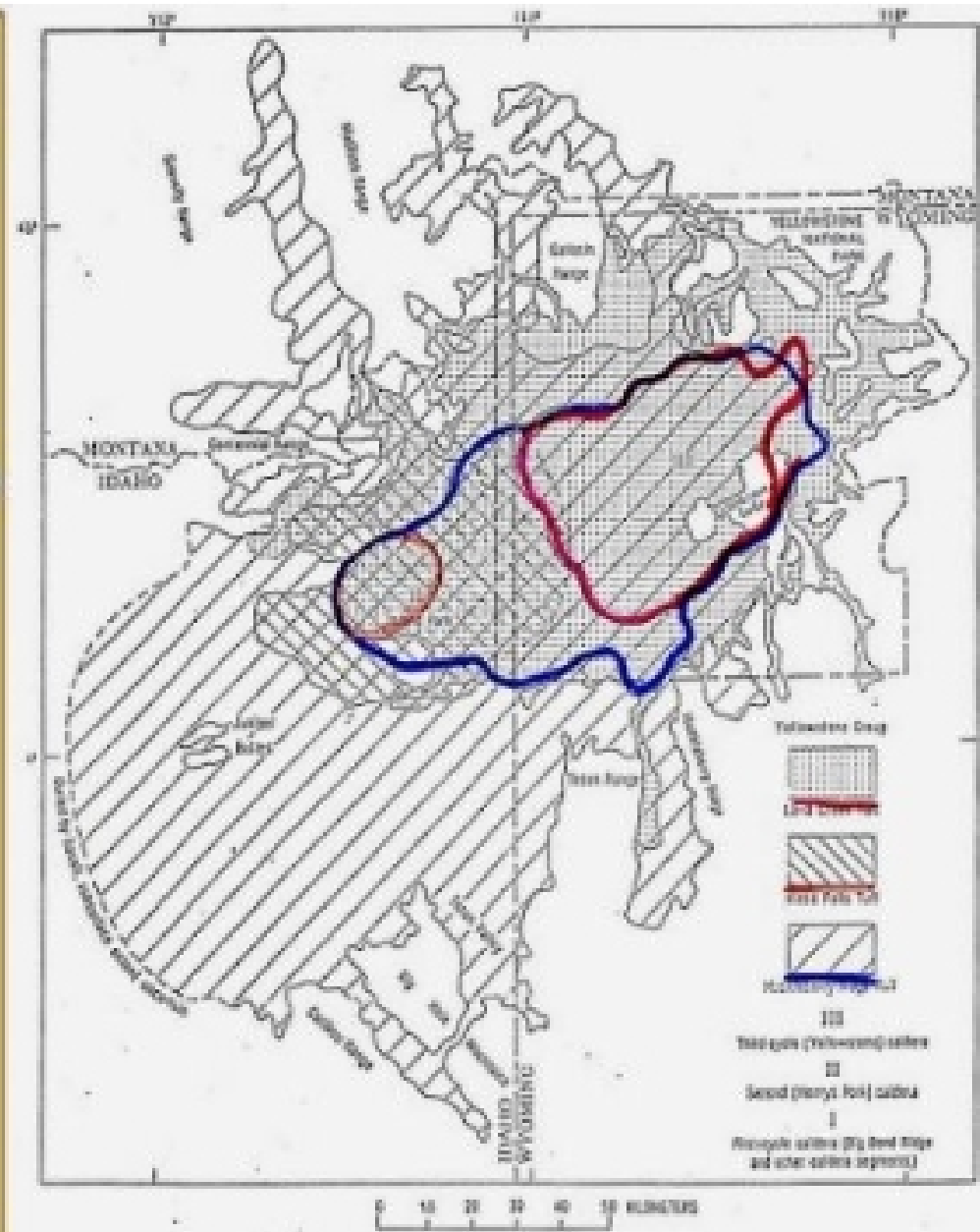
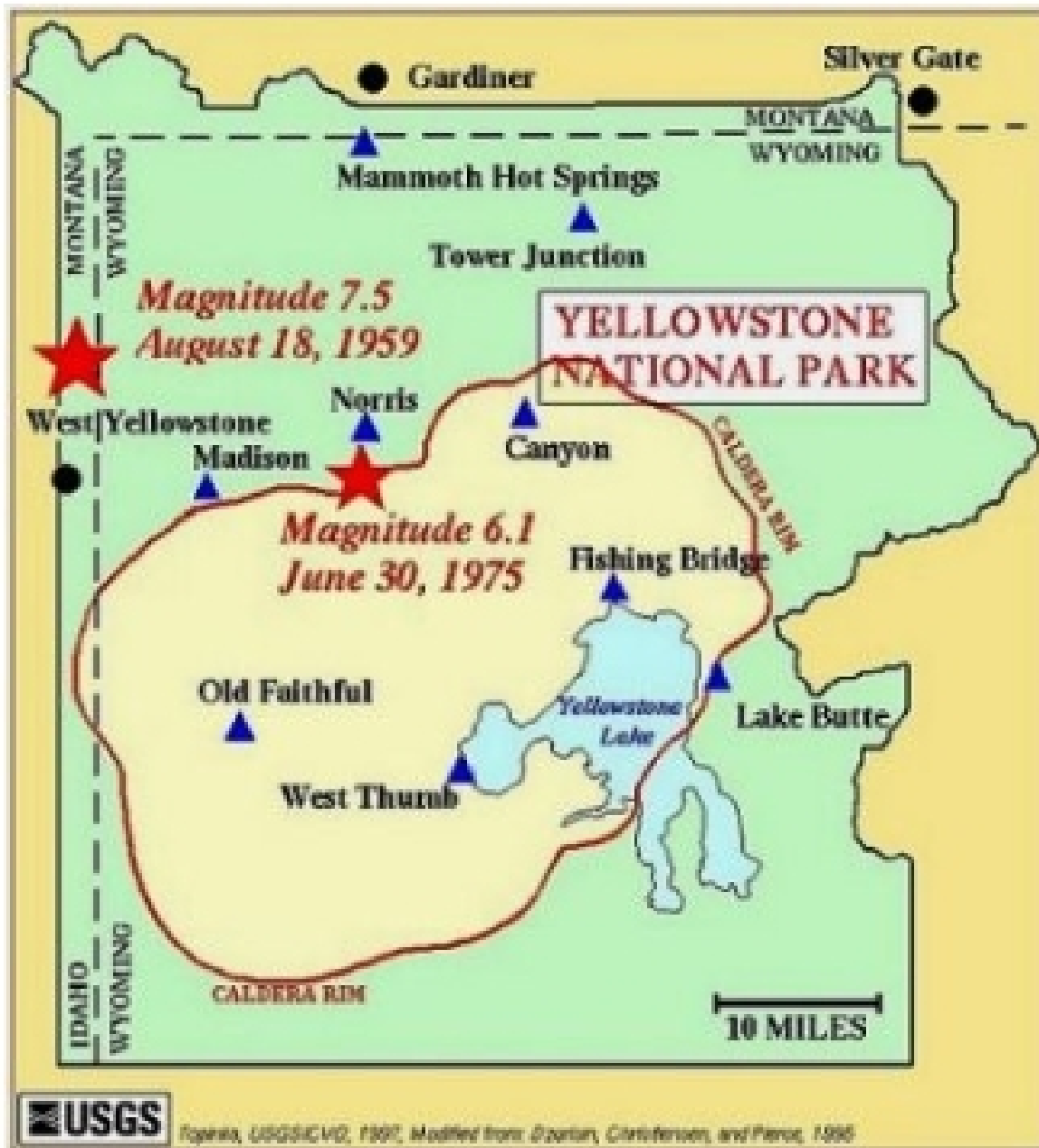


UNSTABLE GROUND  
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# Huge volcano sleeps under Yellowstone

Reading the geochemical fine print found in tiny crystals of zircon and quartz, scientists are forming a new picture of the life history – and a geologic timetable – of a type of volcano in the western United States capable of dramatically altering climate sometime within the next 100,000 years. These are volcanoes that occur over "hot spots" in the Earth and they erupt in catastrophic explosions, sending hundreds to thousands of cubic kilometers of ash into the atmosphere and wreaking climatic havoc on a global scale. By comparison, the eruption of Mount St. Helens sent a mere two cubic kilometers of ash skyward.

## Comparative Volumes of Eruptions in Cubic Kilometers

Mount St. Helens (1980), 2 km<sup>3</sup>

Lava Creek Tuff (630,000 years ago), 1000 km<sup>3</sup>

Huckleberry Ridge Tuff (2 million years ago), 2500 km<sup>3</sup>

