



# Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Inventory and Monitoring National Parks to Acidification Effects from Atmospheric Sulfur and Nitrogen Deposition

*Northern Great Plains Network (NGPN)*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/ARD/NRR—2011/369



**ON THE COVER**

Some ecosystems and vegetation types, such as remote high-elevation lakes, sugar maple trees, headwater streams, and red spruce trees, are sensitive to the effects of acidification from atmospheric nitrogen and sulfur deposition.

Photograph by: National Park Service

---

# **Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Inventory and Monitoring National Parks to Acidification Effects from Atmospheric Sulfur and Nitrogen Deposition**

*Northern Great Plains Network (NGPN)*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/ARD/NRR—2011/369

T. J. Sullivan  
T. C. McDonnell  
G. T. McPherson  
S. D. Mackey  
D. Moore

E&S Environmental Chemistry, Inc.  
P.O. Box 609  
Corvallis, OR 97339

April 2011

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Natural Resource Program Center  
Denver, Colorado

The National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center publishes a range of reports that address natural resource topics of interest and applicability to a broad audience in the National Park Service and others in natural resource management, including scientists, conservation and environmental constituencies, and the public.

The Natural Resource Report Series is used to disseminate high-priority, current natural resource management information with managerial application. The series targets a general, diverse audience, and may contain NPS policy considerations or address sensitive issues of management applicability.

All manuscripts in the series receive the appropriate level of peer review to ensure that the information is scientifically credible, technically accurate, appropriately written for the intended audience, and designed and published in a professional manner.

This report received peer review by subject-matter experts who were not directly involved in the collection, analysis, or reporting of the data. Data in this report were collected and analyzed using methods based on established, peer-reviewed protocols and were analyzed and interpreted within the guidelines of the protocols.

Views, statements, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and data in this report do not necessarily reflect views and policies of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the U.S. Government.

This report is available from Air Resources Division of the NPS (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/Permits/ARIS/networks/acidification-eval.cfm>) and the Natural Resource Publications Management website (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/publications/nrpm/>).

Please cite this publication as:

Sullivan, T. J., G. T. McPherson, T. C. McDonnell, S. D. Mackey, and D. Moore. 2011. Evaluation of the sensitivity of inventory and monitoring national parks to acidification effects from atmospheric sulfur and nitrogen deposition: Northern Great Plains Network (NGPN). Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/ARD/NRR—2011/369. National Park Service, Denver, Colorado.

## Northern Great Plains Network (NGPN)

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

There are three parks in the Northern Great Plains Network that are larger than 100 square miles: Badlands (BADL), Missouri (MNRR), and Theodore Roosevelt (THRO). In addition, there are 10 smaller parks.

Total annual S and N emissions, by county, are shown in Maps E and F for lands in and surrounding the Northern Great Plains Network. County-level S emissions were low, in most areas less than 1 ton per square mile per year. There were scattered pockets of higher S emissions (Map E) within the network, including the region around Knife River Indian Villages NHS (KNRI). Annual county-level N emissions were somewhat higher, ranging from less than 1 ton per square mile to between 5 and 20 tons per square mile. In general, annual county N emissions were less than 5 tons per square mile throughout most of the network. Point source emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> and oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N are shown in Maps G and H, respectively. Point sources of SO<sub>2</sub> were few, and most emitted less than 5,000 tons of S per year. There were several point sources of oxidized N, and one point source of reduced N, within the network that were larger than about 2,000 tons per year.

Urban centers within the network and within a 300-mile buffer around the network are shown in Map I. There are relatively few urban centers of any magnitude within this network, although Denver is close to the southwestern network boundary.

Total S and total N deposition in and around the network are shown in Maps J and K, respectively. Included in this analysis are both wet and dry forms of deposition and both the oxidized and reduced N species. Total S deposition in this network was generally low, less than 2 kg S/ha/yr in most portions of the network. There were a few areas with higher S deposition, most of them in the northern and eastern parts of the network. Total N deposition within the network ranged from as low as 2 to 5 kg N/ha/yr in the northwest to greater than 10 kg N/ha/yr in the southeast. Most of the I&M parks in this network were located within the lower N deposition zone.

Land cover in and around the network is shown in Map L. The predominant cover types within this network are generally grassland/herbaceous, row crop, and pasture/hay.

Watershed slope for parks in the network is shown in Map M. The slope in most of the parks varies from less than 10° to between 10° and 20°. One park (Mount Rushmore [MORU]) has steeper terrain, between 20° and 30°.

Park lands requiring special protection against potential adverse impacts associated with acidic deposition are shown on Map N. Also shown on Map N are all federal lands designated as wilderness, both lands managed by NPS and lands managed by other federal agencies. The land designations used to identify this heightened protection included Class I designation under the

Clean Air Act Amendments and wilderness designation. There is very limited Class I or wilderness area within this network.

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

The Northern Great Plains Network ranked in the middle quintile among networks in Pollutant Exposure (Figure A). Sulfur and N emissions and deposition within the network were moderate. The network Ecosystem Sensitivity was also ranked as Moderate (Figure B). This network ranked in the second lowest quintile in Park Protection, having limited amounts of protected lands (Figure C).

In combination, the network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection yielded an overall Network Risk ranking that is below the middle of the distribution among networks (Figure D). The overall level of concern for acidification effects on I&M parks within this network is considered Moderate.

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

Park-specific Pollutant Exposure rankings for the three parks in this network that are larger than 100 square miles are shown in Table A and Figure E. Two of these large parks, MNRR and THRO, were ranked Moderate for this theme; BADL was ranked Very Low. Pollutant Exposure for each of the smaller parks was ranked in the second lowest or middle quintile. For Ecosystem Sensitivity, Wind Cave (WICA) was the only park ranked in the highest quintile. Jewel Cave (JECA) was ranked in the second highest quintile. All of the larger parks were ranked in the middle quintile (Moderate) for Ecosystem Sensitivity (Figure F). The rest of the parks were ranked Moderate to Very Low for this theme. BADL, THRO, and WICA were in the highest quintile in Park Protection; Mount Rushmore (MORU) and Niobrara (NIOB) were in the second highest. The other parks, including MNRR, were ranked in the middle quintile for Park Protection (Figure G, Table A).

For the larger parks, the overall park Summary Risk ranking for THRO was High, and for BADL and MNRR was Moderate (Figure H). Among the smaller parks, the Summary Risk ranking was High for WICA, Low for Fort Union (FOUS) and KNRI, and Moderate for the others (Table A).

**Table A.** Relative rankings of individual I&M parks within the network for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, Park Protection, and overall Summary Risk from acidic deposition.

I&M Parks <sup>2</sup> in Network	Relative Ranking of Individual Parks <sup>1</sup>			
	Pollutant Exposure	Ecosystem Sensitivity	Park Protection	Summary Risk
Agate Fossil Beds	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
<b><i>Badlands</i></b>	Very Low	Moderate	Very High	Moderate
Devils Tower	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Fort Laramie	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Fort Union Trading Post	Low	Very Low	Moderate	Low
Jewel Cave	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate
Knife River Indian Villages	Moderate	Very Low	Moderate	Low
<b><i>Missouri</i></b>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Mount Rushmore	Low	Low	High	Moderate
Niobrara	Low	Moderate	High	Moderate
Scotts Bluff	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
<b><i>Theodore Roosevelt</i></b>	Moderate	Moderate	Very High	High
Wind Cave	Low	Very High	Very High	High

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

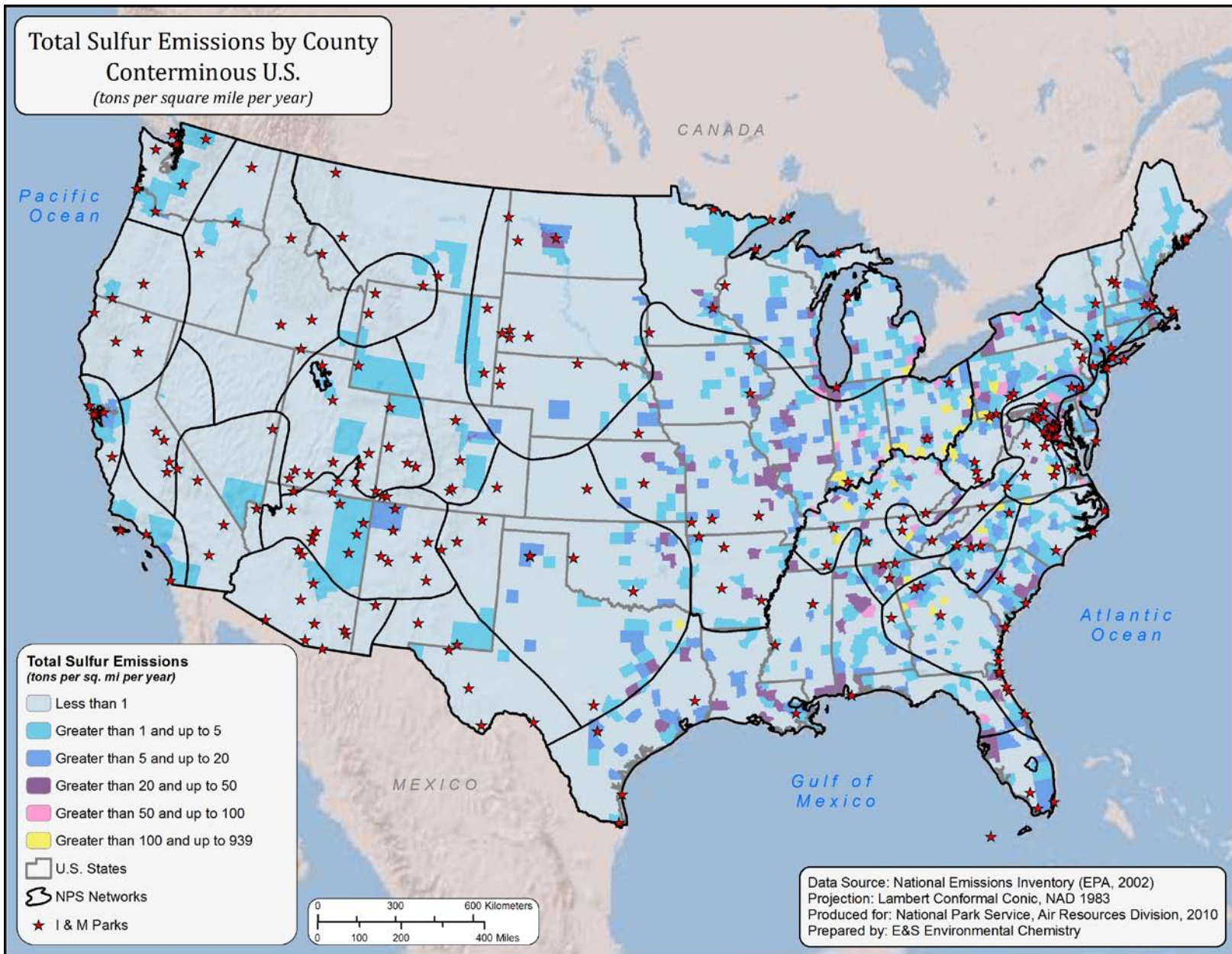
- Map A. National map of total S emissions by county for the year 2002, in units of tons of S per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map B. National map of total N emissions by county for the year 2002. Both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) forms of N are included. The total is expressed in tons per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map C. Total S deposition for the conterminous United States for the year 2002, expressed in units of kilograms of S deposited from the atmosphere to the Earth surface per hectare per year. For the eastern half of the country, wet deposition values were derived from interpolated measured values from NADP (three-year average centered on 2002) and dry deposition values were derived from 12-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. For the western half of the country, both wet and dry deposition values were derived from 36-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. NADP interpolations were performed using the approach of Grimm and Lynch (1997). CMAQ model projections were provided by Robin Dennis, U.S. EPA.
- Map D. Total N deposition for the conterminous United States for the year 2002, expressed in units of kilograms of N deposited from the atmosphere to the Earth surface per hectare per year. Wet and dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and

reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N are included. For the eastern half of the country, wet deposition values were derived from interpolated measured values from NADP (three-year average centered on 2002) and dry deposition values were derived from 12-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. For the western half of the country, both wet and dry deposition values were derived from 36-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. NADP interpolations were performed using the approach of Grimm and Lynch (1997). CMAQ model projections were provided by Robin Dennis, U.S. EPA.

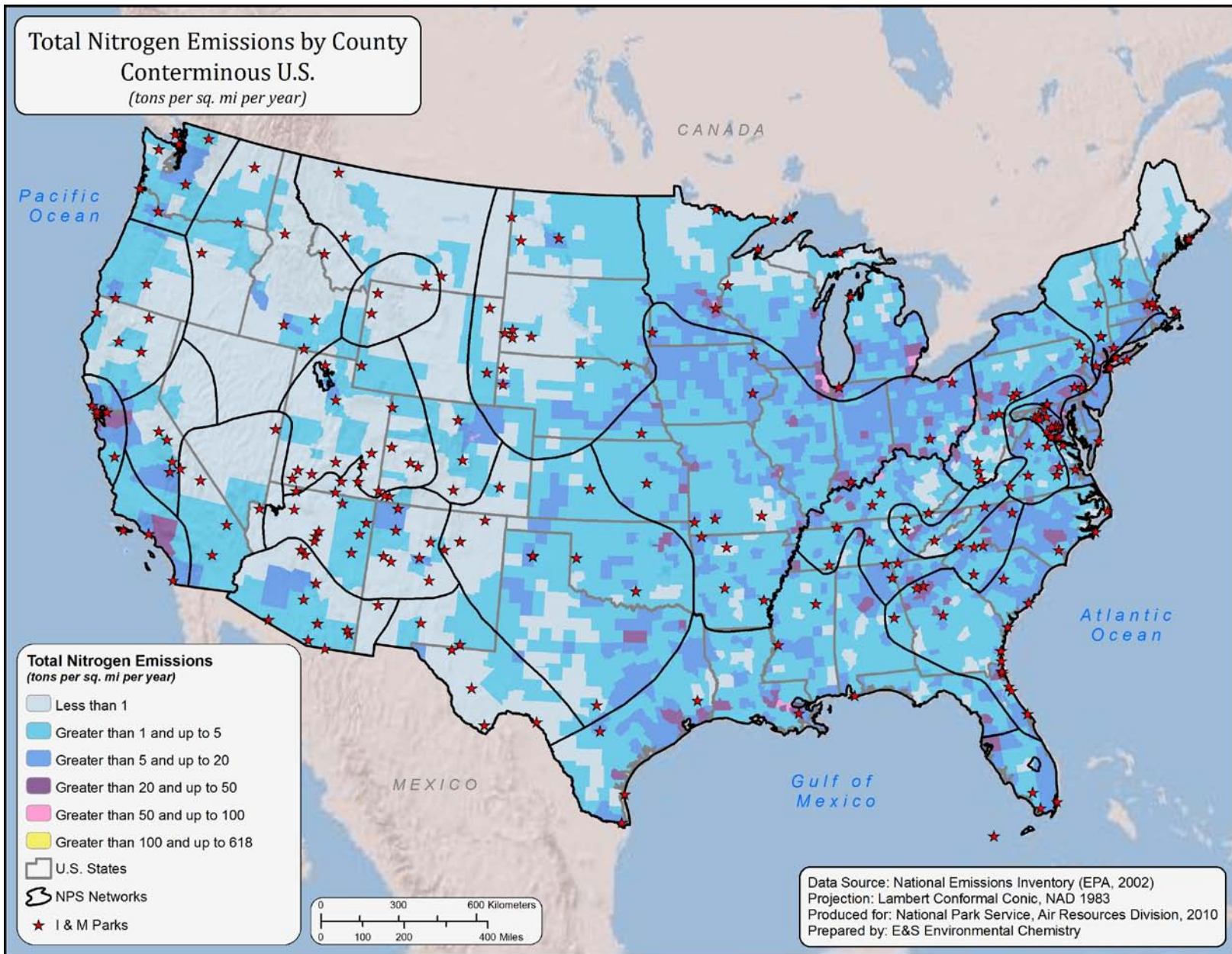
- Map E. Total S emissions by county for lands surrounding the network, expressed as tons of S emitted into the atmosphere per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map F. Total N emissions by county for lands surrounding the network, expressed as tons of N emitted into the atmosphere per square mile per year. The total includes both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map G. Major point source emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> for lands surrounding the network. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map H. Major point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N in and around the network. The base of each vertical bar is positioned in the map at the approximate location of the source. The height of the bar is proportional to the magnitude of the source. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map I. Urban centers having more than 10,000 people within the network and within a 300-mile buffer around the perimeter of the network. (Source of data: U.S. Census 2000)
- Map J. Total S deposition in and around the network. Values are expressed as kilograms of S deposited per hectare per year. (Source of data: Interpolated NADP wet and CMAQ Model dry deposition data for 2002; see information for Map C above for details)
- Map K. Total N deposition in and around the network. Included in the total are wet plus dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N. Values are expressed as kilograms of N deposited per hectare per year. (Source of data: Interpolated NADP wet and CMAQ Model dry deposition data for 2002; see information for Map D above for details)
- Map L. Land cover types in and around the network, based on the National Land Cover dataset. (Source of data: National Land Cover Dataset, [http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd\\_multizone\\_map.php](http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd_multizone_map.php))



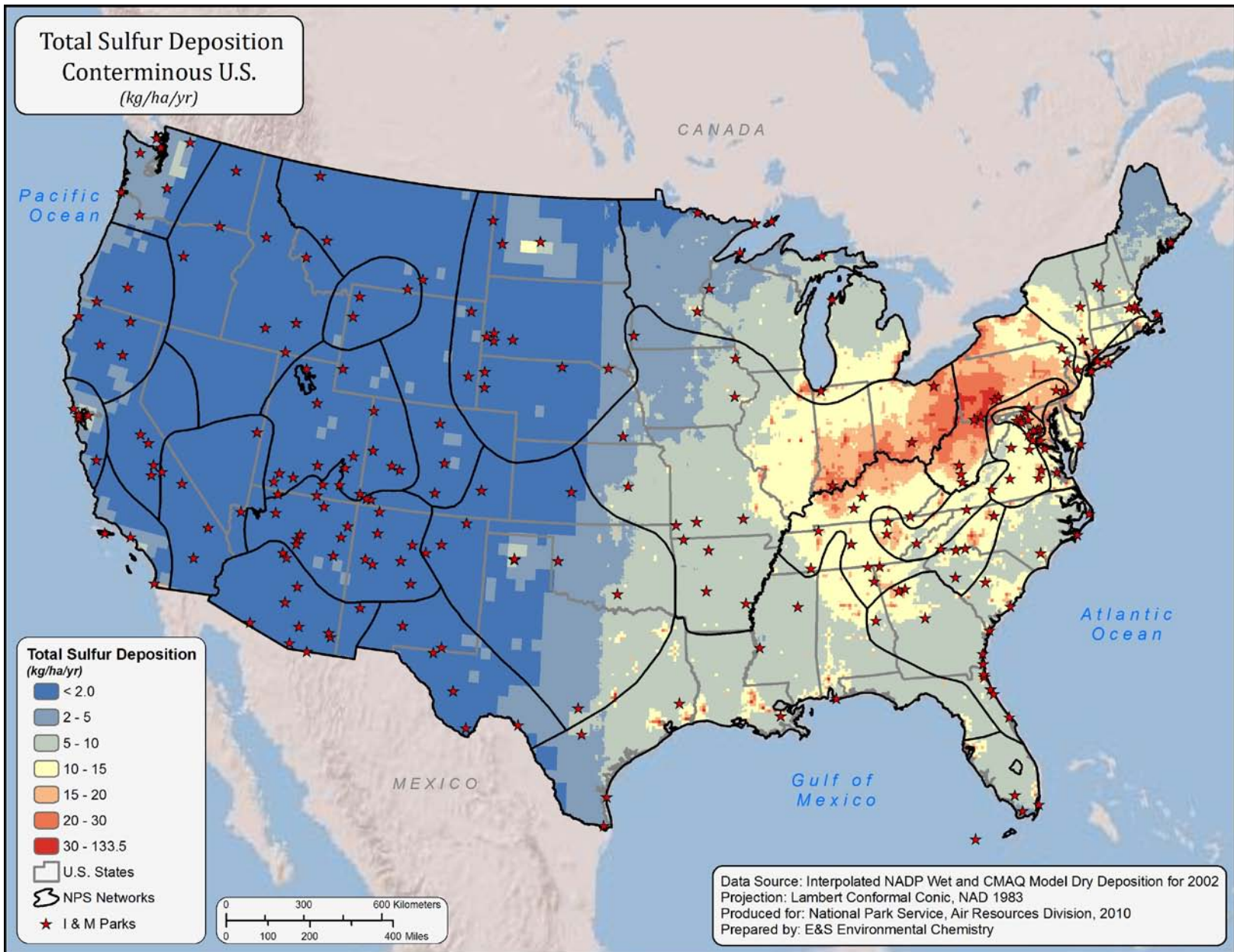
- Map M. Average land slope within park units that occur within the network, by 10-digit HUC. Some parks in this network are slightly larger than 100 mi<sup>2</sup>, but yet too small to readily see the color within the park outline. These parks are represented on the map with a colored circle and a line from the circle indicating the park location. (Source of data: U.S. EPA National Elevation Dataset [<http://ned.usgs.gov/>])
- Map N. Lands within the network that are classified as Class I or wilderness area. (Source of data: USGS 2005 [National Atlas; <http://nationalatlas.gov>] and NPS)
- Figure A. Network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, calculated as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure B. Network rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity, calculated as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure C. Network rankings for Park Protection, calculated as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure D. Network Summary Risk rankings, calculated as the average of the quintile ranks for the Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection themes.
- Figure E. Park rankings for Pollutant Exposure for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure F. Park rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure G. Park rankings for Park Protection for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure H. Park rankings for Summary Risk for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of the quintile ranks for the Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection themes.



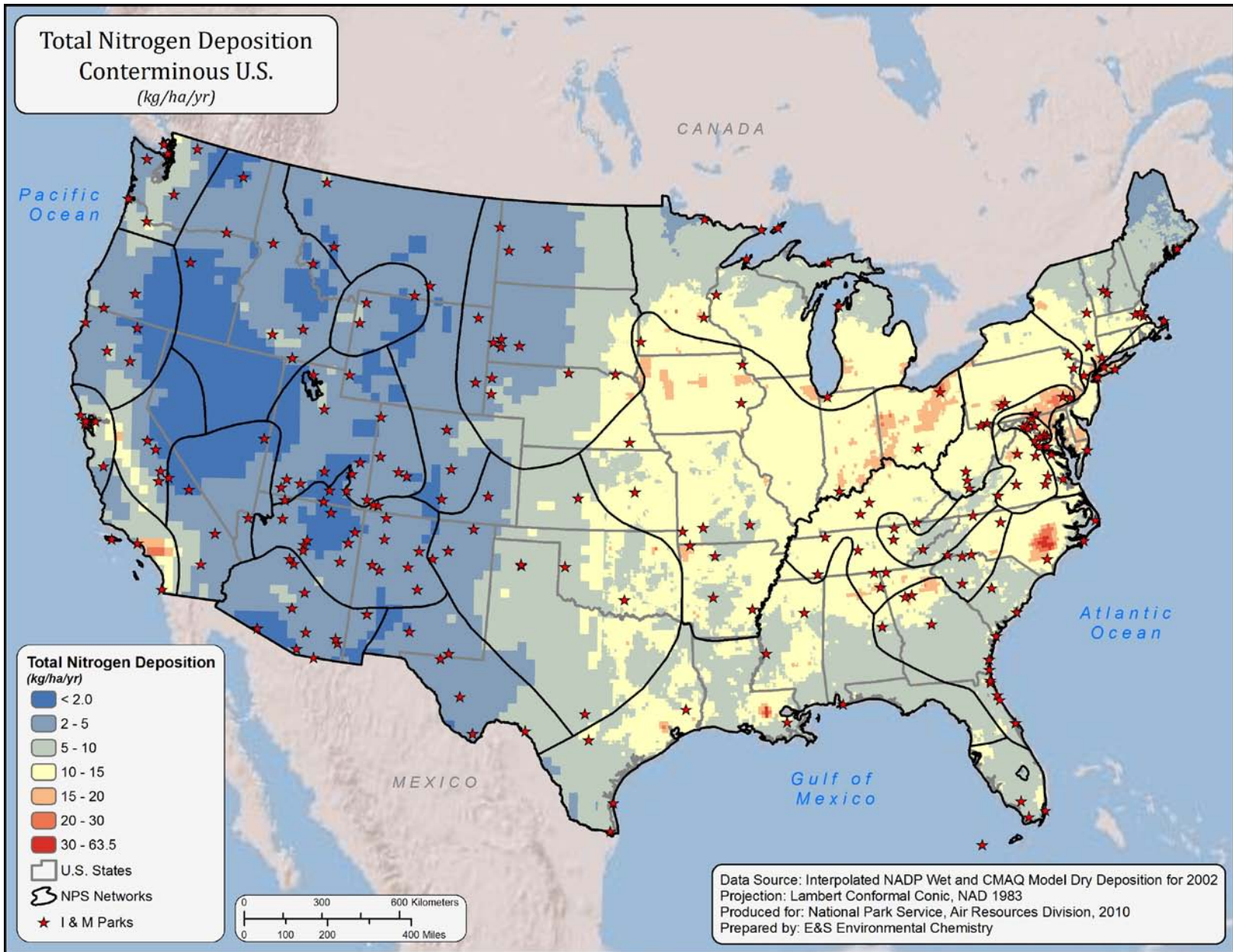
Map A



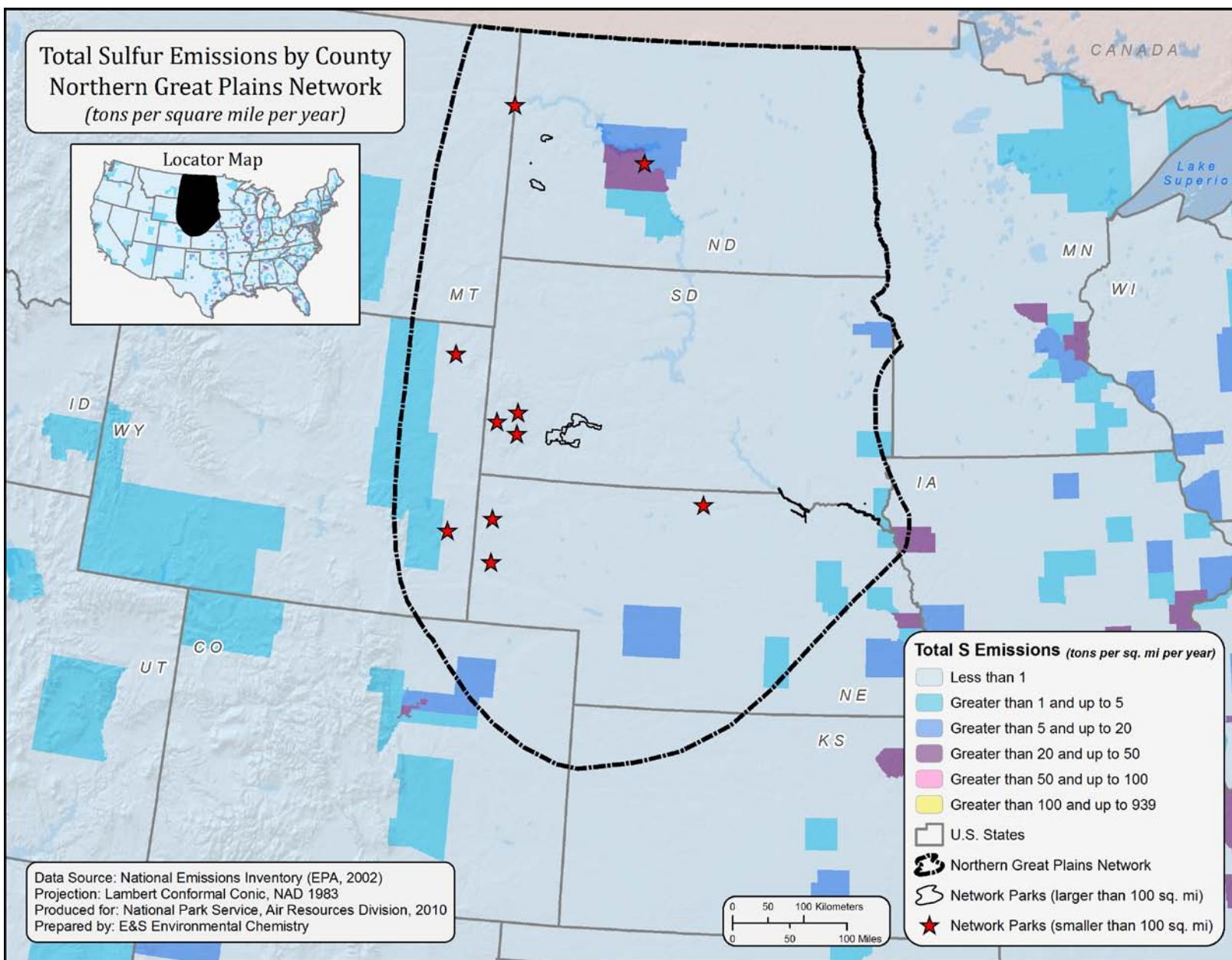
Map B



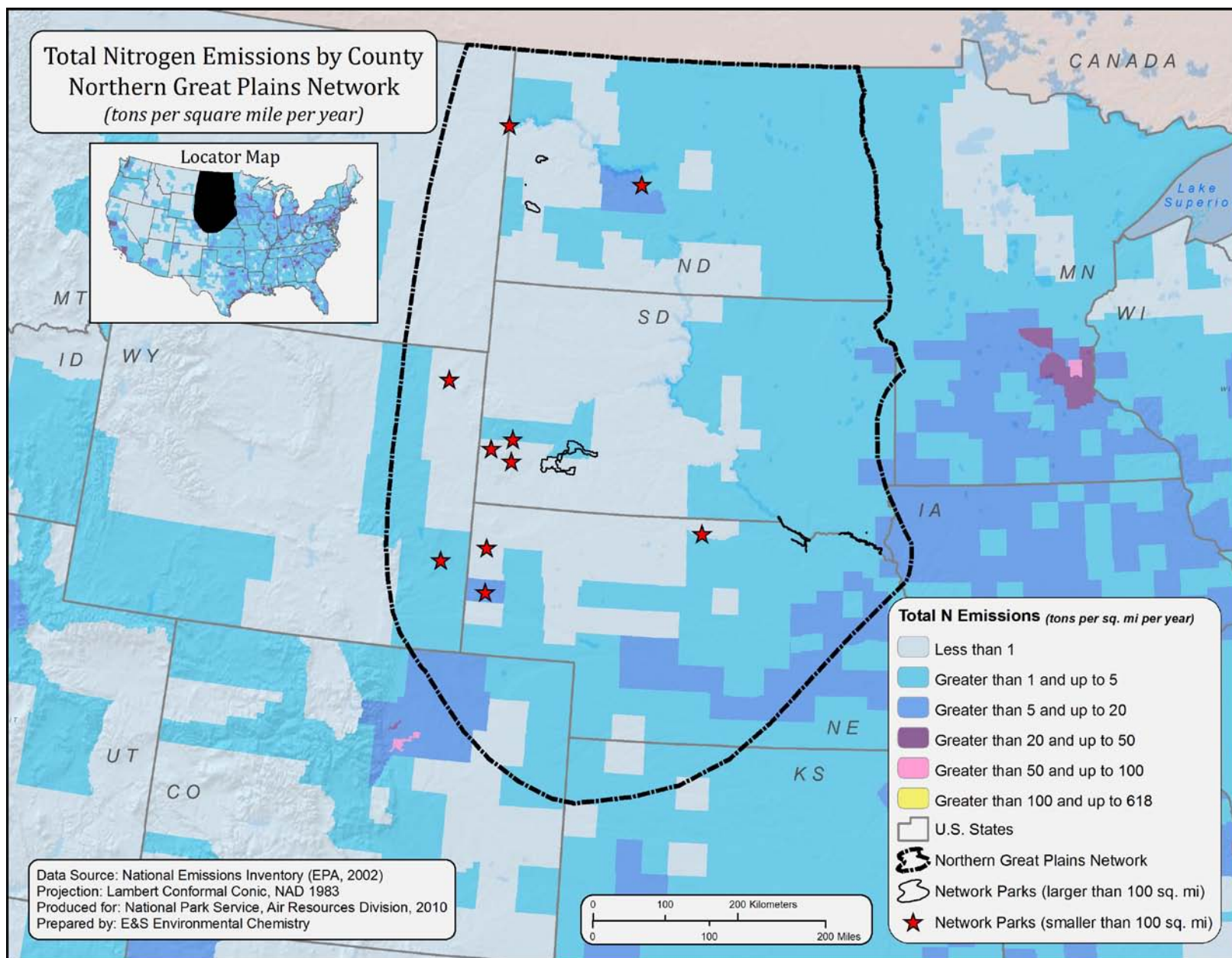
Map C

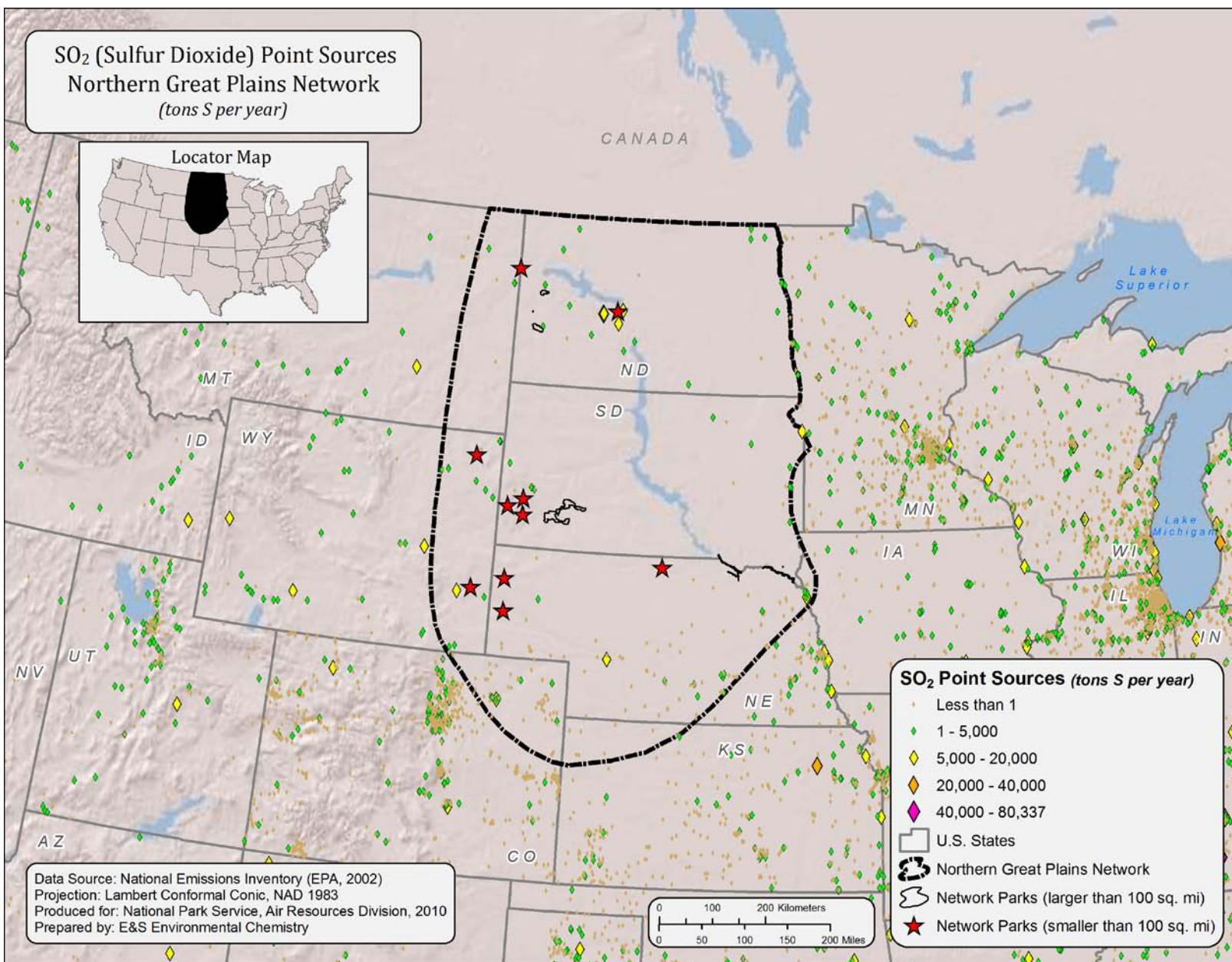


Map D



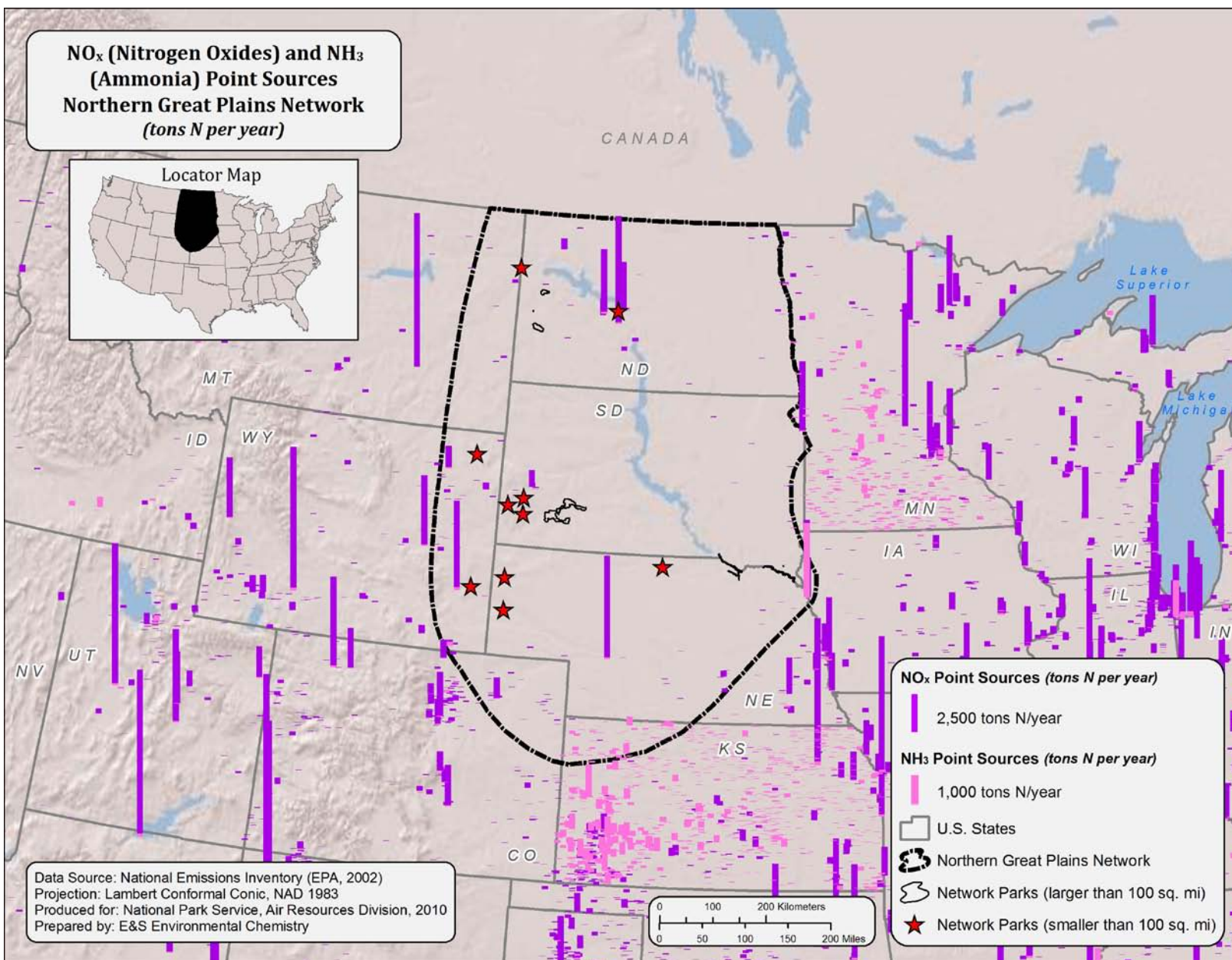
Map E



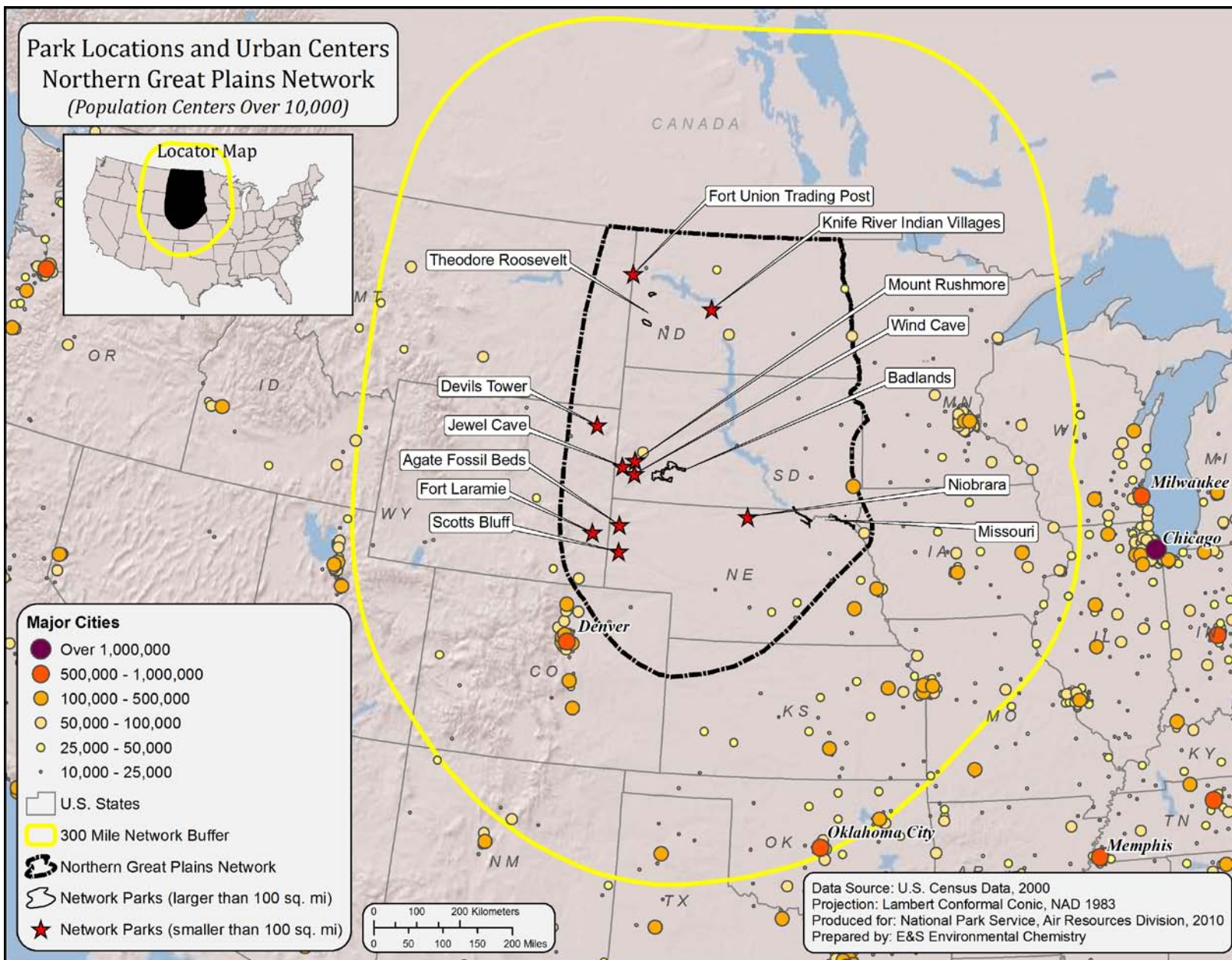


Map G

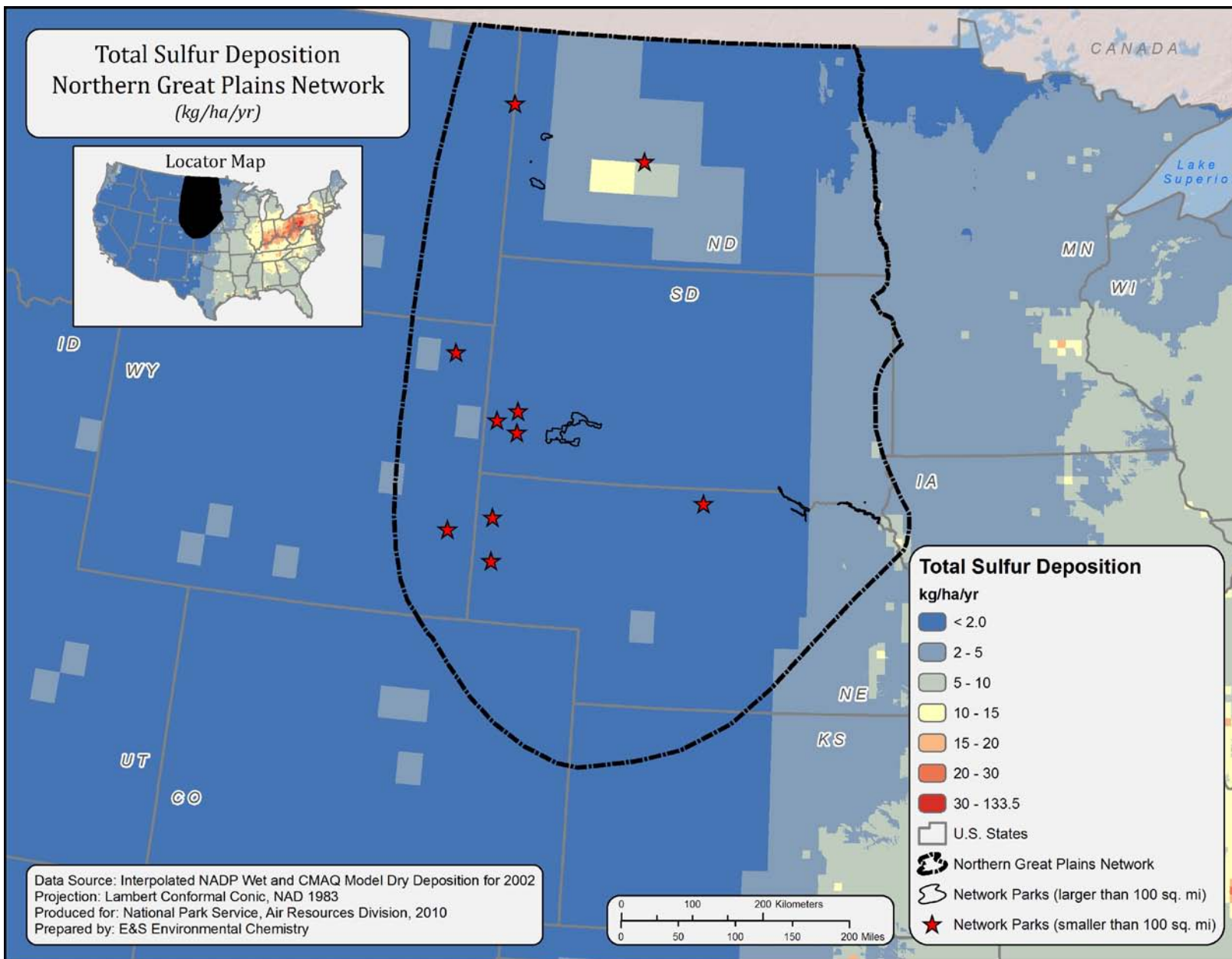




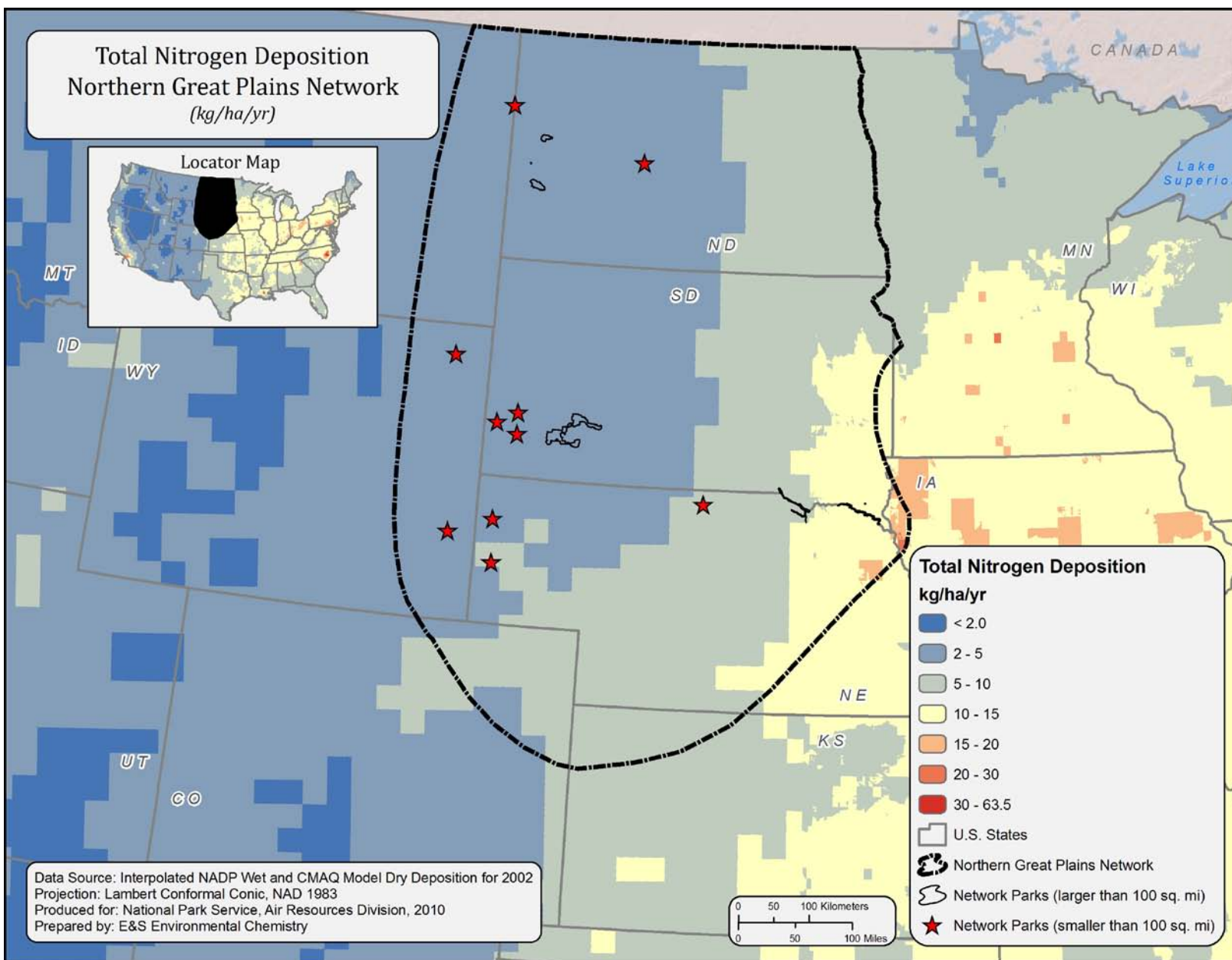
Map H



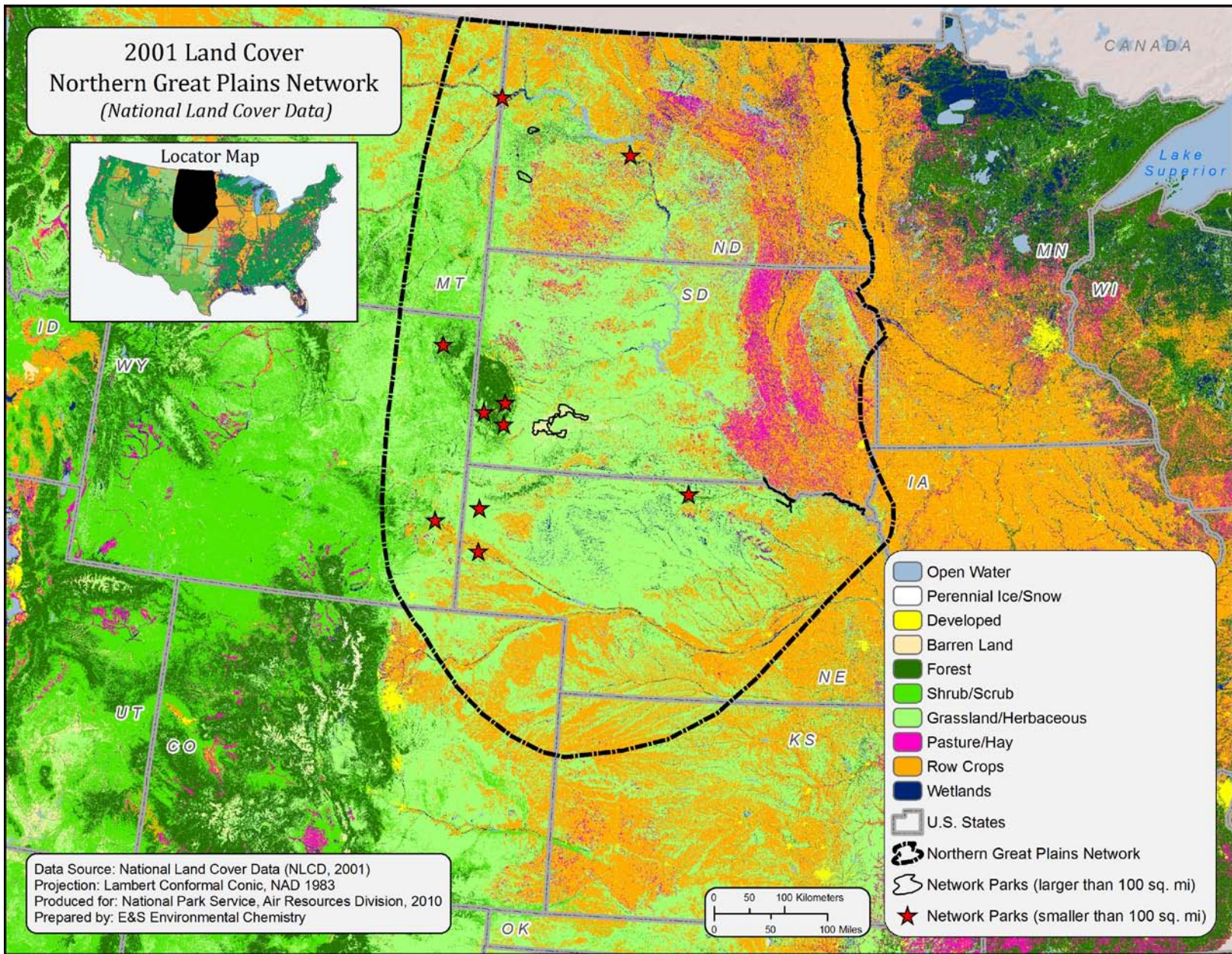
Map I



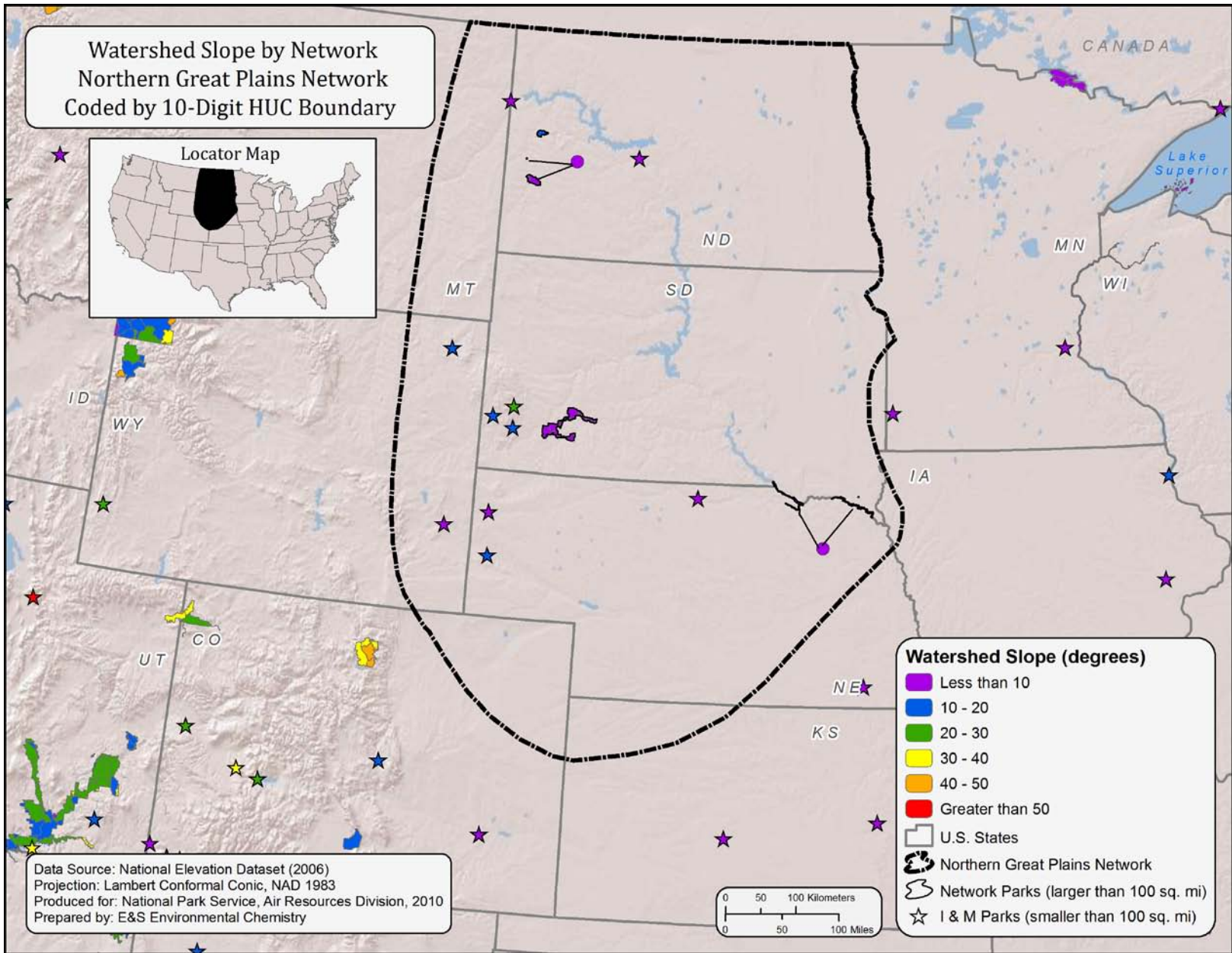
Map J



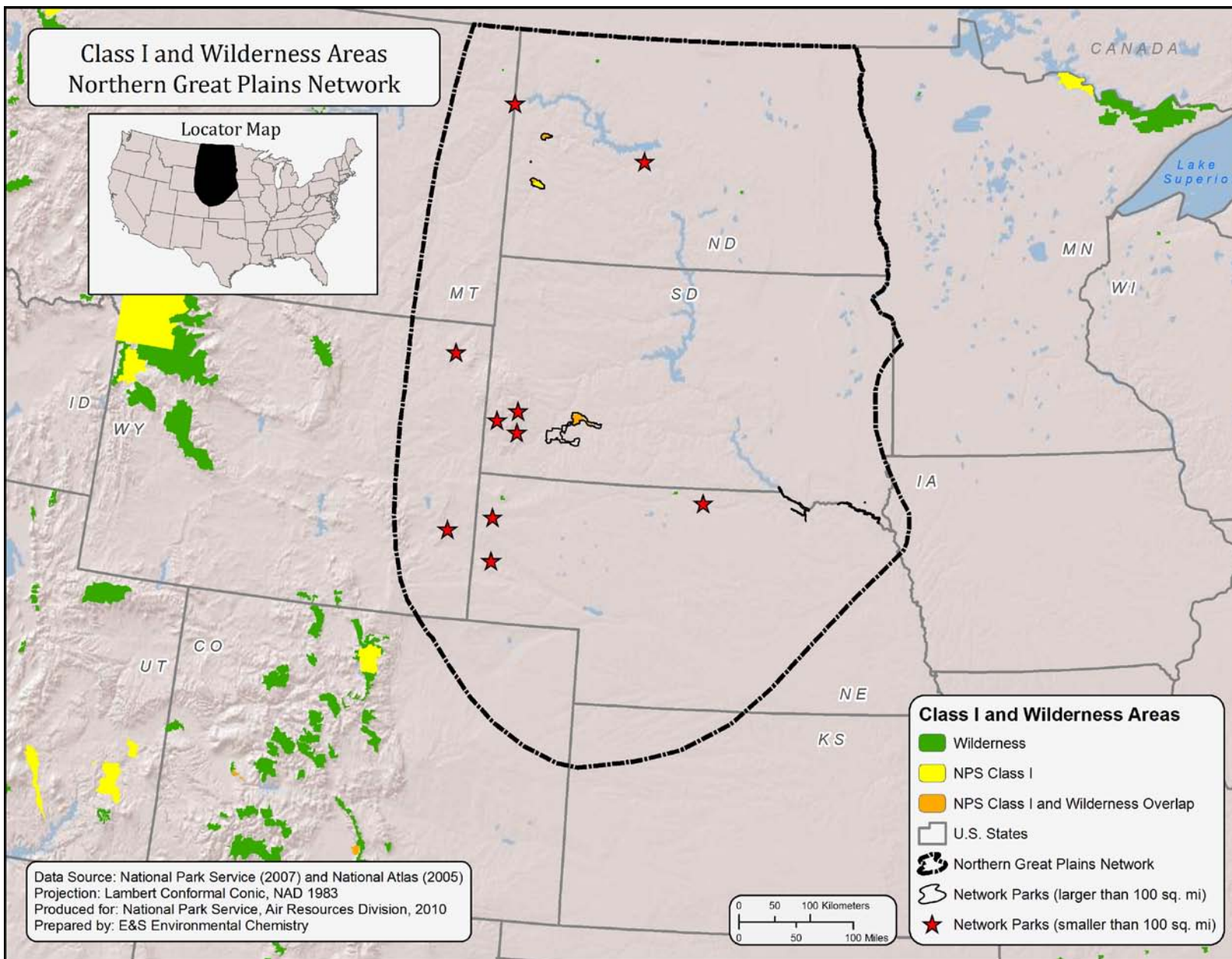
Map K



Map L



Map M



Map N

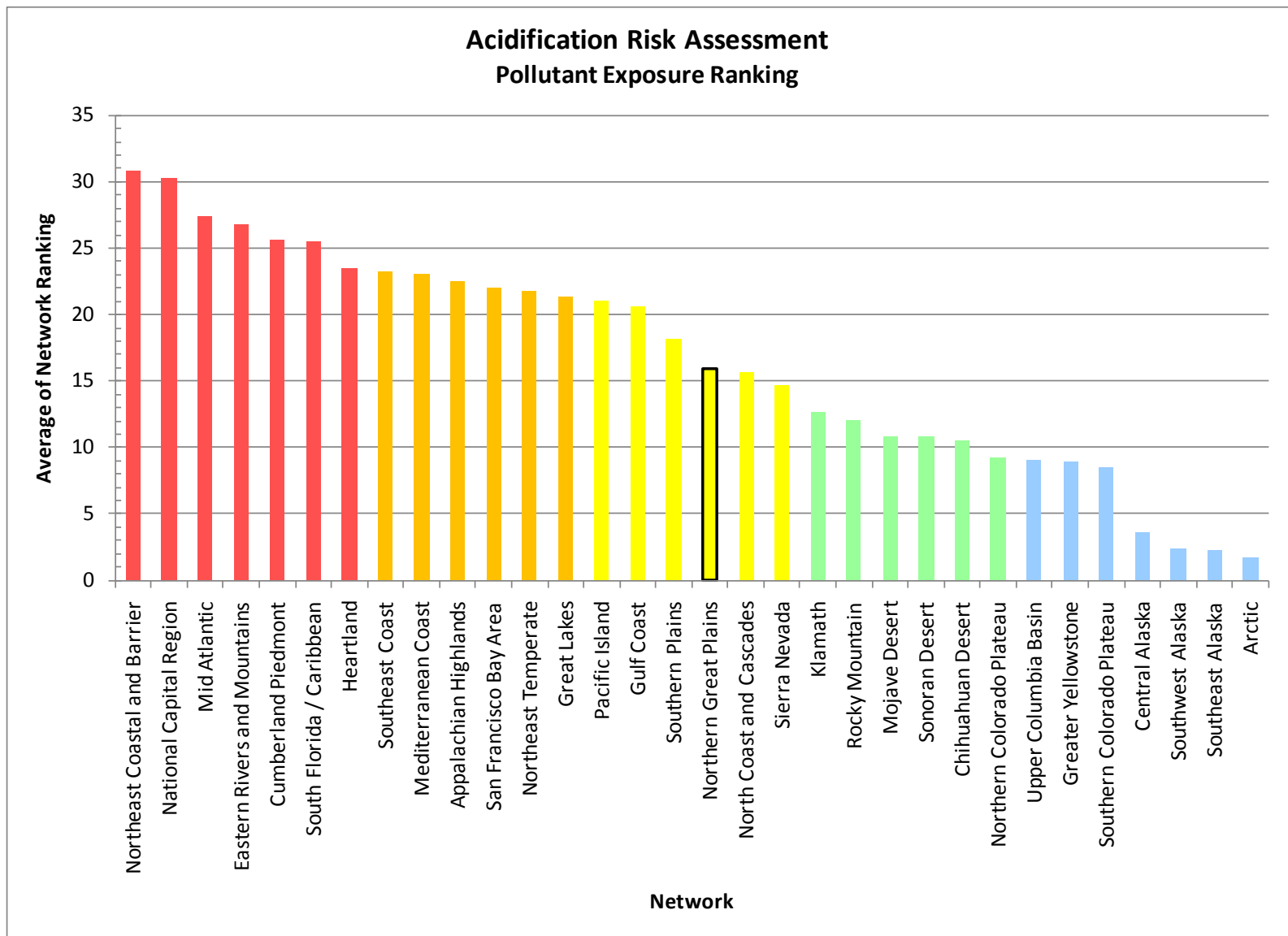


Figure A



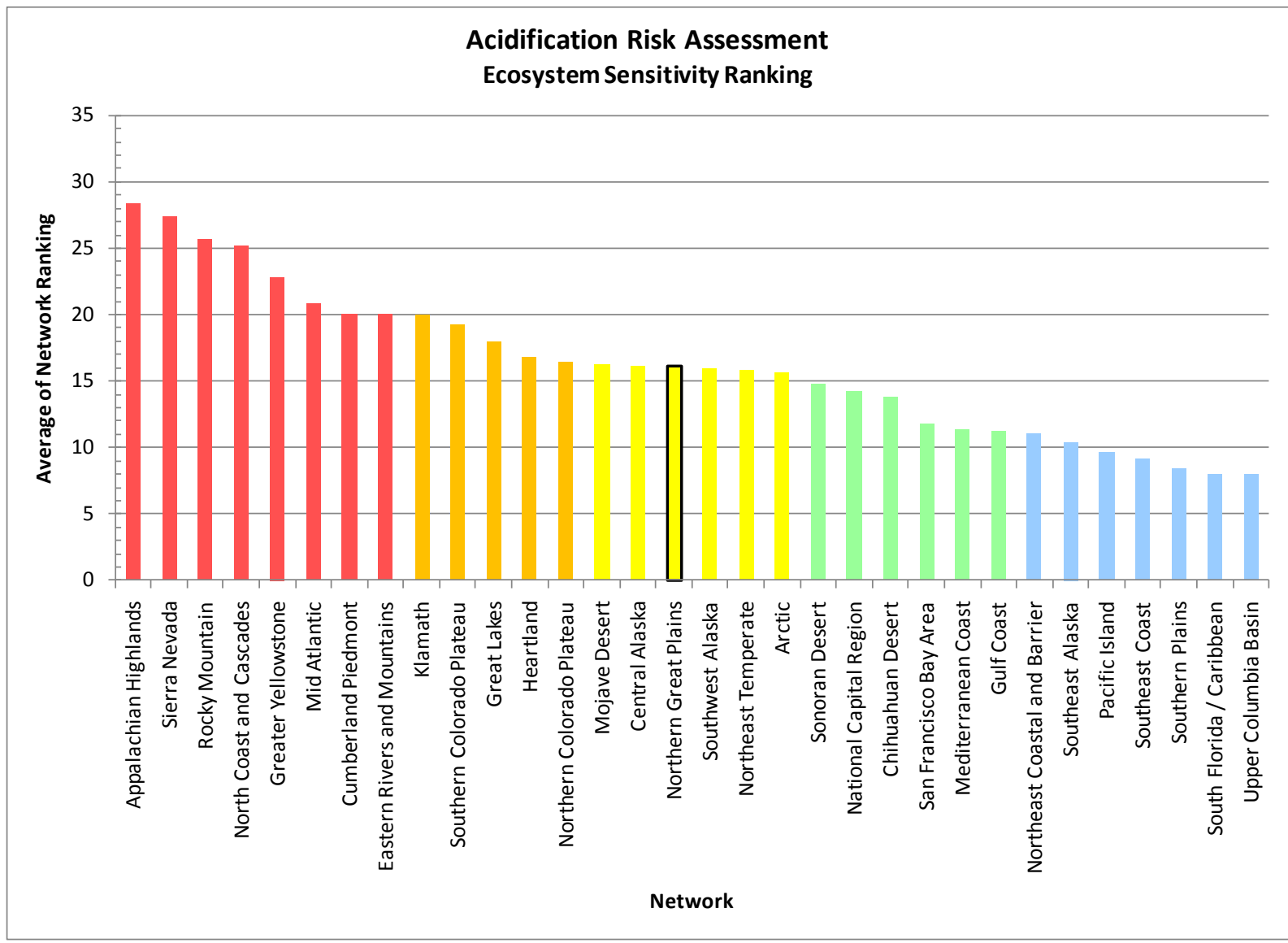


Figure B

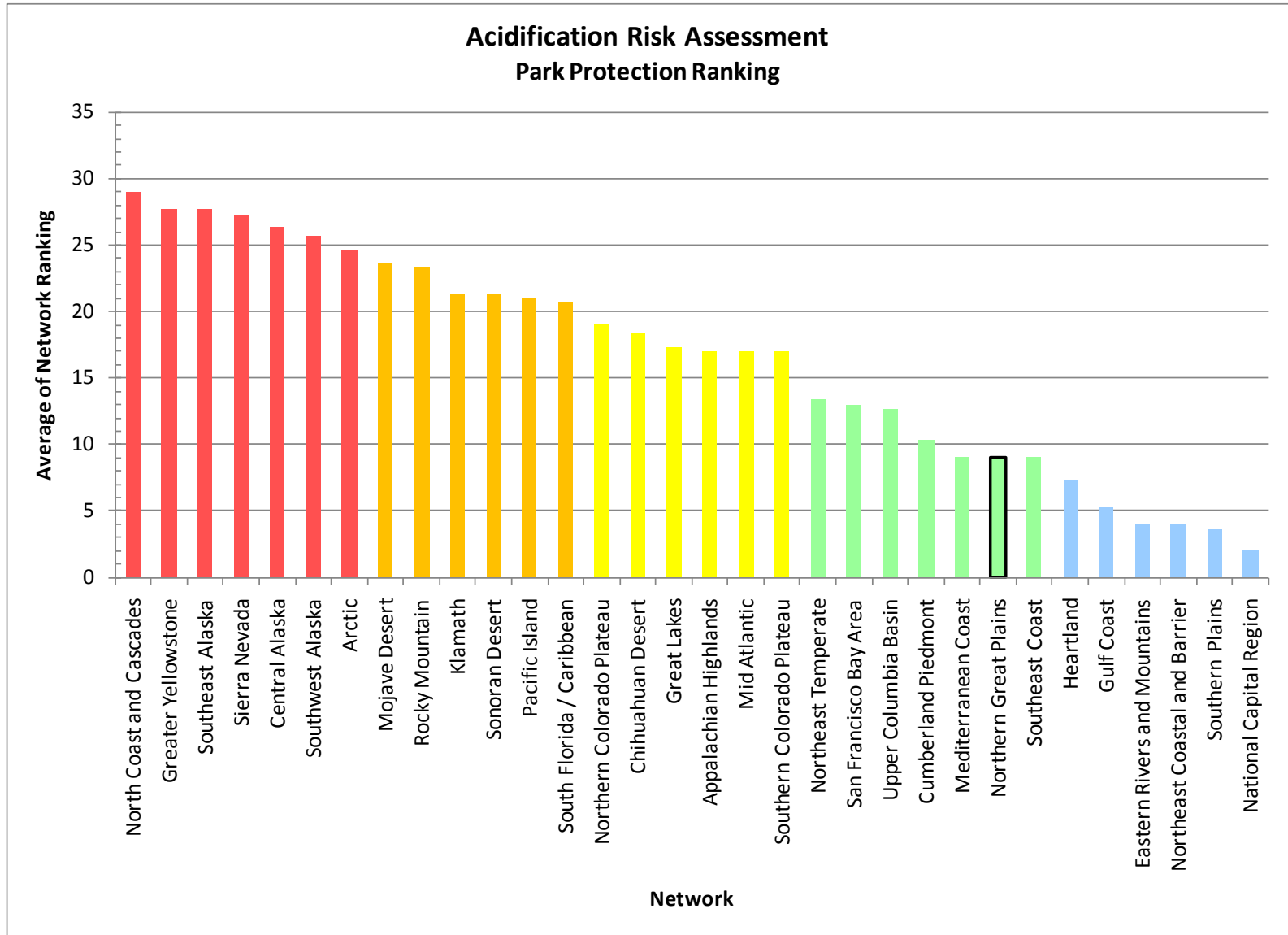


Figure C

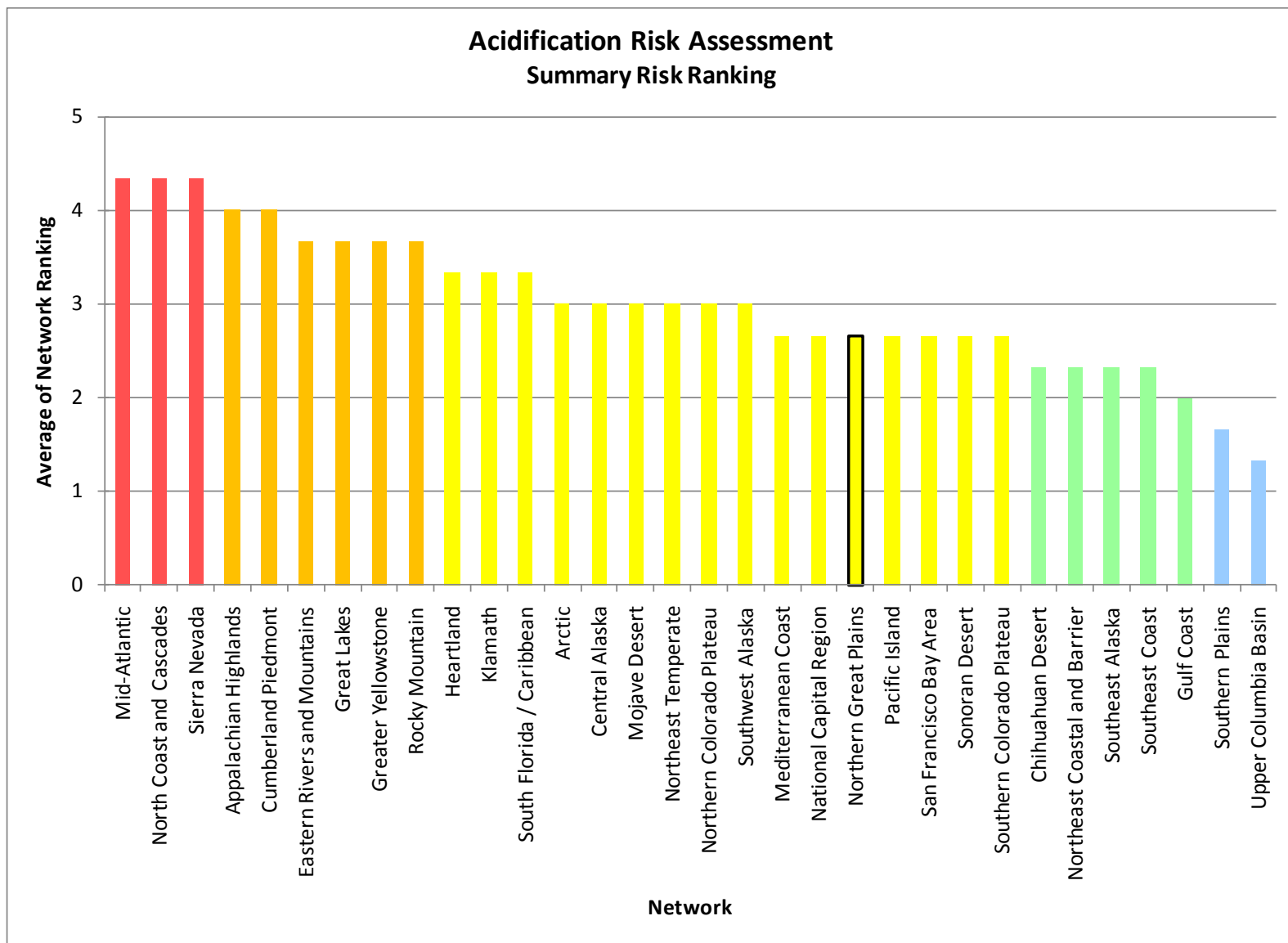


Figure D

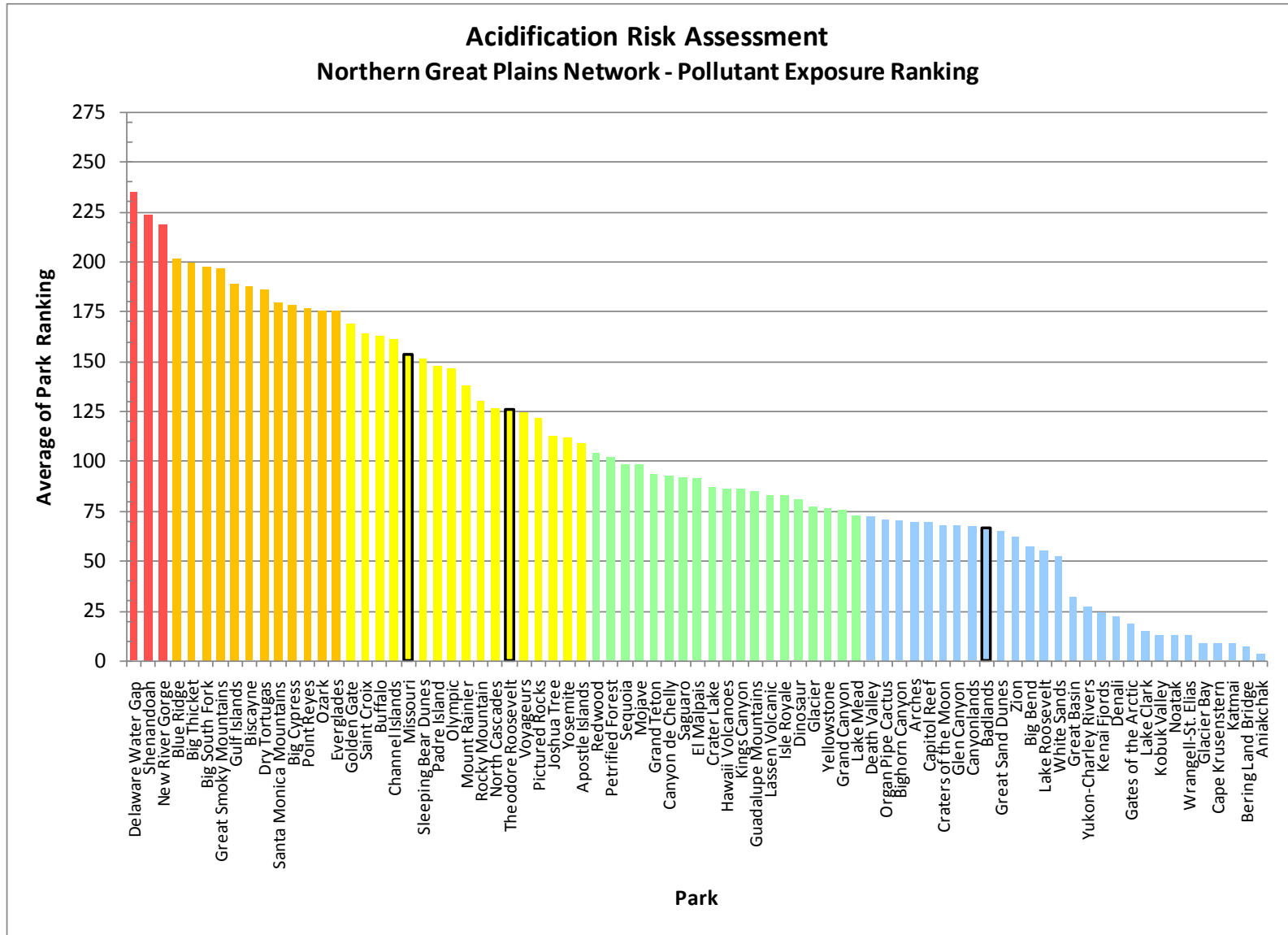


Figure E

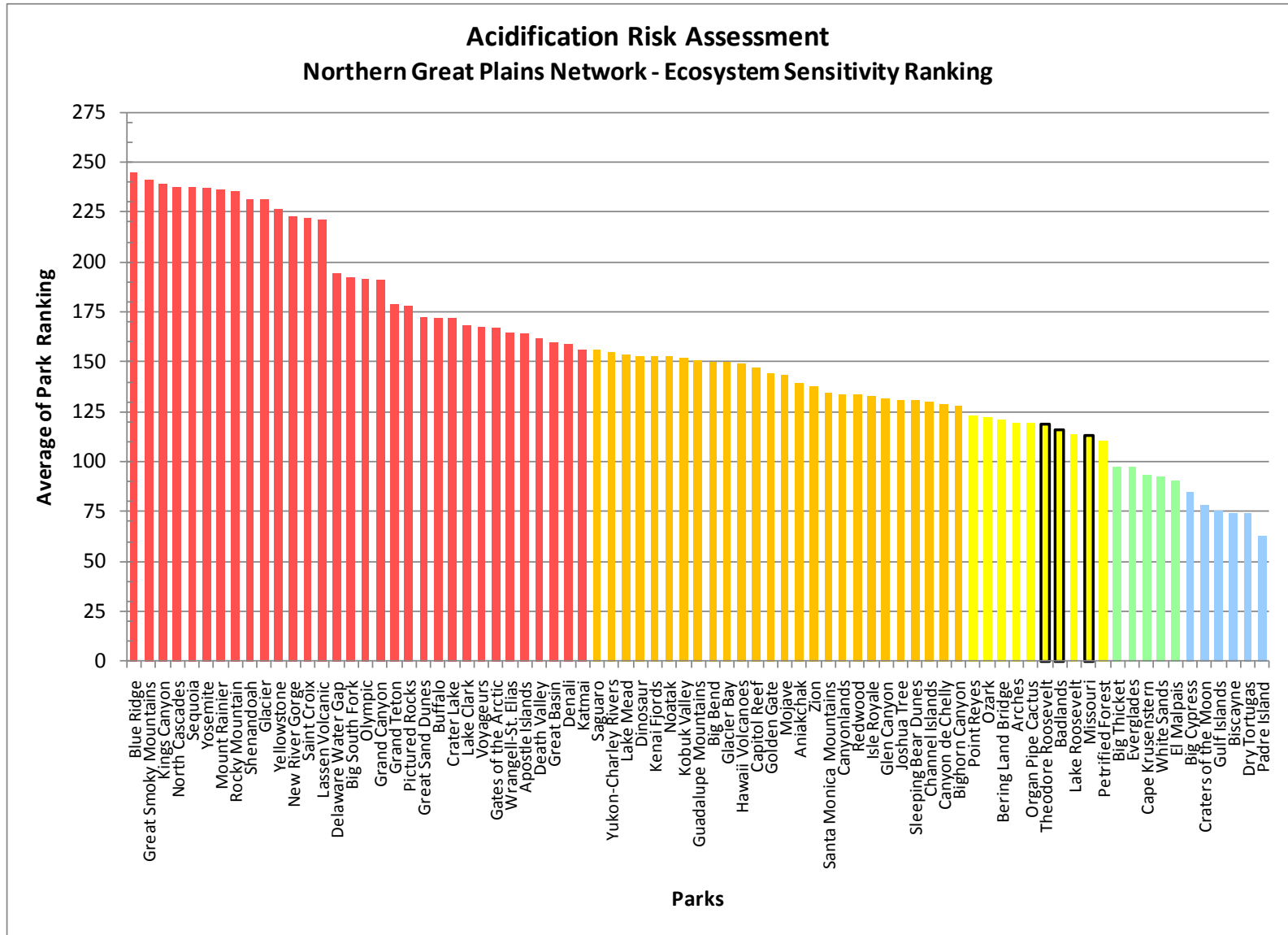


Figure F

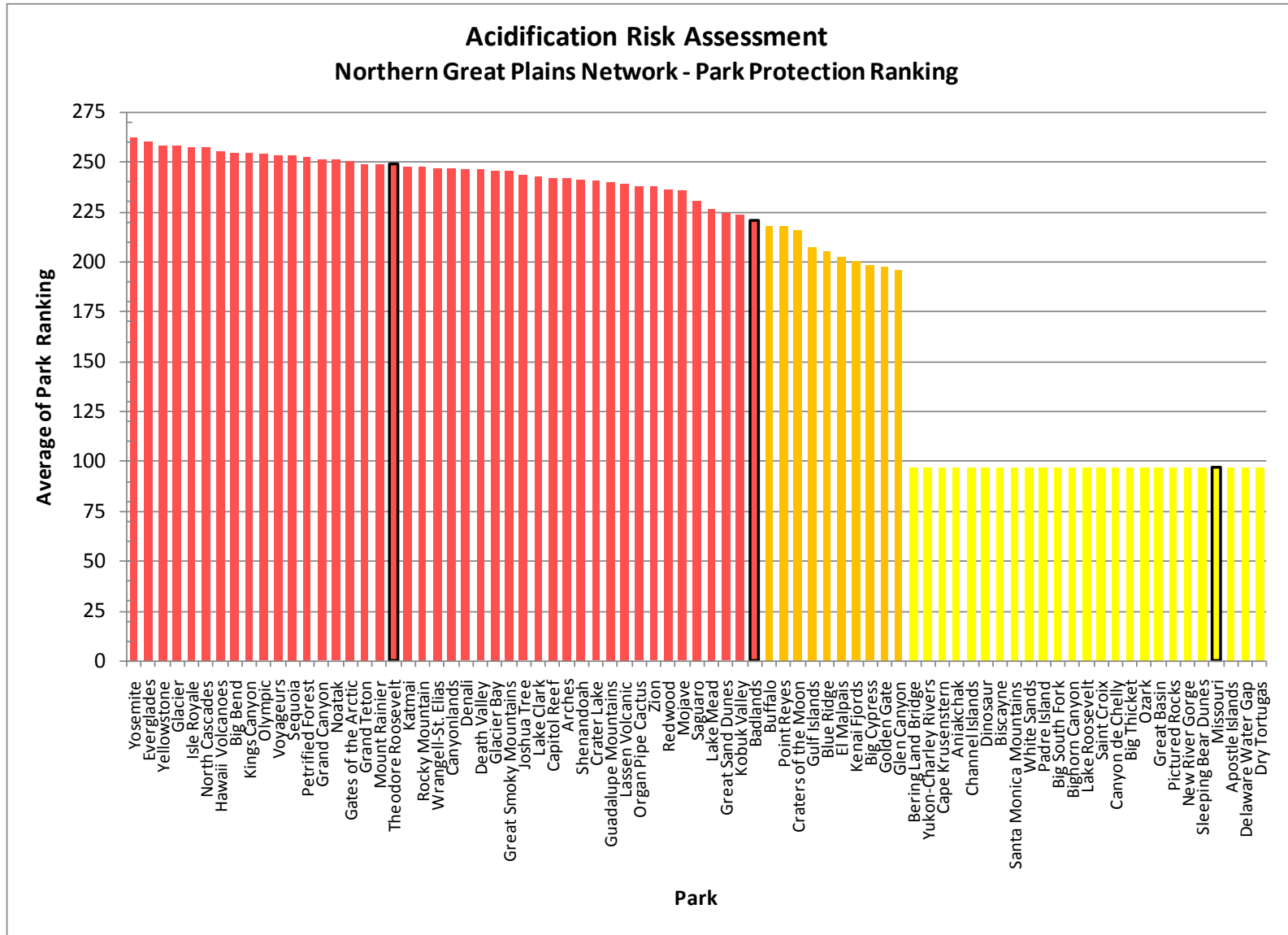


Figure G

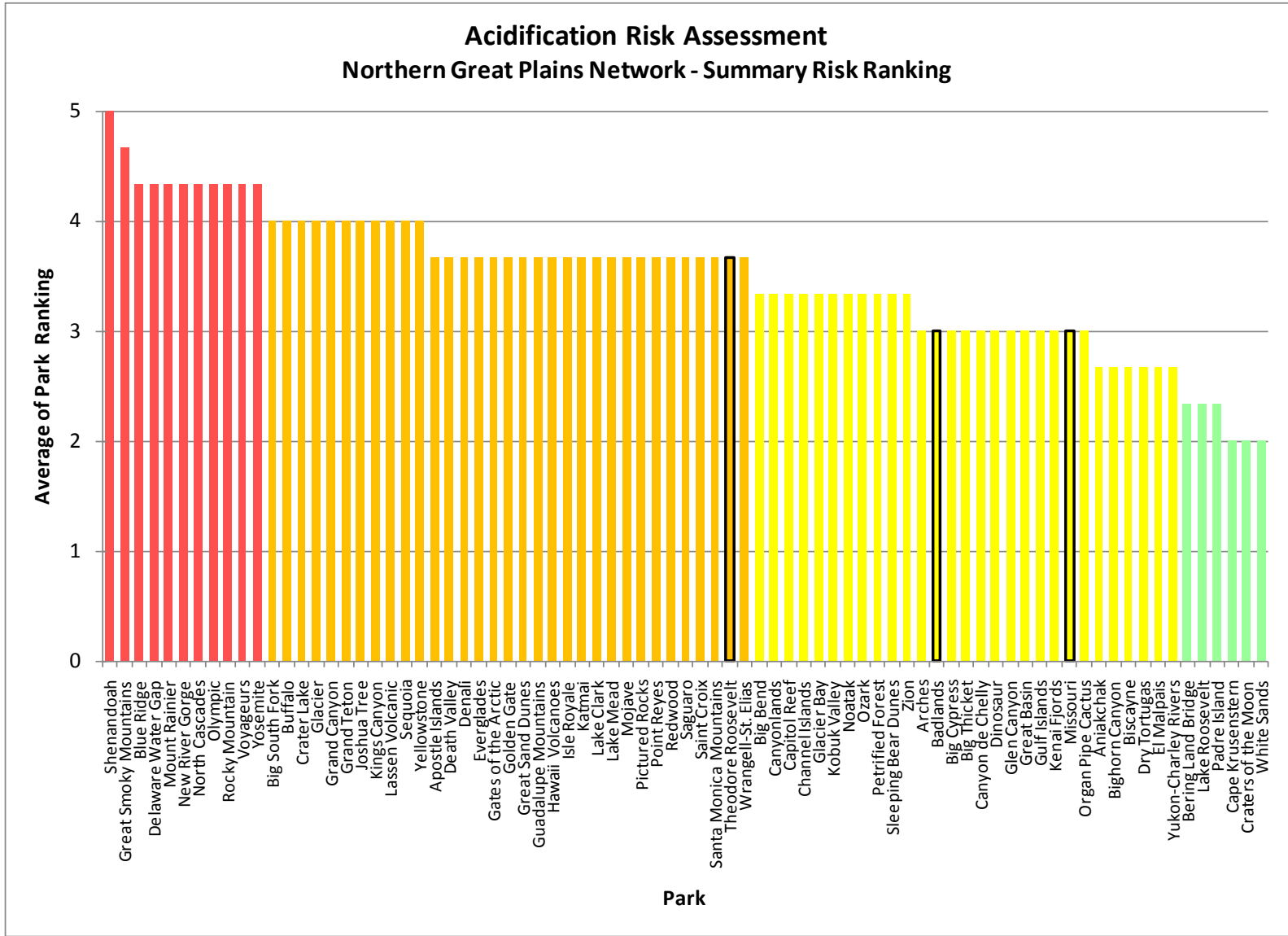


Figure H





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

NPS 920/107405, April 2011

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**



---

**Natural Resource Program Center**

Air Resources Division  
PO Box 25287  
Denver, CO 80225

[www.nature.nps.gov/air](http://www.nature.nps.gov/air)