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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATUS OF OWNERSHIP OF PART OF THE LANDS  
ON WHICH PHOSPHATE-BEARING BEDS CROP OUT IN  
WESTERNMOST WYOMING

by

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This report is preliminary and has not  
been edited or reviewed for conformity  
with U. S. Geological Survey standards  
and nomenclature.

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By Emerson C. Willey, T. M. Cheney, H. W. Peirce  
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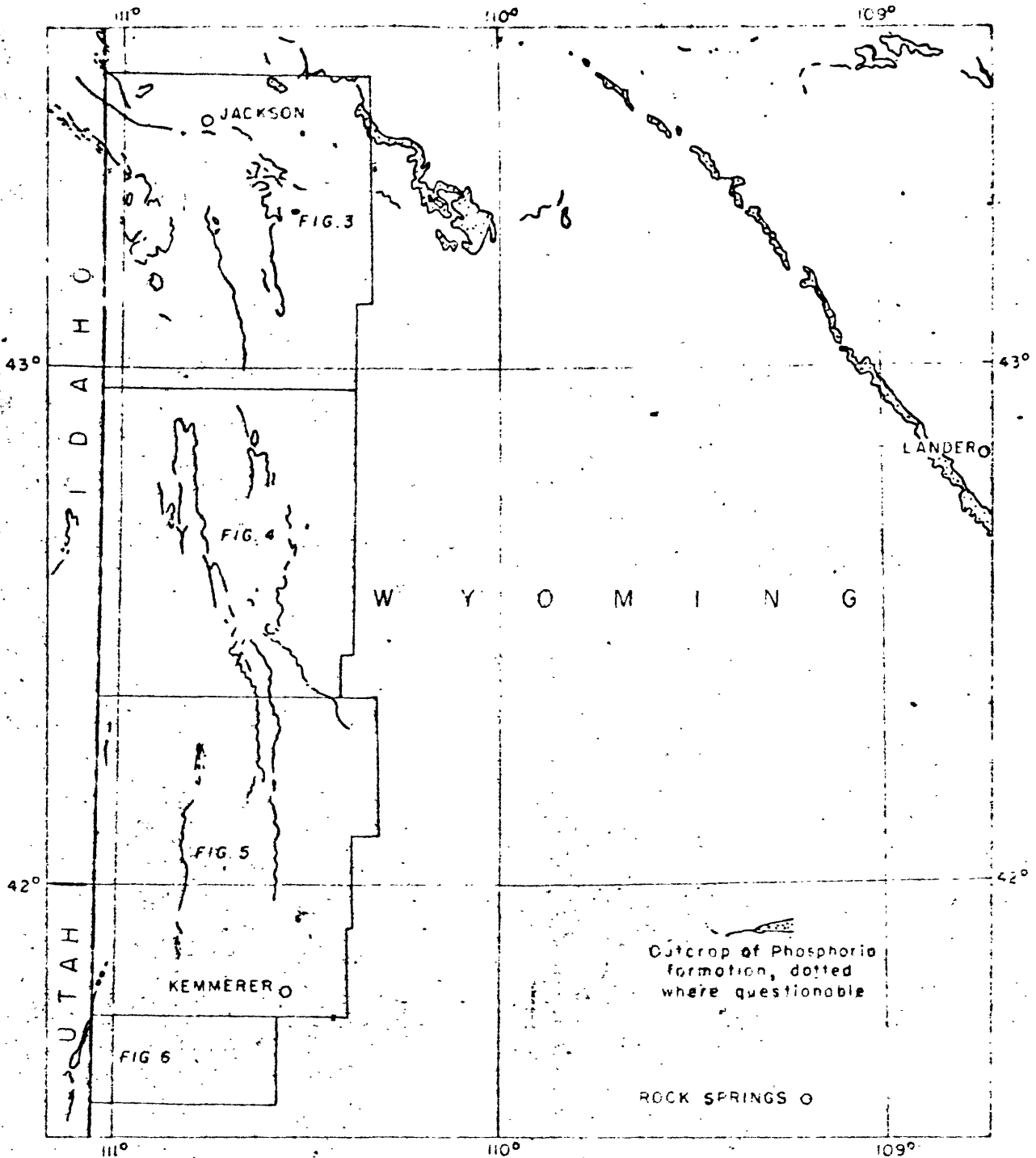
ABSTRACT

This report and accompanying maps summarize the status of ownership of many phosphate bearing lands in westernmost Wyoming. Ownership categories discussed are (1) phosphate rights owned by Federal Government, (2) phosphate rights not owned by Federal Government, and (3) ownership status uncertain.

INTRODUCTION

Maps presented in this report summarize the status of ownership of many phosphate lands in the State of Wyoming. (See fig. 1.) The basic data were compiled from various public records during the Geological Survey's investigation of the western phosphate field, in part as a first step in obtaining permission to explore phosphate deposits and publish information on them. The information is released here in the belief that it may be helpful to those wishing to acquire and develop phosphate deposits in Wyoming. It should be emphasized that the maps presented here do not constitute official records of ownership and no warranty is made as to their accuracy. However, consistent with the practical results to be accomplished, such care has been exercised to determine status as accurately as the objectives appeared to justify.

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INDEX MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUTCROPS OF THE  
PHOSPHORIA FORMATION IN WESTERNMOST WYOMING, AND THE  
LOCATION OF MAPS SHOWING THE STATUS OF OWNERSHIP  
OF PHOSPHATE LANDS (FIGURES 3-6)

0 10 20 30 40 MILES

Records examined include those of the Bureau of Land Management, State Land Board, the title and tax records of the respective counties and those of the Conservation Branch of the Geological Survey. Not all of these sources were examined or used with respect to every parcel of land. They were, however, the total sources used in the compilation of the total data. We are indebted to members of all these offices for their generous cooperation, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP

The categories of ownership listed in the map explanation, figure 2, are a somewhat simplified version of general land classification terms; therefore, the type of ownership included in each category is described more fully here.

#### PHOSPHATE RIGHTS OWNED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Lands for which title to the phosphate deposits are owned and controlled by the Federal Government are grouped into three general categories on the maps (figs. 3-6): (a) those of the National Forest as to which the government owns both surface and mineral rights, (b) vacant public lands, and (c) lands, the surface to which is owned privately, but were patented by the government with a reservation in some instances of the phosphate minerals, and in other instances, of all minerals. Lands in the latter category were those patented under the Agricultural Homestead Act of July 17, 1914, wherein phosphate minerals were reserved along with certain other minerals, or those patented under the Livestock Homestead Act of December 29, 1916, wherein all minerals were reserved to the

EXPLANATION

Outcrop of the Permian phosphate-bearing formations

STATUS OF OWNERSHIP OF PHOSPHATE MINERAL RIGHTS

(No tracts smaller than 40 acres are shown. Where more than one type of ownership is represented in 40 acre tracts, patterns identifying the types of ownership are superimposed)

Phosphate rights owned  
by Federal government



National Forest land



Vacant Public land



Private land, phosphate reserved by Federal government



Federal phosphate lease (pattern generally superimposed on another to show status of land prior to lease)



Patented mining claim (limit not shown; pattern generally superimposed on another showing status of surrounding land)

Phosphate rights not owned  
by Federal government



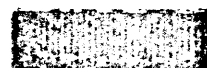
Indian lands



Railroad lands



State lands



Private lands

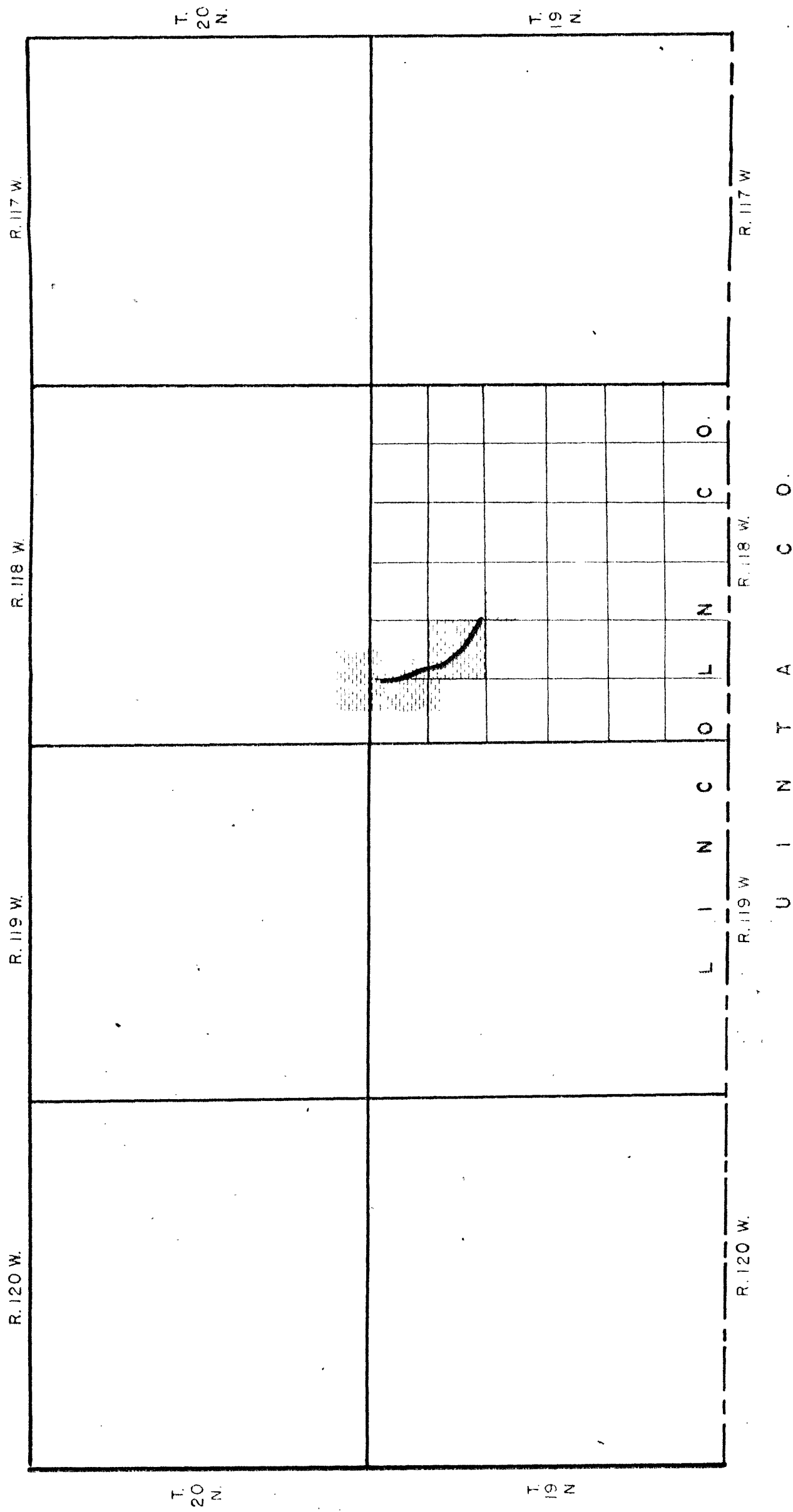


Status uncertain

Ownership status  
uncertain

TRACE ELEMENTS MEMORANDUM  
REPORT 806  
FIGURE 6

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Compiled by E. C. Willey, T. M. Cheney, H. W. Pierce, and L. T. Grose  
Land records examined in September 1953

STATUS OF OWNERSHIP OF PHOSPHATE LANDS IN PART OF  
LINCOLN COUNTY, WYOMING

government. Generally, all lands with phosphate or total mineral reservation originated under one of these two acts. There are, however, some exceptions to this, in that special legislation for particular purposes directed that the patent contain a reservation of some or all minerals to the government.

Phosphate deposits on the lands described by any of these categories may be leased from the Federal Government as provided in the Mining Leasing Act of 1920, as amended. The location of existing Phosphate Leases is shown on the accompanying maps, but the exact outline or acreage in each is not shown.

It is to be noted that with respect to the lands designated as Vacant Public land, no search has been made to determine whether any land withdrawals exist under appropriate Acts of Congress, or under Executive or Departmental Orders. Likewise, no search has been made or determination attempted to ascertain the existence of unpatented mining claims which often cannot be identified in relation to the public surveys. If any valid mining claims exist, the title may include rights to phosphate minerals.

#### PHOSPHATE RIGHTS NOT OWNED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Lands wherein phosphate rights are not owned or controlled by the Federal Government are those for which the government has (a) issued patents to individuals, which include all or at least phosphate mineral rights, (b) made grants to railroads or to states, or (c) by treaty or Congressional Legislation, set aside lands to Indians.

Private lands shown on the maps include all lands, except mining claims and railroad lands, for which private parties hold title to the surface and phosphate mineral rights. Patented mining claims, patents for which include all mineral rights, are shown in a separate category. The exact acreage or outline of a claim or group of claims is not shown--the symbol merely indicates that the claim lies within lands included in one of the other categories.

Lands classified on the maps as State or railroad lands are those to which surface and mineral rights have not been transferred to individual private ownership. Title to some lands originally owned by the State or railroad has been transferred into private ownership. Generally only the surface rights have been transferred, but this cannot be determined specifically without a complete examination of title. Such a title examination has not been made except for a few tracts on which precise ownership information was required and which appear on the maps showing two types of ownership superimposed. In these instances it appeared of record that minerals are owned either by the State or railroad. Therefore, former state and railroad lands wherein surface rights have been transferred are generally shown on the maps as lands for which mineral rights are owned by private parties, and therefore classified as private land, even though a further and complete title examination might disclose that the State or railroads still hold title to some or all of the mineral rights.

Indian lands are those lands to which title originated by treaty with the Federal Government or by Congressional Legislation and are now vested in an Indian tribe or individual Indians. The mineral rights on these

lands cannot be sold but phosphate and other mineral deposits may be leased by negotiation with the Tribal Councils under regulations prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

#### OWNERSHIP STATUS UNCERTAIN

The title records examined for some tracts show conflict in ownership or were insufficient to determine category of ownership without complete title search. All such lands are shown on the accompanying maps as ownership status uncertain.