

Figure 1.—Status of surface- and mineral-rights ownership, as of 1980.

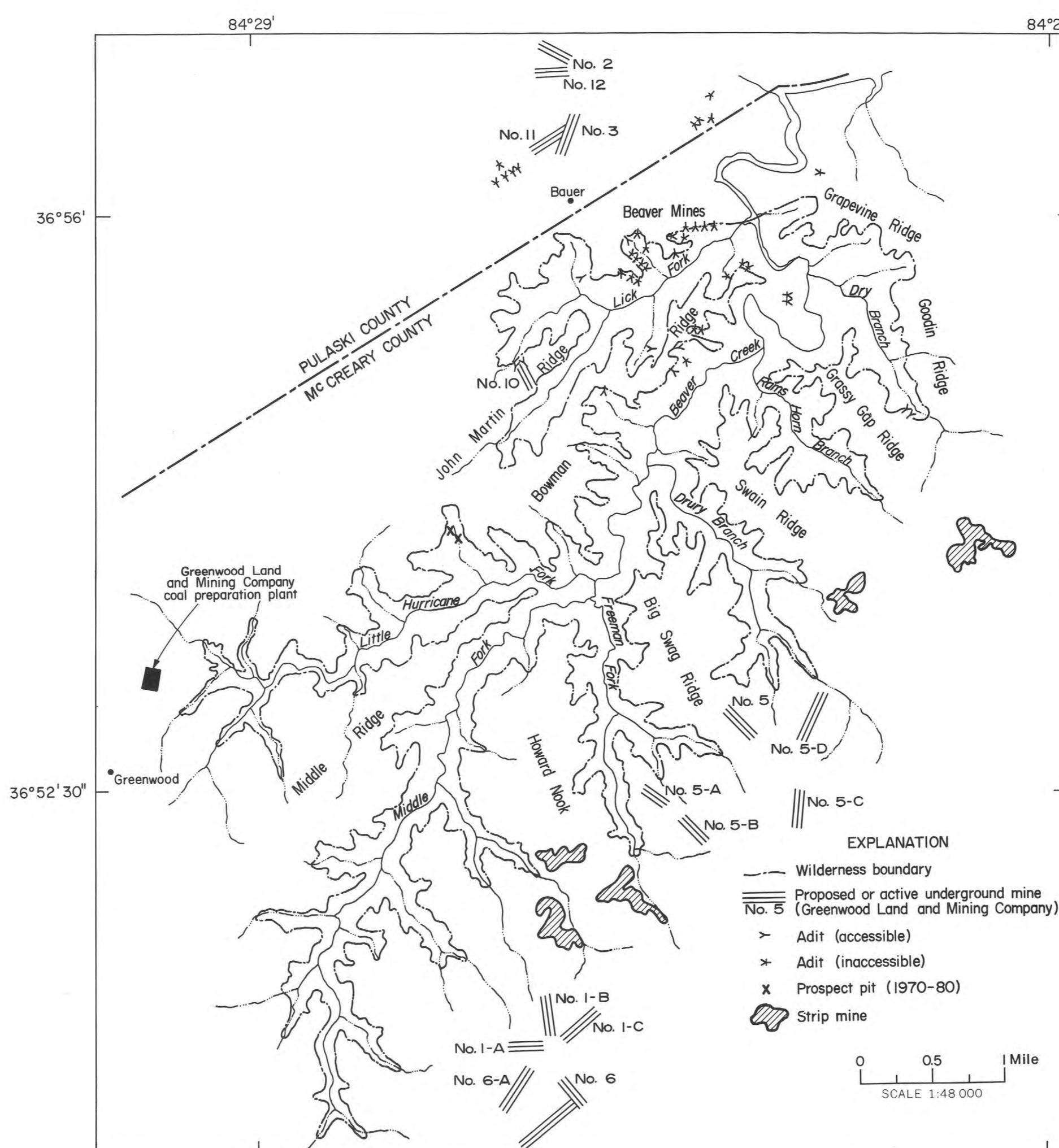


Figure 2.—Locations of proposed, active, and abandoned coal mines (as of 1982).

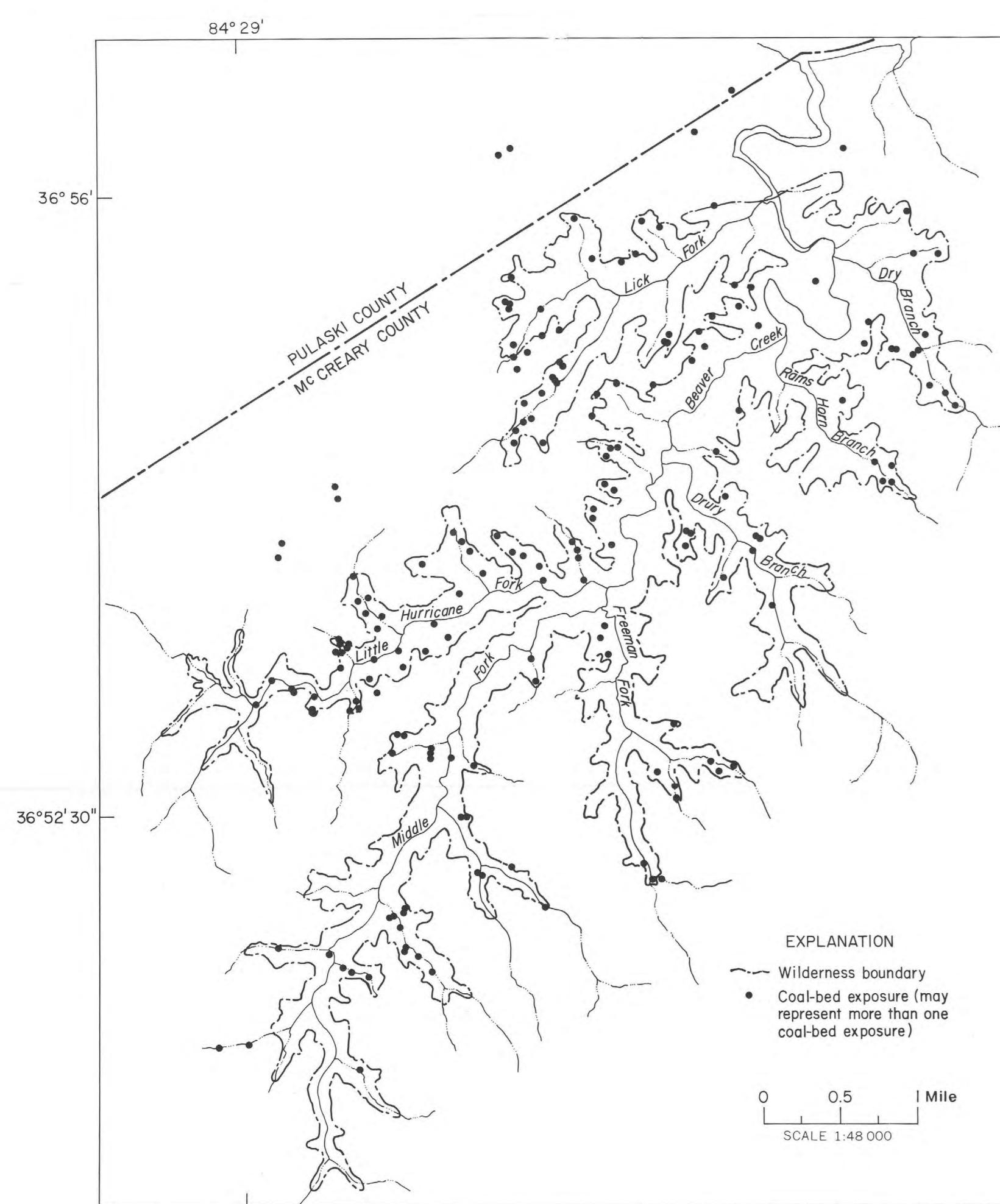


Figure 3.—Locations of described coal-bed exposures.

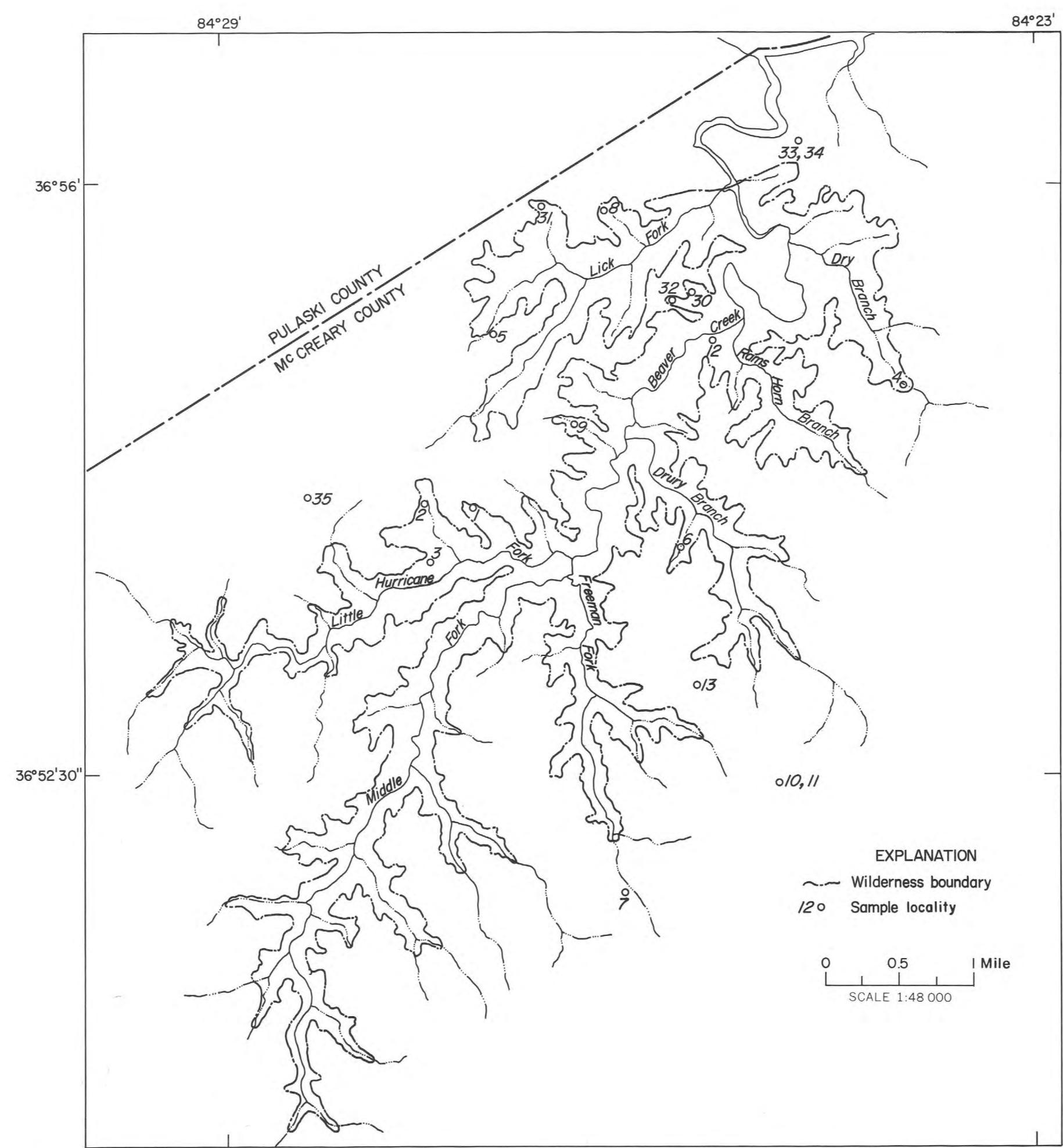


Figure 4.—Coal sample localities.

## MAPS SHOWING MINES, PROSPECTS, AND EXPOSURES IN THE BEAVER CREEK WILDERNESS, MC CREEARY COUNTY, KENTUCKY

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### STUDIES RELATED TO WILDERNESS

The Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577, September 3, 1964) and related acts require the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines to survey certain areas on Federal lands to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present. The act also directs that results of such surveys be made available to the public and be submitted to the President and the Congress. This report presents the results of a survey of mines and prospects in the Beaver Creek Wilderness, Daniel Boone National Forest, McCreary County, Kentucky. The area was established as a wilderness by Public Law 93-622, January 3, 1975.

### INTRODUCTION

The Beaver Creek Wilderness occupies an area of 4,701 acres within the cliffline bordering the Beaver Creek drainage in McCreary County, southeastern Kentucky. It is in the Daniel Boone National Forest and includes part of the Beaver Creek Cooperative Wildlife Management Area, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The area is located about 11 mi southeast of Burnside, Ky., and is accessible from the north and south via U.S. Route 27 and Forest Service Road 50, located at its northwest border (index map). From the east, the area can be reached via State Route 90 and Forest Service Road 46, located at the eastern edge of the area. Access by foot into the interior of the wilderness is provided by an abandoned Forest Service road and by several primitive trails that extend along the major streams.

The Beaver Creek Wilderness is located at the eastern edge of the Appalachian coal region and is within the highly dissected Cumberland Plateau section of the Appalachian Plateau physiographic province. It is drained by Beaver Creek and its tributaries, which flow northeastward into Lake Cumberland, a reservoir on the Cumberland River about 1 mi north of the wilderness. Altitudes range from about 730 ft on the lower part of Beaver Creek to about 1,200 ft at its headwaters.

### SURFACE- AND MINERAL-RIGHTS OWNERSHIP

As of 1980, all surface rights in the Beaver Creek Wilderness, except those for about 35 acres along Middle Fork, were in U.S. Government ownership; however, all mineral and oil and gas rights, except three small tracts totalling about 24 acres, were privately owned (fig. 1). As of 1980, Greenwood Land and Mining Co. owned or retained leases on most mineral tracts in and surrounding the wilderness; and mineral, oil, and gas rights on an 850-acre tract in the headwaters of Dry Branch were owned by Dan Stewart of Lexington, Ky. Oil and gas leases on Greenwood Land and Mining Co. mineral tracts were unassigned as of 1980.

### HISTORY OF MINING

Coal mining has been and remains the principal mineral industry in McCreary County. Mining reportedly predates the arrival of white settlers when Indians dug small amounts of coal from outcrop. Following settlement, coal for domestic use was obtained from small mines near cabins and wagon roads.

Commercial production commenced with the opening of mines along the Cumberland River, where coal could easily be transported by barge. Early operations using slave and convict labor expanded as railroads extended into the region.

Mining in the Beaver Creek drainage basin began in the late 1800's when Bauer Cooperage Railroad completed narrow gauge tracks between Bauer and Greenwood. Subsequently, numerous small drift mines, known as the Beaver Mines, were opened in the Beaver Creek coal bed in the northwest corner of the wilderness (fig. 2). Coal from these mines was transported by tram and incline to the ridge top, where it was loaded on railcars. According to Miller (1910), the Beaver Mines were abandoned prior to 1910. However, conversations with local residents suggest that the mines were reopened and operated intermittently until the 1920's. Extensive coal prospecting during this era was responsible for numerous coal openings throughout the northern half of the wilderness. These mines were small; they seldom extended more than 100 ft into the bed, and they supplied coal for domestic use. After the abandonment of the Beaver Mines, no significant mining occurred in the wilderness until five tunnel mines were opened in the Beaver Creek coal bed during the 1960's. Four of these mines were located in Beaver Ridge, and the fifth was driven into John Martin Ridge. During the same period, a mine was opened in the headwaters of Dry Branch by Dan Stewart of Lexington, Ky. Limited coal tonnage was produced from this mine, due to the thinness of the bed.

Mining of the Barren Fork coal bed in the Beaver Creek watershed began in the 1930's. The first development of the Barren Fork coal bed was during the 1930's when a drift mine was opened on Howard Neck (Miller, 1963, p. A-22). The late development of mining in the Barren Fork coal bed was due in part to the fact that the coal bed crops out on gentle, upland slopes where it is difficult to expose without motorized excavating equipment. However, with the advent of the bulldozer, strip mining of the Barren Fork coal bed became economically feasible. According to Musser

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