USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

OTAC review of 2020 Ranking and Geographic Area Rate Cap

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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ACEP Components

Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE)

- NRCS provides cost-share assistance to eligible entities for the purchase of agricultural land easements on eligible land from eligible landowners. Entity holds the easement.

Purpose of ALE

- Protect the agricultural use, viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses.

- Protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving eligible land.

ACEP Components

Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)

- NRCS purchases easements directly from eligible landowners through a reserved interest deed in eligible land to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats. NRCS holds the easement.

Purpose of WRE

- Restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on eligible land while maximizing wetland wildlife habitat.

ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation

- **Appraised fair Market Value (FMV)** of offered land – only potential easement area appraised
- **Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)** applied to FMV as determined by appraisal
  - GARC is 85% of FMV – offer to landowner will be 85% of FMV

Appraised FMV	GARC	Permanent Easement	30 Year Easement	30 Year Contract
$300,000	85% FMV	$255,000	$191,250	$191,250

ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation

Sources and Considerations

- Neighboring states, Washington and Idaho, are proposing the 85% FMV GARC for FY20; CA is proposing 80%
- Location of high priority areas included in the Oregon Conservation Implementation Strategies and Long Range Plans.
- Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC) support for 85% FMV GARC for FY 19 on July 26, 2018.

ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation

Sources and Considerations

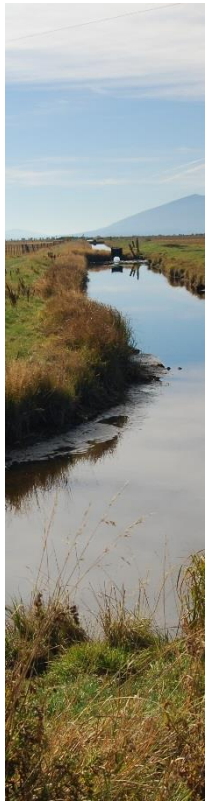
- Based on contracted AWMA in 2014
- Applied a 20% reduction for a GARC of 80 % FMV
- Increased to 85% in 2017
- Increased to be comparable to the adjacent states and to provide compensation to the landowner for the rights they are giving up with the WRE easement.
- The high priority areas in Oregon are located in the higher real estate development areas so to be consistent with the market, we propose to offer the 85% FMV.

ACEP-WRE Ranking Criteria

Hydrology restoration predominant criteria – potential of 50% of points

High ranking projects will provide:

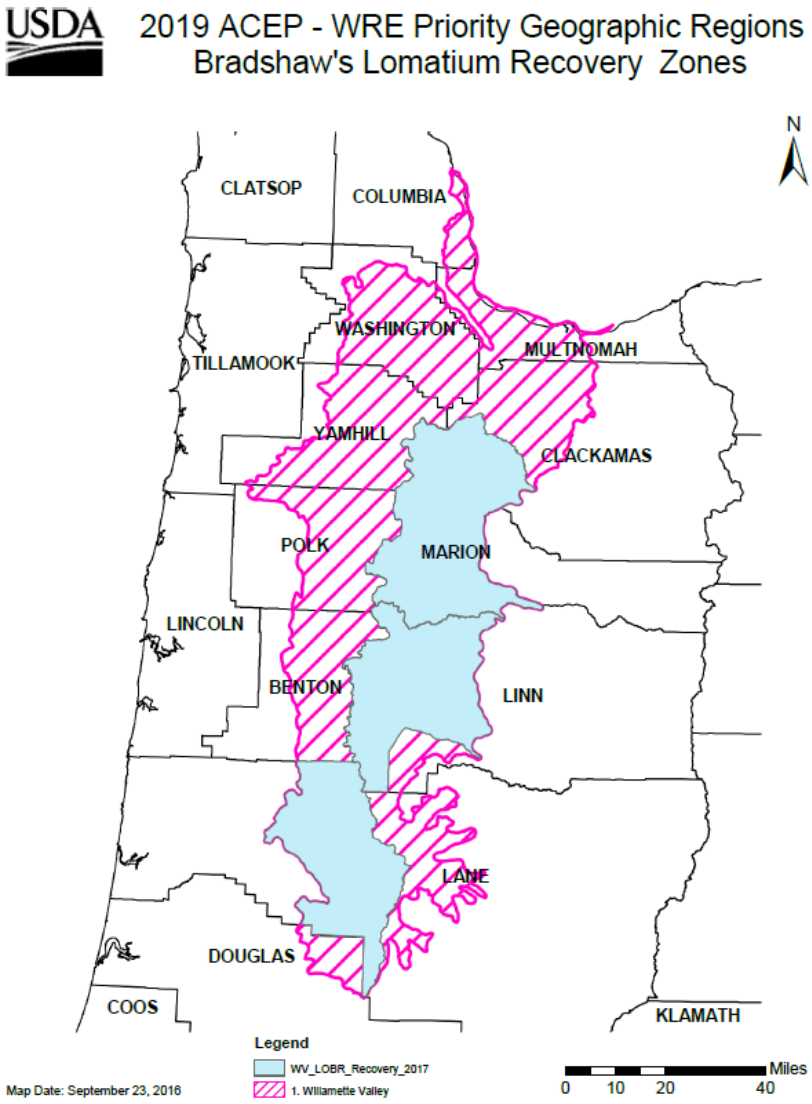
- Successfully restored hydrology with sustainable or low O&M cost to maintain
- Suitable habitat for wetland dependent wildlife species and appropriate for the wetland functions and values that existed in the area historically
- Native and diverse habitat for at-risk species - State or Federally listed T, E, or candidate
- Corridor by connecting to or in close proximity to other protected wetlands
- Floodwater retention
- Low cost for acquisition and restoration
- Located within a strategically planned high priority area



WRE Priority Areas

- Willamette Valley – bradshaw lomatium recovery zone
- Lower Columbia River pacific flyway and estuaries
- Coastal Coho priority estuaries and riparian areas
- Other areas included in local Conservation Implementation Strategy

Bradshaw's Lomatium Recovery Zones



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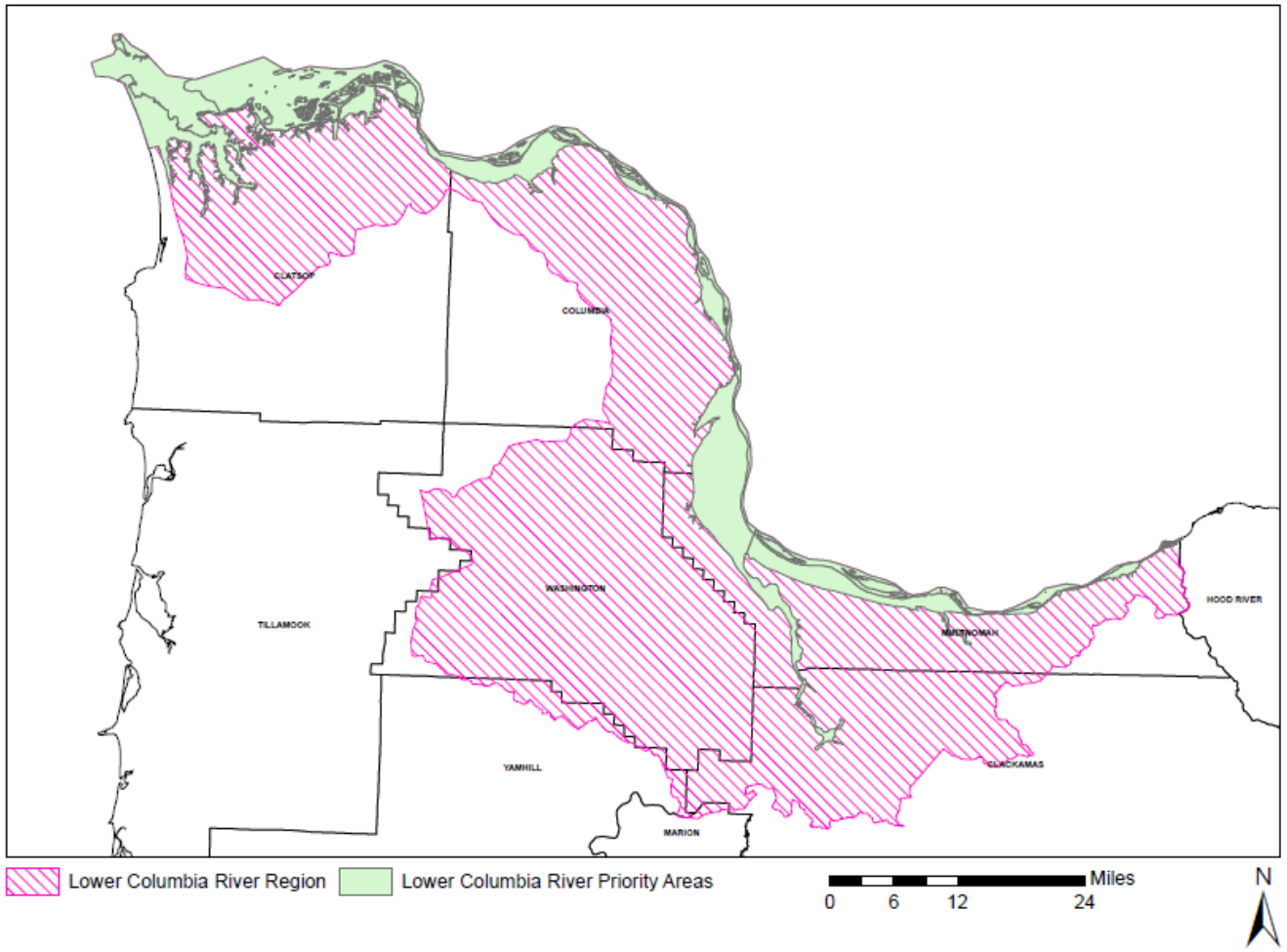
Lower Columbia River Priority Area

2019 ACEP - WRE Priority Geographic Regions
Lower Columbia River Priority Area



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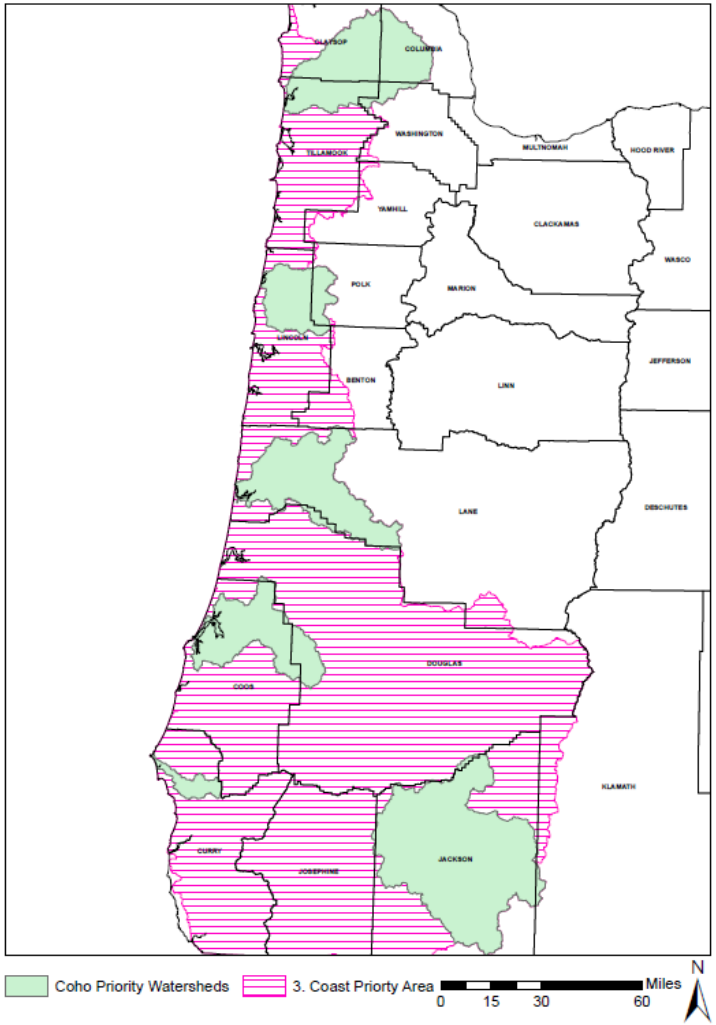
Coastal Coho Priority Watersheds

2019 ACEP - WRE Priority Geographic Regions
Oregon Coastal Coho Priority Watersheds



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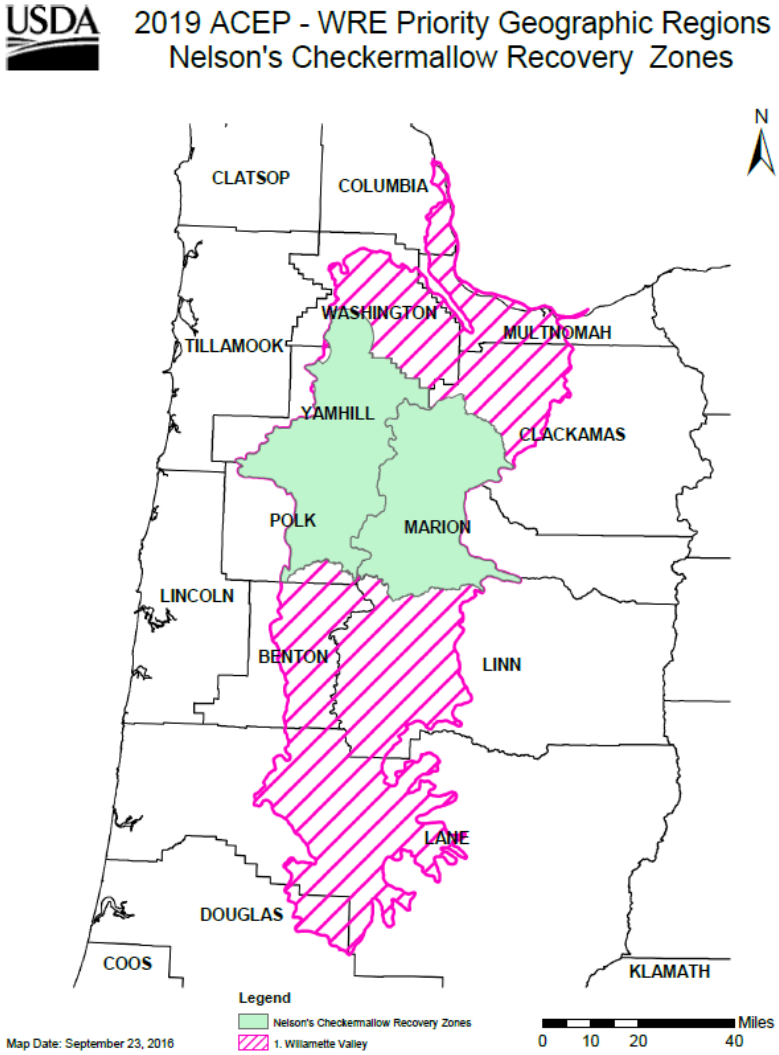
Nelson's Checkermallow Recovery Zones



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ACEP-ALE Ranking Criteria

14 National Criteria = 50% points

1. Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland in the parcel.
2. Historically underserved group, small scale farmer, limited resource landowner, new or beginning farmer or rancher or veteran landowner.
3. Percent of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the parcel.
4. Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county.
5. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county.
6. Percent population growth in the county.
7. Population density per square mile.
8. Existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address farm viability for future generations.
9. Proximity of the parcel to other protected land.
10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure.
11. Maximizing the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use.
12. Whether the land is currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within 1 year.
13. Whether the land is grassland that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement.
14. Parcel contains historical or archaeological resources that will be protected by easement area

ACEP-ALE Ranking Criteria

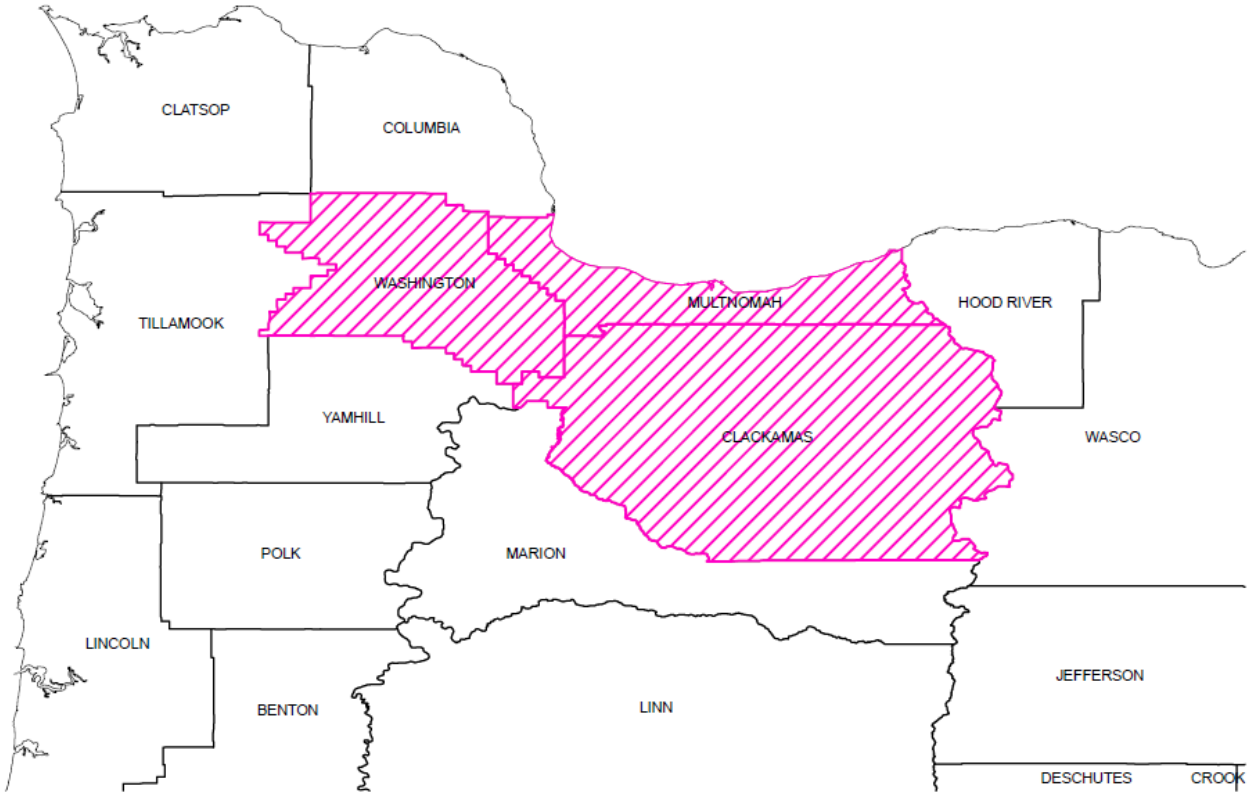
6 State Criteria = 50% points

1. The location of a parcel in an area zoned for agricultural use.
2. The eligible entity's performance in managing and enforcing easements.
3. Multifunctional benefits of agricultural land protection.
4. Geographic regions where the enrollment of particular lands may help achieve national, State, and regional conservation goals and objectives or enhance existing government or private conservation projects.
5. Diversity of natural resources to be protected.
6. Score in the land evaluation and site assessment system or equivalent measure for grassland.

ALE Priority Areas

- Priority Grasslands in ODFW Conservation Strategy
- Portland Metro Area
- Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Recovery Plan Area
- Southern Oregon Northeastern California Migratory Bird Habitat
- Future Sage Grouse Habitat

Metro Priority Area



Map created on 10/9/2015.

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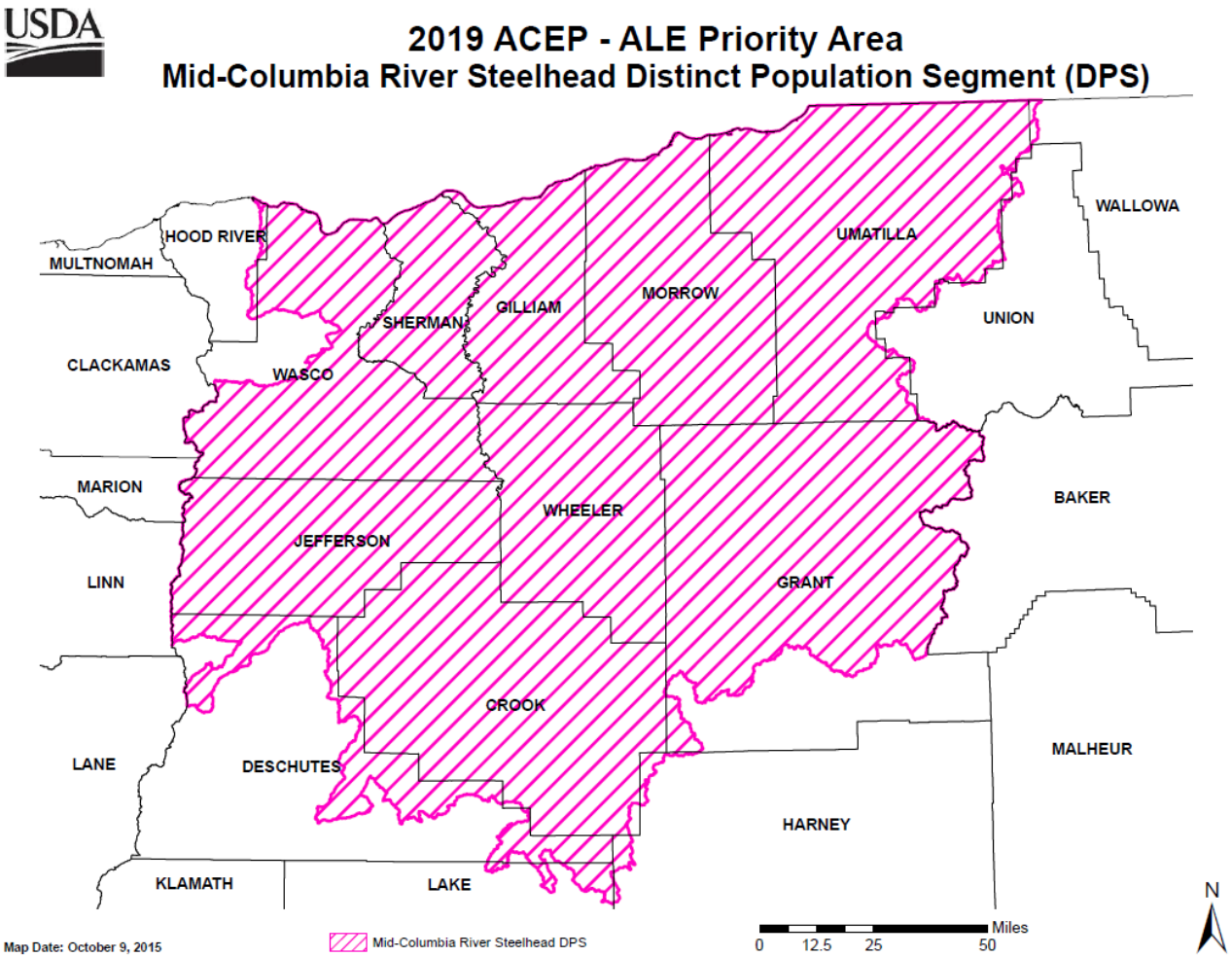
Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS)



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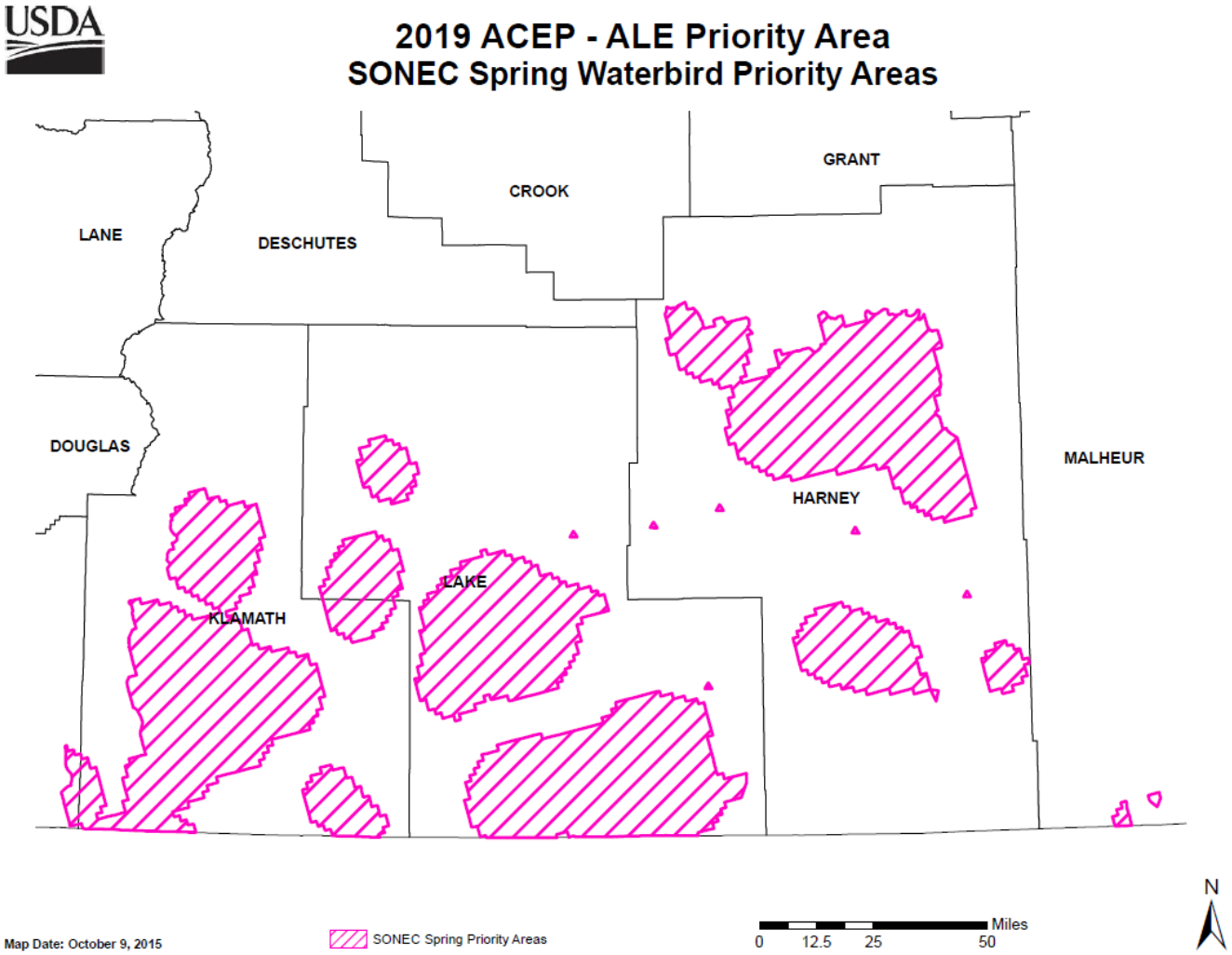
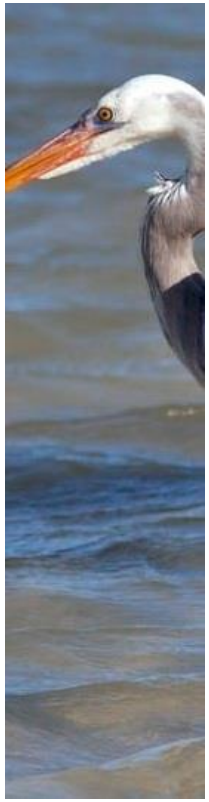
SONEC Spring Waterbird Priority Areas





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