



Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Inventory and Monitoring National Parks to Nutrient Enrichment Effects from Atmospheric Nitrogen Deposition

Greater Yellowstone Network (GRYN)

Natural Resource Report NPS/NPRC/ARD/NRR—2011/308



ON THE COVER

Some ecosystems, such as arid shrublands, subalpine meadows, remote high elevation lakes, and wetlands, are sensitive to the effects of nutrient enrichment from atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Photograph by: National Park Service

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Greater Yellowstone Network (GRYN)

National maps of atmospheric N emissions and deposition are provided in Maps A and B as context for subsequent network data presentations. Map A shows county level emissions of total N for the year 2002. Map B shows total N deposition, again for the year 2002.

There are three parks in the Greater Yellowstone network: Yellowstone (YELL), Grand Teton (GRTE), and Bighorn Canyon (BICA). All are larger than 100 square miles.

Total annual N emissions, by county, are shown in Map C for lands in and surrounding the Greater Yellowstone Network. County-level emissions within the network ranged from less than 1 ton per square mile to 1 to 5 tons per square mile. In general, annual emissions within the network were less than 1 ton per square mile, although emissions were higher in the southeastern portion of the network and continuing into Idaho, in relatively close proximity to GRTE and YELL. Point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH_3) N are shown in Map D. There are few N emissions point sources of any magnitude in or near this network. The few relatively large point sources that do exist are sources of oxidized N. Urban centers within the network and within a 300 mile buffer around the network are shown in Map E. There are no human population centers of any magnitude in or near this network. However, Salt Lake City, Boise, and Denver are all within 300 miles of the network boundary.

Total N deposition in and around the network is shown in Map F. Included in this analysis are both wet and dry forms of N deposition and both the oxidized and reduced N species. Total N deposition within the network ranged from below 2 kg N/ha/yr in the southeast to as high as 5 to 10 kg N/ha/yr in and around portions of GRTE and the southwestern portion of YELL.

Land cover in and around the network is shown in Map G. The predominant cover types within this network are generally a mix of forest, shrublands and grasslands, with some row crops and pasture/hay. Scattered areas of wetlands and developed lands also occur, mostly around the periphery of the network.

Map H shows the distribution within the parks that occur in this network of the five vegetation types thought to be most responsive to nutrient N enrichment effects (arctic, alpine, meadow, wetland, and arid and semi-arid). In general, the predominant sensitive vegetation types within these parks are grassland and meadow, alpine, and arid and semi-arid vegetation types. There are also substantial amounts of wetland in these parks.

Park lands requiring special protection against potential adverse impacts associated with nutrient N enrichment from atmospheric N deposition are shown in Map I. Also shown on Map I are all federal lands designated as wilderness, both lands managed by NPS and also lands managed by other federal agencies. The land designations used to identify this heightened protection included Class I designation under the CAAA and wilderness designation. YELL and GRTE are both Class I. Extensive wilderness areas surround these parks.

Park-specific maps are shown for the two most prominent national parks in the network: GRTE and YELL (Maps J-1 through J-4). In GRTE, alpine vegetation is abundant at the higher elevations of the Grand Teton Mountains, which run north to south along the western border of

the park. Arid and semi-arid land is found at the lower elevations to the southeast. Meadow and wetland vegetation types are scattered throughout the park. A large proportion of GRTE is covered by these vegetation types thought to be most sensitive to nutrient N enrichment effects (Map J-1). A relatively high proportion of YELL is also covered with sensitive vegetation types, with a broad mix of meadow, arid and semi-arid, alpine, and wetland vegetation types (Map J-2).

High-elevation lakes within GRTE and YELL, which might be more prone than lakes at lower elevation to N-enrichment effects, and therefore potentially more susceptible to eutrophication in response to atmospheric N input, are shown in park-specific Maps J-3 and J-4. Lakes are numerous in both GRTE and YELL. High elevation lands are more common in GRTE, and many of the lakes in this park are found above 2,500 m elevation. Many of these lakes might be expected to be N-limited, and therefore might be highly sensitive to eutrophication from atmospheric N deposition.

Network rankings are given in Figures A through C as the average ranking of the Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection metrics, respectively. Figure D shows the overall network Summary Risk ranking. In each figure, the rank for this particular network is highlighted to show its relative position compared with the ranks of the other 31 networks.

The Greater Yellowstone Network ranks in the lowest quintile, among networks, in N Pollutant Exposure (Figure A). Nitrogen emissions and N deposition within the network are both very low. However, the network Ecosystem Sensitivity ranking is Very High, the highest quintile among networks (Figure B). This is because there are extensive distributions of the vegetation types in this network that are among those expected to be especially sensitive to nutrient enrichment effects from N deposition, and there are also high elevation lakes. This network ranks in the top quintile in Park Protection, having substantial amounts of protected lands (Figure C).

In combination, the network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection yield an overall Network Risk ranking that is in the highest quintile among all networks (Figure D). The overall level of concern for nutrient N enrichment effects on I&M parks within this network is considered Very High.

Similarly, park rankings are given in Figures E through H for the same metrics. In the case of the park rankings, we only show in the figures the parks that are larger than 100 square miles. Relative ranks for all parks, including the smaller parks, are given in Table A and Appendix B. As for the network ranking figures, the park ranking figures highlight those parks that occur in this network to show their relative position compared with parks in the other 31 networks. Note that the rankings shown in Figures E through H reflect the rank of a given park compared with all other parks, irrespective of size.

Pollutant Exposure ranked Low for GRTE and YELL, but Very Low for BICA (Figure E). All three are ranked High (BICA) or Very High (GRTE, YELL) for Ecosystem Sensitivity (Figure F). GRTE and YELL both contain high elevation lakes. The three parks diverge more with respect to Park Protection, which is in the highest quintile for GRTE and YELL, but substantially lower for BICA (Figure G). The summary Park Risk metric scores both GRTE and YELL Very High, but BICA is in the lowest quintile (Figure H, Table A).

Table A. Relative rankings of individual I&M parks within the network for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, Park Protection, and Summary Risk from atmospheric nutrient N enrichment.

I&M Parks ² in Network	Relative Ranking of Individual Parks ¹			
	Pollutant Exposure	Ecosystem Sensitivity	Park Protection	Summary Risk
<i>Bighorn Canyon</i>	Very Low	High	Moderate	Very Low
<i>Grand Teton</i>	Low	Very High	Very High	Very High
<i>Yellowstone</i>	Low	Very High	Very High	Very High

¹ Relative park rankings are designated according to quintile ranking, among all I&M Parks, from the lowest quintile (very low risk) to the highest quintile (very high risk).
² Park name is printed in bold italic for parks larger than 100 square miles.

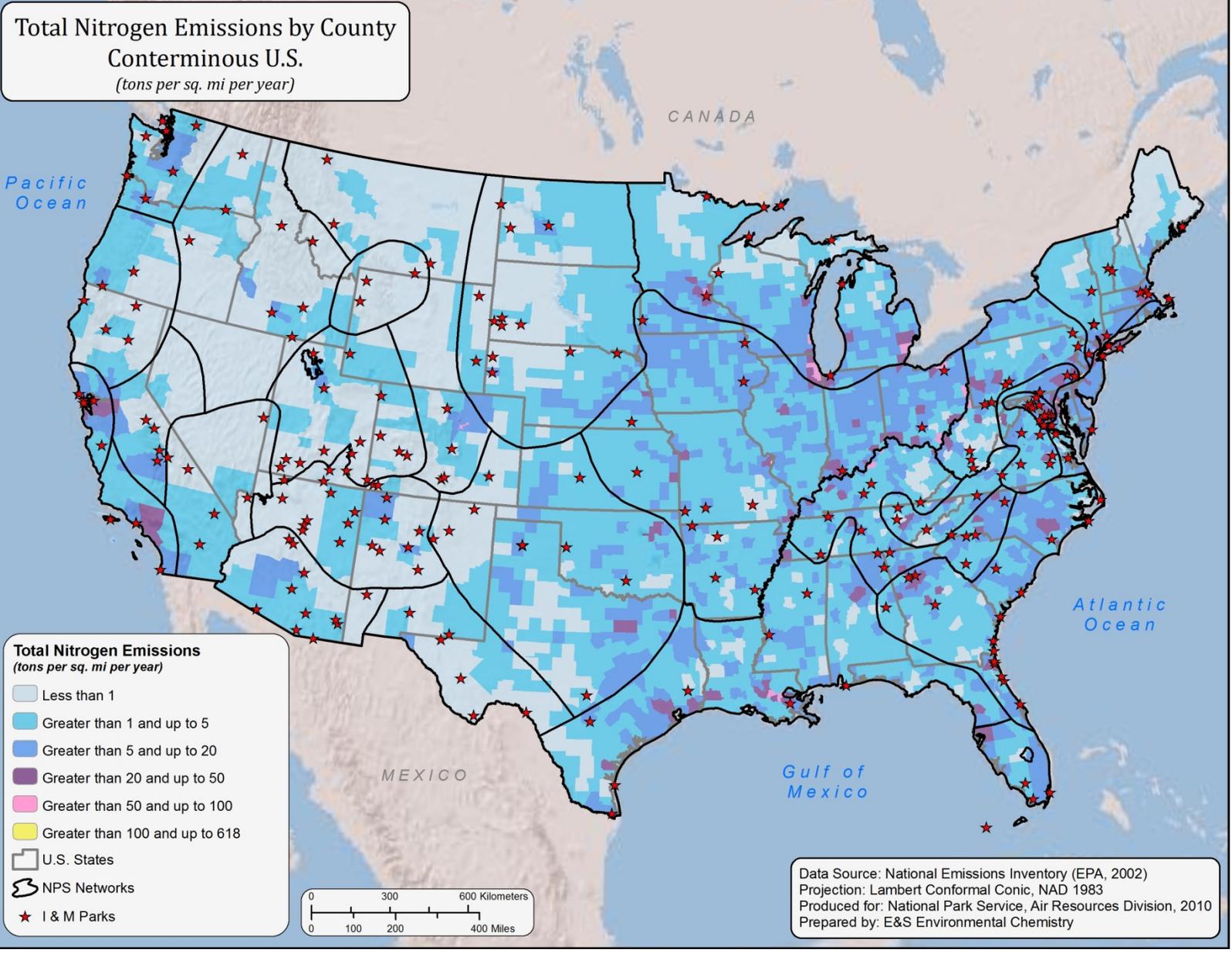
- Map A. National map of total N emissions by county for the year 2002. Both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) forms of N are included. The total is expressed in tons per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map B. Total N deposition for the conterminous United States for the year 2002, expressed in units of kilograms of N deposited from the atmosphere to the earth surface per hectare per year. Wet and dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N are included. For the eastern half of the country, wet deposition values were derived from interpolated measured values from NADP (three-year average centered on 2002) and dry deposition values were derived from 12-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. For the western half of the country, both wet and dry deposition values were derived from 36-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. NADP interpolations were performed using the approach of Grimm and Lynch (1997). CMAQ model projections were provided by Robin Dennis, U.S. EPA.
- Map C. Total N emissions by county for lands surrounding the network, expressed as tons of N emitted into the atmosphere per square mile per year. The total includes both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map D. Major point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N in and around the network. The base of each vertical bar is positioned in the map at the approximate location of the source. The height of the bar is proportional to the magnitude of the source. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map E. Urban centers having more than 10,000 people within the network and within a 300-mile buffer around the perimeter of the network. (Source of data: U.S. Census 2000)

- Map F. Total N deposition in and around the network. Included in the total are wet plus dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N. Values are expressed as kilograms of N deposited per hectare per year. (Source of data: CMAQ Model wet and dry deposition data for 2002; see information for Map B above for details)
- Map G. Land cover types in and around the network, based on the National Land Cover dataset. (Source of data: National Land Cover Dataset, http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd_multizone_map.php)
- Map H. Distribution within the larger parks that occur in this network of the five terrestrial vegetation types thought to be most sensitive to N-nutrient enrichment effects: arctic, alpine, meadow, wetland, and arid and semi-arid. (Source of data: See Appendix A)
- Map I. Lands within the network that are classified as Class I or wilderness area. (Source of data: USGS 2005 [National Atlas; <http://nationalatlas.gov>] and NPS)
- Map J-1. Park-specific map: sensitive vegetation types in GRTE. (Source of data: See Appendix A)
- Map J-2. Park-specific map: sensitive vegetation types in YELL. (Source of data: See Appendix A)
- Map J-3. Park-specific map: high-elevation lakes in GRTE. (Source of data: U.S. EPA National Elevation Dataset and U.S. EPA/USGS National Hydrography Dataset Plus [<http://www.horizon-systems.com/nhdplus/>])
- Map J-4. Park-specific map: high-elevation lakes in YELL. (Source of data: U.S. EPA National Elevation Dataset and U.S. EPA/USGS National Hydrography Dataset Plus [<http://www.horizon-systems.com/nhdplus/>])
- Figure A. Network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, calculated as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure B. Network rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity, calculated as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure C. Network rankings for Park Protection, calculated as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure D. Network Summary Risk ranking, calculated as the sum of the averages of the scores for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection.
- Figure E. Park rankings for Pollutant Exposure for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.

Figure F. Park rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.

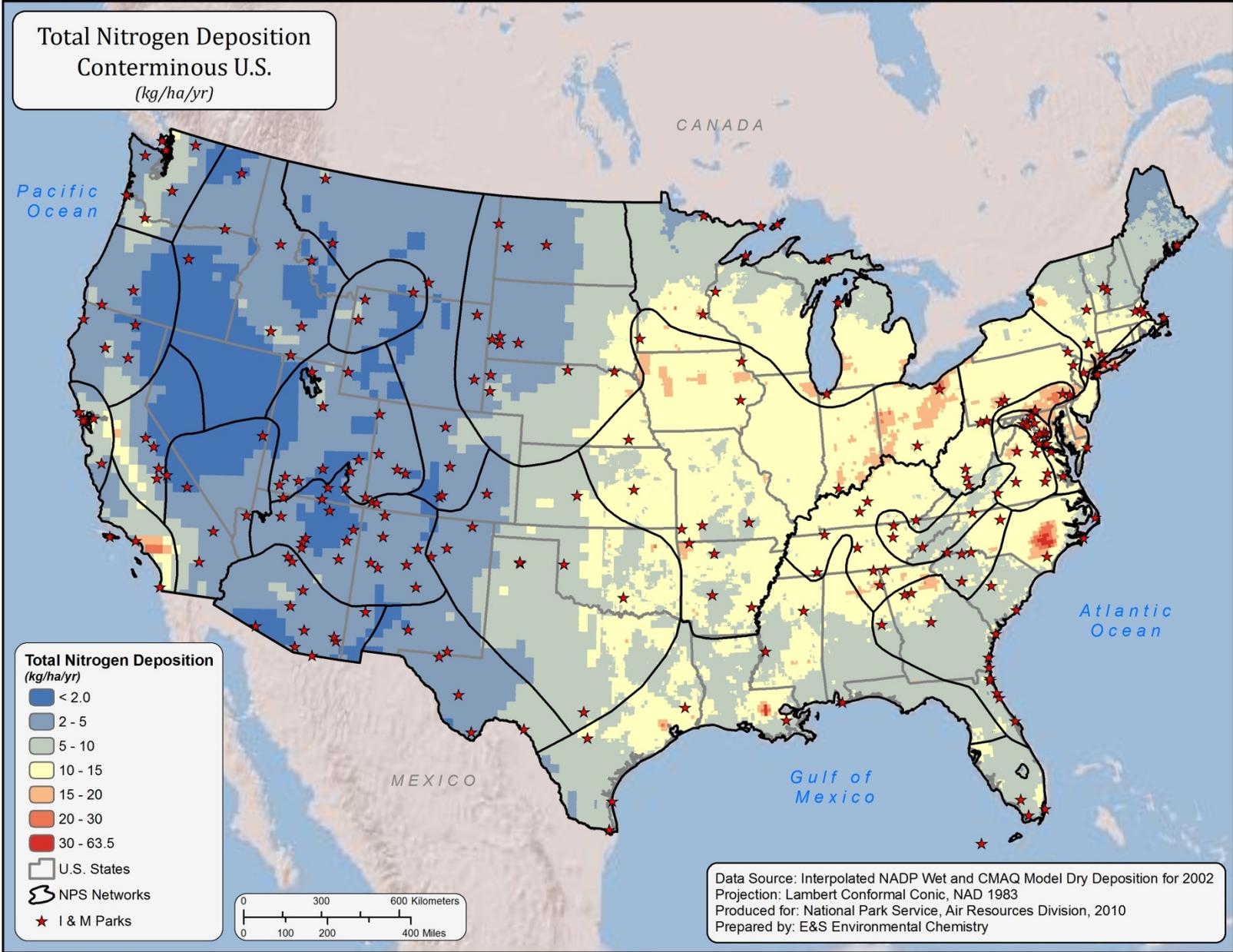
Figure G. Park rankings for Park Protection for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.

Figure H. Park rankings for Summary Risk for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Summary Risk variables.



GRYN-6

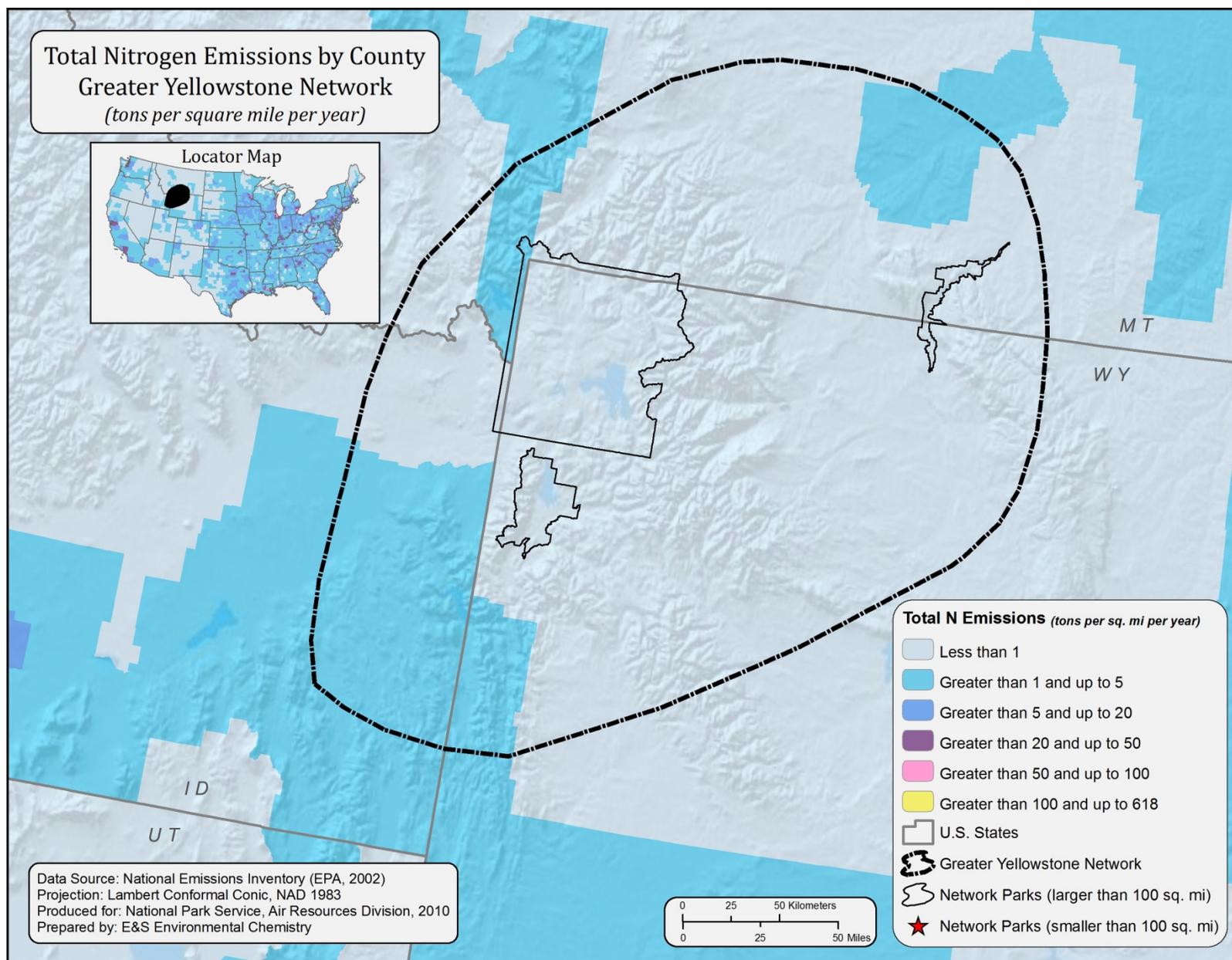
Map A



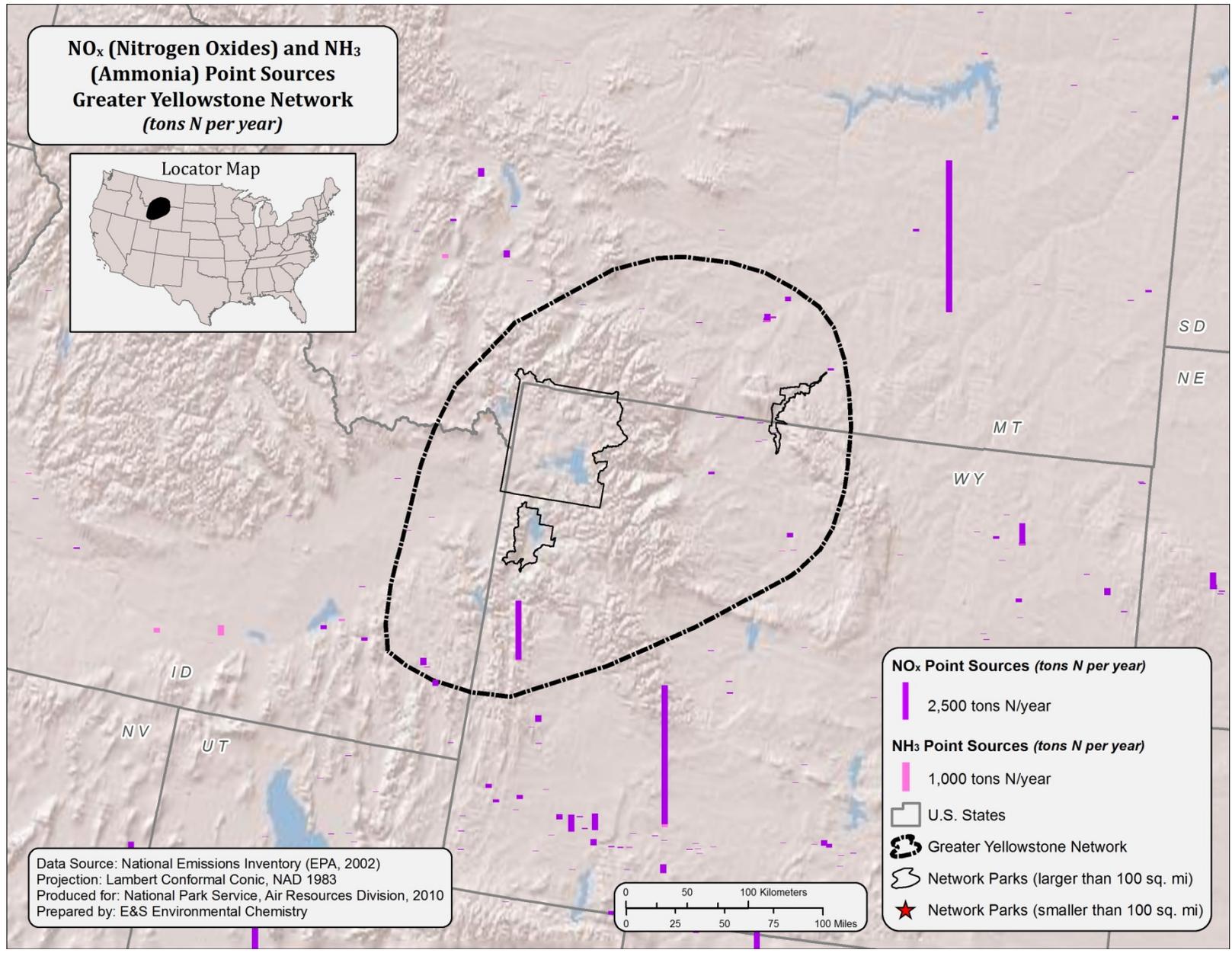
GRYN-7

Map B

GRYN-8

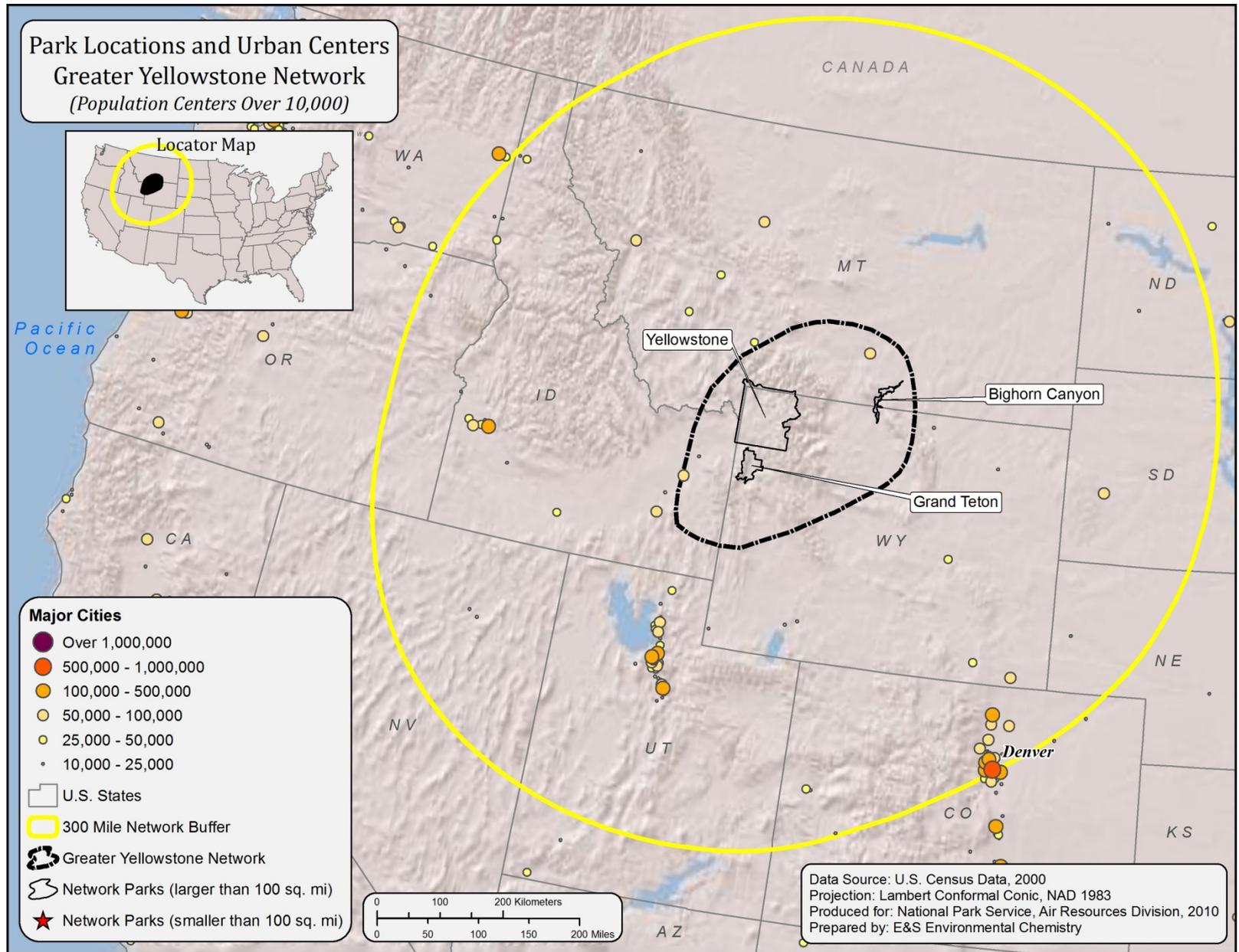


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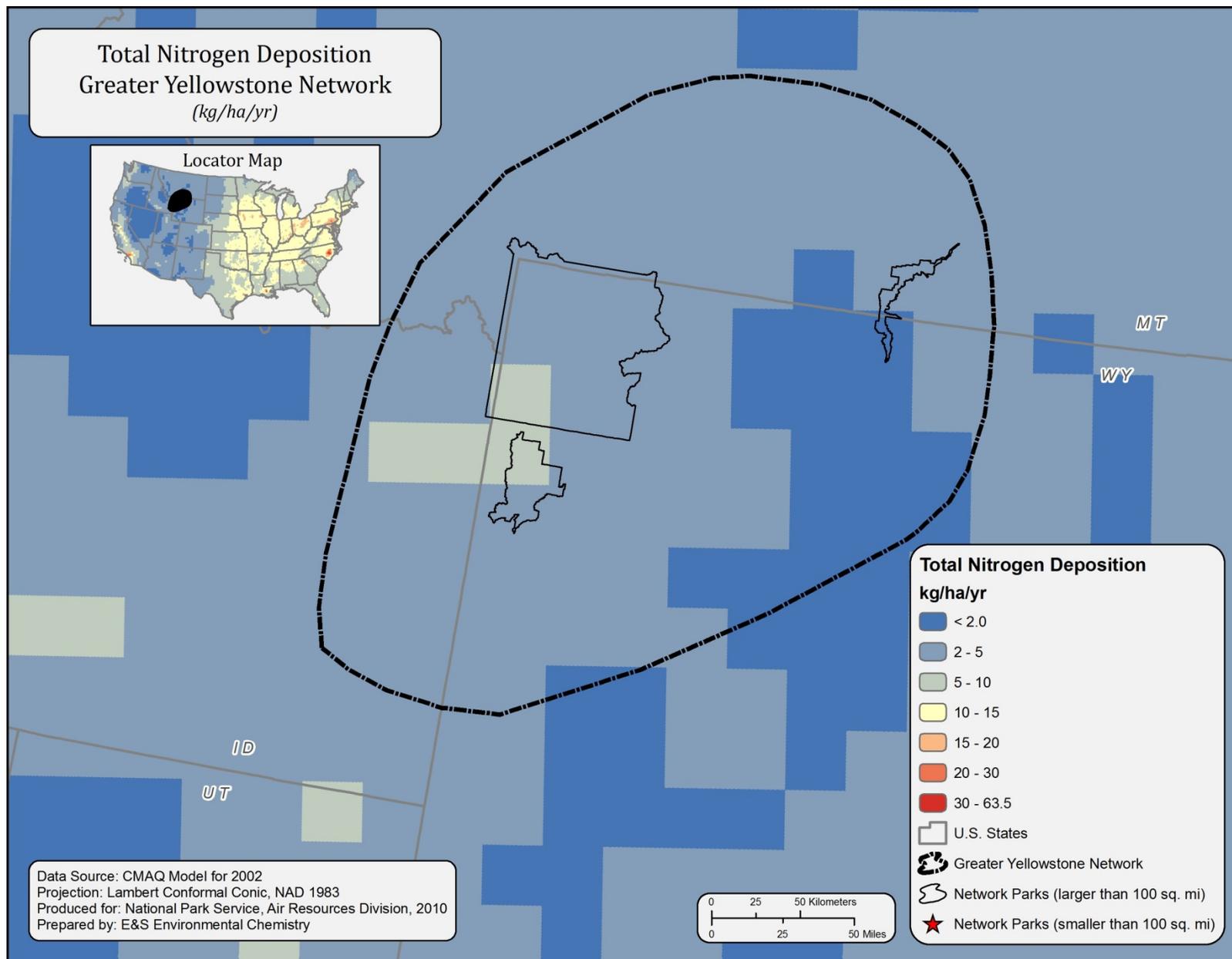
Map D

GRYN-10



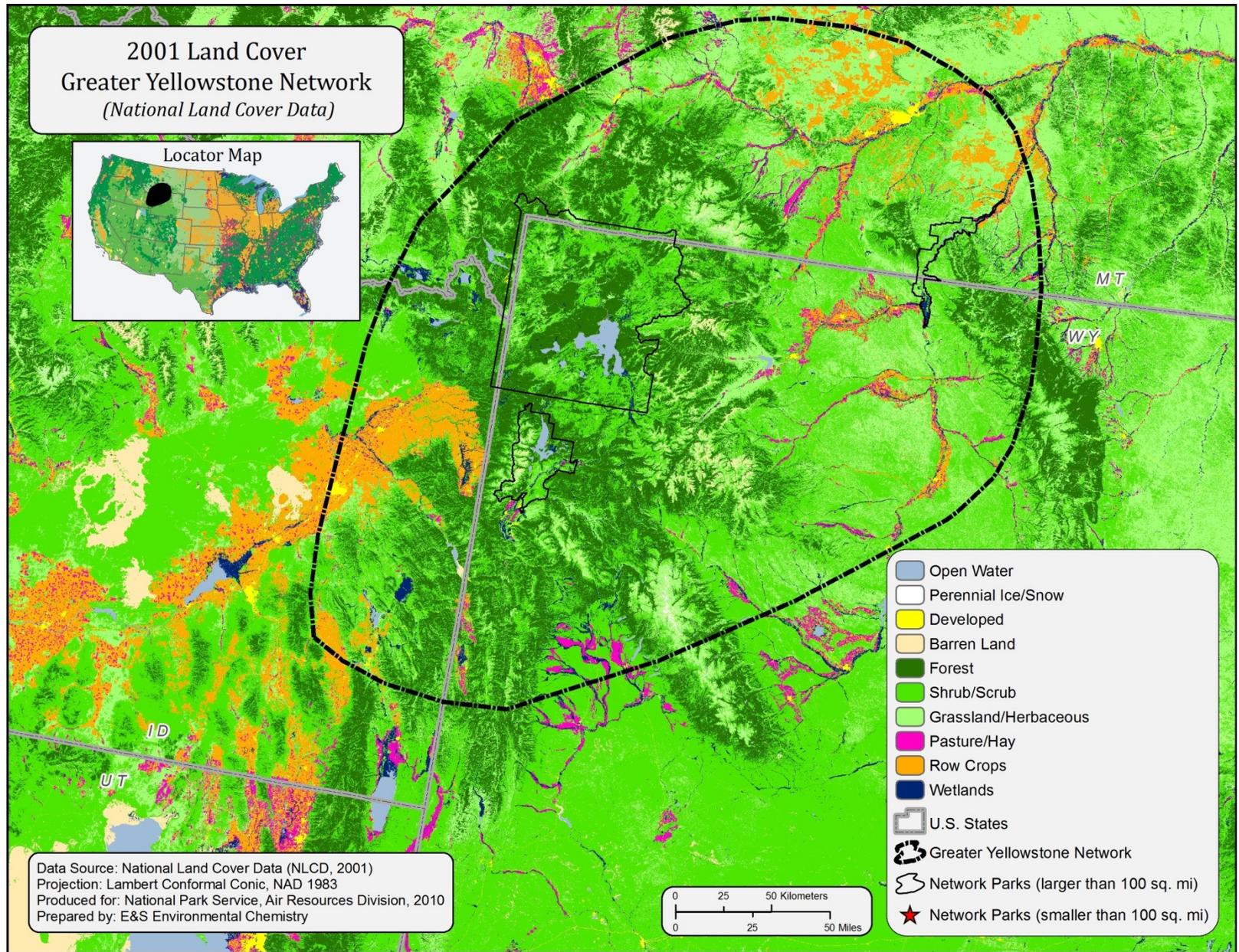
Map E

GRYN-11

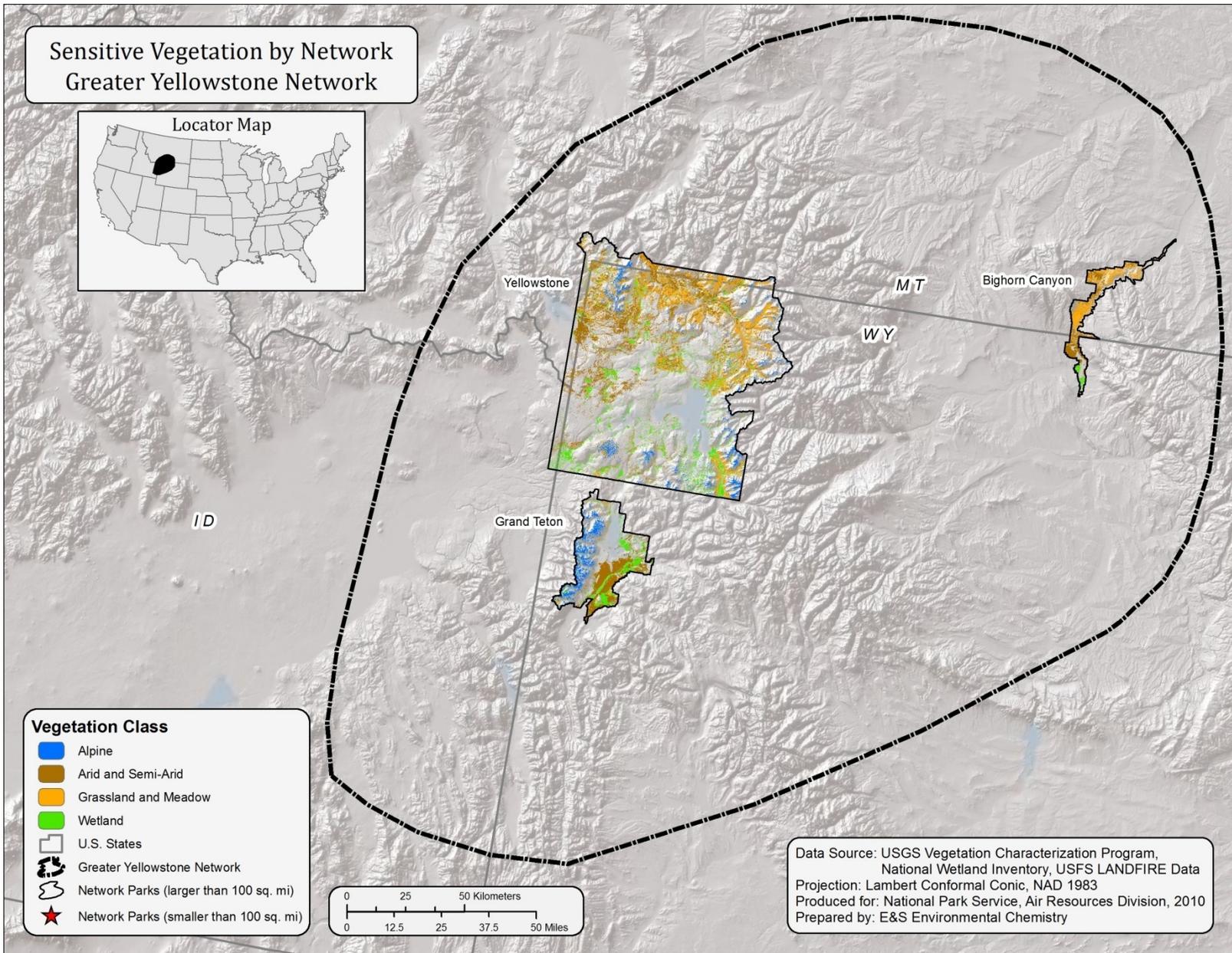


Map F

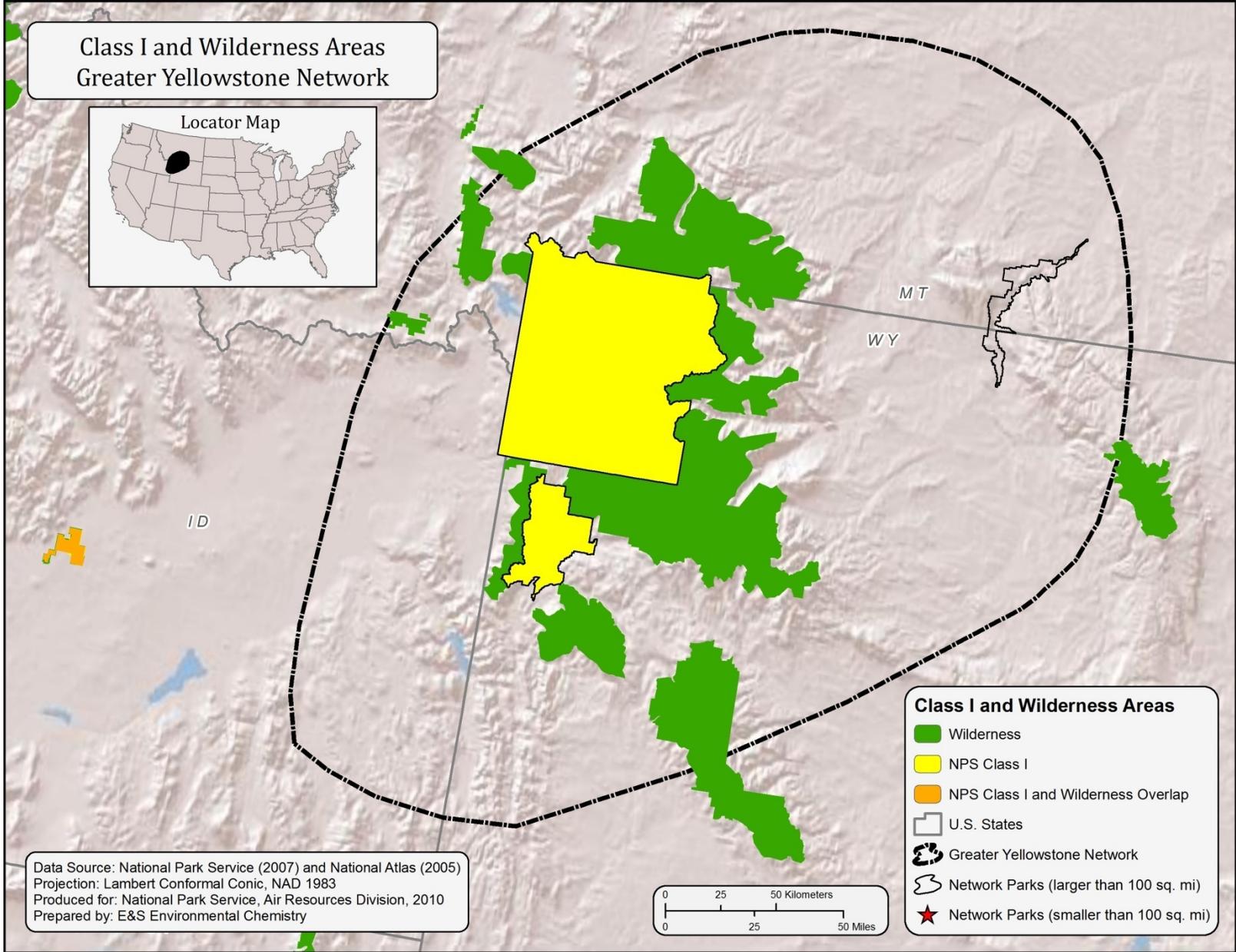
GRYN-12



Map G

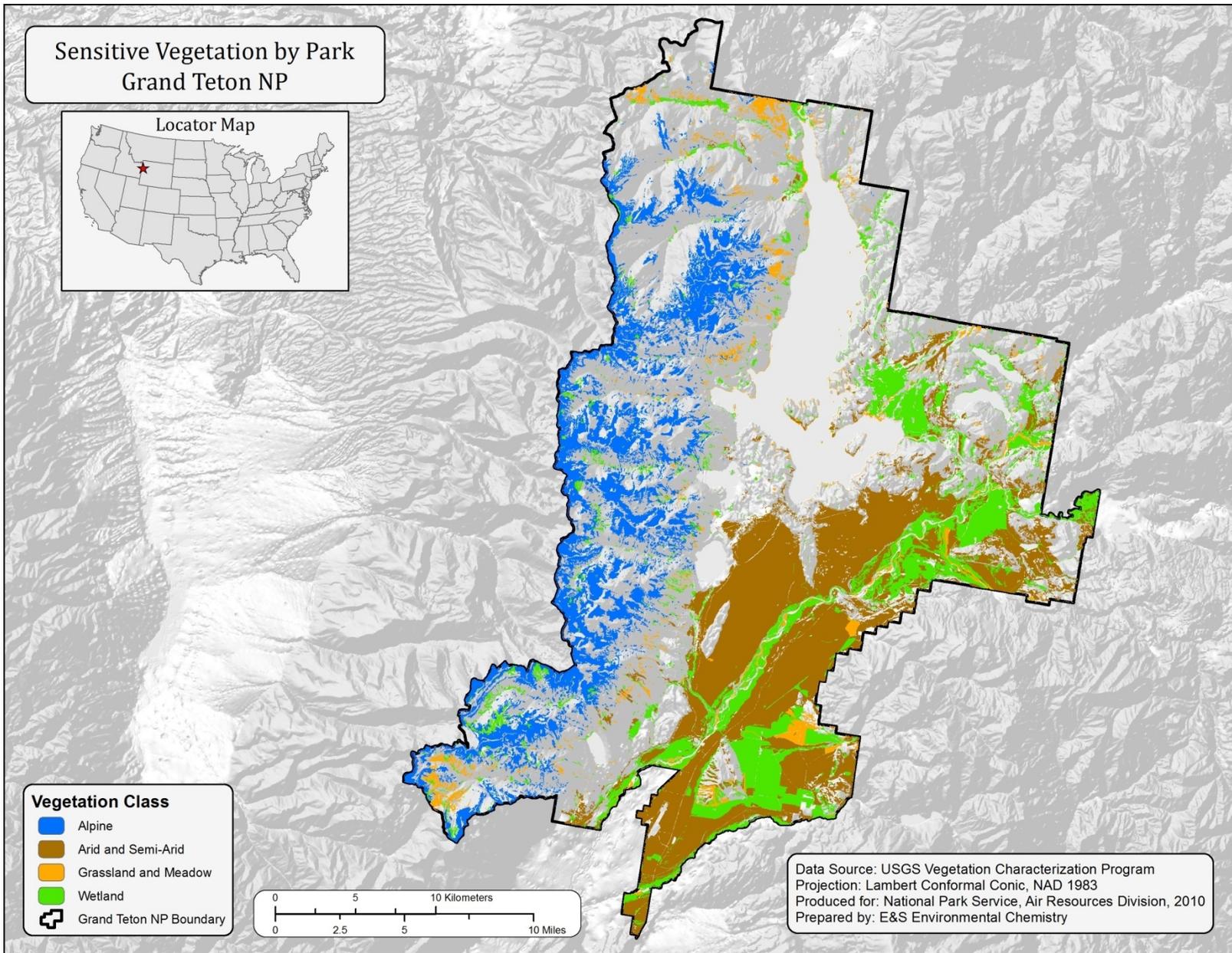


Map H

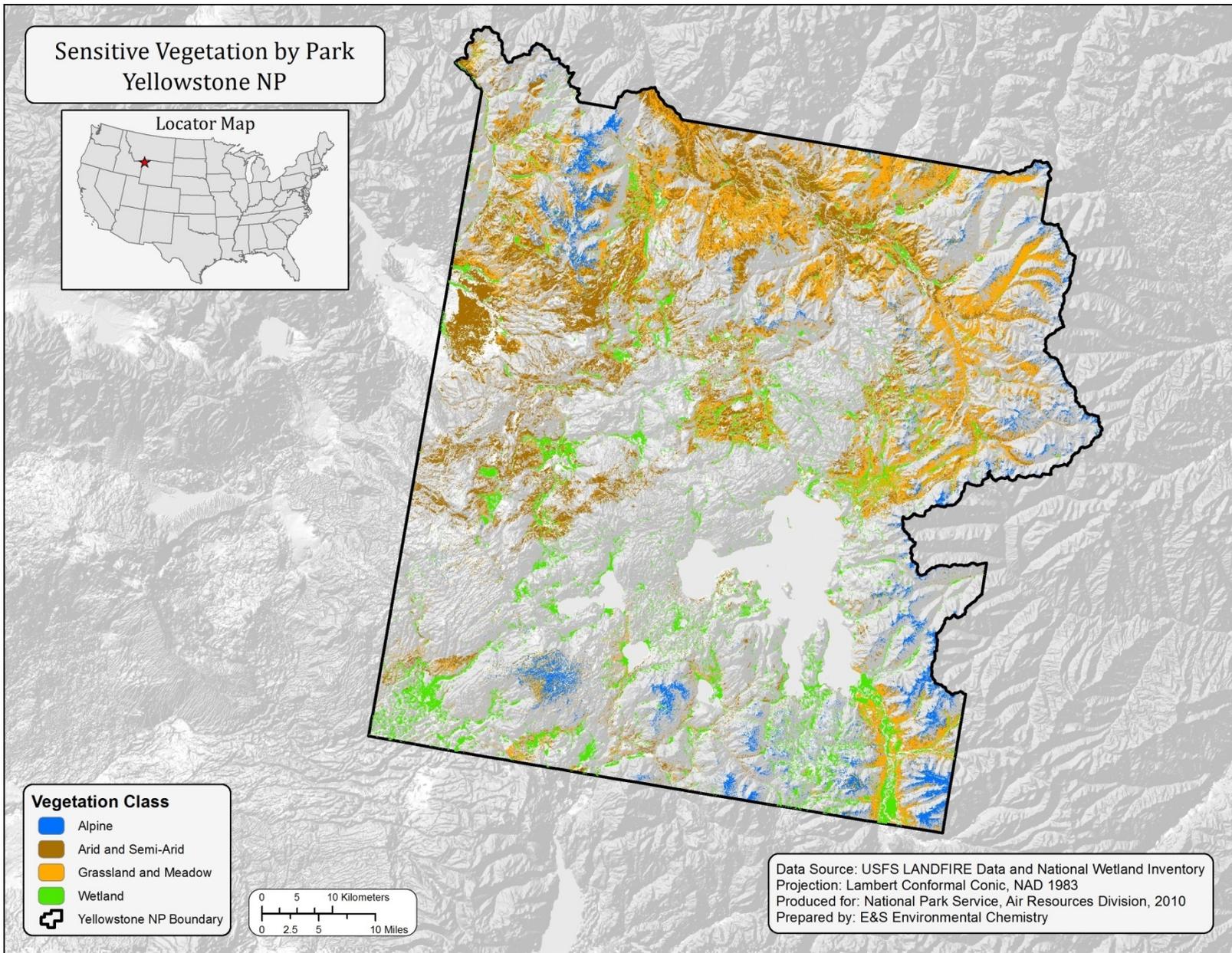


GRYN-14

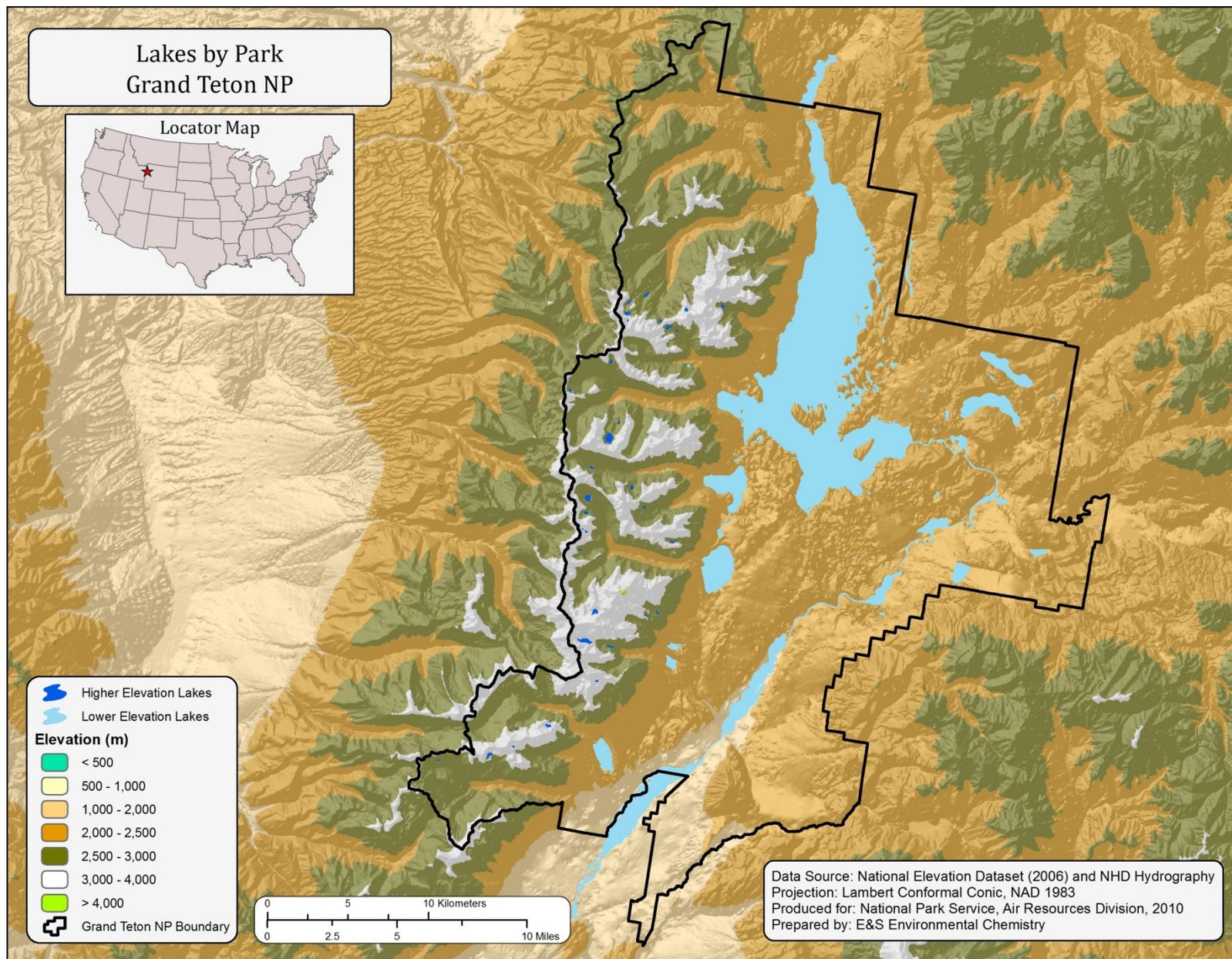
Map I



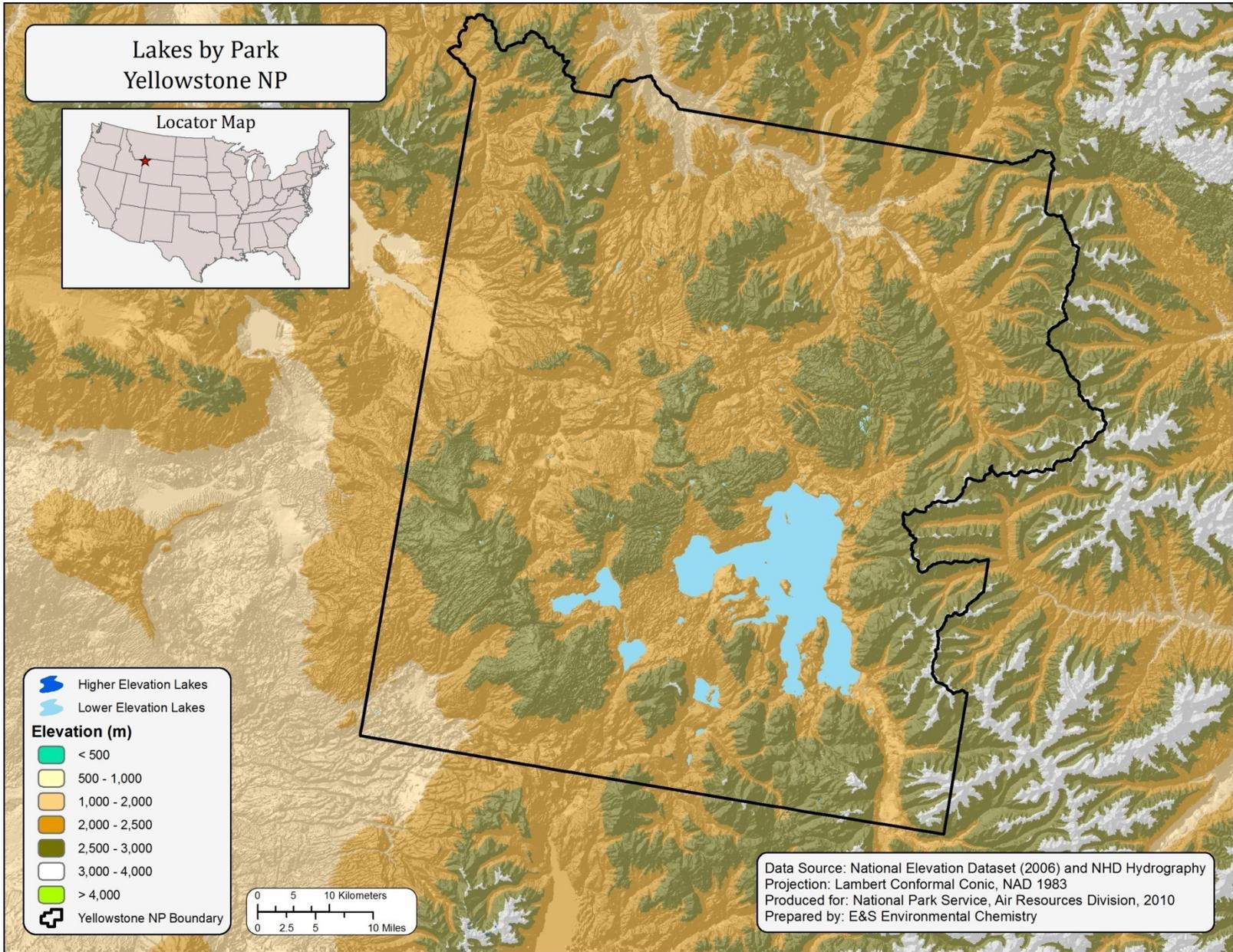
Map J-1



Map J-2



Map J-3



Map J-4

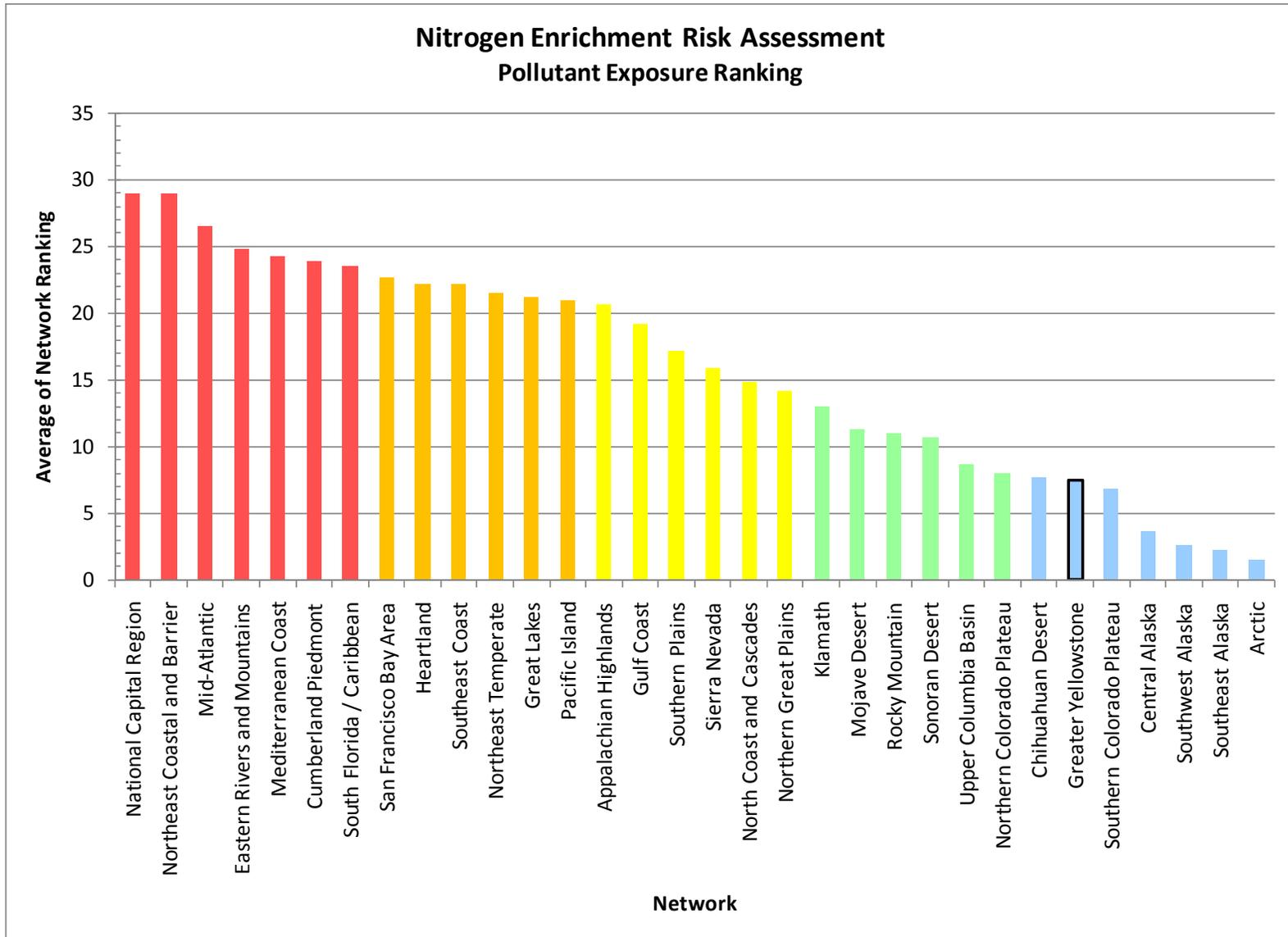


Figure A

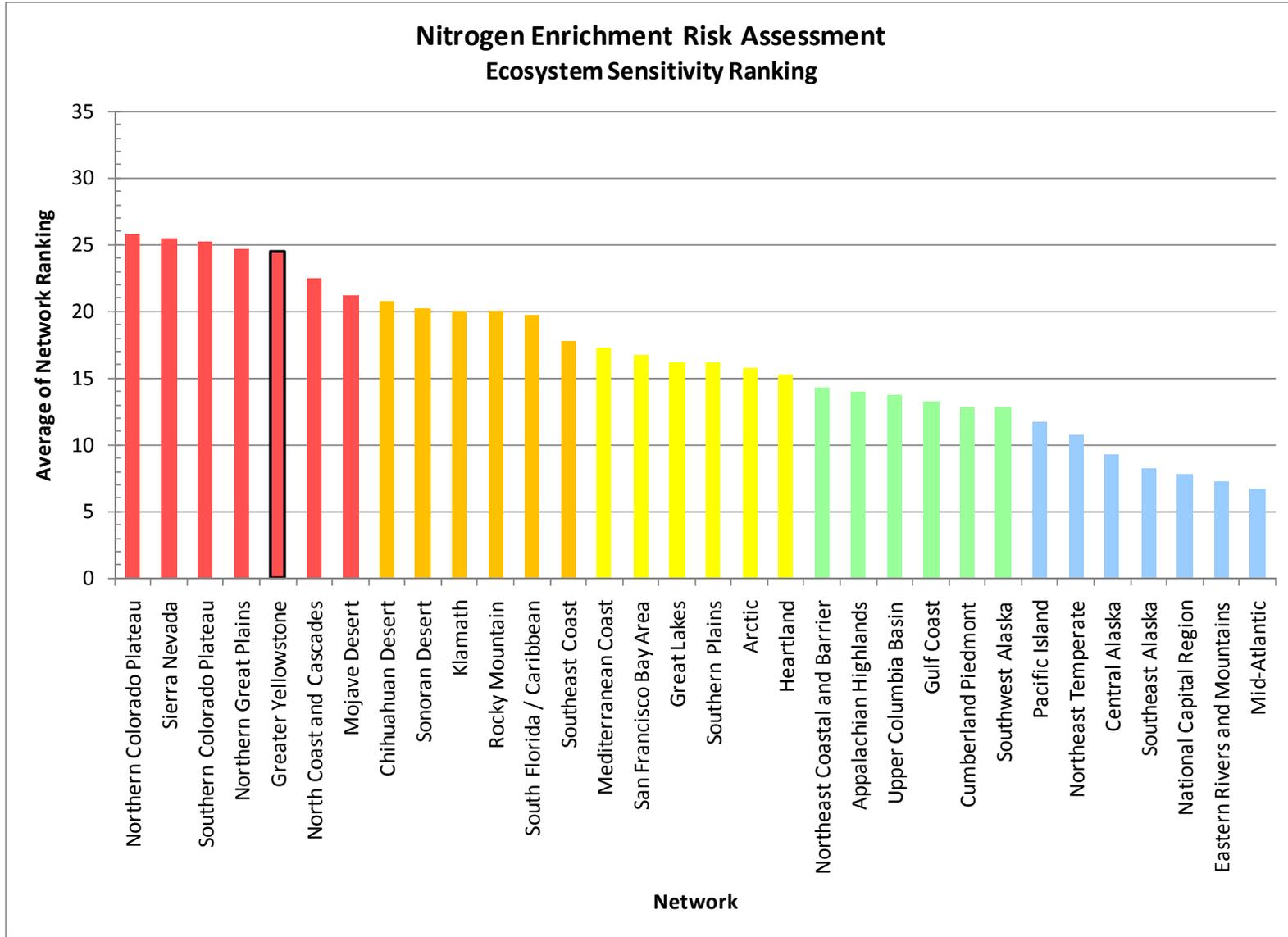


Figure B

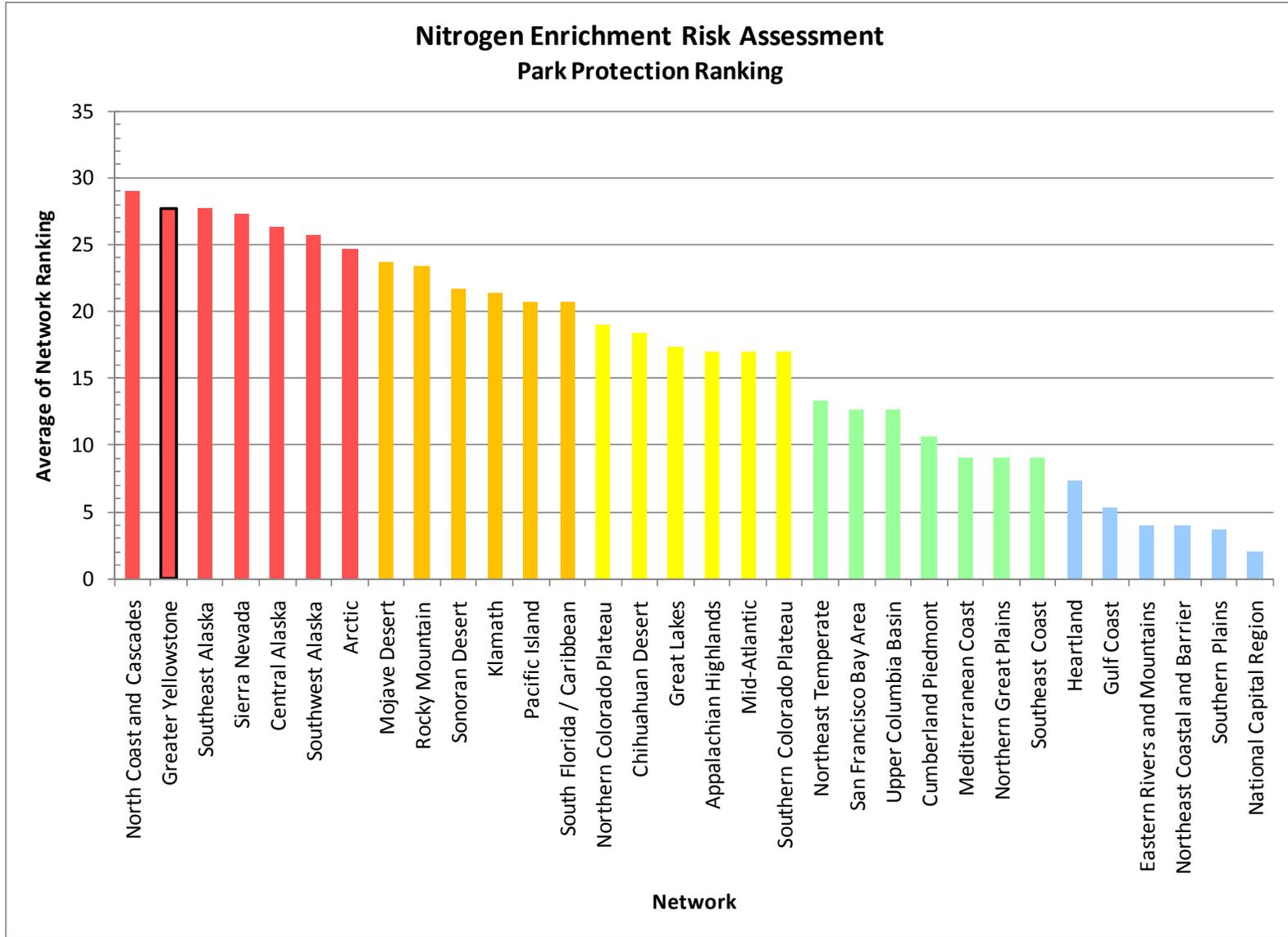


Figure C

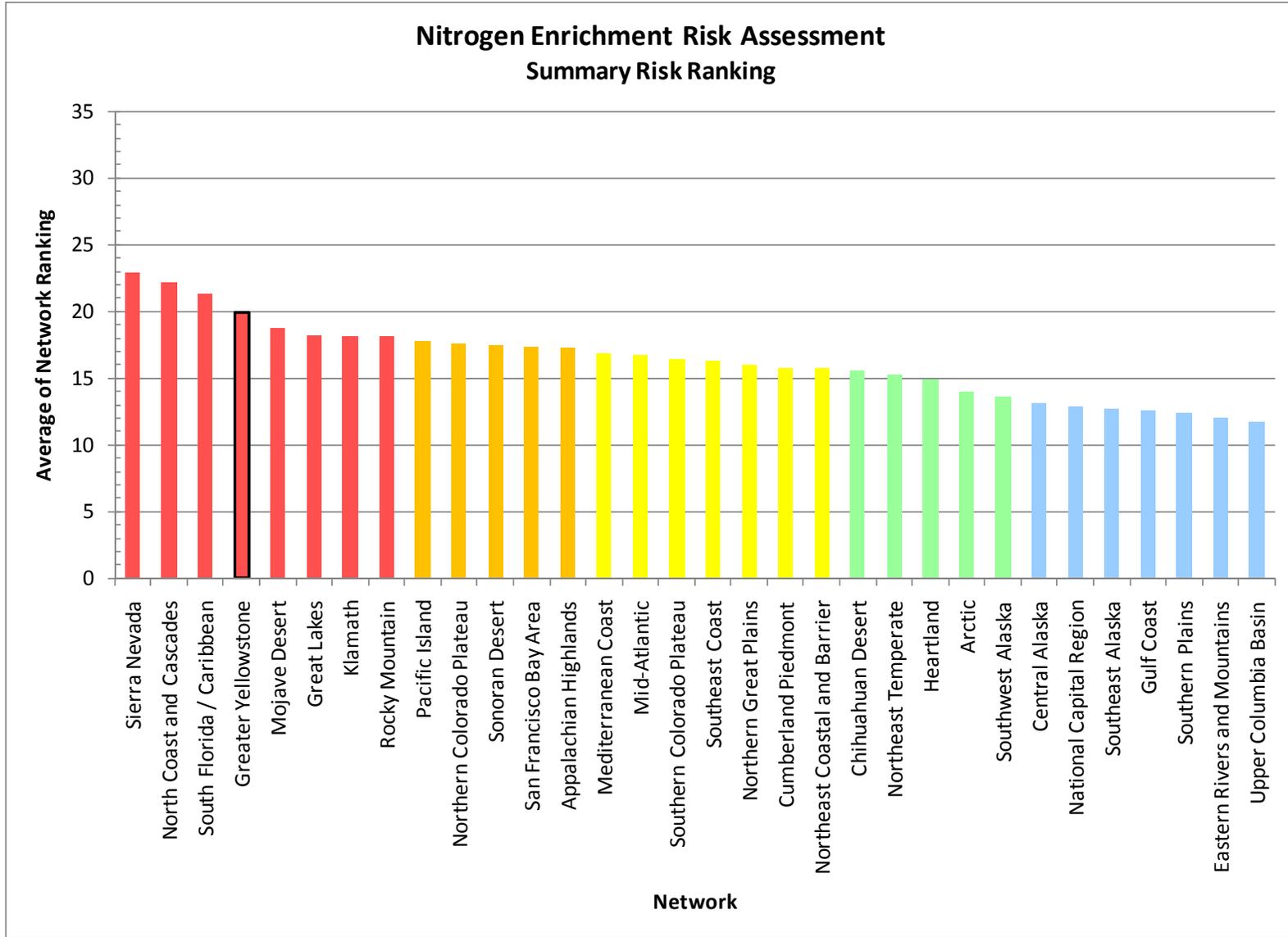


Figure D

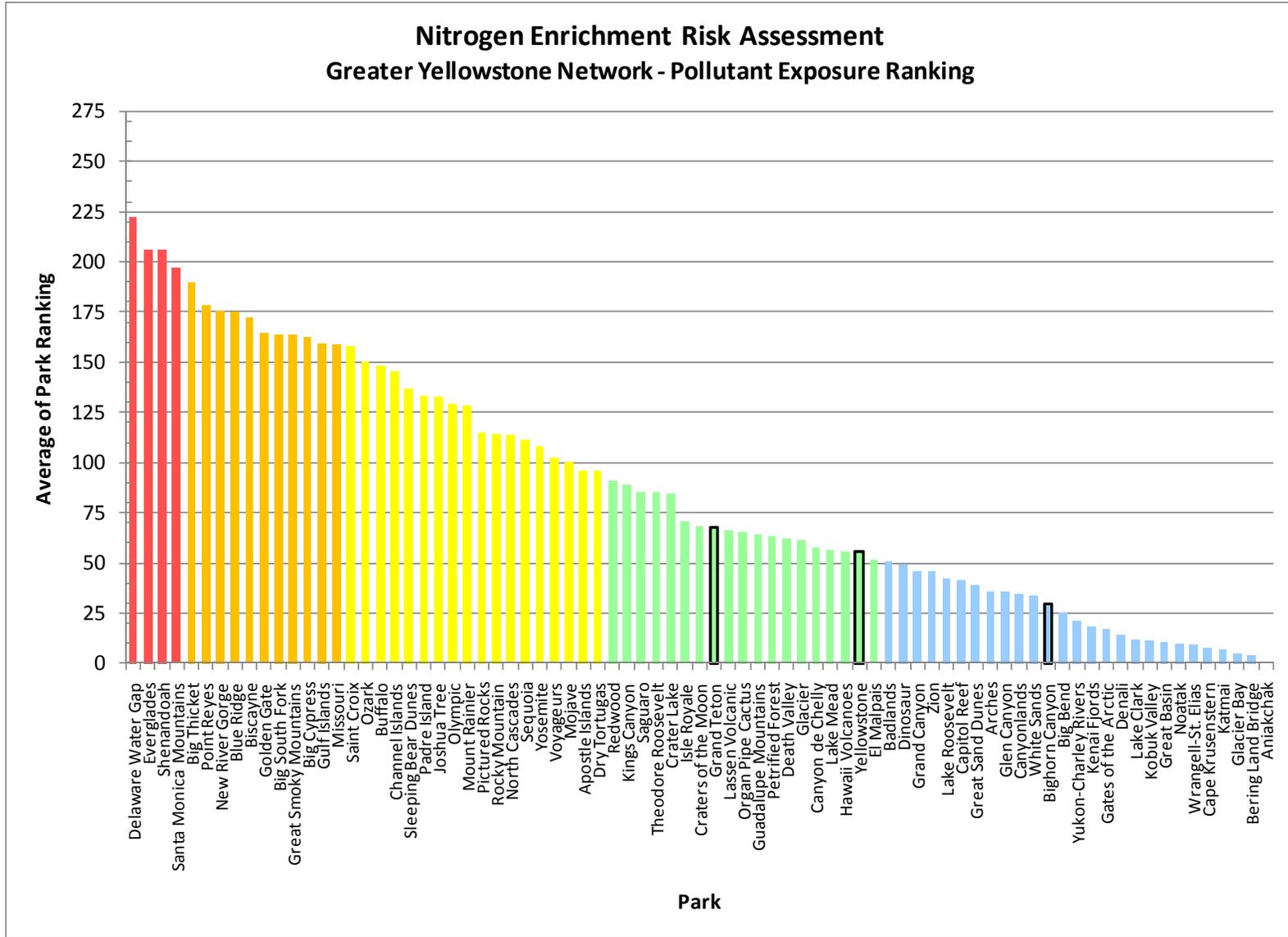


Figure E

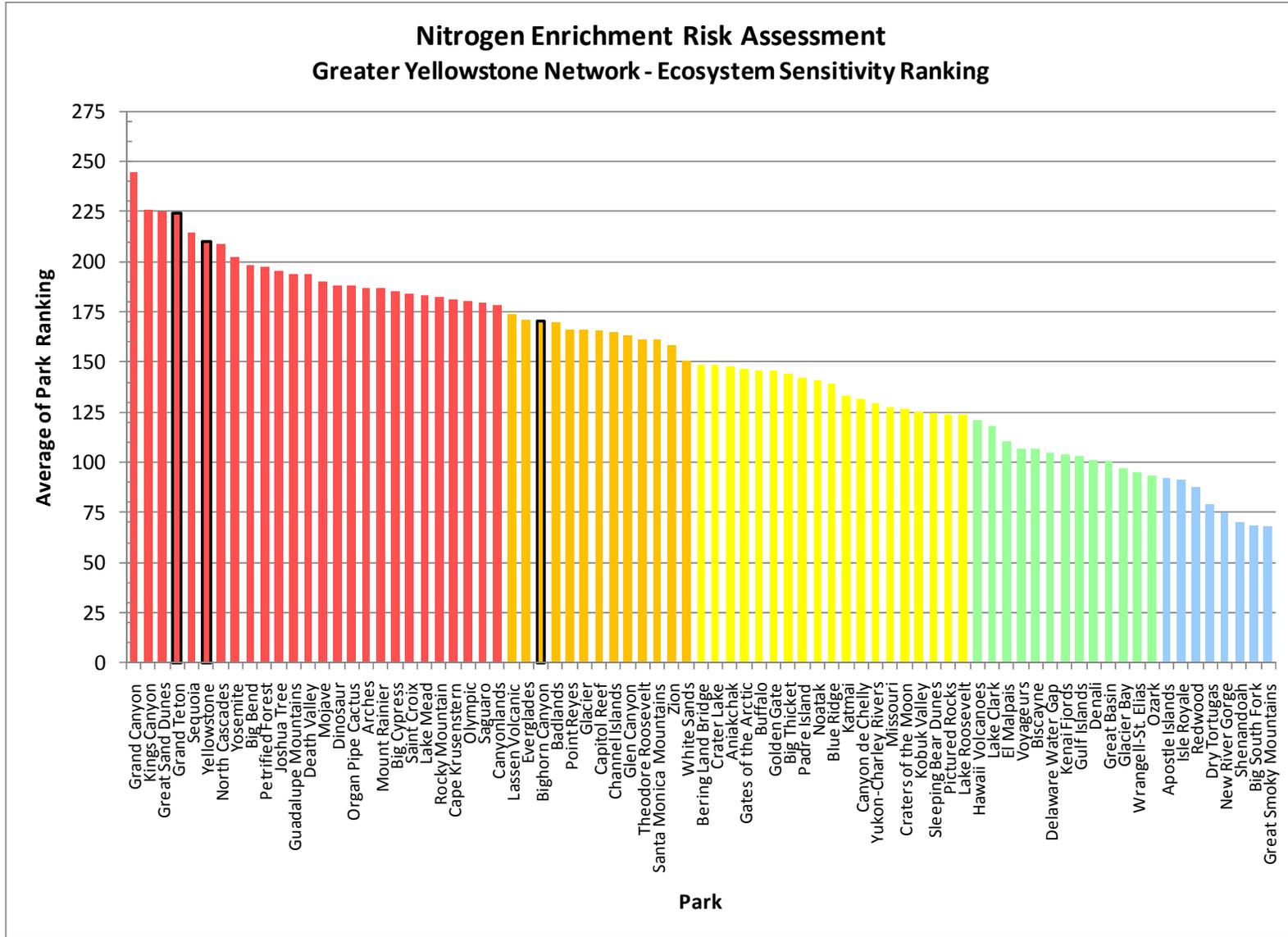


Figure F

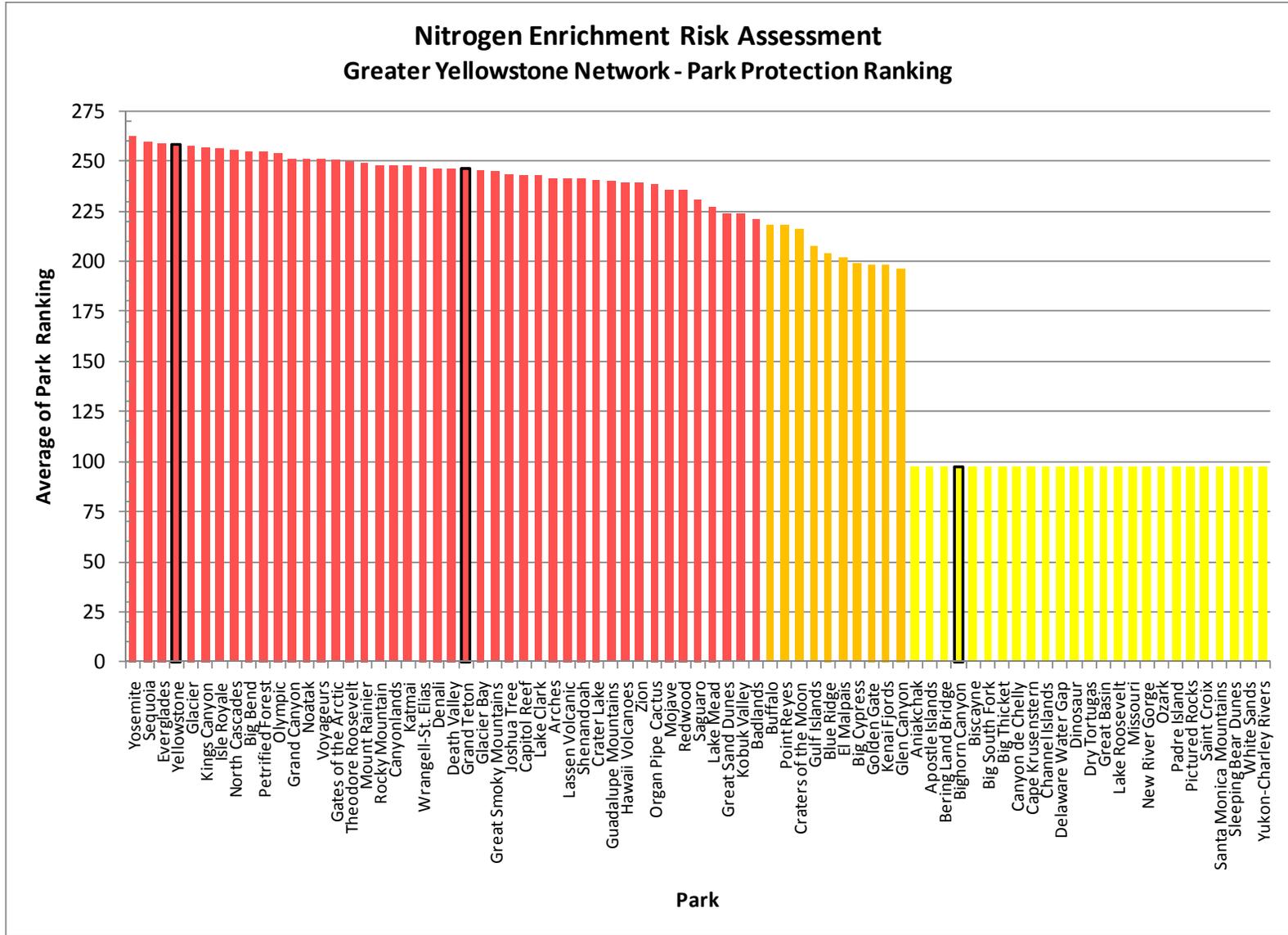


Figure G

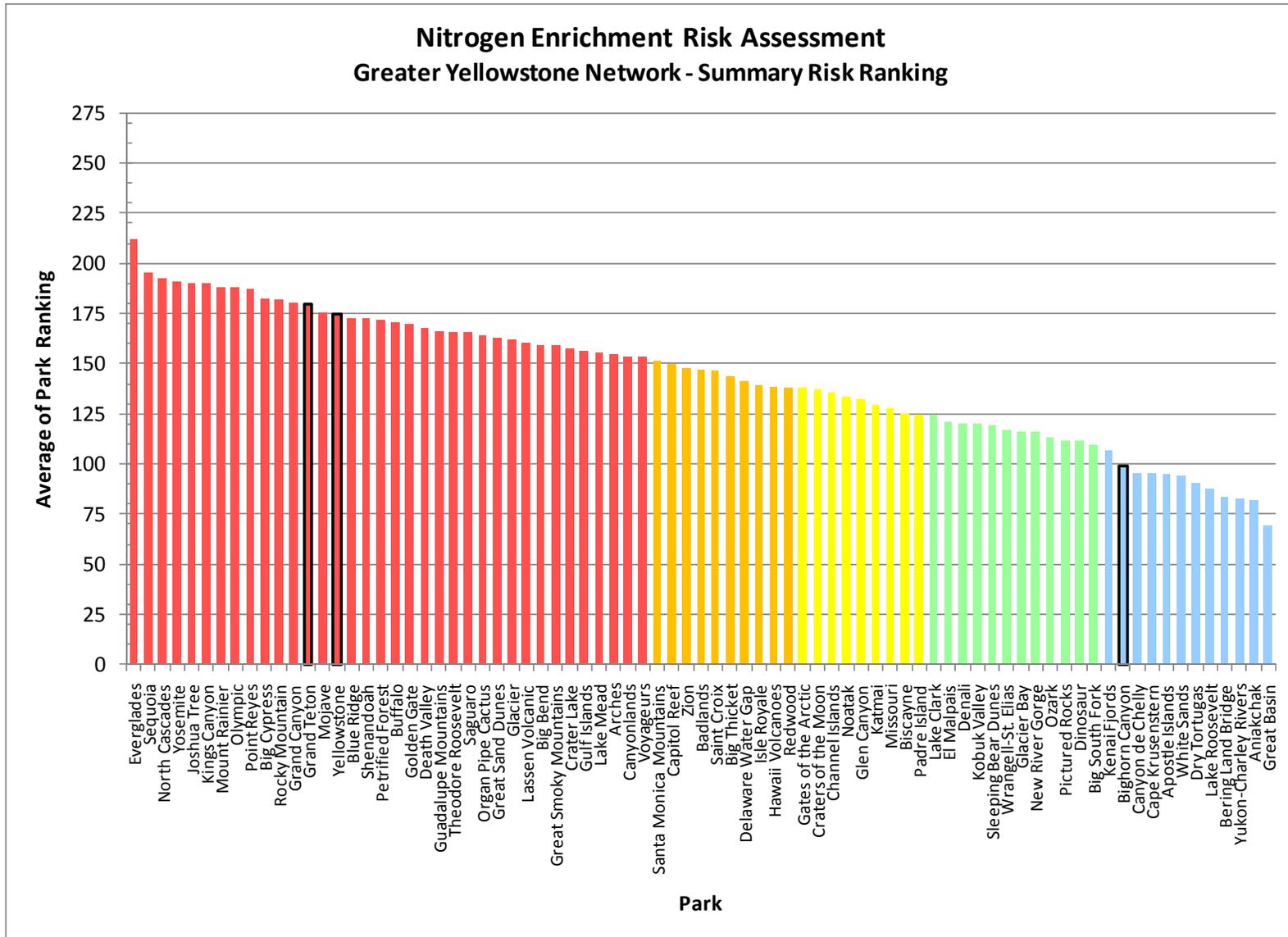


Figure H

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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