Wildland Protection in the Northern Rockies & Global Warming Mitigation

The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act

Wildlands & Global Warming: Overview

- **Northern Rockies Wildlands**

- **Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act**
- Bioregional approach, based on ecological boundaries

- **Wildlands Network Design & Case studies**

- **How does NREPA mitigate the effects of global warming?**

- **Provisions for climate change mitigation**

The Northern Rockies

- The most intact and diverse wild country in the lower 48 states
- Every species found here historically is still found here today
- Pro-active conservation opportunities still exist here in the public domain

What NREPA Would do

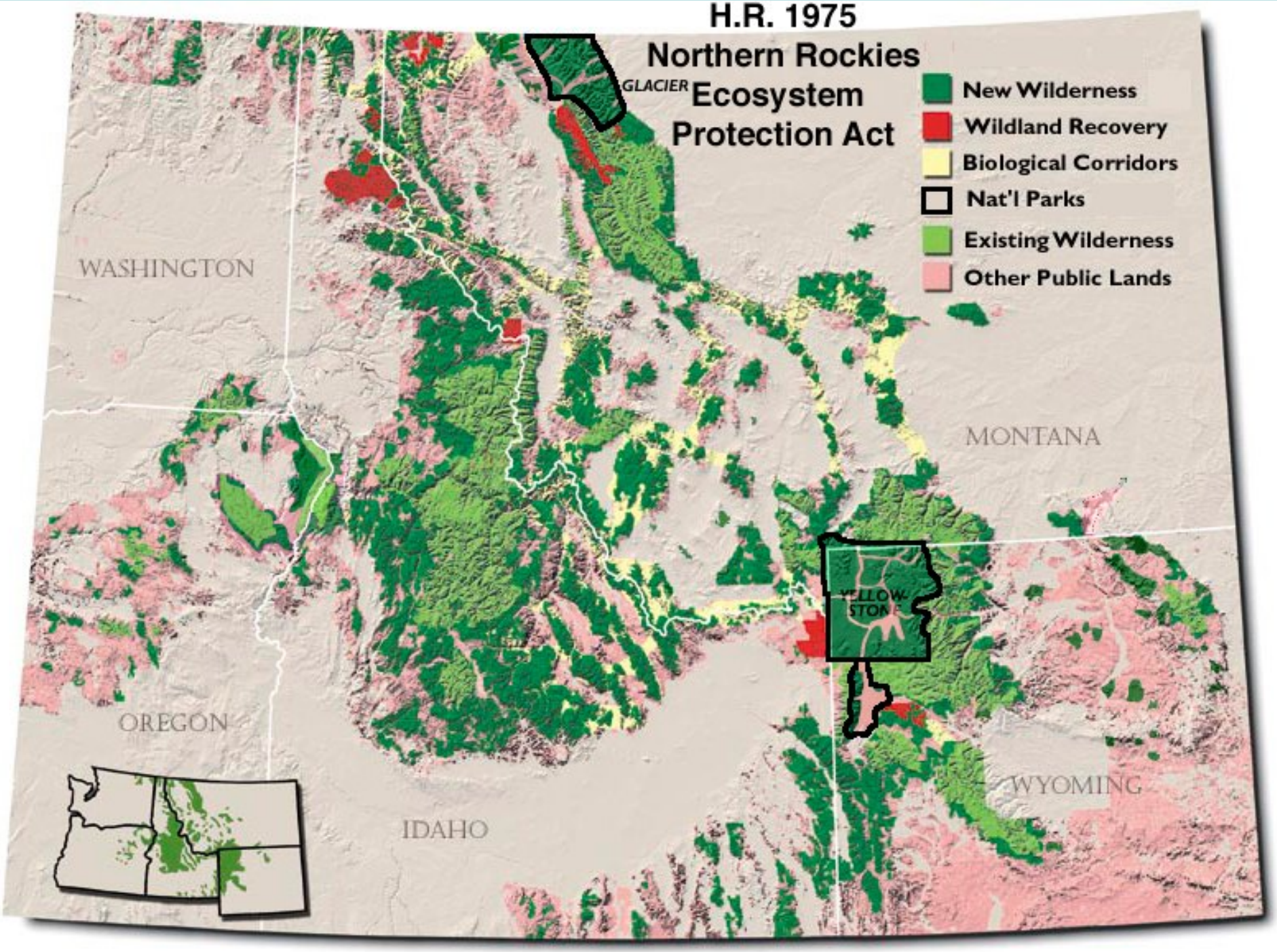
- Uses sound science to protect and restore endangered wildlife (Terborgh, 1999)
- Protect watershed health
- Uses sound economics to promote sustainable economic development in the Northern Rockies region

What NREPA Would do

- Allows for historic uses such as hunting, fishing and firewood gathering
- Affects only Federal public lands
- Respects and honors Native American religions and treaty rights
- Provides for mitigation of global warming effects on sensitive and rare species

How NREPA Works

- Wilderness Designation
- Wild & Scenic River additions
- Corridors between core habitats
- Wildland Recovery System

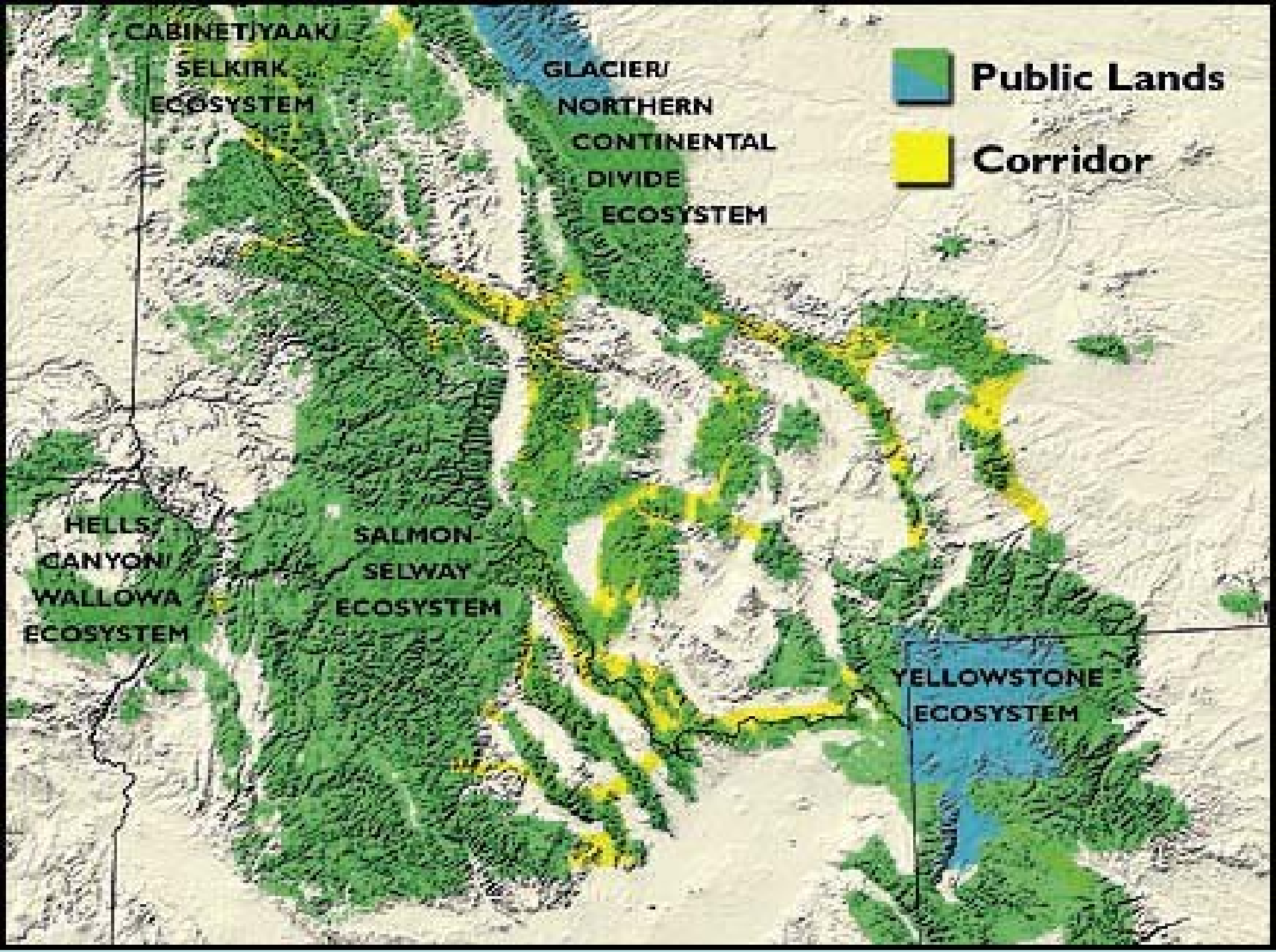

H.R. 1975
Northern Rockies
Ecosystem
Protection Act
GLACIER
New Wilderness
Wildland Recovery
Biological Corridors
Nat'l Parks
Existing Wilderness
Other Public Lands
WASHINGTON
MONTANA
OREGON
IDAHO
WYOMING

NREPA Core Habitats

- Greater Cabinet-Yaak-Selkirk
- Greater Salmon-Selway Ecosystem
- Glacier/Continental Divide Ecosystem
- Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
- Greater Hells Canyon/Wallowa Ecosystem

Our Backyard: Greater Salmon/Selway

- Clearwater River Drainage: Northern half
- WWF study
- Largest core area


CABINET/YAAK/
SELKIRK
ECOSYSTEM
GLACIER/
NORTHERN
CONTINENTAL
DIVIDE
ECOSYSTEM
Public Lands
Corridor
HELLS
CANYON/
WALLOWA
ECOSYSTEM
SALMON-
SELWAY
ECOSYSTEM
YELLOWSTONE
ECOSYSTEM

Our Backyard: What we have

- Weitas Creek
- Meadow Creek
- Mallard-Larkins
- Upper North Fork

Conservation Biology

- NREPA heeds warnings from the scientific community

- Soule, et. al, 2005, Trombulak, 2003, Olsen et al, 2001, Noss et. al, 1999

Wildland Network Design

- Core areas
- Corridors
- Buffers
- Trombulak 2001, Trombulak 2003, Noss and Cooperider 1994

Does Wildland Network Design Work? Case Studies

- Wilderness habitat (designated wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, NP roadless) was analyzed for its role as refugia for grizzlies and bull trout

- Why bears and fish?

- Bader, USDA Forest Service Proceedings, 2000

Case Study #1: Grizzlies

- Higher mortality in non-wilderness habitat
- Human caused mortality is the force that limits population size
- Its all about access

Case Study #2: Bull trout

- Vast majority of strong populations occur in wilderness habitat; the rest occurred close by
- Temperature
- Fine sediment

- Presence inversely related to road densities
- Logging & roadbuilding leading cause of decline (USFWS)

Mitigation of global warming through connectivity

- Corridors & Connectivity (secure pathways)
- On land
- In water

- Dispersal & Migration: a major part of species response (well documented)

Mitigation of global warming through connectivity

- Wilderness Designation

- Preserved connectivity
- Climate moderation
- Old-growth forests as carbon sinks

Provisions in the bill

- Section 401: National Wildland Restoration & Recovery System

- Section 201: Biological Corridors

Summary

- NREPA – “to date the very most realistic approach to avoiding extinctions that can still be avoided in the Northern US Rockies Region.”

- Lance Olsen, Cold Mountains, Cold Rivers, Missoula, MT

NREPA & Wildland Network Design Resources

- Friends of the Clearwater
  - http://www.friendsoftheclearwater.org/
- Alliance for the Wild Rockies (NREPA Policy Information)
  - http://www.wildrockiesalliance.org/issues/nrepa/
- Wildlands Project
  - http://www.twp.org/

Works cited available upon request

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