

BENTON COUNTY SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM UPDATE

Shoreline Public Access Plan

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Public access is a preferred use per the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.020). Public access can be physical access (e.g. trail) and/or visual access (view corridors). Based on State rules, there are two general approaches a community can take to ensure there is sufficient public access to the shoreline:

- **Approach A:** Require every new development of a certain size (thresholds in State rules, e.g. subdivisions) to have a minimum amount of public access based on the size of the development or other factors.
- **Approach B:** Develop a shoreline public access plan identifying specific public needs and opportunities where public access should be located. Use policies and incentives to direct new public access to those identified areas. Such a system can often be more effective than applying uniform public access requirements to all development.

The County's preferred direction is to implement Approach B, a shoreline public planning process, with a focus of public access on public land. Public access standards would apply to new development, not existing development. The County may also consider off-site public access and fee-in-lieu options for new development.

The purpose of this document is to provide a reach by reach shoreline public access plan that identifies existing and known planned public access, and potential future actions to improve shoreline public access. A reach map is attached for reference.

The shoreline public access plan is based on two sources of public input on public access topics: 1) a vision questionnaire and 2) a shoreline public access focus group. Each outreach activity is described below and summaries are attached.

Vision questionnaire results show a desire for future trails and bird/wildlife viewing, similar to the types of facilities found in the County today. Many respondents felt there was adequate shoreline public access (visual and physical), but there were others who wanted to see improved physical public access:

- At Wallula Gap Preserve, Horn Rapids, and Hover Parks
- Between Benton City and Prosser
- Between Benton City and Horn Rapids
- At Hanford Reach
- At Crow Butte Park

Following the survey and in order to ask more specific questions about public access, Benton County hosted a focus group meeting in May 2013, which centered on shoreline public access options, ideas for priority areas for public access improvements, and possibilities of incentives to improve shoreline access. The focus group suggested Approach B above. The group also suggested some high priority areas for public access – with Twin Bridges as a strong first priority, followed by other areas that should be considered:

- Twin Bridges
- Chandler Canal dump to Benton City

- Finley

The focus group's suggestion was to promote public access in places where there is demand or a good recreational character to the water in a reach. The County should put in access by purchasing/developing public land.

This document is intended to generally identify by reach the current public access locations in the County, planned improvements, and areas where the County could as a public agency improve public access, support other agencies, or ensure that development projects that create a demand for public access provide it where feasible. The document is not regulatory and may be amended in the future (e.g. through SMP monitoring) to reflect more current conditions and needs.

COLUMBIA RIVER

Parks and open space along the Columbia River includes the Hanford Reach, Two Rivers Park (County 159 acres), Hover Park (County 175 acres), Wallulla Gap Preserve (County 110 acres), Plymouth Park (Corps), the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge (UNWR) (US Fish and Wildlife Service), McNary National Wildlife Refuge (McNary NWR) (USFWS), and Crow Butte Park (US Army Corps of Engineers). Outside of the Hanford Reach, the largest acreage is for the UNWR.

The boat launches are found in the following reaches and parks:

- C1 Crow Butte Park
- C2 Lake Umatilla (primitive launch at Paterson)
- C5 Plymouth (at Plymouth Park)
- C6 McNary
- C10 Two Rivers (Two Rivers Park)

Based on available GIS data, trails are found in four reaches:

- C8 Hover
- C10 Two Rivers
- C11 North Finley
- C12 Kennewick UGA

Trails are not continuous on the Columbia River, likely due to land use, security, location of railroads, and presence of environmentally sensitive features.

Table 1. Parks and open space acres by Reach – Columbia River

Reach Number	Reach Name	Public Ownership	Public Acres in Jurisdiction	Future Public Access / Potential Actions
C1	Crow Butte Park	Federal	65.2	Crow Butte Park is leased by the US Army Corps of Engineers to the Port of Benton. The 275-acre park is on the island and accessible by motor and river traffic. There are 50 full service camping spots, three boat launches, and a boat basin. The Port has a master plan for the park. The Port is currently planning for improvements to a marina and playground. (Port of Benton 2012 and 2013)
C1	Crow Butte Park	Other	91.8	
C2	Lake Umatilla	Federal	29.8	This reach has a primitive launch at Paterson. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) received a grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to build a new boat ramp, concrete abutment, and loading float. A new road approach, concrete vault toilet, ADA paved parking pad, pathways, and an ADA loading platform are also planned for the site.. Likely continuation of current passive open space.
C2	Lake Umatilla	Other	13.8	
C3	UNWR	Federal	1,475.2	Likely continuation of current passive open space. UNWR is intensively managed to provide habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife. (US Fish and Wildlife Service 2013)
C3	UNWR	Other	0.3	
C4	Plymouth Ag	Federal	0.1	With limited population, the current railroad, and focus on agricultural use, public access is not planned. Opportunities for public access lie to the west and east of this reach.
				Plymouth Park has a boat launch and recreation areas.
C5	Plymouth	Federal	84.6	

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Reach Number	Reach Name	Public Ownership	Public Acres in Jurisdiction	Future Public Access / Potential Actions
C5	Plymouth	Other	53.4	
C6	McNary	Federal	43.3	There is a public boat launch in this reach. There is also a North Shore Fish Viewing Room where one can see adult salmon passing. There are also occasional educational tours (US Army Corps of Engineers 2011).
C6	McNary	Other	10.6	
C7	Columbia Ag	Federal	258.4	The Wallulla Gap Preserve lies in this reach. The Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan describes the preserve as difficult to access. The site serves as an aesthetic and view property from the Columbia River and the river corridor. Means to improve access are recommended such as through easements or other options.
C8	Hover	County	84.2	There is a trail measuring 4,380 feet in this reach. Hover Park is used for passive recreation and some all-terrain vehicles. The County Parks Comprehensive Plan identifies improvements including: Control access. Develop a park master plan that considers: water access, primitive camping options, Columbia water trail stop-over, bathroom facilities, small boat access, parking and trail head, and interpretive signage.
C8	Hover	Federal	154.8	
C9	Finley Industrial	None	None	There are no formal public access facilities, though informal launching has been observed. The Shoreline Public Access Focus Group noted that the Finley area could be a location for additional shoreline access, such as a boat launch and fishing facilities. Consider adding public access if public lands are purchased or if shoreline development creates a demand for it and there are no safety or security issues.

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Reach Number	Reach Name	Public Ownership	Public Acres in Jurisdiction	Future Public Access / Potential Actions
C10	Two Rivers	County	20.0	Two Rivers Park is leased from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The park has a boat launch, docks, picnicking, play areas, and swimming facilities. There is a natural area with a trail (2,480 feet) and a beach. The Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan identifies a future Park and Trail design.
C10	Two Rivers	Federal	51.2	
C11	North Finley	County	0.1	There is a trail about 2,341 feet in length in shoreline jurisdiction.
C12	Kennewick UGA, South	None	None	There is a trail about 874 feet in length in shoreline jurisdiction.
C13	North Richland UGA	Federal	55.2	Though portions of this reach are served by the Riverfront Trail, it is located outside shoreline jurisdiction.
C14	Hanford	Federal	1,983.6	A Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been developed for the Hanford site by the U.S. Department of Energy. The future land use pattern promotes preservation and conservation, research and development, and industrial use. Some focused areas of recreation are also anticipated, such as along the Columbia River at the Vernita Terrace. About 125 acres are planned for high intensity recreation (some concepts explored included a museum, golf course, and RV park) and 334 acres are planned for low-intensity recreation (examples studied included sport fishing and day-use activities).
C15	Priest Rapids	Federal	37.8	The shoreline is undeveloped with the exception of a road that runs along the base of the bluffs. Likely continuation of current passive open space.

Source: The Watershed Company 2012

YAKIMA RIVER

Existing parks and open space along the Yakima River include Horn Rapids Park and Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility. There is other state and federal ownership along the river as well.

There is one boat launch at Horn Rapids County Park. In addition, there are several WDFW water access points in unincorporated areas or in abutting cities, such as at Prosser, Benton City, Snively Road (at border with West Richland), Hyde Road (City of Richland), and Duportail Road (City of Richland).

Currently, there is trail access along the Yakima River at Horn Rapids County Park. There is a plan that would result in 4.4 miles of trails in shoreline jurisdiction following the Tapteal Greenway Trail. The Tapteal Greenway would

provide a recreational and natural/wildlife corridor across the County, linking major public lands such as Horn Rapids Park to Columbia Point. Benton County’s Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element considers the Tapteal Greenway Plan. In addition, Benton County’s Parks Comprehensive Plan includes Policy 1.11, “Continue to support the efforts of the Tapteal Greenway Association to complete the Tapteal Greenway Trail, five miles of which go through the Horn Rapids Park.” As with the Columbia River, the County supports water trails along the Yakima River with pullouts at riverfront parks (Parks Comprehensive Plan Policy 1.6): “Assist in the development of a Yakima and Columbia River water trail system with pullouts and stopping points within riverfront parks.” The County’s Comprehensive Plan does not adopt a specific version of the Tapteal Greenway Plan; the Comprehensive Plan supports the non-profit and multi-agency effort to establish it. The County’s 20-Year Capital Improvements Program does not identify particular trails along the Yakima River, but does include a Horn Rapids Master Plan Update and Improvements.

Table 2. Parks and open space acres by Reach – Yakima River.

Reach Number	Reach Name	Public Ownership	Public Acres in Jurisdiction	Future Public Access / Potential Actions
Y1	Richland UGA	Federal	4.0	This area includes or is in proximity to portions of the Riverview Natural Preserve and Columbia Park Trail.
Y2	Riverside	Federal	0.1	This area does not include public access facilities. However, in the incorporated area nearby there are public access opportunities. Consider adding public access if public lands are purchased or if shoreline development creates a demand for it and it can be designed to avoid impacts to adjacent properties.
Y3	Barker	None	None	This area contains a private ranch mostly in use for conservation purposes.
Y4	Harrington	None	None	There is a WDFW primitive boat launch facility at the north end of the reach in the Richland City Limits. This reach has been conceptually planned as part of the Tapteal Greenway Trail, and the present primitive boat launch is considered part of the Tapteal Water Trail. In the Twin Bridges Road vicinity, there has been some illegal trespass and unmanaged shoreline access. The focus group indicated finding a suitable property for public purchase/easement and improvement to focus access in appropriate areas was a high priority.
Y5	Horn Rapids	County	92.9	The park has an improved campground with full recreation vehicle hookups, showers, restrooms, a horse camp, a model airplane facility, a boat launch, and multi-use trails. Horn Rapids Park is used as an outdoor educational center by area schools. Proposed improvements in the County
Y5	Horn Rapids	Federal	7.4	
Y5	Horn Rapids	Other	115.2	

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Reach Number	Reach Name	Public Ownership	Public Acres in Jurisdiction	Future Public Access / Potential Actions
Y5	Horn Rapids	State	5.9	Comprehensive Parks Plan include boundary reconfiguration for improved management, parking, restroom, land rehabilitation, and a park and trail master plan.
Y6	River Road	Federal	4.6	There are no existing or planned public access facilities. Consider adding public access if public lands are purchased or if shoreline development creates a demand for it and it can be designed to avoid impacts to adjacent properties.
Y7	Benton City UGA	None	None	There is a WDFW concrete boat launch at the southern edge of the reach. This reach has been conceptually planned as part of the Tapteal Greenway Trail. Visioning responses and public access focus group indicated a priority for public access between Benton City and Horn Rapids.
Y8	OIE	State	21.7	There are no existing or planned public access facilities. Visioning responses and public access focus group indicated a priority for public access between Prosser and Benton City.
Y9	Prosser UGA East	None	None	There are no existing or planned public access facilities.
Y10	Prosser UGA Chandler	None	None	There are no existing or planned public access facilities. Public access focus group indicated that from the Chandler Canal dump to Benton City there is a good recreational character to the water in the reach, but no access. Consider adding public access if public lands are purchased or if shoreline development creates a demand for it and there are no safety or security issues.
Y11	Prosser UGA West	None	None	There are no existing or planned public access facilities. Consider adding public access if shoreline development creates a demand for it and it can be designed to avoid impacts to adjacent properties.
Y12	Byron Road	None	None	There are no existing or planned public access facilities. Consider adding public access if shoreline development creates a demand for it and it can be designed to avoid impacts to adjacent properties.

Source: The Watershed Company, 2012

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ATTACHMENTS

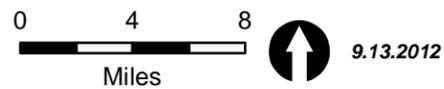
- A. Reach Map, 2012
- B. Vision Questionnaire Results, April 2013
- C. Shoreline Public Access Focus Group Meeting Summary, May 2013

REACHES

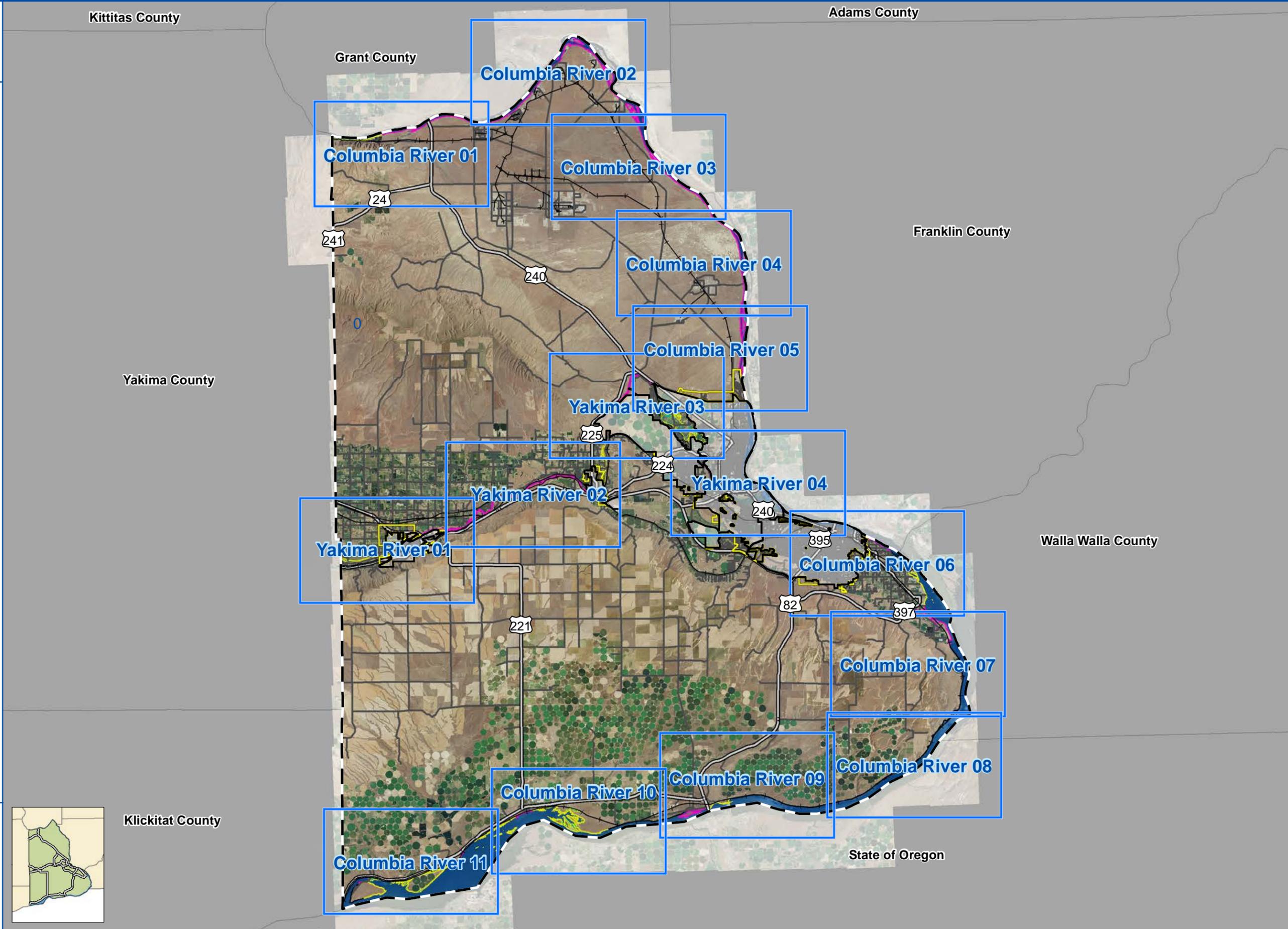


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Kittitas County

Adams County

Grant County

Franklin County

Yakima County

Walla Walla County

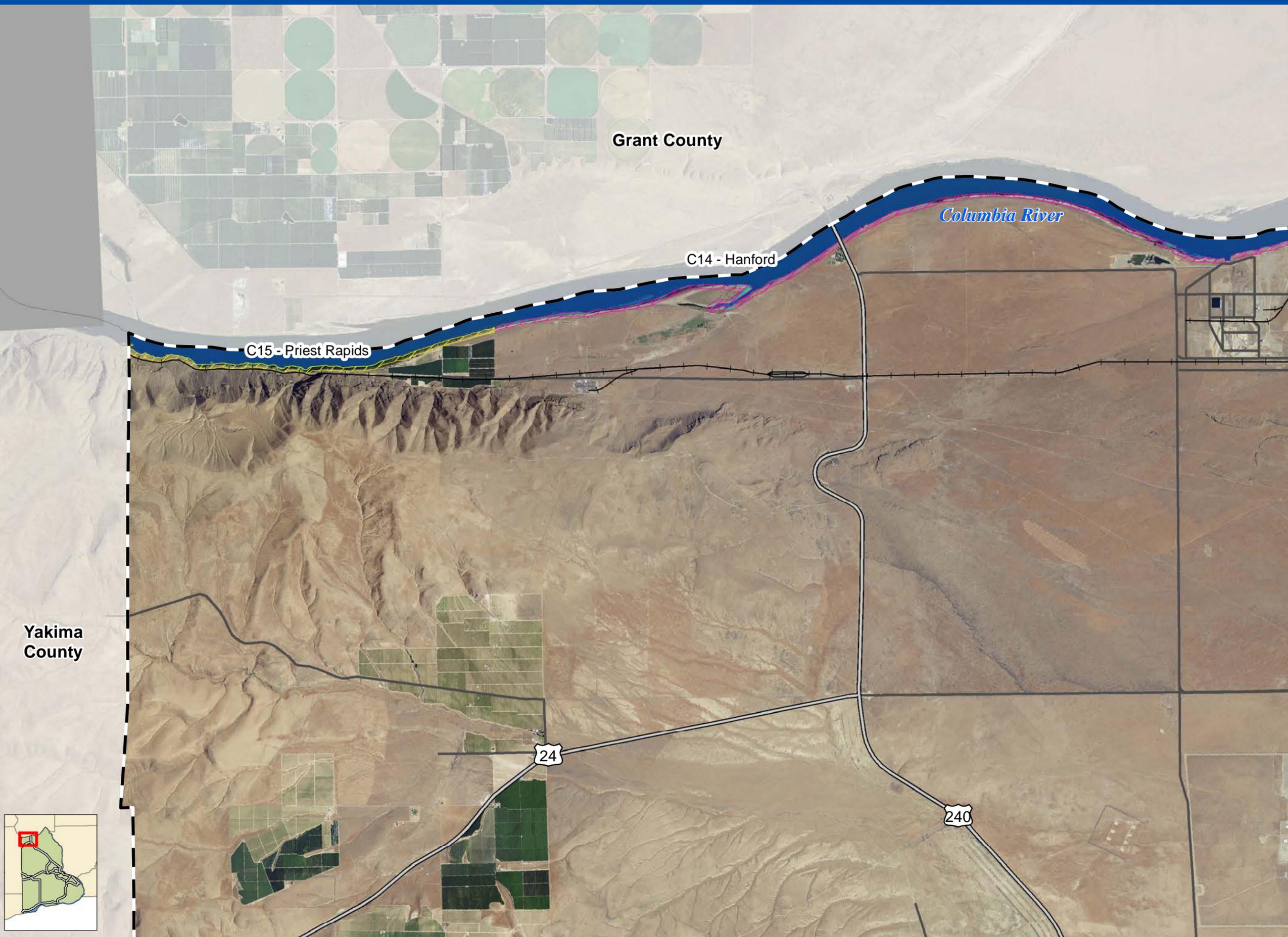
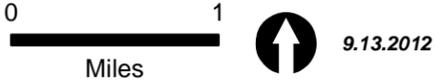
Klickitat County

State of Oregon



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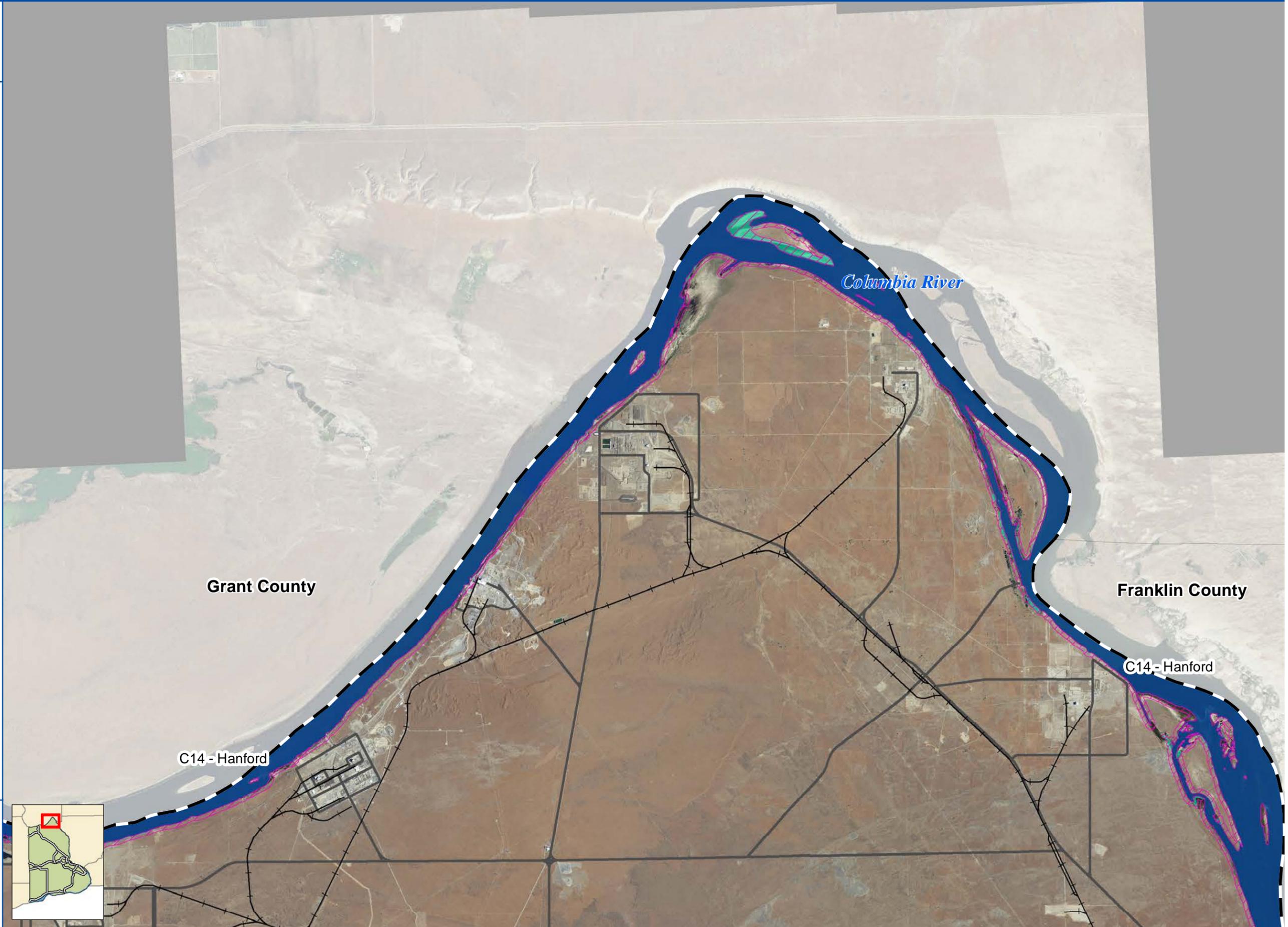
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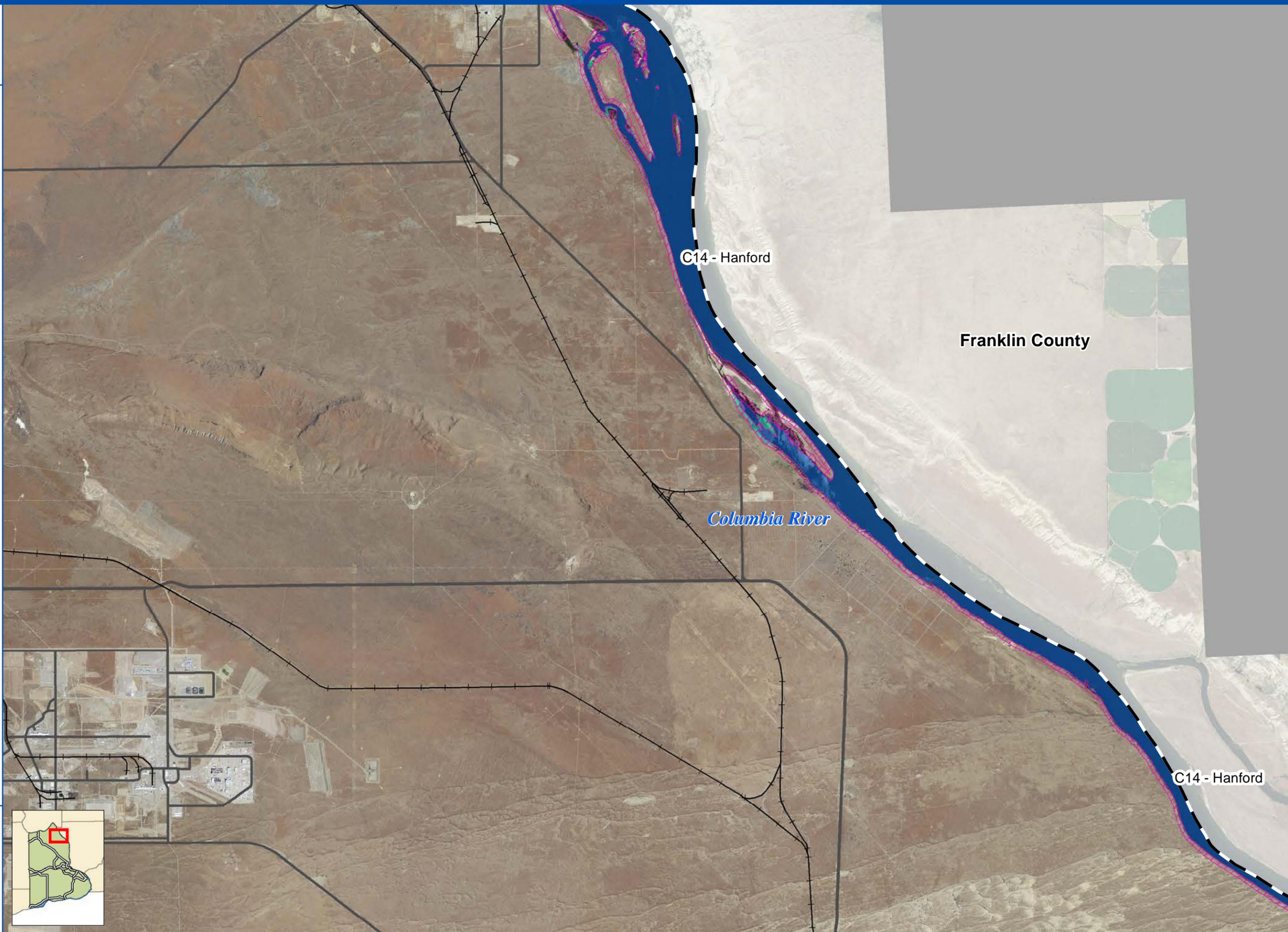




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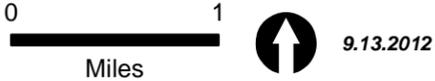


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Franklin County

C14 - Hanford

C14 - Hanford



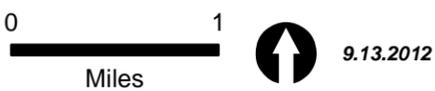
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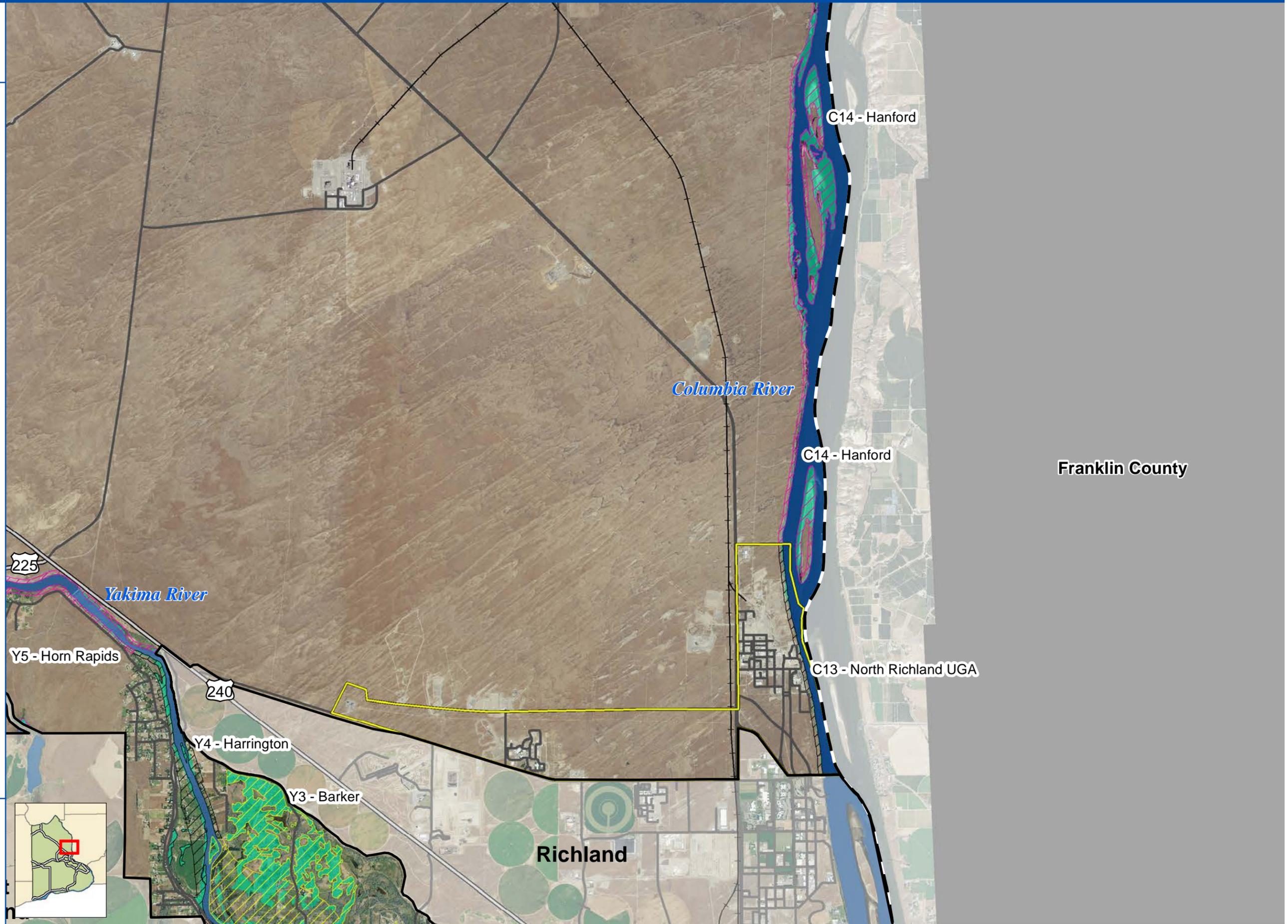


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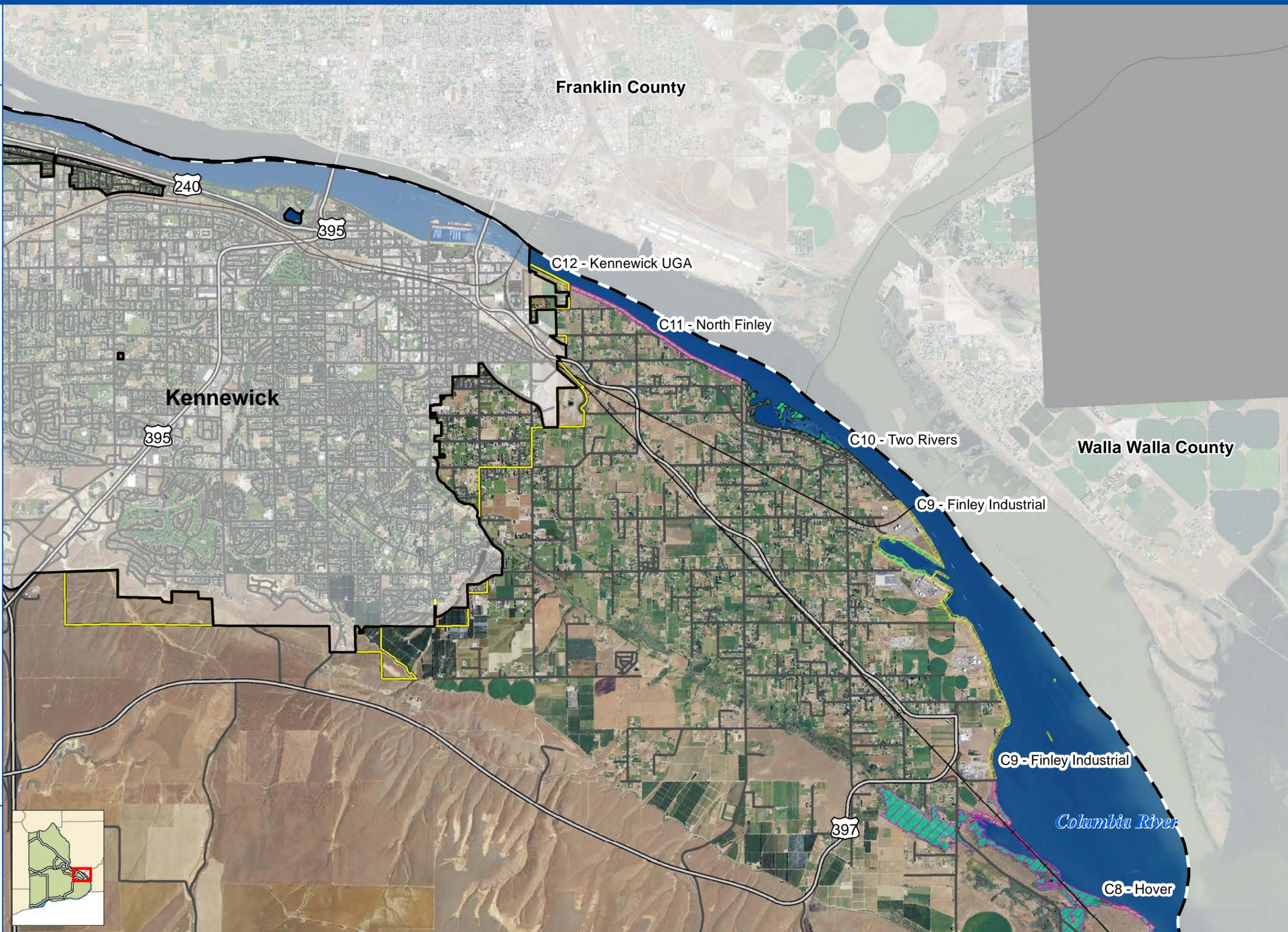
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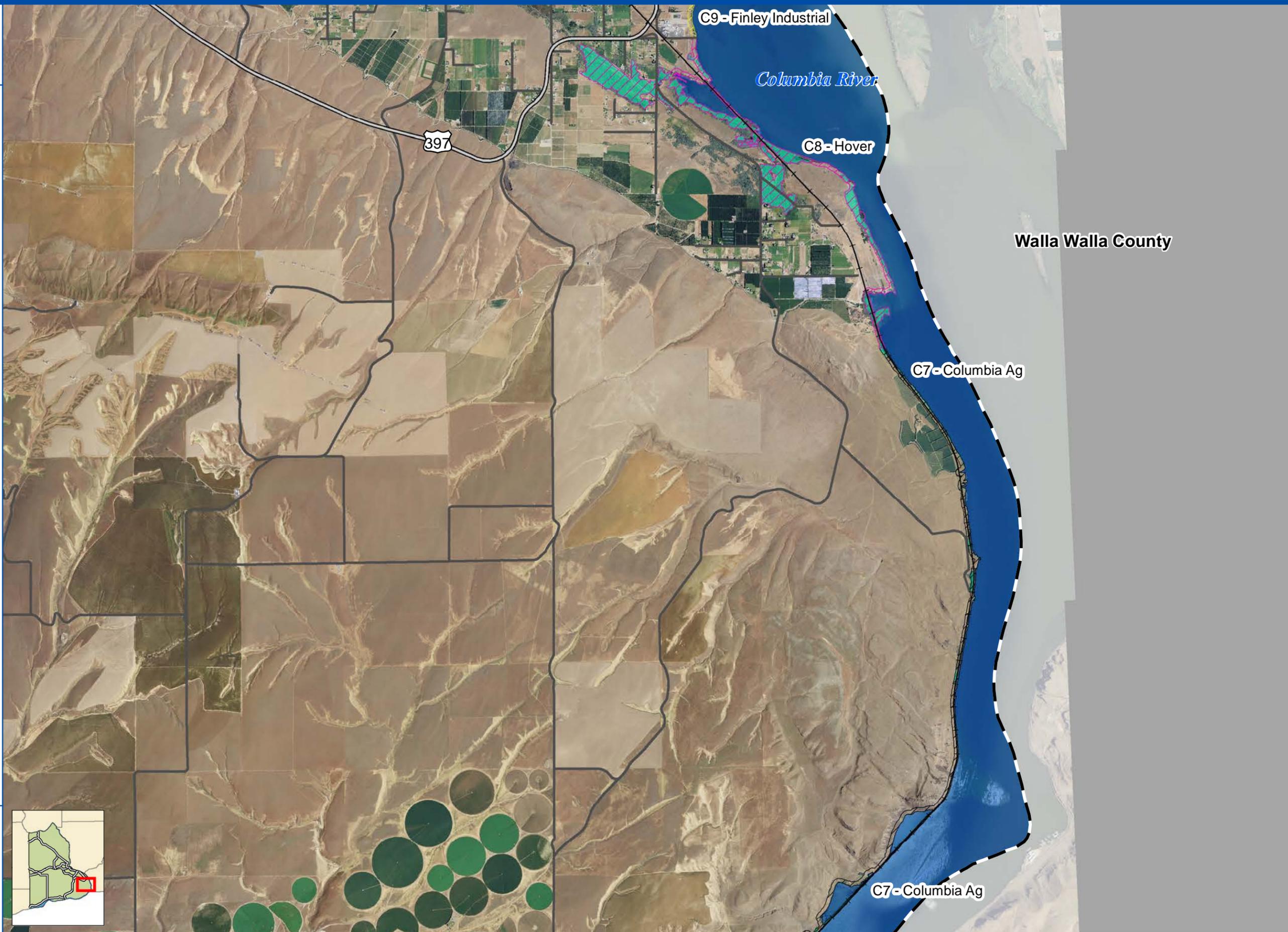
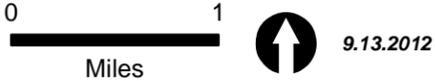
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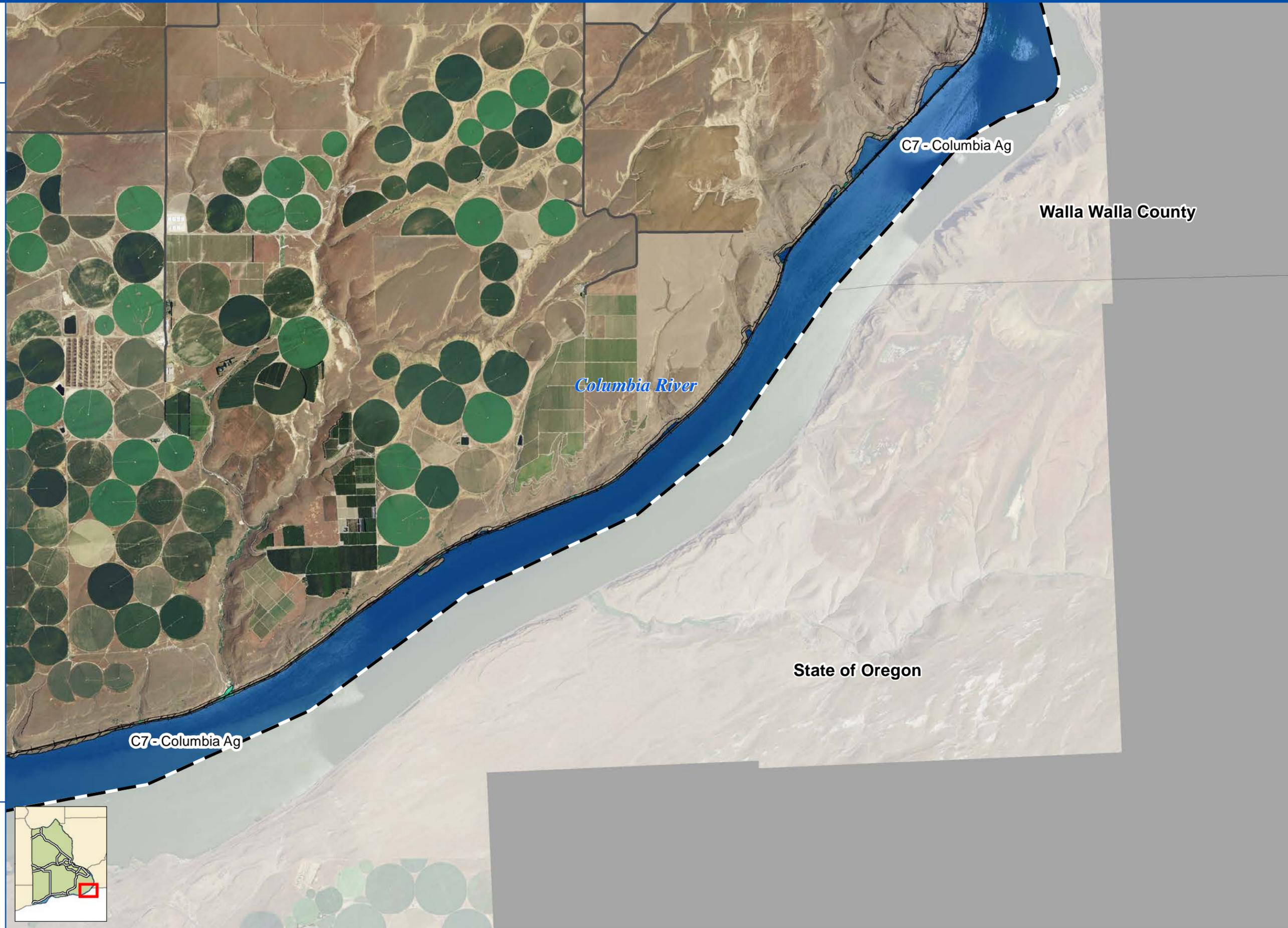
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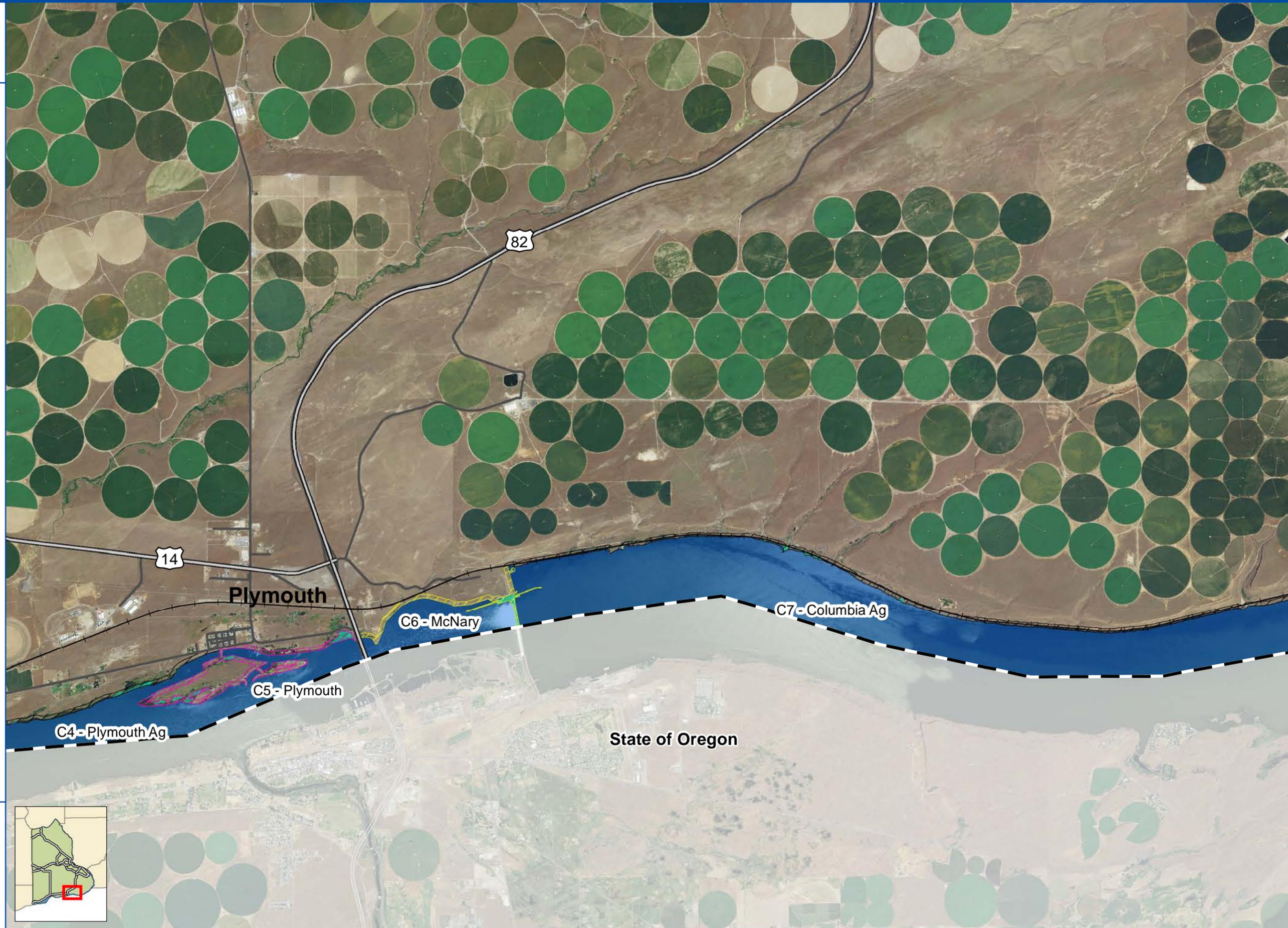
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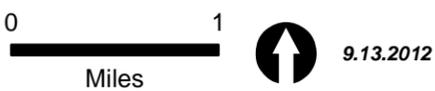
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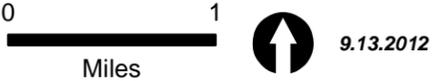
REACHES

Columbia River 11



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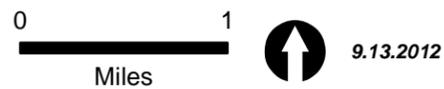
State of Oregon



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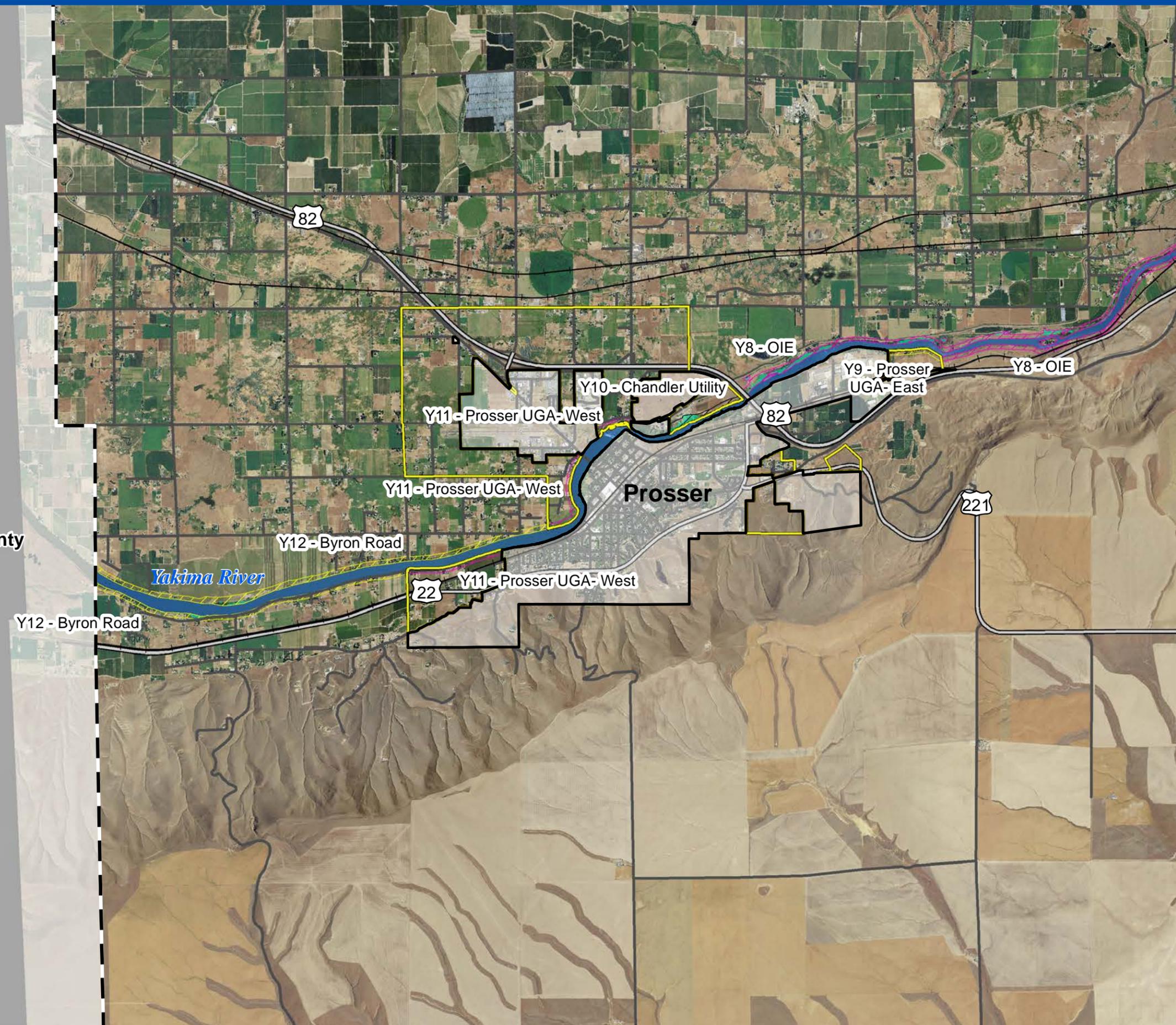
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Yakima County



REACHES

Yakima River 02



Reaches [1]

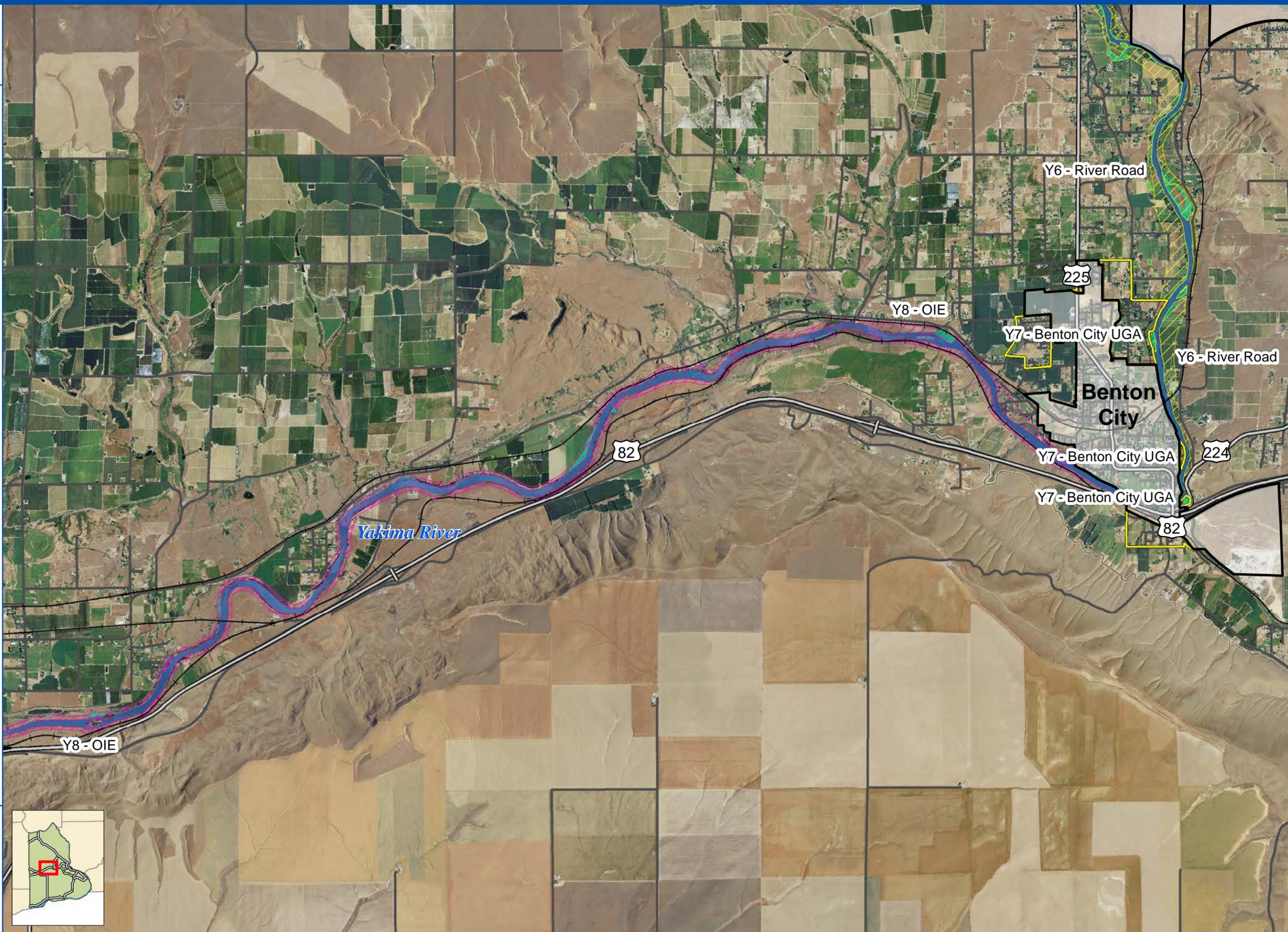
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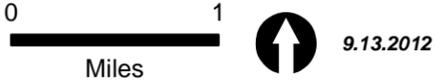
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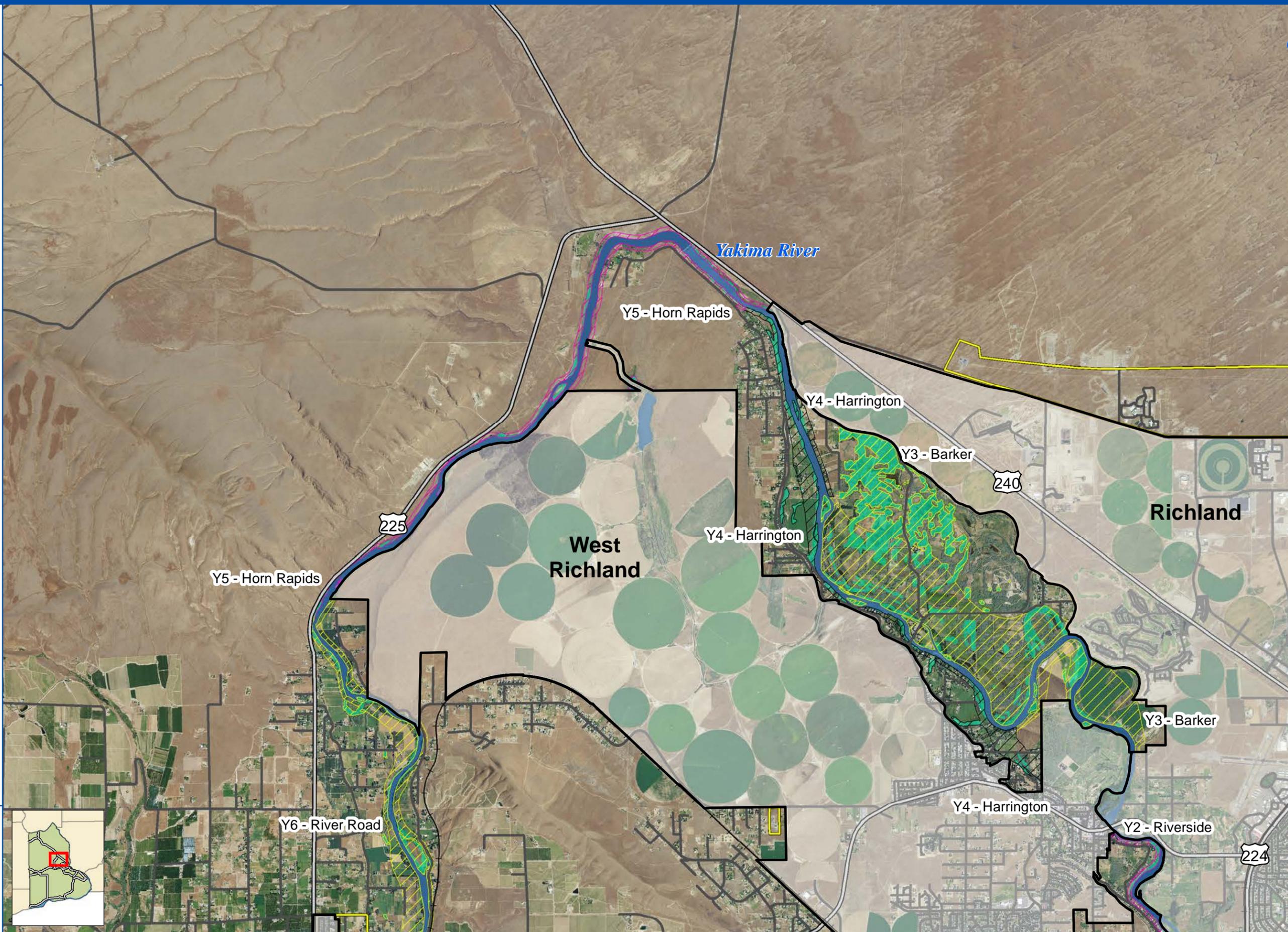


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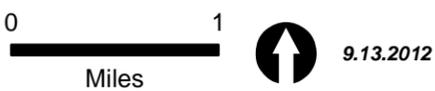
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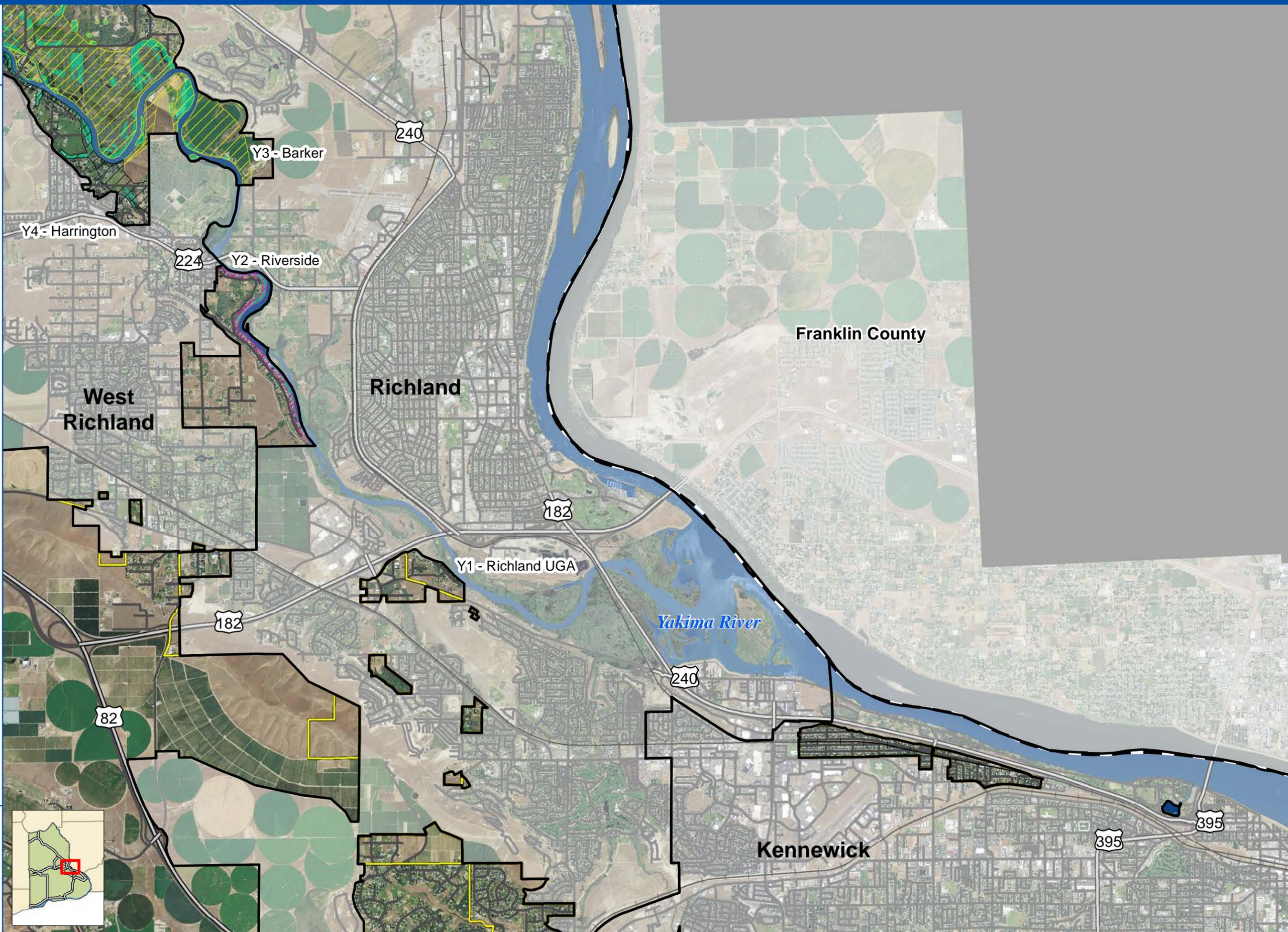


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BENTON COUNTY SMP UPDATE OPEN HOUSE EVENTS



Community Questionnaire & Open House Meeting Summary, April 11, 2013

Prepared by BERK and The Watershed Company, May 2 2013

To help Benton County consider the long-term vision for its Yakima and Columbia River shorelines and its Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update, Benton County issued a web-based Community Questionnaire on Survey Monkey mid-March 2013.

The questionnaire asked questions about:

- Current shoreline use
- Desired future use
- Physical and Visual Access
- Preservation and restoration options and tools

The results of the survey are attached.

Benton County advertised the questionnaire in a display ad in the Tri-City Herald, a postcard to a mailing list of shoreline property owners, and an email flier to persons interested in planning and the SMP in Benton County. After approximately 3 weeks, the County closed the questionnaire on March 31, 2013. The County received 132 responses. Benton County hosted an open house to share the results of the Community Questionnaire on April 11, 2013. Fifteen members of the public attended, as well as two Shoreline Advisory Committee members. This document summarizes the comments made at the Open House.



GENERAL QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the 200-foot Shoreline Jurisdiction:

- Is that more than it was previously?
- How are we going to measure it? Historically the “height of the tree” is what determined the 200ft.
- 200ft is not a setback, correct?
- What is the setback now? 100ft?
 - **Response:** The shoreline jurisdiction is generally 200 feet from the ordinary high water mark, and has not changed since development of the County’s 1974 SMP. Shoreline jurisdiction refers to the applicable area of the SMP (management area). Through the SMP update, setbacks or buffers would be developed based on current, existing conditions. We will also consider Benton County’s critical areas regulations. The current critical area code setback is generally 100 feet, except along certain steep slopes.

FEEDBACK FOLLOWING REVEAL OF SURVEY RESULTS:

Comments & Questions

- **Comment:** “If you are saying the river shoreline is our identity, then first impressions matter. How do the dilapidated trailers and other garbage along the rivers reflect us? We need just enforcement of junked cars that are on properties along the river.”

Public Access

- “Who will provide public access? Will private landowners be required to provide access on their land?”
- “Sounds like you are allowing public access on private lands.”
- “What are private land owners obligated to do?”
 - **Response:** The goal and preferences of the SAC members are to provide public access on public lands. Public access on public lands is a priority in the Shoreline Management Act as well. Please note the State Department of Ecology rules for SMP’s (WAC 173-26) also indicate that new development that creates a demand for public access should provide for public access, such as new subdivisions providing a trail to the shoreline. Public access is not required for existing homes or existing businesses.
- “Do you have enough ‘public property’ to create trails?”
- “It is a balancing act of use versus impact”
- “Ad hoc public access is a community and environmental problem; the County should purchase land to create designated public access new Twin Bridges”
- “We might all want public access but are we willing to pay for it? i.e. property taxes increased?”

Restoration

- “What is the Restoration Plan? What does it do?”
 - **Response:**
 - It is separate from the regulations
 - It is completely voluntary
 - It brings all the restoration efforts happening in the County into one document
- “Can you give us an example of restoration?”
- “Will the plan tell us what species to plant?”
 - **Response:** The County’s website already has some information on this topic.
 - “What are the local ‘noxious’ weeds?”
 - “What do you do if you see a safety issue or pollution problem?” (Scott Revell gave examples of places to call that are referenced on the KID website)

“No net ecological loss”

- “Who decides if there is no net loss?”

- **Response:** The SMP regulations will be designed on a County-wide scale to result in no net loss of ecological function, and we'll be required to "show our work" to the Washington Department of Ecology in a Cumulative Impacts Analysis.
- "An EIS costs thousands of dollars; I don't think individual property owners should have to pay for that."
 - **Response:** We're looking to limit the personal/private obligations for studies. One exception would be for "conditional use" applications.
- "Who will enforce this?"
 - **Response:** The County will enforce the SMP. Every 8 years, the County will evaluate the effectiveness of the policies of the SMP and revise the SMP as needed.

Program Intent and Policy Direction

- "Has there been a change in direction?"
- "What are the changes between the 1974 plan and now?"
 - **Response:**
 - River flows have been altered and improved.
 - There are more homes.
 - In the Shoreline Management Act and Washington State Department of Ecology SMP Guidelines (WAC 173-26), there is an increased focus on habitat protection and restoration, more emphasis on biological health.
 - The listing of some species of salmon on the Endangered Species Act has increased regulatory complexity.
 - There is more attention and regulation on shoreline stabilization.

Setbacks

- "What is the 100 foot setback?"
 - **Response:** The 100-foot setback is a standard in the Benton County critical areas code. The setback requirement will be reconsidered as part of this process. Through the SMP update, setbacks or buffers would be developed based on current, existing conditions. We will also consider Benton County's critical areas regulations.



Benton County Shoreline Master Program Update

Community Visioning Survey Summary
April 11, 2013

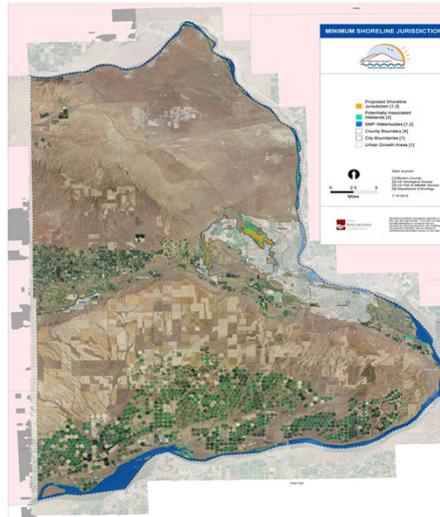


BENTON COUNTY
Shoreline Master Program Update



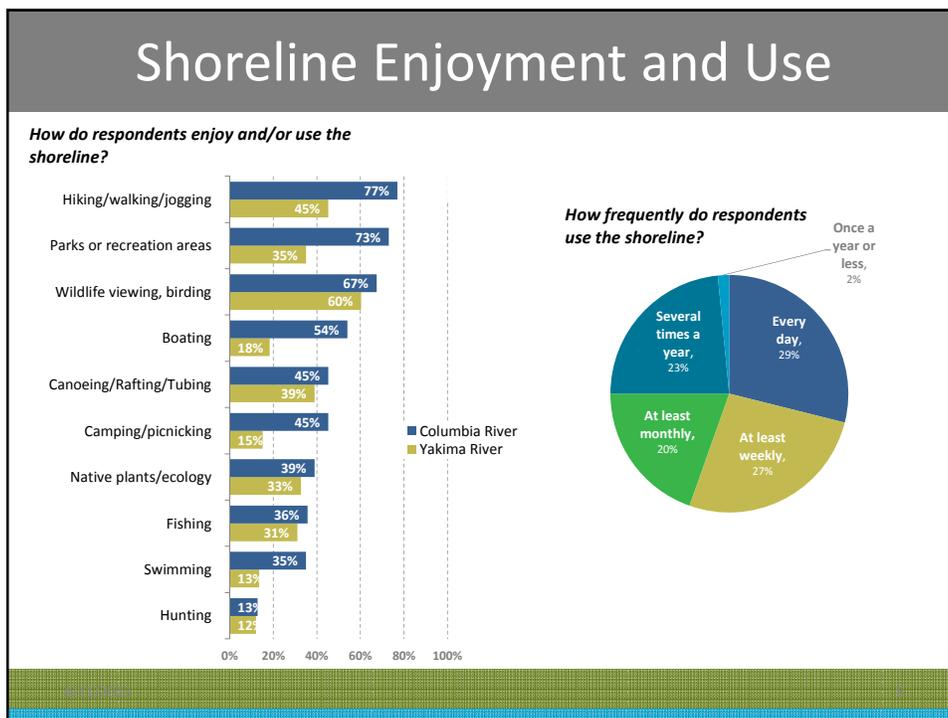
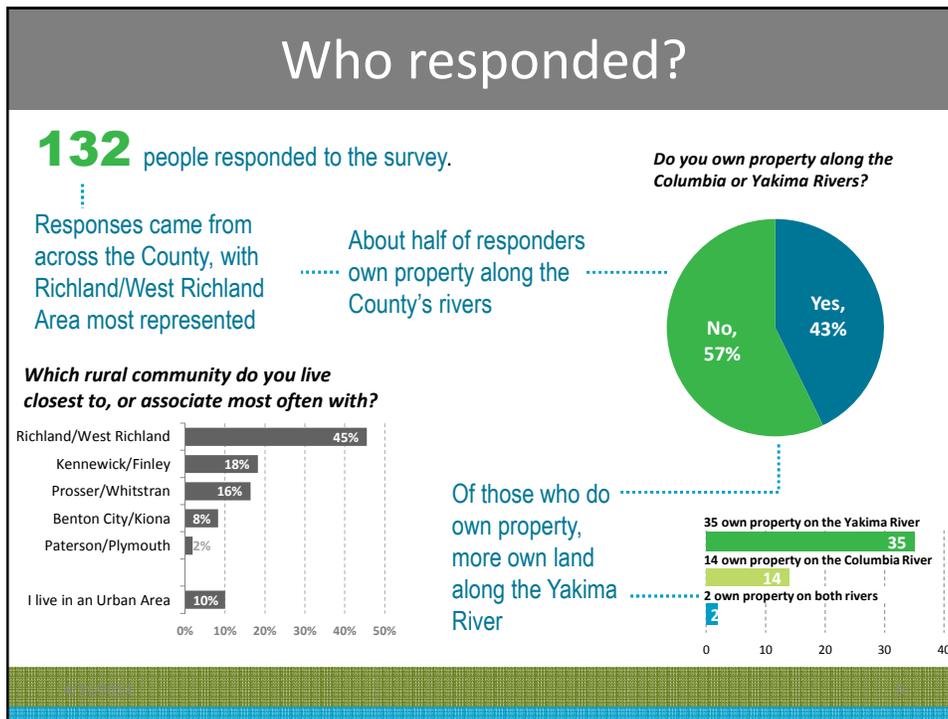
Where does the SMP apply?

- Minimum Shoreline Jurisdiction
 - Stream \geq 20 cfs
 - Upland areas 200 feet from ordinary high water mark
 - Floodways and 200 feet of adjacent floodplain area
 - Associated wetlands
- NEW Uses
 - Existing shoreline uses and activities may continue



Why a vision for the shoreline?

- Build a local consensus for the desired future
- Ensure the SMP reflects the long-term desires of the rural community
- Survey Topics:
 - Current shoreline use
 - Desired future use
 - Physical and Visual Access
 - Preservation and restoration options and tools



Shoreline Enjoyment and Use

- Other Uses
 - **Biking** (both mountain biking and along the riverside paths)
 - Enjoying the **quiet** and **peacefulness** of the river
 - Dog walking
 - Enjoying the **views**
 - Photography

“We live along the Yakima and enjoy the peacefulness of the river and the wildlife. Very few motorized boats on the Yakima keeps it peaceful.”

Desired Future Uses

What are the desired future uses of Benton County's Shorelines?

Trails for walking and hiking	73%
Areas and viewpoints for wildlife viewing or bird watching	42%
Shoreline public access points	40%
Parks or designated swim areas	30%
Within urban growth areas, commercial developments along the shoreline that have views, access, or trails to	26%
Boat ramps or road access to the water	22%
Camping and day use facilities	18%
Residential uses developed with common open space or recreation	15%
Concessions (food and/or recreation oriented businesses)	13%
Port, marina, or other water-oriented businesses	11%

Desired future uses match today's most common uses.

- Recreation-focused

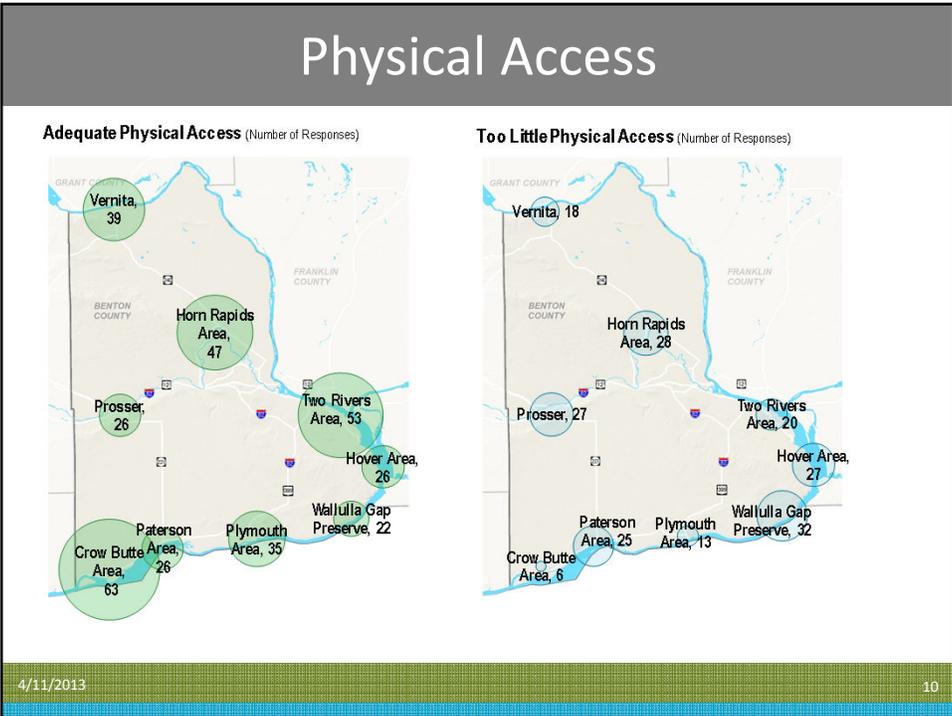
More intense uses are desired by a smaller percentage of responders

4/11/2013 8

Other Future Uses

- Protection and conservation
 - Wildlife
 - Open space
- Comments on commercial uses
 - No commercial use
 - Well-planned along the Columbia, limited along the Yakima
- Other preferences for the future:
 - Trash receptacles at all public access points
 - Improved walking trails along dikes and other areas

4/11/2013 9



Perspectives on Access

Too Much Physical Access (Number of Responses)



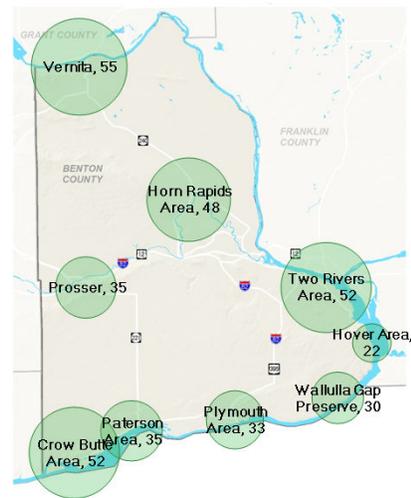
“Van Giessen and Duportail Yakima river access needs to be more completely developed or use needs to be prevented... If we are going to develop the river for tubing then there needs to be money for trash collection, restrooms and most importantly law enforcement on motorized boats going up and down the river all day long during the heavy use months.”

4/11/2013

11

Visual Access

Adequate Visual Access (Number of Responses)



Too Little Visual Access (Number of Responses)

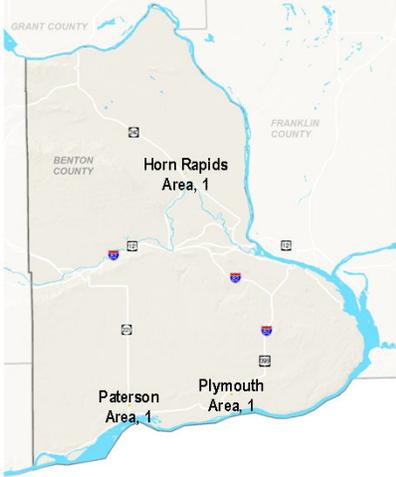


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12

Visual Access

Too Much Visual Access (Number of Responses)



- Few people felt there was too much visual access to the shoreline.

4/11/2013 13

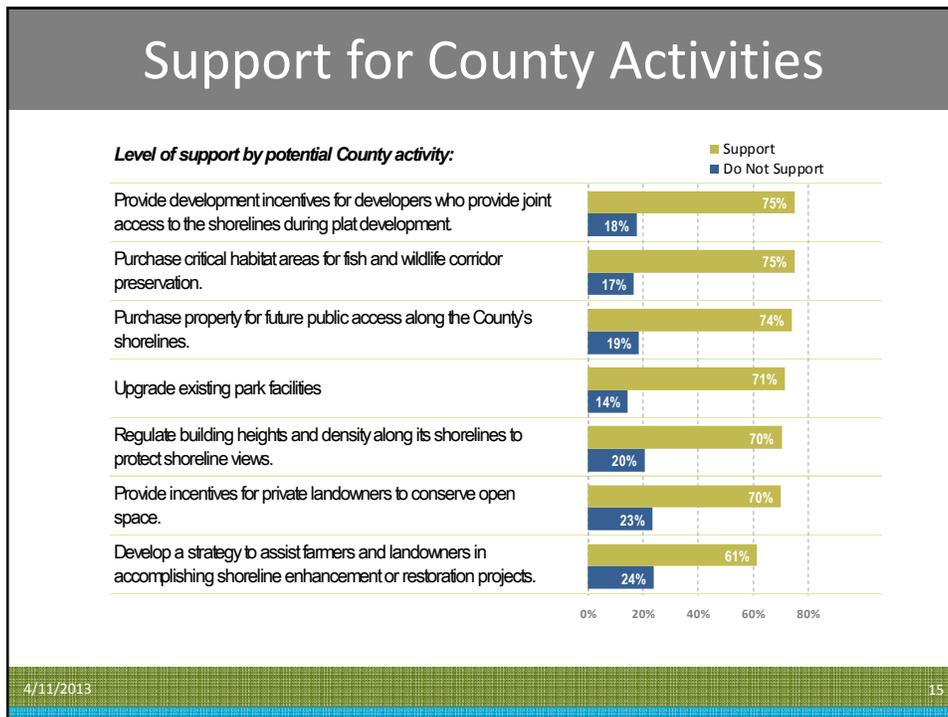
Additional Public Access

- Many locations within city boundaries.
- Additional locations in Benton County
 - Between Benton City and Prosser
 - Between Benton City and Horn Rapids
 - Hanford Reach
 - Crow Butte
- Comments on areas of heavy use (Vernita area, Horn Rapids area)
- Other areas and comments

“In my opinion, there is unprecedented access to the shorelines in Benton County. The Yakima River shorelines should be conserved with limited development and public access. It is too small and will be destroyed quickly. The Columbia river shoreline should be the focus of public facilities, access, etc. It is already developed more so the emphasis should continue on it rather than destroying the Yakima.”

“We own a home at the end of Grosscup and the amount of "floater" traffic over the summer has decimated the wildlife in our neighborhood and is ruining the safety of our neighborhood.”

4/11/2013 14



Areas in Need of Restoration

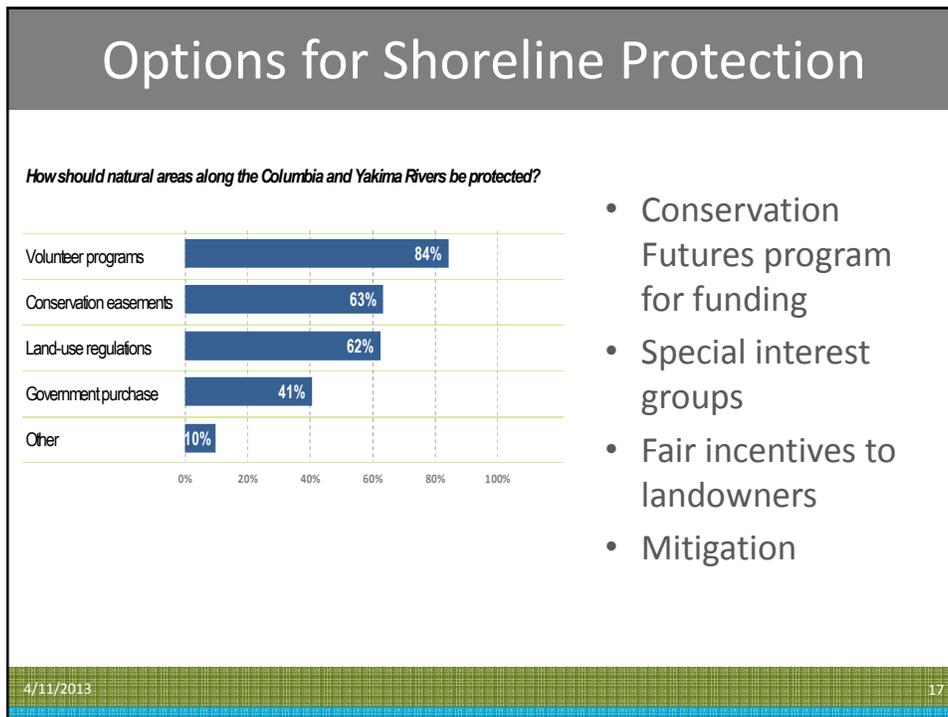
- County areas specifically identified:
 - Hover Park – Paterson
 - Prosser – Plymouth
 - Wallula Gap
- Comments on restoration
 - Manage use to prevent damage
 - Concerns about trash
 - Concerns about invasive species

“Protect them before it is too late. Once the areas are destroyed, it costs more to restore than protecting in the first place.”

“Preservation of open space is critical, both along the rivers and the ridges. This is the identity of our community and how we preserve (or don't preserve) the area will be our lasting legacy.”

“We are fortunate to have the two rivers in Benton County. We need to have policies in place to protect and perpetuate its health and existence.”

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How Will the County Use the Results?

- Results of the questionnaire will help the County to:
 - Develop shoreline use, public access, and recreation policies and regulations
 - Identify topics where more information or discussion is needed
 - Consider protection and restoration priorities for the voluntary restoration plan

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Opportunities to Participate

- Monthly Shoreline Advisory Committee Meetings
 - **Second Thursday** | 3:00-4:30 P.M.
- Regional Public Forums & Meetings
 - **June 2013** | Preliminary Shoreline Master Program elements
 - **Fall 2013** | Draft Shoreline Master Program
 - **Winter/Spring 2014** | Planning Commission Public Meetings
 - **Spring 2014** | BOCC Public Meetings & Hearing
- Review Draft Shoreline Master Program
 - **Preliminary SMP Elements** | Available Summer/Fall 2013
 - **Draft Restoration Plan** | Available June 2013

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