UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

TEXT TO ACCOMPANY:

COAL RESOURCE OCCURRENCE

AND

COAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

MAPS

OF THE

LOST SPRINGS NORTHWEST QUADRANGLE,

CONVERSE AND NIOBRARA COUNTIES, WYOMING

BY

INTRASEARCH INC.

DENVER, COLORADO

OPEN FILE REPORT 79-473

1979

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CONVERSION TABLE

TO CONVERT	MULTIPLY BY	TO OBTAIN
inches	2.54	centimeters (cm)
feet	0.3048	meters (m)
miles	1.609	kilometers (km)
acres	0.40469	hectares (ha)
tons (short)	0.9072	metric tons (t)
cubic yards/ton	0.8428	cubic meters per metric tons
acre feet	0.12335	hectare-meters
Btu/lb	2.326	kilojoules/kilogram (kJ/kg)
Btu/lb	0.55556	kilocalories/kilogram (kcal/kg)
Fahrenheit	5/9 (F-32)	Celsius

I. Introduction

This report and accompanying maps set forth the Coal Resource Occurrence (CRO) and Coal Develcpment Potential (CDP) of coal beds within the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle, Converse and Niobrara Counties Wyoming. This CRO and CDP map series includes 4 figures and 3 plates (U. S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 79-473). The project is compiled by IntraSearch Inc., 1600 Ogden Street, Denver, Colorado, under KRCRA Northeastern Powder River Basin, Wyoming Contract Number 14-08-0001-17180. This contract is a part of a program to provide an inventory of unleased federal coal in Known Recoverable Coal Areas (KRCRA's) in the western United States.

The Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle is located in Converse and Niobrara Counties, in eastern Wyoming. It encompasses parts of Townships 34 and 35 North, Ranges 67 and 68 West, and covers the area: 42° 52' 30" to 43° 00' north latitude; 104° 52' 30" to 105° 00' west longitude.

Main access to the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle is provided by three maintained gravel roads. The major maintained road parallels Twentymile Creek through the northern portion of the study area. Numerous minor roads and trails constitute an avenue of access to much of the quadrangle. The closest railroad is the Chicago North Western trackage approximately 8 miles (13 km) to the south at Lost Springs, Wyoming.

Northeastward-flowing Twentymile Creek provides the major drainage for the northern and western portions of the study area, and Harney Creek drains the southeastern part of the quadrangle. Both of these creeks drain northeastward into the Cheyenne River. A maximum elevation of 5225 feet (1593 m) above sea level is located in Section 33, T. 34 N., R. 67 W. Minimum elevations of 4580 feet (1396 m) above sea level occur in the valley floor of Twentymile Creek at the northern quadrangle boundary.

The ten to twelve inches (25 to 30 cm) of annual precipitation that falls in this semi-arid region accrues principally in the springtime. Summer and fall precipitation usually originates from thunderstorms, and infrequent snowfalls of six inches (15 cm) or less generally characterize winter precipitation. Although temperatures ranging from less than -25°F (-32°C) to more than 100°F (38°C) have been recorded near Douglas, Wyoming, average wintertime minimums and summertime maximums approach +5° to +15°F (-15° and -9°C) and 75° to 90°F (24° to 32°C), respectively.

Surface ownership is divided among fee, state, and federal categories with the state and federal surface generally leased to ranchers for grazing purposes. Details of surface ownership are available at the Converse and Niobrara County Courthouses in Douglas and Lusk, Wyoming. Details of mineral ownership on federal lands are available from the U. S. Bureau of Land Management in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Federal coal ownership is shown on Plate 2 of the Coal Resource Occurrence maps. The non-federal coal ownership comprises both fee and state coal resources.

The Coal Resource Occurrence and Coal Development Potential program pertains to unleased federal coal and focuses upon: 1) the delineation of lignite, subbituminous coal, bituminous coal, and anthracite at the surface and in the subsurface on federal land; 2) the identification of total tons in place as well as recoverable tons; 3) categorization of these tonnages into measured, indicated, and inferred reserves and resources, and hypothetical resources; and 4) recommendations regarding the potential for surface mining, underground mining, and in-situ gasification of the coal beds. This report evaluates the coal resources of all unleased federal coal beds in the quadrangle which are 5 feet (1.5 m) or greater in thickness and occur at depths down to 3000 feet (914 m). No resources or reserves are computed for leased federal coal, state coal, fee coal, or lands encompassed by coal prospecting permits and preference right lease applications.

Surface and subsurface geological and engineering extrapolations drawn from the current data base suggest the occurrence of approximately 3.6 million tons (3.3 million metric tons) of unleased federal coal resources in the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle.

The suite of maps that accompany this report set forth and portray the coal resource and reserve occurrence in considerable detail. For the most part, this report supplements the cartographically displayed information with minimum verbal duplication of the CRO-CDP map data.

II. Geology

Regional. The thick, economic coal deposits of the Powder River Basin in northeastern Wyoming occur mostly in the Tongue River Member of the Fort Union Formation, and in the lower part of the Wasatch Formation. Approximately 3000 feet (914 m) of the Fort Union Formation, that includes the Tongue River, Lebo, and Tullock Members of Paleocene age, are unconformably overlain by approximately 700 feet (213 m) of the Wasatch Formation of Eocene age. These Tertiary formations lie in a structural basin flanked on the east by the Black Hills uplift, on the south by the Hartville and Casper Mountain uplifts, and on the west by the Casper Arch and the Big Horn Mountain uplift. The structural configuration of the Powder River Basin originated in Late Cretaceous time, with episodic uplift thereafter. The Cretaceous Cordillera was the dominant positive land form throughout the Rocky Mountain area at the close of Mesozoic time.

Outcrops of the Wasatch Formation and the Tongue River Member of the Fort Union Formation cover most of the areas of major coal resource occurrence in the Powder River Basin. The Lebo Member of the Fort Union Formation is mapped at the surface northeast of Recluse, Wyoming, east of the principal coal outcrops and associated clinkers (McKay, 1974), and presumably projects into the subsurface beneath much of the basin. One of the principal characteristics for separating the Lebo and Tullock Members (collectively referred to as the Ludlow Member east of Miles City, Montana) from the overlying Tongue River Member is the color differential between the lighter-colored upper portion and the somewhat darker lower portion (Brown, 1958). Although geologists working with subsurface data, principally geophysical logs, in the basin are trying to develop criteria for subsurface recognition of the Lebo-Tullock and Tongue River-Lebo contacts, no definitive guidelines are known to have been published. Hence, for subsurface mapping purposes, the Fort Union Formation is not divided into its member subdivisions for this study.

During the Paleocene epoch, the Powder River Basin tropic to subtropic depositional environment included broad, inland flood basins with extensive swamps, marshes, freshwater lakes, and a sluggish but active northeastward discharging drainage system, superimposed on a near base level, emerging sea floor. Much of the vast areas where organic debris collected was within a reducing depositional environment. Localized uplifts began to disturb the near sea level terrain of northeastern Wyoming following retreat of the Cretaceous seas. However, the extremely fine-grained characteristics of the Tongue River Member clastics suggest that areas of recurring uplift peripheral to the Powder River Basin were subdued during major coal deposit formation.

The uplift of areas surrounding the Powder River Basin created a structural basin of asymmetric characteristic, with the steep west flank located on the eastern edge of the Big Horn Mountains. The axis of the Powder River Basin is difficult to specifically define, but is thought to be located in the western part of the Basin, and to display a north-south configuration some 15 to 20 miles (24 to 32 km) east of Sheridan, Wyoming. Thus, the sedimentary section described in this report lies on the east flank of the Powder River Basin, with gentle dips of two degrees or less disrupted by surface structure thought to relate to tectonic adjustment and differential compaction.

Some coal beds in the Powder River Basin exceed 200 feet (61 m) in thickness. Deposition of these thick, in-situ coal beds requires a discrete balance between subsidence of the earth's crust and in-filling by trememdous volumes of organic debris. These conditions in concert with a favorable ground water table, non-oxidizing clear water, and a climate amenable to the luxuriant growth of vegetation produce a stabilized swamp critical to the deposition of coal beds.

Deposition of the unusually thick coal beds of the Powder River Basin may be partially attributable to short distance water transportation of organic detritus into areas of crustal subsidence. Variations in coal bed thickness throughout the basin relate to changes in the depositional environment. Drill hole data that indicate either the complete absence or extreme attenuation of a thick coal bed probably relate to location of the drill holes within the ancient stream channel system draining this low land area in Early Cenozoic time. Where thick coal beds thin rapidly from the depocenter of a favorable depositional environment, it is not unusual to encounter a synclinal structure over the maximum coal thickness due to the differential compaction between organic debris in the coal depocenter and fine-grained clastics in the adjacent areas.

The Wasatch Formation of Eocene age crops out over most of the central part of the Powder River Basin and exhibits a disconformable contact with the underlying Fort Union Formation. The contact has been placed at various horizons by different workers; however, for the purpose of this report, the contact is positioned near the top of the Roland coal bed as mapped by Olive (1957) in northwestern Campbell County, Wyoming, and is considered to disconformably descend in the stratigraphic column to the top of the Wyodak-Anderson coal bed (Roland coal bed of Taff, 1909) along the eastern boundary of the coal measures. No attempt is made to differentiate the Wasatch and Fort Union Formations on geophysical logs or in the subsurface mapping program that is a part of this CRO-CDP project.

Although Wasatch and Fort Union lithologies are too similar to allow differentiation in some areas, most of the thicker coal beds occur in the Fort Union section on the east flank of the Powder River Basin. Furthermore, orogenic movements peripheral to the basin apparently increased in magnitude during Wasatch time causing the deposition of friable, coarse-grained to gritty arkosic sandstones, fine- to very fine-grained sandstones, siltstones, mudstones, claystones, brown-to-black carbonaceous shales and coal beds. These sediments are noticeably to imperceptibly coarser than the underlying Fort Union clastics.

The Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle is located in an area where surface rocks are classified into the Lebo and Tullock Members of the Fort Union Formation.

Olive (1957) correlated coal beds in the Spotted Horse coal field with coal beds in the Sheridan coal field (Baker, 1929) and Gillette coal field (Dobbin and Barnett, 1927), Wyoming, with the coal beds in the Ashland coal field (Bass, 1932) in southeastern Montana. This report utilizes, where possible, the coal bed nomenclature used in previous reports. The Felix coal bed was named by Stone and Lupton (1910). Kent (1976) named the Norfolk coal bed, and the Smith coal bed was named by Taff (1909). The Swartz coal bed was designated by McKay and Mapel (1973), and Baker (1929) assigned names to the Anderson, Canyon, and Wall coal beds. The Cook coal bed was named by Bass (1932), and the Pawnee and Cache coal beds were named by Warren (1959).

IntraSearch's correlation of thick coal beds from the Spotted Horse coal field to Gillette points out that the Wyodak coal bed, named the D coal bed by Dobbin and Barnett (1927), is equivalent to the Anderson, Canyon and all or part of the Cook coal beds to the north and west of Gillette, Wyoming. Correlation of this suite of coal beds with the Wyodak coal bed south and southwest of Gillette suggests that the Anderson and Canyon coal beds equate with the upper ten to twenty-five percent of the thick Wyodak coal bed, and the Cook and Wall or Upper Wall coal beds are equivalent to the major part of the Wyodak coal bed. Due to problematic correlations outside of the Gillette area, the name Wyodak has been informally used by many previous authors to represent the coal beds in the area surrounding the Wyodak coal mine. The Wildcat, Moyer, and Oedekoven coal beds were informally named by IntraSearch (1978b, 1979, and 1978a).

Local. The Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle lies on the eastern flank of the Powder River Basin, where strata dip gently westward. The Fort Union Formation crops out over the entire quadrangle. The Fort Union Formation is composed of very fine-grained sandstones, siltstones, claystones, shales, carbonaceous shales, and numerous coal beds.

III. Data Sources

Areal geology of the coal outcrops is derived from The Lost Spring Coal Field Report (Winchester, 1912). Five coal beds that crop out on this quadrangle are less than 5 feet (1.5 m) thick. Inasmuch as coal beds less than five feet thick are not evaluated in this CRO/CDP mapping program, these five coal beds are not mapped. A sixth coal bed that crops out is approximately 6 feet (1.8 m) thick and correlates with the Local $_1$ coal bed of IntraSearch in this report.

The major sources of subsurface control, particularly on deep coal beds, is the geophysical logs from oil and gas test bores and producing wells. Some geophysical logs are not applicable to this study, for the logs relate only to the deep potentially productive oil and gas zones. More than eighty percent of the logs include resistivity, conductivity, and self-potential curves. Occasionally the logs include gamma, density, and sonic curves. These logs are available from several commercial sources.

All geophysical logs available in the quadrangle are scanned to select those with data applicable to Coal Resource Occurrence mapping. Paper copies of the logs are obtained, interpreted, and coal intervals annotated. Maximum accuracy of coal bed identification is accomplished where gamma, density, and resistivity curves are available. Coal bed tops and bottoms are picked on the logs at the midpoint between the minimum and maximum curve deflections. The correlation of coal beds within and between quadrangles is achieved utilizing a fence diagram to associate local correlations with regional coal occurrences.

In some parts of the Powder River Basin, additional subsurface control is available from U. S. Geological Survey open-file reports that include geophysical and lithologic logs of shallow holes drilled specifically for coal exploration. A sparse scattering of subsurface data points are shown on unpublished CRO-CDP maps compiled by the U. S. Geological Survey, and where these data are utilized, the rock-coal intervals are shown on the Coal Data Map (Plate 1). Inasmuch as these drill holes have no identifier headings, they are not set forth on the Coal Data Sheet (Plate 3). The geophysical logs of these drill holes were not available to IntraSearch to ascertain the accuracy of horizontal location, topographic elevation, and downhole data interpretation.

The reliability of correlations, set forth by IntraSearch in this report, vary depending on: the density and quality of lithologic and geophysical logs; the detail, thoroughness, and accuracy of published and unpublished surface geological maps, and interpretative proficiency. There is no intent on the part of IntraSearch to refute nomenclature established in the literature or used locally by workers in the area. IntraSearch's nomenclature focuses upon the suggestion of regional coal bed names applicable throughout the eastern Powder River Basin. It is expected and entirely reasonable that some differences of opinion regarding correlations, as suggested by IntraSearch, exist. Additional drilling for coal, oil, gas, water, and uranium, coupled with expanded mapping of coal bed outcrops and associated clinkers will broaden the data base for coal bed correlations and allow continued improvement in the understanding of coal bed occurrences in the eastern Powder River Basin.

The topographic map of the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle is published by the U. S. Geological Survey, compilation date, 1970. Land network and mineral ownership data are compiled from land plats available from the U. S. Bureau of Land Management in Cheyenne, Wyoming. This information is current to October 13, 1977.

IV. Coal Bed Occurrence

Four local coal beds are identified in the subsurface in this quadrangle. Only the stratigraphically highest local coal bed in the subsurface is evaluated in this quadrangle. The remaining local coal beds are not mapped due to insufficient thickness. Three 8 1/2 x 11" (22 to 28 cm) maps are prepared for the Local $_1$ coal bed and are shown as Figures 1, 2, and 3.

An "as received" basis proximate analysis for the Local $_1$ Coal bed at the Sunset mine in Section 35, T.34 N, R. 68 W. is as follows:

COAL BED NAME	ASH	FIXED CARBON	MOISTURE	VOLATILES	SULFUR	BTU/LB
Local $_1$ (1)	12.7	34.9	24.0	28.4	0.61	7,680

(1) Winchester, D. E., 1912, The Lost Spring coal field, Converse County, Wyoming: U. S. Geol. Survey Bull. 471-F, p. 485.

All analyses except BTU/LB are expressed as a percentage.

The Local $_1$ crops out in the southeast portion of the quadrangle and averages 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) thick, (Figure 1). Structural contours on top of the Local $_1$ coal bed indicate a westward dip of approximately one degree (Figure 2). The Local $_1$ coal bed lies less than 150 feet (46 m) beneath the surface throughout the area of occurrence (Figure 2).

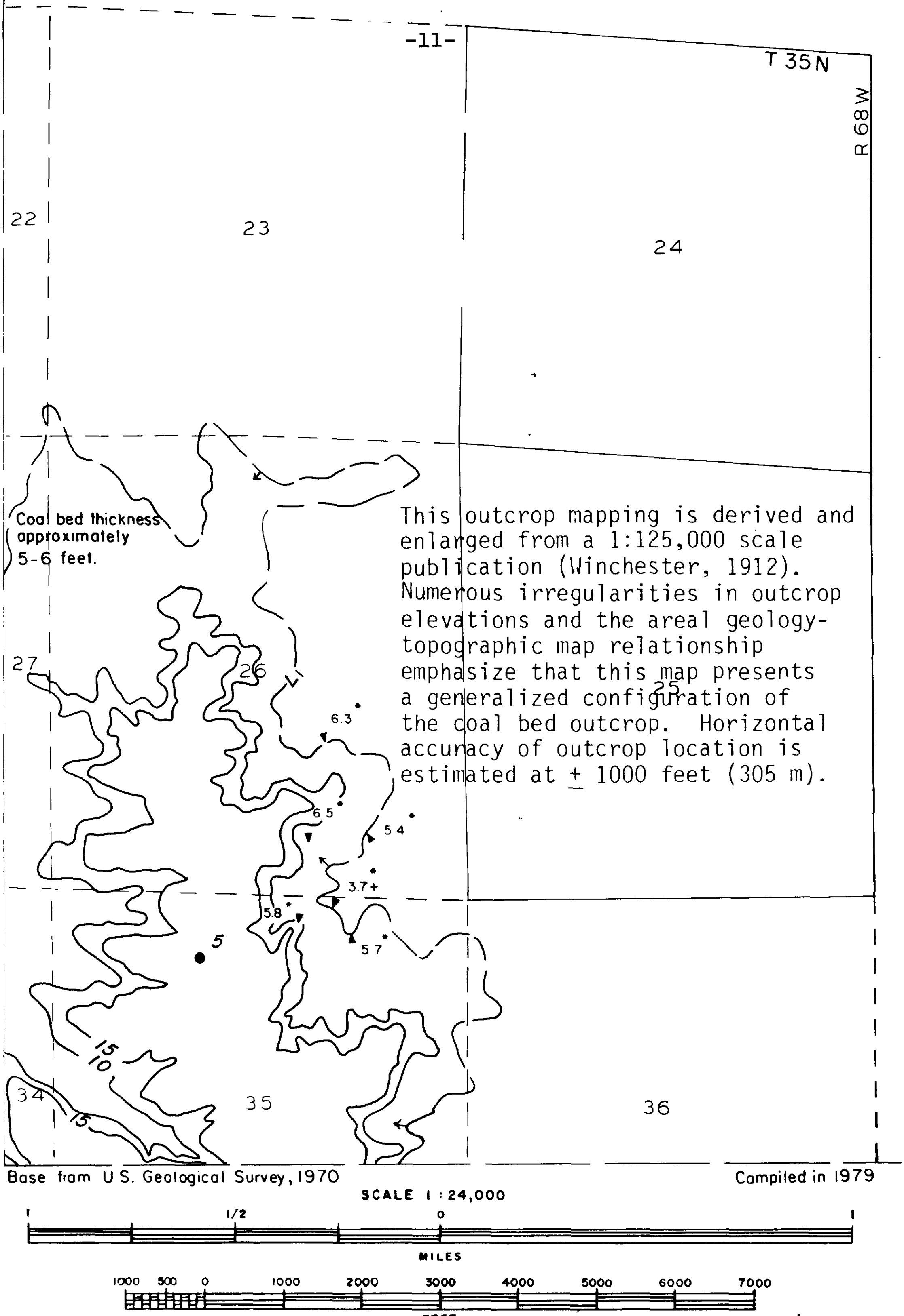
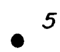


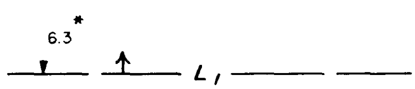
FIGURE 1
ISOPACH AND MINING RATIO MAP
OF LOCAL[1] COAL BED IN
LOST SPRINGS NW QUADRANGLE
CONVERSE AND NIOBRARA COUNTIES, WYOMING
(See following page for Explanation)

EXPLANATION FOR FIGURE 1



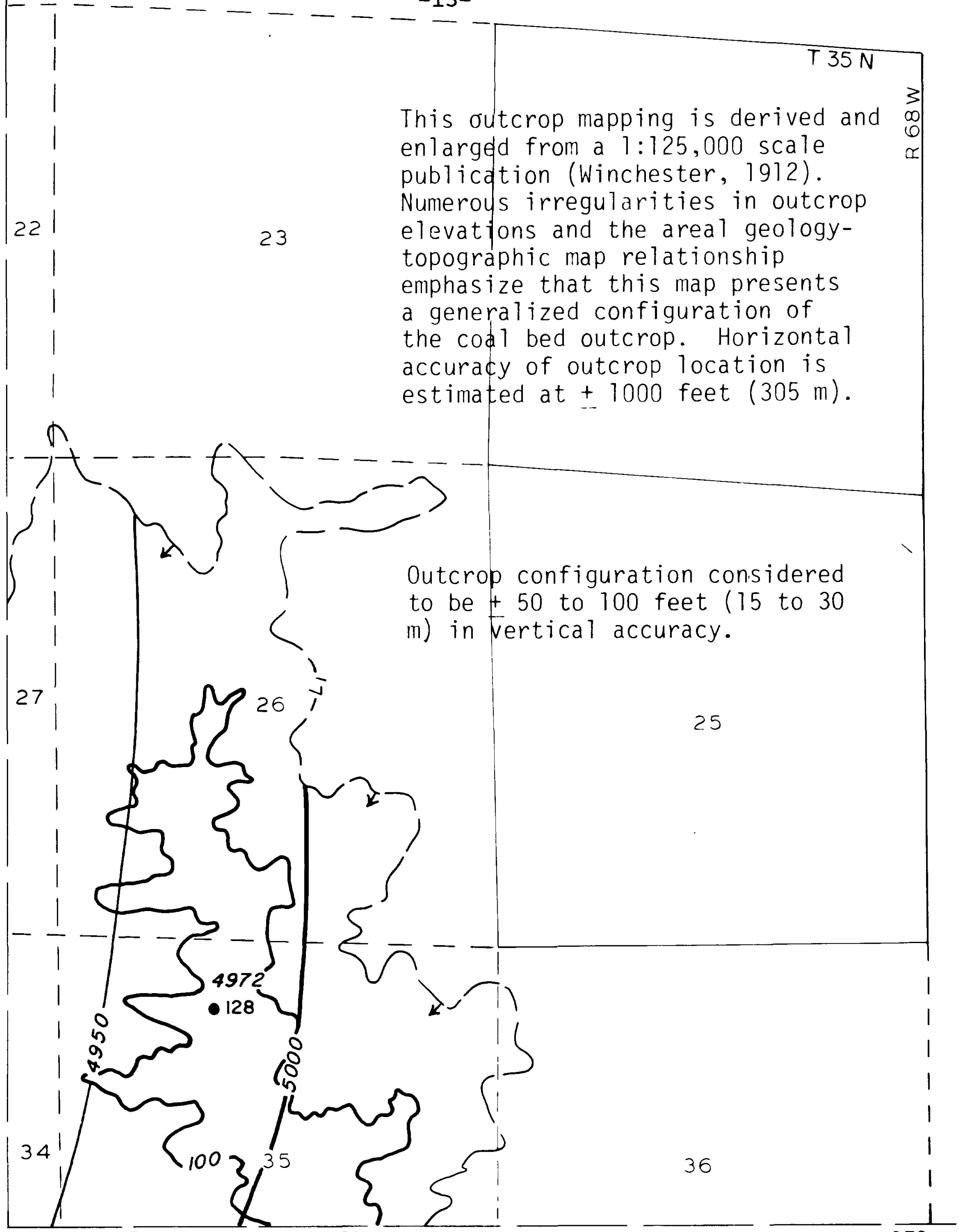
DRILL HOLE-Showing coal thickness in feet.

MINING RATIO CONTOUR- Number indicates cubic yards of overburden per ton of recoverable coal by surface mining methods. Contours shown only in area suitable for surface mining within the stripping limit.



TRACE OF COAL BED OUTCROP-Showing coal thickness in feet, measured at triangle. Asterisk indicates measured section was used in isopach mapping. Arrow points toward the coal-bearing area. Coal bed dashed where inferred.

To convert feet to meters multiply feet by 0.3048.



Base from U.S. Geological Survey, 1970

Compiled in 1979

SCALE 1 : 24,000

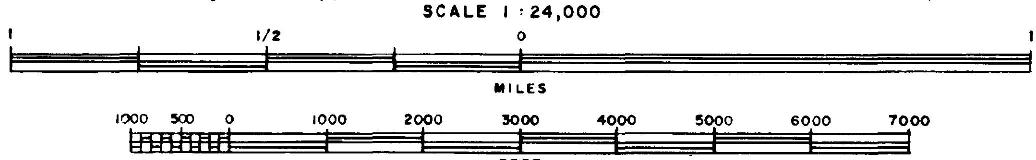
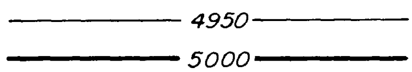
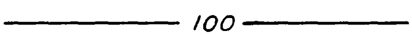


FIGURE 2
STRUCTURE CONTOUR AND ISOPACH OF OVERBURDEN
OF LOCAL[1] COAL BED IN
LOST SPRINGS NW QUADRANGLE
CONVERSE AND NIOBRARA COUNTIES, WYOMING
(See following page for Explanation)

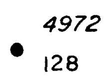
EXPLANATION FOR FIGURE 2



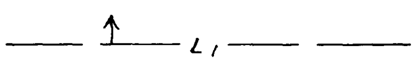
STRUCTURE CONTOURS-Drawn on top of coal bed. Contour interval 50 feet. Datum is mean sea level.



OVERBURDEN ISOPACH-Showing thickness of overburden, in feet, from the surface to the top of the coal bed.



DRILL HOLE-Slanted number showing elevation at top of coal bed; vertical number showing thickness of overburden from the surface to the top of coal bed. Measurements in feet.



TRACE OF COAL BED OUTCROP-Arrow points toward the coal-bearing area. Coal bed dashed where inferred.

To convert feet to meters multiply feet by 0.3048.

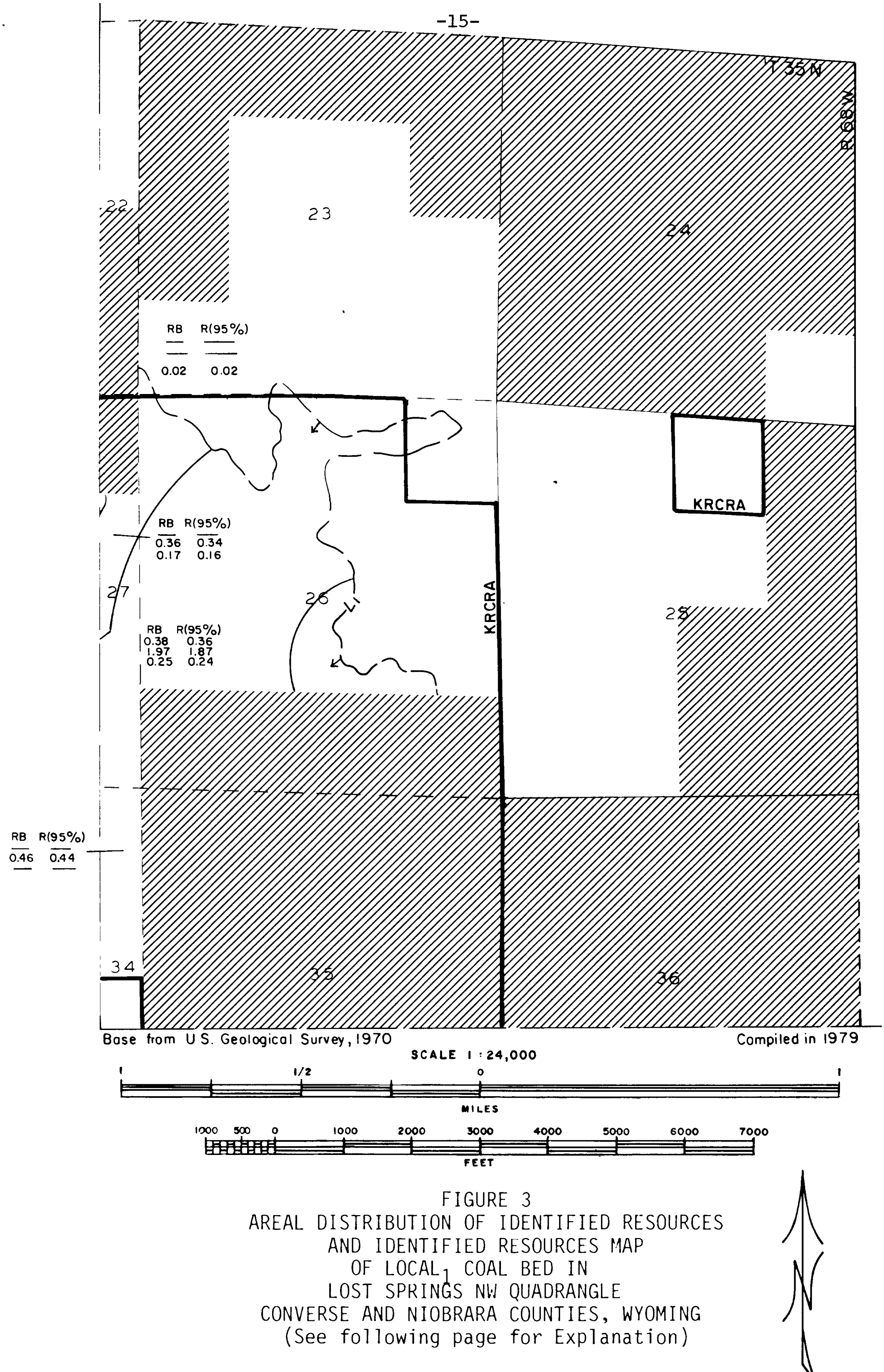
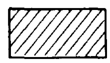
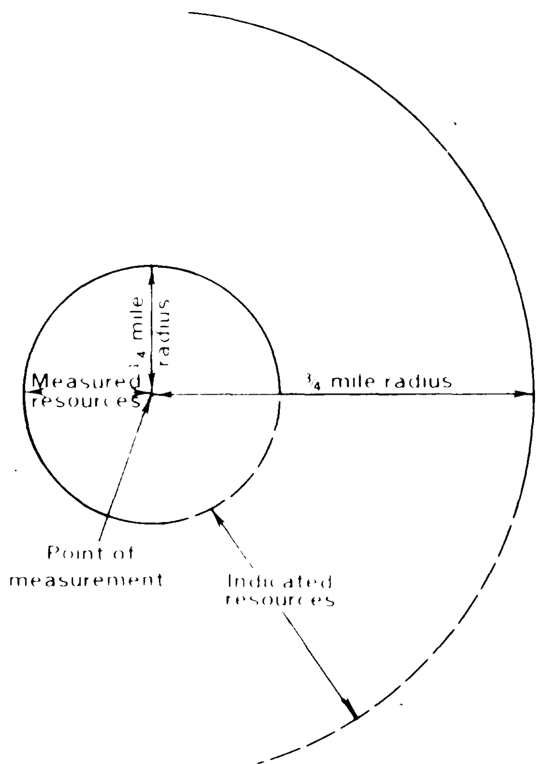


FIGURE 3
AREAL DISTRIBUTION OF IDENTIFIED RESOURCES
AND IDENTIFIED RESOURCES MAP
OF LOCAL[1] COAL BED IN
LOST SPRINGS NW QUADRANGLE
CONVERSE AND NIOBRARA COUNTIES, WYOMING
(See following page for Explanation)

EXPLANATION FOR FIGURE 3



NON-FEDERAL COAL LAND

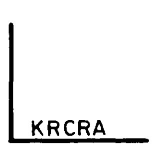


BOUNDARY LINES-Enclosing areas of measured, indicated and inferred coal resources of the coal bed.

This outcrop mapping is derived and enlarged from a 1:125,000 scale publication (Winchester, 1912). Numerous irregularities in outcrop elevations and the areal geology-topographic map relationship emphasize that this map presents a generalized configuration of the coal bed outcrop. Horizontal accuracy of outcrop location is estimated at ± 1000 feet (305 m).

RB	R(95%)	
0.38	0.36	(Measured)
1.97	1.87	(Indicated)
0.25	0.24	(Inferred)

IDENTIFIED RESOURCES OF COAL BED-In millions of short tons. Dash indicates no resources in that category. Reserve Base (RB) x the recovery factor (95%) = Reserves (R).



KNOWN RECOVERABLE COAL RESOURCE AREA-KRCRA

TRACE OF COAL BED OUTCROP-Arrow points toward the coal-bearing area. Coal bed dashed where inferred.

To convert miles to kilometers multiply miles by 1.609.

To convert short tons to metric tons multiply short tons by 0.9072.

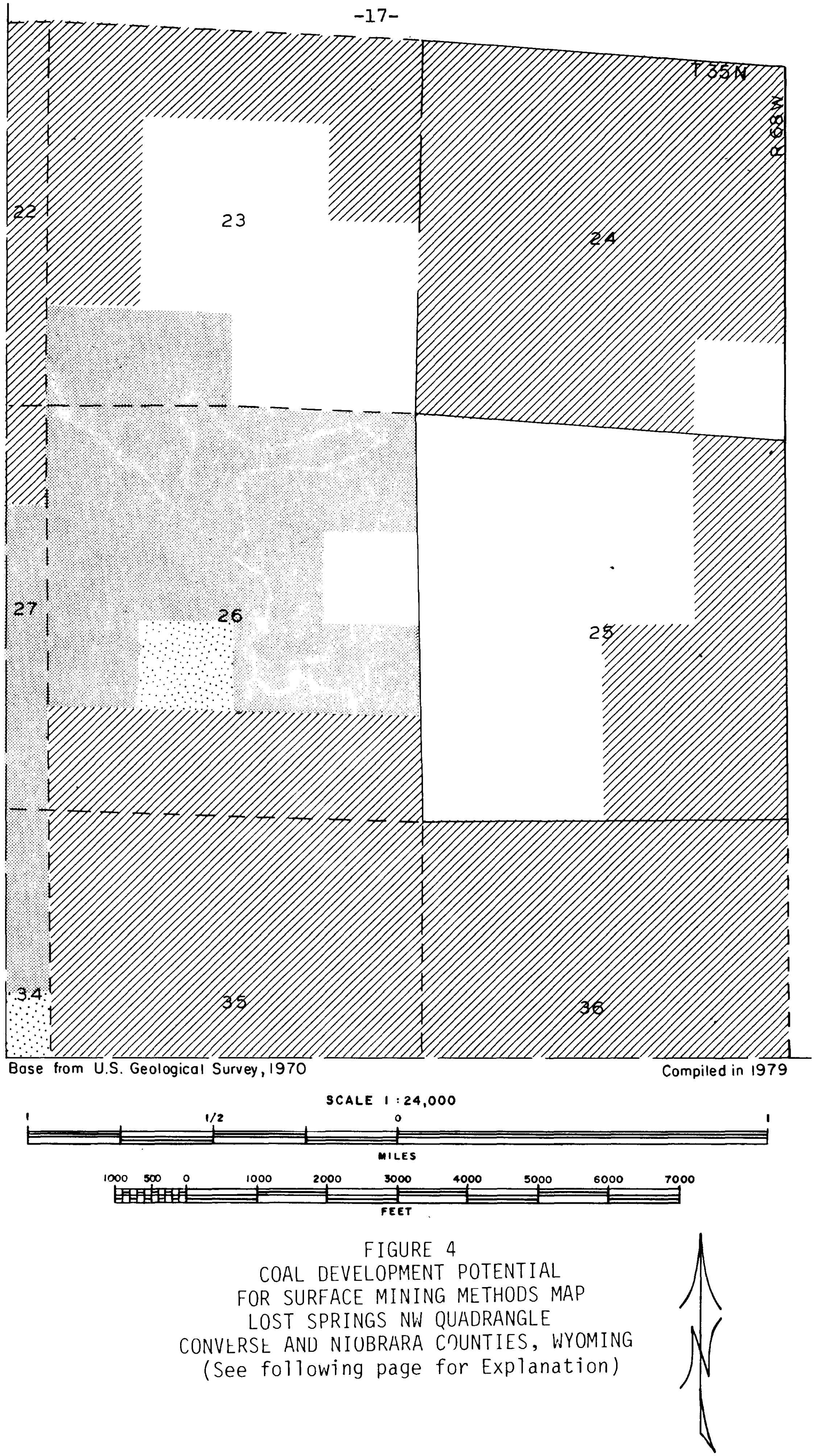


FIGURE 4
COAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
FOR SURFACE MINING METHODS MAP
LOST SPRINGS NW QUADRANGLE
CONVERSE AND NIOBRARA COUNTIES, WYOMING
(See following page for Explanation)

EXPLANATION FOR FIGURE 4

NON-FEDERAL COAL LAND- Coal development potential is not rated.

AREA OF HIGH COAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR SURFACE MINING METHODS-Area has mining ratio values ranging from 0 to 10.

AREA OF MODERATE COAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR SURFACE MINING METHODS-Area has mining ratio values ranging from 10 to 15.

AREA OF NO COAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR SURFACE MINING METHODS-Area contains no known coal in beds 5 feet (1.5 m) or more thick within 500 feet (152 m) of the surface.

The Coal Data Sheet, Plate 3, shows the downhole identification of coal beds within the quadrangle as interpreted from geophysical logs from oil and gas test bores and producing sites. A datum coal bed is utilized to position columnar sections on Plate 3. This portrayal is schematic by design; hence, no structural or coal thickness implications are suggested by the dashed correlation lines projected through no record (NR) intervals. Inasmuch as the Local $_2$ coal bed underlies most of the quadrangle, it is designated as datum for the correlation diagram.

V. Geological and Engineering Mapping Parameters

The correct horizontal location and elevation of drill holes utilized in subsurface mapping are critical to map accuracy. IntraSearch plots the horizontal location of the drill hole as described on the geophysical log heading. Occasionally this location is superimposed or near to a drillsite shown on the topographic map, and the topographic map horizontal location is utilized. If the ground elevation on the geophysical log does not agree with the topographic elevation of the drillsite, the geophysical log ground elevation is adjusted to conformance. If there is no indication of a drillsite on the topographic map, the "quarter, quarter, quarter" heading location is shifted within a small area until the ground elevation on the heading agrees with the topographic map elevation. If no elevation agreement can be reached, the well heading or data sheet is rechecked for footage measurements and ground elevation correctness. Inquiries to the companies who provided the oil and gas geophysical logs frequently reveal that corrections have been made in the original survey. If all horizontal location data sources have been checked and the information accepted as the best available data, the drillsite elevation on the geophysical log is modified to agree with the topographic map elevation. IntraSearch considers this agreement mandatory for the proper construction of most subsurface maps, but in particular, the overburden isopach, the ratio, and Coal Development Potential maps.

Subsurface mapping is based on geologic data within and adjacent to the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle area. Data from geophysical logs are used to correlate coal beds and control contour lines for the coal thickness, structure, and overburden maps. Isopach lines are also drawn to honor selected measured sections where there is sparse subsurface control. Where isopach contours do not honor surface measured sections, the surface thicknesses are thought to be attenuated by oxidation and/or erosion, hence not reflective of total coal thickness. Isopach lines extend to the coal bed outcrops, the projections of coal bed outcrops, and the contact between porcellanite (clinker) and unoxidized coal in place. Attenuation of total coal bed thickness is known to take place near these lines of definition; however, the overestimation of coal bed tonnages that results from this projection of total coal thickness is insignificant to the Coal Development Potential maps. Structure contour maps are constructed on the tops of the main coal beds. Where subsurface data are scarce, supplemental structural control points are selected from the topographic map along coal outcrops.

In preparing overburden isopach maps, no attempt is made to identify coal beds that occur in the overburden to a particular coal bed under study. Mining ratio maps for this quadrangle are constructed utilizing a ninety-five percent recovery factor. Contours of these maps identify the ratio of cubic yards of overburden to tons of recoverable coal. Where ratio control points are sparse, interpolated points are computed using coal structure, coal isopach, and topographic control.

On the Areal Distribution of Identified Resources Map (ADIR), coal bed reserves are not calculated where the coal is less than 5 feet (1.5 m) thick, where the coal occurs at a depth greater than 500 feet (152 m), where non-federal coal exists, or where federal coal leases, preference right lease applications, and coal prospecting permits exist.

Coal tonnage calculations involve the planimetering of areas of measured, indicated, inferred reserves and resources, and hypothetical resources to determine their areal extent in acres. An Insufficient Data Line is drawn to delineate areas where surface and subsurface data are too sparse for CRO map construction. Various categories of resources are calculated in the unmapped areas by utilizing coal bed thicknesses mapped in the geologically controlled area adjacent to the insufficient data line. Acres are multiplied by the average coal bed thickness and 1750 (the number of tons of lignite per acre-foot, 12,874 metric tons per hectare-meter), to determine total tons in place. Recoverable tonnage is calculated at ninety-five percent of the total tons in place. Where tonnages are computed for the CRO-CDP map series, resources and reserves are expressed in millions of tons. Frequently the planimetering of coal resources on a sectionized basis involves complexly curvilinear lines (coal bed outcrop and 500-foot stripping limit designations) in relationship with linear section boundaries and circular resource category boundaries. Where these relationships occur, generalizations of complex curvilinear lines are discretely utilized, and resources and/or reserves are calculated within an estimated two to three percent plus or minus accuracy.

VI. Coal Development Potential

Strippable Coal Development Potential. Areas where coal beds are 5 feet (1.5 m) or more in thickness and are overlain by 500 feet

(152 m) or less of overburden are considered to have potential for surface mining and are assigned a high, moderate, or low development potential based on the mining ratio (cubic yards of overburden per ton of recoverable coal). The formula used to calculate mining ratios is as follows:

$$MR = \frac{to\ (0.911)^*}{tc\ (rf)}$$

where MR = mining ratio
to = thickness of overburden
tc = thickness of coal
rf = recovery factor
0.911*= conversion factor (cu. yds./ton)

*A conversion factor of 0.922 is used for lignite.

A surface mining potential map (Figure 4) is prepared utilizing the following mining ratio criteria for coal beds 5 to 40 feet (1.5 to 12 m) thick:

1. Low development potential = 15:1 and greater ratio.
2. Moderate development potential = 10:1 to 15:1 ratio.
3. High development potential = 0 to 10:1 ratio.

The following mining ratio criteria is utilized for coal beds greater than 40 feet (12 m) thick:

1. Low development potential = 7:1 and greater ratio.
2. Moderate development potential = 5:1 to 7:1 ratio.
3. High development potential = 0 to 5:1 ratio.

The surface mining potential is high for one square mile of the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle. This high development potential relates to mining ratios less than 10:1 for the Local $_1$ coal bed. A small area of moderate development potential is due to Local $_1$ coal bed mining ratios between 10:1 and 15:1. The remainder of the quadrangle is non-federal coal land or has no development potential for surface mining. No development potential areas are located where coal bed thicknesses are less than 5 feet (1.5 m), or overburden thicknesses greater than 500 feet (152 m).

Table 1 sets forth the estimated strippable reserve base tonnages per coal bed for the quadrangle.

Table 1.--Strippable Coal Reserve Base Data (in short tons) for Federal Coal Lands in the Lost Springs Northwest Quadrangle, Converse and Niobrara Counties, Wyoming.

Development potentials are based on mining ratios (cubic yards of overburden/ton of recoverable coal).

Coal Bed	High Development Potential (0-10:1 Mining Ratio)	Moderate Development Potential (10:1-15:1 Mining Ratio)	Low Development Potential (>15:1 Mining Ratio)	Total
Local	2,750,000	380,000	300,000	3,430,000
TOTAL	2,750,000	380,000	300,000	3,430,000

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