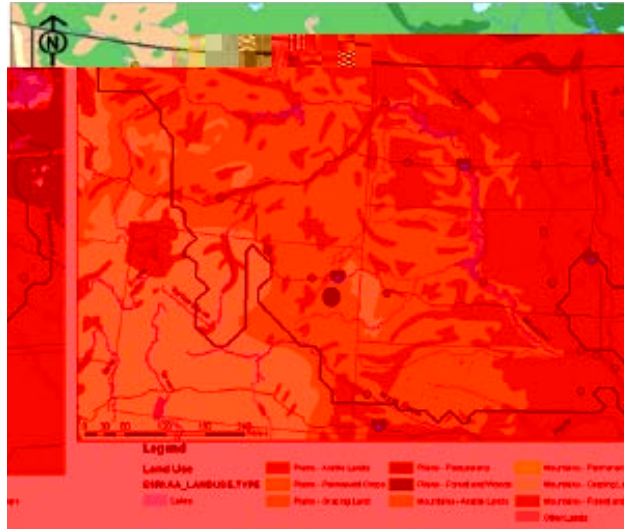


## Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG): Northern Plains Domain

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**Location within Domain:** The Thunder Basin National Grassland was established in 1960 and is located in northeastern Wyoming in the Powder River Basin between the Big Horn Mountains and the Black Hills.



**History:** At one time, significant portions of the area were dedicated to cultivated crops but few cultivated areas remain and the primary land use is rangeland. Parts of the Grassland are underlaid by vast coal deposits and the region is the largest coal producing area of the United States.

**Key Characteristics:** Most of the Thunder Basin National grassland is dominated by northern mixed-grass prairie vegetation with significant occurrence of Wyoming big sagebrush. Average annual precipitation in the area is approximately 390 mm, about half of which falls as snow. The Grassland is administered by the Douglas Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest. The Grassland ranges in elevation from 3,600 feet to 5,200 feet and the climate is semiarid. The Fiddleback area is a large area of prairie on the Thunder Basin National Grassland located between Douglas and Gillette. The area includes the Cheyenne River Valley with the Red Hills and Rochelle Hills surrounding the area to the west and north. It is also a haven for eagles, raptors, deer, elk, and antelope. There are no developed campgrounds; however, camping is allowed. Land patterns are very complex because of the intermingled federal, state, and private lands.

**Existing Infrastructure:** Very little infrastructure exists on the Thunder Basin National Grassland; the one building that exists is a fire work station on Highway 450. No climatological data is collected by the USFS on the grassland. Wyoming Department of Transportation maintains atmospheric sensors on US Highway 59 just north of the Grassland.