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March 1, 2007

## DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council Members

**FROM:** Mark Fritsch, project implementation manager

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation on within-year request for the Yakima Side Channels, Project 1997-051-00

### PROPOSED ACTION:

Approve the within-year project funding request as defined in Bonneville's 2007 - 2009 implementation plan for the Yakima Side Channels, Project 1997-051-00. At the March Council meeting, Council staff will provide an overview of the request and seek a recommendation from the Fish and Wildlife Committee and the Council. In addition, staff from the Yakama Nation will provide a brief overview of the project's history and needs.

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The total amount is \$500,000 in expense funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. This amount includes the funding level identified in the Council's FY 2007 - 2009 recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND:

The Council's FY 2007 - 2009 funding decision for the Yakima Side Channels project directed the sponsor (the Yakama Nation) to "go through the within-year request process" for their acquisitions.<sup>2</sup> At the November budget oversight group (BOG) meeting two parcels were submitted totaling \$1,853,000.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fiscal Year 2007, 2008, and 2009 at \$46,666 per year for work element #6 (i.e., conduct pre-acquisition activities)

<sup>2</sup> The Yakima Side Channels project strives to protect the most productive alluvial floodplains through acquisition. The upper watershed is experiencing unprecedented residential growth which threatens to seriously degrade watershed productivity.

<sup>3</sup> Burlington Northern Santa Fe/ Interchange Pond- Habitat Acquisition for \$628,000, and Hundley Property Acquisition for \$1,225,000.

On January 16, 2007, the Council staff presented the requests and reviewed the schedule associated with the within-year budget adjustment requests for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2007. The comment period associated with these requests closed on January 24 (no comments received) and as anticipated, after the close of the comment period, Bonneville submitted a final list of the recommended within-year requests for a Council recommendation at the February meeting.

On February 14, 2007 the Council discussed the request associated with the Yakima Side Channels Project, but was not prepared to support Bonneville's recommendation. The Council will return to the request at its March meeting for a decision.

On February 12, 2007 the Council received Bonneville's 2007 - 2009 implementation plan that provided \$500,000 per fiscal year for 2007, 2008 and 2009. As part of this recommendation, the sponsors were encouraged to seek cost share opportunities.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The recommended level of funding, defined by Bonneville, seems reasonable and will allow the Yakama Nation some flexibility to negotiate with potential sellers, and more importantly to pursue other funding sources to meet their project needs. As is evident over the past year, it has been difficult for the sponsor to secure properties in a timely manner without losing the opportunity.<sup>4</sup>

Based on the reviews conducted by the BOG members and correspondence received from Bonneville, the Council staff recommends that the \$500,000 as defined in Bonneville's 2007 - 2009 implementation plan per FY 2007, 2008, and 2009 be approved for the Yakima Side Channels, Project 1997-051-00.

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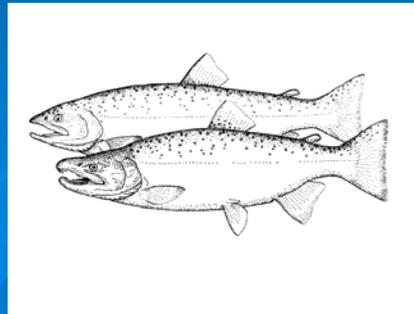
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<sup>4</sup> The sponsors made an initial request (December 7, 2005) for funds to purchase the Browitt and Runacres parcels. This request was approved by the Council and recommended to Bonneville on February 22, 2006. These acquisitions did not occur due to high landowner expectations and a lack of adequate negotiation time.

# Yakima Side Channels Project

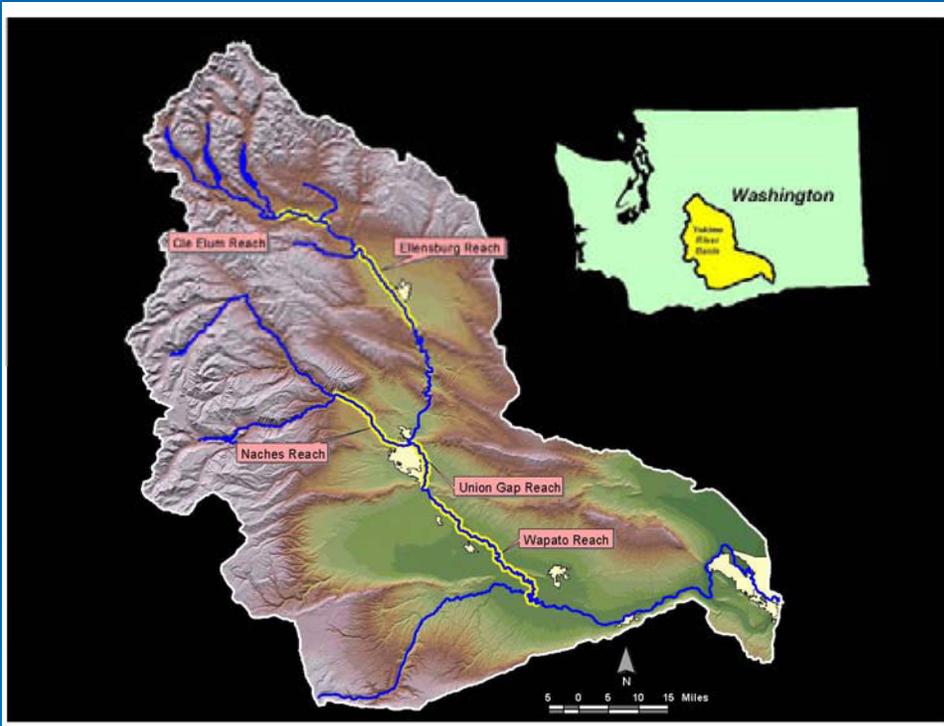
*Habitat for Fish*

Scott Nicolai  
YN-YKFP Habitat Biologist



# Yakima Side Channels

- The Yakima Side Channels (YSC) Project was initiated in '97 and is co-managed by WDFW and the Yakama Nation.
- The project goal is to protect the most productive floodplain habitat remaining in the basin.



Priority Reaches –Easton/Cle Elum, Kittitas, Naches, Union Gap, & Lower Naches

# YSC Priority Reaches



# YSC Project Criteria

- Habitat acquisition criteria:
  - Owned by a willing seller;
  - characterized by connected or restorable floodplain;
  - prime spawning and/or rearing habitat; and
  - critical habitat for listed Mid-Columbia steelhead.
- Preference is also given to properties that have a water right, and/or are adjacent to protected lands.

# Project Success



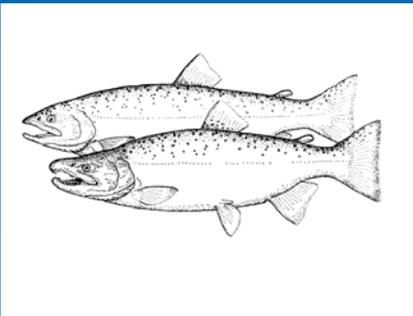
Scatter Creek Side Channel near  
Cle Elum.

- Protected 13 parcels encompassing 960 acres of high value habitats in four priority reaches.
- YSC has generated over **\$5 million** in matching, non-BPA funds for habitat acquisitions.
- Partnered on several restoration projects (e.g., Hanson Ponds).

# Past Accomplishments

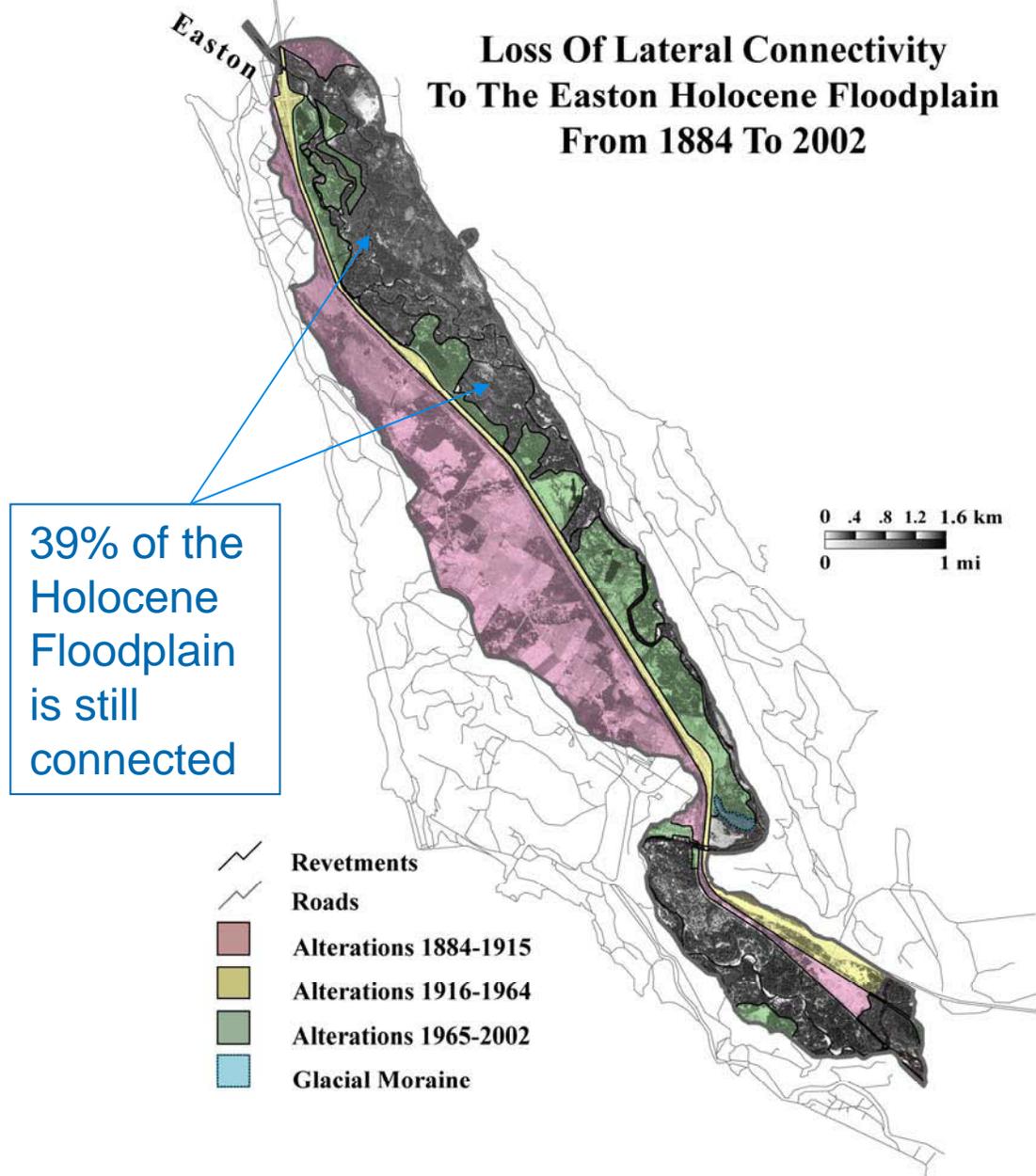
## Priority Floodplains:

- Easton
- Cle Elum
- Kittitas
- Lower Naches
- Union Gap

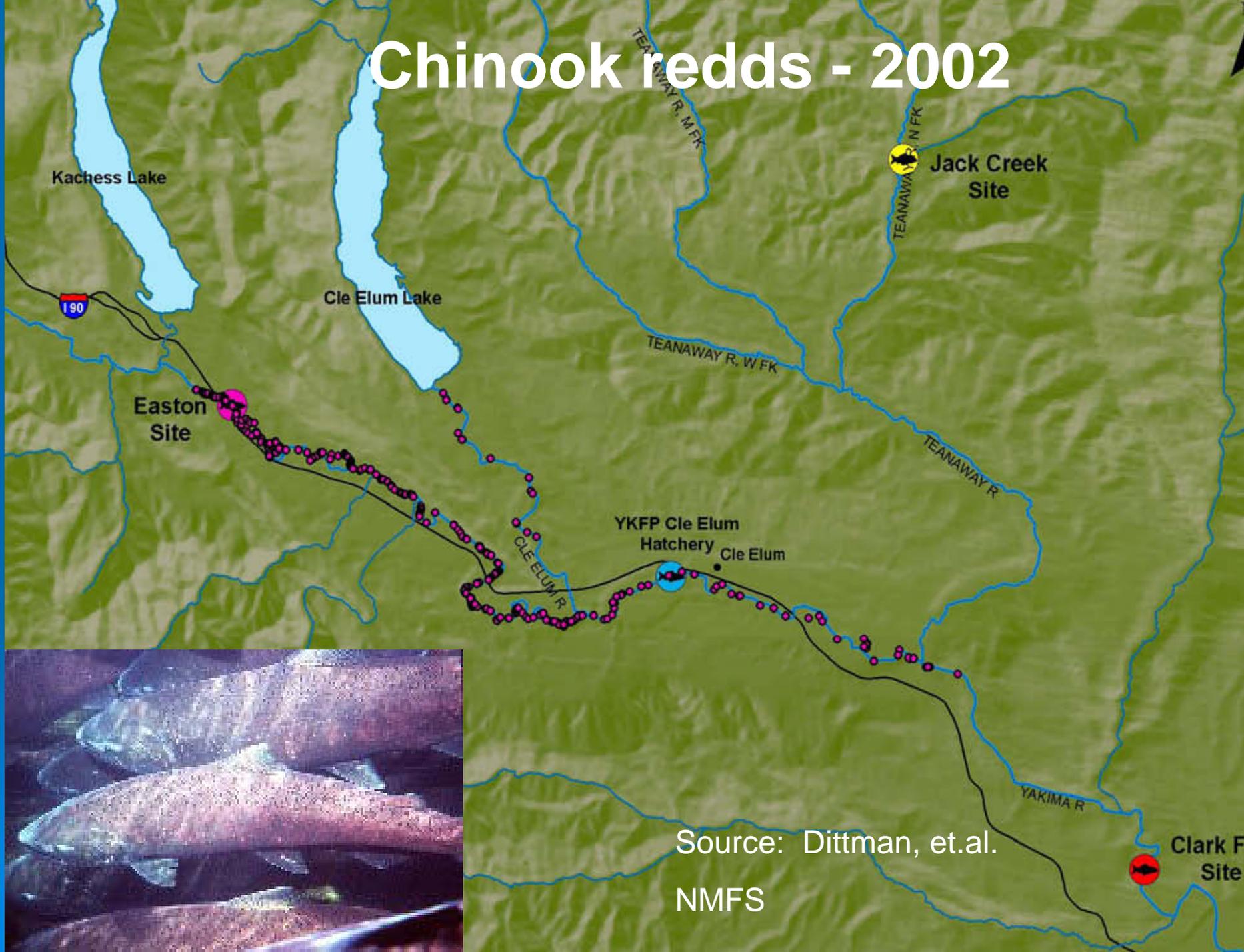


# Easton Floodplain

## Loss Of Lateral Connectivity To The Easton Holocene Floodplain From 1884 To 2002



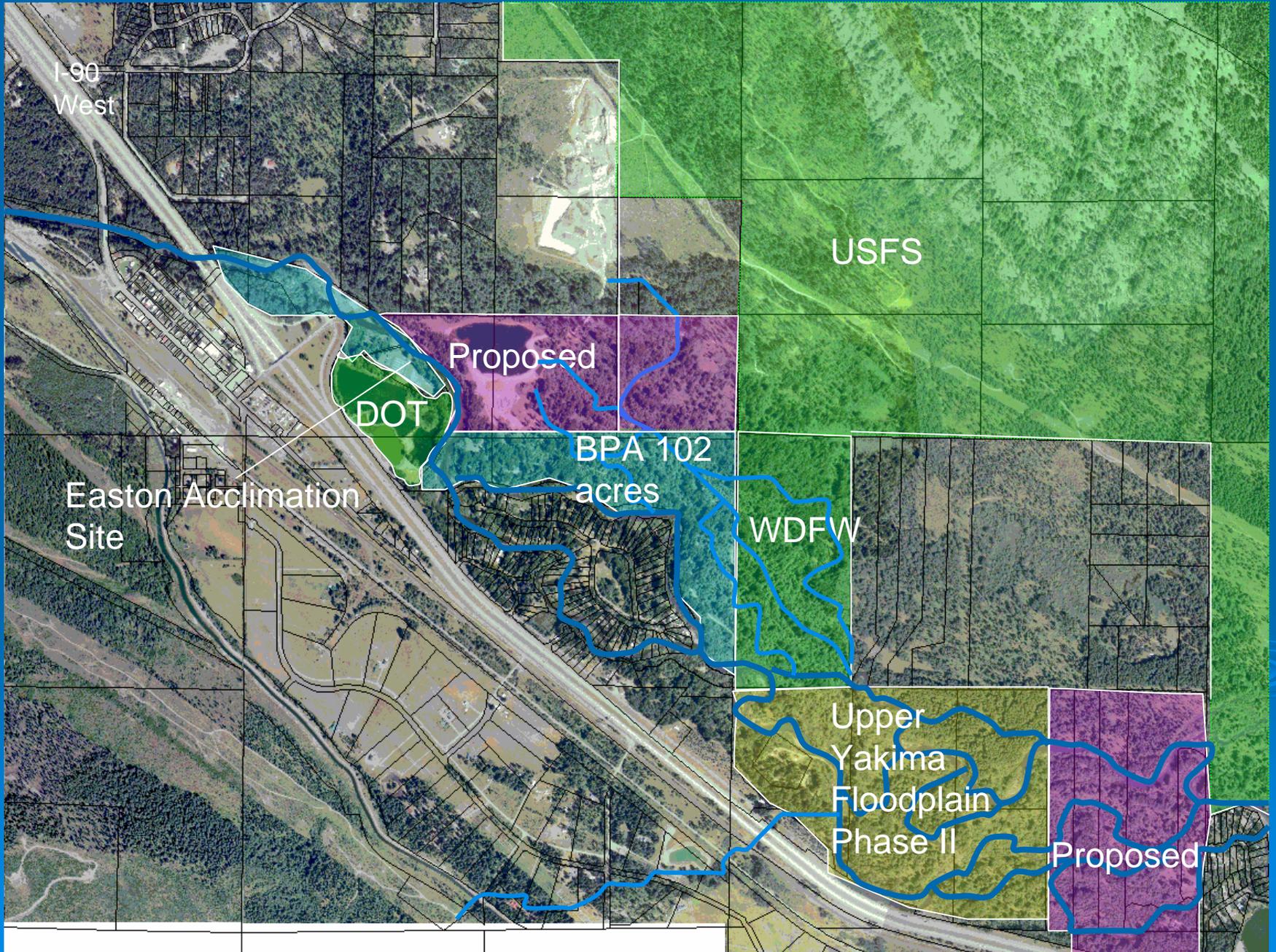
# Chinook redds - 2002



Source: Dittman, et.al.

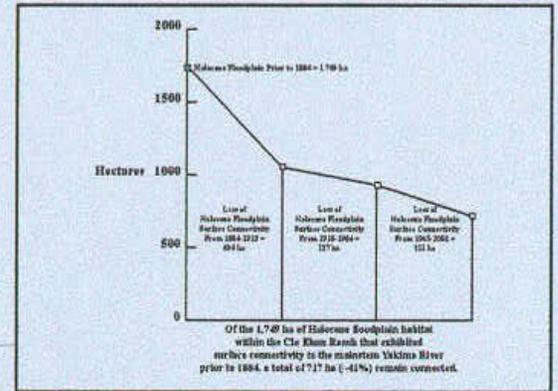
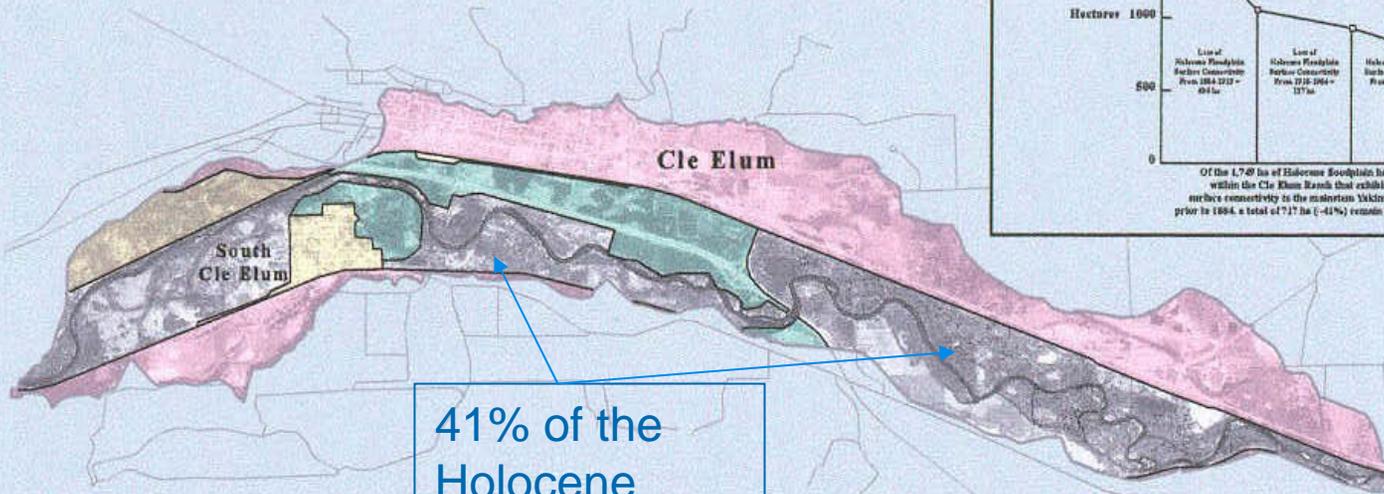
NMFS

# Easton Reach



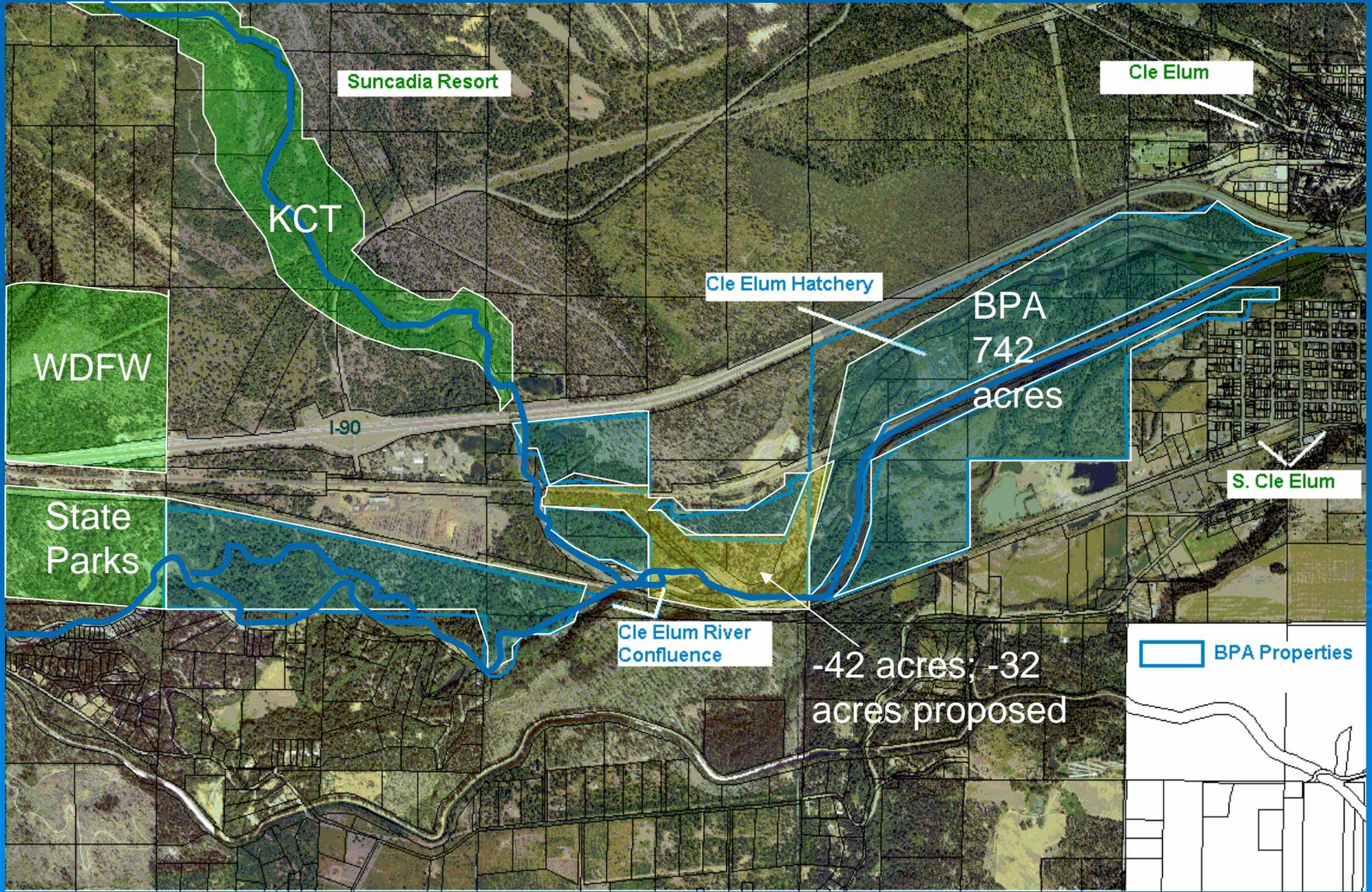
# Cle Elum Floodplain Reach

## Loss Of Lateral Connectivity To The Cle Elum Holocene Floodplain From 1884 To 2002

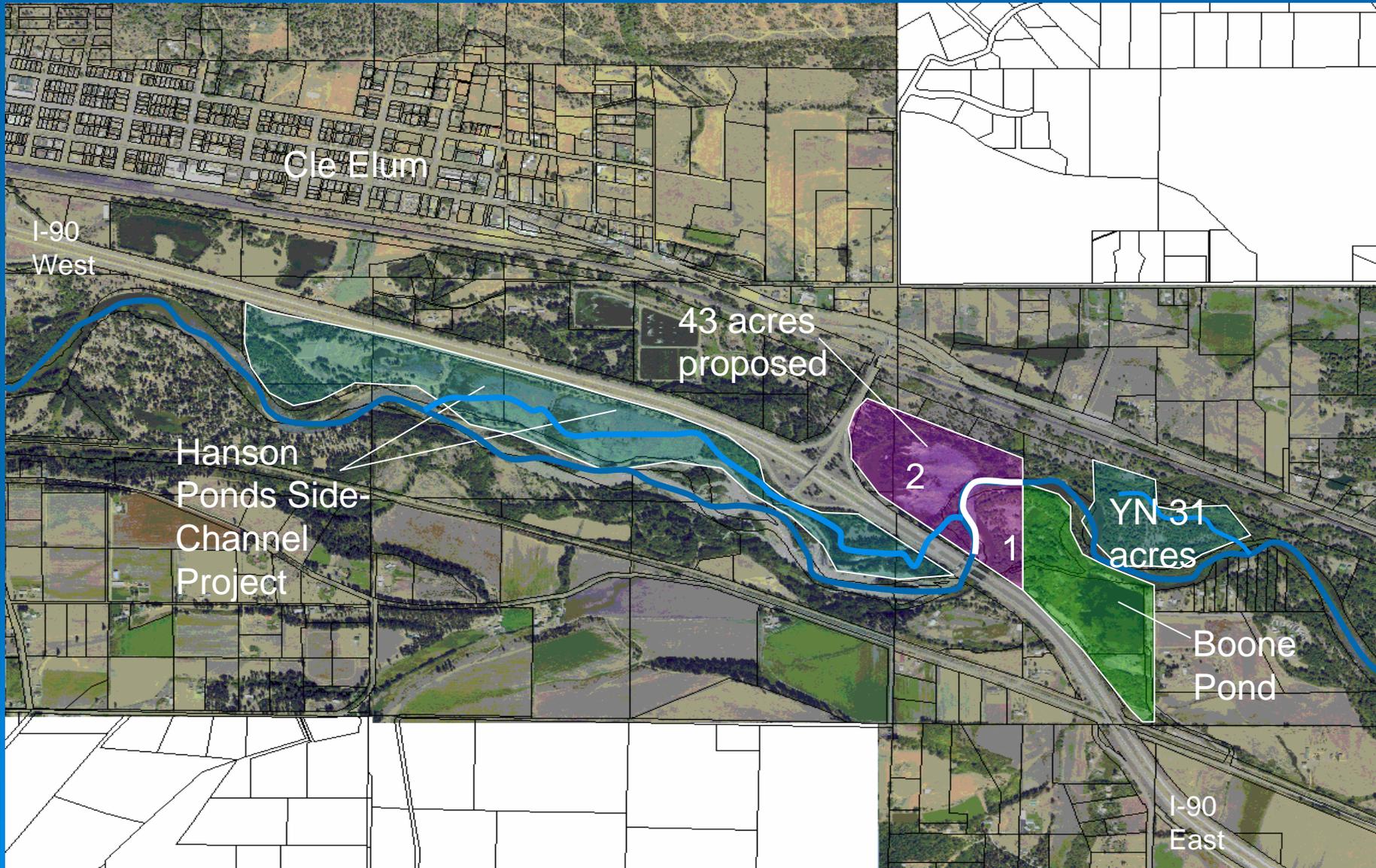


41% of the  
Holocene  
Floodplain is  
still connected

# Cle Elum Reach Properties



# Cle Elum Reach Properties cont.



# Hanson Ponds Project Elements

Wetland Peninsulas

Project  
Area

Main Drop  
& Pipe  
Installation

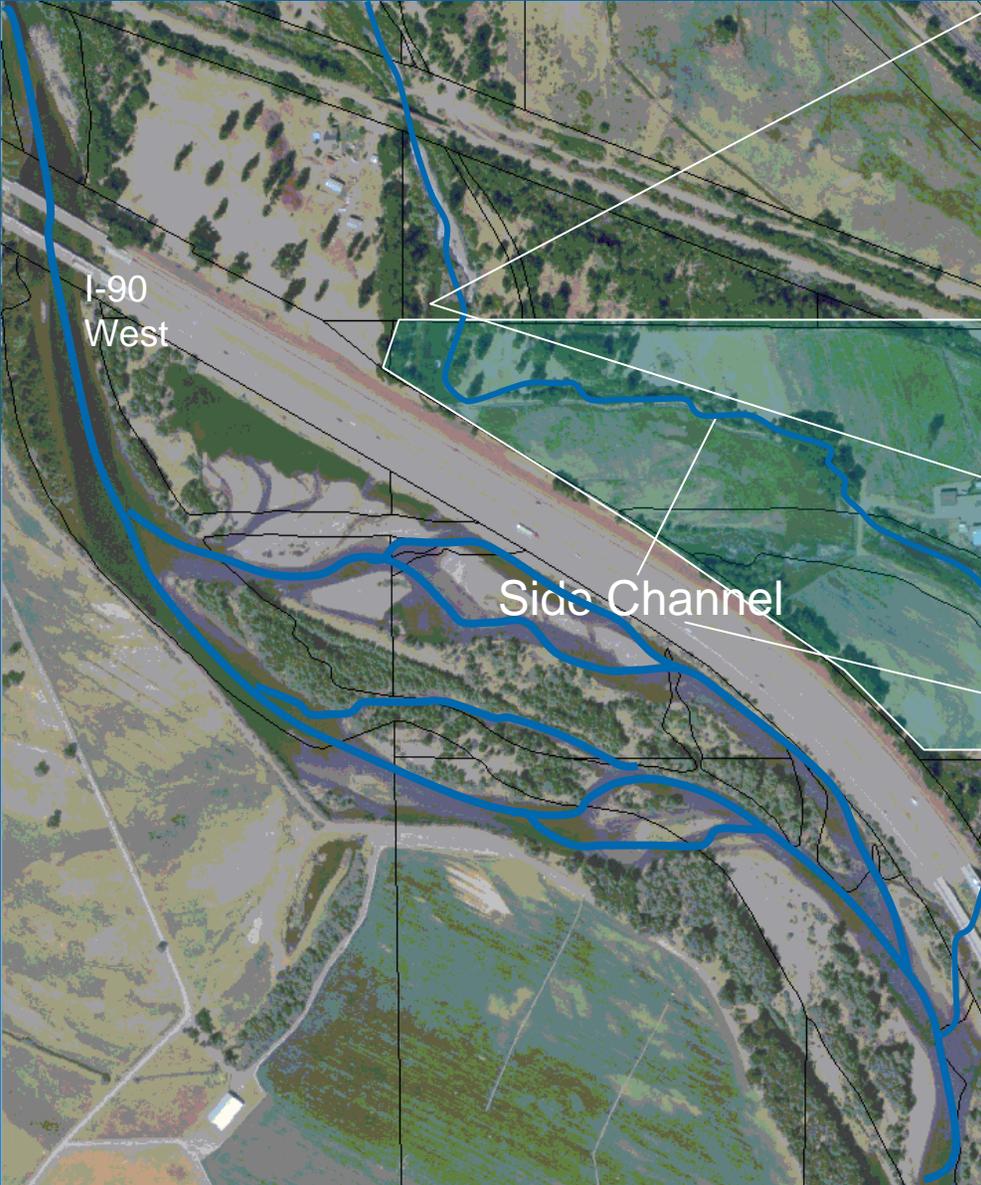
Abandoned Road with  
Levee Breaches

Connected Side Channel

★ Large Woody  
Debris Locations



# Kittitas Reach Property-Holmes



Coho Acclimation



# Salmon in the Classroom- 2006



# Community Work Party –April 2006

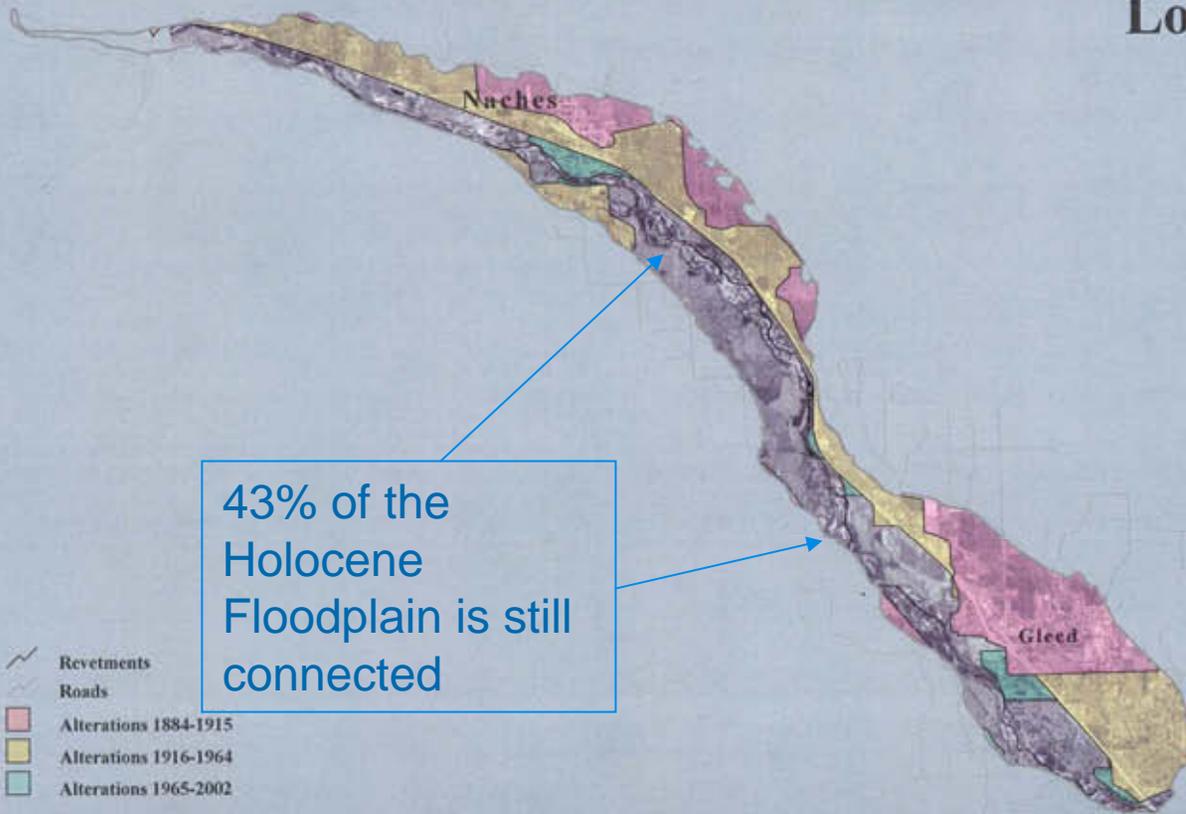


Partnered with Cascade Land  
Conservancy

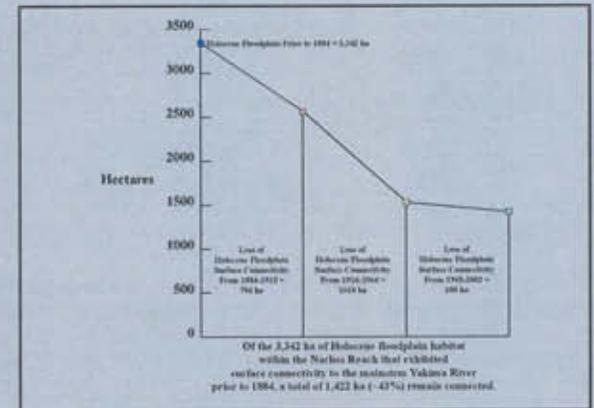


>60 Volunteers!

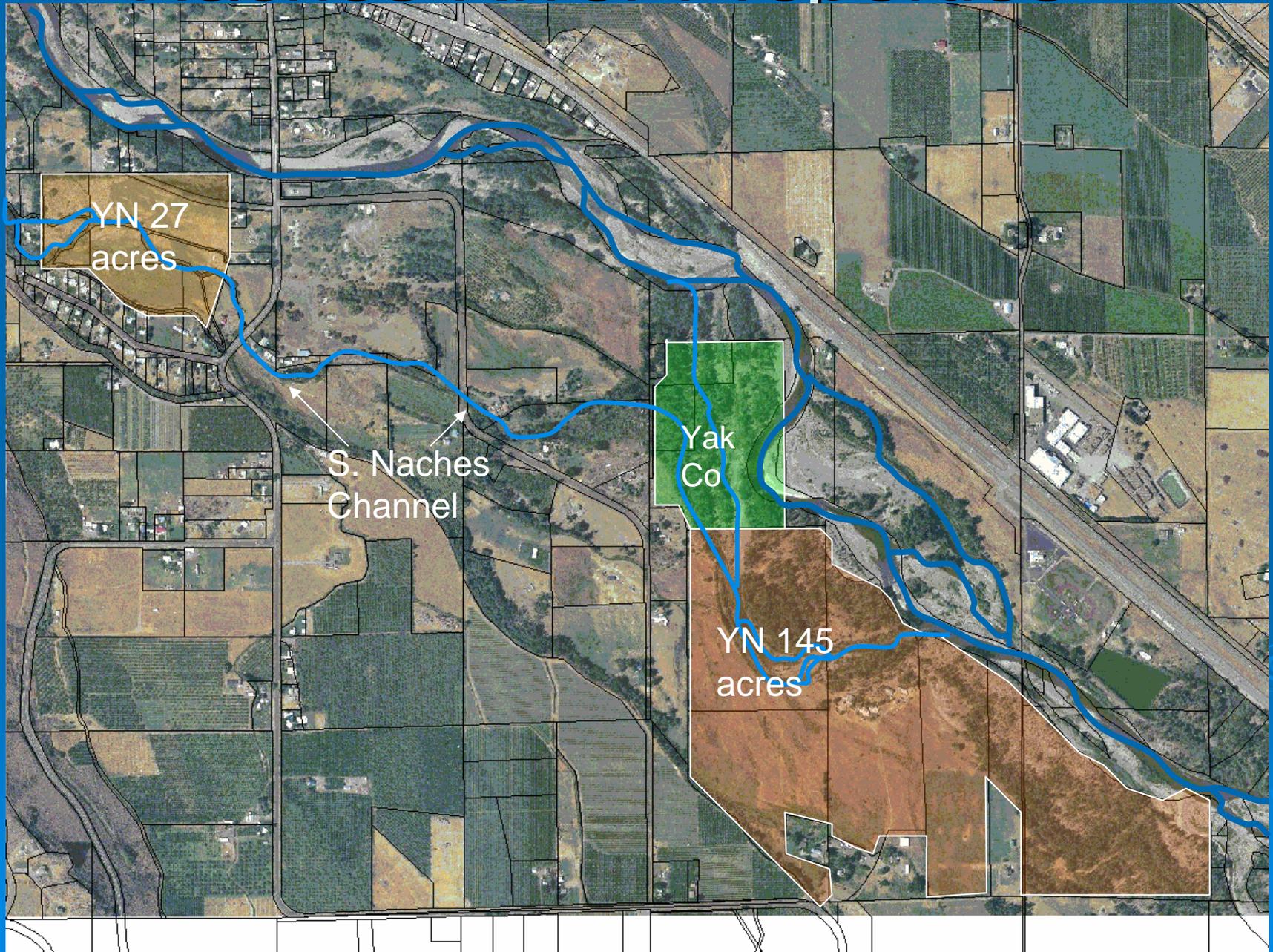
# Lower Naches Floodplain



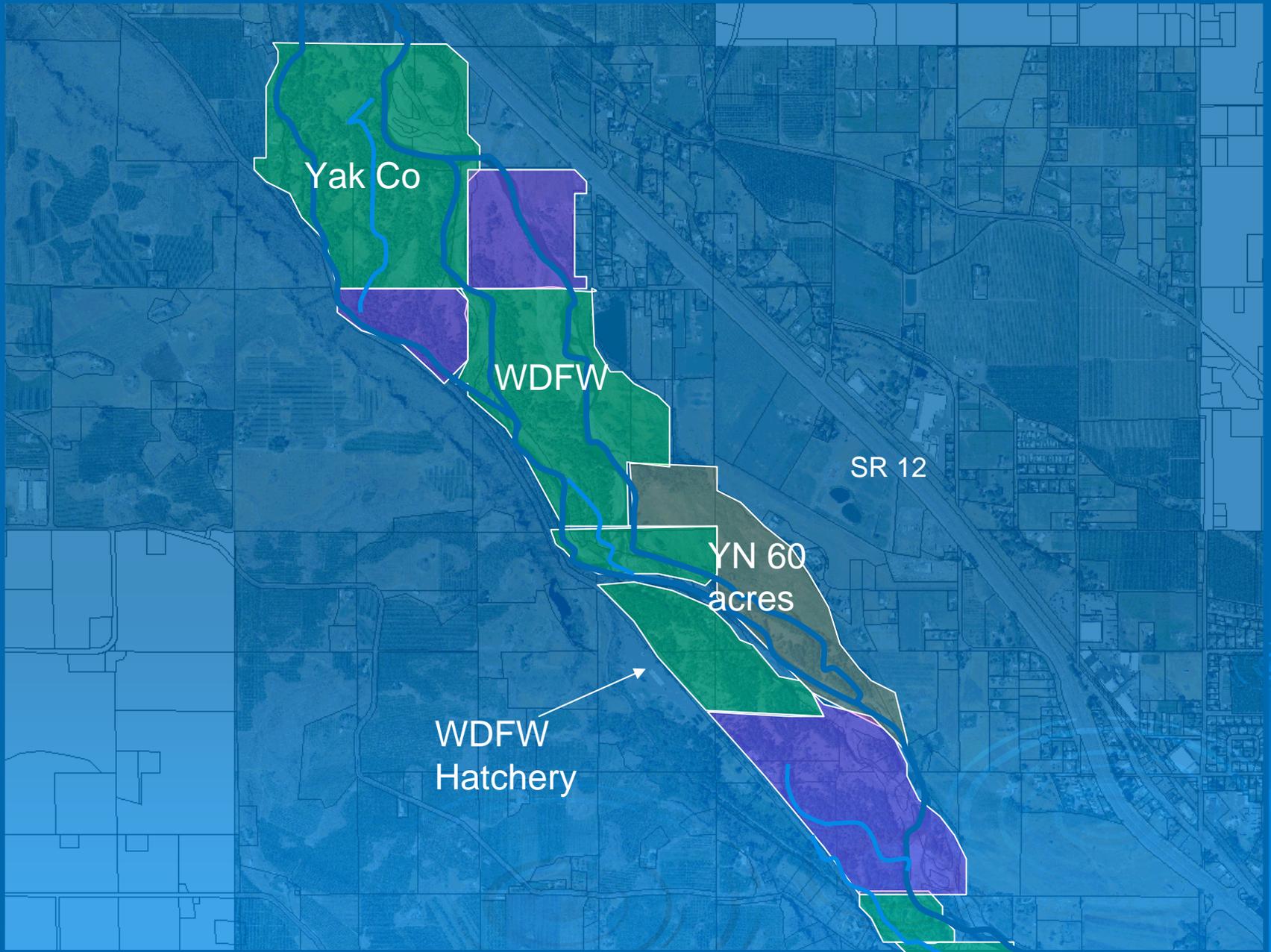
## Loss Of Lateral Connectivity To The Naches Holocene Floodplain From 1884 To 2002



# Naches River Properties

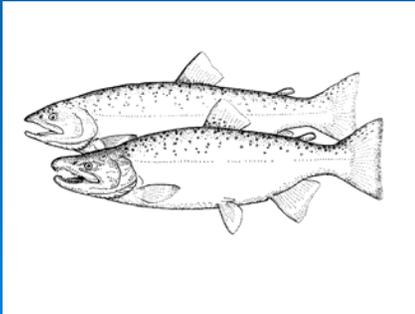


# Lower Naches Floodplain





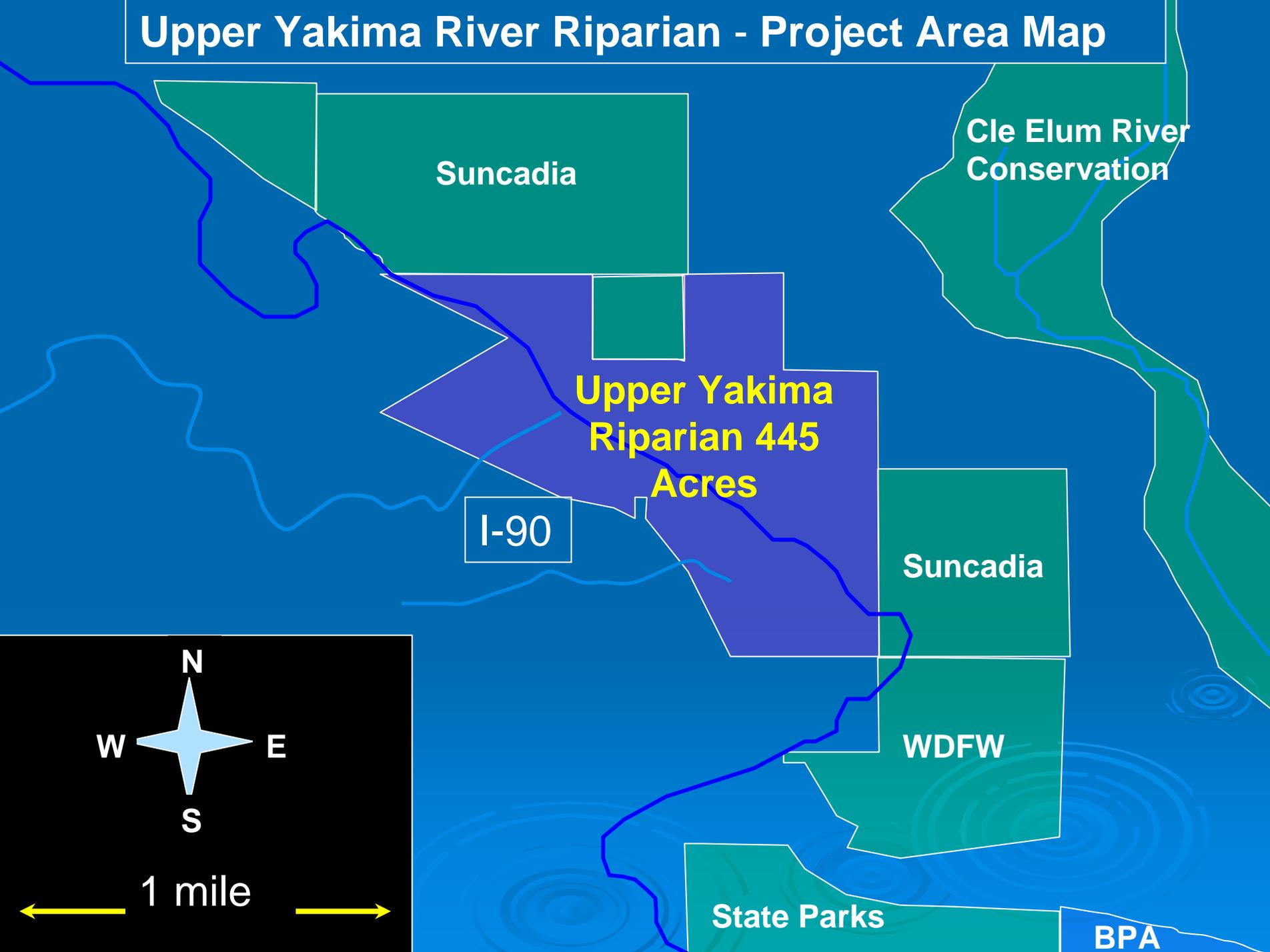
# Future Acquisitions: What we aim to protect by 2009



## Priority Floodplains:

- Easton
- Cle Elum
- Lower Naches

# Upper Yakima River Riparian - Project Area Map



Suncadia

Cle Elum River  
Conservation

Upper Yakima  
Riparian 445  
Acres

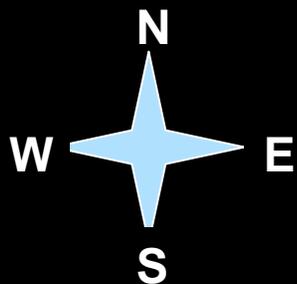
I-90

Suncadia

WDFW

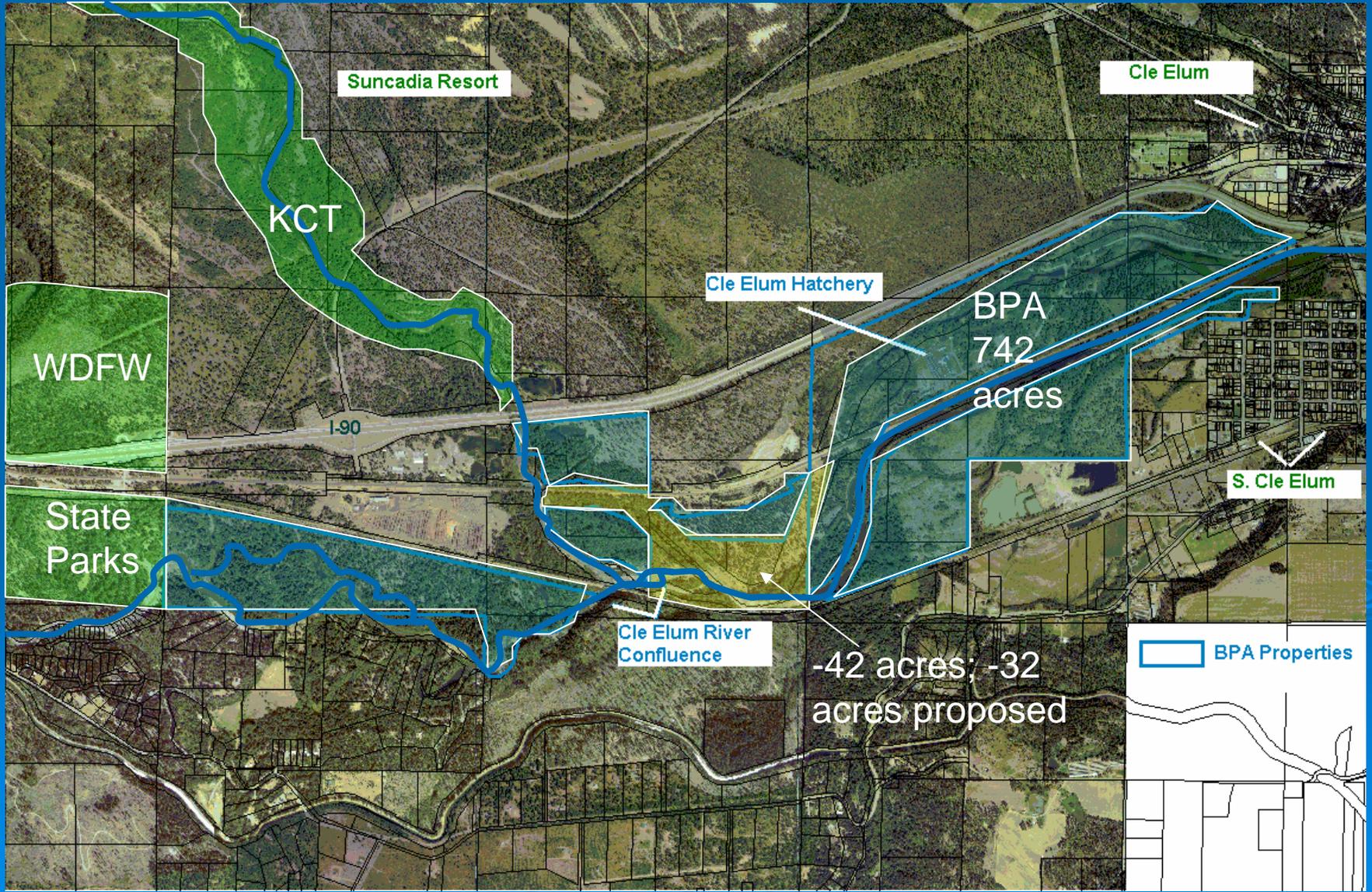
State Parks

BPA

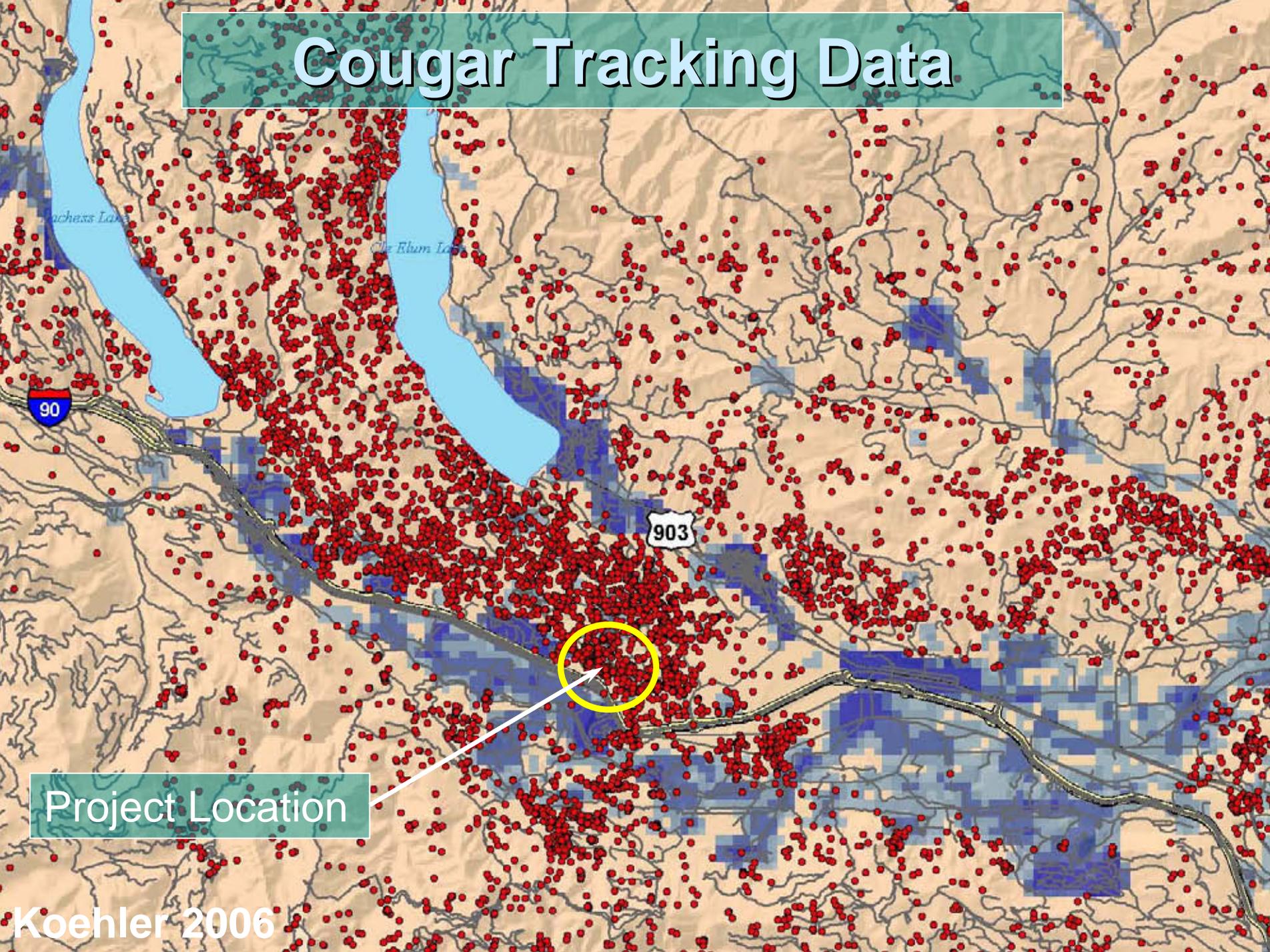


1 mile

# Cle Elum Reach Properties

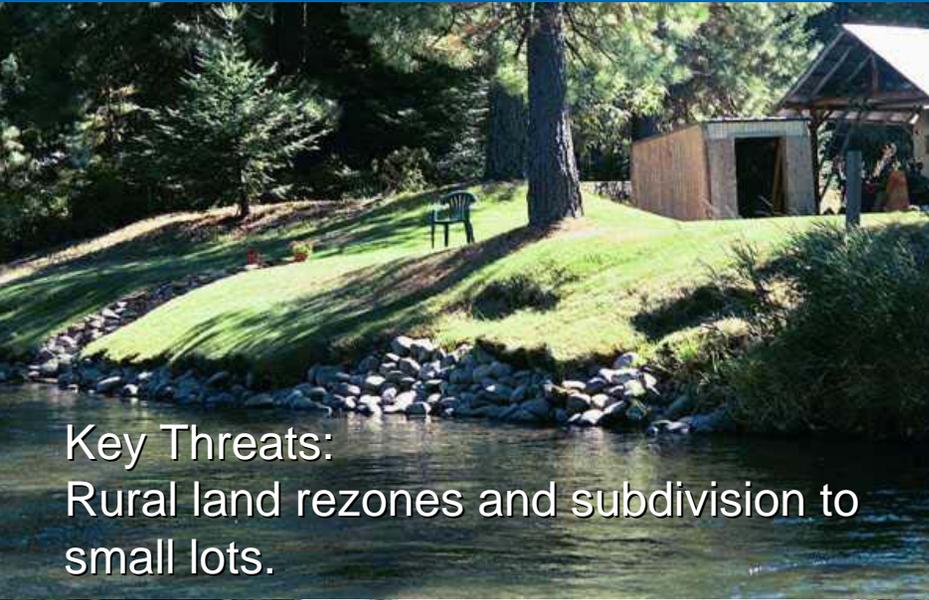


# Cougar Tracking Data



Project Location

# Risk and Lost Opportunities



Key Threats:  
Rural land rezones and subdivision to small lots.



Habitat destruction -land clearing, wetland side channel and overflow channel infilling, levee/dike construction, bank armoring and residential /commercial development.



Weak local protection policies, and lack of enforcement (critical areas, shoreline master plan, flood hazard planning).

# Primary Funding Sources

- Bonneville Power Administration
  - (one year funding cycle, limited funding)
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
  - (every year, limited funds)
- Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund
  - (every year, limited funds)
- Mid-Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group
  - (unlimited access to funds, limited funding)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
  - (Co-manager WDFW eligible every 2 years)

# Funding Problems

- **Problem:**
- YKFP has been planning to acquire several habitat parcels from private landowners for the YSC project.
- BPA placed a hold on habitat purchases in December of 2002. Although the hold has now been lifted, capital acquisitions are now stalled because a crediting mechanism has not been adopted.
- The Within Year Request process does not work well due to the lack of uncertainty and short time frame to complete the transaction.

# Strategies to further YSC work

- Develop stable source of funding
- Expand landowner outreach and support – relationship building
- Continue coordination and partnerships with agencies and organizations
- Funding availability flexibility – Within Year Request process will need to continue to be available

The End...



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