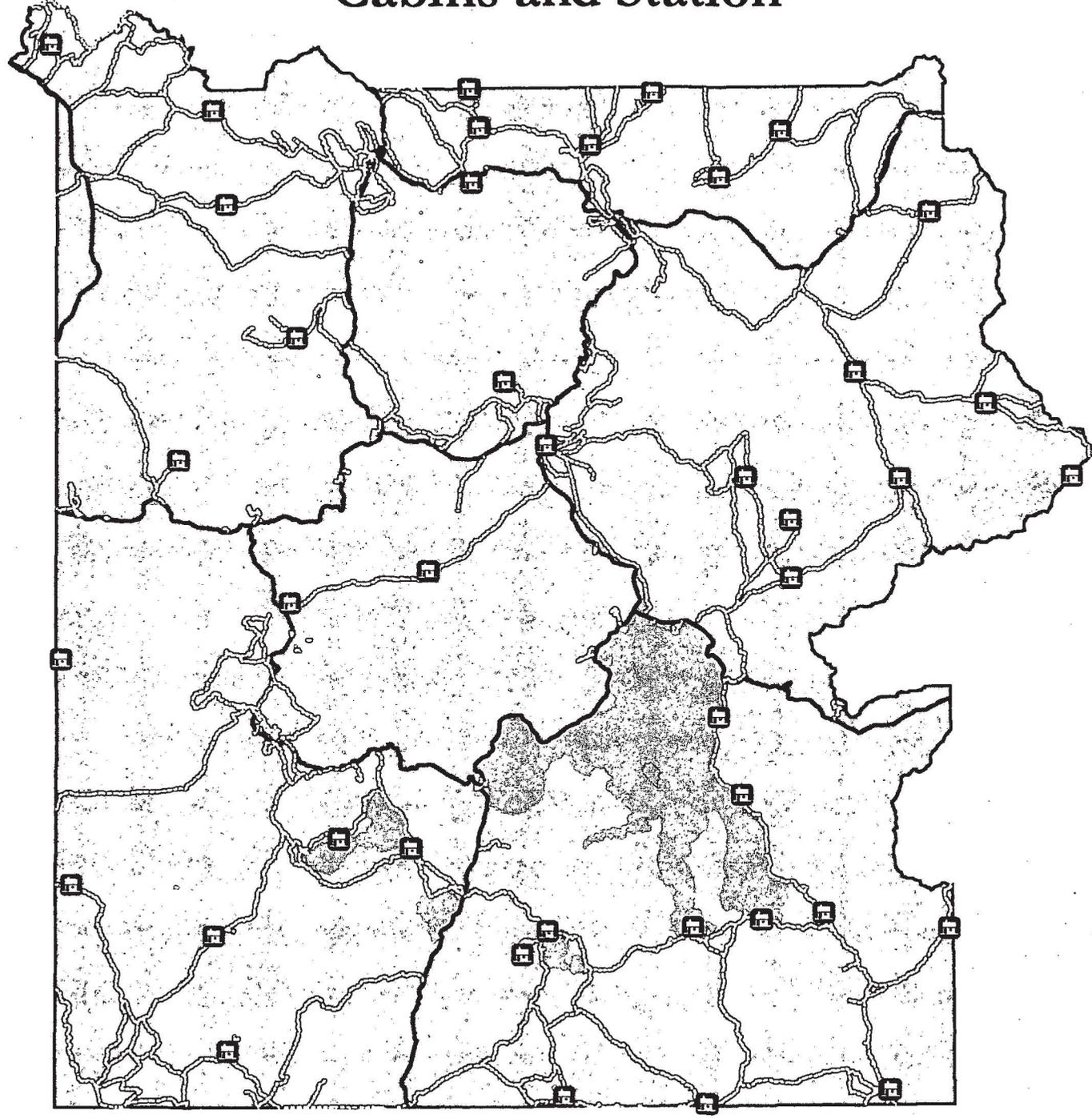




Inventory of the System of Backcountry Cabins and Station



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Feet

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— Roads

--- Trails

Backcountry Cabins

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Overview of Cultural Landscape Characteristics of Yellowstone's System of Ranger Backcountry Ranger Stations and Patrol Cabins

Introduction

The current system of ranger stations and patrol cabins was based on the geographically strategic patrol operation that was established during the military administration of the park. This operation was supported by a system of soldier stations and snowshoe cabins first built by the U.S. Army and then augmented by the National Park Service.

The nucleus of the system, representing the Army era and early NPS facility development, was constructed and expanded between 1890 and 1934 (Culpin, 1997) (Johnson, 2000). The design of these buildings had developed during the three decades of military administration of the park, and the remote locations required the use of locally available materials in non-skilled workmanship (Johnson, 2000). The NPS modifications and expansion of this system of cabins included a stronger emphasis on aesthetic criteria that affected scenery.

Document Scope and Terminology

Definitions: The entire system of soldier station, ranger stations, and patrol cabins includes both "front-country" area (those areas that can be accessed by car), and "backcountry" areas (those areas accessed by foot/stock only). "Soldier stations" were buildings used by the U.S. Army soldiers for patrol purposes, between 1886-1918. These included both front-country stations and backcountry stations. Those stations located in the backcountry were also referred to as snowshoe cabins. After the National Park Service took over the administration of the park in 1916, these snowshoe cabins were referred to as "patrol cabins" or "backcountry cabins." A "ranger station" is any building used by NPS rangers after 1916 as a place from which to work. Many soldier stations that were constructed by the U.S. Army became "ranger stations" since the beginning of the NPS administration of the park in 1916 (Whittlesey, interview, 2004).

This document will address the known cultural landscape characteristics that are common to those ranger stations and patrol cabins that are located in the backcountry of Yellowstone National Park. The front-country ranger stations will not be discussed in this document. This Level-I Cultural Landscape Inventory of the system of backcountry cabins and stations is considered a *Landscape Reconnaissance Survey*, identifying existing and needed information. Researching all readily available secondary source material, and documenting existing conditions yields an initial evaluation of the significance and character of the landscape.

Recommendations for Potential Eligibility and Further Study

In order to determine the eligibility of any component landscapes within the study area, it will be necessary to further evaluate the Yellowstone Backcountry Cabins through a more in-depth Level-II Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI-II). A CLI-II or *Landscape Analysis and Evaluation*, identifies and evaluates the integrity of landscape characteristics, and their associated features, of a specific landscape or component landscape.

A meeting with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office in January, 2004, resulted in an agreement that the backcountry cabins would be considered a discontinuous district with multiple properties with phased recordation. Each cabin would be evaluated as an undertaking was proposed; each cabin would be evaluated as a component of the entire discontinuous district. For the System of Backcountry Ranger Stations and Cabins in Yellowstone National Park, it is recommended that a CLI-II be developed to determine eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. This document provides an overview of what may potentially be common cultural landscape characteristics across the system.

The *system* of backcountry cabins and backcountry ranger stations are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A – for its association with historic events and activities associated with the Administrative Development of Yellowstone National Park and the Conservation of park resources. It is also eligible under Criterion C – as some of these cabins are good examples of Rustic Style architecture and landscape architecture; they embody the distinctive design and physical characteristics associated with vernacular architecture. Contextually, the system relates to the evolution of Yellowstone National Park architecture beginning with the early Civilian superintendent structures (1872-1886), followed by the United States Army structures (1886-1916), and concluding with the National Park Service structures (1916-present). The National Park Service early NPS Rustic Style architecture relates to the historical context “Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916-1942.” The period of significance for this system is 1872-1949. The properties fall under property type: “Buildings, Structures or Sites Associated with the *Administration* of Yellowstone National Park,” and under the subtype “Ranger/Patrol Cabins/Soldier Stations complex (station, barn, corral, outhouses). It is also categorized under the subtype under the property type: “Buildings and Structures or Sites Associated with the *Conservation* of Resources,” and under the subtype: “Ranger/Patrol Cabins.”

These backcountry cabins and backcountry ranger stations are significant in Yellowstone’s history for the role they played in the preservation, maintenance, and management of natural resources in Yellowstone National Park. The system was based on the geographically strategic patrol operation that was established during the military administration of the park. The operation was supported by a system of soldier stations and snowshoe cabins first built by the U.S. Army, and then augmented by the National Park Service. Those NPS structures and modifications are representative of early utilitarian vernacular log cabins later replaced in the 1930s by cabins constructed from standardized architectural drawings.

History and Purpose of Stations and Cabins

The following historical overview will discuss the cultural traditions that influenced the cultural landscape associated with these facilities.

U.S. Army Era

The role of managing and protecting Yellowstone National Park proved to be too daunting for civilian superintendents when America’s first national park was established in 1872. They lacked the experience, staff and funds. The park was very large (2.2 million acres) and winters were harsh. Illegal timber harvesting, wildlife poaching, commercial exploitation, vandalism and collection of park resources remained unchecked. Commercial ventures unlawfully took up residence in the park (Culpin, 1997). The civilian superintendents attempted to establish outposts, which included cabins and government stations within areas where resources violations occurred (Johnson, 2000).

In 1886, the U.S. Army arrived in Yellowstone to take over the duty of protecting and managing the park. Through a systematic approach, the Army was able to capture and discourage resource violators. This system included a secret telegraphic code and a well-organized patrol operation. The patrol operation was based out of a hierarchical system of camps, soldier stations, and snowshoe cabins; apportioning the park into patrolled districts (Culpin, 1997). These structures allowed for effective patrolling during the winter months, enabling the soldiers to reach even the most remote areas of the park. They were spaced within a day’s travel (10-miles apart) and provided shelter in Yellowstone’s especially harsh wilderness. In 1908, Yellowstone’s Military Superintendent wrote that the cabins were “...scattered throughout the park, in what are intended

to be secreted points..." (Johnson, 2000). A primitive telephone system connected some of the cabins to one another (Culpin, 1997). Between 1890 and 1916, the military endeavored to improve and expand this system of quarters, which started out with very basic and primitive structures, in order to more effectively manage and protect the park's natural and cultural resources (Yochim, 2004). They were very successful. In 1917, after the NPS had already taken over the administration of the park, the Army was called back to assist in dealing with an insurgence of resource crimes. During the period between 1890 and 1916, nineteen snowshoe cabins had been built, which is the nucleus of today's system of backcountry patrol cabins (Johnson, 2000).

Soldier stations were manned year-round with often more than one person. Some accommodated horses. For the soldier stations, comforts and architectural appearance may have been important design criterion, however, not all structures expressed these principle. In 1910, a park inspection revealed that "no similarity in style or architecture had been followed." In 1911, General Maus commented that the soldier stations should conform to the surroundings and that they "should have a uniform, artistic and dignified appearance, as well as providing full comfort and shelter for the men (Culpin, 1997).

Early National Park Service Era

When the newly created National Park Service carried on the administration of Yellowstone after 1916, their ranger corps continued the same effective system of patrol operations, using the patrol cabins. By then, however, many of the Army-built cabins had fallen into disrepair. One of the earliest construction priorities for the newly formed National Park Service was improving the quarters for the NPS ranger force. Though very basic and meager, the new architectural program under Chief NPS Landscape Engineer PUNCHARD included Superintendent ALBRIGHT's new ranger stations and the replacement of snowshoe cabins, which had fallen into deplorable conditions (McClelland, 1998, p.152).

In 1920, seven snowshoe cabins were constructed and four others remodeled. Several more cabins were built during the 1920s (Yochim, Heart Lake, 2004). The geographic distribution of these cabins was expanded throughout the park with an emphasis toward harmonizing them with their surrounding landscape (Yochim, Heart Lake, 2004).

These cabins and their surrounding landscapes exhibit features that are characteristic with the National Park Service Rustic Style in Yellowstone. During this time, the NPS Landscape Engineering Division oversaw a building program under the philosophy that the "cultural character of a region's architecture could provide appropriate sources for a cultural theme and harmonious construction." Landscape architect Daniel Hull used this philosophy when explaining his design of the Lake Ranger Station in 1922 (McClelland, p.166, 1998). The cabins were constructed in a "Rocky Mountain log cabin" style; using gable-end entrances and distinctive porches that housed firewood (Johnson, 2000). In 1921 NPS Landscape Architect Daniel Hull and Supt. Albright specifically discussed the type of "old time log effect" appropriate for remote areas in Yellowstone; and using logs for corrals as well. Rangers constructed these structures and Hull was felt they met the requirement for harmonizing with the environment. At the 1922 annual superintendent's conference, Albright praised Yellowstone's relationship with the NPS landscape engineers, specifically mentioning the collaborative effort on the cabin design (Johnson, 2000).

During the late 1920s, NPS landscape architect Thomas Vint realized that architectural themes could be imposed on standard plans, such as for patrol cabins. These could follow a common design that was repeated throughout the park (McClelland, 1998, p.244).

In 1930, the NPS Landscape Engineering Division provided Yellowstone with three standard plan cabin designs, of which the park selected Cabin Type 2, which was revised in the following year. The landscape architects yielded to changing the roof and chimney materials to corrugated metal roof and stove pipe, even though this was contrary to Rustic Design philosophy (Johnson, 2000). The park continued to use this plan throughout the 1930s.

Around 1940, the policy restricting the cutting of trees in national parks for use as log in construction was established service wide. Only the Nez Perce snowshoe cabin in Yellowstone was constructed using wood frame, reflecting this policy. However, it used the same standardized plans (Johnson, 2000).

The system of cabins continues to be used today. In the 1970s, the NPS used an "A-Frame" style patrol cabin; of which there are six total.

Cultural Landscape Characteristics

The early U.S. Army system of cabins was built in quick response to an urgent threat and was built by scouts using immediately available local materials. These facilities were more functional in site use, design and construction. Apprehending poachers required cabins to be "scattered throughout the park in what are intended to be secreted points." Most of these original cabins did not survive Yellowstone's harsh winters (Yochim, 2004).

The later NPS modifications to this system often used the general locations of the original Army cabins, adding aesthetic values that used the NPS Rustic Style, which was a significant NPS emphasis of that time. During this time, all NPS facilities were constructed to be not only in harmony with their immediate environment, but also to be inconspicuous in a wilderness setting. Throughout Yellowstone National Park, facilities built during the early NPS years (1916-1942) in both the backcountry and frontcountry areas show strong patterns of design that take full advantage of the interplay between meadows and adjacent forests. Forest edges around meadows are typically thicker and can conceal development effectively. For the users of the facilities themselves, views across the meadows became a focal point from which to design from.

Both the Army and the NPS emphasis, whether for "secreted points" or "inconspicuous development" resulted in facilities which took full advantage of native vegetation. Recent aerial photographs, as well as a reconnaissance survey of 5 of the 30 cabins, indicate that most cabins are sited within the cover of trees, many times near the edge of meadows; in keeping with the idea of "secreted points" as well as the use of forest edge for screening. Meadows can also be associated with a water source and horse pasture, which may have been important site criteria for both the Army and NPS. Very rarely have cabins been sited outside the cover of trees.

NOTE: The following landscape characteristics will further explore potential similarities and patterns in the cultural landscape features associated with backcountry ranger stations and cabins. Many of these properties are in remote wilderness locations. These evaluations are preliminary and are based upon aerial photo imagery, historic photographs, secondary sources of historic information, and finally, a site visit to several of these locations. As part of the phased recordation of this system, each CLI will reveal additional information about the cultural landscape characteristics for this system of cabins.

Natural Systems and Features

For the parkwide system of cabins, geological characteristics form the foundation of an ecosystem. In Yellowstone, the interplay between volcanic, hydrothermal, and glacial processes and the distribution of flora and fauna are intricate and unique.

The topography of the land from southern Idaho northeast to Yellowstone results from millions of years of hotspot influence. Some scientists believe the Yellowstone Plateau itself is a result of uplift due to hotspot volcanism. Today's landforms channel westerly storm systems eastward onto the plateau where they drop large amounts of snow.

The distribution of rocks and sediments in the park also influences the distributions of flora and fauna. The volcanic rhyolites and tuffs of the Yellowstone Caldera are rich in quartz and potassium feldspar, which form nutrient-poor soils. Thus, areas of the park underlain by rhyolites and tuffs generally are characterized by extensive, monotypic stands of lodgepole pine, which are drought tolerant and have shallow roots that take advantage of the nutrients in the soil. In contrast, andesitic volcanic rocks that underlie the Absaroka Mountains are rich in calcium, magnesium, and iron. These minerals weather into soils that can store more water and provide better nutrients than rhyolitic soils. This allows for more vegetative growth, which adds organic matter to the soils and results in much more fertile soils. You can see the result when you drive over Dunraven Pass or through other areas of the park with Absaroka rocks. They have a richer flora, including mixed forests interspersed with meadows. Lake sediments such as those underlying Hayden Valley, which were deposited during glacial periods, form clay soils that allow meadow communities to out-compete trees for water. The patches of lodgepole pines in Hayden Valley grow in areas of rhyolite rock outcrops.

Because of the influence rock types have on plant distribution, some scientists theorize that geology also influences wildlife distributions and movement. Whitebark pine is an important food source for grizzly bears during the autumn. The bears migrate to the whitebark pine areas such as the andesitic volcanic terrain of Mt. Washburn. Grazing animals such as elk and bison are found in the park's grasslands, which grow best in sedimentary soil of valleys such as Hayden and Lamar. And the many hydrothermal areas of the park, where grasses and other food remain uncovered, provide a haven for animals during the winter (Yellowstone Internet Website).

Most of Yellowstone national park contains remote recommended wilderness areas. The system of backcountry ranger stations and patrol cabins spans the entire park area.

The most obvious and influential characteristic of this wilderness is its sheer vastness. It is the largest proposed wilderness within the contiguous 48 states. Many of the backcountry cabins and stations are found in remote areas that can only be reached by foot or stock. The conditions can be harsh; the terrain severe and the weather unforgiving. Army scouts of the past as well as the backcountry rangers of today rely on only themselves within the seclusion of these areas. The ranger stations and patrol cabins in the backcountry are considered a respite and allows them to carry lighter loads (Regula, Thorofare Ranger Station CLI, 2005).

The location of the cabin/station was dependent upon various natural systems and features. Almost all of the cabins are near a water source. Typically, these would be rivers, lakes and streams. Meadows associated with these water sources provided pasture for livestock (wherever livestock was utilized). These meadows were often wet and were visible from surrounding vantage points. Therefore many of the cabins are located outside of the meadows and within the cover of trees. Please see the discussion on "Vegetation" for more information regarding the use of trees.

Land Use

Administrative; ranger residence, and patrol facilitation; occasional visitor contact.

Spatial Organization

As a system of patrol cabins along a system of backcountry trails, the following large-scale planning criteria were potentially considered in locating these structures within the landscape of Yellowstone National Park:

The park was apportioned into patrolling districts based upon the park boundary, poaching "hot spots" (good wildlife habitat), and the location of the backcountry trails. Within these patrolling districts, a soldier/ranger station or patrol/snowshoe cabin was built.

The cabins were spaced 1-day's travel apart (on snowshoe), usually near a water source such as a lake, river or stream. Please refer to the Natural Systems section for the role of the landscape in spatial organization.

Cultural Traditions

U.S. Army Era, 1886-1918: Shortly after their arrival, the U.S. Army began implementing a very effective and systematic approach toward apprehending and thereby deterring resource violators. The park was apportioned into patrolling districts. Soldier stations and snowshoe cabins allowed the patrols to occur in remote districts within the park.

These structures were built using non-skilled workmanship and locally available materials. Form followed function. The structures were primitive and many did not withstand the harsh winters. Secrecy was key to apprehending resources violators and the cabins were hidden from view. For the soldier stations, comforts and architectural appearance may have been important design criterion, however, not all structures expressed these principle. In 1910, a park inspection revealed that "no similarity in style or architecture had been followed." In 1911, General Maus commented that the soldier stations should conform to the surroundings and that they "should have a uniform, artistic and dignified appearance, as well as providing full comfort and shelter for the men (Culpin, 1997).

Early NPS Rustic Style: Rooted in the American park movement of the nineteenth century, naturalistic park design flourished under the stewardship of the NPS in the early twentieth century. Park designers – landscape architects, architects, and engineers – forged a rich legacy of roads and trails that blended with the natural scenery, picturesque park villages, campgrounds and picnic areas, scenic overlooks, and majestic views. For backcountry patrol cabins, Superintendent Albright and Landscape Engineer Thomas Vint and Daniel Hull collaborated on the design and development. These landscape architects designed and developed the front-country areas within Yellowstone National Park, as well. The design philosophy they followed at the time – park-wide – involved making developments blend into the surrounding landscape and be as inconspicuous as possible. They used various techniques in implementing this philosophy. In Yellowstone, these designers used the ecotone between meadow and forest edge as an important tool. Historic Master Plans dated from the 1930s and 1940s show a strong preference for utilizing the edges of forest and meadow, where vegetation is more dense, as a screen. In the case of backcountry cabins, historic photos show newly-constructed cabins with large existing trees remaining immediately adjacent to the building foundations. Vegetation was often used to obscure the mass of structures and help make them inconspicuous, as in the case of Heart Lake Patrol Cabin. Forested areas are often outside of the wet meadow conditions, typically at a slightly higher elevation. Developments under tree cover often took advantage of views out onto adjacent meadows. The 6 NPS-constructed backcountry patrol cabins that have been surveyed thus far exhibit this design philosophy.

Architecture that was horizontal in nature and used natural materials, such as rough-hewn logs and stone, blended well into the landscape. The cabins had gable end doors and extended roofs characteristic of the Rocky Mountain style log cabin.

Adirondack style: In 1931, the Adirondack style and tradition illustrated in Augustus D. Shepard's book entitled, "Camps in the Woods" was written for tourist cabins. It revealed how Adirondack style evolved in the 20th century; accommodating new ideas arising from Prairie style of architecture, the Arts and Crafts Movements, and other sources. Shepard advocated southern exposure (morning and midday sun), utilizing views, and considering prevailing winds/storms. He emphasized the protection of existing native vegetation, using careful grading and siting techniques and to develop cabins so that they appeared to grow from the ground. Shepard also stressed the use of nineteenth century techniques of incorporating stone and rough hewn wood. Historian Linda McClelland discusses how influential this illustrated book was on the NPS landscape engineering division during the 1930s.

Around 1940, the policy restricting the cutting of trees in national parks for use as log in construction was established service wide. Only the Nez Perce snowshoe cabin in Yellowstone was constructed using wood frame, reflecting this policy. However, it used the same standardized plans (Johnson, 2000).

Vegetation

Yellowstone National Park contains diverse vegetation as a result of the extreme topographic relief, differing soils, varied slope and aspect, and a range of microclimates. The park includes seven vegetation zones, ranging from desert to alpine tundra. Approximately 1,200 to 1,300 plant species have been identified in the park, but most of the landscape is dominated by a few vegetative community types (WUI Fuels Management EA, 2002).

Lower elevations, between 5,000 and 7,000 feet, support grasslands, shrublands and wet meadows. Grasslands include bluebunch wheatgrass, Hood's phlox, and rosy pussytoes. Shrublands generally include sagebrush, rabbitbrush, yarrow, wild buckwheat, Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, and junegrass. In wet meadows, willow, cinquefoil, American bisort, tufted hairgrass, alpine timothy and a variety of sedges (WUI Fuels Management EA, 2002).

Approximately 60 percent of the park is forested, with the majority dominated by lodgepole pine. This community is found in a variety of successional stages at elevations between 7,500 and 9,000 feet. In moist areas and on rich soils, Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir are found. At elevations ranging from 6,000 to 7,000 feet, Douglas-fir and aspen stands are common. Whitebark pine is found above 8,400 feet, with alpine tundra above treeline at 9,400 feet (WUI Fuels Management EA, 2002).

The vegetative character of Yellowstone's landscape is one of a mosaic of meadows and coniferous forests (affected by the 1988 Fires) associated with rivers and streams. Between 1916 and 1942, the NPS landscape engineers utilized this natural pattern in the landscape in their attempts to "harmonize" facilities into their surroundings. Historic Master Plans dated from the 1930s and 1940s show a strong preference for utilizing the edges of forest and meadow, where vegetation is more dense, as a screen. In the case of backcountry cabins, historic photos show newly-constructed cabins with large existing trees remaining immediately adjacent to the building foundations, such as for the Heart Lake Patrol Cabin. Vegetation was often used to obscure the mass of structures and help make them inconspicuous.

During the U.S. Army era, it is not clear how vegetation was utilized. Many of the original snowshoe cabins have been either rehabilitated or razed by the NPS. However, it is apparent on current aerial photographs that most of the sites chosen by the U.S. Army scouts were within tree cover. In 1908, Yellowstone's Military Superintendent wrote that the cabins were "...scattered throughout the park, in what are intended to be secreted points..." (Johnson, 2000). It is assumed that this indicates that forest cover was an important characteristic in the "secretive" siting of these cabins during this period.

Circulation

Backcountry cabins and ranger stations are located along the park's backcountry and boundary trail system. Within the cabin area are usually secondary trails that lead to water sources, pasture, and other structures such as barns. Often, development is rarely visible from the wilderness trail corridor.

Buildings and structures

Building types include the main cabin and, in some cases, a horse barn. The architectural styles include primitive log structures constructed by the U.S. Army, and Early NPS Rustic- influenced by Rocky Mountain Rustic and possibly the Adirondack style (see "Cultural Traditions" section) using rough-hewn logs.

Around 1940, the policy restricting the cutting of trees in national parks for use as log in construction was established service wide. Only the Nez Perce snowshoe cabin in Yellowstone was constructed using wood frame, reflecting this policy. However, it used the same standardized plans (Johnson, 2000).

Topography

In this unstable landscape, ancient volcanoes arose about 50 million years ago to form the Absaroka and Washburn mountains. Lying across Yellowstone Lake and bounding the park's east side, the Absarokas are an imposing mountain range that formed from erupting volcanoes during a 15-million-year period. Today, they provide a scenic backdrop to the waters of Yellowstone Lake. At the time of their creation, they ejected silica-rich lava and ash, which mixed with water to form mudflows.

Meadows associated with rivers and streams, are often wet and occasionally flooded. Cabins have typically been located where they were outside of these wet conditions; often on slight rises that remain dry and often vegetated.

Views and Vistas

Most cabins seem to have been hidden in tree cover and do not detract from the remote wilderness character of Yellowstone's backcountry. Wide sweeping views of wilderness from trails are not impeded by these structures although some cabins are at meadow (such as Thorofare Ranger Station). It can be assumed that army scouts and, later, NPS rangers found security as well as increased effectiveness in being hidden from poachers. NPS had strong pattern of using meadow views as an asset to those users of the facilities, however, it is not clear if this was a design criterion for the patrol cabins.

Small Scale Features

Many of these cabins are so remote that there are very few man-made features in the landscape. In some cabins and ranger stations, features such as hitching posts, corral fences, pasture fences, wood piles, drainage/irrigation ditches can be found.

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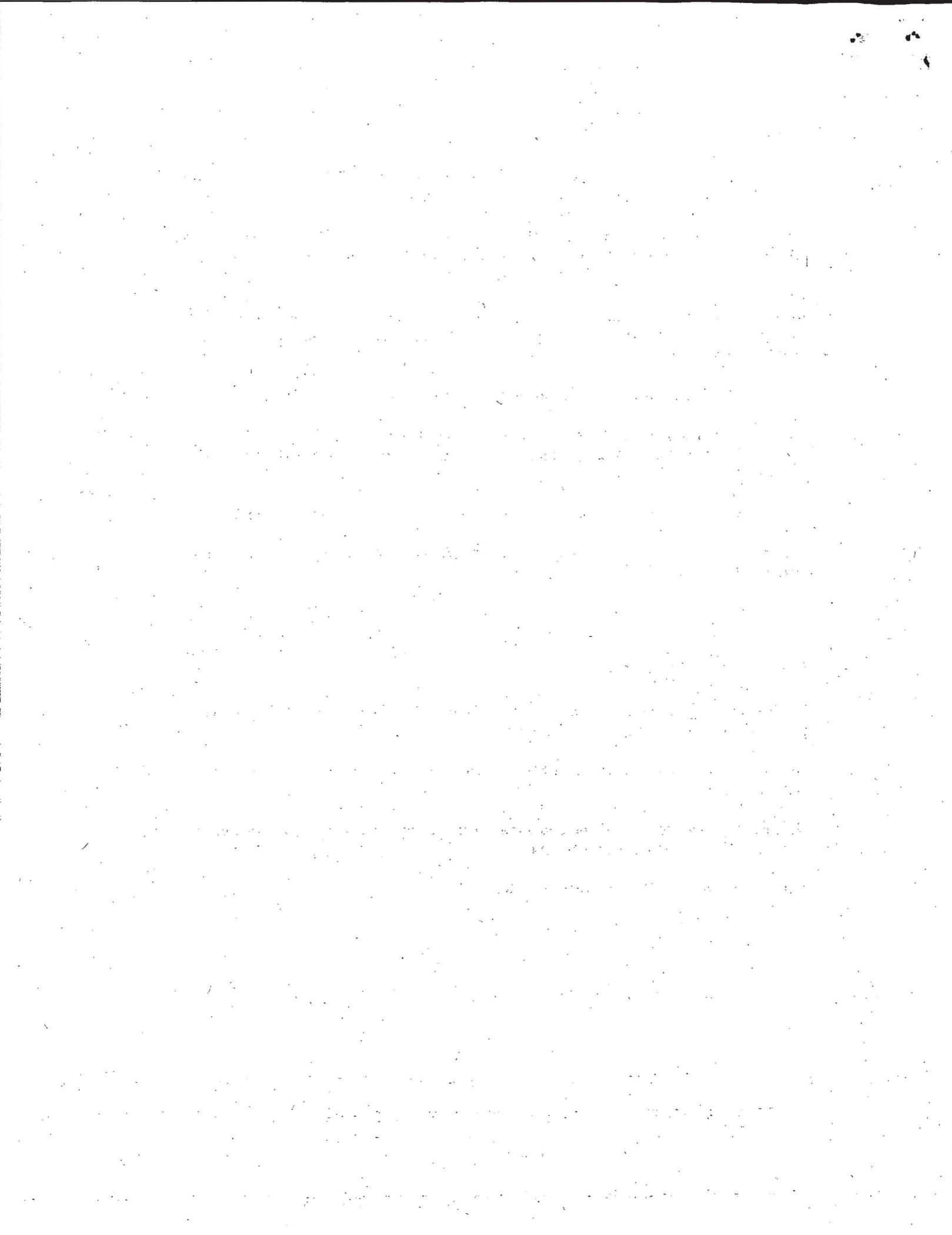
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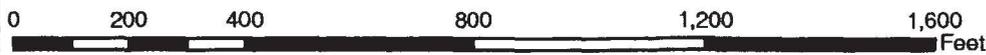
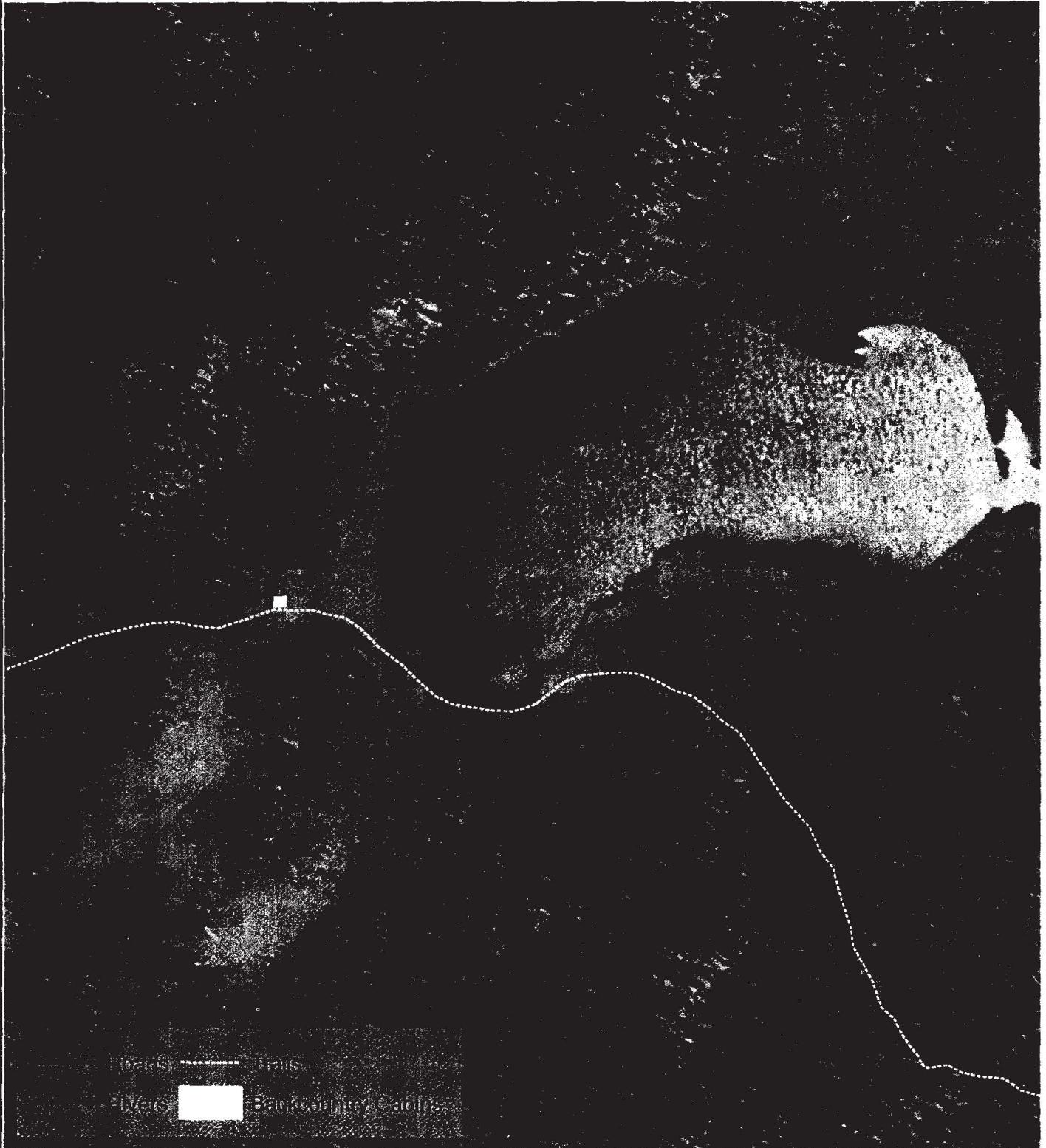
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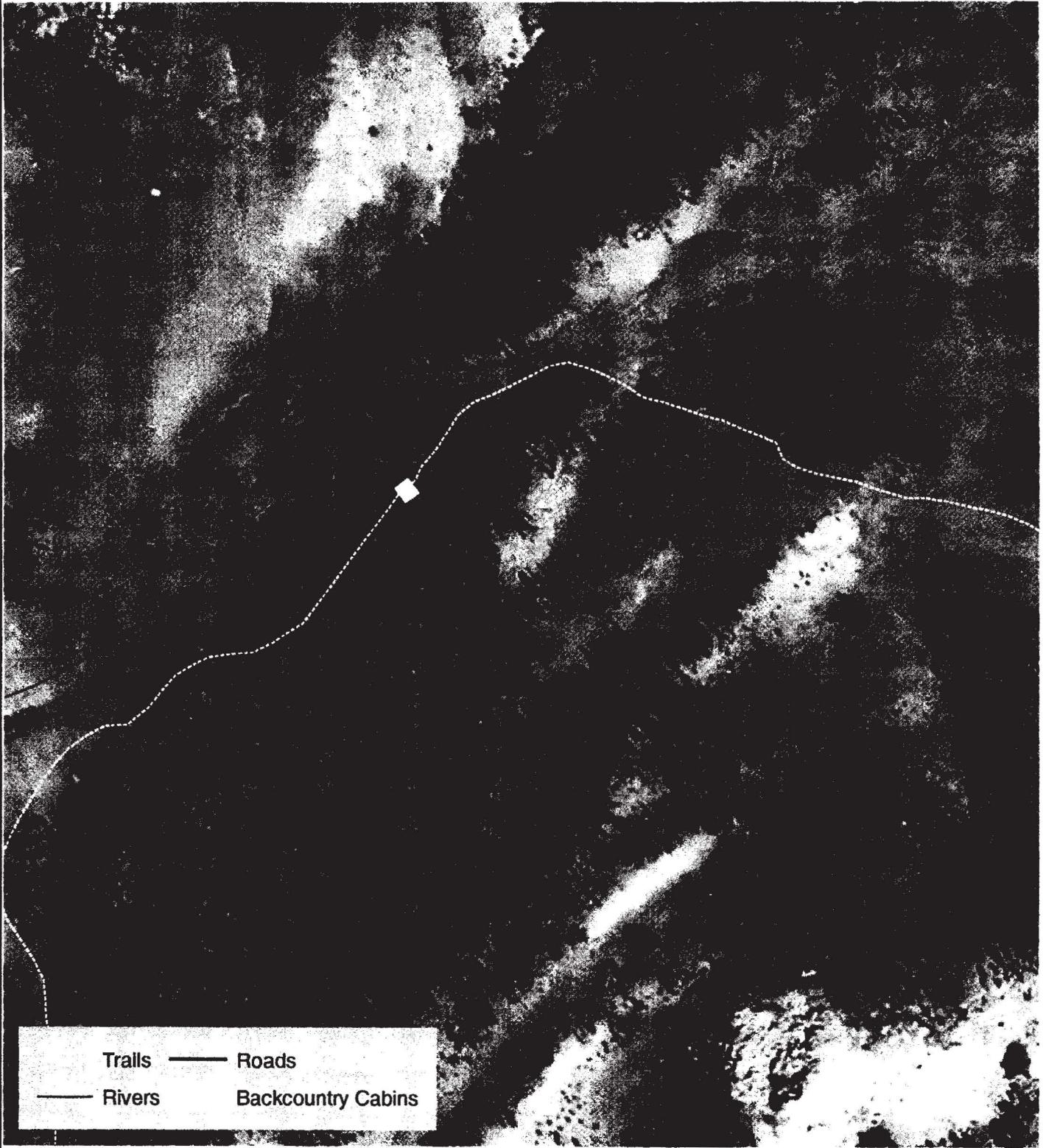


Buffalo Lake Snowshoe Cabin





Buffalo Plateau Backcountry Cabin

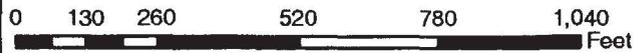
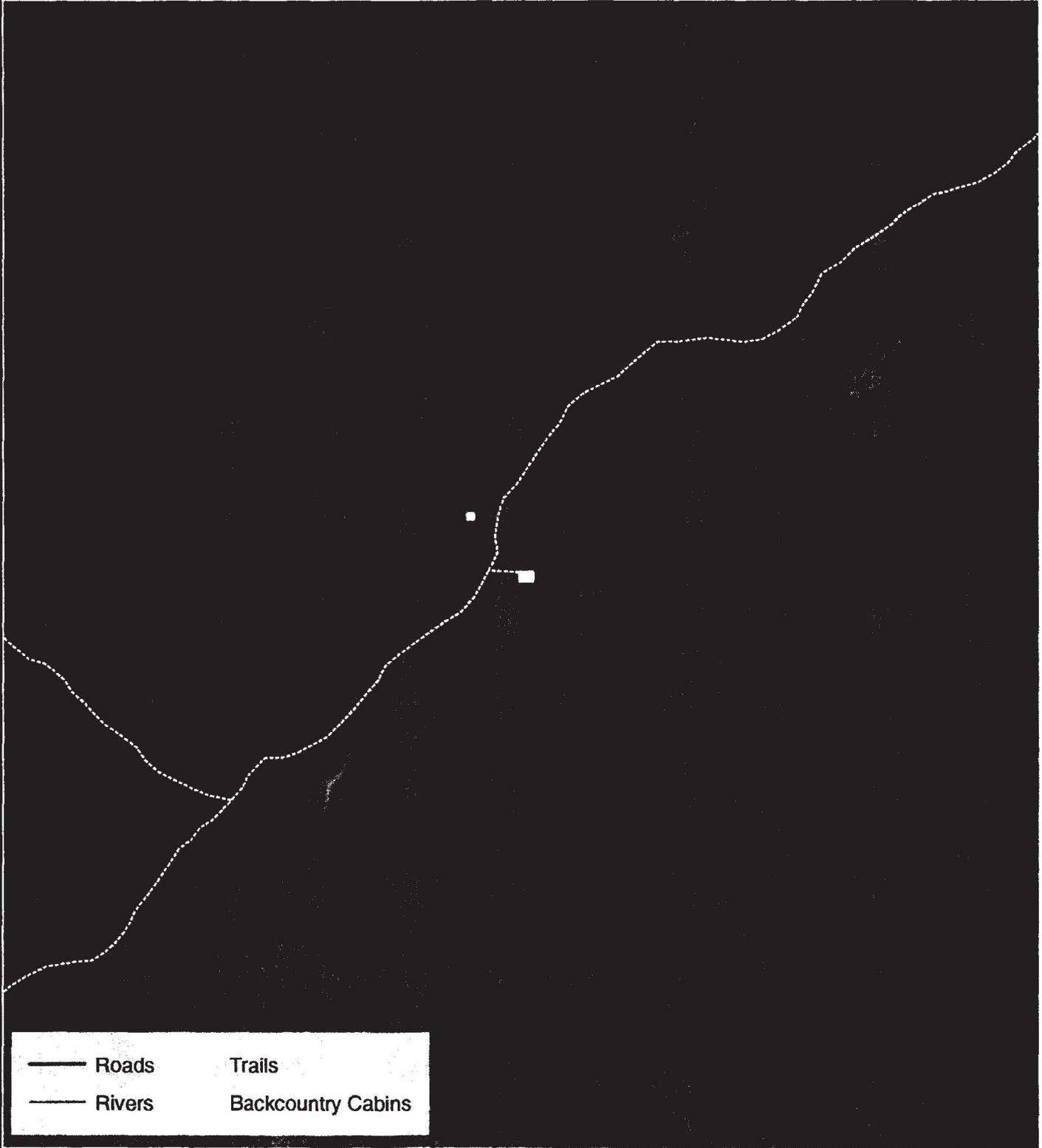


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Cache Creek Snowshoe Cabin



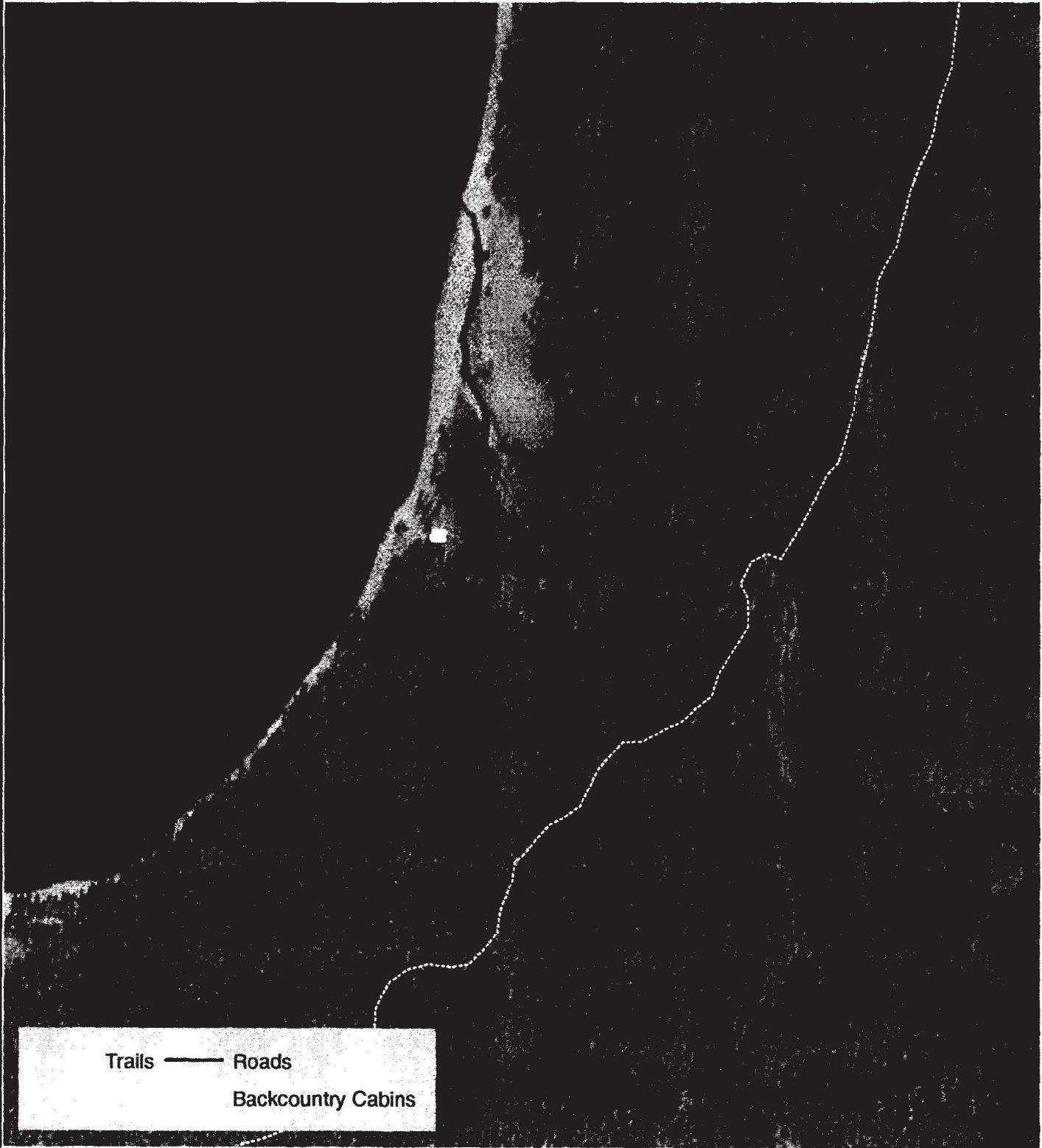
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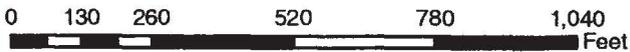
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Clear Creek Patrol Cabin



Trails — Roads
Backcountry Cabins



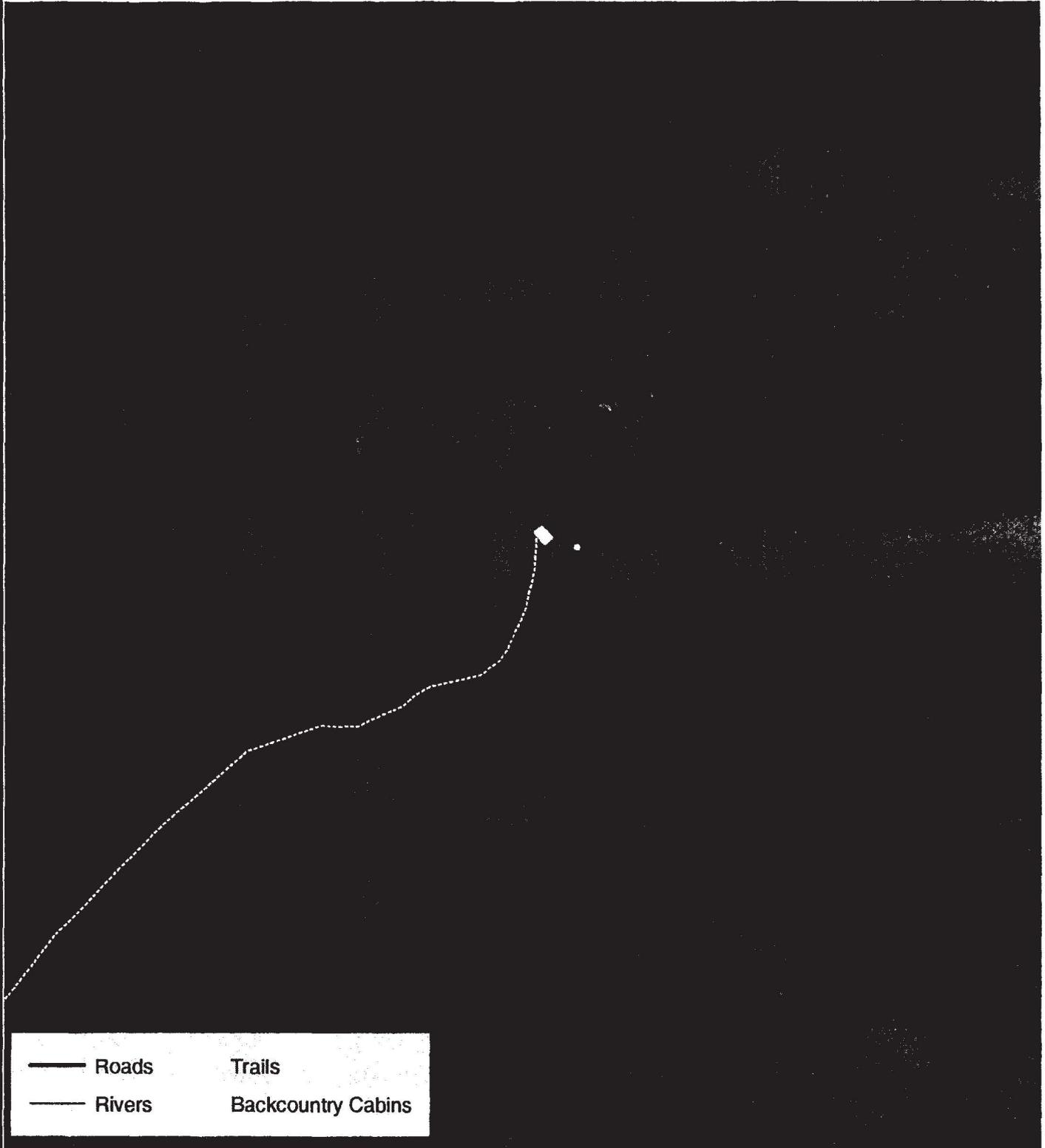
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Cougar Creek Snowshoe Cabin

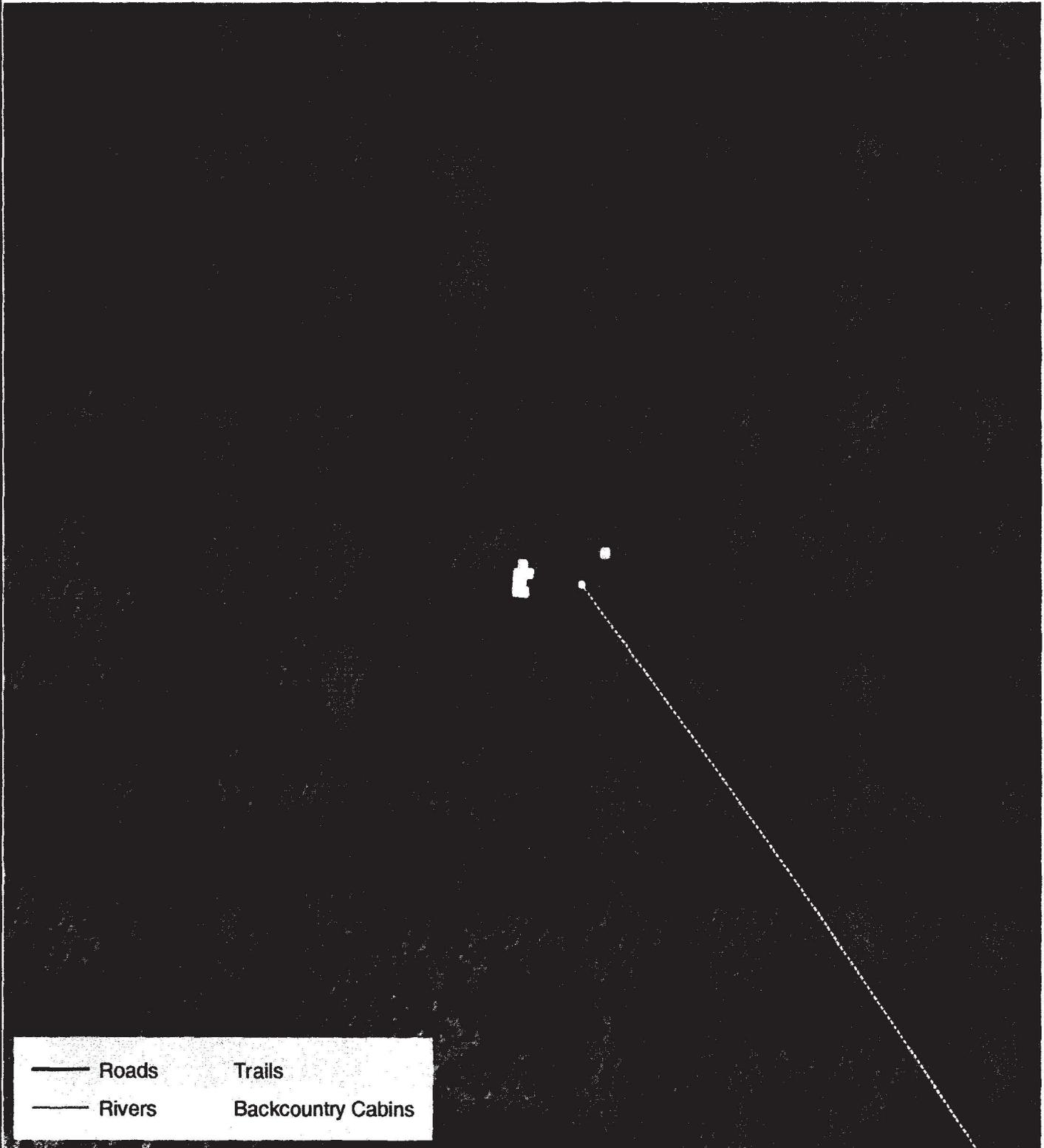


— Roads	Trails
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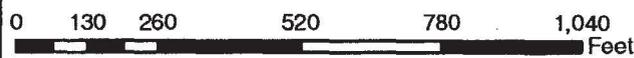




Crevice Mountain Ranger Station

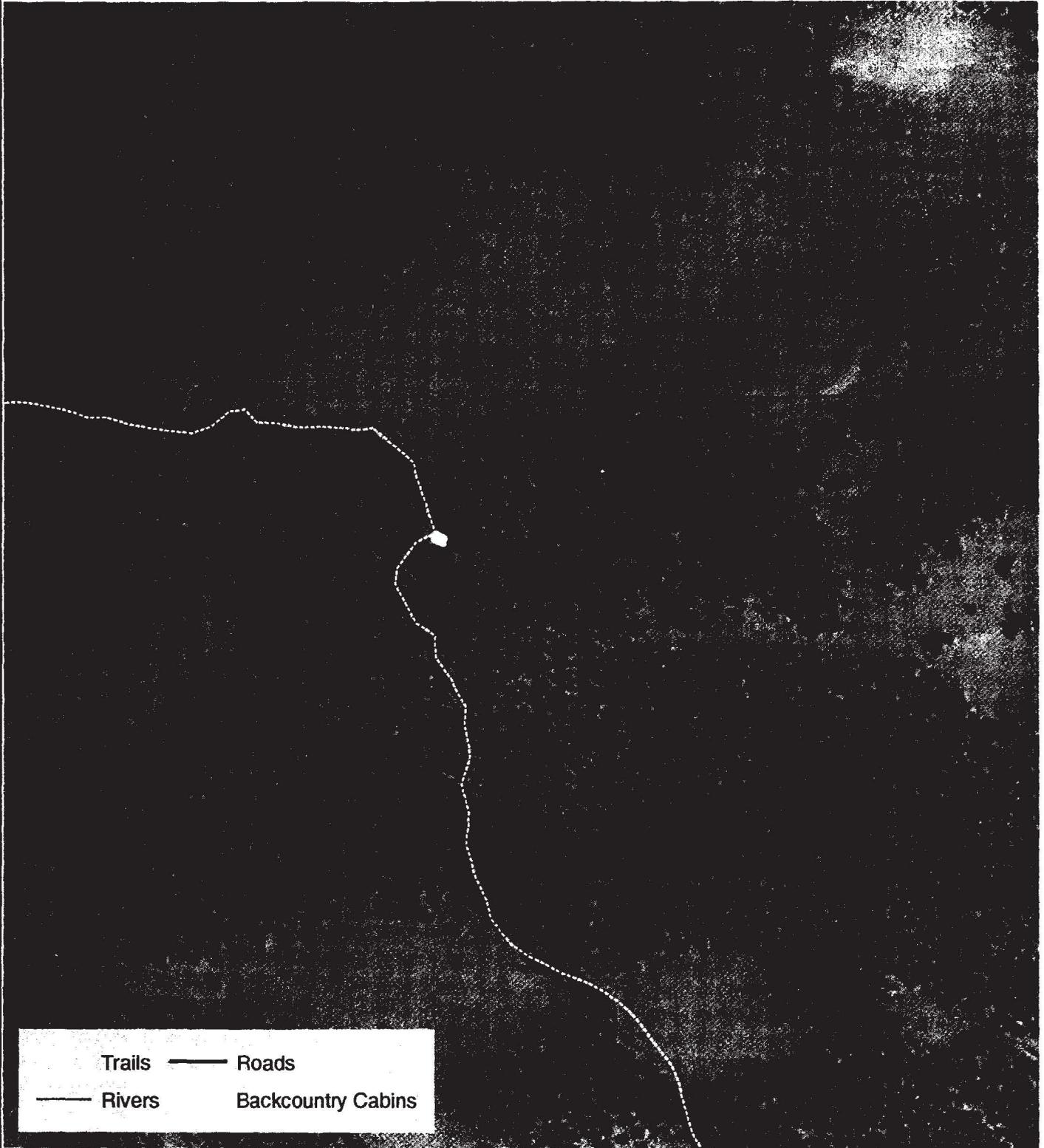


— Roads	Trails
— Rivers	Backcountry Cabins





Daly Creek Patrol Cabin



Trails	—	Roads
Rivers	—	Backcountry Cabins

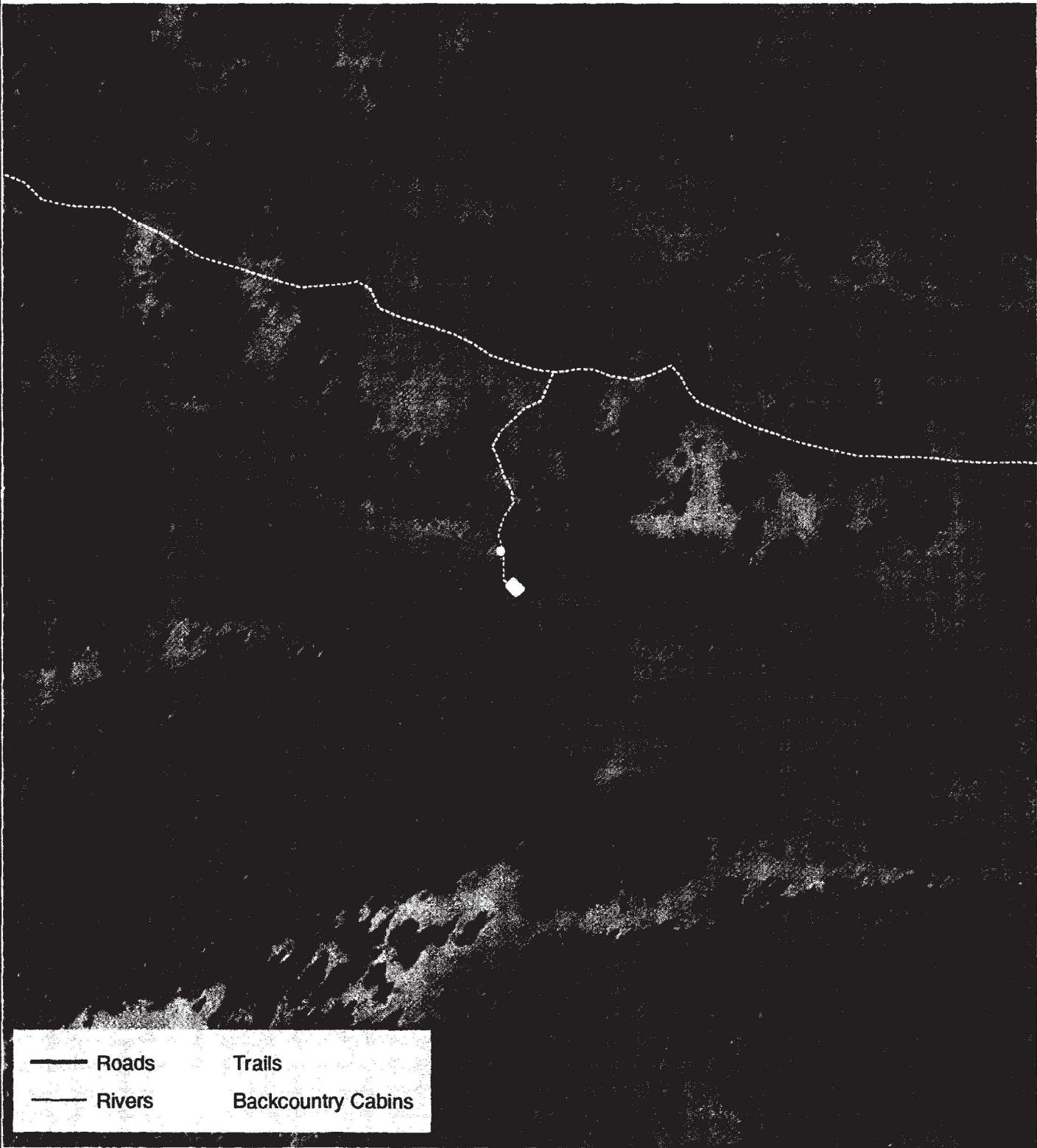


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Fawn Pass Snowshoe Cabin

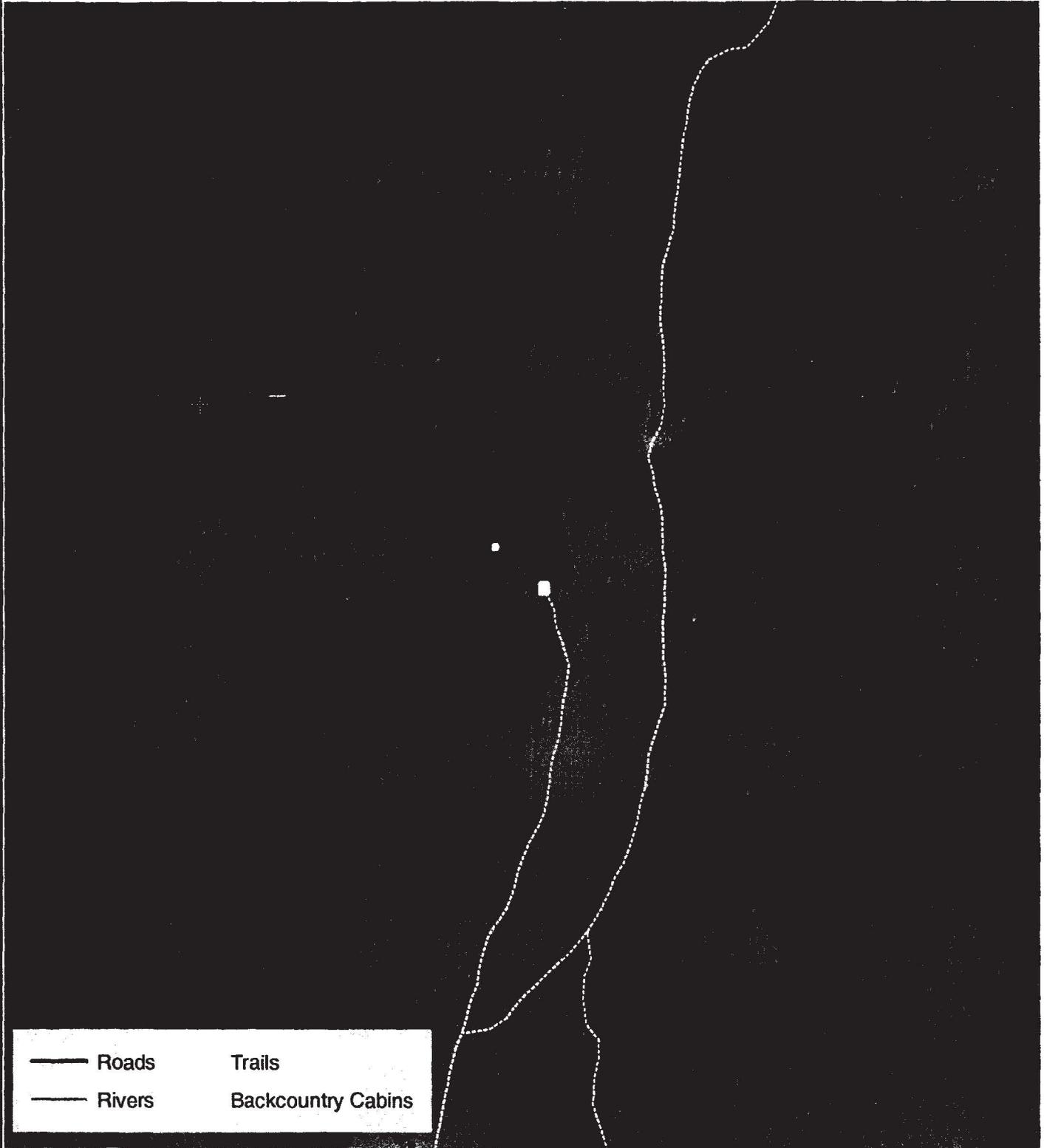


	Roads		Trails
	Rivers		Backcountry Cabins

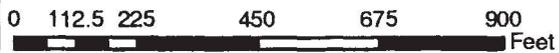




Fern Lake Snowshoe Cabin

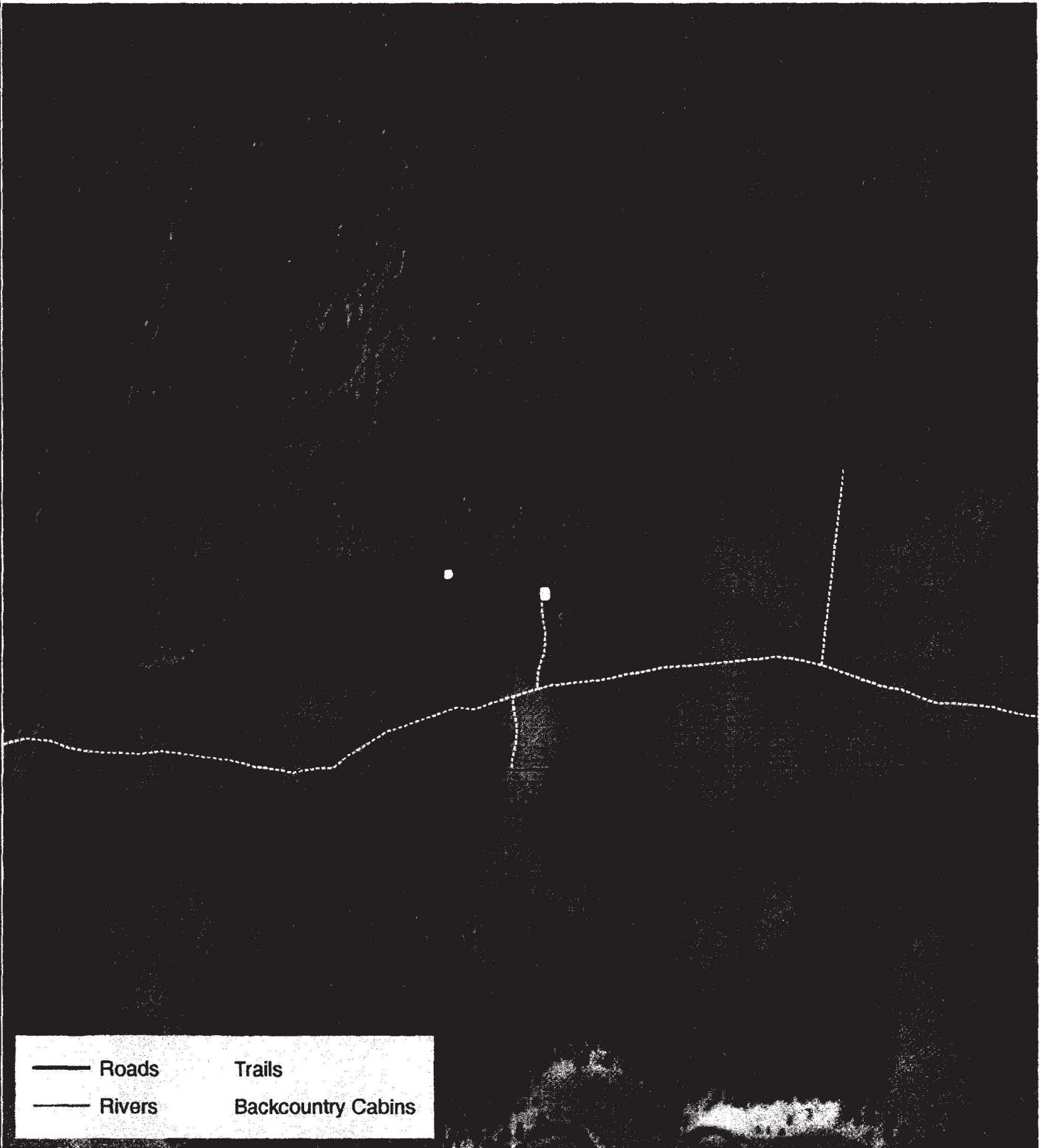


Roads	Trails
Rivers	Backcountry Cabins





Fox Creek Snowshoe Cabin



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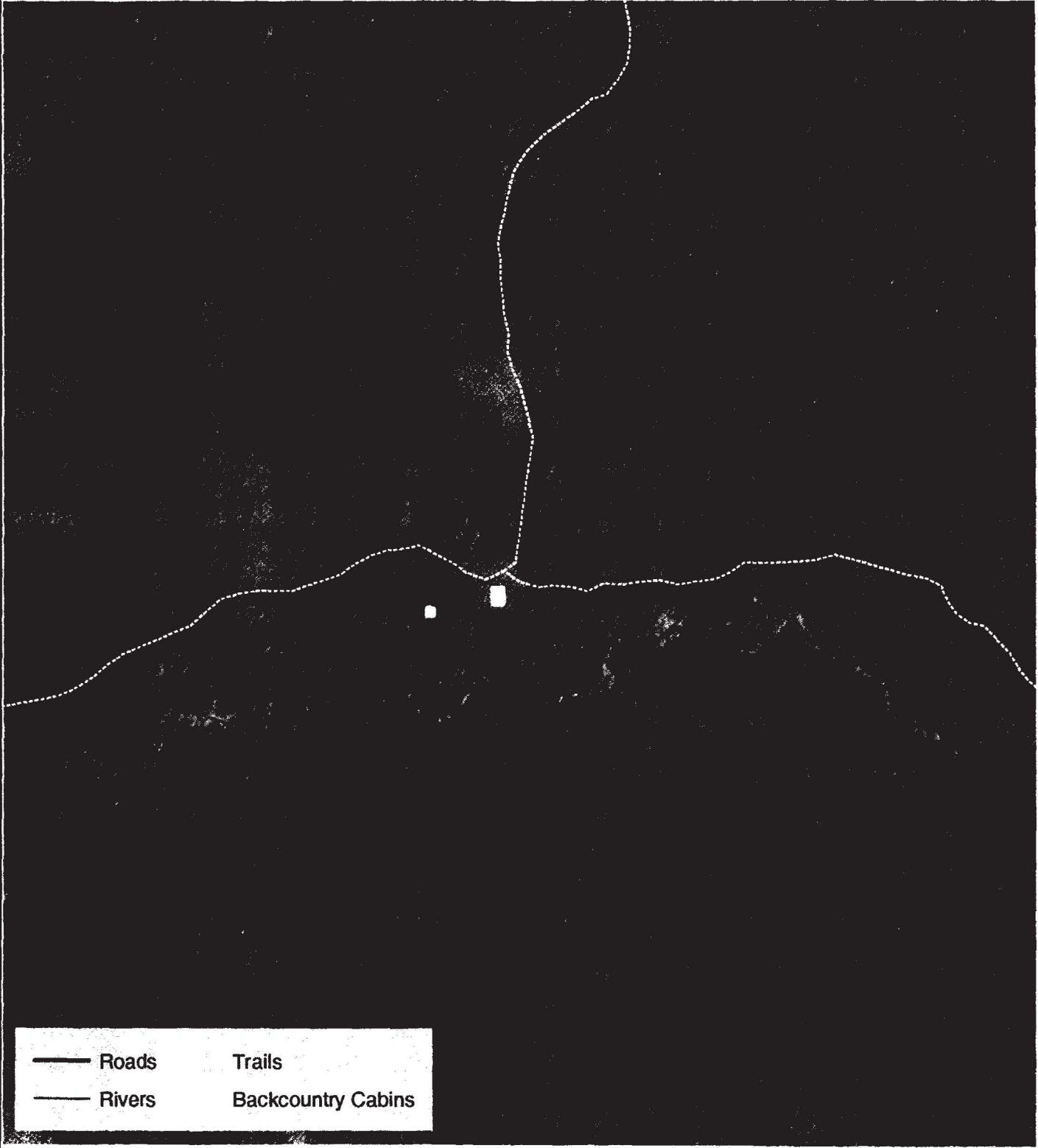
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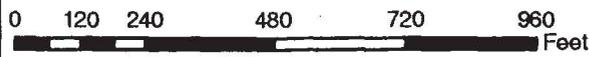
Jan 2005



Harebell Snowshoe Cabin

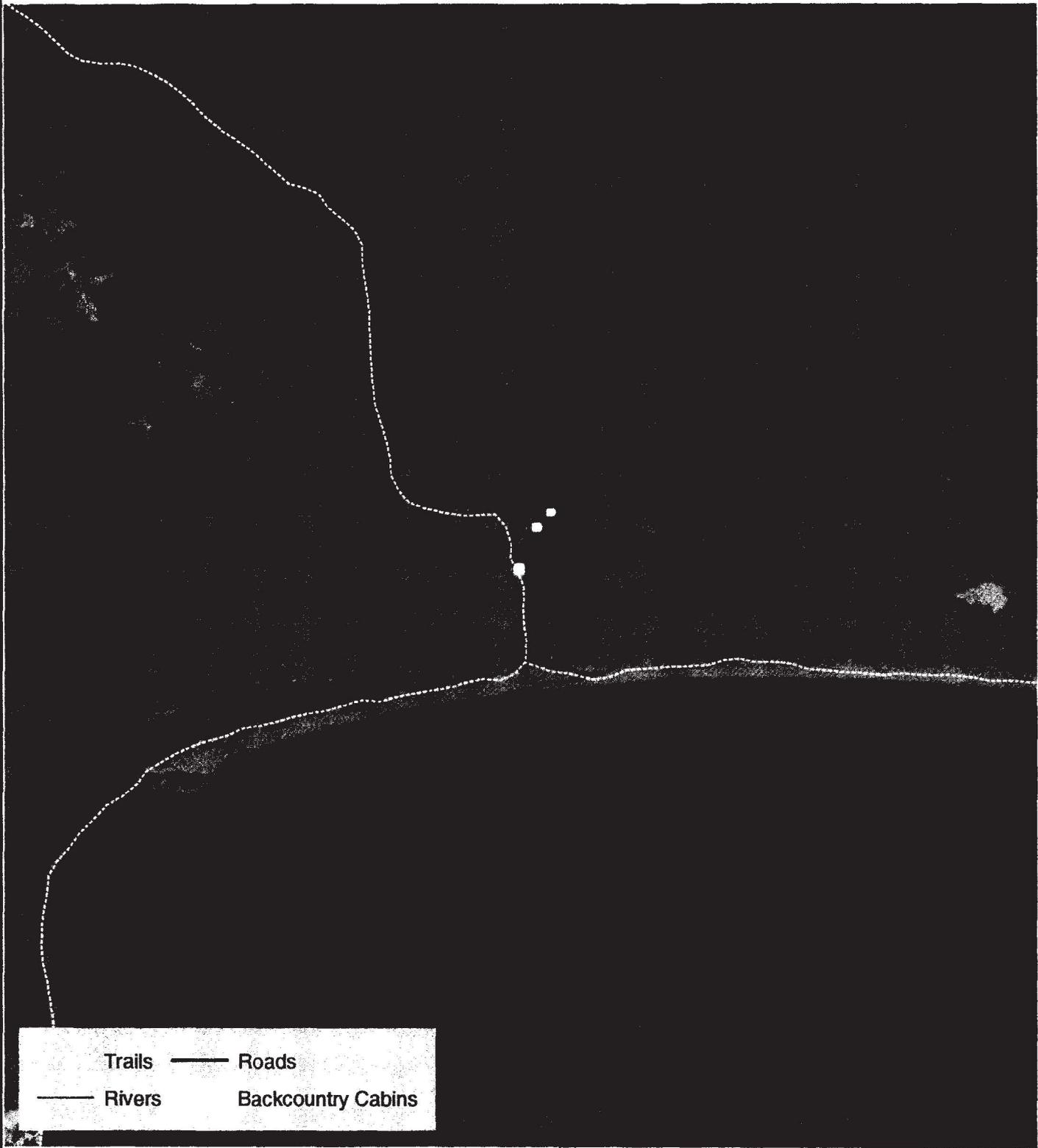


Roads	Trails
Rivers	Backcountry Cabins





Heart Lake Snowshoe Cabin

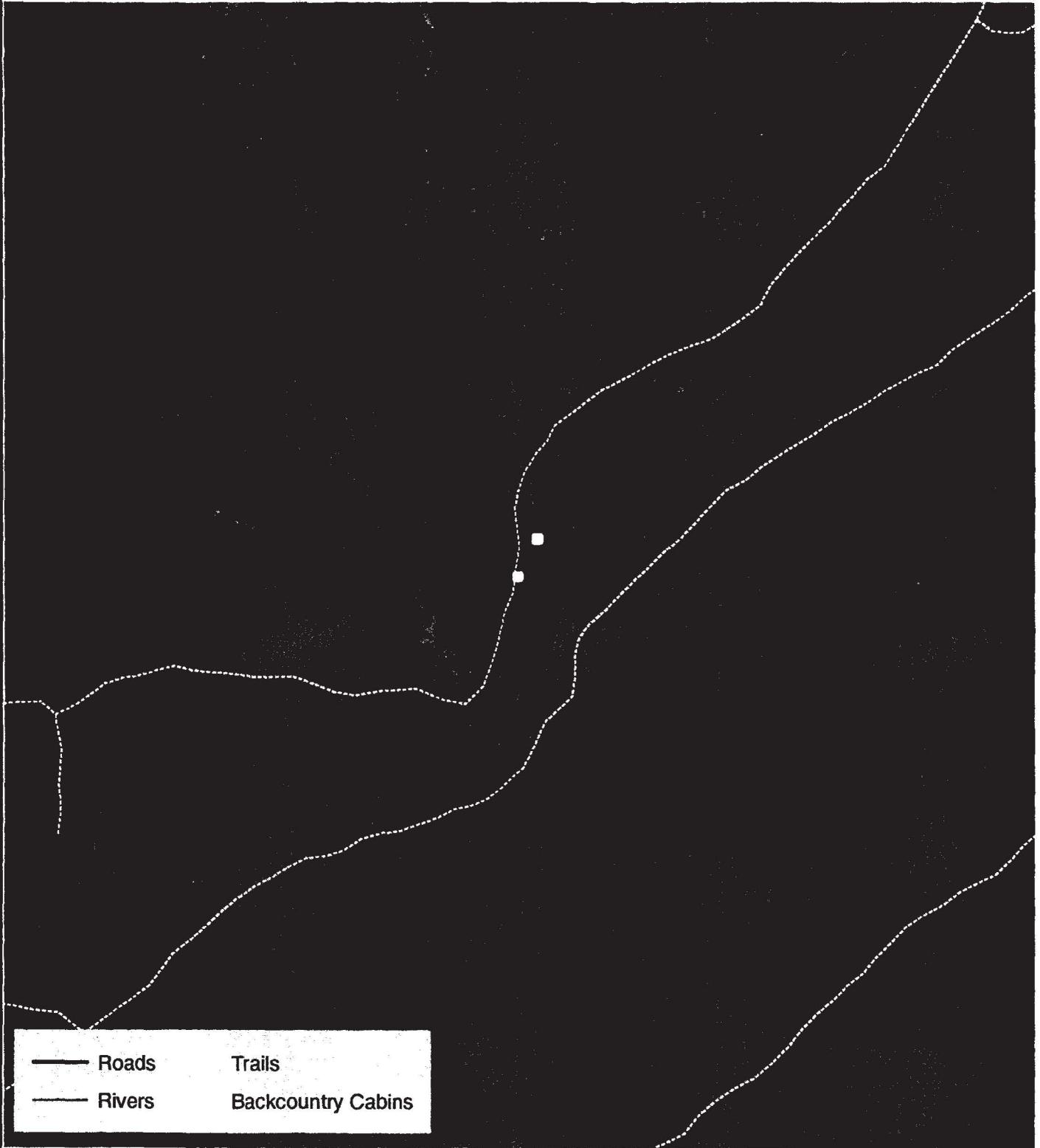


Trails	—	Roads
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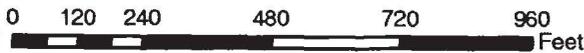




Hell Roaring Snowshoe Cabin and Barn

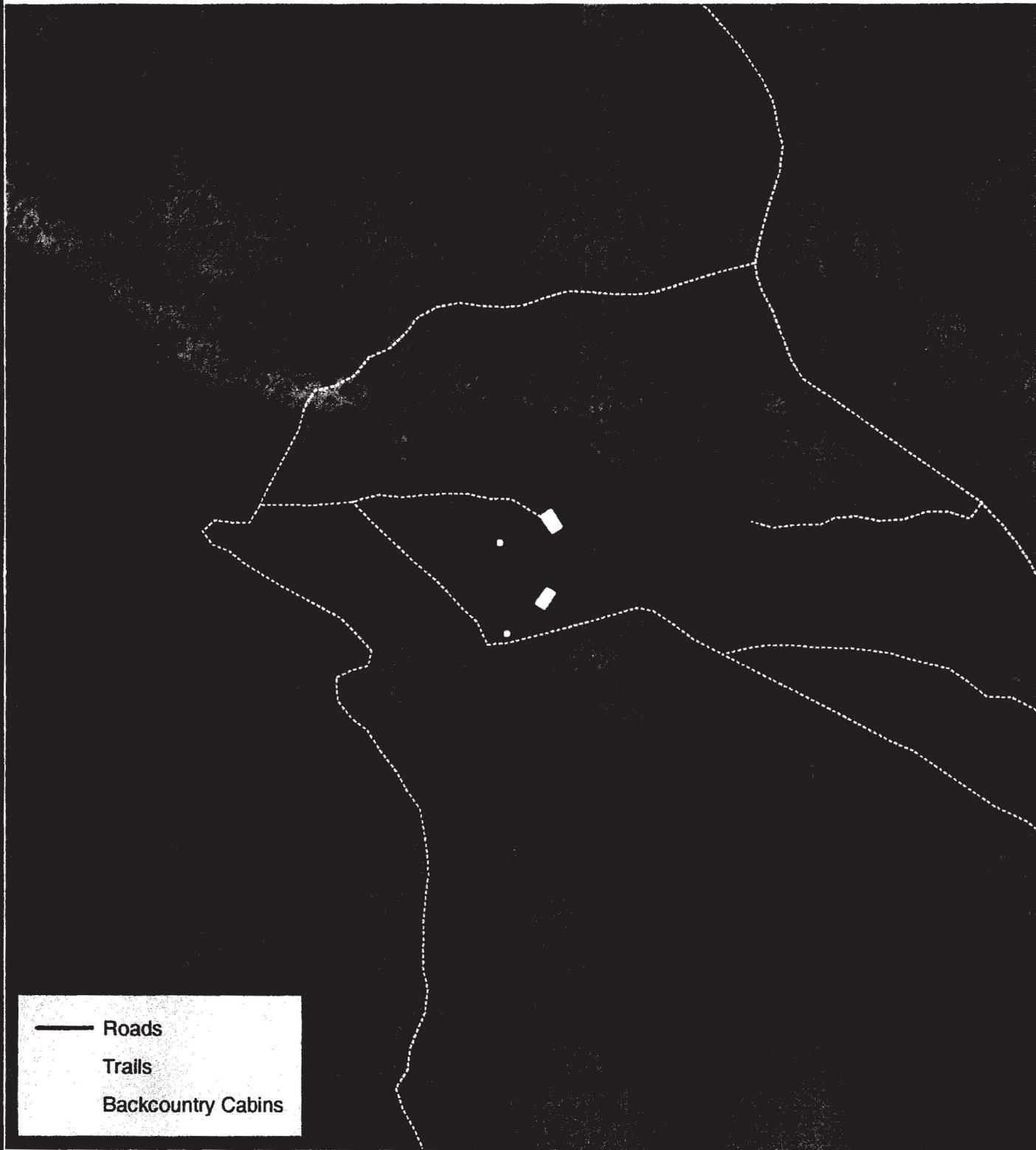


Roads	Trails
Rivers	Backcountry Cabins

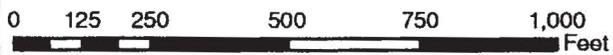




Lower Blacktail Deer Creek Snowshoe Cabin

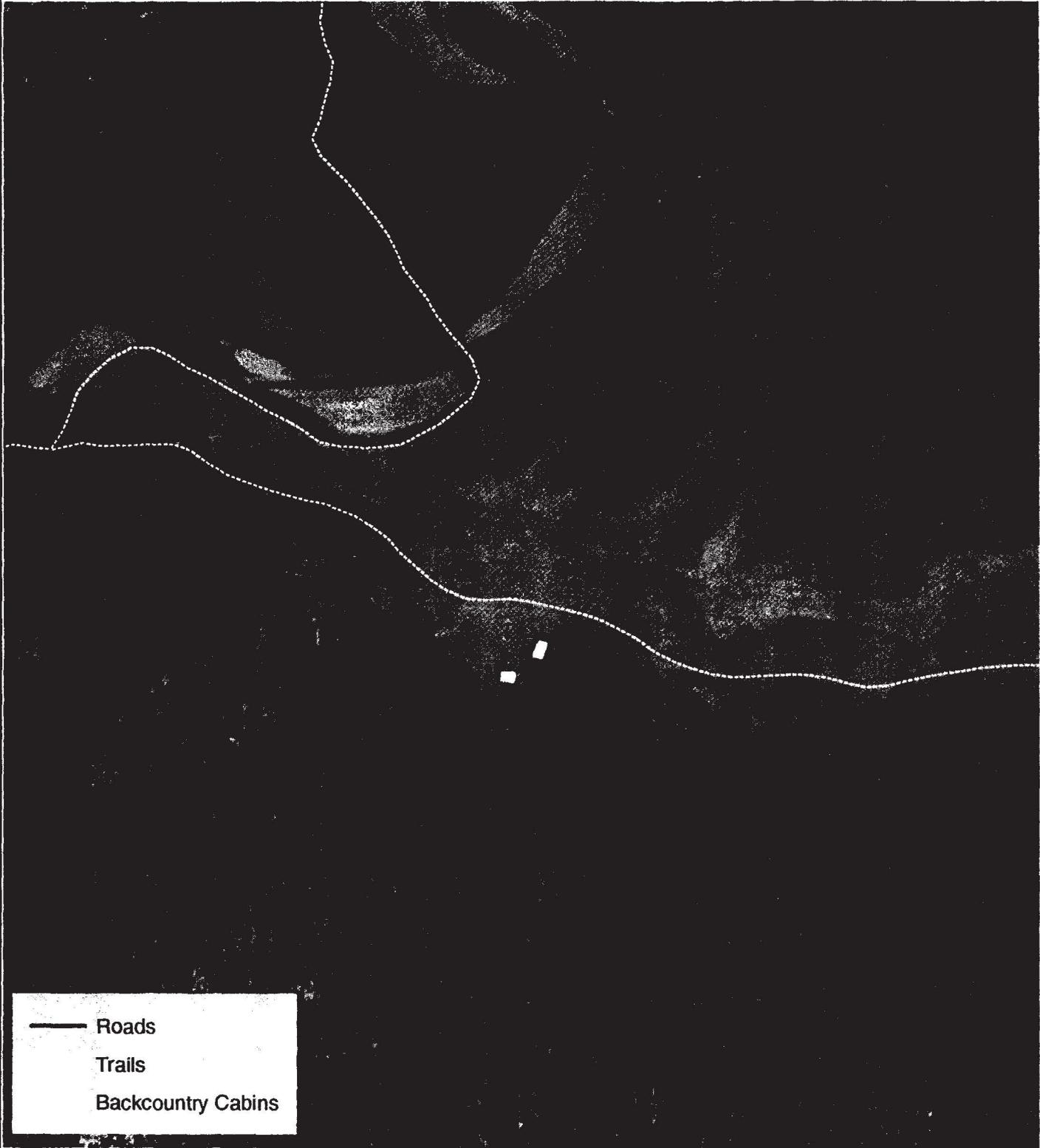


— Roads
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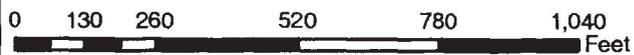




Lower Slough Creek Cabin (Slough Ck. Hay Ranch)

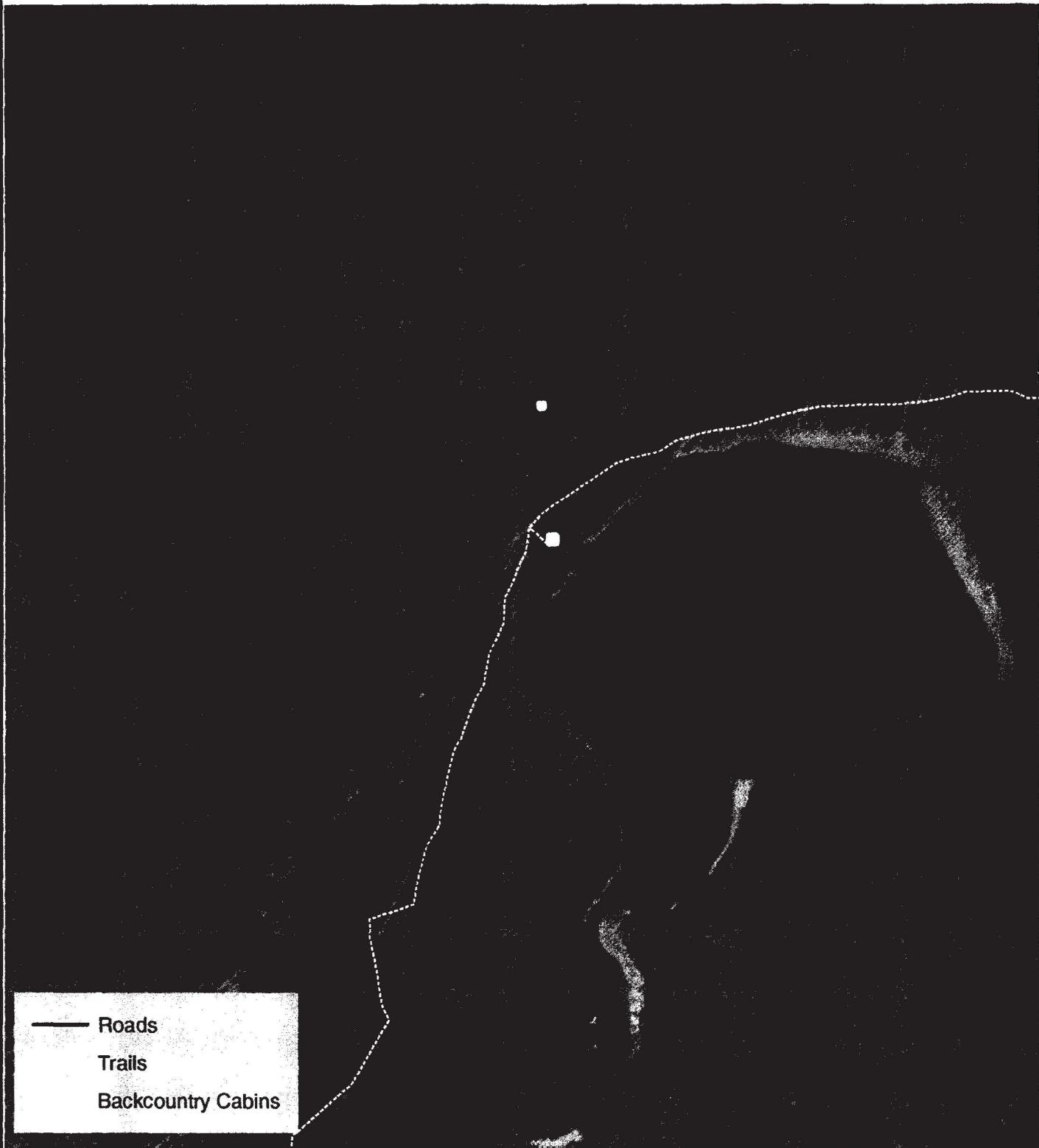


— Roads
Trails
Backcountry Cabins





Mary (Lake) Mountain Snowshoe Cabin

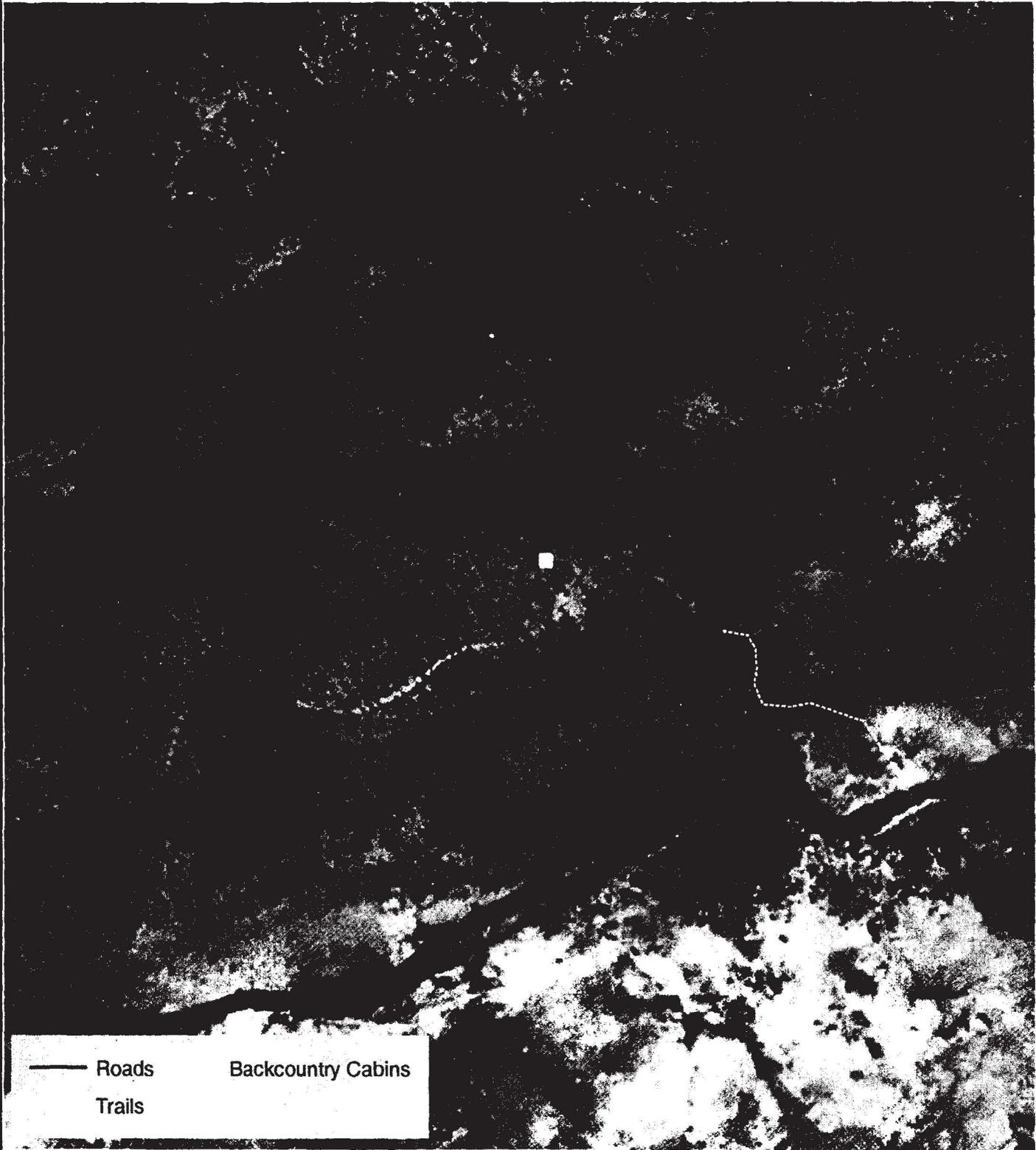


— Roads
Trails
Backcountry Cabins





Nez Perce Snowshoe Cabin



— Roads Backcountry Cabins
Trails

0 130 260 520 780 1,040 Feet

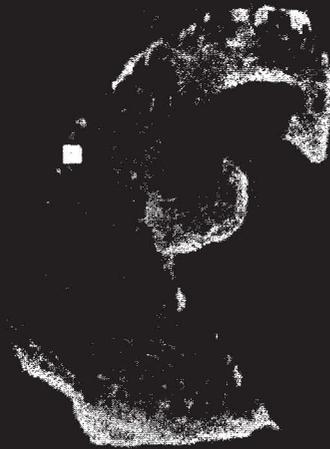


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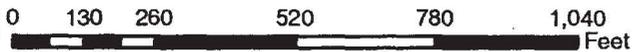
Jan 2005



Peale Island Patrol Cabin



Trails	—	Roads
Rivers	—	Backcountry Cabins



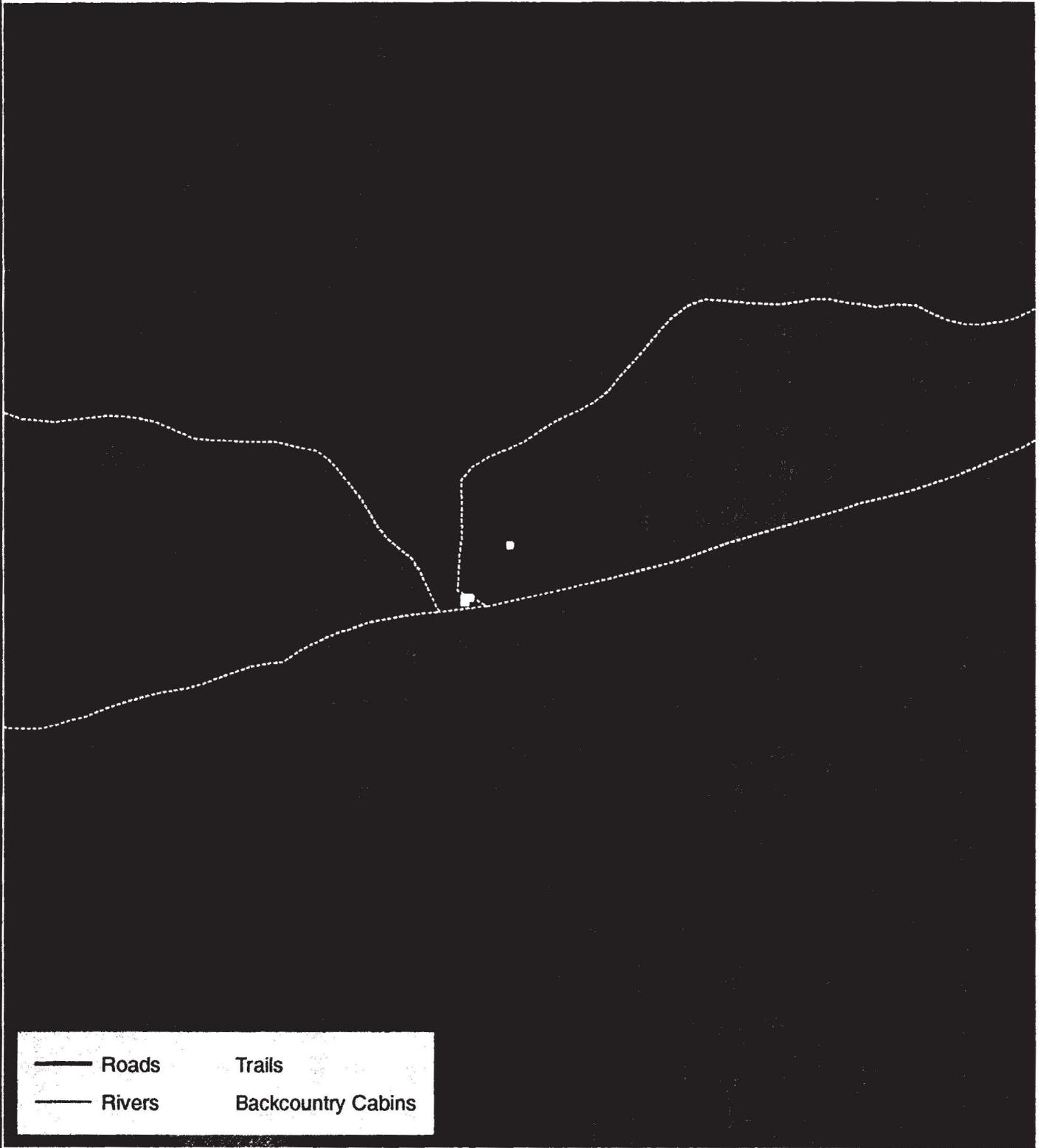
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Jan 2005



Pelican Springs Patrol Cabin



Roads	Trails
Rivers	Backcountry Cabins

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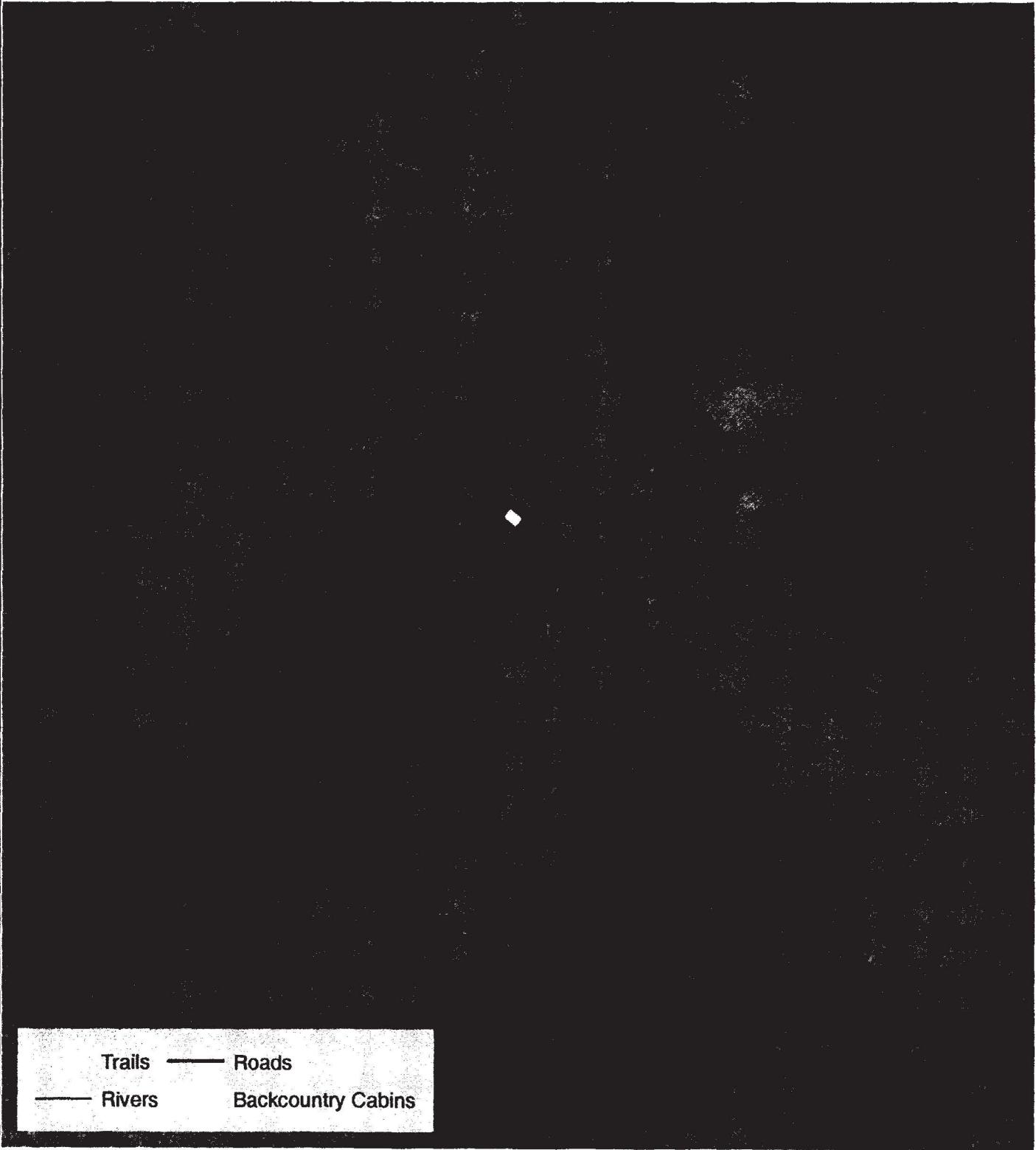


Produced by Spatial Analysis Center (307)344-2246

Jan 2005



South Riverside Patrol Cabin

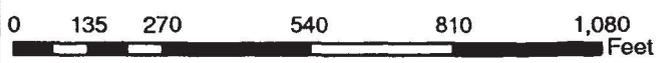
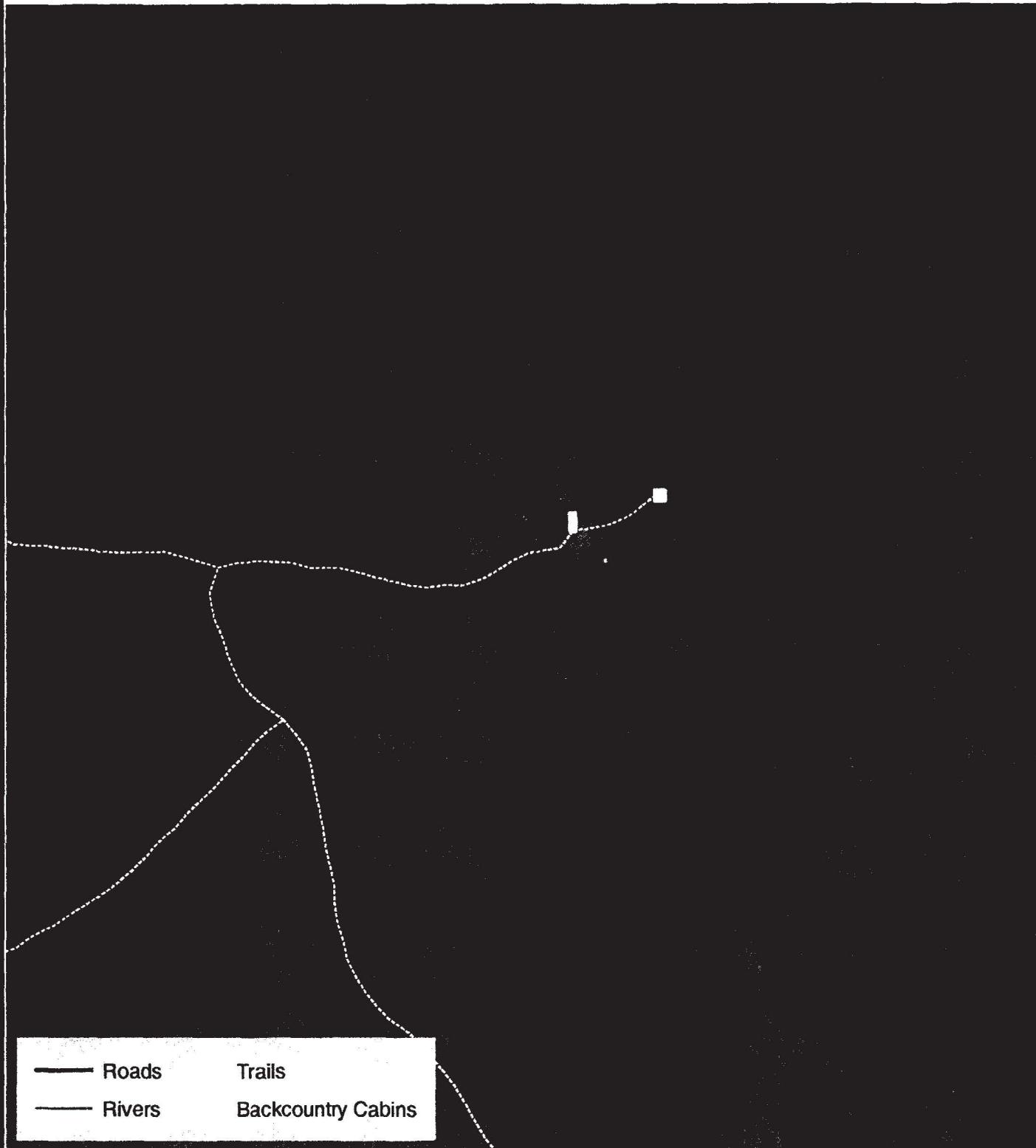


Trails	——	Roads
——	Rivers	Backcountry Cabins





Thorofare Snowshoe Cabin and Barn



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Trail Creek Patrol Cabin and Barn



Roads	Trails
Rivers	Backcountry Cabins

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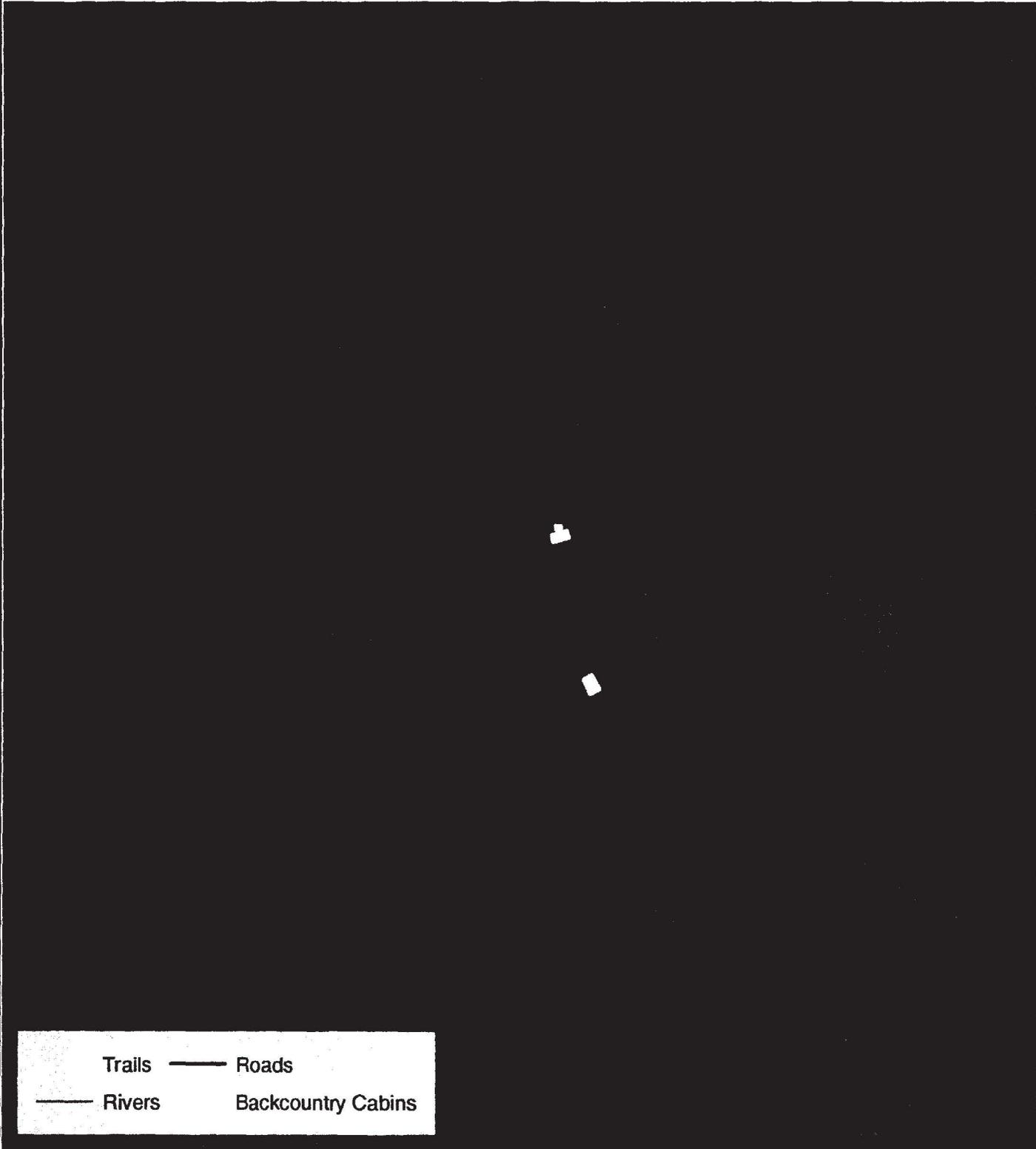


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Jan 2005



Upper Blacktail (Deer Creek) Patrol Cabin and Barn

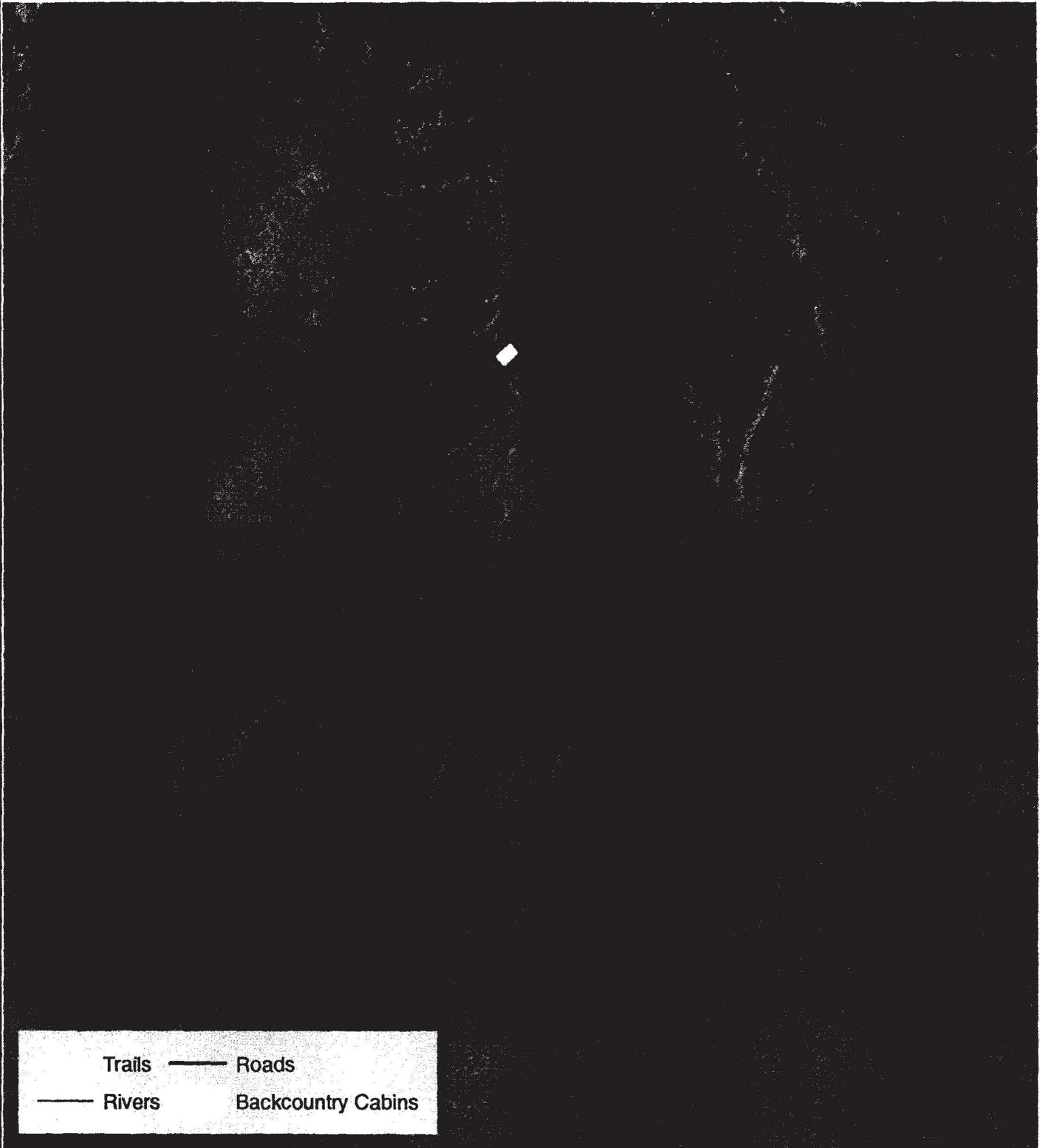


Trails	—	Roads
Rivers	—	Backcountry Cabins





(Upper) Lamar Mountain Snowshoe Cabin

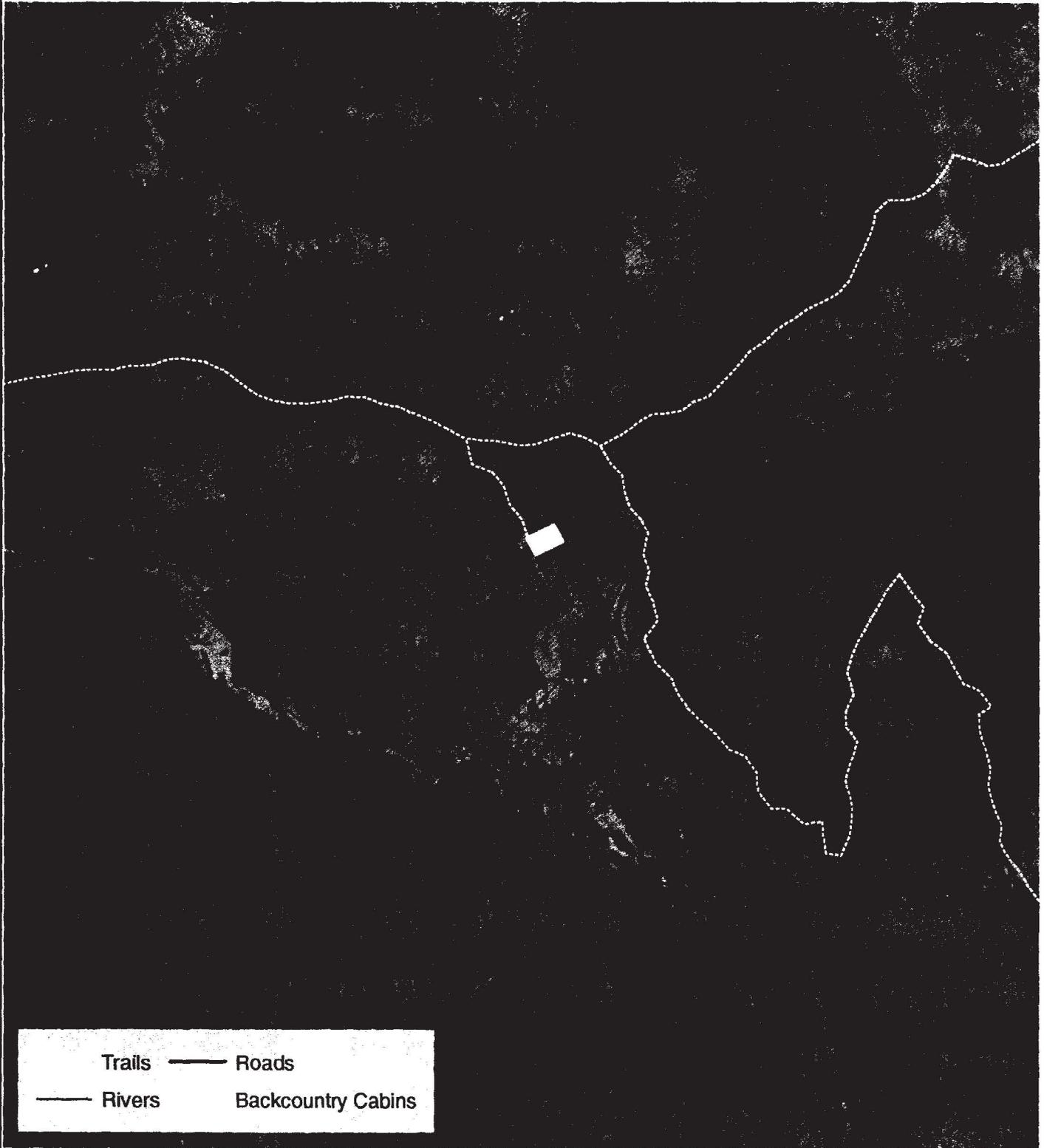


Trails	—	Roads
Rivers	—	Backcountry Cabins





Upper Miller Creek (Buffalo Herder's) Patrol Cabin



SNOWSHOE CABINS YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Introduction

Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 as America's first national park, a "pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." Simultaneously, Yellowstone's managers also were mandated to preserve "from injury or spoilation . . . all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within . . ." The protection of Yellowstone's resources is one its primary and ongoing missions, and one of its most historic. Backcountry snowshoe cabins, strategically located in remote areas of the park, are integral parts of that protection system. Today, Yellowstone has 38 backcountry cabins, some of them originally constructed for other uses. Sixteen cabins constructed as snowshoe cabins date to the historic period.

In 1879, Yellowstone built what may have been its first protective "outpost," located approximately 50 miles from the park headquarters at Mammoth Hot Springs. In that year, crews constructed an "earth-roofed log-house and other improvements" in a grove of trees between the Beehive and the Castle geysers in the Upper Firehole Basin. The cabin provided a central location for resource protection and for geyser observation.² The following year, Yellowstone constructed a house for gamekeeper Harry Yount at the mouth of Soda Butte Creek. Yount's presence helped deter Clark's Fork miners and other mountaineers living on the east side of the park from illegally hunting game, particularly elk and bison. By the end of the season, however, Yount reported to Superintendent Norris that the job was too much for one person, and "a small, active, reliable police force" was needed to protect all sections of the park.³ A Sundry Appropriation Bill in 1883 allowed Superintendent Conger to hire ten assistant superintendents, who he believed should be uniformed, equipped, and provided with comfortable cabins at five strategic points within the park. By the fall of that year, Conger had converted the stage station on the Cooke City road into a government station, and stationed assistants at the Upper Firehole Basin and at Mammoth.⁴

U.S. Army Snowshoe Cabins

In 1886, the U.S. Army arrived in Yellowstone to assume the role of managing and protecting the park, which had proved too daunting for civilian superintendents. The Army immediately initiated a patrol system and, within a few weeks of its arrival, troops were stationed at Norris Geyser Basin, Lower Geyser Basin, Upper Geyser Basin, Falls of the Yellowstone, Riverside on the Madison River, and Soda Butte on the Cooke City Road.⁵ By 1890, Acting U.S. Army Superintendent Captain Frazier Boutelle laid the plans for a coordinated system of snowshoe cabins to be built in the remote areas of the park. By the end of the

¹ Aubrey Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, Vol. II (Wyoming: Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1977), 471.

² Philetus W. Norris, *Report Upon the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1879* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), 10. Hereafter, all Superintendents' Annual Reports will be referenced "Yellowstone Annual Report" followed by the year of the report.

³ Yellowstone Annual Report, 1880, 50.

⁴ Yellowstone Annual Report, 1883, 5; P. H. Conger, Letter to the Secretary of the Interior, January 5, 1884. Microcopies of records of the National Archives, No. 62, Roll 2, YNP Archives.

⁵ Captain Moses Harris, Letter to H. Muldrow, September 1, 1886. Microcopies of records in the National Archives, No. 62, Roll 3, YNP Archives.

decade, 19 cabins had been constructed, forming the nucleus of the backcountry patrol cabin system that exists to this day.⁶

In 1908, Yellowstone's military superintendent wrote the Secretary of the Interior that:

... there are scattered throughout the park, in what are intended to be secreted points, cabins called snowshoe cabins. These cabins are at a distance of about 10 miles from the outlying outposts. It is one of the duties of the enlisted men and of the scouts who may be out on outpost, to cross the country on showshoes, and these cabins are placed at distances which are considered to be a fair day's travel for the men on showshoes through the mountains. The work of climbing the mountains is so difficult that it is impossible for the soldiers and scouts to carry anything on their backs. For this reason the Interior Department purchases from the funds appropriated for the maintenance and protection of the Yellowstone National Park, a small amount of rations which is stored in these cabins and is used by the scouts and soldiers during the nights spent in the cabins on the occasions when they visit them.⁷

Yellowstone National Park Snowshoe Cabins

After the National Park Service was created in 1916, its ranger corps followed the same system of patrol that had been established during the army years. Superintendent Horace Albright's 1919 Annual Report to the Director of the National Park Service included a plea for funding to construct new buildings in Yellowstone. He described most of the park's buildings outside of the headquarters in Mammoth Hot Springs as dilapidated beyond practical repair. Specifically mentioning the snowshoe cabins, he wrote:

the snowshoe cabins of the park, which are constantly used in the dead of winter by patrolling rangers, ought to be rebuilt and refurnished. They are old, in bad repair, poorly located, and unsatisfactory from every standpoint. The ranger force of every park, considering the nature of its work, should have dry, sanitary quarters, and, in winter, the means of overcoming the effects of exposure while on long patrols in below-zero weather. Such quarters are few in the Yellowstone, where the weather conditions are more severe in winter than in any other member of the system. This is frankly an appeal in the interest of humanity.⁸

Albright's plea met receptive ears. Seven new snowshoe cabins were constructed in Yellowstone during 1920, and four others were remodeled. Thus, more than one-half of the park's nineteen rationed cabins were replaced or upgraded that year.⁹

Albright described the first snowshoe cabins built by the National Park Service in Yellowstone as "one-room, rough log cabins, 12 x 16 feet in size."

All of these cabins . . . have roofs of rubberoid, laid over hewed poles and covered about 6 inches deep with earth. The floors are poles flattened on three sides, and the doors and

⁶ John Noble, Letter to Captain F.A. Boutelle, September 25, 1890, Item No. 2, File: Doc. 200-287, YNP Archives.

⁷ Major, Fifth Cavalry, Superintendent, Letter to The Secretary of the Interior, December 14, 1908, Doc. 8249, Item 29, YNP Archives.

⁸ *Yellowstone Annual Report*, 1919.

⁹ *Yellowstone Annual Report*, 1920.

window shutters are made of 2-inch plank to provide protection from bears. The walls are of peeled logs, well chinked with mud.¹⁰

The cabins had gable end doors and extended roofs characteristic of the Rocky Mountain style log cabin. The extended front roof provided a convenient location for the storage of firewood.¹¹ The extant Harebell Snowshoe Cabin, constructed in 1920, provides evidence of these cabins' other design characteristics. The Harebell Cabin has an off-center door in the gable end and single six-light sash (placed vertically) on each side of the cabin. With the exception of the windows, lumber for the door and shutters, the rubberoid roofing, and the furnishings, building materials could be obtained at the sites.

Yellowstone did modify snowshoe cabin plans if circumstances required it. The Thorogfare (1920) and the Hellroaring cabins had two or three rangers assigned to them in the winter. These cabins appeared identical to the other cabins, but were increased in length to provide two rooms. A rather temperate location on the Yellowstone River may have been responsible for the only cabin with a side entry at Lower Blacktail Deer Creek. Cabins, close to supply roads, often had lumber roof sheathing and shingled roofs.

Yellowstone's 1920 cabins displayed features that would later become synonymous with the National Park Service Rustic Style in Yellowstone. The NPS Landscape Division's philosophy that "the cultural character of a region's architecture could provide appropriate sources for a cultural theme and harmonious construction"¹² could have found no better model than the "pioneer" or vernacular building tradition of snowshoe cabins. The design of these buildings had developed during the three decades of military administration of the park, and the remote locations required the maximum use of locally available materials put together in methods familiar to non-professional builders. The buildings were easy to build, economical, and functional.

In the spring of 1921, Yellowstone Superintendent Horace Albright and NPS Landscape Architect Daniel Hull discussed the type of log architecture that was appropriate for "out-of-the-way" places in Yellowstone. Hull favored an "old time log cabin effect." Albright concurred, and believed all buildings and corrals should be constructed of logs. Albright, undoubtedly referring to the cabins constructed in 1920, advised Hull that the rangers had developed a type of cabin that fit their needs and harmonized with the environment. He also felt that rangers should continue to build the cabins, since it was more economical than sending laborers and supplies into the backcountry by pack trains.¹³

At the annual superintendent's conference in November 1922, Albright praised Yellowstone's relationship with the Landscape Division and specifically mentioned snowshoe cabins among the buildings that had benefited from the collaboration.¹⁴ The collaboration may have resulted in two changes to the cabins built in 1921. First, an additional purlin was added to each slope of the roof between the ridge and wall purlins. Whatever the purpose of the purlin, it is found only on cabins constructed in 1921. Cabins built after that returned to the single purlin on each roof slope. Second, a six-light window was installed in the gable end adjacent to the door. This window, and the two side windows, were installed with the long side of the sash parallel to the logs. This gave the cabins a more horizontal appearance, than the previous practice of installing the windows vertically.

¹⁰ *Yellowstone Annual Report*, 1920.

¹¹ Yellowstone National Park, "Final Report Two Snowshoe Cabins," October 30, 1936.

¹² Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 98.

¹³ Horace Albright, Letter to Daniel Hull, May 25, 1921. National Archives, Record Group 79, Entry 7, Box: 620.01-630.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

The overall design for Yellowstone's snowshoe cabins changed little through the remainder of the 1920s. By 1924 and after, the extended Rocky Mountain style front porch increased in depth to a typical seven or eight feet, and builders experimented with a variety of designs for the posts needed to structurally support the extended roof. There is no identifiable pattern for the location of doors and windows suggesting their placement was left up to the builders in the field.

Standard Plan Snowshoe Cabins

Although Yellowstone was required to submit all building plans to the Landscape Division for approval, in March 1927, Yellowstone's acting superintendent, Leroy Hill, wrote Chief Landscape Engineer T.C. Vint, that the park

does not feel that it is necessary to submit sketches for the snowshoe cabins since they are to be built in remote locations and by unskilled labor.¹⁵

Whether or not the Landscape Engineering Division agreed with Hill, it was moving toward providing all parks with standardized plans for small buildings such as comfort stations and snowshoe cabins. The standard plans carefully adhered to each park's theme, and exterior materials could be adapted to specific site characteristics.¹⁶ In 1930, the division provided Yellowstone with three standard plan cabin designs for review. The size and floor plans for the cabins were identical with variations in the exterior design. The one room cabins measured 15 by 13 feet. An 8-foot deep porch extended from the front gable end and a stone chimney rose from the roof. The plans called for a built-in closet, cupboard, and sink. A small cellar or food storage vault was located beneath the cabins' floor.¹⁷

Cabin Type 1 called for frame construction with a 2-over-2 double hung window on each sidewall. Four by four-inch posts supported the extended front porch. A beam spanned the posts, and 4x4 posts resting on the beam carried fake timber purlins. Cabin Type 2 was for a log building with a 4-light window on each sidewall. The porch roof was carried on log posts. A beam spanned between the posts and log uprights resting on the beam carried the three purlins. Cabin Type 3 was similar to Type 2, however, it was for a much stouter building. Bars across the windows suggest it may have been designed to protect the occupants from bears. Besides the ridge and wall purlins, five additional purlins on each slope would have deterred bears from entering through the roof. The wall logs extended to the front of the porch, leaving only one side open.¹⁸

The park selected the Type 2 cabin, and the Landscape Division provided one sheet of construction details. The plan incorporated many of the features that had been incorporated in Yellowstone's snowshoe cabins since the early 1920s, including stone piers, battered log crowns, axe cut log ends, and purlins extending beyond the roof edge. Changes to the earlier alternative were the substitution of a sliding sash window in the back wall, elimination of the interior built-in furniture, and specifying a puncheon floor for the porch. Yielding to practical circumstances of construction in the backcountry over Rustic design, a galvanized stovepipe replaced the stone chimney.¹⁹

By the following year, the standard plan for snowshoe cabins was again revised. The changes appear to correct functional problems that likely reflect comments from the rangers using the cabins. The stove was moved from the front to the rear of the cabin and the cellar was moved from a rear corner to near the front.

¹⁵ Leroy Hill, Acting Superintendent, Letter to T.C. Vint, March 24, 1927. Folder 6, Box D-38, YNP Archives.

¹⁶ Linda Flint McClelland, 243-44.

¹⁷ Yellowstone Plan No. 312. On microfiche, YNP Maintenance Division.

¹⁸ Yellowstone Plan No. 312. On microfiche YNP Maintenance Division.

¹⁹ Yellowstone Plan No. 328. On microfiche, YNP Maintenance Division.

with the trap door opening just to the side of the entry door. This rearrangement permitted two twin beds, end to end along one wall, a table at the back wall, and a stove and washstand along the other wall. The main exterior change was in the roofing material where wood shingles or shakes gave way to corrugated iron roofing. Just as with the elimination of the stone chimney in 1930, this change was at odds with the Rustic design philosophy of the Landscape Division, but probably addressed the practical concern of Yellowstone's heavy snowfall. (The drawings included an alternative log "bearproof roof." Six-inch logs were laid side-by-side covering the entire roof.) The other exterior change made in the 1931 drawings was in the window sash. The earlier 4-light sash became 6-light sash. Yellowstone used the plans throughout the 1930s.²⁰

Beginning in 1931, along with the standard plans, the park began a concerted effort to supply the cabin's with proper equipment. Besides the standard rations distributed each fall, "a good supply of china and silverware," small aluminum stew kettles and bake pans, and bedding added to the comforts of the patrolling rangers.²¹ The rangers, during this period, used the snowshoe cabins for regular and special patrols. The rangers performed a number of jobs, including the observation and protection of wildlife; hunting predatory animals; observation of weather conditions; and reporting water gage heights and snow depths.²²

Around 1940, the National Park Service established a policy restricting the cutting of trees in the parks for building logs.²³ This policy is reflected in the only snowshoe cabin built in Yellowstone during the 1940s. The Nez Perce Snowshoe Cabin follows the basic plan and design of the 1930s cabins, but was constructed with a woodframe.

Yellowstone's Snowshoe Cabins Today

Yellowstone's historic snowshoe cabins continue to be maintained and used by the Ranger Division, mostly for backcountry patrol. In the 1970s, Yellowstone began constructing "A-Frame" style patrol cabins. The park has six A-Frame cabins; all but one (Union Falls) are built to a standard plan. Current plans call for any new and/or replacement cabins to be built in the Rustic tradition.²⁴ The Sportsman's Lake Patrol Cabin, which was destroyed during the 1988 Yellowstone fire, was replaced with a neo-Rustic style log building.

Lon Johnson
Branch of Cultural Resources
Yellowstone National Park
August 2000

Christine Whitacre, Historian
Intermountain Support Office-Denver
July 1999

Note: Much of the historical information on snowshoe cabins was drawn from "Yellowstone National Park, Patrol Cabins and Ranger Stations," prepared by Marcy Culpin, 1997.

²⁰ Yellowstone Plan No. 3037. On microfiche, YNP Maintenance Division.

²¹ George F. Baggley, Chief Ranger, Memorandum for Park Rangers, August 28, 1933. YNP Archives.

²² *1930 Report of Director of National Park Service*, 158.

²³ Paul V. Brown, Acting Regional Director, National Park Service, Letter to Fred J. Foster, Regional Director, Bureau of Fisheries, January 17, 1940. Folder 620-30, Box D 157, YNP Archives.

²⁴ Tom Olliff, Yellowstone Ranger Division, Personal communication with Christine Whitacre, July 16,

Architectural Significance
Standard Snowshoe Cabin

In Superintendent Horace Albright's 1919 Annual Report to the Director of the National Park Service, he pled for funding to construct new buildings in Yellowstone. He described most of the park buildings outside of the park headquarters in Mammoth Hot Springs as dilapidated beyond practical repair. Specifically mentioning the snowshoe cabins he said:

... the snowshoe cabins of the park, which are constantly used in the dead of winter by patrolling rangers, ought to be rebuilt and refurnished. They are old, in bad repair, poorly located, and unsatisfactory from every standpoint. The ranger force of every park, considering the nature of its work, should have dry, sanitary quarters, and, in winter, the means of overcoming the effects of exposure while on long patrols in below-zero weather. Such quarters are few in the Yellowstone, where the weather conditions are more severe in winter than in any other member of the system. This is frankly an appeal in the interest of humanity.

Albright's appeal met receptive ears. Seven new snowshoe cabins were constructed in Yellowstone during 1920, and four others were remodeled. Thus, more than one-half of the park's nineteen rangers' cabins were replaced or upgraded that year. Yellowstone had launched a program to replace its U.S. Army snowshoe cabins with new cabins reflecting the National Park Service's evolving ideas of rustic design.

Superintendent Albright described Yellowstone's first snowshoe cabins as "one-room, rough log cabins, 12 x 16 feet in size."

All of these cabins . . . have roofs of rubberoid, laid over hewed poles and covered about 6 inches deep with earth. The floors are poles flattened on three sides, and the doors and window shutters are made of 2-inch plank to provide protection from bears. The walls are of peeled logs, well chinked with mud.

The cabins had gable end doors and five-foot extended roofs characteristic of the Rocky Mountain style. The Harebell Snowshoe Cabin, constructed in 1920, had an off-center door in the gable end and single six-light sash (placed vertically) on each side. With the exception of the windows, lumber for the doors and shutters, the rubberoid roofing, and the furnishings, building materials could be obtained at the sites.

Yellowstone did modify the standard snowshoe cabin plan if circumstances required it. The Thorogfare cabin, constructed in 1920, had two rangers assigned to it all winter. This cabin appeared identical to the other designs, but was increased in length to provide two rooms. Other cabins, closer to supplies, had lumber sheathing and shingled roofs.

The design for these cabins had been developed in the park, and apparently met with the approval of the National Park Service's senior landscape engineer, Daniel Hull. In a 1921 meeting, Albright and Hull discussed appropriate building designs for isolated buildings. Albright told Hull that Yellowstone had already developed a standardized design for snowshoe cabins that harmonized with the environment and met the functional needs of the rangers. The design of Yellowstone's snowshoe cabins changed little through the 1920s, although the extension of the front porch did grow deeper.

In the spring of 1921, Yellowstone Superintendent Horace Albright and NPS Landscape Architect Daniel Hull discussed the type of log architecture that was appropriate for "out-of-the-way" places in Yellowstone. Hull favored an "old time log cabin effect." Albright concurred, and believed all buildings and corrals should be constructed of logs. Albright, undoubtedly referring to the cabins constructed in 1920, advised Hull that the rangers had developed a type of cabin that fit their needs and harmonized with the environment. At the annual superintendent's conference in

November 1922, Albright praised Yellowstone's relationship with the Landscape Division and specifically mentioned snowshoe cabins among the buildings that had benefited from the collaboration.

Yellowstone's 1920 cabins displayed features that would later become synonymous with the National Park Service Rustic Style in Yellowstone. The NPS Landscape Division's philosophy that "the cultural character of a region's architecture could provide appropriate sources for a cultural theme and harmonious construction" (McClelland, p. 98) could not have found a better example to use than the "pioneer" or vernacular building tradition of snowshoe cabins. The design of these buildings had developed during the three decades of military administration of the park. The remote locations required the maximum use of locally available materials put together in methods familiar to non-professional builders. The buildings were easy to build, economical, and functional.

Two changes did occur in the design of the cabins built in 1921. Whether these changes were suggested by the Landscape Division is undocumented, but it seems likely based on Albright's statements that November. First, an additional purlin was added to each slope of the roof between the ridge and wall purlins. Whatever the purpose of the additional purlin, it quickly disappeared. Cabins built after 1923 returned to the single purlin on each roof slope. Second, a six light window was added to the front wall to the side of the door. This window, and the two side windows, were installed with the long side of the sash parallel to the logs. This design change helped give the cabin a more horizontal appearance, than the previous practice of installing them vertically.

Yellowstone's snowshoe cabin design changed little through the remainder of the 1920s. By 1924 and after, the extended Rocky Mountain style front porch increased in depth to a typical seven or eight feet. Builders experimented with a variety of designs for the posts needed to structurally support the extended roof. The location of doors and windows follows no pattern, and was apparently left up to the builders in the field.

The Landscape Division apparently approved of Yellowstone's cabin designs or found it had more important issues on which to concentrate. In a letter to T.C. Vint in March 1927, Yellowstone's acting superintendent, Leroy Hill, wrote that the park

... does not feel that it is necessary to submit sketches for the snowshoe cabins since they are to be built in remote locations and by unskilled labor.

The National Park Service's Landscape Division (San Francisco) provided Yellowstone National Park with three designs for snowshoe cabins in 1930. These designs were apparently alternatives for Park consideration. By 1931, the Landscape Division had revised the "Type 2" design, renamed it "No. 2 Standard Snowshoe Cabin," and sent the Park a full sheet of construction plans. A few more changes were made by 1932 and the drawings labeled "Standard Snowshoe Cabin."

According to Linda McClelland in *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service*, between 1927 and 1932, "the building program of the National Park Service [Landscape Engineering Division] made substantial progress in providing each park with administrative buildings that were functional and harmonious in design." The Yellowstone snowshoe cabins are an example of the division's standard plans for smaller, functional buildings that could be built throughout a park. The division often based standard plans on a park's pre-existing vernacular architecture if it conformed to its philosophy. Yellowstone had a long history of log snowshoe cabins, dating back to the military administration of the park, and refined during the early days of the National Park Service's administration. The Landscape Division further refined Yellowstone's earlier snowshoe cabin designs, and after a series of modifications, provided the park with a standard plan in 1931. Yellowstone used the plans throughout the 1930s.

The size and plans for the three 1930 alternatives were identical. The one room cabin measured 15 feet x 13 feet. An 8-foot deep front porch extended from the front gable end. A stone chimney rose from the roof. The plans called for a built-in closet, cupboard, and sink. A small cellar or food storage vault was accessed by a trap door in the cabin's floor.

Type 1 called for frame construction with a 2-over-2 double hung window on each side. Four by four-inch posts supported the extended front porch. A beam spanned the posts, and 4x4 posts resting on the beam carried fake timber purlins. Type 2 was for a log building with a 4-light window on each sidewall. The porch roof was carried on log posts. A beam spanned between the posts and log uprights resting on the beam carried each of the three purlins. Type 3 was similar to Type 2. The design, however, was for a much stouter building. Bars across the windows suggest this may have been for bear protection. Besides the ridge and wall purlins, five additional purlins on each slope supported the roof. The wall logs extended to the front of the porch, leaving only one side open.

Thomas Vint, chief landscape architect with the National Park Service's Landscape Division (San Francisco) approved the Number 2 Standardized Snowshoe Cabin for Yellowstone in 1931. The plan incorporated a variety of Rustic style features meeting the division's philosophy that cabins appear as if they were constructed by "pioneers", and that they be inconspicuous and subordinated to their settings. Many of these features had been incorporated in Yellowstone's snowshoe cabins since the early 1920s, including stone piers, battered log crowns, axe cut log ends, and purlins extending beyond the roof edge. Changes from the 1930 alternative were the substitution of a sliding sash window in the back wall, elimination of the interior built-in furniture, and specifying a puncheon floor for the porch. Yielding to practical circumstances of construction in the backcountry over Rustic design, the stone chimney was replaced by a galvanized stovepipe.

By the following year, the plan for snowshoe cabins was again revised. The 1931 changes appear to correct functional problems that likely reflect comments from the rangers using the cabins. The stove was moved from the front to the rear of the cabin and the cellar was moved from a rear corner to near the front with the trap door opening just to the side of the entry door. This rearrangement permitted two twin beds, end to end along one wall, a table at the back wall, and a stove and washstand along the other wall. The main exterior change was in the roofing material where wood shingles or shakes gave way to corrugated iron roofing. Just as with the elimination of the stone chimney in 1930, this change was at odds with the Rustic design philosophy of the Landscape Division, but probably addressed the practical concern of Yellowstone's heavy snowfall. (The drawings included an alternative log "bearproof roof." Six-inch logs were laid with the slope of the roof on roofing paper and wood sheathing.) The other exterior change made in the 1931 drawings was in the window sash. The earlier 4-light sash became 6-light sash.

Designers and builders experimented with various methods of supporting the roof over the next decade. The Miller Creek Cabin is the oldest identified cabin to use vertical log posts beneath the purlins in the open porch gable, a feature adopted in the standardized plan. Other Rustic style

details found in the Miller Creek Snowshoe Cabin such as the battered log crowns and purlins projecting beyond the roof edge, were adopted in the Landscape Divisions standardized plan.

The Landscape Division strived for buildings that were inconspicuous and readily subordinated to their settings. A horizontal appearance most readily achieved this goal, and the Miller Creek cabin's steeply pitched roof and oversized wall logs betrayed this philosophy. The standardized plan lowered the roof pitch by one-half, reduced the diameter of the 12- to 18-inch wall logs to 8- to 10-inches and the diameter of the 10- to 12-inch purlins to 6-inches, and replaced the rear double-hung window with a pair of sliding sash. These changes significantly diminished the scale and massing of the later snowshoe cabins in comparison to the Miller Creek cabin. Whether or not the Miller Creek cabin served as a prototype for the standardized plan, it was the last of Yellowstone's snowshoe cabins to exhibit distinctive design characteristics.

The [historic cabin name] Snowshoe Cabin is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. The cabin is a representative example of the Rustic style developed in the National Park Service's Landscape Division. It also is an example of the standardized snowshoe cabin, which Yellowstone National Park adopted ca. 1931. These standardized Snowshoe Cabins are characterized by the Rocky Mountain style extended front porch (which Yellowstone had been using for snowshoe cabins in 1920).

Historic Overview of Military - Era Construction in Yellowstone National Park

Following is a brief overview of the buildings and structures that were built during the U.S. Army's administration of Yellowstone National Park. The third volume of Yellowstone National Park's Historic Resource Study will provide the historic context for both the Army's administration and the ranger corps's efforts towards park protection and preservation. The following overview provides the context to evaluate the historic district. This overview briefly discusses the origins of both the soldier stations and the patrol cabins (snowshoe cabins). For additional historic context, please refer to:

Aubrey Haines, *The Yellowstone Story* Vol. II. Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1977.

H. Duane Hampton, *How the U. S. Cavalry Saved Our National Parks*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971.

For the decade after 1872 when Yellowstone National Park was established, the park was under serious threat from those who would exploit, rather than protect its resources. Poachers killed animals. Souvenir hunters broke large pieces off the geysers and hot springs. Developers set up camps for tourists, along with bath and laundry facilities at hot springs. Civilian superintendents were hired to preserve and protect this land from 1872 through 1886. The good intentions of these early administrators, however, were no match for their lack of experience, funds and manpower. Word got back to Congress that the park was in trouble and legislators refused to appropriate any funds for the park's administration in 1886. Invoking the Sundry Civil Act of 1883, the Secretary of the Interior called upon the Secretary of War for assistance in protecting the park. The Army came to the rescue, and in 1886 men from Company M, First United States Cavalry, Fort Custer, Montana Territory under Captain Moses Harris came to Yellowstone to begin what would be more than 30 years of military presence in Yellowstone.¹

Construction Overview

The 1883 Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill (with an amendment) provided not only money for the employment of ten assistants for the superintendent and the deployment of an engineer officer and troops to supervise the construction and improvement of the roads and bridges, but a clause authorized the Secretary of War, at the request of the Secretary of the Interior, to detail troops to the park to prevent trespassers or intruders from entering the park for purposes of poaching or vandalizing the "objects of curiosities."² Yellowstone National Park Superintendent P. H. Conger believed that protection would best be provided if two assistants were stationed at five different strategic points in the park. The men should be uniformed and equipped and provided with a comfortable cabin.³

In late fall of 1883, Superintendent Conger converted a stage station in the northwest area of the park into a government station for use by his assistants. Other assistants were housed in the blacksmith shop at Mammoth and at a "shanty" in the Upper Firehole Basin.⁴ For the next few years, the park's lack of protection received more national coverage resulting in the administration of the park being transferred from the ineffective civilian superintendents to the U.S. Army in the summer of 1886.

In August 1886, Captain Moses Harris arrived in the park with Troop "M", 1st U. S. Cavalry. Within a few weeks of his arrival, Harris stationed detachments at all of the sites occupied by assistants of the last superintendent, David Wear. These sites were Norris Geyser Basin, Lower Geyser Basin, Upper Geyser Basin, Falls of the Yellowstone, Riverside, on the Madison River, and at Soda Butte on the Cooke City road.⁵ Captain Harris, who needed experienced men immediately, found three of Wear's assistants to be very helpful, but was disappointed that he could only hire one, C. J. Baronett, as a scout and guide.⁶

As of June 2, 1887, the troops at the detached stations were instructed to enforce all rules and regulations of the Department of the Interior, "to discover and prevent the spread of forest fires, to protect visitors to the Park from any abuse or extortion by stage drivers or other persons, and generally to preserve respect for law and order."⁷ Finding that civilian rule would not return to Yellowstone in 1887, Harris sent his men on daily excursions in all points from each station. They were usually under the direction of C.J. Baronett and, later in the summer, under the direction of Edward Wilson, the scout who replaced Baronett. However,

Harris believed the available force was inadequate for the protection of the park and he hoped to supplement his one troop of cavalry with the addition of a company of infantry and two more scouts.⁸

At the end of 1887, Harris had men at the following stations:

- Soda Butte - 1 non-commissioned officer & 2 privates
- Riverside - 1 non-commissioned officer & 2 privates
- Upper Geyser Basin - 1 non-commissioned officer & 1 private
- Lower Geyser Basin - 2 privates
- Norris Geyser Basin - 2 privates
- Grand Canyon - 2 privates
- Mammoth Hot Springs - 1 foot patrol
- Parkwide - several mounted patrol on duty with scout.⁹

Harris initiated boundary patrols in order to halt illegal hunting. During the 1888 winter, the patrols not only performed their protection duties, but also began making observations on the numbers and locations of buffalo in the park. In addition to recording buffalo statistics, the men gathered information on elk, deer, and mountain sheep.¹⁰

By 1890, Acting Superintendent Captain Frazier Boutelle planned a system of "snowshoe cabins" to be built in the remote areas of the park. This system allowed for effective patrolling during the winter months. Boutelle called for the construction of 5 or 6 cabins to cost no more than \$100 each. The first group of cabins would be joined by 13 more during the 1890s at the following locations:

- Gneiss Creek - due north of Riverside Soldier Station
- Gallatin River - northwest of Crowfoot Ridge
- Gallatin Lake
- Christmas Tree Park - south of Mount Holmes
- Crystal Springs - near Obsidian Cliff
- Observation Peak - in the Washburn Range in a saddle west of
- Geode Creek - head of
- Hellroaring Creek
- Slough Creek
- Lamar River - below the mouth of Willow Creek
- Astringent Creek - above junction with Pelican Creek
- Park Point - on Yellowstone Lake
- Trapper's Creek - at mouth of
- Heart Lake - west shore
- Lewis River - below mouth of Aster Creek
- "Pot Hole" or Rocky Ford - on Bechler River
- Buffalo Lake
- Shoshone Geyser Basin
- Mary Lake

In 1894, a long-awaited park protection bill passed the Congress giving the soldiers more authority for crimes committed in the park. However, the acting superintendent, Captain George Anderson, still faced a shortage of men to protect the park properly. He reexamined the locations of the soldier stations. He found the Snake River outpost to be too far away from supervision and its patrol areas. It covered country much used by hunting parties and was too large for effective coverage. Captain Anderson believed that another station should be built at the mouth of Thorofare Canyon, but the lack of men and its remoteness from supply sources prevented this in 1894.¹¹

Anderson found the 1894 protection act coupled with the vigilant patrols to have a profound effect on the poaching activity. He also credited his patrols with the decrease in destructive fires. Armed with buckets and shovels, patrols left every station every morning and continued until they met a patrol from the nearest station. After a short stop, each patrol would retrace its. During the winter of 1895, Anderson added a new

station near Mud Geysir to help protect the bison in the Hayden Valley and was authorized to employ additional civilian scouts.¹²

Shortly after his arrival in 1887, the new acting superintendent, Colonel S.B.M. Young requested \$300 for the purchase of supplies. These supplies were for the construction of three additional outpost cabins and temporary shacks for snowshoe parties and for building provision boxes for the temporary shacks.¹³

Colonel Young instituted a method of record keeping for each of the outposts. He required an accounting of the days events, with number of miles traveled, number of men used, distance of travel, type of travel (on snowshoes, skis, horseback or on foot), number, location, and kind of game seen, and weather statistics. A monthly report based upon the accumulated data was sent to headquarters. Colonel Young gave his men instructions regarding the snowshoe cabins:

All persons are enjoined to use the rations in the snowshoe cabins only in case of necessity; never under any circumstances to waste any of them and to always leave the cabins and their contents secure and in good condition. The ax and shovel must be left inside; the comfortables hanged up, the cooking utensils left clean and dry and the food in its box secure from mice, etc. Enough dry wood for one night should always be left in the cabin.¹⁴

In November 1897, Colonel Young was replaced by his next-in-command, Captain James B. Erwin who continued the policies of the previous military superintendents. Registration of travelers was now taken at Mammoth, Upper Geyser Basin, Norris, Lake, Lower Geyser Basin, Snake river, Riverside, and Soda Butte stations. Captain Erwin found there were fewer violators of park rules. He attributed that fact to the restrictions now well publicized, the presence of a resident U.S. Commissioner, the presence of the guards at the interesting points, and the regular patrols from the stations.¹⁵

During the next few years, military action in the Far East caused several turnovers in command at Fort Yellowstone. In March 1899, Captain Erwin was replaced by Captain Wildurr Willing, Fourth Cavalry, who was in command only three months when he was sent to the Phillipines. Captain Oscar Brown, First Cavalry, assumed the command from Captain Willing until his transfer to the Far East in July 1900. Captain Brown requested funds to build two new stations, one in the northwestern corner of the park and the other in the southwestern corner. Captain Brown also wanted to construct a station and entrance gate at Gardiner, a proposal that Captain Willing had also introduced.¹⁶

The following year, the new acting superintendent, Captain George Goode, planned to dispatch soldiers to Knowles Cabin near Crevice Creek to patrol the Hellroaring country, to put a detachment on the Bechler River in the southwest corner of the park, to abandon the extant Snake River Station in favor of a new station at the point where the southern boundary crosses the Snake River, to put a new station at the southeast corner of Thorofare Creek, to put a new station in Fan (Fawn?) Creek or on the Gallatin River in the northwest corner and to put a station at the north entrance. A series of snowshoe cabins placed at strategic points would allow most of the park lands to be patrolled, supporting his plan of apportioning the entire park into patrolled districts. Captain Goode wanted to increase the number of civilian scouts to ten and provide them with quarters at Mammoth and in the Lower Geyser Basin. Combined with the work of the civilian scouts and the presence of a magistrate, the soldiers were providing excellent administration of the park in general.¹⁷

In 1901, the Army Corp of Engineers' Captain Hiram Chittenden, who was in charge of the construction of the park roads and whose crews also used the soldier stations, called for the enlargement and improvement of the existing soldier stations. He also called for the construction of several additional stations, bringing the total of the stations to 12 or perhaps 13. He estimated that each station would cost about \$2,000, including the outhouse. However, a shortage of carpenters in 1902 prevented any improvement work on the stations. In 1902, the Snake River Station was "torn down and removed to a point where the road crosses the boundary of the park."¹⁸

In 1903, Captain Chittenden reported to the acting superintendent, Major John Pitcher, that with the 1903 appropriation he was able to complete the Engineer's office and the powerhouse at Mammoth, the fence and

entrance arch at Gardiner, one new soldier station (not named) and the repair of other stations. Chittenden planned to build two new stations and possibly another one at Gardiner in 1904. He also advised Pitcher that he would then turn over "three good buildings (buildings used by the road crews) at Tower Falls, and one in the Gibbon Canyon."¹⁹

In 1904, Chittenden supervised the construction of two new stations, one at Thumb and one east of Sylvan Pass on the East Entrance Road. He hoped to have one complete at the Cooke City entrance before the year was over. He also built a detached room for officer quarters at all of the stations except the one at the North Entrance.²⁰

During these years, there was an ongoing debate over the effectiveness of military or civilian patrols and administration. After a 1908 park visit by Secretary of Interior James Garfield, the Secretary found the system of using regular Army troops for patrol to be "highly satisfactory."²¹ In 1910, the Department of the Interior sent its Chief Clerk, Clement Ucker, to inspect the park. Ucker toured the soldier stations and found "no similarity in style of architecture had been followed." He urged the Secretary to erect suitable stations for the soldiers' use and that the style of architecture should conform to the style chosen for the proposed new administration building at Mammoth Hot Springs. (The proposed new administration building designed by Robert Reamer was never constructed.)²² Ucker concluded that a civilian superintendent be appointed with perhaps continued use of the soldiers for patrol.²³

Meanwhile, the southwest corner of the Park had gone unwatched for a quarter century, during which time poachers and cattlemen used the area as if it were part of the public domain. An early freight road, marked on present maps as "Old Marysville Road," looped deeply into the Park as it passed around the Bechler Meadows. It linked Marysville, Idaho, a former town on the eastern outskirts of Ashton, with Marysvale, Wyoming, the early settlement near present-day Jackson.

Although the need for protection from illegal activities was recognized as early as 1899, only an occasional patrol from the South Entrance or from Riverside Station was possible until 1911, when the Bechler Station was built on Wyoming Creek (mistakenly built there instead of on Rock Creek, at the Park corner). The soldier station became the Bechler River Ranger Station after the army left the Park.²⁴

In 1912, a new soldier station was also built on the park boundary on Crevice Mountain, east of Gardiner.²⁵ In 1913, 58 miles of trails or fire lanes were constructed between the Gallatin Soldier Station and the headquarters via Sportsman Lake and also along the western boundary. The previous year, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and War signed a cooperative agreement regarding fire prevention and suppression. Boundary trails or fire lanes greatly assisted the patrolling of the newly organized districts assigned to the various soldier stations. Caches of fire-fighting tools were attributed to the districts.²⁶

The old Snake River Soldier Station burned on August 7, 1914, and soon was replaced with a new one-story, log building (16' x 50') with an addition (16' x 24') forming a T-shape. A new fire lane was constructed from the Snake River Station east toward the southeast corner of the park. Other fire lane projects during 1914 were the construction of a 27-mile long fire lane from Obsidian Creek Bridge southwesterly toward the Riverside Soldier Station, improvements to the western boundary fire lane connecting Yellowstone (West Yellowstone) to the Bechler Soldier Station, the fire lane beginning on the East Entrance road along the eastern shore of Yellowstone Lake, along the Upper Yellowstone River.²⁷

In 1916, Congress created the National Park Service, and the army relinquished its administration of the world's first national park. After local residence made this transition difficult, the Army returned in 1917 for one more year, when the park was fully under the National Park Service control.

- ¹ This paragraph was lifted verbatim from *The Army Years 1886-1918: Fort Yellowstone Historic District Yellowstone National Park Wyoming*, (Yellowstone National Park: The Yellowstone Association), 1.
- ² "Mr. Vest's Victory, *Forest and Stream*, March 8, 1883.
- ³ P.H. Conger, *Annual report of the Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1883*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 5.
- ⁴ Richard Bartlett, *Yellowstone: A Wilderness Besieged* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 238.
- ⁵ Captain Moses Harris, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park 1886* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 6.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Harris, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1887* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 6, 11.
- ⁸ Harris, 12.
- ⁹ Lt. Colonel Edwin Mason to Adjutant General, 08 September 1887.
- ¹⁰ Captain Moses Harris, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1888* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 6.
- ¹¹ Captain George Anderson to the Adjutant General, U.S. Army, 10 April 1894. The Adjutant General to Commanding Officer, Department of Dakota, 02 May 1894. National Archives. Record Group 94. Entry 464. Box: 117 Yakima River - Fort Zollecottes, Tenn.
- ¹² Captain George Anderson, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1895* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 6, 7, 10-12.
- ¹³ Colonel S.B.M. Young to Secretary of the Interior, 10 July 1897. National Archives. Record Group 79. Entry 1, Yellowstone National Park. Letters Received. Box: 54.
- ¹⁴ Col. S.B.M. Young to the Secretary of the Interior, 10 July 1897.
- ¹⁵ Captain James B. Erwin, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1898* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898).
- ¹⁶ Captain Oscar Brown, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1899* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 3, 9.
- ¹⁷ Captain George Goodé, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1900* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 4.
- ¹⁸ Major John Pitcher, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1901* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 11.
Major John Pitcher, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1902* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), 14.
- ¹⁹ Captain Hiram Chittenden to Major John Pitcher, 28 September 1903. Document No. 6049. Yellowstone National Park Archives.
- ²⁰ Major Hiram Chittenden to Major John Pitcher, 01 June 1904. Document No. 7988. Yellowstone National Park Archives.
- ²¹ James Garfield, *Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1909* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), 42.
- ²² Clement Ucker. "Report of the Chief Clerk of the Department on the Yellowstone National Park, September 22, 1910." National Archives. Record Group 79. Entry 6. Yellowstone National Park. Box: 218 Fort Yellowstone - Irrigation, Folder: Inspections and Investigations.
- ²³ Ucker, "Report of the Chief Clerk of the Department on the Yellowstone National Park, September 22, 1910.
- ²⁴ Aubrey L. Haines. *Yellowstone Place Names*, University Press of Colorado (Niwot, Colorado: 1996); pp. 116-117.
- ²⁵ Lt. Col. L.M. Brett, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park 1912* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 14-15.
- ²⁶ Colonel L.M. Brett, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1913* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 13-14.
- ²⁷ Colonel L.M. Brett, *Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park to the Secretary of the Interior 1914* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), 17.