



The lode-claim density maps from data compiled by Causey (2007, rev. 2011) show the change in intensity of mineral exploration through time. The number of open or valid lode claims are aggregated by section (roughly 1 mi²). The maximum claim size is 600 ft x 1500 ft. Claim sizes were mandated by the Mining Law of 1872. Only about 31 maximum sized claims can fit in a section. Sections with more than 31 claims may have smaller or irregularly shaped claims, or the claims were overstaked so as not to miss any potentially favorable ground due to surveying errors. The claim data in this application show where there was the most interest in any given year. Because the changes tend to be gradual from year to year, this series of maps is constructed in 5-year increments, except the first map in 1976.

For geologic context, the claims are shown on a simplified geologic map (from Wilson and others, 2001) along with the locations of all the uranium mines, prospects, occurrences, and mineralized areas. Most claims are for uranium, but in some cases may be a different commodity and in need of further investigation. Claims outside of the known mineralized areas would need to be examined to determine what the prospective commodity was, as there was no requirement that claimants name the commodity they were targeting.

Notice the change in extent of the claims and the "hot spots." In the eastern part of Great Divide Basin there were many claims in 1976, but very few by 1985 due to the price collapse (as a result of the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl incidents), and a slight rebound since 2005 due to advances in in-situ recovery technology. A northeast-trending block of claims at Red Rim (best observed in 1976 and 1980), west of Rawlins, is a uranium prospect. The last interest in the Miller Hill uranium area was in the 1980 time frame. Current activity in Big Creek (in the southeast corner of the study area) may be for rare earth deposits, although this area is not geologically similar to the known rare-earth deposits in the Bear Lodge area in the northeast corner of the state (Wilson, in press).

Historical Perspective of Lode-Claim Density 1976–2010 and Location of Uranium Mines, Prospects, Occurrences, and Mineralized Areas

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