some extent with the mule deer crucial winter range on the PAPA.
- Reduce sage-grouse fence strikes in delineated CORE habitat. All modified fencing near documented sage grouse leks and within winter concentration areas would be outfitted with reflectors to increase visibility for grouse and limit the number of fence strikes.
- Improve and maintain outdated allotment fencing.

6. POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE EXPANSION OF PROJECT. Explain

Future phases of this project will eventually cover fence modification for the entire Mesa proper. Depending on funding, all BLM allotment fences on the Mesa would be modified to wildlife friendly fence specifications within 5-years of starting this project.

In addition, future expansion of fence modification could be focused in several directions from the Mesa to specifically benefit mule deer in the Sublette herd unit that use the PAPA. Efforts could continue until all non-wildlife friendly fencing has been removed from adjacent winter range habitats and migration corridors to the north and west of the project area. Mule deer migration corridors and high use areas identified by WEST, Inc. such as the Soapholes and Ryegrass areas could be targeted for fence modification to benefit mule deer in the Sublette herd that specifically use the Anticline. Fence modifications in all of these areas would also benefit other species of wildlife including pronghorn and sage-grouse.

7. LIST ALL PROJECT PARTNERS/COOPERATORS, THEIR ROLES AND/OR CONTRIBUTIONS

BLM personnel – oversee and manage the project, conduct monitoring
WGFD – coordinating partner

8. PROJECT MONITORING AND REPORTING (Describe how monitoring and reporting will be done, and how it relates to the objectives)

Motion capture cameras would be set up at big-game access gates to collect an accurate count of individuals using passageways in order to monitor their effectiveness as mitigation tools. A comparison with annual population monitoring and migration data would detect any changes in mule deer migration patterns or level of habitat utilization following fence conversions. Annual fence checks would be conducted in the summer by a BLM PFO biologist to document any damage or repairs necessary through the first 5 years following fence modification.

Reporting would consist of annual reports of monitoring efforts over the next 5 years. Emphasis would be placed on access gate use counts and spatial and magnitude changes in daily and seasonal migration patterns and activity. Fences marked with reflectors will also be monitored for sage-grouse strikes. In addition, a progress and completion report would be submitted following the completion of modification activities. All reports would be generated and complied by the appropriate BLM PFO staff biologist.

9. RESEARCH POTENTIAL

While the positive impact of wildlife fence conversions has been well documented in the past, this project represents an opportunity to directly measure increased use or adjustments to migration patterns given the wealth of data that has been collected seasonally for mule deer on the PAPA. To date no fences within the PFO include seasonal wildlife access gates. This represents an excellent opportunity to quantify the effectiveness of such measures which may present a valuable tool in future mitigation efforts.

10. PERMITS AND AUTHORIZATIONS REQUIRED PRIOR TO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (including but not necessarily limited to the following):

PERMIT OR AUTHORIZATION	REQUIRED		SUBMITTED		APPROVED	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cultural Resource Inventory		x				
COE Section 404 Permit		x				
Cooperative Agreement(s)		x				
NEPA Analysis		x				
Pesticide Application Permit		x				
Private Landowner Agreement(s)		x				
Sensitive Species Clearance		x				
Surface/Ground Water Permits		x				
T/E Species Clearance		x				
Other (explain)						

11. TOTAL PROJECT COST (Attach detailed budget)

Project Planning and Design	$ 0
Project Implementation	$ $500,000 (for Phase I)
Project Operation and Maintenance	$ 0
Total Required	$ $500,000 (for Phase I)

The cost estimate for Phase I is based on $3.00/foot for fence modification. There are approximately 30-miles of fence that would be modified in Phase I of the project. Overall, there are over 100-miles of fence on the Mesa that do not meet wildlife friendly fence specifications. Modifying all 100-miles of fence is an over-arching goal of the entire project over the next five years. The projected cost of modifying all 100-miles of fence on the Mesa is approximately $2 million dollars. Funding requests from PAPO for future phases of the project is likely.

12. MATCHING FUNDS ANTICIPATED IN CASH (list source and amount)

Funding from other sources has not been secured at this time. If PAPO funding is received, it will be used to leverage additional funding from several sources. Several of the other potential funding sources require a certain percentage of matching funds. The initial funds that are secured for this project are crucial in leveraging matching funds from other sources. Other potential funders that will be solicited include BLM, WGFD, Mule Deer Foundation, WLCI, WWNRT and others.

13. ANTICIPATED "IN KIND" MATCHING FUNDS (list source, valuation, and valuation method)

BLM and WGFD employees will be committed to project implementation and monitoring.

14. PERCENTAGE OF FUNDING ON HAND OR COMMITTED

None at this time.

15. TOTAL PAPO FUNDING REQUESTED: $ 500,000 (for Phase I)

16. EXPECTED/ANTICIPATED LIFE OF PROJECT (LOP)

Perpetual _____ > 50 Years_____ 25-50 Years___X_____ < 25 Years_____

Explain Basis for Projected LOP: Estimated life/utility of average fence in the project area.

17. PROJECT TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE. Explain

Contractor bids would be obtained based on initial assessment of requirements determined during priority analysis. Construction and modification would be completed during the summer and fall of 2012-2013 outside of PFO wildlife timing stipulations.

Activity	Timeline
Obtain bids for equipment, labor and materials to complete modifications and engage contractors to complete work.	Spring/Summer 2012/2013
Finalize the determination of priority fences and gate locations. Obtain necessary permissions for proposed action.	Spring/Summer 2012/2013
Complete identified modifications/reconstructions/ removals.	Summer/Fall 2012 and Summer/Fall 2013
Monitor modifications to evaluate effectiveness.	Ongoing for 5-years following modifications

18. ATTACHMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Project Design _____

Letters of Support _____

Management Plan _____ Long Term _____ Short Term _____ [1]

Monitoring Plan _____ Long Term _____ Short Term _____ [1]

Relevant Past Experience_____ Other X_____ Explain: Maps attached

[1] Long term is defined as greater than (>) 5 years; short term is less than (<) 5 years.

19. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PAPO CONSIDERATION

This represents both on-site and off-site mitigation efforts with immediate benefit implemented as the result of the Pinedale Anticline SEIS Record of Decision 2008 Wildlife Monitoring and mitigation matrix trigger being met for mule deer for the past two years. The first category of mitigation response outlined in the SEIS ROD is on-site habitat enhancements across the core and flanks areas which this project would accomplish by converting allotment fences to meet wildlife friendly fence specifications.

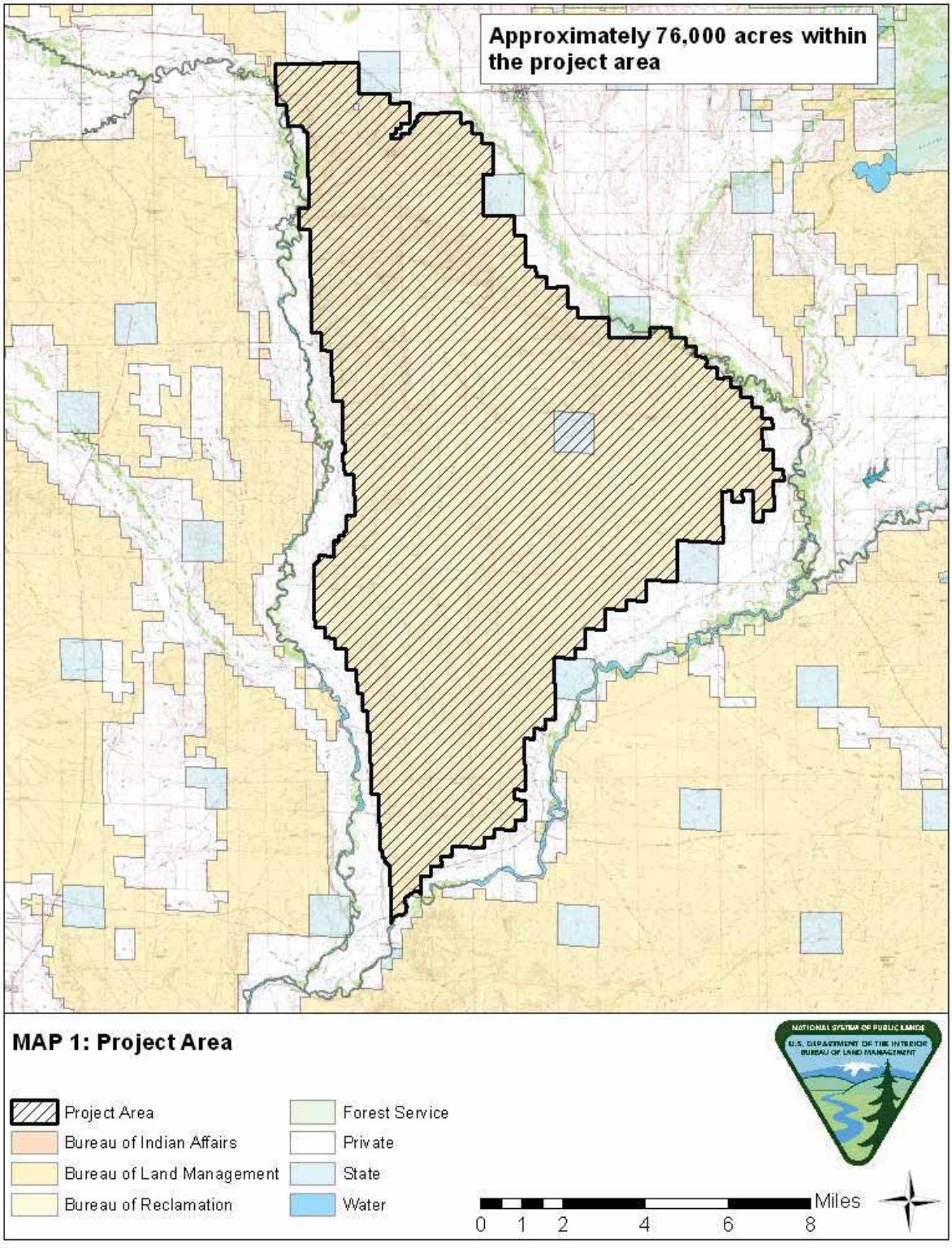
20. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: this project and requested funding is subject to approval by the PAPO Pinedale Anticline Mitigation Management Board.

/s/ Theresa Gulbrandson
Signed

Theresa Gulbrandson
Printed Name

BLM Wildlife Biologist
Title

01/17/12
Date


Approximately 76,000 acres within the project area
MAP 1: Project Area
Project Area
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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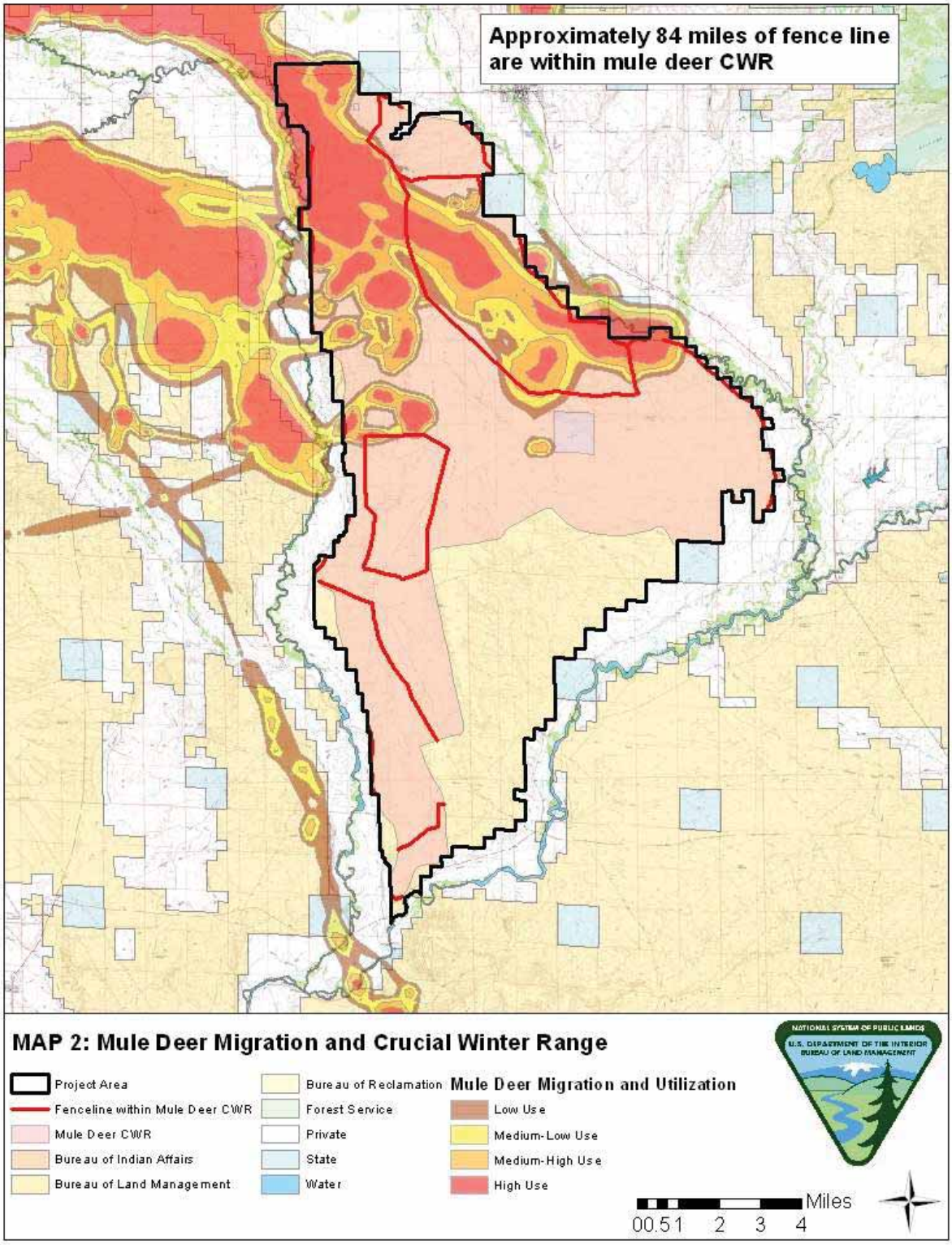
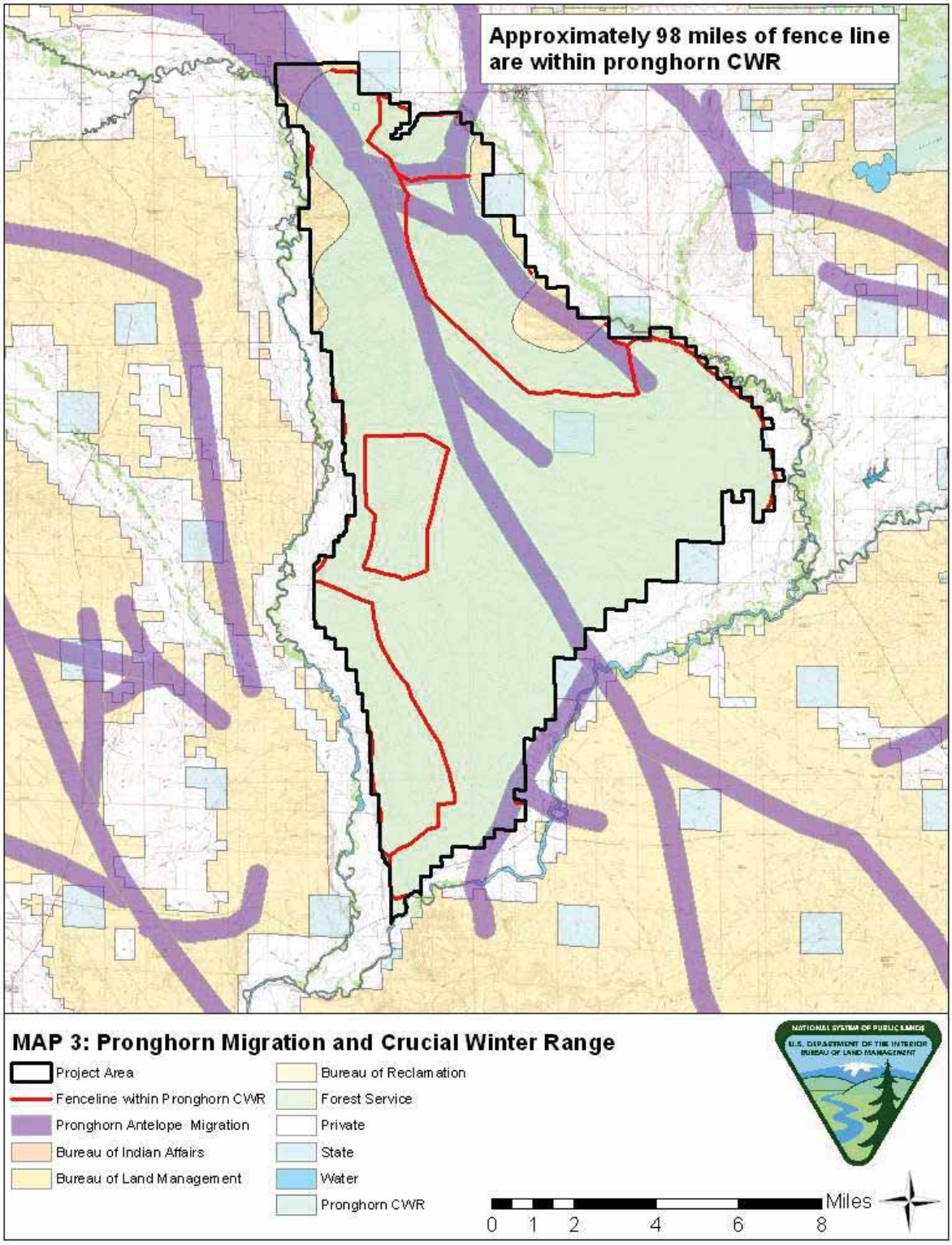
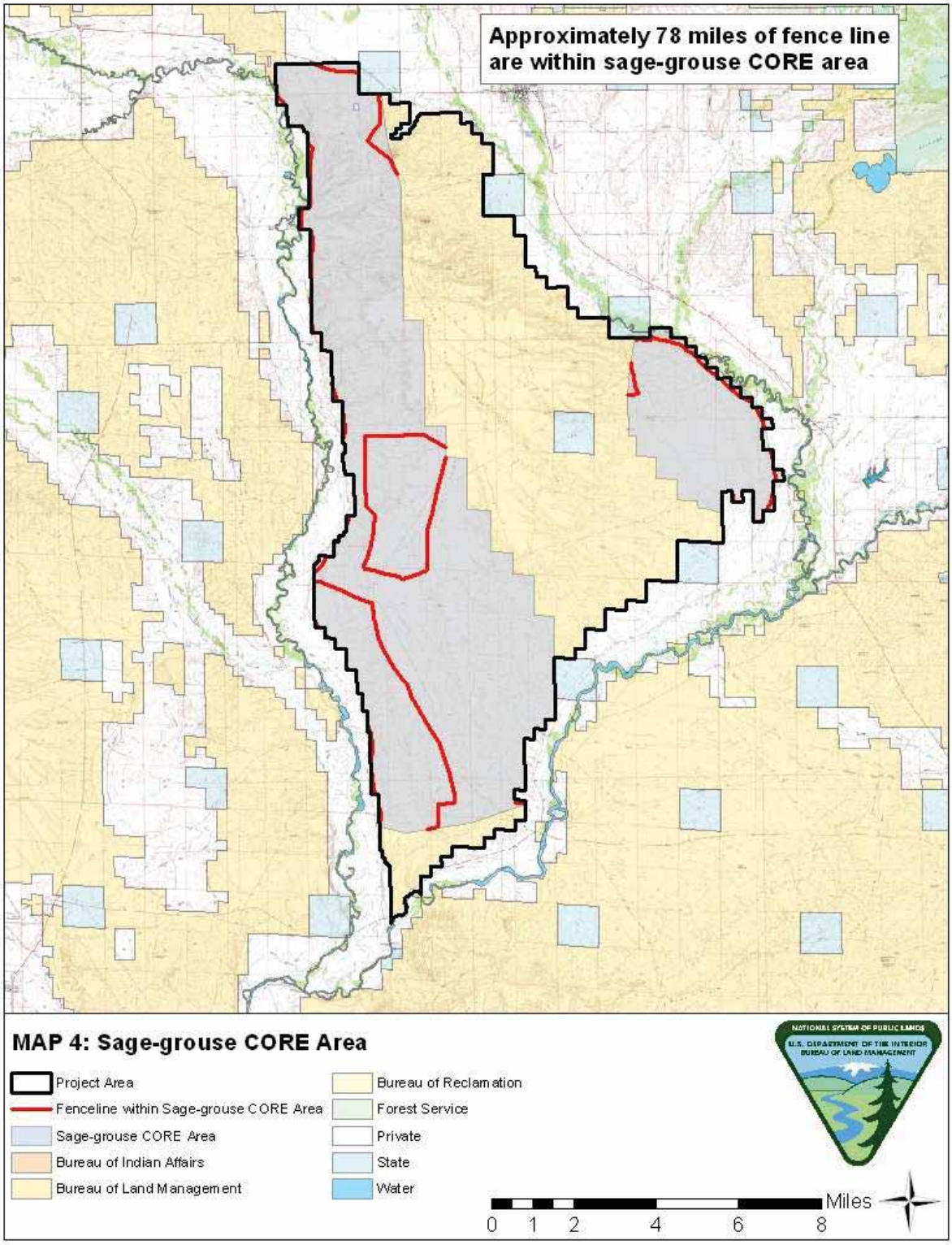
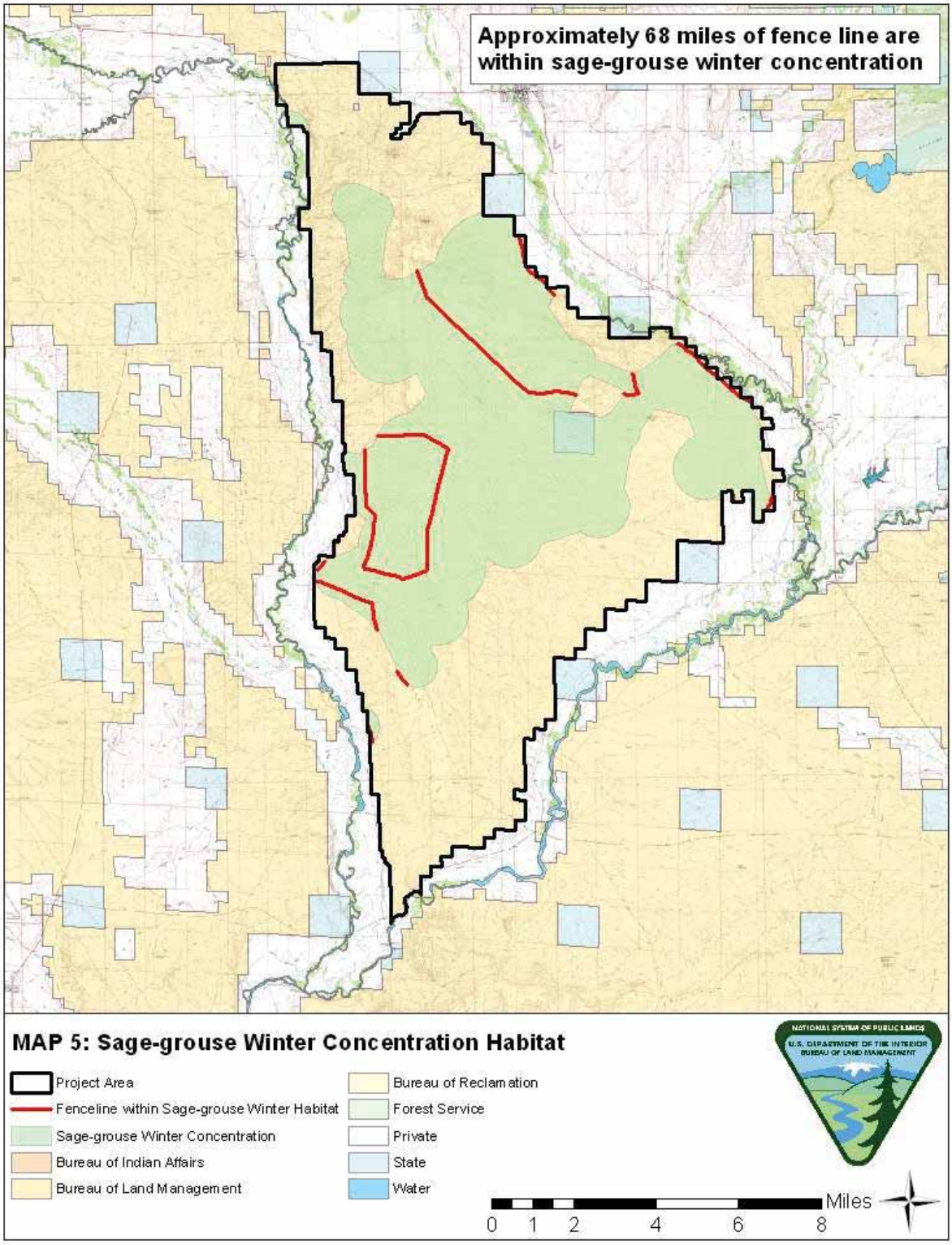
Miles


Approximately 84 miles of fence line are within mule deer CWR
MAP 2: Mule Deer Migration and Crucial Winter Range
Project Area
Fenceline within Mule Deer CWR
Mule Deer CWR
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
Mule Deer Migration and Utilization
Low Use
Medium-Low Use
Medium-High Use
High Use
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Miles
0 0.5 1 2 3 4


Approximately 98 miles of fence line are within pronghorn CWR
MAP 3: Pronghorn Migration and Crucial Winter Range
Project Area
Fenceline within Pronghorn CWR
Pronghorn Antelope Migration
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
Pronghorn CWR
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
0 1 2 4 6 8
Miles


Approximately 78 miles of fence line are within sage-grouse CORE area
MAP 4: Sage-grouse CORE Area
Project Area
Fenceline within Sage-grouse CORE Area
Sage-grouse CORE Area
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
0 1 2 4 6 8
Miles


Approximately 68 miles of fence line are within sage-grouse winter concentration
MAP 5: Sage-grouse Winter Concentration Habitat
Project Area
Fenceline within Sage-grouse Winter Habitat
Sage-grouse Winter Concentration
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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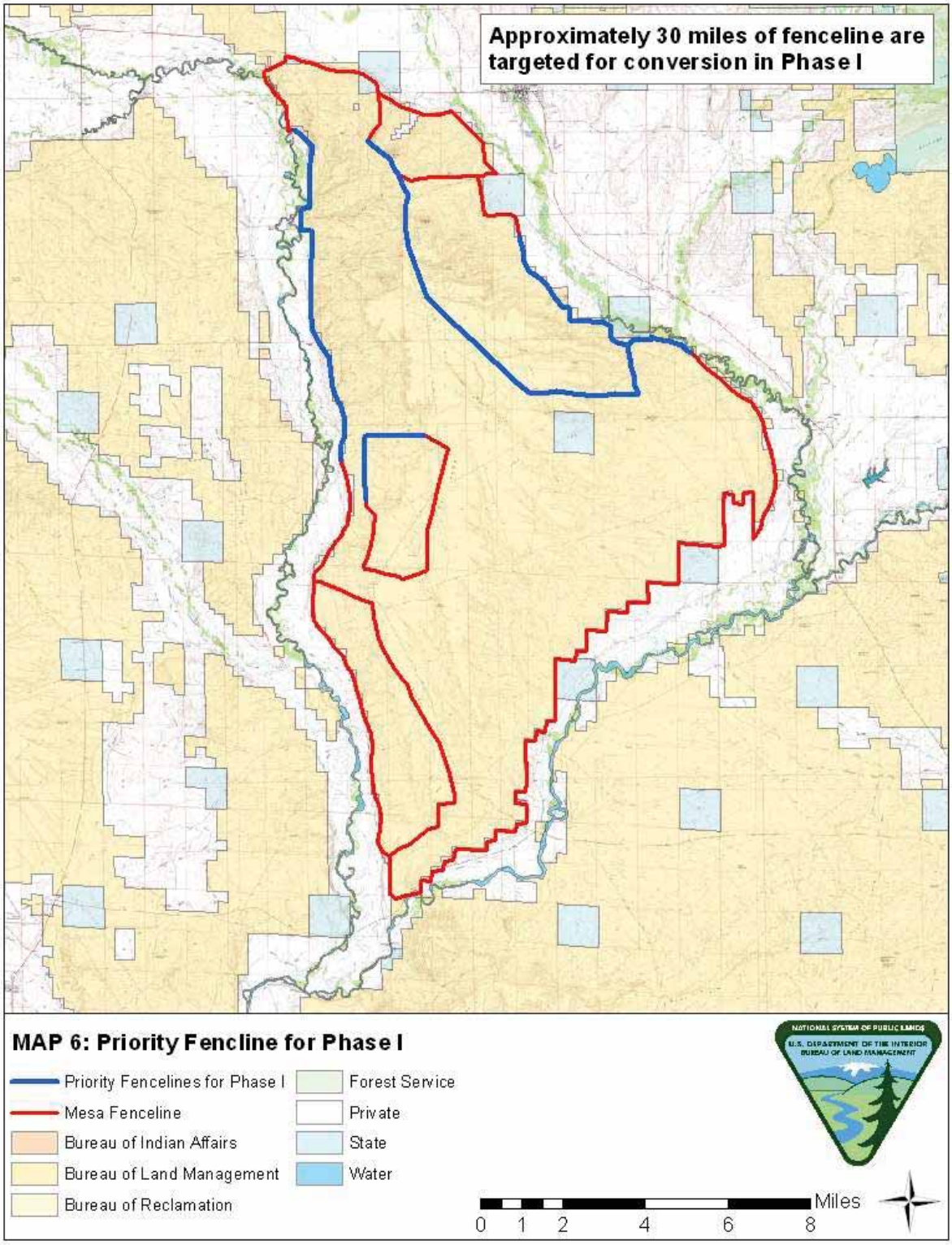
Approximately 30 miles of fenceline are targeted for conversion in Phase I
MAP 6: Priority Fencline for Phase I
Priority Fencelines for Phase I
Mesa Fenceline
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Forest Service
Private
State
Water
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
0 1 2 4 6 8
Miles