Natural Resources Long Range Planning Strategy
Gilliam County

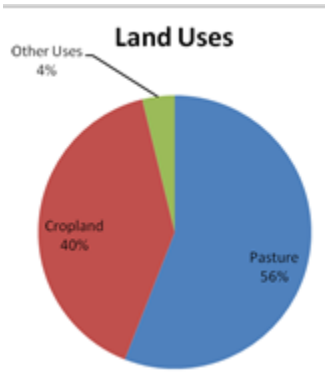
Overview

Gilliam County encompasses 782,910 acres and is comprised of three 8-digit sub-basin watersheds. The county is over 92% Private land with BLM making up 6% and the Army Core of Engineers 2%. The three watersheds are, Middle Columbia-Lake Wallula, Willow Cr., and Lower John Day. The lower John Day sub-basin makes up 75% of the county while Middle Columbia and Willow are evenly split on the remaining 25%

Recreation and Fee-hunting have steadily increased as a means of income for the county. The John Day River is a wild and scenic river that boasts world class fishing, hunting, and canyon views. The Columbia River also boasts world class fishing for multiple species and great water-skiing and wind-surfing.

Gilliam County is one of the richest counties per capita in the state. The primary reason is the landfill in Arlington and the recent spike in alternative energy production "Windmills". The windmill companies have been leasing and purchasing land from farmers across the county paying a handsome fee. The windmills are large in stature; however they have a small footprint on the actual land disturbed. Farming and Grazing activities take place in harmony with the windmills, which provide a nice supplemental income for the farmers and ranchers individually as well as substantial income for the county.

There has been a lot of conservation spread across the landscape of Gilliam County, however it is hard to quantify results. Conservation efforts have begun shifting from a shotgun approach to more of a watershed partner cooperative approach over the last couple of years. This SAC will provide the means to proceed with and fine tune this watershed scale approach to conservation.



Inventory by Land Use

Cropland

There is 294,573 acres of cropland in Gilliam County. 6,571 acres are irrigated, including 3,106 acres of surface irrigation all within the Rock Creek watershed. Ninety percent of the surface irrigated acres are within Lower Rock Creek. The deep well ground water pivot irrigation is not a resource concern as quality criteria is met on irrigation efficiency and soil erosion because of the high residue continuous crops grown. The surface irrigated crop acres in Rock Creek have resource concerns for inefficient use of irrigation water because of the open ditch conveyance systems, lack of flow measuring devices, uncontrolled flood irrigation, and worn out sprinkler systems. The second resource concern on these irrigated acres is water quality on the flood systems that transport excess sediment into Rock Creek which is a summer steelhead stream. The third resource concern is decreased stream flows from Rock Creek during irrigation season. Soil erosion, although occurring and potentially affecting water quality, is not typically a concern because the high residue perennial crops grown meet quality criteria for soil erosion. These effects can be mitigated further by riparian enhancement which is also a resource concern. There are approximately 198 river miles on Rock Creek, of which 25 miles of Rock Creek have a riparian buffer that meets state water quality standards. Fish passage is a resource concern adjacent to the irrigated cropland in Rock Creek as well because of old diversion structures. There has been little conservation work on irrigation systems on rock creek in the past to improve efficiency and a better inventory is needed. CREP has been implemented on 18 miles of Rock Creek. ODFW, OWEB, and SWCD have been replacing impassable irrigation diversion structures with passable structures and fish friendly on farm diversion structures. There are currently two diversions being replaced that will allow fish passage to an additional 30+ miles of Rock Cr.

There is 288,002 acres of dry land crop in Gilliam County. The majority of these acres are in a wheat/fallow crop rotation. Local climatic conditions particularly low rainfall; limit the diversity of crops grown. Another factor for limited crop diversity is the lack of markets or distance to markets for alternative crops that could be grown within the area. The wheat fallow rotation was done with conventional farming practices for many years which left soils exposed with little residue to stop erosion and sedimentation in streams. Much of the top-soil has been lost further decreasing production potential on already low production soils. The major resource concerns are soil erosion, soil quality, plant productivity, health and vigor, and water quality. There has been a large shift to conservation farming, utilizing less tillage such as 2 pass mulch tillage maintaining 30% residue and direct seeding which eliminates full width tillage and maintains a minimum of 50% residue. These farming practices have significantly reduced soil erosion from the dry and crop acres to a level that meets quality criteria. Approximately 40,000 acres of cropland is being treated with conservation tillage that meets quality criteria. NRCS, OWEB and the SWCD have utilized FA and TA to assist in treating 20,000 acres. 20,000 acres of cropland has been treated by NRCS to promote use of precision Ag technology to reduce pesticide and nutrient applications which treats the water quality concern. NRCS and the SWCD have cooperated to assist the implementation of approximately 50,000 acres of conservation crop rotation to break disease and pest cycles treating soil health and plant productivity, health and vigor. FSA has utilized the CRP program to maintain 73,643 acres of highly erodible soils in a permanent cover since 1986. This in combination with the conservation tillage has all but eliminated the soil erosion from the annual cropland. 50,000 acres of CRP are expiring from the program from 2010-2013, which means they will be eligible to be annually cropped again. It is a high priority to maintain these highly erodible soils in a permanent cover either through re-enrollment to CRP or other means. All highly erodible annually cropped soils within the county are protected with a conservation plan that meets quality criteria in order to be eligible for farm bill programs. I estimate this to be around 80,000 acres. Taking 50,000 acres treated with precision Ag & conservation tillage combined with 80,000 under conservation plans

and 73,643 acres of CRP that leaves about 84,359 acres of cropland to treat. It is unknown if these acres meet quality criteria or not and further analysis would be needed.

Rangeland

There are 488,337 acres of rangeland within Gilliam County supporting 58 livestock producers. There are 10,000 head of beef cattle currently in Gilliam County, which is down from 22,000 in 1986. This could be attributed to CRP enrollment as the rangeland adjacent to the CRP is not fenced and falls under the exclusion of grazing on CRP acres. The historic plant community is sagebrush-steppe habitat consisting mainly of Bluebunch Wheatgrass on the south slopes and tops, Idaho Fescue on the north slopes, and Basin Big Sagebrush in the swales and bottoms and Wyoming big sagebrush on the tops and north slopes. The production on good condition range is around 800-900lbs per acre on the south slopes, 1000-1100 lbs per acre on the tops, 1200-1400 lbs per acre on the north slopes, shallow rocky sites range from 300-600 lbs per acre, and loamy bottoms upwards of 2000 lbs. From a visual observation I would assess the majority of the rangeland in Gilliam County is in fair to good condition but transitioning to fair to poor without management and without fire. Many of the steep south slopes and north slopes are in good condition because they are inaccessible to livestock. Many creek bottoms have crossed a threshold from historical overgrazing done during the late 1800's and early 1900's. A combination of overgrazing in the early 19th century and fire suppression has essentially eliminated fire from the landscape. This has allowed a significant increase in the Basin Big sagebrush and Wyoming Big Sage brush which has out-competed the native perennial bunchgrass and various forbs resulting in a dramatic decrease on thousands of acres. This removal of fine fuels further expands the fire suppression, which means the sage-steppe habitat is mostly advancing to a late seral plant community and beginning to degrade. The food sources are significantly diminished for native mule deer that require browse species and early seral habitat. The forage production is significantly decreased and sage-brush is becoming a monoculture on thousands of acres. Western juniper has also encroached into Gilliam County on 47,500 acres according to our GIS analysis. The juniper encroachment into sage-steppe has occurred for the same reasons as the increase in sage brush. We have identified 16,500 acres of phase I and phase II juniper in the Thirty-mile creek watershed and 31,000 acres within the Upper Rock Creek watershed. The main resource concerns are water quantity, plant productivity health and vigor, noxious and invasive species, water quality "uncontrolled livestock access to open water". We would like to have a GIS analysis tool to determine percent sage brush canopy and percent juniper canopy. We currently have a rudimentary tool for juniper canopy.

NRCS, SWCD, Gilliam East Watershed council, and OWEB have contributed 600,000 dollars towards removing juniper on 4,000 acres within the Upper Rock Creek Watershed. Our goal is to treat 33 percent of the juniper in the watershed over the next 5 years so we would need approximately 1,065,330 dollars between Gilliam, Morrow and Wheeler counties. This treatment would address the water quantity, plant productivity, health and vigor, and noxious and invasive species concerns on a third of the acres with juniper expansion. Our figures estimate a potential retention of 4,296 acre feet of water to be captured stored and slowly released within the Rock Creek Watershed.

Forage production could increase by 20%. NRCS has cost-shared on 40 water developments through EQIP and WHIP throughout the county. These water developments have addressed plant health and vigor and water quality by improving grazing distribution and providing off stream water reducing livestock presence in riparian areas and springs. Acres and treatment level of rangeland treated is unknown and further analysis would be needed.

Water and Riparian Areas

Gilliam County is bordered on the western boundary by the John Day River and the northern boundary is the Columbia River. The John Day River is the second longest undammed stream in North American supporting a Native Salmon and Steelhead run. The John Day and Columbia Rivers are over 90% publicly owned. There is 1303 miles of steelhead streams in Gilliam County of which 804 miles are on the John Day and Columbia. The remaining 499 miles are in 10 other watersheds. 268 miles are in Rock Cr. and Thirty-mile Cr. These two watersheds account for 53% of the privately owned critical steelhead habitat stream miles. There are 70 miles in Thirty-mile Creek and 198 miles in Rock Cr. There is also 1,500 miles of 303 d list streams within the county. These are listed for temperature, flow modification, and habitat modification.

There have been 134 miles of Riparian buffers established to meet state water quality standards through CREP in the county. ODFW, The Warm Springs Tribe, and BPA have all contributed FA and TA to address in stream habitat projects, tree and shrub planting and riparian fencing. The most recent investment from BPA and The Warm Springs Tribe is $200,000 dollars to be invested in the Thirty-mile watershed. The major resource concerns are riparian vegetation productivity, health and vigor, disconnected flood plains, stream temperatures, lack of large woody debris, habitat diversity, T&E species critical habitat, and noxious and invasive species. Fish are not the only animals that rely on riparian health and habitat. Ninety percent of terrestrial wildlife rely on riparian areas for at least some portion of their life cycle. Riparian health and function is an extremely important component to healthy ecosystems.

NRCS has emphasized increased points in our local ranking of projects for funding for people who agree to treat or have already treated their riparian areas to meet state water quality standards utilizing partner funds.

High Priority Resource Concerns

2010 NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting
Gilliam County
Meeting Minutes

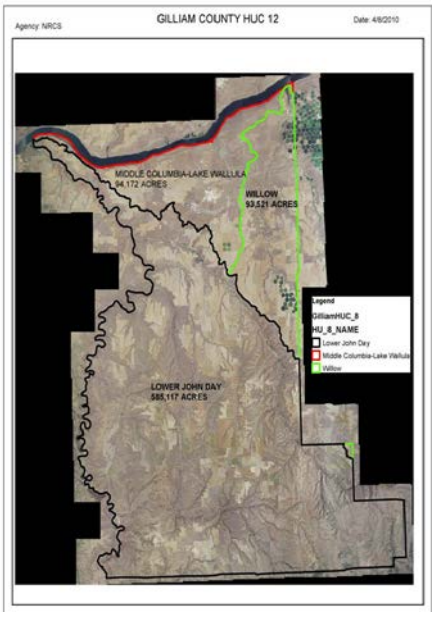
PURPOSE: Provide a forum for NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) to work collaboratively with our partners so we can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources in a way that benefits all of us.

OBJECTIVES: **1)** Identify resource problems
Set priorities
Determine measurable outcome

RESOURCE CONCERNS DISCUSSION – Cyndee Hill, Harney County NRCS Range Management Specialist, asked the group to identify resource concerns in Gilliam and Wheeler Counties. Broad topics were generated by the group and specifics were added as time allowed.

DETERMINE DESIRED OUTCOMES – The facilitator acknowledged that the next step was to start

envisioning the desired future condition for the top three resource concerns. The group decided that this was not the correct forum to address Education/Outreach in detail and would therefore create sub-committees on:



Upland Function
Water Quality/Quantity
Soil Erosion

Partner Contact List-

BLM- Craig Obermiller Obermiller@blm.gov
ODFW- Steve Cherry steve.p.cherry@state.or.us "Terrestrial Biologist"
Jeff Neil jeff.neil@state.or.us "Aquatic Biologist"
County Commissioners "Gilliam Co" Michael Weimar mwfarm@hughes.net

Sub-Basin overview

Lower John Day-

The Lower John Day 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub basin is slightly over 2 million acres and includes parts of 8 counties. Approximately one-half of the sub basin is rangeland, and the rest is forestland and areas used for grain crops, hay, and pasture. The main resource concerns on the rangeland and forestland include overstocked pine, juniper encroachment, invasive weeds, and a perceived high cost of conservation. Sheet, rill, and wind erosion are concerns for cropland, and waste management and a lack of riparian vegetation along streams are concerns for grassland and pastureland.

Middle Columbia-Lake Wallula-

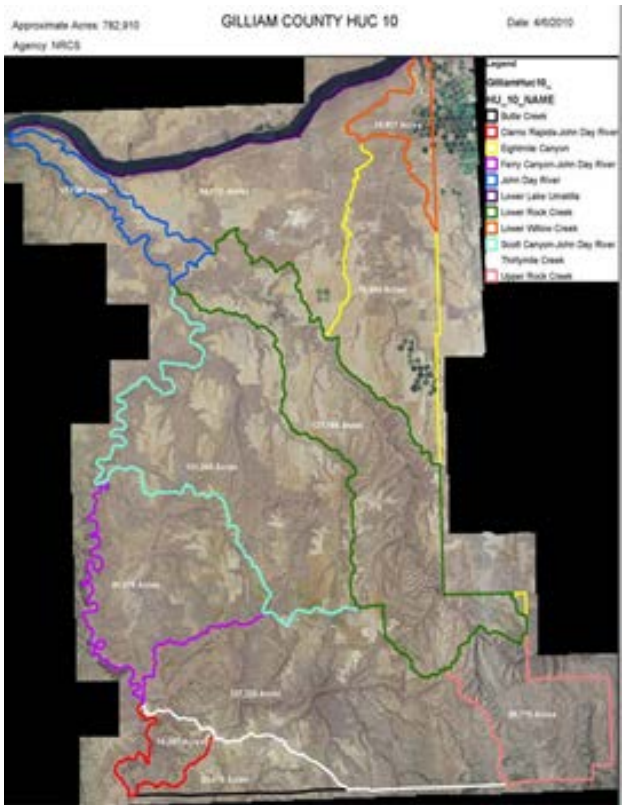
The Oregon portion of the Mid-Columbia/Wallula 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub basin is 502,600 acres in size and is in parts of four counties, including Morrow (63 percent), Gilliam (19 percent), Umatilla (18 percent), and Sherman (<1 percent) Counties. The sub basin is 85 percent privately owned, consists of both irrigated land and dry land, and is largely rangeland, pastureland, and cropland. Resource concerns include wind erosion, poor soil condition, inadequate irrigation water management, and ground water contamination. Social concerns include unreliable profits, perceived high risks, inadequate cost-share programs, and new, inexperienced resource managers.

Willow-

The Willow 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) sub basin is comprised of 555,903 acres. Over eighty percent of the sub basin is in Morrow County, and the remainder is in Gilliam County. Ninety-six percent of the land is privately owned. The sub basin has 112 farms, of which fifty-five percent are very large and well over 1,000 acres in size. Sixty-seven percent of the sub basin is used for grain crops and as rangeland, fourteen percent has been removed from production through government programs, twelve percent is used as pastureland, and seven percent is private and public forest land.

There is never an end to conservation and there will always be resources that need treatment, however Gilliam counties watershed approach will be critical to actually showing some real quantifiable results in the future. Locally we have been utilizing watershed assessments to focus

our conservation efforts. The John Day Sub-basin plan is a comprehensive assessment completed with involvement from the majority of the conservation agencies and partners in the area. This document has also developed a management plan that outlines the specific priority resource concerns on a 10-digit HUC scale as well as BMP's to address these concerns. This scale of watershed treatment will be important to NRCS and all conservation oriented agencies and or groups to be successful. This is a scale at which we can have an impact with the financial and technical resources available to us.



Natural Resource Problems and Desired Future Outcomes

Water Quantity and Quality

What is the severity of the problem?
Gilliam County has seen a rise in the number of recreational activities and fishing on the John Day River in the past decade. While this is a big boost to the county's economy, the river's aesthetic appeal is at risk of deterioration due to a decline in the riparian habitat and decreased stream flows. If nothing is done to control these problems, the John Day River and its major Salmonid supporting tributaries will continue to degrade in both quality and quantity of available habitat.

Irrigation water withdrawals from Rock Creek are a concern as most of the irrigation systems are open ditch conveyance systems utilizing uncontrolled flood irrigation. These systems are inefficient and most lack adequate flow measuring devices. The open ditch conveyance systems are losing approximately 2.2 acre/ft per acre of water per year. Irrigated acres in the Rock Creek Watershed constitute about half of the total irrigated acres in Gilliam County, which is about 3,250 acres. The remaining irrigated acres use deep well pivots and are not a water concern.

Who is willing to help aid in this resource concern?
The Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Gilliam Eastern

Watershed Council, Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Gilliam and Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Farm Service Agency, Oregon Water Resources, Wheeler County Watershed, Warm Springs Tribe, and the Oregon Freshwater Trust are all willing members to partner with the NRCS on the Gilliam County water concern.

Resource Trends

While the number of conservation farmers in Gilliam County has increased, there are still many conventional farming methods being used that increase the erosion rates and continue to damage the riparian health. The expansion of invasive species that compete with the near-stream vegetation contributes to the warming stream temperatures and the declining upland plant health and vigor.

Irrigated Lands in Gilliam County

	2002		1997		1992		1987		1982	
	Acres	% of total	Acres	% of total	Acres	% of total	Acres	% of total	Acres	% of total
Harvested Cropland	6185	90.6%	3619	89.4%	3545	88.3%	5675	90.4%	10530	76.8%
Pasture & Other Land	645	9.4%	427	10.6%	469	11.7%	606	9.6%	3177	23.2%
Total Irrigated Land	6830		4046		4014		6281		13707	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Gilliam County Irrigated Agricultural Land

HUC	Water Source	
	Surface	Ground
1707010110		510.3
1707010111		951.4
1707010401		439.8
1707010412		1562.8
1707020401	76.4	
1707020402	1056.8	
1707020404	1379.5	
1707020405	67.0	
1707020407	51.7	
1707020410	83.2	
1707020412	136.4	
1707020415	255.5	
Total Acres	*3106.7*	*3464.3*

Table 70. Lower and Middle Mainstem John Day River (below Kimberly) Priority Rankings

		STRATEGY RANKS: 1=Low 2=Moderate 3=High 4=Very High									
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
5th FIELD HUC by RANK	Restoration Priority Ranking 1 is Highest Priority	Passage	Fish Screening	Flow Restoration	In-stream Activities	Riparian Habitat Improvements	Control of Pollution Sources	Protect Existing Habitat	Upland Improvements	Education and Outreach	Manage Recreation & Tribal Fisheries
Bridge Creek	1	4	4	4	2	3	1	3	3	2	1
Thirty Mile Creek	1	4	4	4	2	3	1	2	3	2	1
Butte Creek	2	4	4	4	2	3	1	3	3	2	1
Upper Rock Creek	2	4	4	3	2	3	1	3	3	2	1
Pine Hollow	3	2	1	4	2	4	1	3	4	2	1
Lower JDR Muddy Creek	3	4	4	4	2	3	1	4	3	2	1
Lower JDR Ferry Canyon	3	2	2	3	2	3	1	4	4	2	1
Lower JDR Service Creek	4	2	4	3	2	4	1	3	3	2	1
Lower JDR Kahler Creek	4	4	4	4	2	3	1	3	3	2	1
Grass Valley Canyon	5	3	2	3	2	4	1	2	4	2	1
Lower JDR Scott Canyon	6	1	4	3	1	3	2	3	4	2	1
Lower Rock Creek	6	4	4	4	1	3	2	2	3	2	1
Lower JDR McDonald Ferry	7	1	1	2	1	3	2	4	4	2	1
Lower JDR Clarno	7	1	3	3	1	4	1	4	3	2	1

Table 71. Strategies Ranking for Lower and Middle Mainstem John Day River (below Kimberly)

STRATEGIES BY RANK	RANK
Protect Existing Habitat	1
Passage	2
Flow Restoration	3
Riparian Habitat Improvements	4
Fish Screens	5
Upland Improvements	6
In-stream Activities	7
Education and Outreach	8
Manage Recreation & Tribal Fisheries	9
Pollution Control	10

What are the goals?

Increase irrigation efficiency
Improve plant productivity on hay land
Increase water quality and quantity
Improve and increase riparian habitat
Improve in stream habitat

In five years, all 3,250 acres should be implementing more efficient irrigation piping systems such as above ground multi-outlet pipelines with underground piping of the conveyance systems and flow measuring devices. Landowners will be implementing NRCS's cost-share assistance programs to help address the above mentioned resource concerns.

How much funding is required?

To fund the entire project, including education and outreach, approximately $750,000will be needed. The irrigation portion will cost about $500,000 of allotted funds and the total calculated water savings will be 5.9 acre/feet per acre which will increase the irrigation efficiency by nearly 32 percent according to the NRCS irrigation water savings estimator. The results will include increased water quality and quantity, healthier riparian areas, and more sustainable upland plant health and irrigated crops.

Soil Quality and Quantity/Upland Health/Plant Productivity Health and Vigor

What is the severity of the problem?

The Thirtymile Watershed in Gilliam County encompasses about 137,222 acres, of which 16,500 acres of Phase I and II Juniper have invaded the sagebrush steppe habitat. Effects of the Juniper include increased erosion, poor soil conditions, increased invasive annual grasses, and an overall degradation of the rangeland hydrologic cycle. The impacts to the hydrologic cycle include decreased surface and subsurface flows, which directly correlate to a reduction in riparian and aquatic habitat. The declining aquatic and riparian habitats have detrimental effects on the Salmonid fish species and upland mammals that depend on healthy riparian areas.

Another soil concern is the 50,000 acres of CRP expiring over the next three to four years. The majority of these acres are Highly Erodible Land with the potential to contribute large quantities of sediment to Salmonid bearing streams within the John Day Watershed. There is a large portion of the 50,000 acres within the Thirtymile Watershed, which is an important Salmonid stream. Fifty percent of the acres are expected to be re-enrolled in the program, which will leave 25,000 acres that will be converted to crop production or to side idle, possibly used for livestock grazing. The potential for erosion on CRP acres converted to farming using conventional tillage will increase from zero tons of soil loss under CRP to a minimum of two tons per acre per year. Alternative farming methods that will exhibit high soil qualities include prescribed grazing, which entails maintaining existing perennial grass stands using proper grazing management, fencing, and creating more water available; and no-till farming coupled with conservation crop rotation and residue management.

Who is willing to help in this resource concern?

The NRCS is partnering with the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Gilliam Eastern Watershed Council, Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Gilliam and Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Farm Service Agency, Wheeler County Watershed, and the Warm Springs Tribe to reduce Juniper and invasive weeds and produce more sustainable agricultural soils.

Resource Trends

Conservation practices have been implemented in increasing numbers in the past five-10 years. However, there are still a large number of farms that are conventionally tilled and erosion is still an issue, especially the effects on streams, as well as the declining soil organic matter and overall soil quality. Future soil conditions are dependent on the methods the landowners use to treat expired CRP acres.

Conservation efforts have also begun to shift from a shotgun approach to more of a watershed partner cooperative approach over the past years. Conservation practices used include Residue Management, direct seeding and Precision Ag on 20,000 acres, 40 Upland Water developments, 134 miles of riparian buffers, and Brush Management on 5,000 acres, CRP on 70,000 acres.

What are the goals?

Outreach with landowners to educate on proper methods to eradicate Juniper and invasive weeds

Educate on NRCS cost-share assistance programs for conservation farming and tools to reduce invasive weeds

Maintain native perennial grasses on highly erodible cropland

Encourage conservation farming practices in annual cropland

The NRCS plans to treat Juniper encroachment on 8,250 acres in the Thirtymile Watershed over the next five years. An effective outreach plan should be in place as well, informing land owners of cost-share assistance programs. Soil erosion levels should be decreased, which will result in healthier stream quality, and cover for upland wildlife species should be maintained and enhanced as well. At this rate, the entire infected area should be treated in 10 years.

The NRCS plans to treat half of the expired CRP acres that do not get re-enrolled in the next three to four years, which is about 12,500 acres. Five years after the acres expire, the NRCS will have treated 8,660 acres, at a rate of 1,732 per year.

How much funding is required?

To treat the entire 16,250 acres of Juniper encroachment in the Thirtymile Watershed over ten years will cost $480,000, which includes the cost of the outreach, cost-share assistance programs, and technical assistance.

The 12,500 acres of expired CRP that the NRCS plans to treat will cost approximately $2,125,000. Outreach, cost-share assistance programs, and technical assistance will cost about $170 per acre.

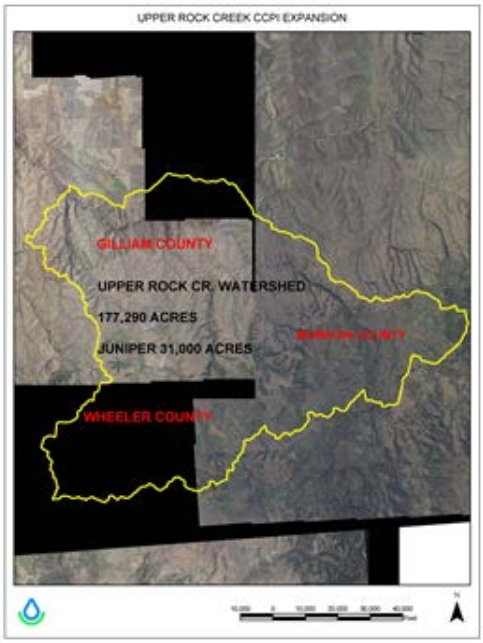
Current and Future Projects:

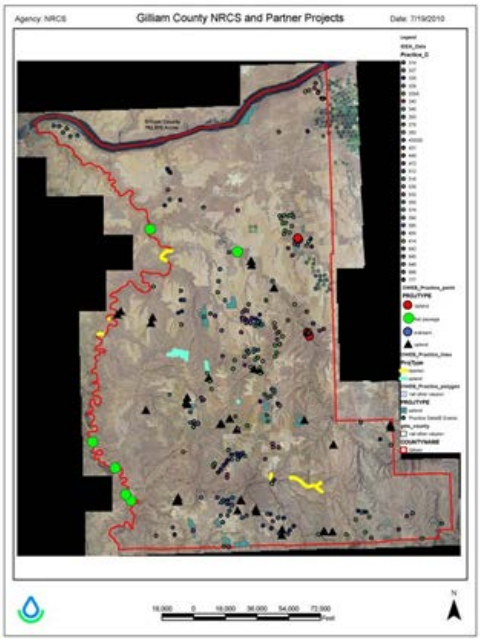
The **Gilliam County Lonerock CCPI** was approved in 2009.3,500 acres of brush management for juniper control, 7 spring developments, cross fencing, and range seeding were contracted in 2009 and 2010, for the years 2010-2013.Sixty percent of the project is complete and 2 yrs ahead of schedule on the original plan. The project was expanded in 2011 to encompass the entire Upper Rock Cr. Watershed, which includes Gilliam, Morrow and Wheeler counties. The investment for 2010-2013 was 366,589 NRCS, WHIP, and EQIP dollars, 25,000 NRCS Technical assistance, 200,000 OWEB Funds, and 52,000 in Gilliam SWCD Technical assistance. The NRCS investment to be contracted in 2011 is 235,000 EQIP dollars and approximately 25,000 in SWCD Technical assistance. This 2011 investment would treat an additional 1300 acres of juniper and will add 8 landowners that were not previously participating, including some in each county.

The purpose is to recover some hydrologic function, and the quality, quantity, and duration of

stream flow in Lonerock Creek, which is a tributary of Rock Creek and part of the John Day River System. CCPI is a voluntary conservation initiative that enables the use of certain conservation programs, along with resources of eligible partners to provide financial and technical assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands.

Removing juniper from the landscape will allow the grassland ecosystems to capture, store, and slowly release 100 percent of the effective precipitation in the watershed, which will increase grass production per acre and raise water tables. According to Miller in Western Juniper Technical bulletin 152, 3-5 inches of annual precipitation is utilized or prevented from entering the watershed by phase I & II juniper stands through canopy interception and evapotranspiration. We have converted this to the equivalent of 0.42 acre feet per acre of water use annually by phase I and phase II juniper. There are 31,000 acres of juniper within the watershed , which would mean 13,020 acre feet of water is not being captured, stored and slowly released within the Native Sage-Steppe habitat. There is 325,829 gallons per acre ft., which would mean juniper is removing 4.2 Billion gallons of water annually from the watershed. would appear to be having the largest impact on hydrologic function and ultimately decreased stream flows within the watershed. Juniper expansion is creating desertification, essentially changing a 12-14" watershed to a 9-11".This decline in effective precipitation increases as the stands transition to phase III. As the water quantity and quality improve, spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and resident rainbow trout will be enhanced.





Analysis

Water Quality and Quantity
Cropland

Upland Health

Land Use	Acres/Miles	Resource Concerns

Cropland	Dryland- 288,002 acres Irrigated– 6,571 acres	Degraded Plant Condition, Water Quality Degradation, Inefficient Energy Use, Excess/Insufficient Water
Rangeland	488,337 acres (57,500 of juniper encroachment)	Degraded Plant Condition, Excess/Insufficient Water, Soil Erosion, Soil Quality Degradation, Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife, Livestock Production Limitation
Water	2,803 miles	Water Quality Degradation, Degraded Plant Condition, Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife, Excess/Insufficient Water

RANKING	RESOURCE CONCERN	NUMBER OF VOTES
#1	Upland Function	11
#2	Water Quality/Quantity	10
#3	Soil Erosion	5
#4	Riparian Restoration	4
#5/6	Noxious Weeds	3
#5/6	Wildlife	3

303d listed and Critical Steelhead habitat streams	1,500 miles (675 miles on private land, 198 on Rock Creek)
Miles with riparian buffers meeting state water quality standards	-134 miles
Remaining miles needing treatment	**1,366 miles**

Wheat fields and wind turbines with Mt. Hood in the background
Juniper invasion on rangeland in Gilliam County

Dryland Acres in Gilliam County	288,000
Surface Irrigated Acres in Gilliam County	3,106
Acres enrolled in CRP	-73,643
HEL annually cropped soils protected with a conservation plan	-80,000
Acres the NRCS and SWCD have assisted with to implement conservation crop rotation	-50,000
Remaining acres of crop to treat	**84,359**

Juniper Encroached acres	47,500 acres (16,500 in Thirtymile Watershed, 31,000 in Rock Creek Watershed)
Acres Treated	-4,000 acres
Remaining Acres	**43,500 acres**

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DEQ- Don Butcher butcher.don@deq.state.or.us
ODA- Tom Straughan- tstraughan@oda.state.or.us
Gilliam SWCD- Wally Powell walter.powell@oacd.org
OSU Extension- Jordan Maley Jordan.maley@oregonstate.edu
ONDA- Aaron Killgore akillgore@onda.org
Oregon Water Resources- Scott White whitesc@wrd.state.or.us
FSA County Committee- Justin Faulhaber Justin.Faulhaber@or.usda.gov
Wheeler County Watershed Coordinator- Debbie Bunch debrabunch@gmail.com
Wheeler SWCD- Judy Potter judypotter@centurytel.net

Warm Springs Tribal Contact- Linda Brown jdborestoration@ortelco.net
Oregon Freshwater Trust- Brett Brownscombe brett@freshwatertrust.net

2011 NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting
Gilliam County
Meeting Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE: Amy Charette, Warm Springs, Watershed Restoration Coordinator JD Basin; Wally Powell, Gilliam SWCD; Tom Straughan, ODA; Debra Bunch, Mid- JD Watershed Councils; Kevin Martin, USFS; Shannon Jewitt, ODFW. Nate James, NRCS DC Gilliam County; Damon Brosnan, NRCS DC Wheeler County; Kathy Ferge, NRCS (meeting facilitator).

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION:

Provide a forum for NRCS to work collaboratively with our partners so we can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources in a way that benefits all of us.

OBJECTIVES

Identify natural resource problems, priorities, and measurable outcomes.

OVERVIEW OF NRCS STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In fall of 2009, Oregon NRCS begin the process of developing what is entitled localized Strategic Approach to Conservation plans. These are long-term strategic plans that guide the work of the local NRCS office. They offer NRCS the opportunity to focus on specific locations to address and remedy specific resource concerns, which allow for measurable results and the opportunity to partner with other organizations to further leverage funding.

Last summer, as part of the planning process, community planning sessions were held to identify resource concerns, prioritize those concerns, provide input on activities that might be used to address the concerns, and identified potential project partners.

The prioritized concerns were then used to develop specific Conservation Implementation Strategies. These detailed strategies are used to prioritize EQIP and other NRCS funding.

Through this process NRCS has actually planned activities through 2012.Through this meeting they are looking at resources concerns for 2013 and beyond as well as doing a double-check on the resource concerns and activities to address those concerns in 2012.

SUMMARY OF 2011 MEETING

In 2010, the following resource concerns were identified as priorities within the two county area.

-Upland Health/Function
-Water Quality/Quantity
-Soil Erosion
-Riparian Restoration
-Noxious weeds

Additionally the following locations were listed as priority watersheds, with associated funding pools for 2011:

-Thirty-mile
-Upper Rock Creek

2012 PLANNED CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (CIS):

Lower Willow Creek Weed Management Area

Rock Creek -Irrigation Efficiency

FUTURE PROJECT CONCEPTS:

CRP management for Mule Deer activity (Kevin Martin noted there may also be funding associated with CRP as elk habitat)

Farm-over of Terraces -energy efficiency for direct seeders

LOOKING AHEAD:

Resource concerns identified by partners:

-Long term management of juniper
-Pine encroachment on rangelands
-Prescribed burn (ability to utilize effectively to manage resource concerns)
-Invasive species -namely ventenata and medusa head
-Water quality -TMDL John Day - Temperature

Other identified concerns/opportunities:

-Monitoring-especially pre-documentation and funding for monitoring
-Biochar-Forest Service is doing work on conversion and use.

Partnership Opportunities

Everyone at the table agreed that NRCS's move to strategic planning is beneficial and they expect to be kept in the loop for future activity. Most have funding or can solicit grants for cooperative projects and see a benefit of utilizing NRCS as a federal match or federal leverage.

2012 Local Work Group Meeting
February 15, 2012
Gilliam Co. Meeting Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE: Kacee Lathrop NRCS (facilitator), Damon Brosnan NRCS, Nate James NRCS, Shannon Jewett ODFW Heppner, Roger Lathrop Gilliam SWCD, Jordan Maley OSU Extension, Kathy Street, Sandy McKay Gilliam-East John Day Watershed, Mitch Mund Oregon Department of Forestry, Tom Straughn Dept of Ag, Brian Cochran Warm Springs, Ross Ryno, Herb Winters Wheeler SWCD and Jeff Neal DFW John Day.

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION:

Provide a forum for NRCS to work collaboratively with our partners so we can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources in a way that benefits all of us.

OBJECTIVES

Identify natural resource problems, priorities, and measurable outcomes.

SUMMARY OF 2011 MEETING

Priority Resource concerns from last two years work groups:

-Upland Health/Function
-Noxious Weeds
-Water quality/quantity
-Soil Erosion
-Riparian Restoration

Thirty Mile Watershed Enhancement CIS began in 2011

-Priority to groups of landowners to prescribed burning phase 1 Juniper
-Clean up after natural burn with mechanical cutting
-Upland funds riparian areas utilizing CREP or ODFW fencing project

-Seeding of annual and medusahead sites
-34 additional miles of riparian treatment at end of project approx 7 miles/year
-Juniper Management
-Increase riparian treatment
-303 list critical habitat

Upper Rock Creek Watershed Juniper Management CIS
-Juniper removal phase 1 heading into phase 2 in this area
-Take care of juniper sites before they transition to annuals
-Riparian treatment ranks higher
-Prescribed burning ranks higher
-Private contractors working with landowners on burning in the future
-Juniper goal to treat 9000 acres 5200 has been completed or contracted already
-Riparian goal of 34 miles in five years
-HUC tri-county project

2014 PLANNED CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (CIS):

Terraces CIS
-Risk of erosion
-Inventoried terraces on cropland
-Many terraces have been or will be removed
-Concerned about long term risk of erosion
-If intense tillage is resumed there could be a higher risk of erosion
-Larger equipment with GPS tech requires the terraces to be adapted as opposed to being removed
data 20% savings in fuel by reducing overlap increases efficiency in spray and nutrient
-Energy efficiency initiative
-Pesticide runoff

Continuation of Upper Rock Creek Juniper Management CIS using Prescribed Burning as the focus and focusing more in Lone Rock Creek

Rock Creek Irrigation CIS

Basin Wide AFO/CAFO CIS

FUTURE PROJECT CONCEPTS:

Lower Willow Creek Weed Management Area CIS
-Overlaps in Morrow County
-Treating invasive weeds in the flood plain
-Need inventorying in the flood plain for last year, working with landowners,
-Chemical treatment
-Reseeding
-Weed management area
-Nature conservancy was working in area
-Pick up where previous work ended

LOOKING AHEAD:

Ferry Canyon
CRP will any acres be coming out? Won't know until the ranking comes out, and after the signups. There are only 8 contracts expiring in 2013.
Is there funding available for range health for something smaller? Springs, weeds, are these obtainable. A group of landowners could work together to build a plan for future funding, and work with SWCD.
Without treating junipers, working on seeding or spring developments will be useless. Long term commitment is a concern
Introducing natives in the upper rock creek area, transition from annual to perennial Range drill is needed. The Gilliam SWDC/ Gilliam East John Day Watershed Council have acquired a range drill that is now ready to rent/lease.
Rock creek irrigation, Meeting was held with Producers in May of 2013 with a great response, will be submitting a new CIS for 2014.
Passage work on Rock Creek and Thirty Mile will be finished soon Flow measuring device removed, looking for agency to fund replacement of device. This would allow tracking of the difference seen due to Juniper removal. Ken will check on flow measuring device City of Lonerock has metering device, this has shown that the water has doubled in the last year
Ventenata weed increasing rapidly in Grant County so we are watching here.
Riparian corridor is a big issue concerning weeds.
Partnering with agencies will improve the service offered to producers and landowners.
Liability of range burning of juniper. Pasture use, fences, and landowner liability concerns. Permits through ODF lowers liability on ODF ground. Liability ultimately rests on landowners. Having a prescribed burn plan is required and educating landowners on benefits of burning may help.
Grass Bank: there is nowhere to go if the grass burns. Many landowners cannot support their herd if they have a loss of pasture. Use of stubble for grazing has affected pasturing cattle. Varieties of stubble or fungicide prevents use. Working Grass Bank program would benefit county Insurance companies could perhaps attach a small rider to insurance policies if landowners pushed the companies to offer this.
For investment of government dollars we are getting the most "bang for the buck" burning juniper. Need numbers that demonstrate the benefit from burning junipers. This will help landowners make informed decisions. The increase in amount of water and grass. One page fact sheets are being compiled on the cost of juniper invasion and the effect of juniper progressing to phase 2 or phase 3. Slash that results from mechanical juniper removal is a problem in the future. Burning the slash is effective.

Gilliam and Wheeler Local Workgroup Meeting Attendees
February 6, 2013

Steve Cherry, ODFW
Mitch Mund, ODF

Tom Schott, Local landowner
Georgia Van Winkle, Local landowner and SWCD board member
Jim Van Winkle, Local landowner
Chas T. Koenig, Wy' East RC&D
Douglas Wilson, Local landowner and SWCD board member
Walter Powell, Local landowner and SWCD manager
Tom Straughan, ODA
Sandy McKay, Gilliam-East John Day Watershed Council
Roger Lathrop, Gilliam SWCD technician
Tim Campbell, Local landowner
Joseph Campbell, Gilliam SWCD student trainee
Dan Schott, Local landowner
Mist Bennett, Gilliam NRCS District Conservationist
Damon Brosnan, Wheeler NRCS District Conservationist
Kacee Lathrop, Morrow NRCS District Conservationist and Meeting Facilitator

Gilliam and Wheeler NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2013

Topics discussed are organized according to Land use.

Rangeland –

- Upper Rock Creek watershed – transition this existing funding pool, that expires this year, into a funding pool with a focus on Prescribed burning as a viable option to treat juniper.
- Consider developing a CIS for the Ferry Canyon watershed. This CIS would focus on treating rangeland and items needing treatment are juniper encroachment into non-historical habitat, cross fencing for better livestock distribution, development of alternative watering sources, and re-vegetation of degraded rangeland.
- The need for a county grassbank was discussed. The grassbank would help alleviate the loss of forage after a landowner has voluntarily undertaken conservation practices that would deplete the existing forage base of the treated land unit. This would, in most cases, be needed after using Prescribed burning to treat juniper issues. Several meeting participants cited the loss of forage as an obstacle to treating range land with burning.
- Rangeland contained within cropland fields was discussed and one landowner brought up how CREP has hurt his ability to graze neighbor's cropland due to the water sources being excluded from livestock due to the program.
- The adverse effects of juniper on Mule deer habitat were discussed. Annual grass invasion, primarily Ventenata and Medushaea, was cited as being extremely detrimental to Mule deer habitat. CRP monocultures were also discussed as having negative impacts on Mule deer.
- The annual grass invasion in both counties was discussed at some length. Discussion centered on developing a CIS to start addressing the problem and conversation centered around the treatment options and how to design the CIS to intelligently treat annual grasses in order to garner support for the endeavor.

The impending Soil Health initiative was talked about and there might be an opportunity to utilized National money to work on rangeland. There is ongoing work to determine the best use of this money on rangeland to accomplish the goals of the initiative.

A landowner broached the subject of sagebrush control and that there is a herbicide, Spike, that proven to be very effective in killing sagebrush. He talked about the cost being prohibitive for landowners but NRCS cost share may make it affordable. This subject was mentioned since there are many areas in Gilliam county that sagebrush has increased the percentage as described in the ecological site descriptions.

Mention was made of the continuing efforts of several State agencies to monitor and quantify water quality. The discussion centered around the need to better describe the beneficial effects of upland conservation on the stream corridors. Comments were made about the conflict between measurable outcomes (i.e. the use of science) and the use of expert, local knowledge in evaluating condition. One is measurable and the other is visual, experience orientated.

Cropland –

Recently, Gilliam county has struggled to find a new resource concern in the Dry cropland arena that is of importance to the area and its inhabitants. There was a concerted effort to seek input on a new direction that NRCS can pursue in the dry cropland resource areas of Gilliam County.

Infrared mapping was discussed as a new technology. The District, along with partners, may be interested in writing a CIG grant to develop a plan to use infrared photography to monitor crop stress, etc..

The increasing use of Canola as a rotation crop was discussed. The benefits of planting in the early summer, the addition of nutrients, the breaking of the pest cycle, and using the Canola for forage in the first year were all discussed. Canola is a new crop to Gilliam County and some experimentation will be needed to see if its use will be beneficial.

The Energy Initiative was a topic of conversation with mention made of the availability of money from the National level. The process was explained, i.e. audits and then implementation. The Wy' East RC&D is involved in this process and Chaz talked about the role of the RC&D and the opportunity to use BPA money to help defray or completely pay landowner costs in upgrading systems that were highlighted in the audit.

The potential Soil Health Initiative was brought up and the potential for cost share to improve dryland cropping systems. There is not much known about the initiative at this time but it will be watched closely to see if, primarily, Gilliam operators can take advantage of this new conservation funding opportunity.

Forestry –

Forestry was discussed in relation to Wheeler County since Gilliam County has no forestland of significance. The Mountain Creek Forestry funding pool was discussed with reasons (forest health) and extent highlighted. Eligible landowners will need to be within ½ mile of the National Forest. This is due to dangers posed by

catastrophic wildfire from publicly owned forest and the hope is that by treating within the ½ mile buffer the private land can be "armored" to better withstand a fire.

Other forestry items discussed relate to:

- Juniper expansion into forestland
- Pine tree expansion into rangeland
- The need to re-introduce prescribed fire into the forests to maintain forest health and keep junipers in check
- The devastating effects that catastrophic wildfires can have on, not only the forestland, but the entire watershed

Irrigated land –

Gilliam County has a tough time engaging the landowners with irrigated land. The specific areas are few in the county but several efforts in the past to engage these landowners have failed. There was discussion on how to connect with the affected irrigators and get them interested in improving their delivery systems. The Wy' East RC&D has programs designed to help with improving on farm efficiencies which would/could include irrigation. There is the potential of NRCS partnering with the RC&D and the local SWCD to increase landowner interest in improving inefficient irrigation systems.

In Wheeler County, the discussion centered around the current Mountain Creek Irrigation funding pool that is in its second year of implementation. The major obstacle facing irrigation improvement in Wheeler County is due to lack of a baseline on irrigated acres and where improvements need to be made. There are no Irrigation Districts in the county so irrigation work has not been as "well designed" as it could be.

Gilliam and Wheeler NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2014

Attendance: There were six landowners present and 9 personnel present from differing Agencies.

Introductions/Housekeeping/Objectives – Misty Bennett

Look into the Past – a recount of past EQIP funding pools and Resource concerns from 2006 through 2013*. Damon Brosnan and Misty Bennett

Current Funding pools (CIS) in Gilliam and Wheeler counties*. Damon Brosnan and Misty Bennett

Topics discussed are organized according to Land use.

Rangeland –

1. Consider developing a CIS for the Ferry Canyon watershed. This CIS would focus on treating rangeland and items needing treatment are juniper encroachment into non-historical habitat, cross fencing for better livestock distribution, development of alternative watering sources, and re-vegetation of degraded rangeland.
2. The need for a county grassbank was discussed. The grassbank would help alleviate the loss of forage after a landowner has voluntarily undertaken conservation practices that would deplete the existing forage base of the treated land unit. This would, in most cases, be needed after using Prescribed burning to treat juniper issues. Several meeting participants cited the loss of forage as an obstacle to treating range land with burning.

3. The adverse effect of juniper on Mule deer habitat was mentioned. Annual grass invasion, primarily Ventenata and Medushaea, was cited as being extremely detrimental to Mule deer habitat.
4. There is concern with the adverse effects, on healthy range, of burning juniper slash.
5. The annual grass invasion in both counties was discussed at some length. Conversation centered on the treatment options (containment vs whole field treatment and a new herbicide product that shows promising results) and how to design the CIS to intelligently treat annual grasses in order to garner support for the endeavor. There was a consensus that proper grazing that encouraged bunchgrass health is the cheapest, most effective method for containing annual grasses.
6. The impending Soil Health initiative was talked about and there might be an opportunity to utilize National money to work on rangeland. There is ongoing work to determine the best use of this money on rangeland to accomplish the goals of the initiative.
7. The continuing need for livestock water was discussed. Along similar lines, a discussion ensued about the use of ponds and wascobs to store and release water into the streams. The intent would be to prolong summer flows in streams that tend to dry up by earl summer or are very flashy with periods of high runoff followed by extended periods of low flow.
8. ODFW talked about the negative impacts of woven wire fence on wildlife. A publication from Montana was pointed out as being a good reference on designing wildlife, friendly fence.

Cropland –
Recently, Gilliam County has struggled to find a new resource concern in the Dry cropland arena that is of importance to the area and its inhabitants. There was a concerted effort to seek input on a new direction that NRCS can pursue in the dry cropland resource areas of Gilliam County.
1. The use of variable rate technology in cropland was a topic of conversation. Landowners mentioned the cost of upgrading is high but there is some interest if NRCS can help offset the costs.
2. The Energy Initiative was a topic of conversation with mention made of the availability of money from the National level. The process was explained, i.e. audits and then implementation with examples given of the types of upgrades available.
3. The Soil Health Initiative was brought up and the potential for cost share to improve dryland cropping systems. There is not much known about the initiative at this time but it will be watched closely to see if, primarily, Gilliam operators can take advantage of this new conservation funding opportunity. The use of cover crops on cropland was discussed. There continues to be skepticism among wheat growers that the use of cover crops will be beneficial and not detrimental in areas with a low precipitation. The adverse impacts of cover crops were also discussed as it relates to crop insurance.
4. The continuing need for Direct seed/no-till conversion was discussed with mention made of the recent runoff issues caused by winter storms.
5. There continues to be concern with the recent removal of terraces. While some landowners expressed little concern since the affected fields have been converted to no-till, some landowners feel there is still the potential for significant runoff if the right weather event occurs. Discussion then centered on the status of the Terrace rebuild CIS that has been explored in recent years and what watershed/area is in the greatest need of help.
6. The future of CRP was a topic. There is uncertainty about the future enrollment potential of Gilliam contracts. There were no solutions devised but the future use of CRP in a Grassbank was an option. The hope is that the Gilliam SWCD will be the lead on developing a Grassbank

that landowners can use as an alternative source of forage. The potential listing of the Washington ground squirrel was pointed out and the impact this might have on whether to graze or till expire CRP acres.
7. The increasing problem with Rattail fescue, Rabbitbrush, and Sagebrush on no-till cropland was mentioned. The use of tillage seems to be the best option to deal with these pests.

Forestry –
Forestry was discussed in relation to Wheeler County since Gilliam County has no forestland of significance. The Mountain Creek Forestry funding pool was discussed with reasons (forest health) and extent highlighted. Eligible landowners will need to be within ½ mile of the National Forest. This is due to dangers posed by catastrophic wildfire from publicly owned forest and the hope is that by treating within the ½ mile buffer the private land can be "armored" to better withstand a fire.
Other forestry items discussed relate to:
1. Juniper expansion into forestland
2. Pine tree expansion into rangeland
3. The need to re-introduce prescribed fire into the forests to maintain forest health and keep junipers in check
4. The devastating effects that catastrophic wildfires can have on, not only the forestland, but the entire watershed
5. Timber markets are horrible and landowners are/should be managing forestland for forage production.

Irrigated land –
Gilliam County has a tough time engaging the landowners with irrigated land. The specific areas are few in the county but several efforts in the past to engage these landowners have failed. There was mention made that drilling wells would be a good option, if Water Resources were more willing partners. This would free up stream flow for wildlife and give landowners a more dependable source of irrigation water that would increase the irrigation period into the summer (vs a stream that dries up by the end of June).
In Wheeler County, the discussion centered around the current Mountain Creek Irrigation funding pool that is in its second year of implementation. The major obstacle facing irrigation improvement in Wheeler County is due to lack of a baseline on irrigated acres and where improvements need to be made. There are no Irrigation Districts in the county so irrigation work has not been as "well designed" as it could be.

Gilliam and Wheeler NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2015

Attendance: There were seven landowners present and 7 personnel present from differing Agencies.

Purpose: Bring together individuals with a variety of expertise and knowledge allowing the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and our partners to better focus our efforts for program year 2016 and beyond.

AGENDA

Time	**Task**
1:00 p.m.	Arrive, get settled and network
1:05 p.m.	Welcome/Housekeeping/Introductions – Misty Bennett and Damon Brosnan, NRCS
1:15 p.m.	Meeting Objectives and Protocols – Kacee Lathrop, facilitator
1:25 p.m.	EQIP Snapshot –Recap of work done in 2014- Misty Bennett and Damon Brosnan, NRCS • Brief overview of EQIP in the last 5 years. • Discuss reduced funding levels • Common practices, funding levels, location maps • New funding strategies, i.e. RCPP, Two Chiefs, FIP
1:45 p.m.	GROUP BRAINSTORM Resource Concerns by Landuse • Identify what is being done now,

- What is planned for 2016 & beyond,
- Identify/update resource concerns

2:10 p.m. Break

2:20 p.m. Geographic Priorities/Focus Areas and Discuss Future Opportunities

- New technologies/techniques in the crop arena
- Collaboration potential with SWCD, Watershed Councils

2:55 p.m. Summary of the Day – Kacee Lathrop, facilitator

3:00 p.m. Adjourn

***See Attached Powerpoint Presentation at end of Document**

Topics discussed are organized according to County.

WHEELER COUNTY

1. The North Slope Ochoco RCPP was discussed
    a. Separate signup and funding pools
    b. Ability to leverage additional monies from other funding organizations
    c. Due to reduced funding for EQIP, Wheeler County is fortunate to have separate funding through RCPP
2. ACEP was discussed and the new face of easements due to the 2014 Farm Bill
    a. Interest in Wheeler County for the program
    b. Working on an active ACEP application and hoping to complete and get approved in Spring of 2016
3. Discussed future funding possibilities and the trend of how conservation will be applied on the ground

    a. RCPP process
    b. OWEB and other funding entities
4. Discussed different methods of cutting and removing juniper and the use of prescribed burning

GILLIAM COUNTY

1. Current year EQIP funding discussed
    a. Lonerock Basin Prescribed Burn on hold.
    b. Rock Creek Irrigation, reduced funding.
2. Discussed CSP opportunities in the County.
3. Discussed State/National Initiatives-Energy.
4. Gilliam RCPP was discussed.
    a. Maybe change directions? More focused?
    b. Need partner/leverage funds
    c. Use experience gained from previous CCPI.
    d. Moving to Rock Creek Watershed
        i. WASCOB's for erosion control, not water storage
        ii. Upland projects
        iii. Forestry in the upper watershed
        iv. Irrigation work is being completed now
5. Discussed 2017 CRP expiration.
    a. Very competitive signup with reduced acres.
    b. Thoughts? Production/Grazing/Grass Bank
6. Discussed having measurable outcomes and doing more monitoring so we can tell our story with current and future projects.

2015 NRCS Gilliam and Wheeler Local Workgroup Meeting

February 4, 2015

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Meeting Objectives and Protocol
- EQIP Snapshot – Recap of Work done in 2014
- Brief overview of Funding Pools the past 5 years
- Current Resource Concerns
- Current Funding Pools
- Resource Concerns of the Future – Are they different?
- Are there Geographic priorities/Focus Areas?

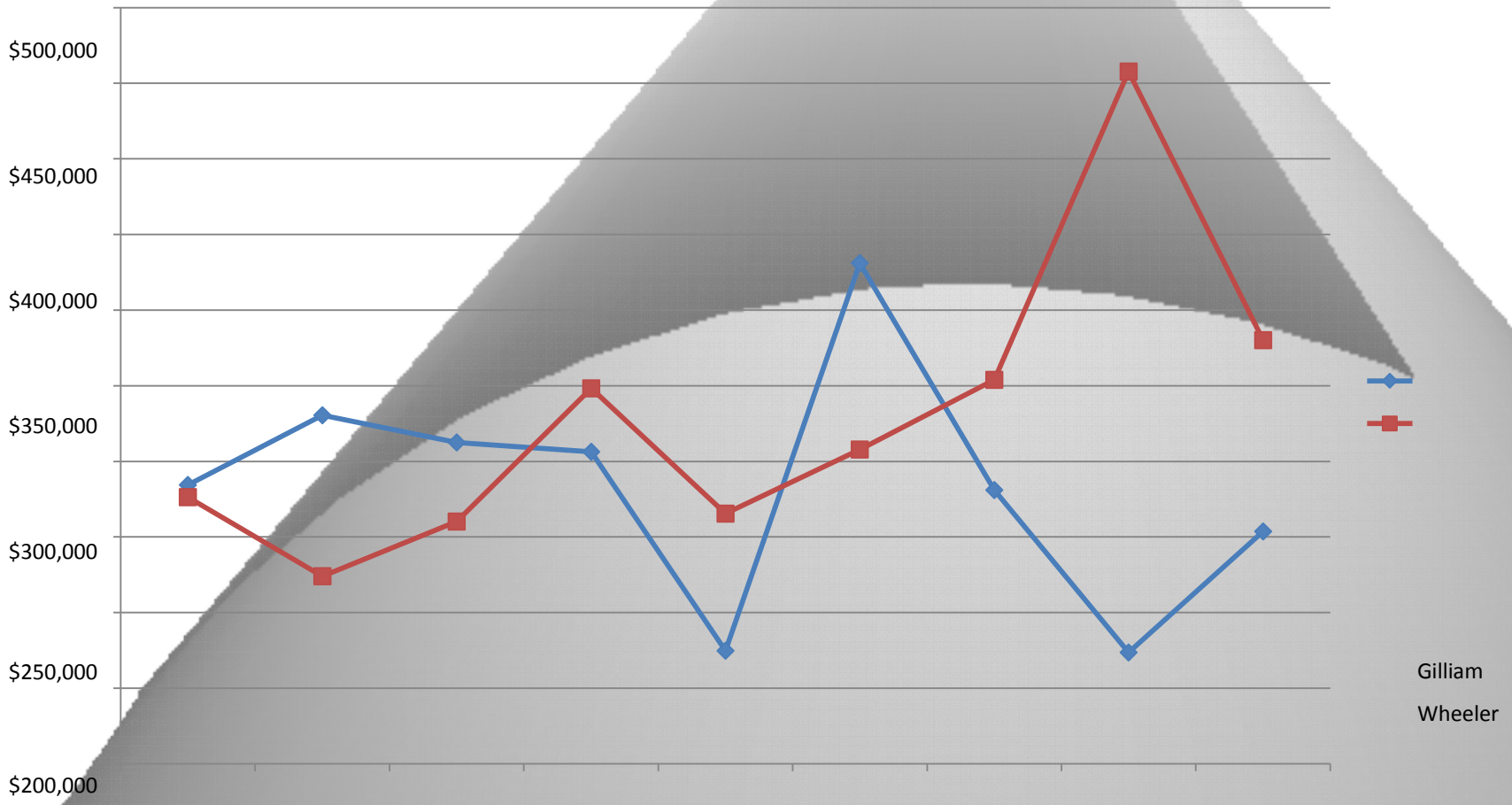
PAST RESOURCE CONCERNS WHEELER/GILLIAM COUNTY

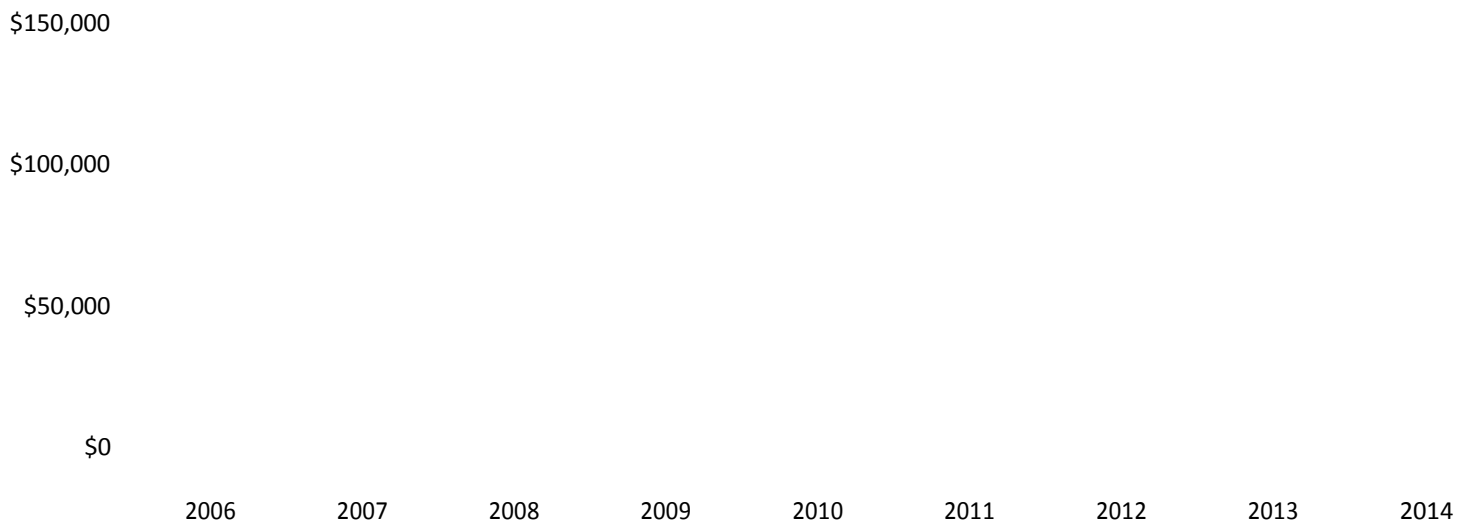
- Juniper Invasion
- Annual Grass Invasion
- Irrigation Efficiency
- Forestland Health
- Insufficient Livestock Water
- Improper Pasture Utilization
- Cropland Efficiency

HISTORICAL FUNDING P0OLS WHEELER COUNTY 2006-2014

- Grazinglands
- Irrigated Crop
- Grazed Range/Forest
- Irrigated Crop/Pasture/Hay
- Irrigation
- Sutton Mtn. CCPI
- Grazing
- Irrigation
- Rangeland Invasives
- Rowe Creek
- Twickenham/Rowe Creek CCPI
- Bear Creek Juniper Treatment
- Mountain Creek Irrigation
- Mountain Creek Forestry

FUNDING LEVELS GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES




$150,000
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2006
2007
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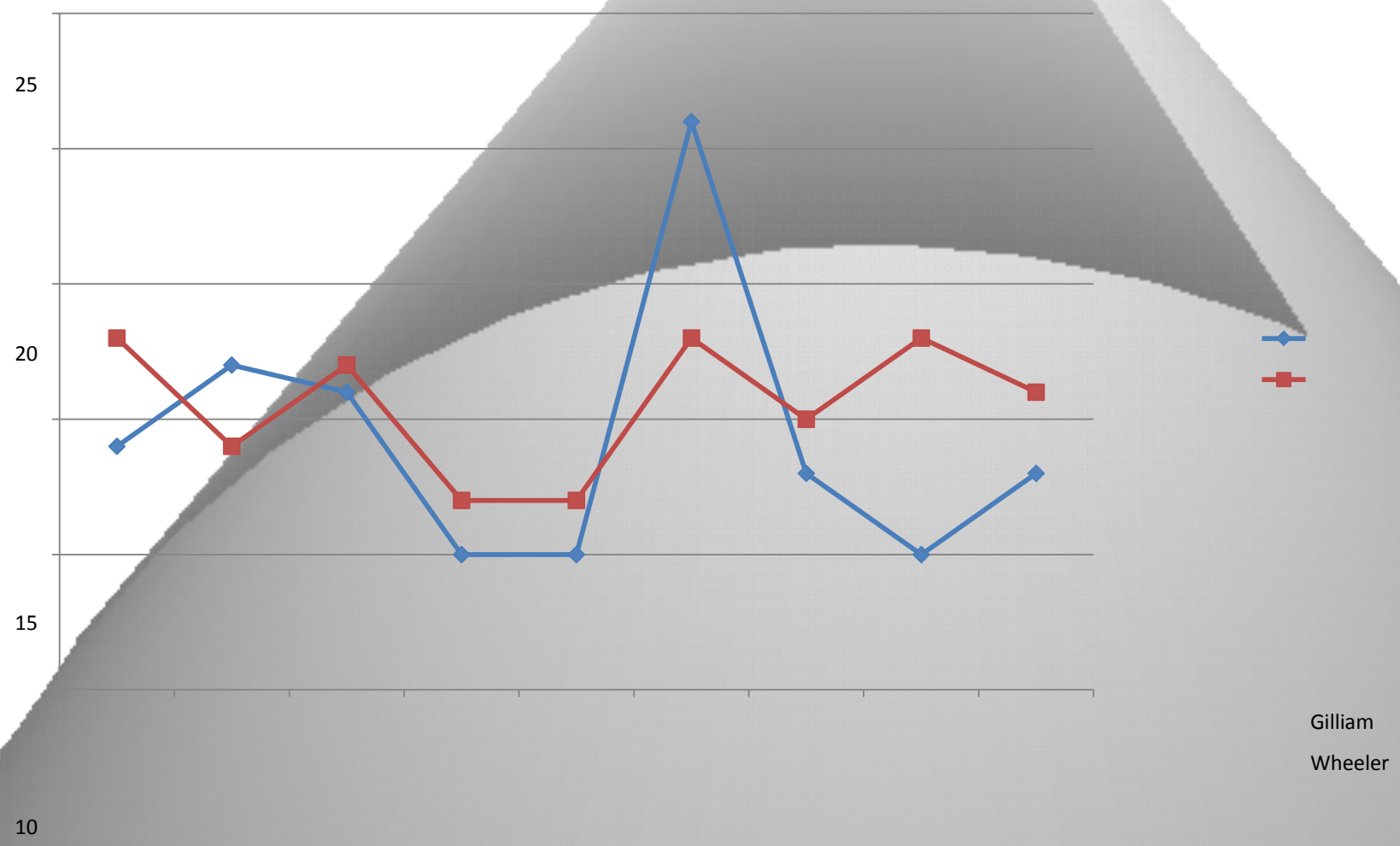
CONTRACTS AWARDED IN GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES



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2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014

CURRENT WHEELER RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Invasion of juniper into non-historical sites
- Irrigation efficiency
- Forest health

CURRENT GILLIAM RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Invasion of juniper on non-historical sites
- Irrigation efficiency
- Cropland efficiency
- Soil eroison

- Energy savings

2015 WHEELER COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

- These funding pools will be directly tied to the RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) funding that the Wheeler SWCD recently secured.
- Specific funding pools have not fully been developed
- Hoping to have signups by March 1st and contracts by mid April 2015

What is RCPP????

- **RCPP ~ "Regional Conservation Partnership Program"**
- Nearly 600 pre-proposals submitted to NRCS in 2014. Top ones asked to submit full proposals.
- 210 full proposals submitted for $1.4 billion – 4x the funding available
- Projects were evaluated on four criteria: *Contributions, Solutions, Innovations, Participation*
-
- October 2014: W-SWCD submitted **"North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project"** full proposal.
- January 2015: Proposal accepted at reduced funding (43%); approximately $5 million dollars.
- Partnership program requiring at least a 1 to 1 match of funds requested
- Only six proposals were offered/awarded in Oregon.
-
- **North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project:** Timeframe- 5 years
- Three watersheds: Mountain Creek, Bridge Creek, Cherry Creek

- Cost Share Practices:
-

  Pre-commercial thinning

- Irrigation efficiency
- Conservation easements
- Juniper removal

- Range restoration
- Spring developments

RCPP Continued

- **Specifically, the Output Objectives**:

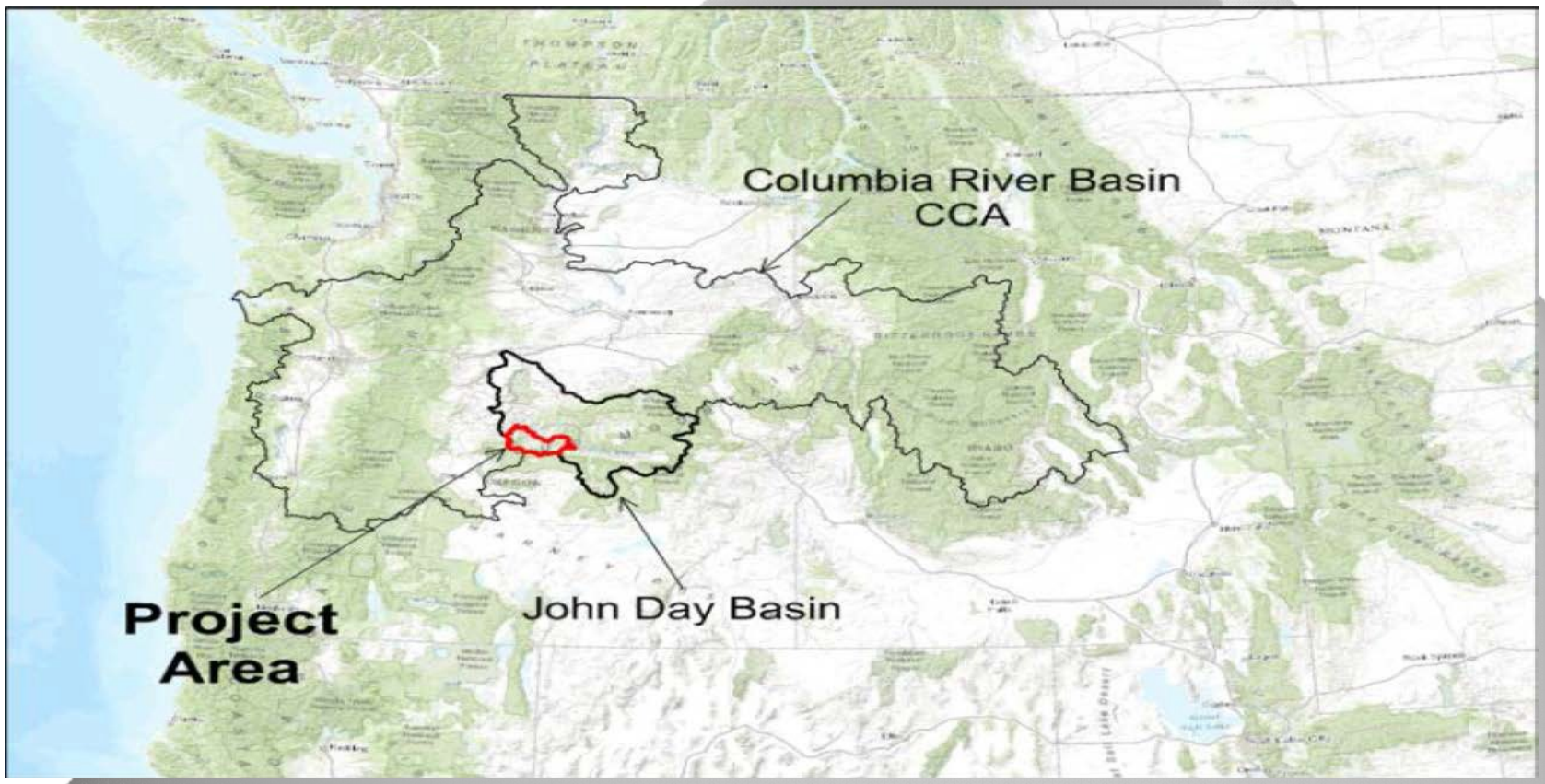
- 1) 6,200 acres of brush management
- 2) 90,000 feet of irrigation conveyance
- 3) 900 acres of irrigation water management
- 4) 600 acres of forest stand improvement
- 5) 30,000 feet of livestock pipeline
- 6) 5 solar livestock pump plants
- 7) 1,000 acres of range planting
- 8) 10 fish screens installed
- 9) 38 spring developments
- 10) 28,000 gallons of trough/cisterns
- 11) 686,000 feet of fence
- 12) 7,000 acres of permanent conservation easements
- 13) 106 miles of stream enrolled in CREP
- 14) 30 fish passage/habitat projects

Partners:
OWEB

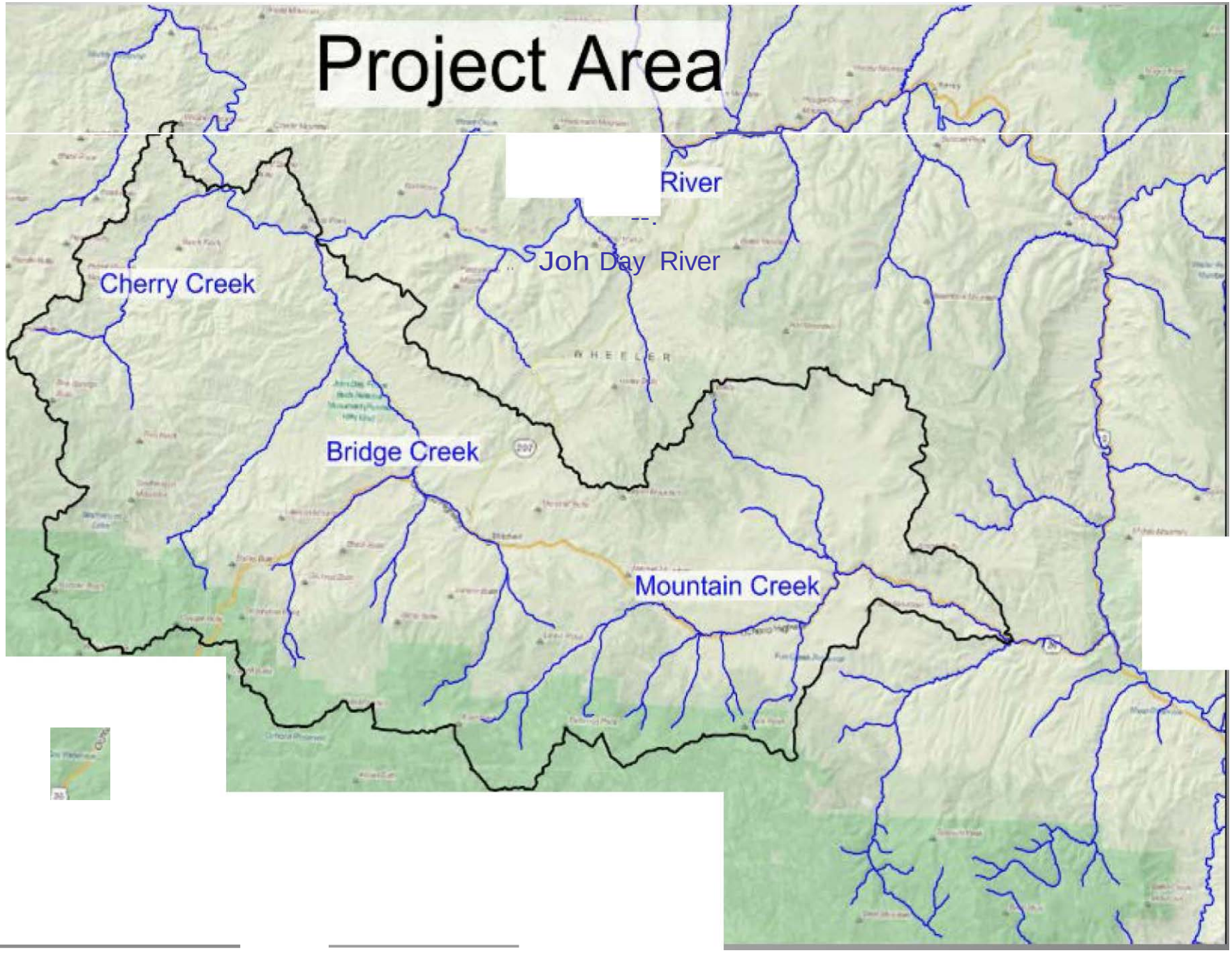
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Farm Service Agency

-

RCPP Project Location

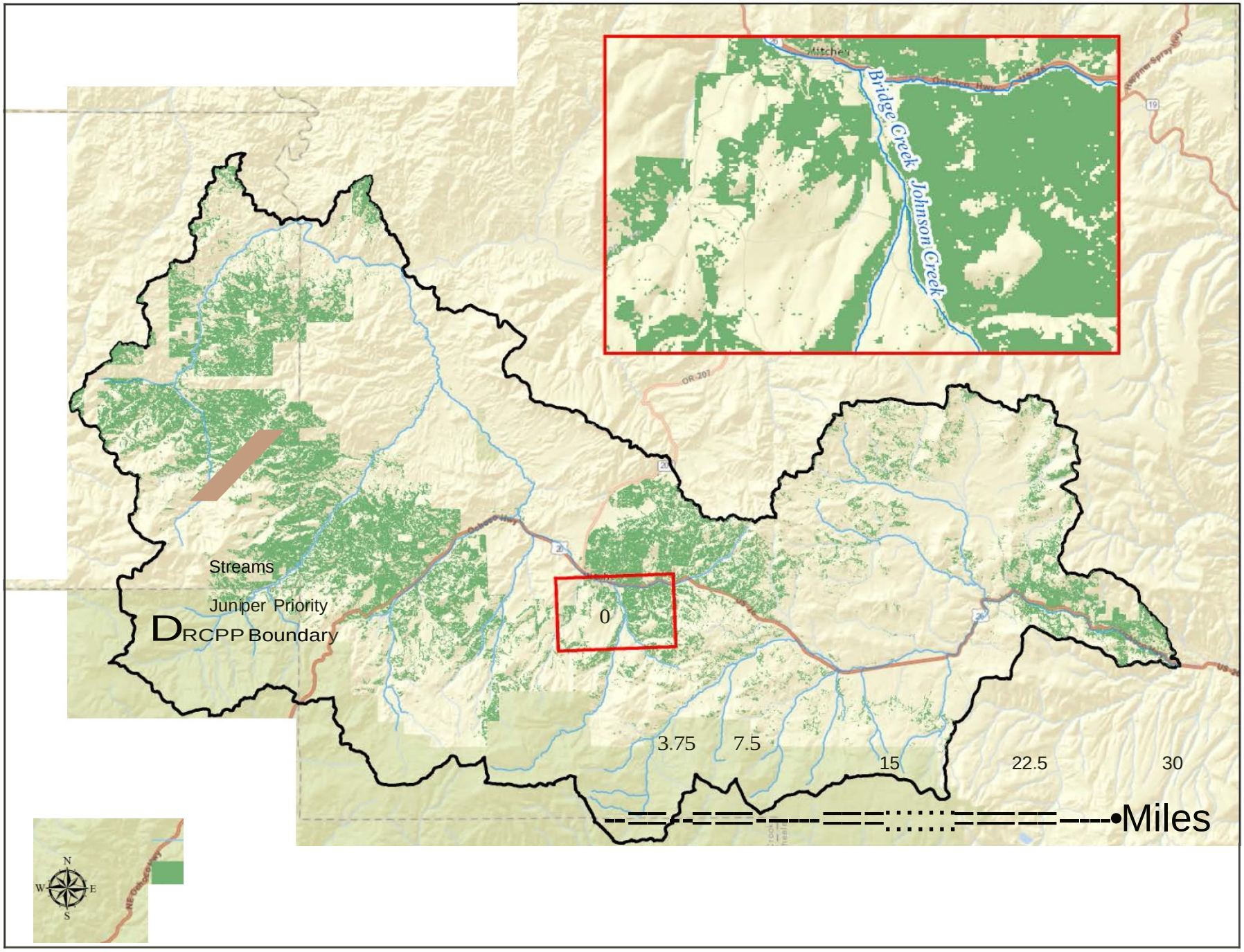


Project Area

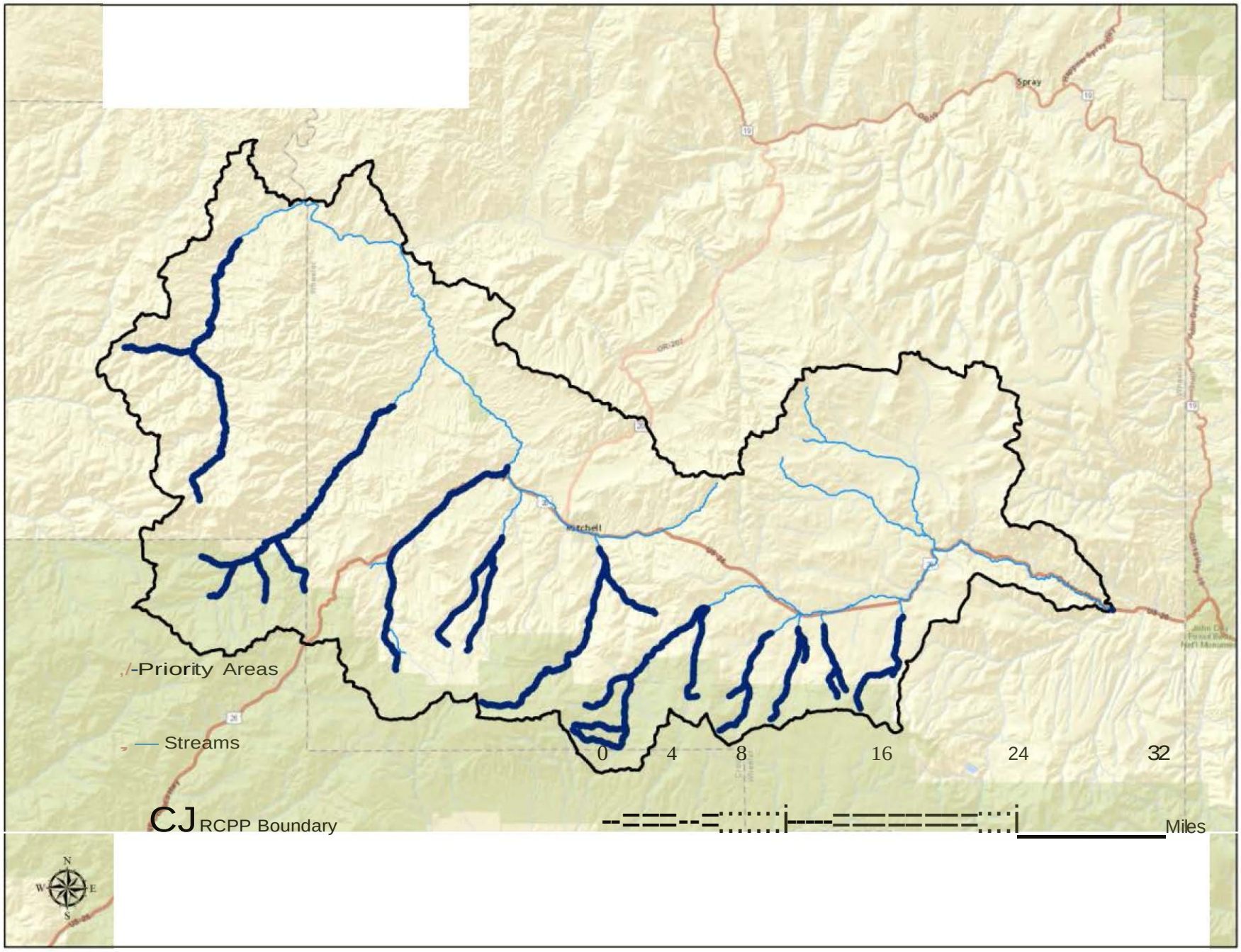


Project Boundary

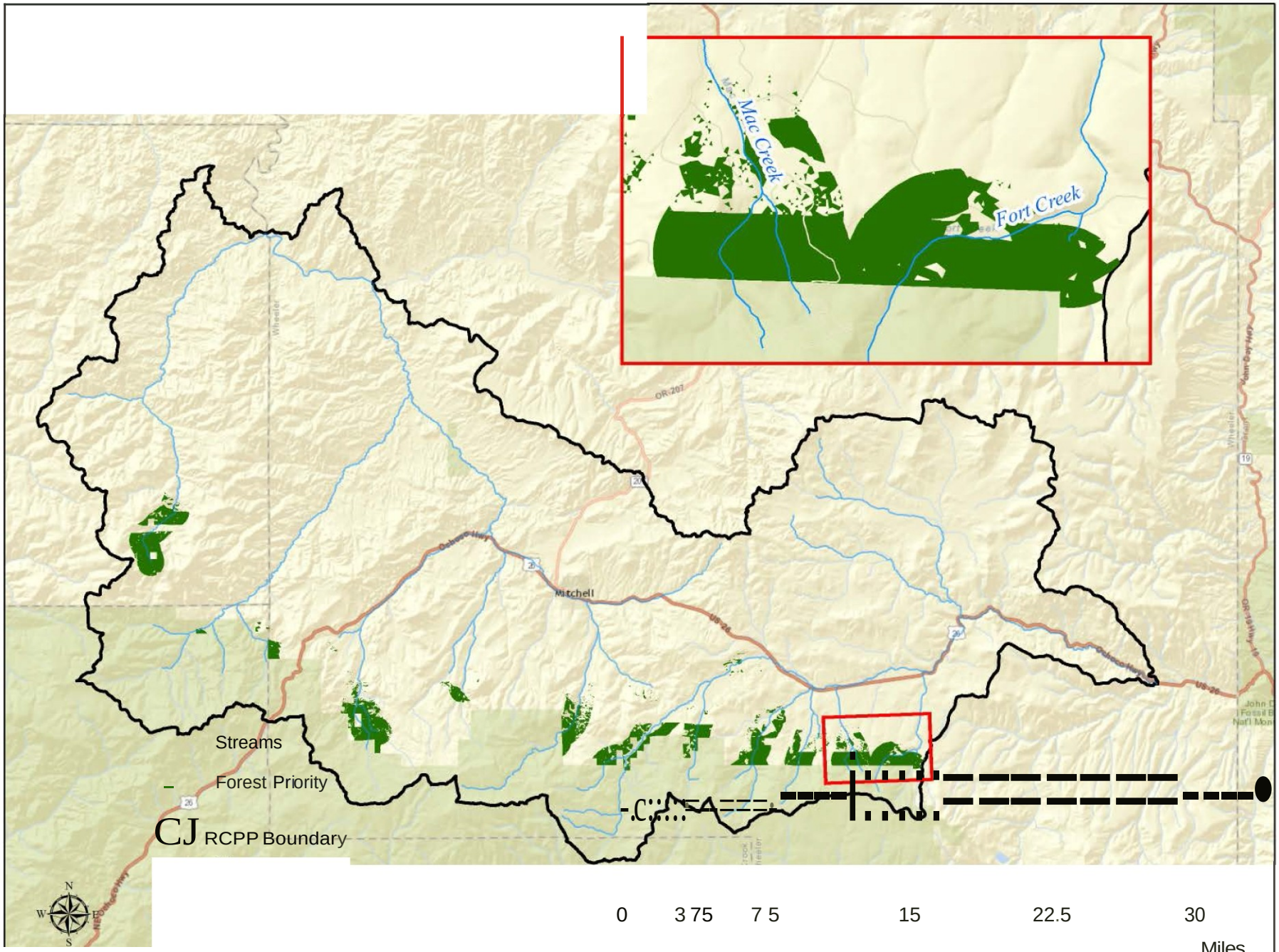
Juniper Priority Treatment Areas


Bridge Creek
Johnson Creek
Streams
Juniper Priority
DRCPP Boundary
0
3.75
7.5
15
22.5
30
Miles
N
W
E
S

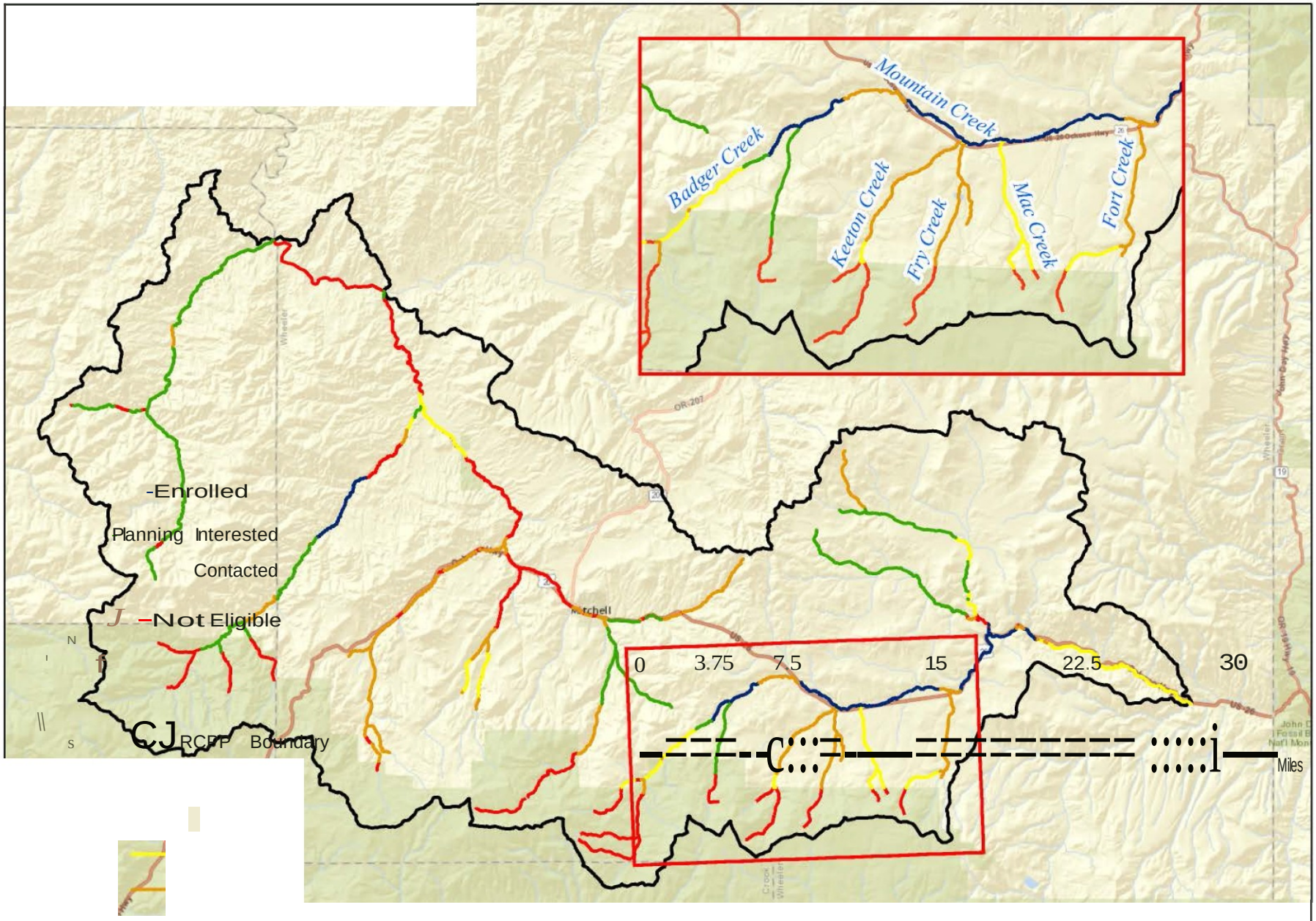
Irrigation Efficiency Areas


Spray
Mitchell
Priority Areas
Streams
RCPP Boundary
0
4
8
16
24
32
Miles
N
W
E
S

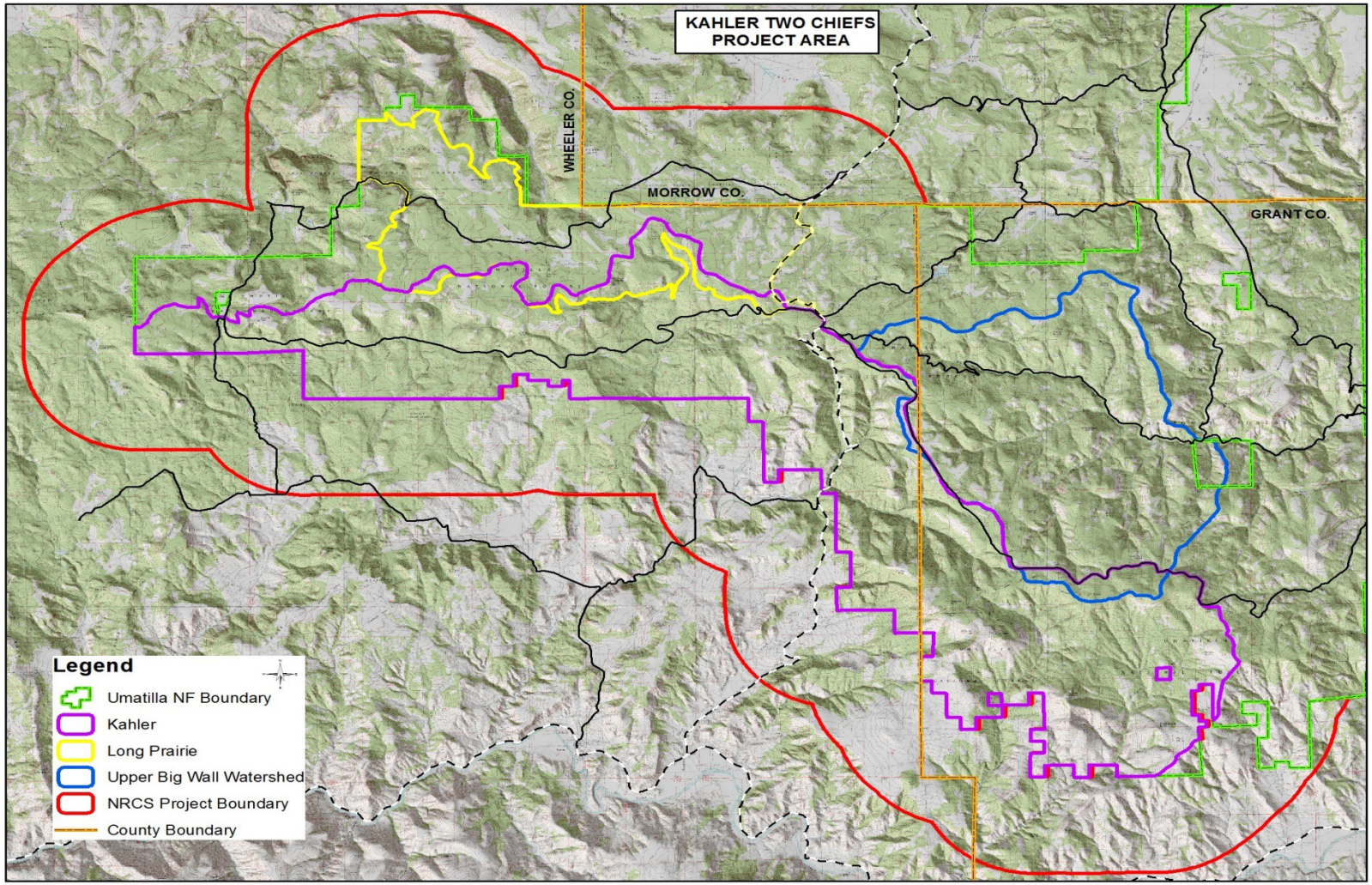
Forest Priority Treatment Areas


Mac Creek
Fort Creek
Mitchell
Streams
Forest Priority
CJ RCPP Boundary
0
3 75
7 5
15
22.5
30
Miles

CREP Planning Status


Mountain Creek
Badger Creek
Keeton Creek
Fry Creek
Mac Creek
Fort Creek
-Enrolled
Planning Interested
Contacted
-Not Eligible
RCPP Boundary
0
3.75
7.5
15
22.5
30
Miles

TWO CHIEFS PROJECT
KAHLER BASIN



TWO CHIEFS CONTINUED

- *Defined Deliverables:*
- **Thinning to reduce tree densities and encroachment**: 2,000 acres on public lands, **1,200 acres on private lands**
- **Juniper removal on 2,400 acres of private land**
- Kahler Timber Sale: 9,000 acres
- Combined underburn acres for Long Prairie CE and Kahler EIS: 41,255 acres. As a result of the partnership between federal, state, and private land, approximately 4,200 acres of federal land will be underburned which could not be accomplished otherwise.
- Road decommission and SDDR: 3.7 miles
- **Aspen enhancement, hardwood planting and fencing**: 30 acres of public lands, and **10 acres of private lands**
- Bio-char: 5 tons

FUTURE TREATMENT IDEAS/AREAS IN WHEELER COUNTY

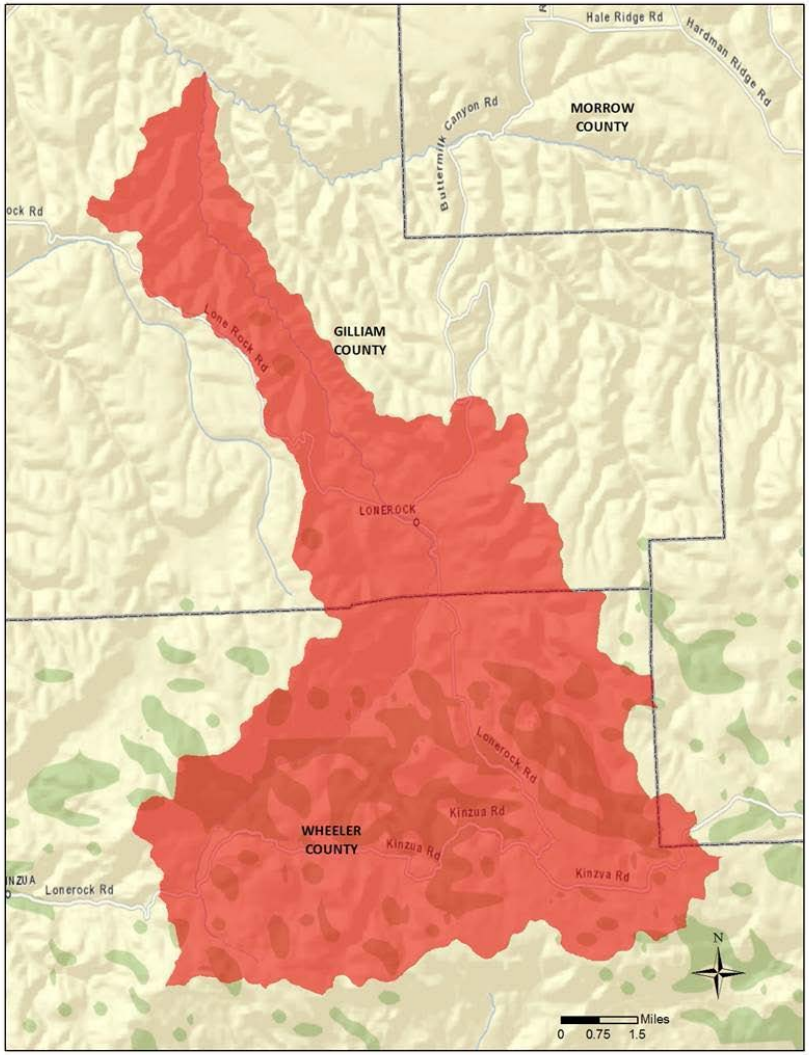
- Old, decadent crop fields
  - Rejuvenate perennial grass stands with multi-species mix, cut out invading juniper
  - First funding pool will be focused on Kahler watershed
  - Landowner recruitment has already started
- Butte Creek uplands improvement
- Other ideas?

2014 GILLIAM COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

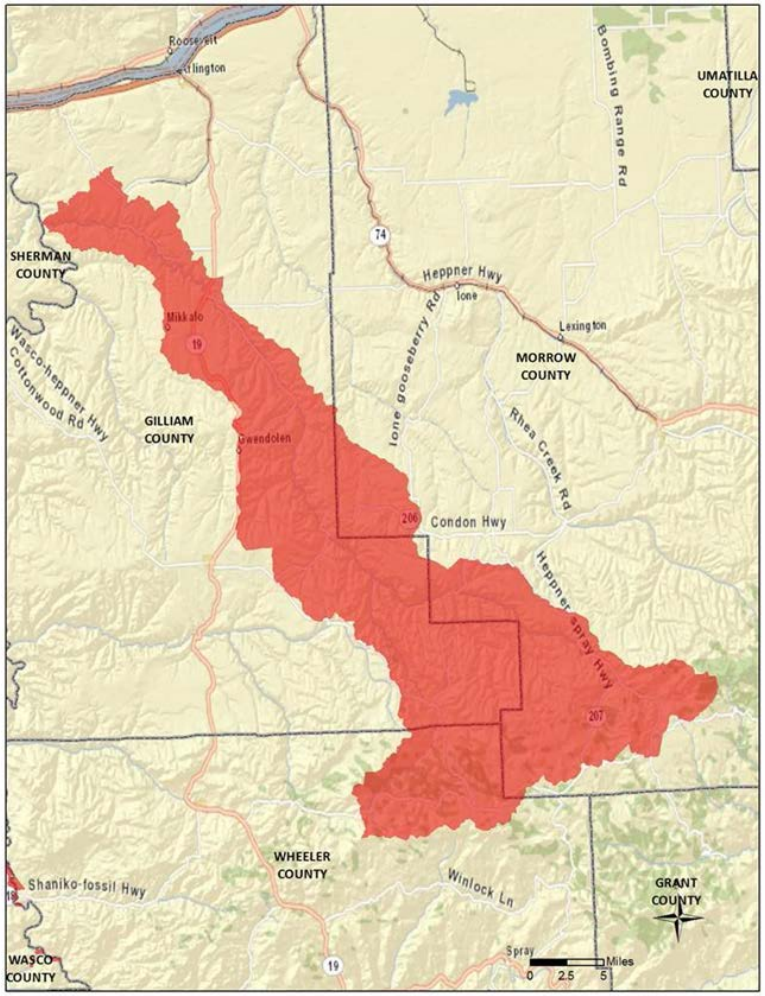
- LONEROCK BASIN JUNIPER
- ROCK CREEK IRRIGATION
- ENERGY AUDIT/SAVINGS
- SOIL HEALTH

- ***Reduced EQIP funding for 2015

Lonerock Basin Juniper



ROCK CREEK IRRIGATION



ROCK CREEK IRRIGATION

GILLAM: STATE OF THE UNION

- 2014 CSP- 7 CONTRACTS- $1.2 MILLION
- 2014 CSP RENEWALS-19 CONTRACTS- $3.5 MILLION
- EQIP STATEWIDE INITITIATIVES: ENERGY-2 CONTRACTS FOR ENERGY AUDITS ON FARM

GILLIAM FUTURE IDEAS?

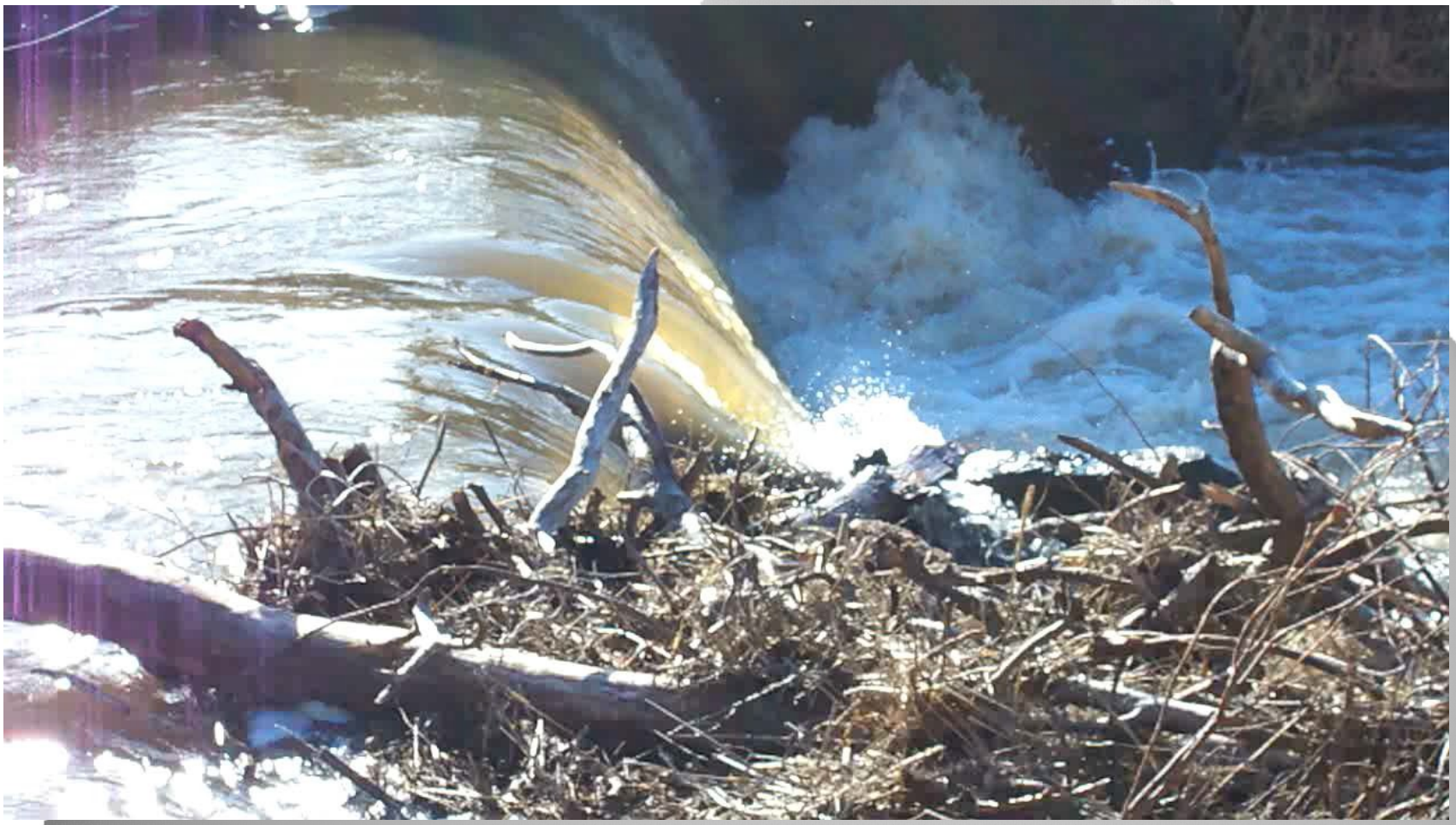
- FERRY CANYON/HAY CREEK/COTTONWOOD RANGELAND/STREAM HEALTH?
- GRASS BANK IDEA/PRESCRIBED GRAZING?
- DIRECT SEED/RESIDUE MANAGEMENT?
- MORE JUNIPER?
- **ROCK CREEK RCPP?**

OTHER RESOURCE CONCERNS/Areas of Interest?

- Annual grass invasion?
- Crop land concerns?
- CRP takeout? (2017)
- Riparian Areas?
- Wildlife Concerns? Habitat? Numbers?
- Other partner efforts?
- Areas of opportunity?

Questions/Concerns?

(VIDEO COURTESY GILLIAM SWCD)



United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Gilliam/Wheeler NRCS Local Work Group
Strategic Planning Meeting

February 4, 2016
12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Gilliam County USDA Service Center, Conference Room
333 S. Main St., Condon, OR

Purpose: Bring together individuals with a variety of expertise and knowledge allowing the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and our partners to better focus our efforts for program year 2017 and beyond.

AGENDA

Time	**Task**
1:00 p.m.	Arrive, get settled and network
1:05 p.m.	Welcome/Housekeeping/Introductions –Damon Brosnan, NRCS
1:15 p.m.	Meeting Objectives and Protocols – Kacee Lathrop, facilitator
1:25 p.m.	EQIP Snapshot –Recap of work done in 2015- Damon Brosnan, NRCS • Brief overview of EQIP in the last 5 years. • Discuss reduced funding levels • Common practices, funding levels, location maps • New funding strategies, i.e. RCPP, Two Chiefs, FIP
1:45 p.m.	GROUP BRAINSTORM Resource Concerns by Landuse • Identify what is being done now, • What is planned for 2016 & beyond, • Identify/update resource concerns
2:10 p.m.	Break
2:20 p.m.	Geographic Priorities/Focus Areas and Discuss Future Opportunities • New technologies/techniques in the crop arena • Collaboration potential with SWCD, Watershed Councils
2:55 p.m.	Summary of the Day – Kacee Lathrop, facilitator
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Thank you for taking time to participate in today's session!

Gilliam and Wheeler NRCS Local Workgroup Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2016

Attendance: See attached

Purpose: Bring together individuals with a variety of expertise and knowledge allowing the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and our partners to better focus our efforts for program year 2017 and beyond.

12:30 p.m. Arrive, get settled and network

12:45 p.m. Welcome/Housekeeping/Introductions – Kacee Lathrop (District Conservationist for Morrow County) and Damon Brosnan (District Conservationist for Gilliam and Wheeler Counties), NRCS

1:00 p.m. **Meeting Objectives and Protocols** – Kacee Lathrop, facilitator

1:25 p.m. **EQIP and CStP discussion**- Damon Brosnan, NRCS

- Past funding levels and practices for both counties
- Past and future CStP discussion
- 2015 EQIP funding
  - Rock Creek irrigation
  - Lone Rock Basin Juniper
  - Common practices, funding levels, location maps
  - RCPP, Two Chiefs Project Kahler Basin

1:45 p.m. **Group Discussion of Resource Concerns for Gilliam and Wheeler counties**

- tools available for controlling annuals including biological control, re-seeding, and maintaining the line
- road spray control as an option
- timing of projects
- burning/3yr rest period, and concerns of where to put those animals during rest period
- Tree of heaven, encroachment in neighboring counties riparian zones

- Water: drought, ponds/impoundments, springs/cisterns with solar powered pumps,
- Road erosion
- Wind breaks
- Soil erosion on fields
- Cover crop trials
- Animal disturbances: Elk, mule deer vs whitetail, hogs
- Forest: wildfire, disease, juniper and pine, is there a market?
- ODF notification for power driven machinery (PDM)
- Russian thistle

2:15 p.m. **Geographic Priorities/Focus Areas and Discuss Future Opportunities**

- Cover crops to reduce erosion
- Collaboration potential with ODF and burning
- Group projects with Gilliam Watershed Council and SWCD were discussed

2:30 p.m. **Summary of the Day** – Damon Brosnan, Kacee Lathrop

2:40 p.m. Adjourn

GILLIAM/WHEELER LWG MEETING 2-4-2016	
NAME	**PROFESSION/AFFILIATION**
Sandy McKay	Gilliam SWCD
Jim VanWinkle	Gilliam Co. Landowner
Georgia VanWinkle	Gilliam Co. Landowner
Scott Maley	Gilliam Co. Landowner
Tim Campbell	Wheeler/Gilliam Co. Landowner
Tom Campbell	Wheeler/Gilliam Co. Landowner
Jason Campbell	Wheeler/Gilliam Co. Landowner
Paul Chamness	Wheeler Co. Landowner
Abby Wicks	NRCS
Brenna Rietmann	Gilliam SWCD
Sue Greer	OWEB
Ryan Miller	Oregon Department of Forestry
Roger Lathrop	Gilliam SWCD
Herb Winters	Wheeler SWCD
Kathy Pendergrass	NRCS
Chris Reidy	NRCS
Rita Rattray	Gilliam Co. Landowner
Amber Schlaich	Gilliam Watershed Council
Smita Mehta	Oregon DEQ

2016 NRCS Gilliam and Wheeler Local Workgroup Meeting

February 4, 2016

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Meeting Objectives and Protocol
- EQIP Snapshot – Recap of Work done in 2015
  - Brief overview of Funding Pools the past 5 years
  - Current Resource Concerns
  - Current Funding Pools
- Group Brainstorm
  - Resource Concerns of the Future – Are they different?
  - Are there Geographic priorities/Focus Areas?

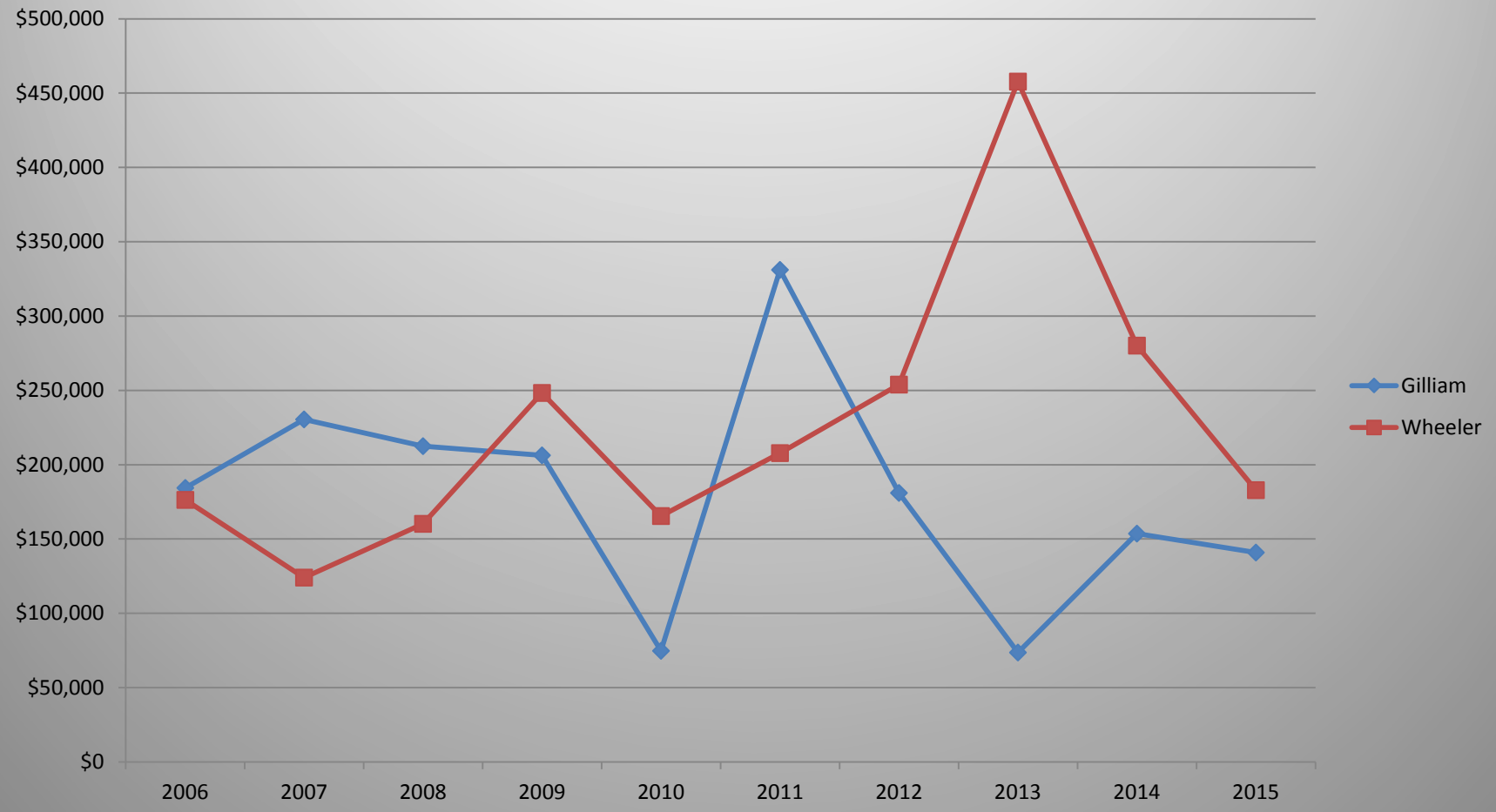
PAST RESOURCE CONCERNS WHEELER/GILLIAM COUNTY

- Juniper Invasion
- Annual Grass Invasion
- Irrigation Efficiency
- Forestland Health
- Insufficient Livestock Water
- Improper Pasture Utilization
- Cropland Efficiency

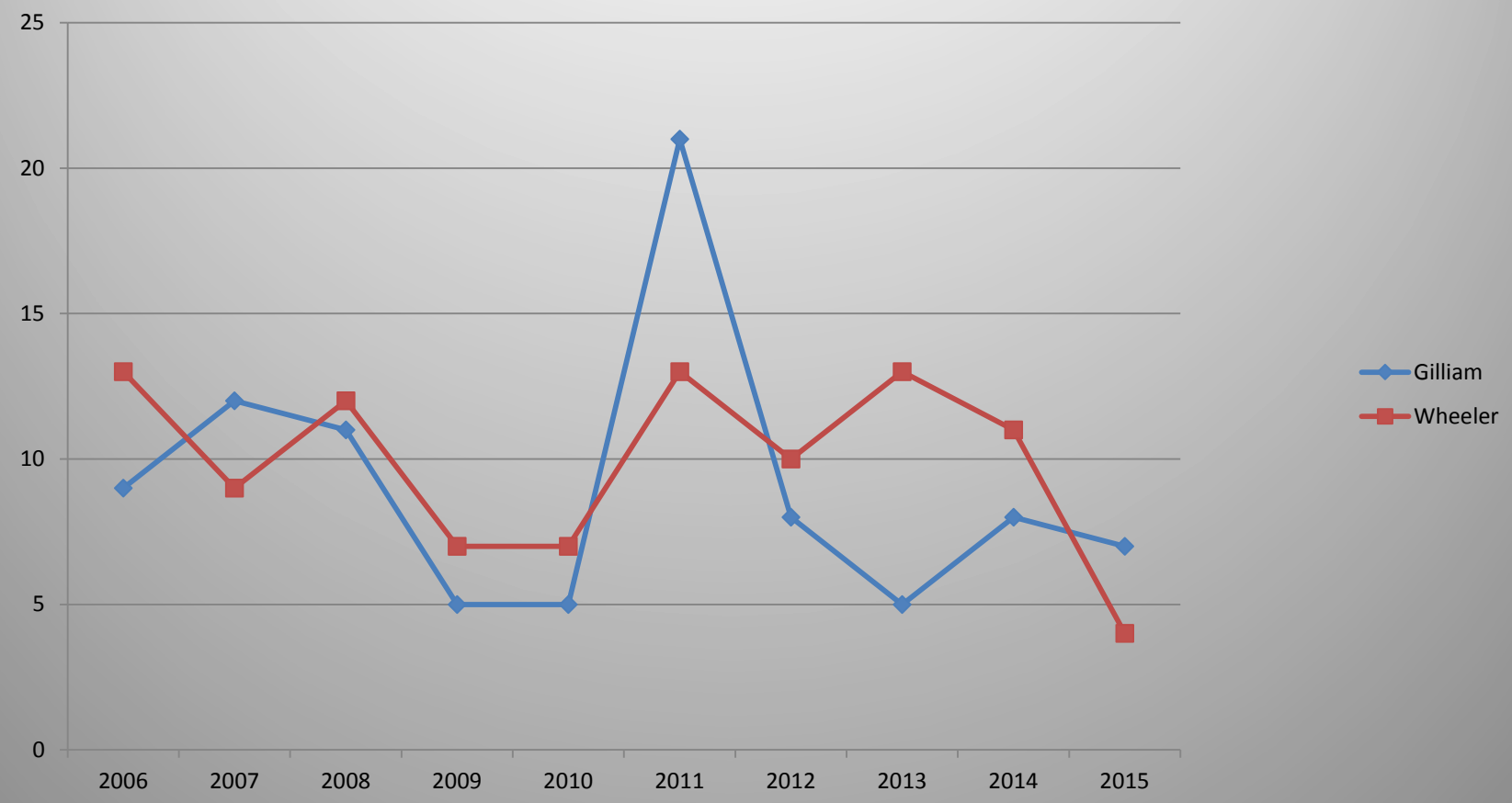
HISTORICAL FUNDING P0OLS WHEELER COUNTY 2006-2015

- Grazinglands
- Irrigated Crop
- Grazed Range/Forest
- Irrigated Crop/Pasture/Hay
- Irrigation
- Sutton Mtn. CCPI
- Grazing
- Irrigation
- Rangeland Invasives
- Rowe Creek
- Twickenham/Rowe Creek CCPI
- Bear Creek Juniper Treatment
- Mountain Creek Irrigation
- Mountain Creek Forestry
- North Slope Ochoco RCPP

EQIP FUNDING LEVELS GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES



EQIP CONTRACTS AWARDED IN GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES



CStP Contracts and Funding Levels

- Wheeler-
  - 24 contracts
  - 129,408 acres under contract
  - $1,296,384.00 obligated
- Gilliam-
  - 46 contracts
  - 168,611 acres under contract
  - $3,901,410.00 obligated

CURRENT WHEELER RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Invasion of juniper into non-historical sites
- Irrigation efficiency
- Forest health

CURRENT GILLIAM RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Invasion of juniper on non-historical sites
- Irrigation efficiency
- Cropland efficiency
- Soil eroison
- Energy savings

CStP continued

- Total deferred applications in Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla Counties from 2015 sign up- **161**

- 101 contracts awarded last year in Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla
  - Includes renewals

2016 WHEELER COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

- One funding pool, RCPP, with three different subsets: irrigation, uplands, and forestry
- 20 applications
- $807,000 will be obligated by sometime in March 2016
- Approximately 2000 acres will be contracted
- Treating resource concerns on rangeland, forest land, and irrigated crop land

What is RCPP????

- **RCPP ~ "Regional Conservation Partnership Program"**
- Nearly 600 pre-proposals submitted to NRCS in 2014. Top ones asked to submit full proposals.
- 210 full proposals submitted for $1.4 billion – 4x the funding available
- Projects were evaluated on four criteria: *Contributions, Solutions, Innovations, Participation*
-
- October 2014: W-SWCD submitted **"North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project"** full proposal.
- January 2015: Proposal accepted at reduced funding (43%); approximately $5 million dollars.
- Partnership program requiring at least a 1 to 1 match of funds requested
- Only six proposals were offered/awarded in Oregon.
-
- **North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project:** Timeframe- 5 years
- Three watersheds: Mountain Creek, Bridge Creek, Cherry Creek

- Cost Share Practices:
-
  Pre-commercial thinning
- Irrigation efficiency
- Conservation easements
- Juniper removal
- Range restoration
- Spring developments

RCPP Continued

- **Specifically, the Output Objectives**:

- 1) 6,200 acres of brush management
- 2) 90,000 feet of irrigation conveyance
- 3) 900 acres of irrigation water management
- 4) 600 acres of forest stand improvement
- 5) 30,000 feet of livestock pipeline
- 6) 5 solar livestock pump plants
- 7) 1,000 acres of range planting
- 8) 10 fish screens installed
- 9) 38 spring developments
- 10) 28,000 gallons of trough/cisterns
- 11) 686,000 feet of fence
- 12) 7,000 acres of permanent conservation easements
- 13) 106 miles of stream enrolled in CREP
- 14) 30 fish passage/habitat projects

Partners:

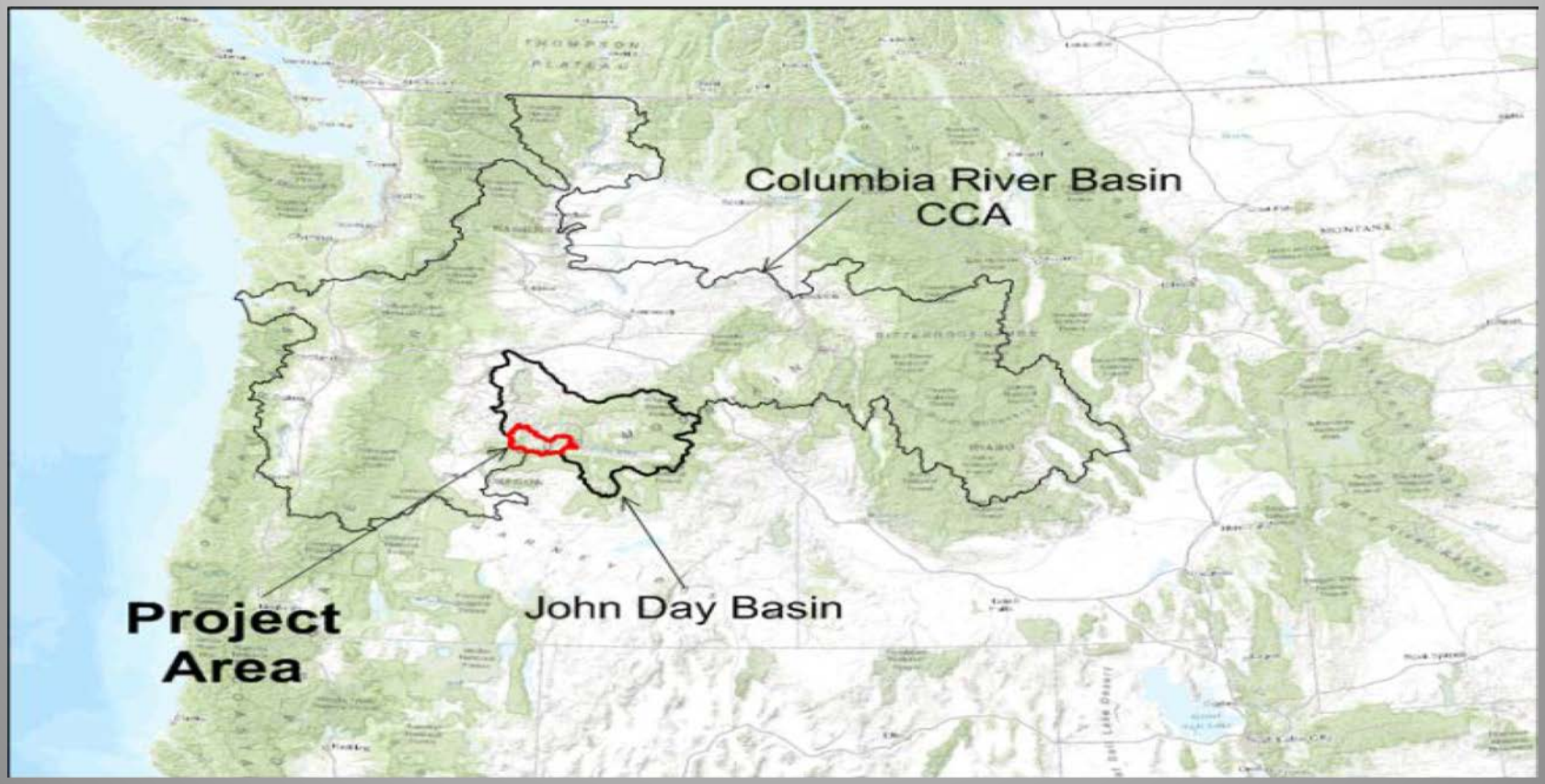
OWEB

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

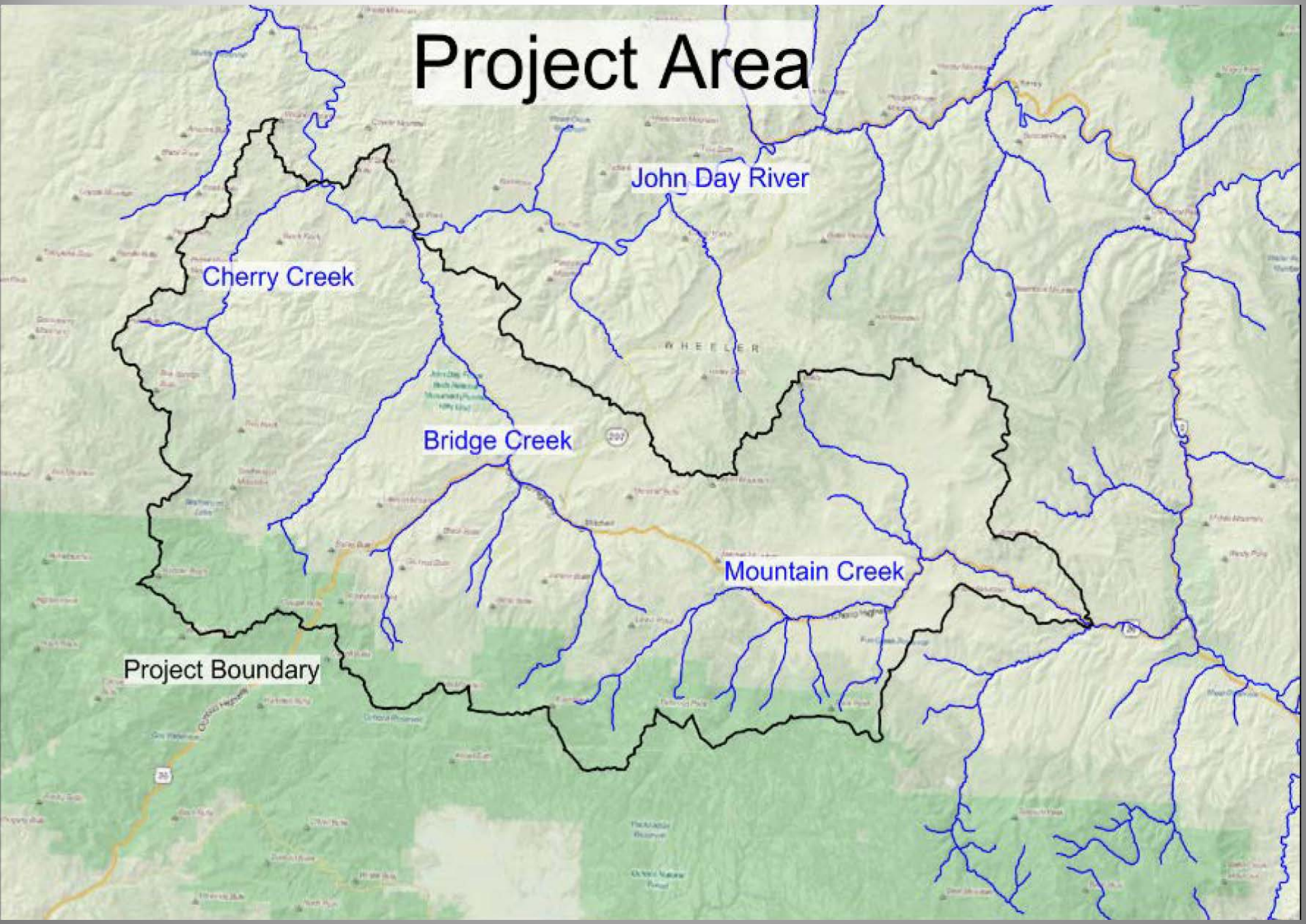
Farm Service Agency

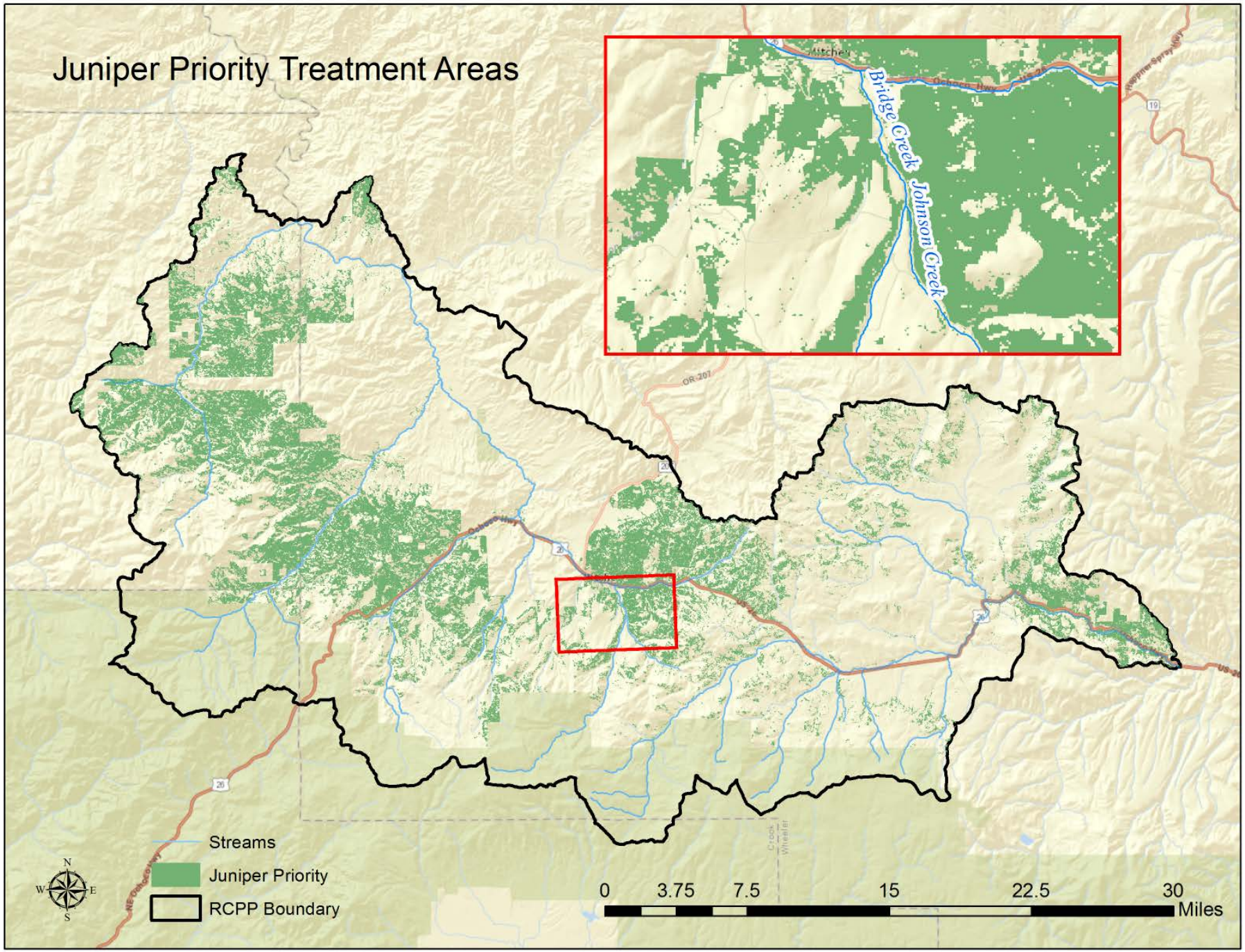
-

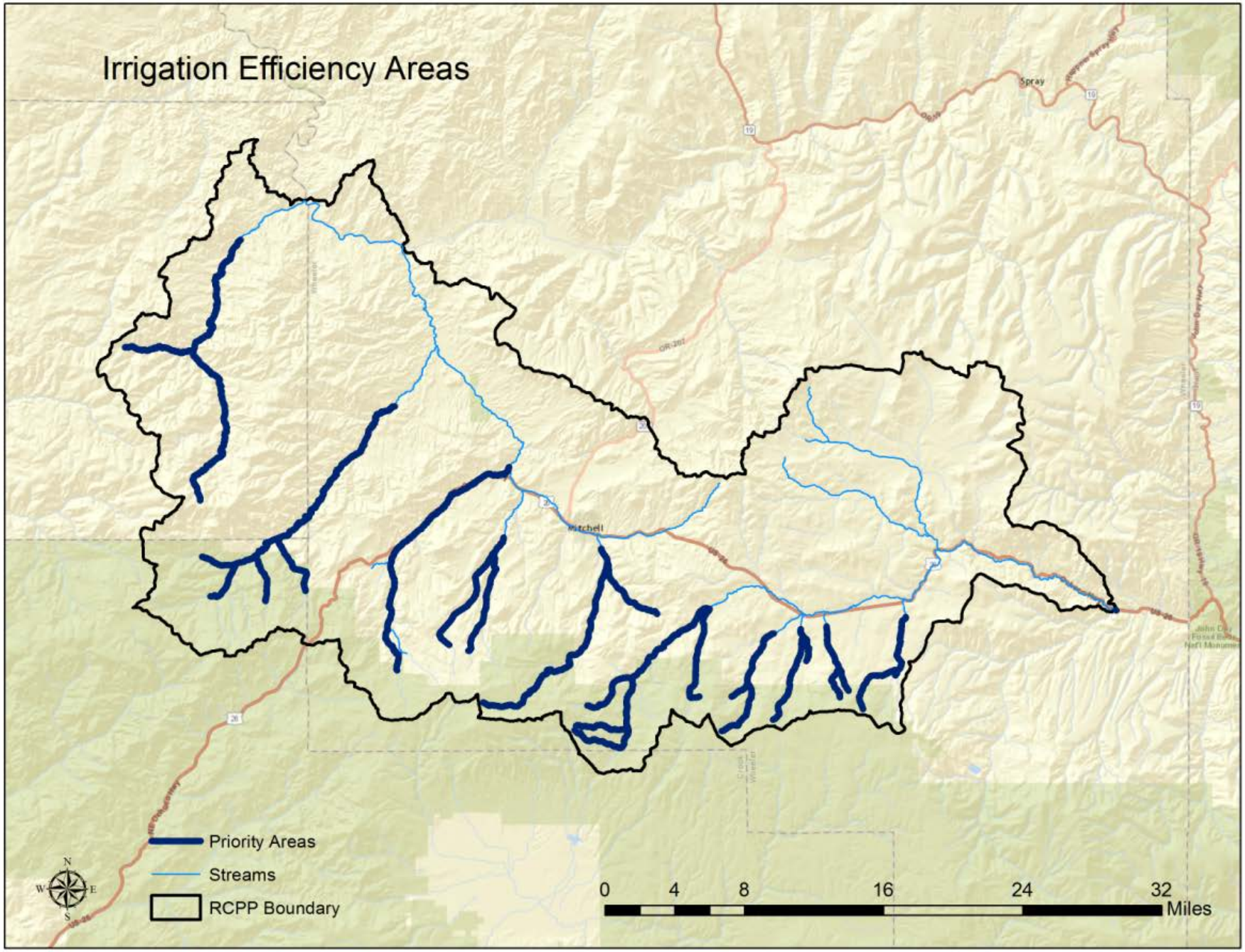
RCPP Project Location



Project Area




Juniper Priority Treatment Areas
Bridge Creek
Johnson Creek
Streams
Juniper Priority
RCPP Boundary
0
3.75
7.5
15
22.5
30
Miles
N
S
E
W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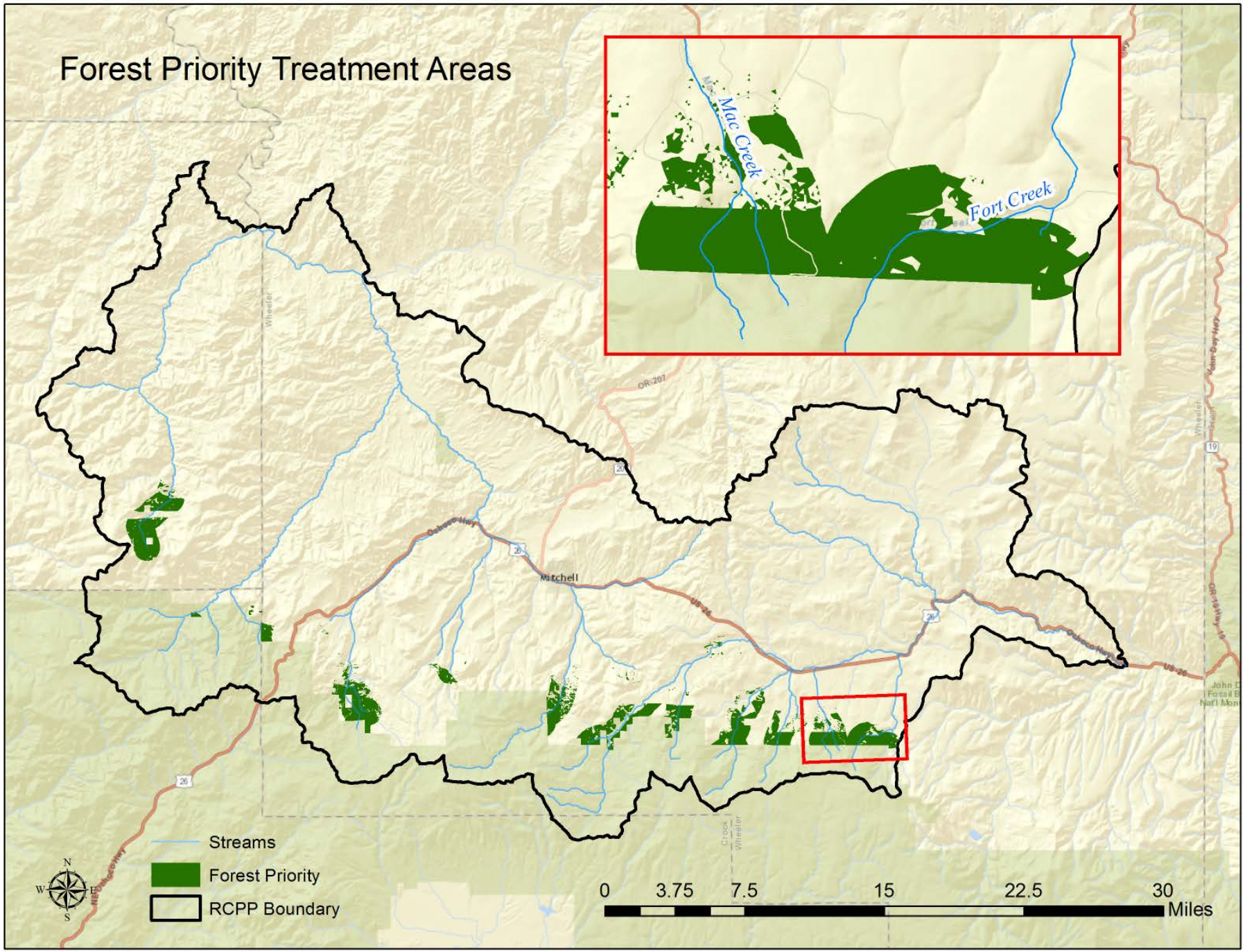
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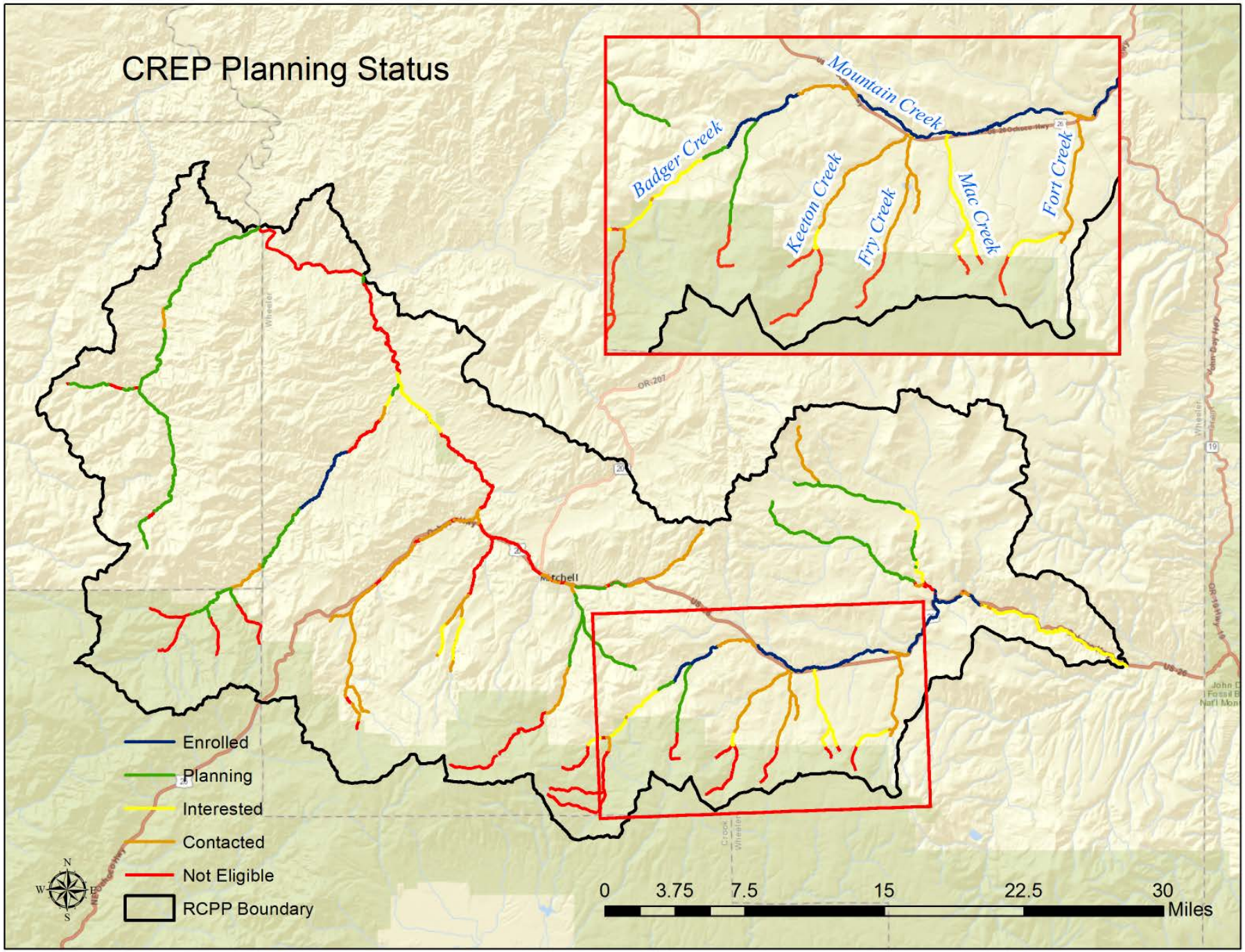
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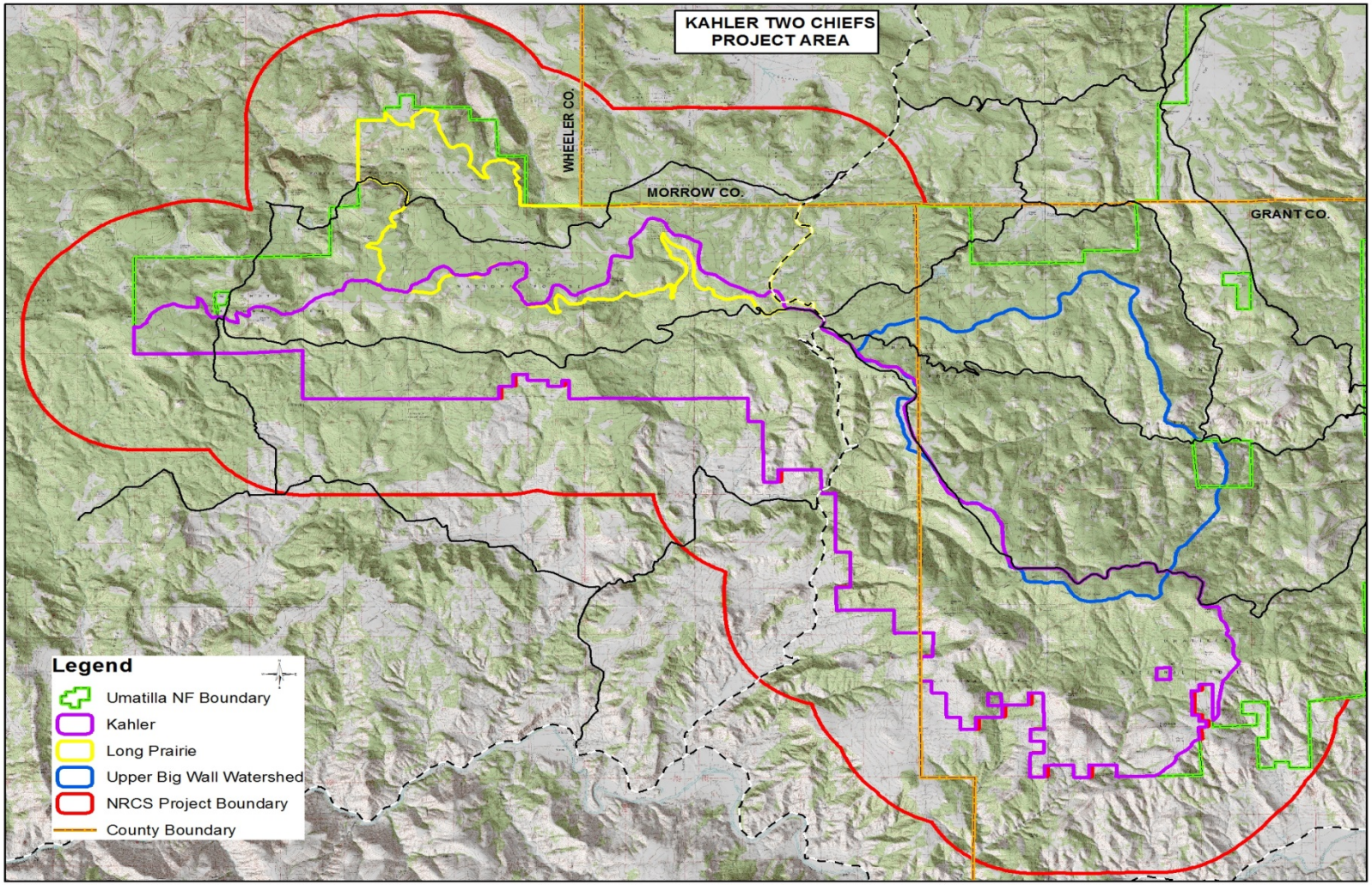
TWO CHIEFS PROJECT
KAHLER BASIN



TWO CHIEFS CONTINUED

- *Defined Deliverables:*
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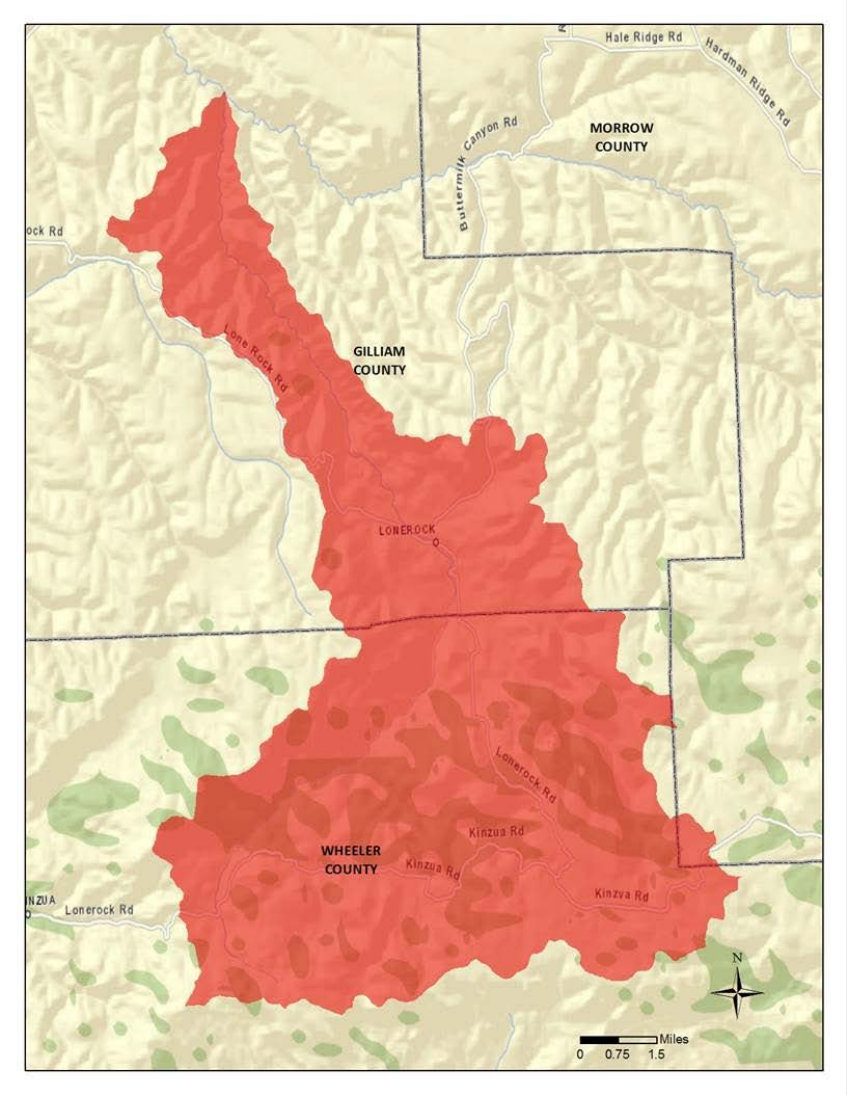
  - Rejuvenate perennial grass stands with multi-species mix, cut out invading juniper
  - First funding pool will be focused on Kahler watershed
  - Landowner recruitment has already started
- Butte Creek uplands improvement
- Other ideas?

2015 GILLIAM COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

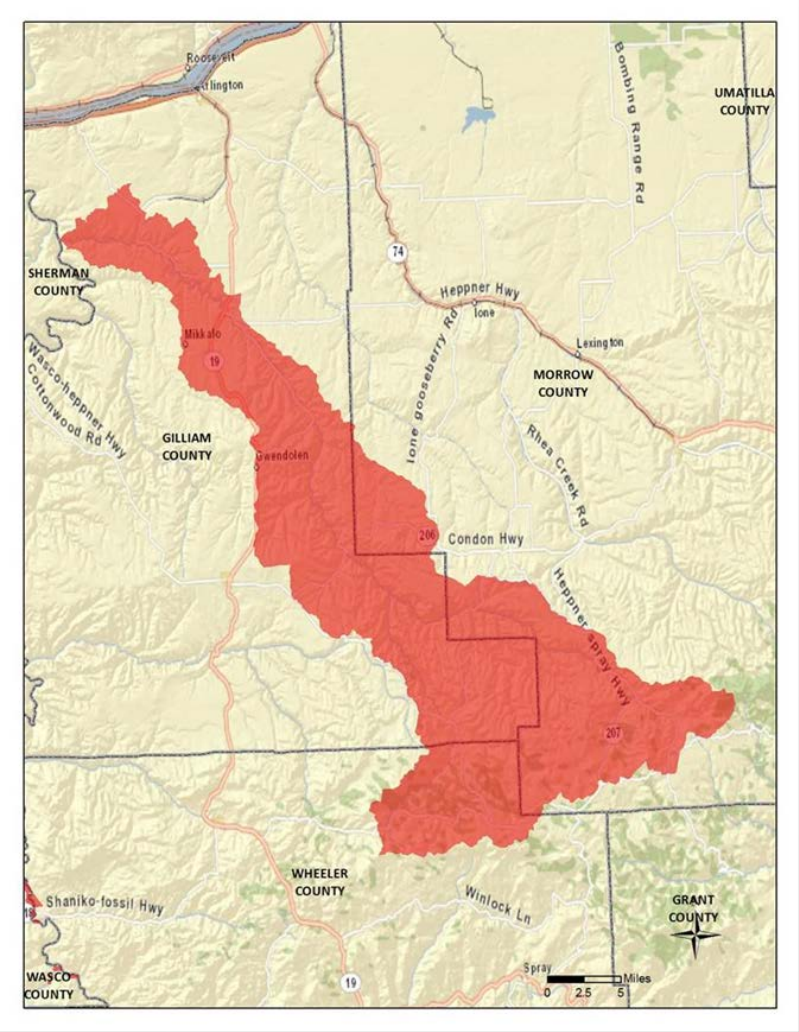
- LONEROCK BASIN JUNIPER
- ROCK CREEK IRRIGATION

- ***Reduced EQIP funding

Lonerock Basin Juniper



ROCK CREEK IRRIGATION



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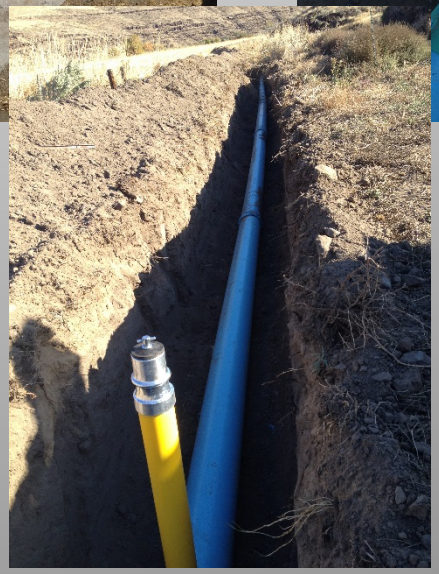

GILLIAM FUTURE IDEAS?

- FERRY CANYON/HAY CREEK/COTTONWOOD RANGELAND/STREAM HEALTH?
- GRASS BANK IDEA/PRESCRIBED GRAZING?
- Soil health initiative and cover cropping?
- MORE JUNIPER?
- **ROCK CREEK RCPP?**

OTHER RESOURCE CONCERNS/Areas of Interest?

- Annual grass invasion?
- Crop land concerns?
- CRP takeout? (2017)
- Riparian Areas?
- Wildlife Concerns? Habitat? Numbers?
- Other partner efforts?
- Areas of opportunity?

Questions/Concerns?

2017 Gilliam & Wheeler Local Working Group Meeting Minutes

Past Resource Concerns in Gilliam/Wheeler Counties:

-Juniper Invasion
-Annual Grass Invasion
-Irrigation Efficiency
-Forestland Health
-Insufficient Livestock Water
-Improper Pasture Utilization
-Cropland Efficiency

*There was a large number of contracts awarded in Wheeler County in the last two years due to Drought and RCPP Funding.

2017 Wheeler County EQIP Funding Pools

- 3rd Sign-Up for RCPP in the Mitchell area which includes Irrigation, Rangeland, and Forestry
  -Watersheds: Mountain Creek, Bridge Creek, and Cherry Creek
  -19 Applications
  -Contracts Include: Pre commercial thinning, irrigation efficiency improvements, conservation easements, juniper removal, range restoration, spring developments

- 1st Sign-Up for the Kahler Basin funding pool which will treat resource concerns on rangeland and forest land.
  -11 Applications
  -Defined Deliverables: Thinning to reduce tree densities on 1,200 acres of private land, Juniper removal on 2,400 acres of private land, 9,000 acres Kahler Timber Sale, and a underburn in partnership with federal and state lands.

There are no funding pools in Gilliam County for 2017

Future Treatment Ideas/Areas in Wheeler County

- Rejuvenate old, decadent crop fields with multi-species perennial mixes while cutting out invading juniper.
- Butte Creek upland improvement- City of Fossil Water Shortage
- Broom Snake Weed Control
- Annual Grass Control
- Wheeler SWCD got a Sun Grant for Juniper Bio Char experimenting (Water Holding)
- BDA in Bear Creek

Future Treatment Ideas/Areas in Gilliam County

- Ferry Canyon/Hay Creek/Cottonwood Rangeland/Stream Health
- Grass Bank /Prescribed Grazing
- Soil Health and Cover Crops
- Chemical Resistant Weeds when direct seeding
- Juniper removal
- BDA in Ferry Canyon
- Scott Canyon Fire Rehab (Watershed Council is working on this)
- Jointed Goat Grass, Medusa Head, Ventenata, and Cheat Grass Control – What is next now that soil bacteria were banned in Oregon
- Natural fire barriers- Green line with Forage Kochia
- Variable Rate Fertilizers-Protein Mapping

Expiring CRP- How can we get these fields back to useable ground, with either grazing or cropping?

- NRCS Cost Share- water developments, cross fencing, reseeding, burning
- Come up with a technical document on how to best get rid of sheep fescue
- ODFW might have some incentives for keeping it in range rather than production.

Working Land Easements

- Development rights are sold, to ensure ground stays in agriculture production
- Will reduce property value so the farmer is compensated- Up to 1.5 million dollars
- Will keep the farm from being broken up
- Tax Benefits from Easements

The Gilliam SWCD is hosting a meeting on Working Lands Easements on Feb 28th at Noon

Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR

From: Amy Charette <amy.charette@ctwsbnr.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 3:30 PM
To: Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR
Subject: Re: Local workgroup meeting

Hi Damon

Thank you for the invite, I'm not going to be able to make the meeting now.

I would like to provide support for Beaver dam analogs and would also support making that a priority in future years. If there are any specific questions you plan to go overview I would be happy to have a conversation afterwards and provide some input.

Thanks, Amy

Amy Charette
Watershed Restoration Coordinator
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
John Day Basin Office
320 W. Main Street
John Day, OR 97845
(541) 575-1868 office
(541) 620-4521 cell
amy.charette@ctwsbnr.org

http://wsfish.org/

On Jan 13, 2017, at 10:14 AM, Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR <Damon.Brosnan@or.usda.gov> wrote:

Good Morning,

I have attached the Local workgroup meeting announcement and invite. I hope to see some of you there.

Thank you,

Damon Brosnan
District Conservationist – Wheeler and Gilliam Counties
USDA/NRCS
P.O. Box 106
Condon, OR 97823
541-384-2671 ext. 107

FAX: 855-651-9160

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Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR

From: Tom Rietmann <tom.rietmann@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2017 12:28 PM
To: Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR
Subject: Re: LWG meeting

Damon,

Keeping land in grass rather than farmed is the single best thing we can do to protect Ferry Canyon and other watersheds. Ways to keep expiring CRP contracts in perennial cover and encouraging conversion of highly erodible farmland to grass should always be the top priority.
We have learned that direct seeding will require some tillage because of chemical resistant weeds. Encouraging the least amount of tillage possible on farmland should be the next priority. Dams and terraces should be kept in place and expanded upon. Experimenting with cover crops should also be encouraged because we don't know what works here. It might be 10 years of grass to rebuild soil structure. In all the above cases managed grazing should be allowed without nesting season restrictions. We might think about establishing sanctuary areas within fields as an alternative to the current nesting season restrictions. The legacy of CRP where whole fields and the surrounding unfarmed areas are never grazed is fewer birds.
I would be pleased to take anyone on a hike through the lower 5 miles of Ferry Canyon so you can see the dramatic changes that have occurred there since CRP started in 1986 along with the advent of direct seeding.

Maybe something like a carbon payment for meeting soil organic matter goals should be part of the discussion.

Tom

On Wed, Feb 1, 2017 at 11:13 AM, Brosnan, Damon - NRCS, Condon, OR <Damon.Brosnan@or.usda.gov> wrote:

> I am sorry, I didn't include the time for the meeting. It will be from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm today.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Damon Brosnan
>
> District Conservationist – Wheeler and Gilliam Counties
>
> USDA/NRCS
>
> P.O. Box 106
>
> Condon, OR 97823
>
> 541-384-2671 ext. 107

FAX: 855-651-9160

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GILLIAM/WHEELER LWG MEETING 2-1-2017			
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Benn Eilers	Engineering Contractor		benn@rsiengr.com
Debbie Bunch	Watershed Council	541-468-2990	debrabunch@gmail.com

2017 NRCS Gilliam and Wheeler Local Workgroup Meeting

February 1, 2017

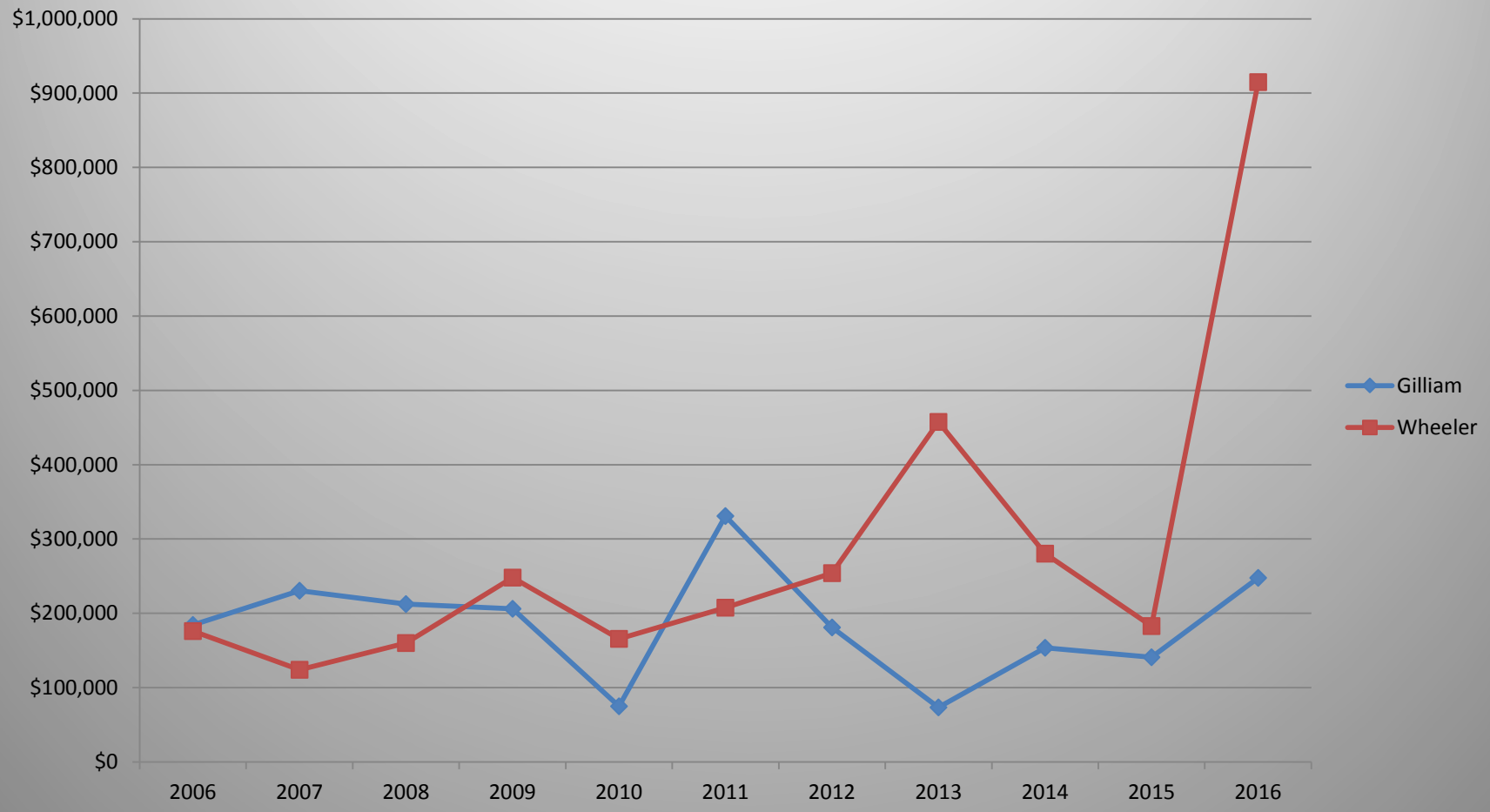
AGENDA

- Introductions
- Meeting Objectives and Protocol
- EQIP Snapshot – Recap of Work done in 2016
  - Brief overview of Funding Pools the past 5 years
  - Current Resource Concerns
  - Current Funding Pools
- Group Brainstorm
  - Resource Concerns by Land use-Are they different?
  - Are there Geographic priorities/Focus Areas?
- Planned Conservation Implementation Strategies for 2018 and beyond
- NRCS/Partner Efforts – current and future
- Summary of the Day

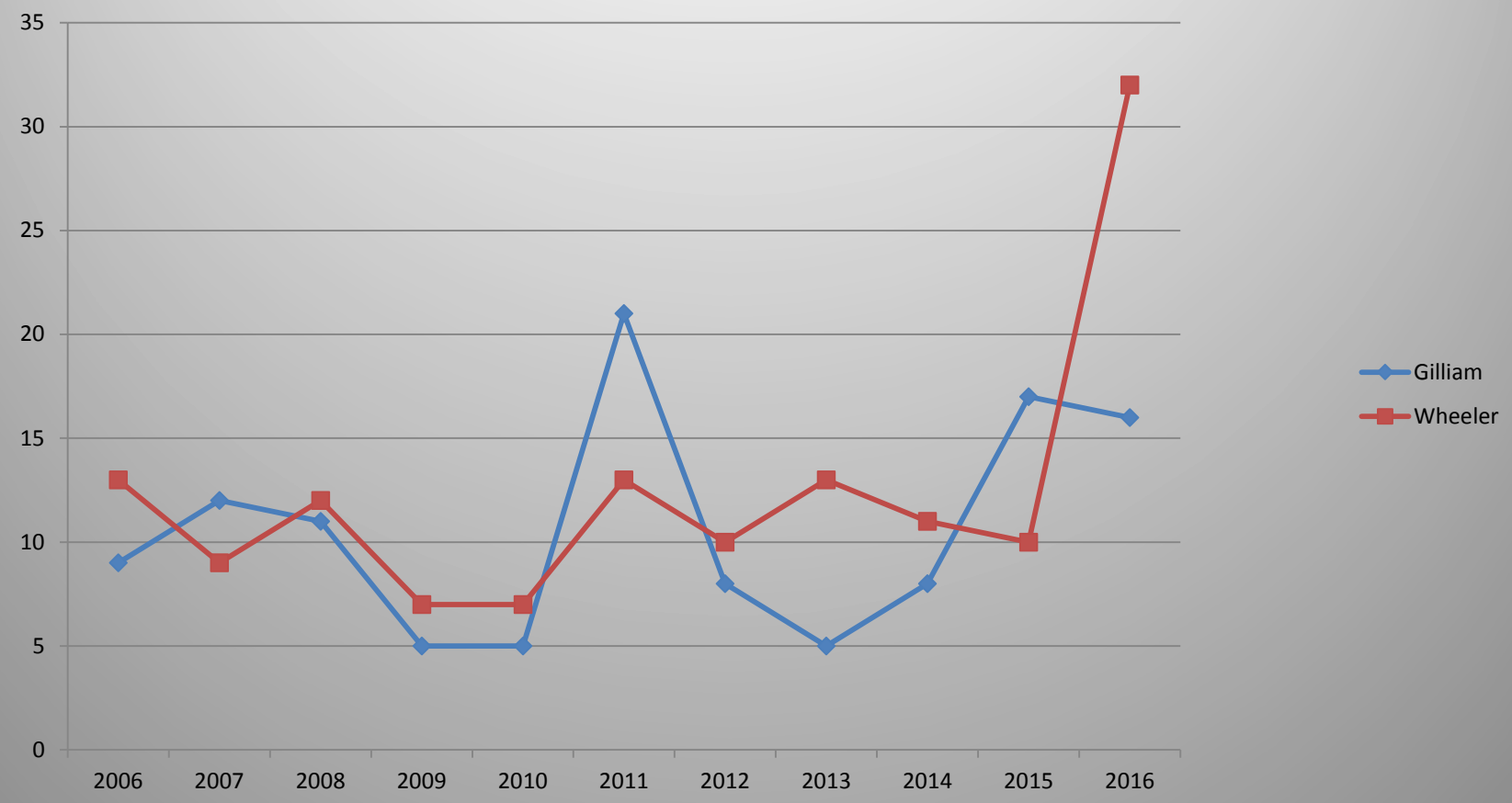
PAST RESOURCE CONCERNS WHEELER/GILLIAM COUNTY

- Juniper Invasion
- Annual Grass Invasion
- Irrigation Efficiency
- Forestland Health
- Insufficient Livestock Water
- Improper Pasture Utilization
- Cropland Efficiency

EQIP FUNDING LEVELS GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES



EQIP CONTRACTS AWARDED IN GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES



HISTORICAL FUNDING P0OLS WHEELER COUNTY 2006-2015

- Grazinglands
- Irrigated Crop
- Grazed Range/Forest
- Irrigated Crop/Pasture/Hay
- Irrigation
- Sutton Mtn. CCPI
- Grazing
- Irrigation
- Rangeland Invasives
- Rowe Creek
- Twickenham/Rowe Creek CCPI
- Bear Creek Juniper Treatment
- Mountain Creek Irrigation
- Mountain Creek Forestry
- North Slope Ochoco RCPP
- Kahler Uplands Improvement Project

2017 WHEELER COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

- One funding pool, RCPP, with three different subsets: irrigation, uplands, and forestry
  - 19 applications
  - Treating resource concerns on rangeland, forest land, and irrigated crop land
- Kahler Uplands is the other funding pool
  - 11 applications
  - Treating resource concerns on rangeland and forest land

What is RCPP????

- **RCPP ~ "Regional Conservation Partnership Program"**
- Nearly 600 pre-proposals submitted to NRCS in 2014. Top ones asked to submit full proposals.
- 210 full proposals submitted for $1.4 billion – 4x the funding available
- Projects were evaluated on four criteria: *Contributions, Solutions, Innovations, Participation*
-
- October 2014: W-SWCD submitted **"North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project"** full proposal.
- January 2015: Proposal accepted at reduced funding (43%); approximately $5 million dollars.
- Partnership program requiring at least a 1 to 1 match of funds requested
- Only six proposals were offered/awarded in Oregon.
-
- **North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project:** Timeframe- 5 years
- Three watersheds: Mountain Creek, Bridge Creek, Cherry Creek

- Cost Share Practices:
-
  Pre-commercial thinning
- Irrigation efficiency
- Conservation easements
- Juniper removal
- Range restoration
- Spring developments

RCPP Continued

- **Specifically, the Output Objectives**:

- 1) 6,200 acres of brush management
- 2) 90,000 feet of irrigation conveyance
- 3) 900 acres of irrigation water management
- 4) 600 acres of forest stand improvement
- 5) 30,000 feet of livestock pipeline
- 6) 5 solar livestock pump plants
- 7) 1,000 acres of range planting
- 8) 10 fish screens installed
- 9) 38 spring developments
- 10) 28,000 gallons of trough/cisterns
- 11) 686,000 feet of fence
- 12) 7,000 acres of permanent conservation easements
- 13) 106 miles of stream enrolled in CREP
- 14) 30 fish passage/habitat projects

Partners:

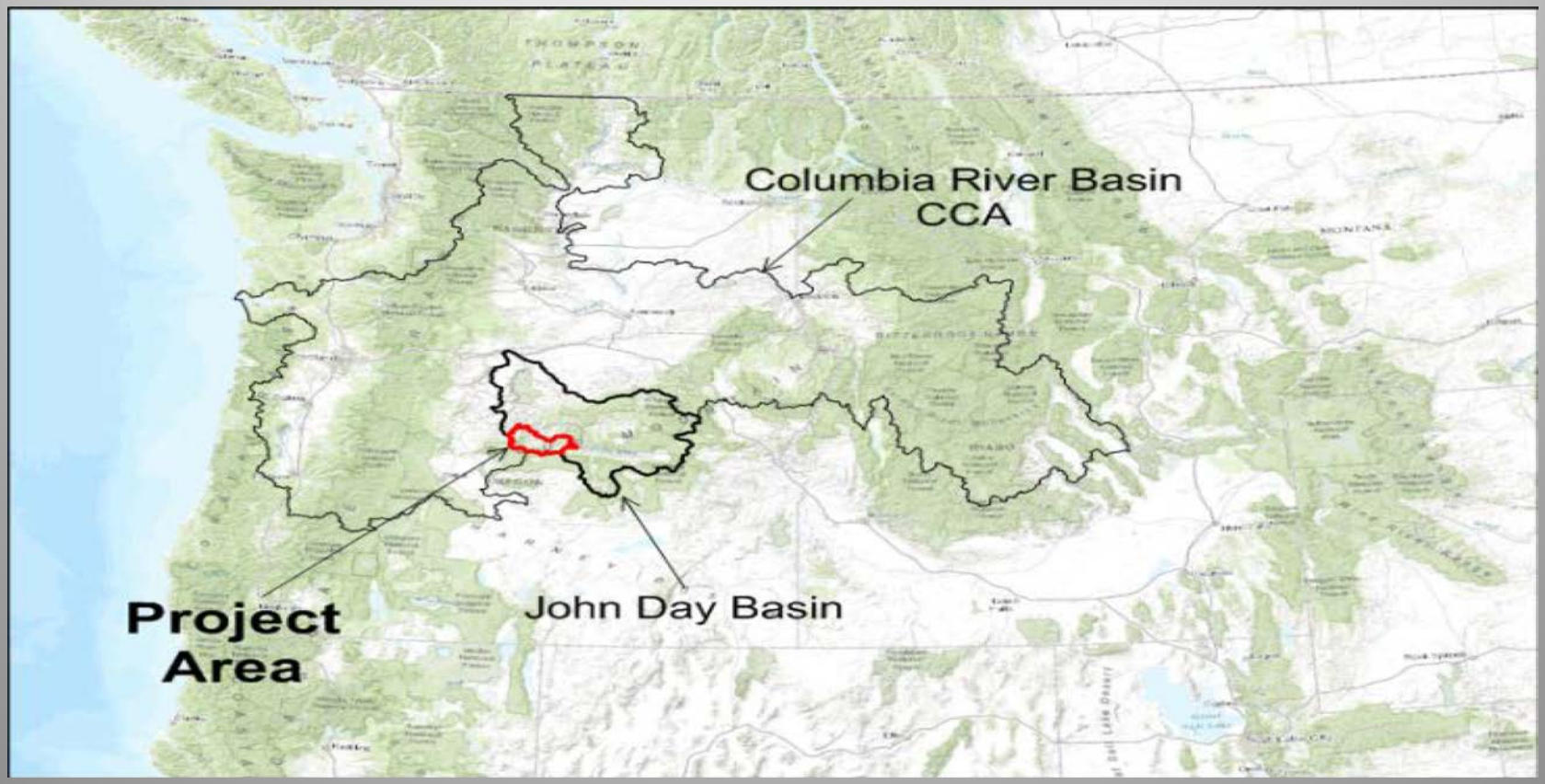
OWEB

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

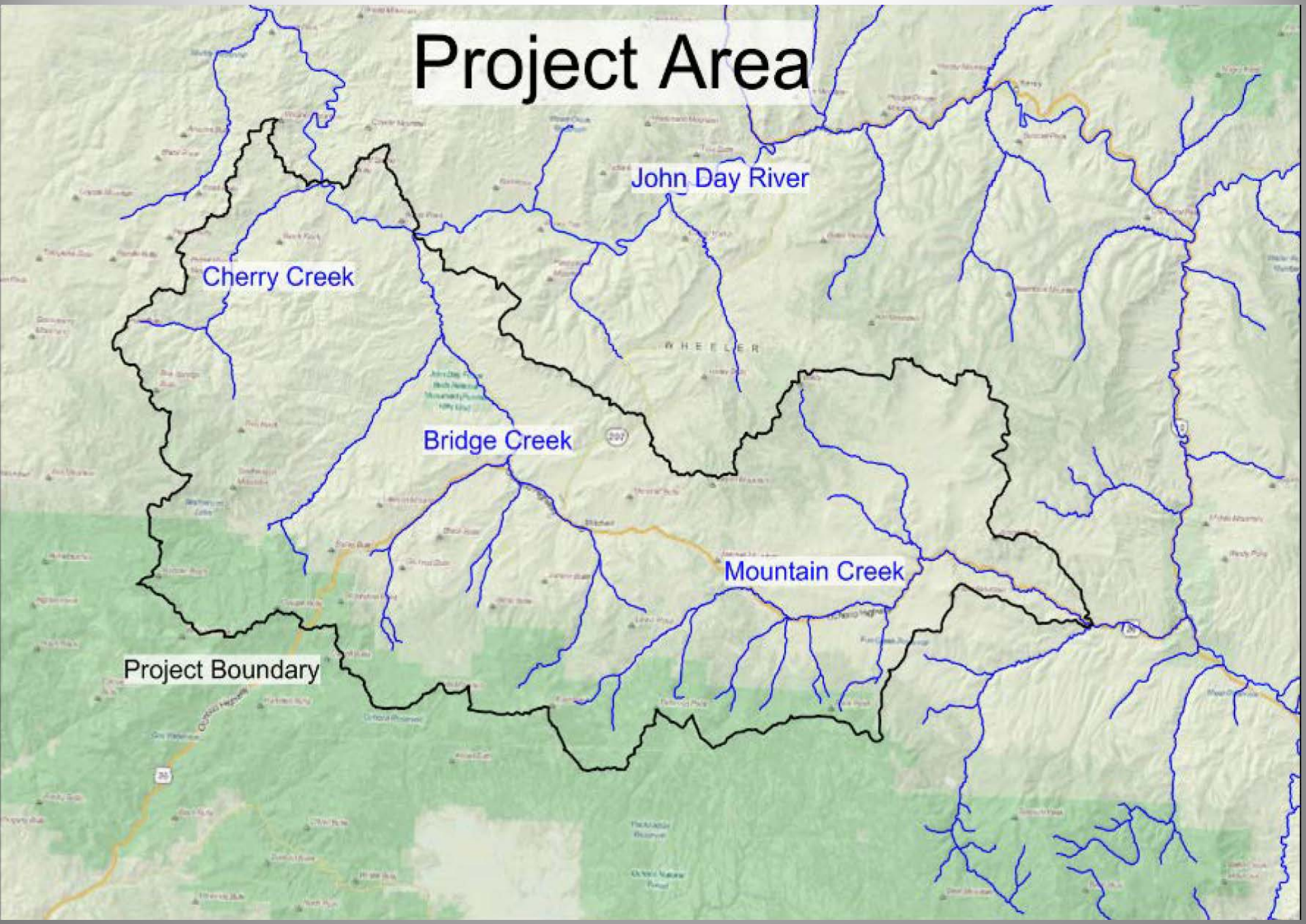
Farm Service Agency

-

RCPP Project Location



Project Area

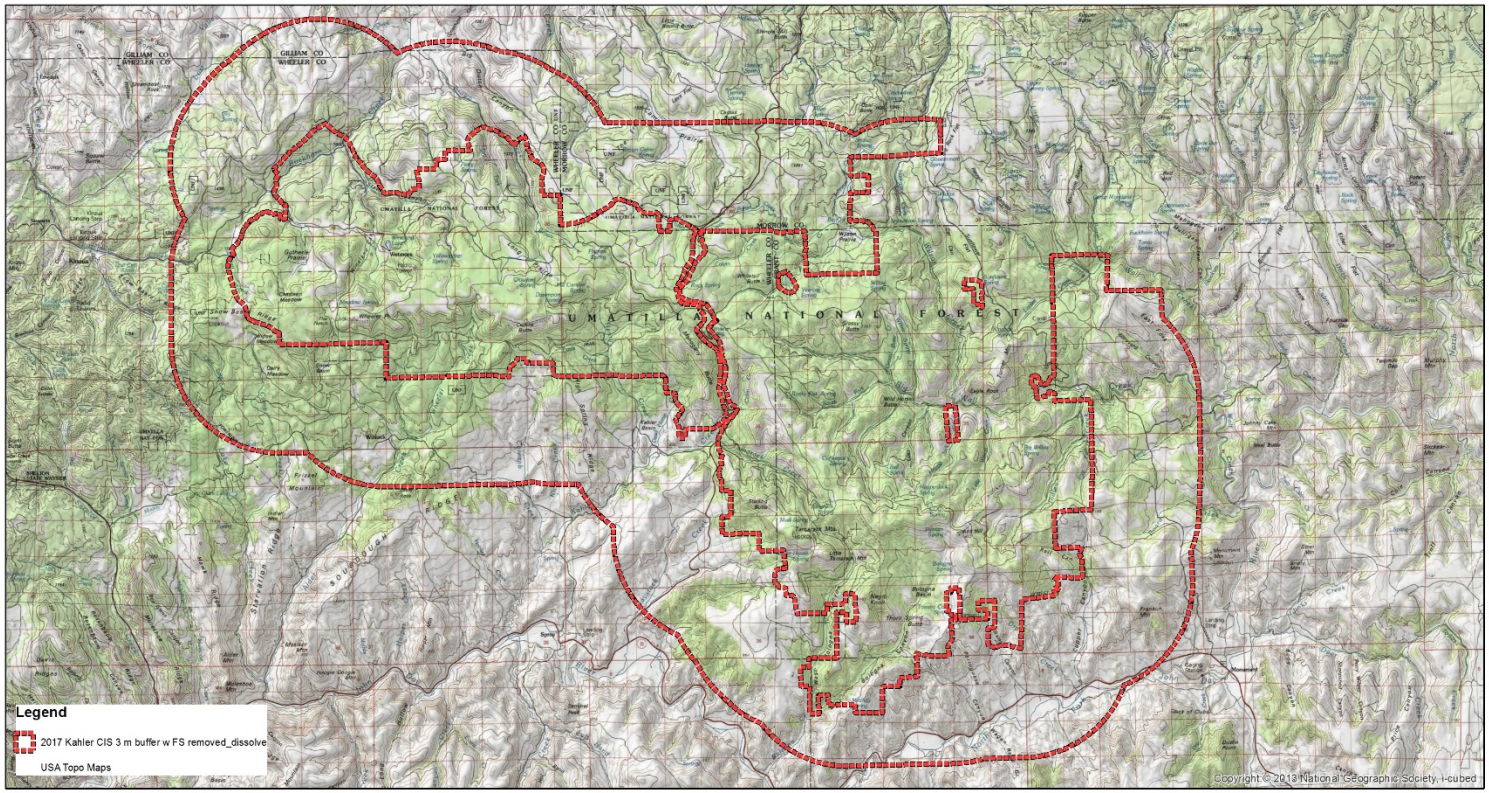


KAHLER UPLANDS PROJECT MAP

Field Office: CONDON SERVICE CENTER
Agency: USDA/NRCS

KAHLER UPLANDS COLLABORATIVE PROJECT AREA MAP

Date: 3/21/2016



34,000 0 34,000 68,000 102,000 136,000
Feet

N

KAHLER UPLANDS PROJECT

- *Defined Deliverables:*
- **Thinning to reduce tree densities and encroachment: 1,200 acres on private lands**
- **Juniper removal on 2,400 acres of private land**
- Kahler Timber Sale: 9,000 acres
- Combined underburn acres for Long Prairie CE and Kahler EIS: 41,255 acres. As a result of the partnership between federal, state, and private land, approximately 4,200 acres of federal land and yet to be determined private land will be underburned which could not be accomplished otherwise.

FUTURE TREATMENT IDEAS/AREAS IN WHEELER COUNTY

- Old, decadent crop fields
  - Rejuvenate perennial grass stands with multi-species mix, cut out invading juniper
  - First funding pool will be focused on Kahler watershed
  - Landowner recruitment has already started
- Butte Creek uplands improvement
- Other ideas?

2017 GILLIAM COUNTY EQIP FUNDING POOLS

- **There were no funding pools designated for Gilliam County in 2017**

GILLIAM FUTURE IDEAS?

- FERRY CANYON/HAY CREEK/COTTONWOOD RANGELAND/STREAM HEALTH?
- GRASS BANK IDEA/PRESCRIBED GRAZING?
- Soil health initiative and cover cropping?
- MORE JUNIPER?
- **ROCK CREEK RCPP?**

PARTNER EFFORTS

- Lonerock Prescribed Burn
- Lonerock Monitoring
- Kahler Uplands grant through Watershed Council
- BDA's on Bear Creek in RCPP project area
- Bio Char in RCPP project area
- Sustainable Northwest and juniper marketing and milling

OTHER RESOURCE CONCERNS/Areas of Interest?

- Annual grass invasion?
- Crop land concerns?
- CRP takeout? (2017)
- Riparian Areas?
- Wildlife Concerns? Habitat? Numbers?
- Other partner efforts?
- Areas of opportunity?

Questions/Concerns?