

TERRESTRIAL REGIONAL FOCAL AREAS

A total of 55 Tier I and 61 Tier II terrestrial Focal Areas were identified. These ranged in size from a small area (37 miles²) providing connectivity in northwestern Montana, to a large contiguous sagebrush and grassland landscape in eastern Montana (3,983 miles²). It is clear by looking at the maps in [Appendices L](#) and [M](#) that the approach to identify terrestrial Focal Areas differed east and west of the Continental Divide.

In eastern Montana, the teams focused on large intact landscapes to provide the largest area possible to develop conservation actions for multiple SGCN. Connectivity between protected landscapes (e.g., wilderness areas, roadless areas) was the focus in the western part of the state, resulting in numerous smaller Focal Areas.

FWP staff further refined the Tier I Focal Areas by ranking them and identifying the top two within each FWP region for a total of 14 ([Figure 36](#)). The remaining Tier I and Tier II Focal Areas can be found in [Appendices L-M](#). Examples of conservation actions that may be implemented in these Focal Areas can be found under the associated CTGCN and SGCN specific pages. The listed conservation actions, while thorough, may not represent all actions that should be implemented within each Focal Area. Listed actions should be reviewed prior to a project being implemented to determine relevancy to the project goals. Additional actions should be explored and implemented if they benefit the Focal Area, CTGCN, and/or SGCN.

While these areas were identified to focus conservation efforts, it is not implied that efforts only be restricted to these 14 areas. Implementing conservation actions in any Tier I or Tier II Focal Area has tremendous conservation value for Montana.

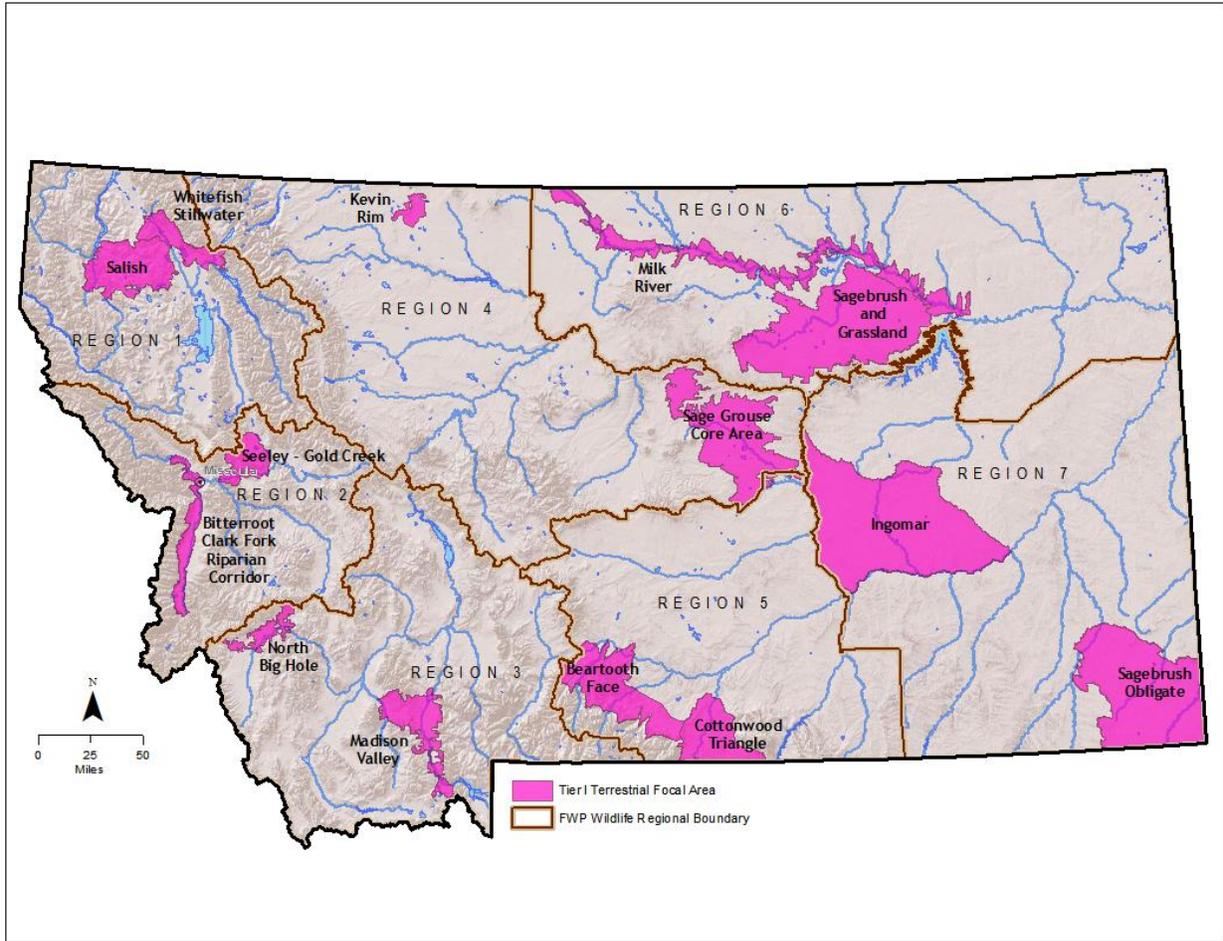


Figure 36. Top 14 Terrestrial Focal Areas

WHITEFISH STILLWATER

396 miles²

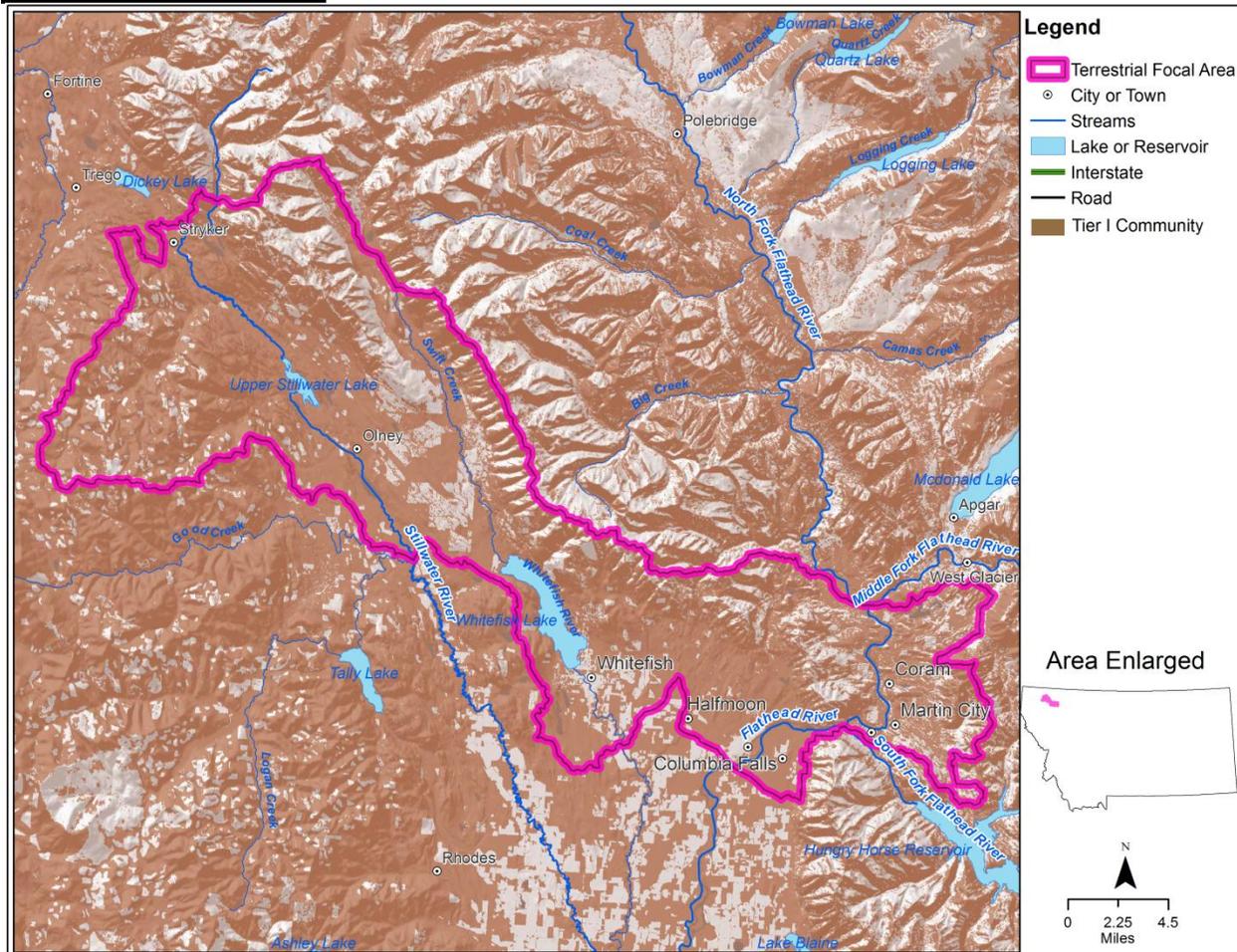


Figure 37. Whitefish Stillwater Focal Area in FWP Region 1 (Kalispell)

This Focal Area consists of a mix of public (e.g., Flathead National Forest, DNRC) and private lands, including industrial forest and agricultural lands that form part of the western boundary of the Crown of the Continent. This Focal Area is very important to maintaining wildlife connectivity between the northern Rockies of Canada, Glacier National Park, and the Swan Valley/Bob Marshall Wilderness complex to the south. It also helps connect the Northern Continental Divide to the Salish Focal Area and Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystems. The Whitefish Stillwater Focal Area forms the western portion of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem's grizzly bear core area. It also is part of the Whitefish-Swan ridge of mountains that form a major raptor migratory flyway, and much of the area is comprised of CTGCN.

Overall, few of the private land acres are protected by conservation easements. Most of the existing conservation easements are relatively small and held by Montana Land Reliance, The Nature Conservancy, and Flathead Land Trust. The area does include the Flathead National Forest's 8.9 mile² Le Beau Research Natural Area (RNA) and the Coram Experimental Forest. Active conservation partnerships and strong community support exist in the Whitefish area. A significant portion of the Whitefish Stillwater Focal Area provides the source of Whitefish's

water supply and forms the headwaters of Whitefish Lake. The entire Focal Area supports high recreational uses including Whitefish Trails (about 60 miles of public access hiking/biking trails on DNRC lands), fishing, hunting, berry picking, hiking, and wildlife watching. Restoration opportunities exist on private agricultural lands and to a limited degree on forested lands. There are excellent opportunities to restore whitebark pine.

Current impacts and future threats to the area include high rates of recreational and home development that has been occurring in the region over the last two decades. This development has been especially great near Whitefish and Columbia Falls, as well as on outlying rural lands along USFS and other public land boundaries. As development increases, it threatens the large acreage of corporate timberlands. The number of lakes and streams makes this area vulnerable to ANS. Other impacts include threats from terrestrial invasive species, habitat fragmentation, and a changed fire regime. Climate change is considered a future threat and could have long term impacts.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (mesic-wet)
Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Shrubland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern

Black Swift

Black Tern

Black-backed Woodpecker

Bobolink

Boreal Chickadee

Brewer's Sparrow

Brown Creeper

Cassin's Finch

Clark's Nutcracker

Common Loon

Common Tern

Evening Grosbeak

Flammulated Owl

Forster's Tern

Golden Eagle

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch

Great Blue Heron

Great Gray Owl

Harlequin Duck

Horned Grebe

Le Conte's Sparrow

Lewis's Woodpecker

Long-billed Curlew

Northern Goshawk

Northern Hawk Owl

Peregrine Falcon

Pileated Woodpecker

Trumpeter Swan

Varied Thrush

Veery

White-tailed Ptarmigan

Mammals

Canada Lynx

Fisher

Grizzly Bear

Hoary Bat

Little Brown Myotis

Northern Bog Lemming

Pygmy Shrew

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Wolverine

Reptiles

Northern Alligator Lizard

Western Skink

SALISH

920 miles²

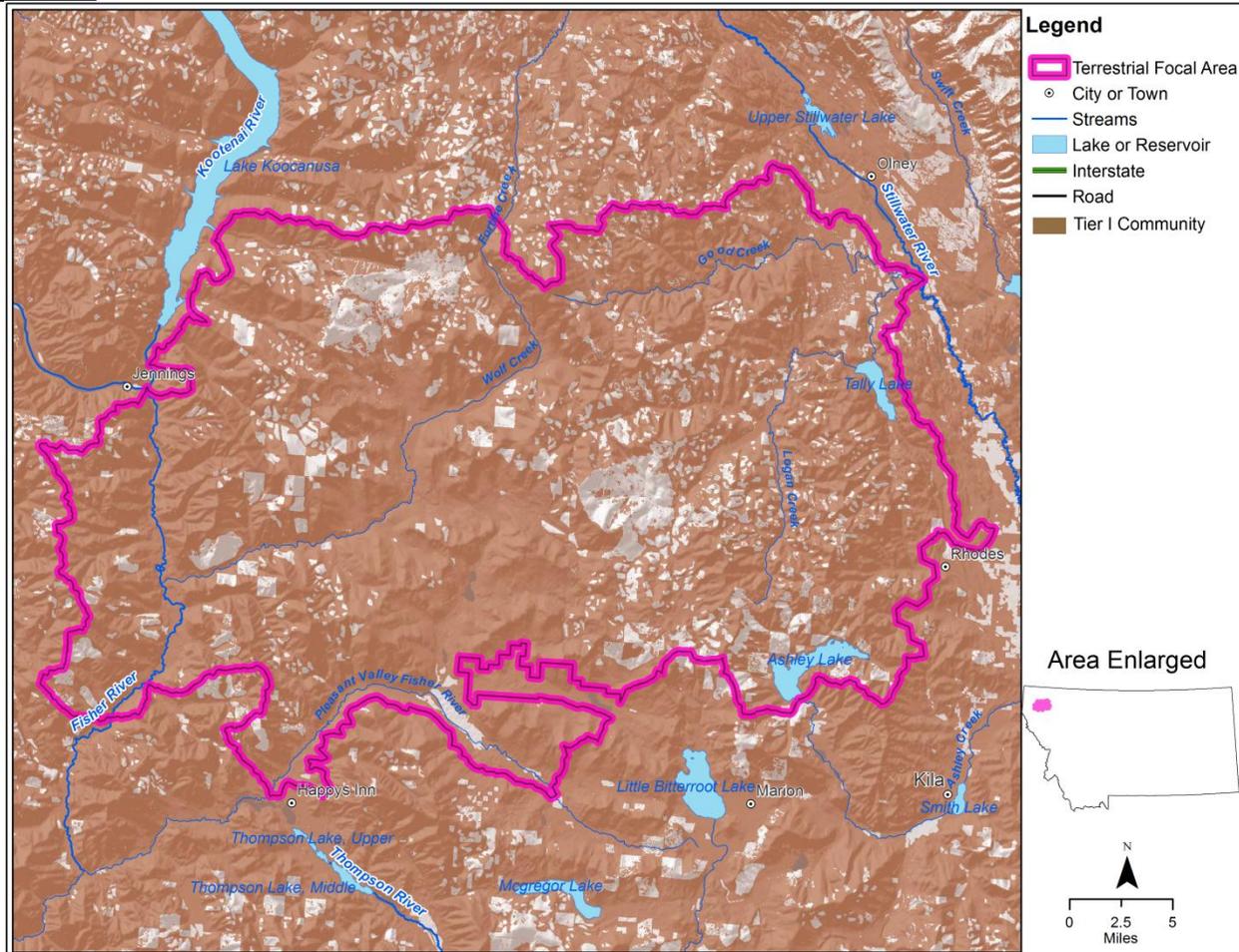


Figure 38. Salish Focal Area in FWP Region 1 (Kalispell)

This Focal Area provides an important linkage between the North Continental Divide and the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystems. The central part of this linkage is the relatively new Lost Trail NWR. Lost Trail protects exceptional Palouse prairie grasslands and outstanding restored wetland habitats as well as superior views and quality hunting/recreational opportunities. However, wildlife habitat values are highly threatened with development along NWR borders. This Focal Area supports nesting trumpeter swans and provides breeding habitat for western toads. This area is home to one of the few areas the federally threatened Spalding catchfly (native grassland plant) is found in Montana. This area also is important for elk migration and winter range for elk and mule deer.

About 14 miles² of this Focal Area are protected by the Lost Trail NWR and several leased DNRC parcels within the NWR boundaries. Another five miles² of private wetland/grassland on the valley floor are protected by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program conservation easements. A few parcels are protected by land trust held conservation easements. The vast majority of the remaining acreage in this Focal Area is owned by Plum Creek Timber Company. Existing partnerships that support conservation in this area include FWP, USFWS, NRCS, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Vital Ground, Flathead

Audubon, Montana Loon Society, and the American Bird Conservancy. This area has several opportunities for restoration of riparian and grassland areas, aspen communities, and ponderosa pine communities.

Current impacts to the area include development, incompatible timber harvest practices, and invasive weeds. Future threats are the same as current impacts and are widespread and imminent. In addition, climate change is a future threat and could have long term impacts. Increased recreation may also have negative impacts in the future.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (mesic-wet)
Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Shrubland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Coeur d'Alene Salamander
Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern
Black Swift
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Bobolink
Boreal Chickadee
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Cassin's Finch
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Loon
Common Tern
Evening Grosbeak
Flammulated Owl
Forster's Tern
Golden Eagle
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Harlequin Duck
Horned Grebe

Le Conte's Sparrow
Lewis's Woodpecker
Long-billed Curlew
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pileated Woodpecker
Trumpeter Swan
Varied Thrush
Veery
White-tailed Ptarmigan

Mammals

Canada Lynx
Fisher
Fringed Myotis
Grizzly Bear
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Northern Bog Lemming
Pygmy Shrew
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Wolverine

Reptiles

Northern Alligator Lizard
Western Skink

SEELEY-GOLD CREEK

371 miles²

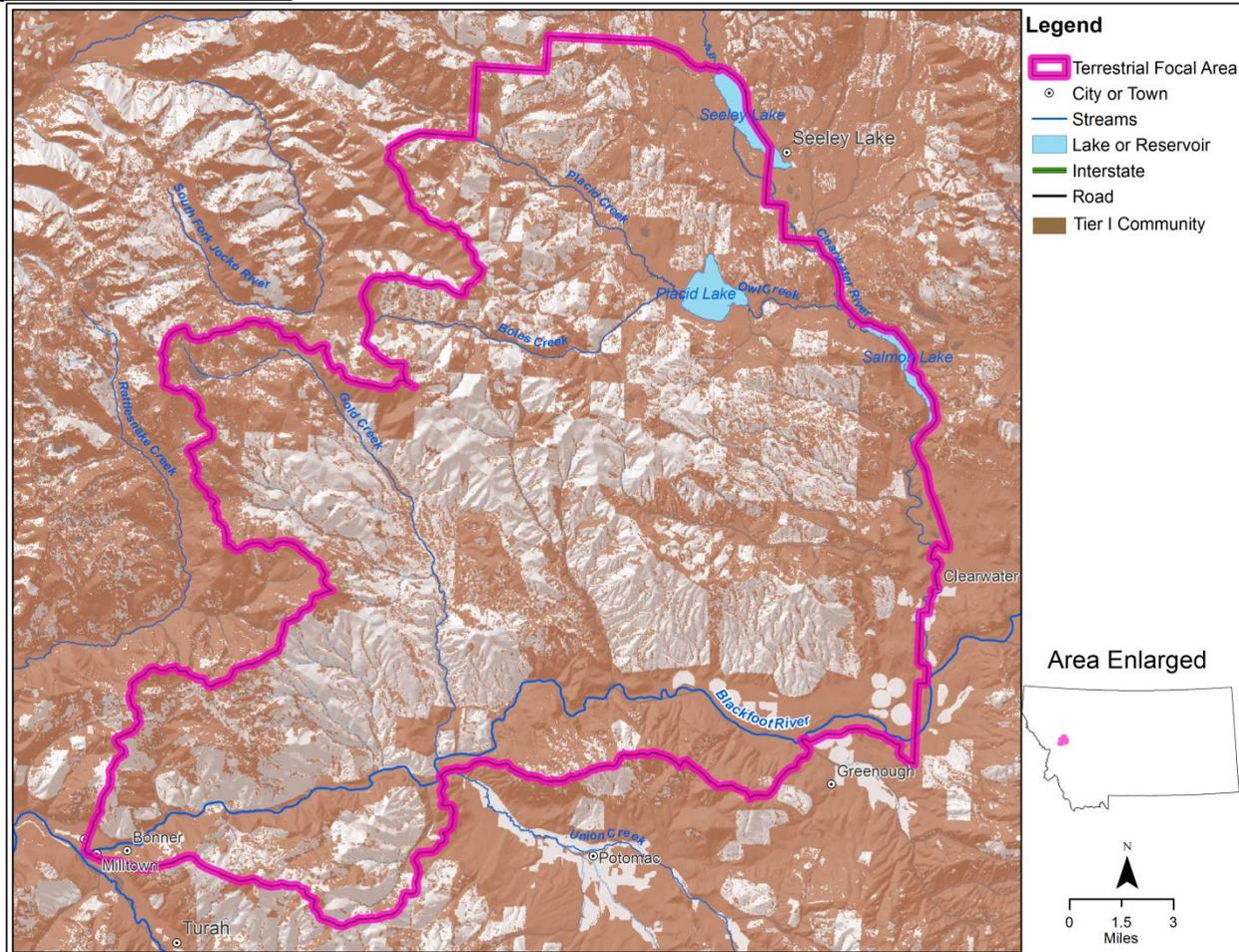


Figure 39. Seeley-Gold Creek Focal Area in FWP Region 2 (Missoula)

This area supports a high diversity of species and habitats, and has a high density of wetlands. It is critical "front country" to the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area, and provides critical connectivity between the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area; the Swan and Mission ranges to the northeast; and the Garnet, Sapphire, Flint, and Bitterroot ranges to southwest. This area supports high biodiversity, including many SGCN. It is a Canada lynx stronghold, supports grizzly bears, has numerous SGCN toad breeding sites, at least one northern bog lemming site, and several great blue heron rookeries. This Focal Area is adjacent to the Shoofly Meadow RNA that also supports northern bog lemmings, and the Sheep Mountain Fen which is a USFS botanical area. This area also contains a small stand of open, old-growth ponderosa pine habitat that is protected by conservation easement.

This area is extremely valuable in spite of logging and recent large burns because it is largely undeveloped. The area is relatively unfragmented as current housing development mostly is taking place around the periphery. There are few current protections in this Focal Area, as it mostly is private land, but this area is adjacent to protected areas such as the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area, Rattlesnake National Recreation Area, Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA, Tribal

wilderness, and the Blackfoot Valley. Many conservation agencies and organizations are working in the Blackfoot and Clearwater valleys including Five Valleys Land Trust; Blackfoot Challenge; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Seeley Lake and Missoula community foundations; Missoula County; Vital Ground; BLM; USFS; DNRC; and Plum Creek Timber Company. The opportunity for new partnerships also is great.

Because this area is very productive, it is already recovering from logging and fire impacts. Restoration can easily be continued, but the cost could be high if acquisition is considered, as a large area currently is for sale. Restoration will be compromised if significant portions are sold and developed for housing. This area is valuable for all types of recreation and, because of its proximity to Missoula, is heavily used for hunting, hiking, camping, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities.

Current and past impacts to the area include housing development around the periphery, roads, incompatible timber harvest practices, incompatible grazing practices, heavy recreational use impacts, and invasive weeds. Future threats are the same as current impacts and are widespread and imminent. Housing development is an immediate threat, as large tracts of land are currently for sale, and some recently-sold parcels are already seeing housing development. In addition, climate change may negatively impact this area in the future.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern

Black Swift

Black Tern

Black-backed Woodpecker

Bobolink

Boreal Chickadee

Brewer's Sparrow

Brown Creeper

Cassin's Finch

Clark's Nutcracker

Common Loon

Common Tern

Evening Grosbeak

Flammulated Owl

Golden Eagle

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch

Great Blue Heron

Great Gray Owl

Harlequin Duck

Horned Grebe

Lewis's Woodpecker

Long-billed Curlew

Northern Goshawk

Peregrine Falcon

Pileated Woodpecker

Trumpeter Swan

Varied Thrush

Veery

White-tailed Ptarmigan

Mammals

Canada Lynx

Fisher

Fringed Myotis

Grizzly Bear

Hoary Bat

Little Brown Myotis

Northern Bog Lemming

Preble's Shrew

Pygmy Shrew

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Wolverine

Reptiles

Northern Alligator Lizard

Western Skink

BITTERROOT-CLARK FORK RIPARIAN CORRIDOR

372 miles²

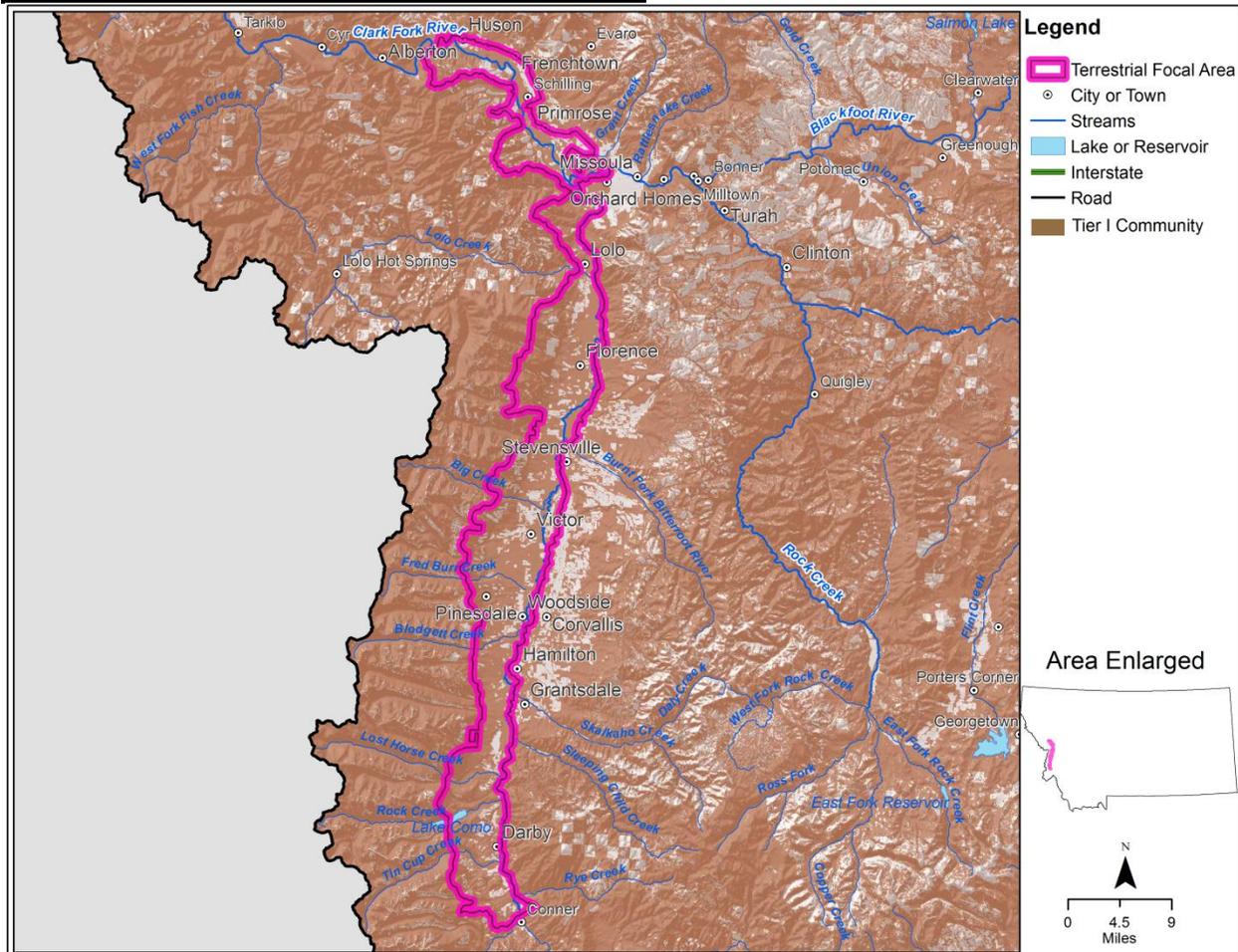


Figure 40. Bitterroot-Clark Fork Riparian Corridor Focal Area in FWP Region 2 (Missoula)

This high biodiversity area is an important north-south migration corridor for songbirds and owls and part is designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the National Audubon Society. It is a major breeding area for Lewis's woodpeckers and numerous great blue heron rookeries are found throughout the area. The riparian corridor is very wide in places, and mostly continuous throughout the length of the Focal Area.

Most of this Focal Area is private land, although some areas offer protections including several conservation easements, the Lee Metcalf NWR, the Teller Wildlife Refuge (private nonprofit), and MPG Ranch (private conservation ranch). There are many existing partnerships in this area, such as Five Valleys Land Trust; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; and Montana Land Reliance, and the potential exists for many more. Though there is opportunity for restoration, it may be difficult and come at a high cost due to the large number of landowners in this Focal Area. The diverse recreational use is high, but likely is below what resources could support because of private land ownership.

Current impacts to the area include housing development, dewatering, cottonwood tree removal, pollution from urban runoff and superfund sites, habitat fragmentation, and impacts from illegal OHV use. Future threats are the same as current impacts and are imminent. In addition, incompatible grazing and agricultural practices and climate change may negatively impact this area in the future.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Coeur d'Alene Salamander
Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern
Black Rosy-Finch
Black Swift
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Bobolink
Boreal Chickadee
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Cassin's Finch
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Tern
Evening Grosbeak
Flammulated Owl
Forster's Tern
Golden Eagle
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Harlequin Duck

Horned Grebe
Lewis's Woodpecker
Long-billed Curlew
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pileated Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Varied Thrush
Veery

Mammals

Canada Lynx
Fisher
Fringed Myotis
Grizzly Bear
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Northern Bog Lemming
Preble's Shrew
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Wolverine

Reptiles

Northern Alligator Lizard
Western Skink

MADISON VALLEY

641 miles²

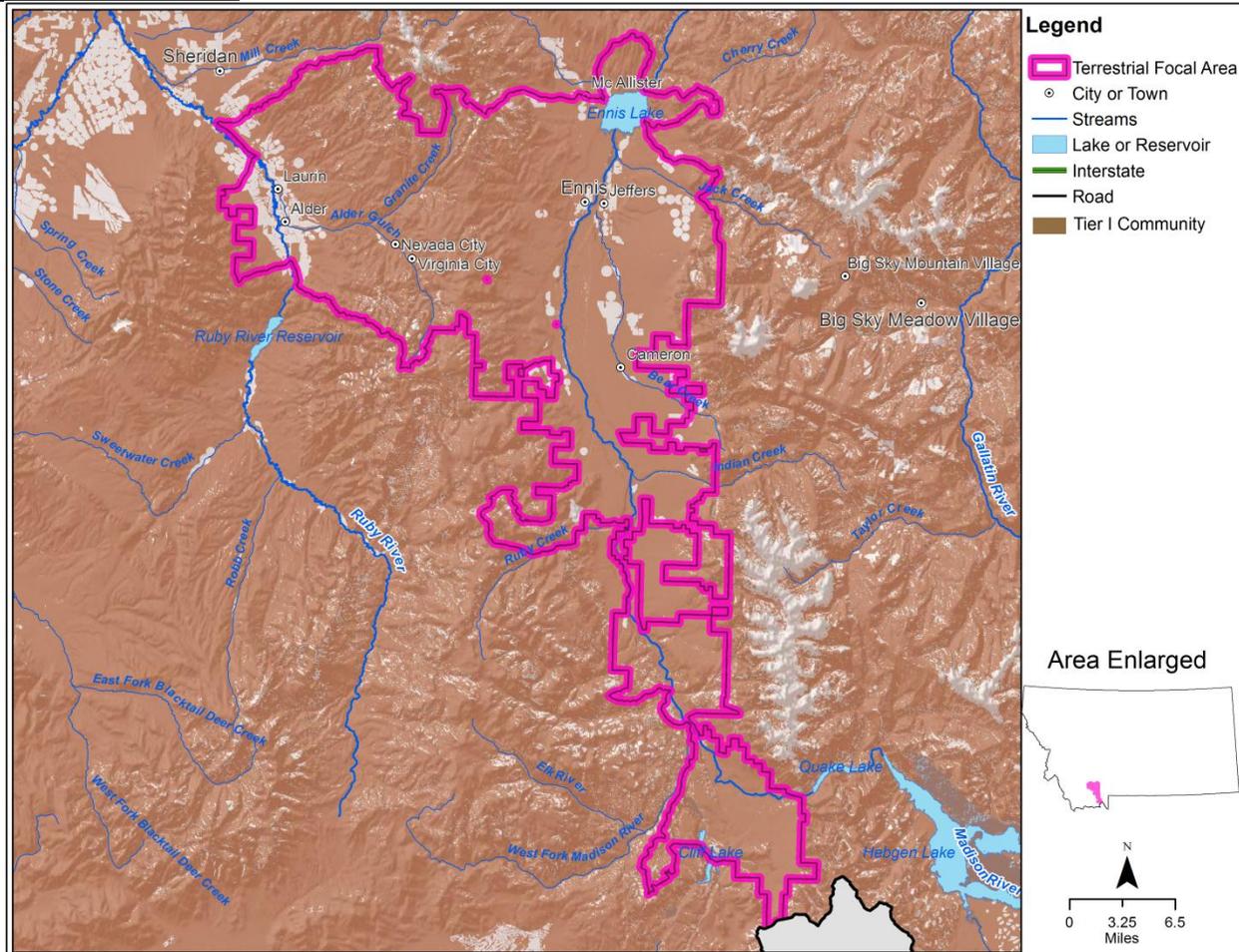


Figure 41. Madison Valley Focal Area in FWP Region 3 (Bozeman)

This Focal Area provides connectivity to designated wilderness areas, includes important areas for grizzly bears and wolverines, and contains important winter and summer range for elk, antelope, mule deer, and bighorn sheep. It also is an important area for grassland birds, contains many wetlands and riparian areas, and is therefore important wetland bird and waterfowl habitat. In addition this area is a designated IBA by the National Audubon Society. There is high recreational use including fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching.

There are some existing conservation easements in this area, but the opportunity for more is great. The existing partnerships are successful and include landowners, a county commission, and county planners, as well as NGOs and state and federal agencies. There are on-going wetland restoration projects underway in the valley and the potential for additional wetland and riparian restoration opportunities is high.

Current impacts to the area include subdivision development and possible recreation impacts. Certain agricultural practices which could be deleterious to CTGCN and SGCN include chronic livestock overstocking and overuse. Also, some powerlines may pose hazards to some SGCN.

There is a high development threat in the future which would include impacts from subdivisions, fences, and recreation. Other future threats are the same as current impacts.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot
Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern
Black Rosy-Finch
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Black-billed Cuckoo
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Clark's Nutcracker
Evening Grosbeak
Ferruginous Hawk
Flammulated Owl
Forster's Tern
Franklin's Gull
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Harlequin Duck
Lewis's Woodpecker

Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Sagebrush Sparrow
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Trumpeter Swan
Varied Thrush
Veery
White-faced Ibis
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

Canada Lynx
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Great Basin Pocket Mouse
Grizzly Bear
Hoary Bat
Merriam's Shrew
Little Brown Myotis
Preble's Shrew
Pygmy Rabbit
Spotted Bat
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Wolverine

NORTH BIG HOLE

221 miles²

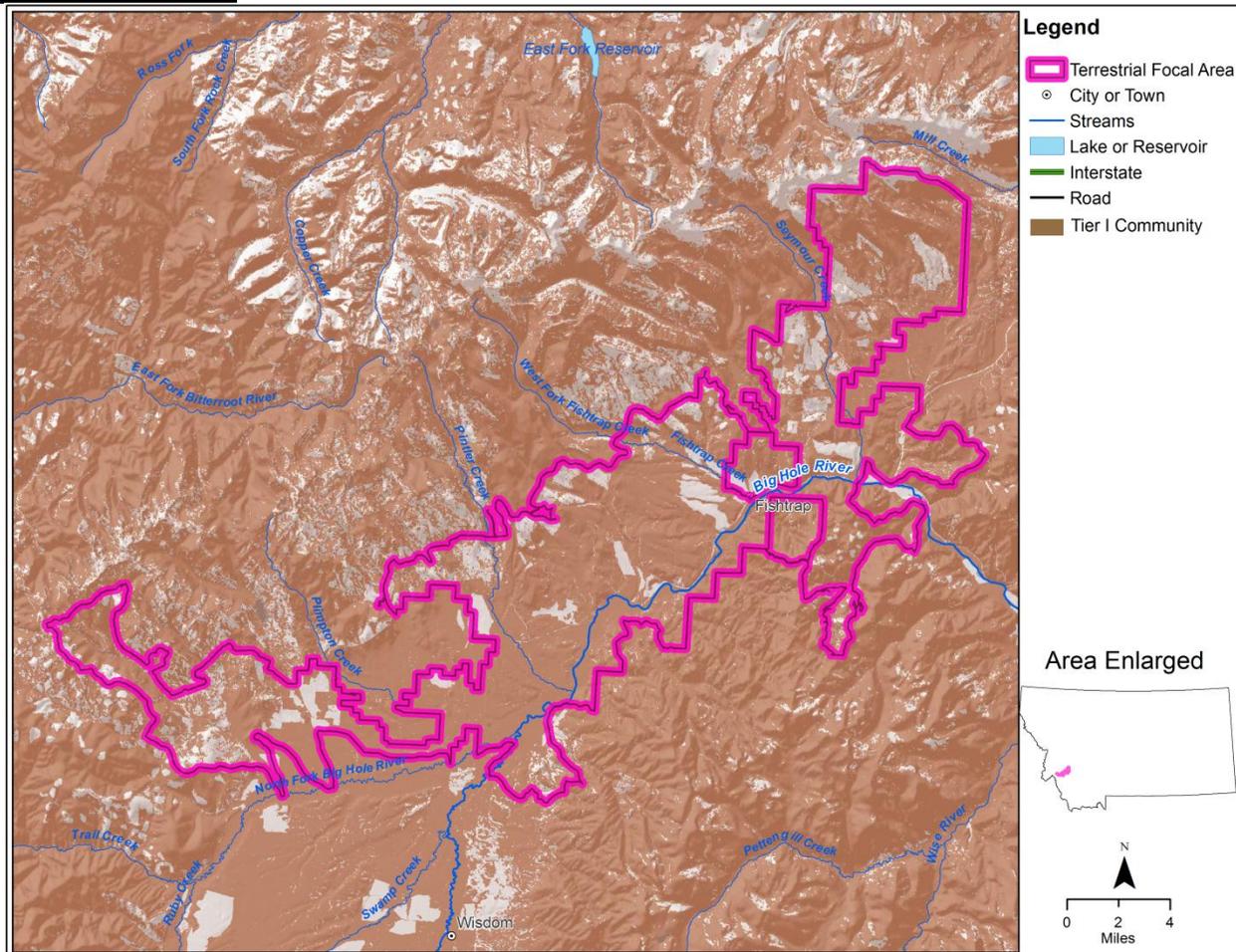


Figure 42. North Big Hole Focal Area in FWP Region 3 (Bozeman)

The North Big Hole provides connectivity and includes important areas for grizzly bears and wolverines. It is an important migration route for elk and antelope, and provides important moose habitat. There are also several greater sage-grouse leks found in this Focal Area.

This area demonstrates partnership successes with the Big Hole Grayling CCAA, and there is opportunity to forge new partnerships. There are a few conservation easements in this area, and there is potential to secure additional. There is high recreational use including fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching.

Current impacts to the area include possible impacts from recreation and certain agricultural practices such as sagebrush conversion, conversion of native grasslands, and invasive species. Future threats may include impacts from a powerline corridor if approved; other future threats are the same as current impacts.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern
Black Rosy-Finch
Black Swift
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Clark's Nutcracker
Evening Grosbeak
Ferruginous Hawk
Flammulated Owl
Forster's Tern
Golden Eagle
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee

Harlequin Duck
Lewis's Woodpecker
Long-billed Curlew
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pileated Woodpecker
Sagebrush Sparrow
Sage Thrasher
Varied Thrush
Veery

Mammals

Canada Lynx
Dwarf Shrew
Fisher
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Northern Bog Lemming
Preble's Shrew
Pygmy Rabbit
Spotted Bat
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
Wolverine

SAGE GROUSE CORE AREA

1,529 miles²

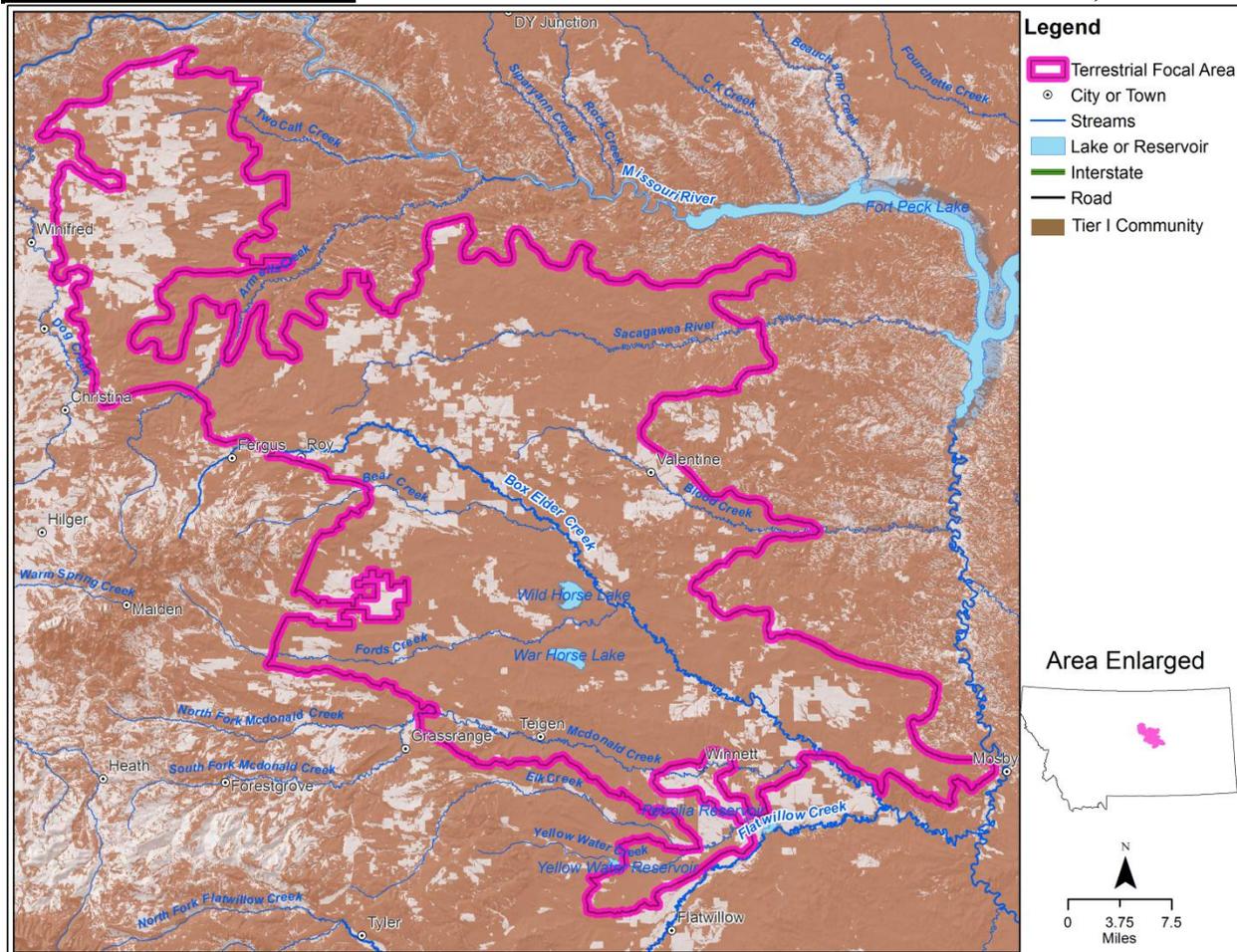


Figure 43. Sage Grouse Core Area Focal Area in FWP Region 4 (Great Falls)

This Focal Area contains one of the greater sage-grouse core areas and has large contiguous habitat. There is considerable public land (e.g., BLM) managed for multiple use, but there are limited protections on private land. There is a high potential for partnering with local landowners, NRCS, and BLM. Restoration opportunities in this area can be done with difficulty, and the cost likely is high. There is good recreational value and high use in this Focal Area.

The largest current impact to this area is sobusting. Increased sobusting is the number one future threat. Livestock grazing is a major land use in the area and proper management practices are critical to maintaining the area's SGCN habitat values.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

American Bittern
Baird's Sparrow
Black Tern
Black-billed Cuckoo
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Tern
Ferruginous Hawk
Forster's Tern
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Horned Grebe
Lewis's Woodpecker
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur

Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery
White-faced Ibis

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Pallid Bat
Preble's Shrew
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake

KEVIN RIM

134 miles²

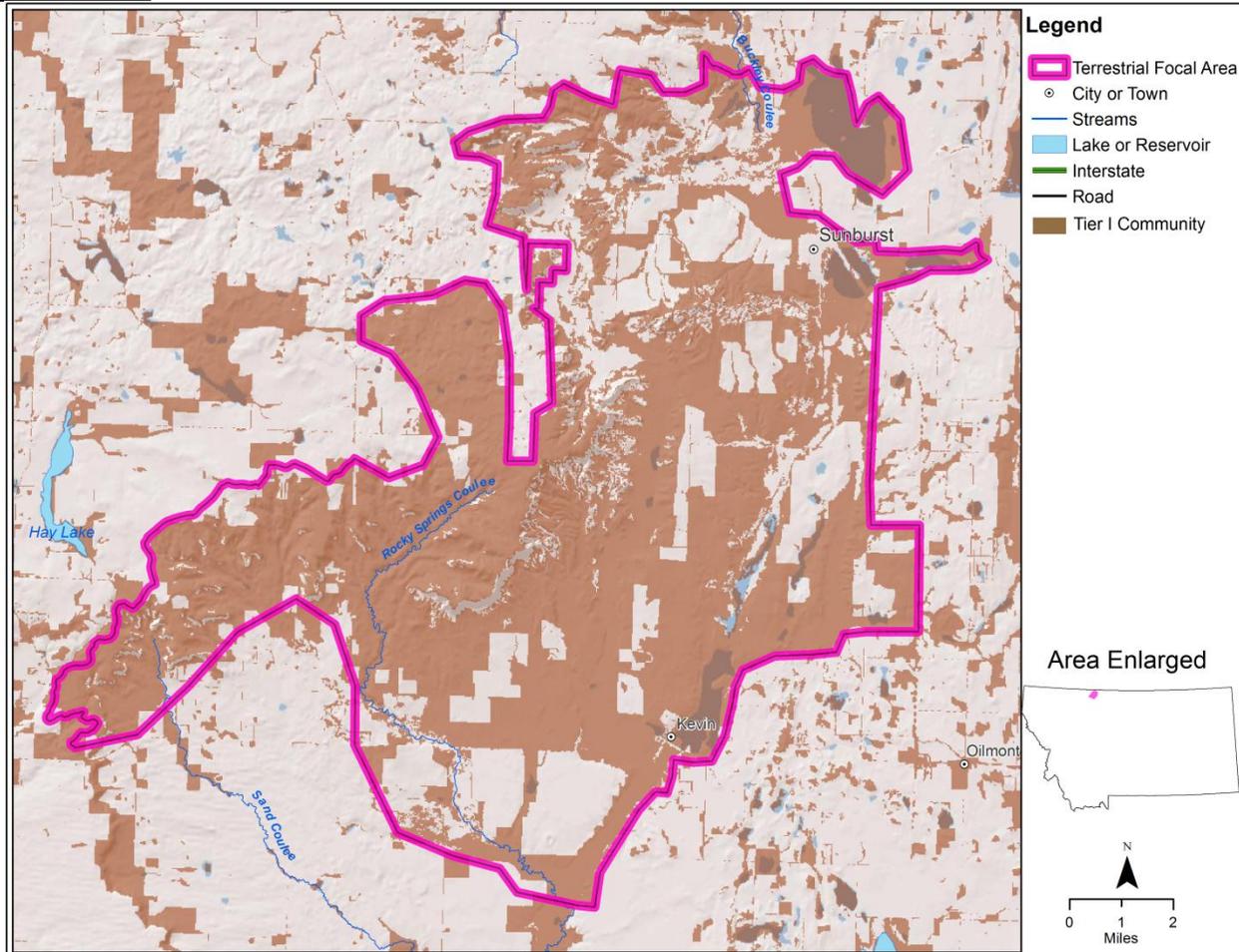


Figure 44. Kevin Rim Focal Area in FWP Region 4 (Great Falls)

Kevin Rim supports a high concentration of nesting raptors, primarily ferruginous hawks, although nine other raptor species have been documented to breed in this Focal Area. Kevin Rim has one of the highest documented raptor nest densities in the state and has been designated as a Key Raptor Area by the BLM and is recognized as an IBA by the National Audubon Society.

The recreational value of this area is good, and includes several Block Management Areas and BLM and DNRC lands. There is good opportunity to partner with private landowners.

Current impacts and potential future threats include direct and indirect habitat loss associated with wind development and oil and gas exploration and development.

Associated CTGCN

Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Open Water
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

Baird's Sparrow
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Ferruginous Hawk
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew

McCown's Longspur
Peregrine Falcon
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery

Mammals

Dwarf Shrew
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Preble's Shrew
Swift Fox

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Western Hog-nosed Snake

COTTONWOOD TRIANGLE

770 miles²

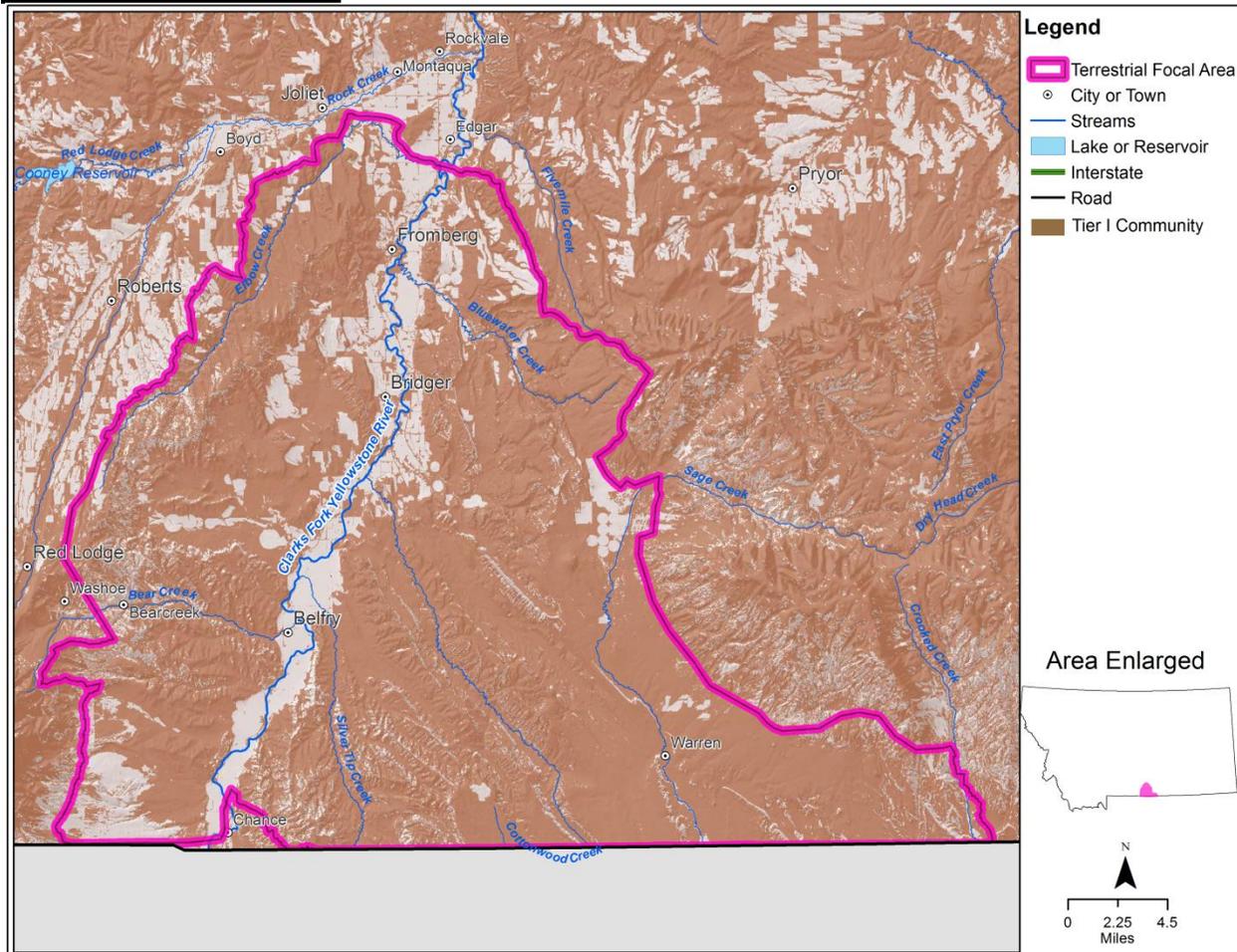


Figure 45. Cottonwood Triangle Focal Area in FWP Region 5 (Billings)

This area is unique in Montana in that it is a true desert. It is home to white-tailed prairie dogs (WTPD) which are found nowhere else in the state. This Focal Area, which is made up of contiguous habitat, includes a greater sage-grouse core area. This area also supports mule deer and antelope winter range.

Restoration opportunities exist but are difficult and come with a high cost. There is concern that another pipeline under a stream could fail, as happened in the Yellowstone River in 2011. That would impact the great and diverse recreational opportunities in the area (e.g., consumptive and non-consumptive use). The biggest impact currently is oil and gas exploration and development. Future threats are the same. In addition, coal exploration may occur and a windfarm has been proposed in the best greater sage-grouse habitat in the area.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Scrub and Dwarf Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

American Bittern
Baird's Sparrow
Black Rosy-Finch
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Black-billed Cuckoo
Black-necked Stilt
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Nutcracker
Evening Grosbeak
Ferruginous Hawk
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Harlequin Duck
Lewis's Woodpecker
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk

Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sagebrush Sparrow
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Varied Thrush
Veery
White-faced Ibis
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Canada Lynx
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Grizzly Bear
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Pallid Bat
Preble's Shrew
Spotted Bat
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
White-tailed Prairie Dog
Wolverine

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake

BEARTOOTH FACE

1,168 miles²

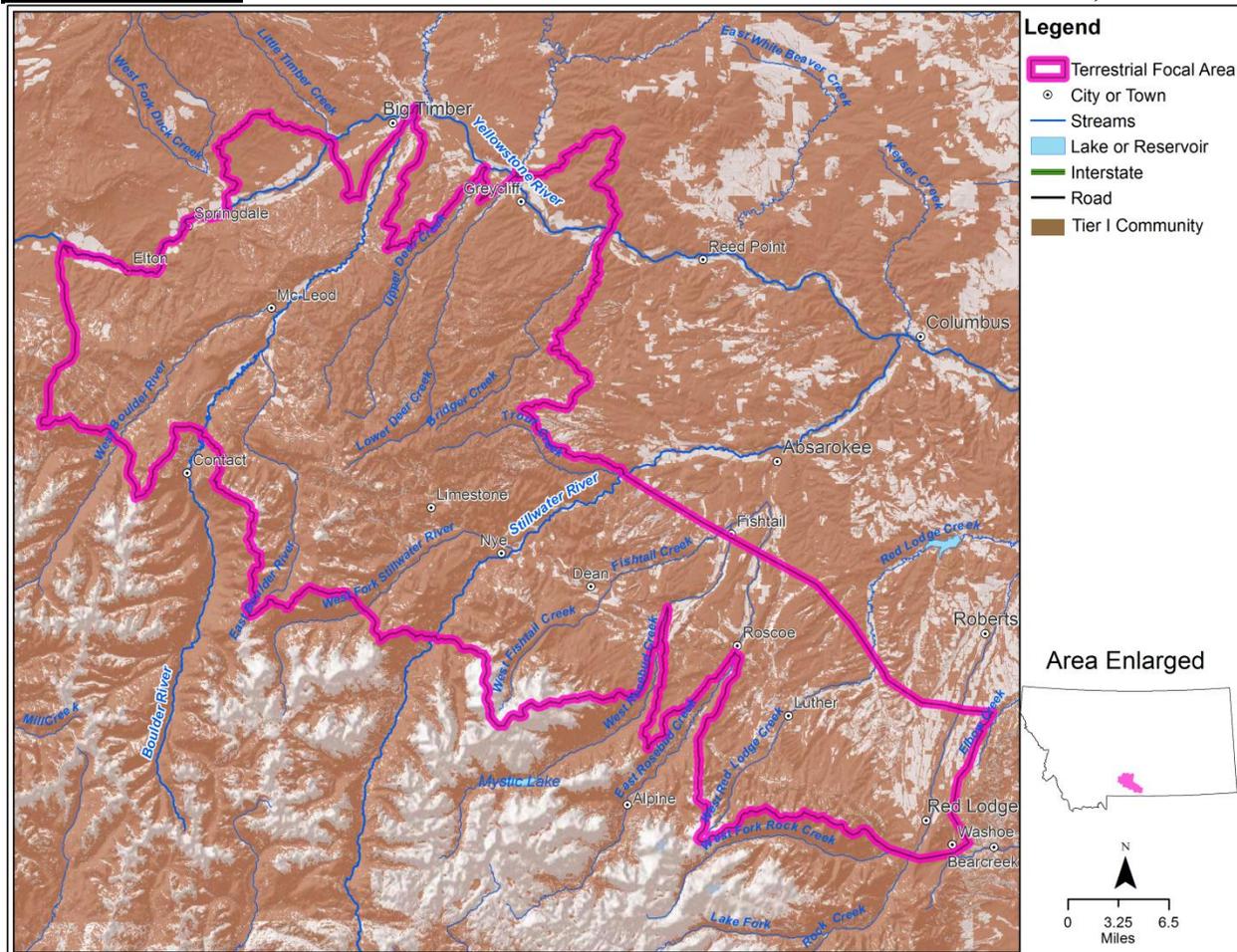


Figure 46. Beartooth Face Focal Area in FWP Region 5 (Billings)

The Beartooth Face provides a buffer to a wilderness area and has high quality winter range for deer, elk, moose, and bighorn sheep. It is comprised of large areas of contiguous habitat and has very high quality aspen communities. This area also supports grizzly bear expansion. There are many conservation easements with private landowners in this area that afford some protections.

Restoration opportunities exist for some impacts (i.e., oil and gas development) but are difficult and come with a high cost. There is concern that another pipeline under a stream could fail, as happened in the Yellowstone River in 2011. That would impact the great and diverse recreational opportunities in the area (e.g., consumptive and non-consumptive use).

The biggest impact currently is subdivision development. With the proximity to Billings, this likely will continue to be a threat. There is great oil and gas exploration and development potential, as well as wind development.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot
Western Toad

Birds

American Bittern
Baird's Sparrow
Black Rosy-Finch
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Black-billed Cuckoo
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Nutcracker
Evening Grosbeak
Ferruginous Hawk
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Great Gray Owl
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Harlequin Duck
Lewis's Woodpecker
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon

Pinyon Jay
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sagebrush Sparrow
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Trumpeter Swan
Varied Thrush
Veery
White-faced Ibis
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Canada Lynx
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Grizzly Bear
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Pallid Bat
Preble's Shrew
Spotted Bat
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat
White-tailed Prairie Dog
Wolverine

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake

SAGEBRUSH/GRASSLAND

2,947 miles²

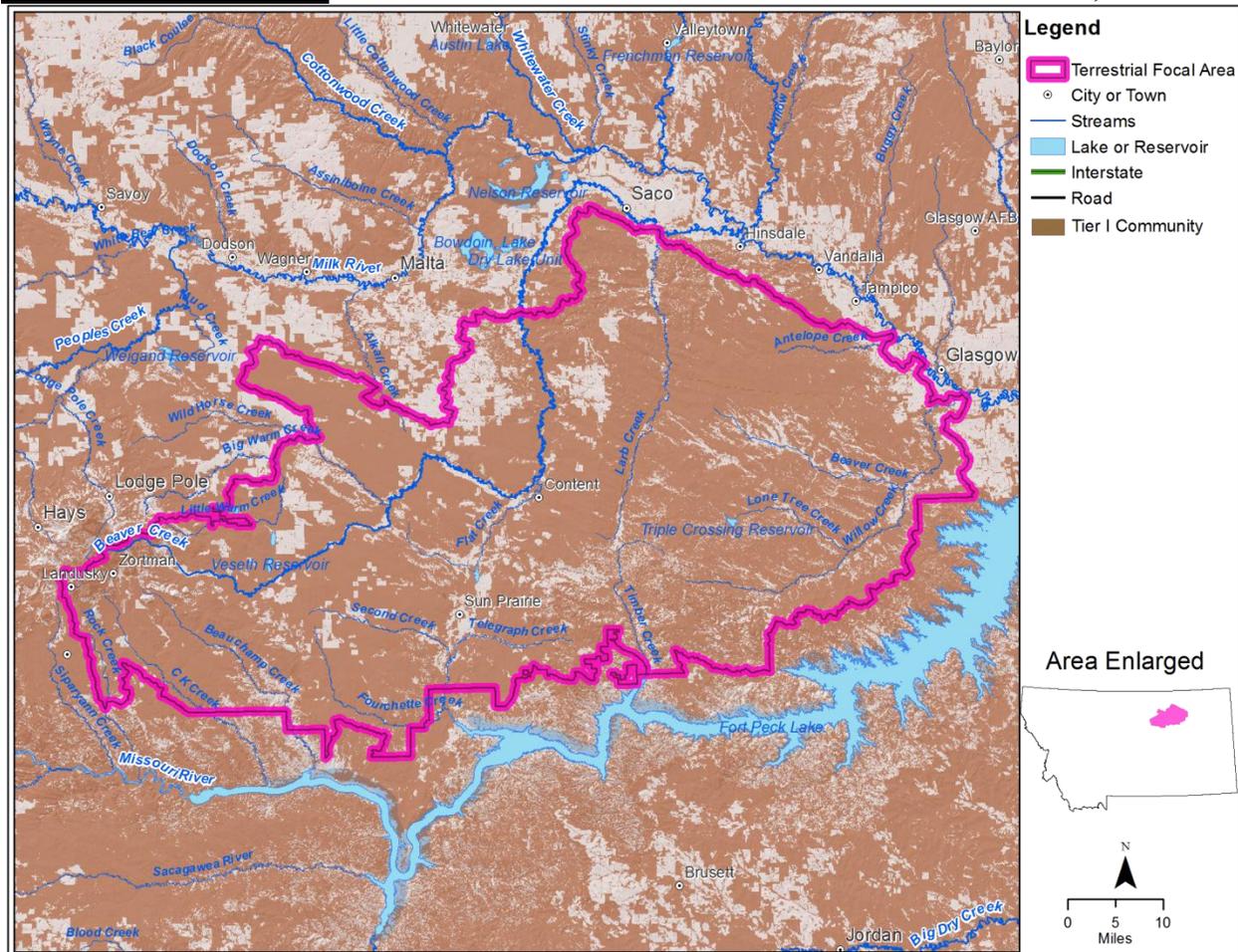


Figure 47. Sagebrush/Grassland Focal Area in FWP Region 6 (Glasgow)

This area includes a greater sage-grouse core area and supports many sagebrush and grassland obligate SGCN. The Charlie M. Russell NWR borders this Focal Area on the south side. There are several existing partnerships with NGOs including the World Wildlife Fund, American Prairie Reserve, and The Nature Conservancy. There is high recreational value in this area including hunting and wildlife viewing.

Restoration opportunities exist for most existing impacts (e.g., oil and gas development, CRP loss) to this area, as the impacts are somewhat reversible. Although once native prairie is broken, it can never be restored completely back to its original condition. If current impacts are not addressed, they will continue to be a threat in the future along with the potential for urban development.

Associated CTGCN

Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

American Bittern
American White Pelican
Baird's Sparrow
Black Tern
Black-billed Cuckoo
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Black-necked Stilt
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Caspian Tern
Cassin's Finch
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Grebe
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Tern
Ferruginous Hawk
Forster's Tern
Franklin's Gull
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Horned Grebe
Least Tern

Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover
Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Piping Plover
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery
White-faced Ibis

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Preble's Shrew
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake

MILK RIVER

1,350 miles²

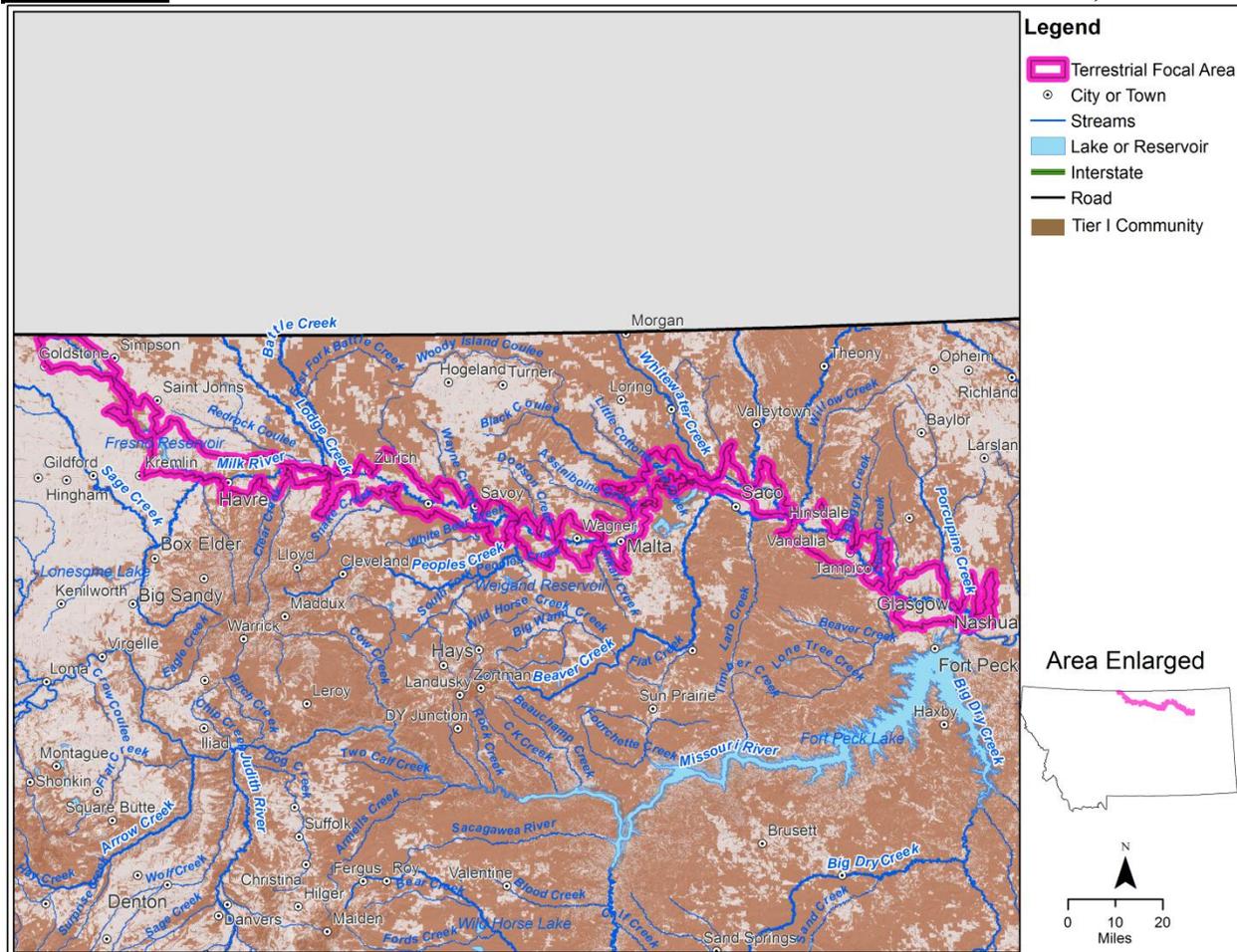


Figure 48. Milk River Focal Area in FWP Region 6 (Glasgow)

This terrestrial Focal Area overlaps almost entirely with the aquatic Milk River Focal Area. There is high quality riparian habitat in this area that supports many SGCN. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing are important recreational activities in this area. There are some existing partnerships (e.g., Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation), and there is opportunity to develop more.

Current impacts include oil and gas development, some urban development, and incompatible farming practices. Fortunately very few of these impacts are irreversible. Future threats to this area are the same as current impacts if not addressed, in addition to the likely loss of acres enrolled in CRP.

Associated CTGCN

Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

American Bittern
American White Pelican
Baird's Sparrow
Black Tern
Black-billed Cuckoo
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Black-necked Stilt
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Caspian Tern
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Grebe
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Tern
Ferruginous Hawk
Forster's Tern
Franklin's Gull
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Horned Grebe
Least Tern

Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Piping Plover
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery
White-faced Ibis

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Preble's Shrew
Pygmy Shrew
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Western Hog-nosed Snake

SAGEBRUSH OBLIGATES

2,689 miles²

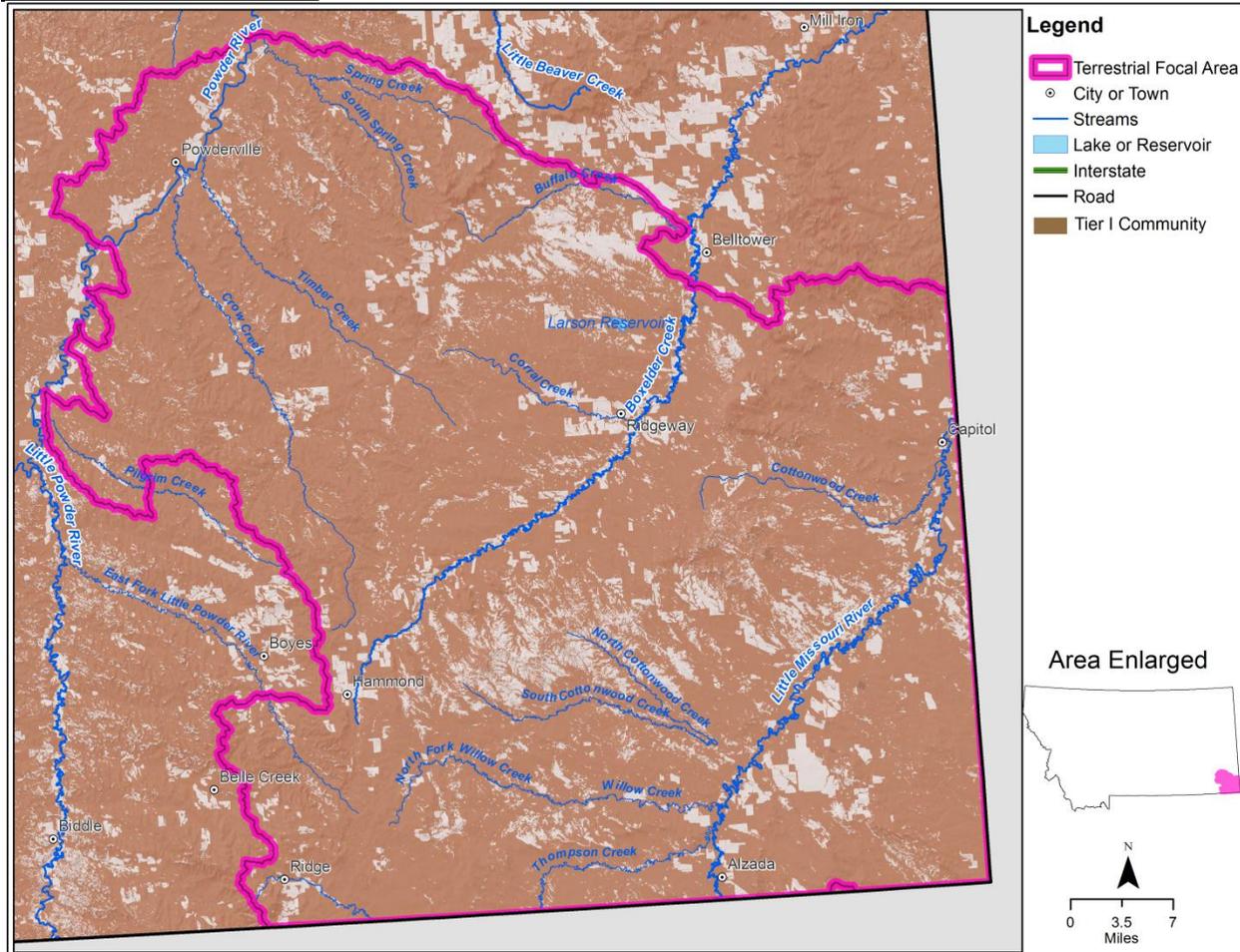


Figure 49. Sagebrush Obligates Focal Area in FWP Region 7 (Miles City)

This area has been identified as an NRCS conservation priority area and it provides critical mule deer and antelope habitat. It also includes a greater sage-grouse core area and supports many sagebrush and grassland obligate SGCN. There is a great deal of habitat diversity in this Focal Area, and creeks provide corridors and connectivity. At times in late summer, the only surface water available for wildlife are the creeks in this Focal Area.

This area supports a large, intact native range that has high conservation value and restoration opportunities. The Focal Area contains several large, contiguous pieces of public land (e.g., BLM) managed for multiple use, but there are limited protections on private land. The recreational value in this area is exceptional, and use is high for both consumptive and non-consumptive users. Existing partnerships in the area are extensive and include state and federal agencies, private landowners, and many NGOs.

Current impacts in this area are sobusting and incompatible grazing practices. The future threats include current impacts in addition to betonite development, oil and gas exploration and development, and pipeline construction.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

Baird's Sparrow
Black Tern
Black-backed Woodpecker
Black-billed Cuckoo
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Brown Creeper
Burrowing Owl
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Nutcracker
Ferruginous Hawk
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Lewis's Woodpecker
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover

Northern Goshawk
Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Snapping Turtle
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake

INGOMAR

3,983 miles²

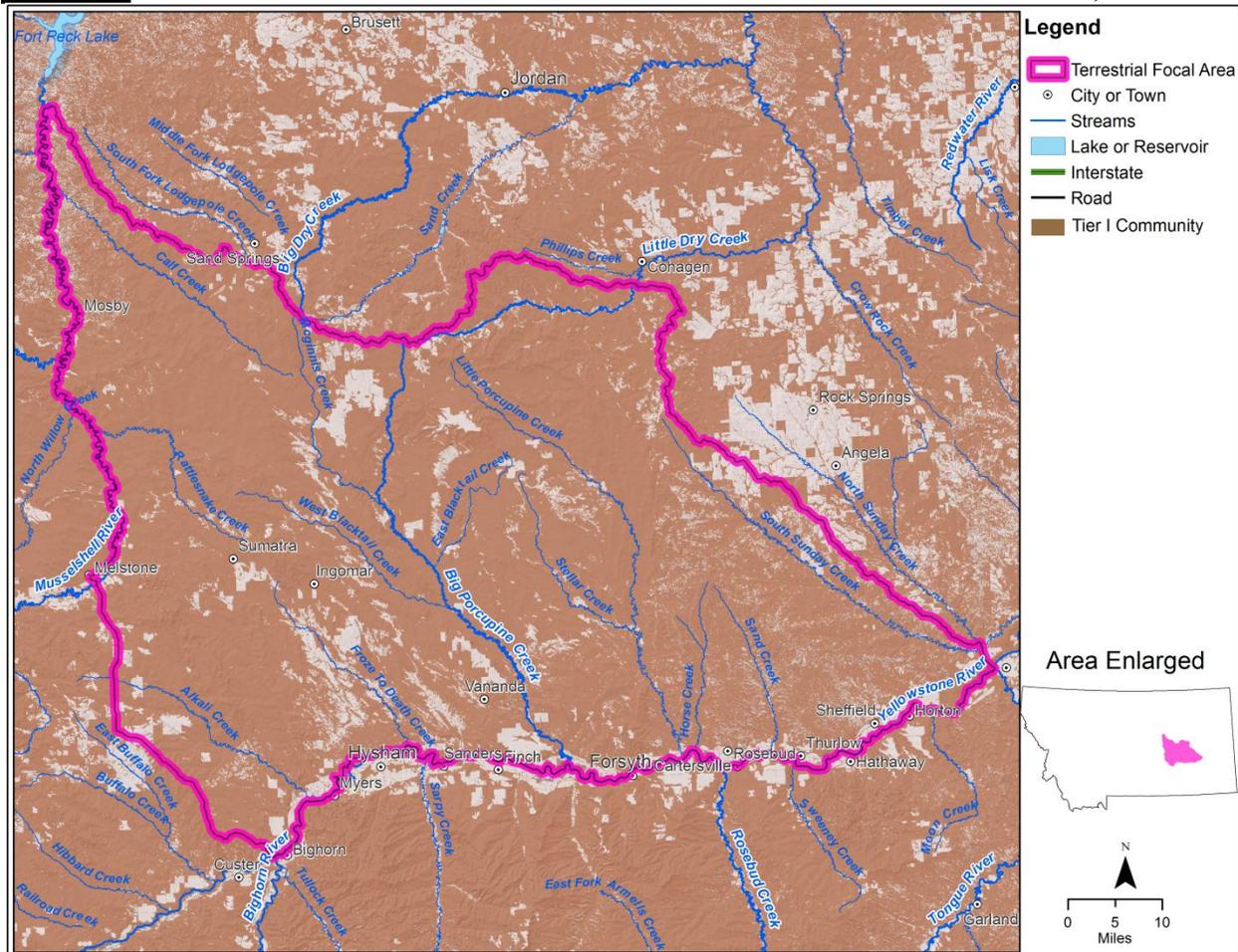


Figure 50. Ingomar Focal Area in FWP Region 7 (Miles City)

This area has been identified as an NRCS conservation priority area and it provides critical mule deer and antelope habitat. This area includes a greater sage-grouse core area and supports many sagebrush and grassland obligate SGCN. There is a great deal of habitat diversity in this Focal Area, and creeks provide corridors and connectivity. At times in late summer, the only surface water available for wildlife are the creeks in this Focal Area.

This area supports a large, intact native range that has high conservation value and restoration opportunities. The recreational value in this area is exceptional, and use is high for both consumptive and non-consumptive users. Existing partnerships in the area are extensive and include state and federal agencies, private landowners, and many NGOs.

Current impacts in this area are sodbusting and incompatible grazing practices. The future threats include current impacts in addition to oil and gas exploration and development and pipeline construction.

Associated CTGCN

Conifer-dominated Forest and Woodland (xeric-mesic)
Deciduous Dominated Forest and Woodland
Floodplain and Riparian
Lowland/Prairie Grassland
Montane Grassland
Open Water
Sagebrush Steppe & Sagebrush-Dominated Shrubland
Wetlands

Associated SGCN

Amphibians

Great Plains Toad
Northern Leopard Frog
Plains Spadefoot

Birds

American Bittern
Baird's Sparrow
Black Tern
Black-billed Cuckoo
Bobolink
Brewer's Sparrow
Burrowing Owl
Cassin's Finch
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Clark's Nutcracker
Common Tern
Ferruginous Hawk
Forster's Tern
Golden Eagle
Great Blue Heron
Greater Sage-Grouse
Green-tailed Towhee
Least Tern
Lewis's Woodpecker
Loggerhead Shrike
Long-billed Curlew
McCown's Longspur
Mountain Plover
Northern Goshawk

Peregrine Falcon
Pinyon Jay
Red-headed Woodpecker
Sage Thrasher
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Sprague's Pipit
Veery
White-faced Ibis
Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Dwarf Shrew
Fringed Myotis
Hoary Bat
Little Brown Myotis
Merriam's Shrew
Pallid Bat
Preble's Shrew
Spotted Bat
Swift Fox
Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Reptiles

Greater Short-horned Lizard
Milksnake
Snapping Turtle
Spiny Softshell
Western Hog-nosed Snake