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May 6, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Rudy Salakory, Oregon Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's Department of Natural Resources: Purpose, Programs, Philosophy, and History

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Eric Quaempts Director for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's (CTUIR) Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Summary: The CTUIR DNR utilizes many approaches across a broad array of disciplines to protect, restore, and enhance the First Foods and medicines for the perpetual cultural, economic, and sovereign benefit of the CTUIR. Director Quaempts will provide a brief overview of the mission, goals, and approaches CTUIR undertakes, and will provide specific examples of how these interrelated goals get implemented.

Relevance: CTUIR DNR efforts associated with the Council date back to the Council's formation, while contracts it has had through Bonneville Power Administration and the Council include 574 contracts goes back to 1983.

Background: Eric Quaempts has served as the Director for the CTUIR DNR since 2004. Prior to working for CTUIR, Eric spent eight years as a Wildlife Biologist in the CTUIR DNR's Wildlife Program and eight years on the Umatilla National Forest where his career development included inter-disciplinary rotations in Forestry, Wildlife,

Range, Reforestation, Fisheries, and Fire Management Programs on the Walla Walla Ranger District.

As the CTUIR's DNR Director, he developed and implemented the First Foods management approach in 2006 and has directed the implementation of the CTUIR DNR's River and Upland Visions to facilitate management in support of First Foods. In implementing the mission, he oversees Administration, Cultural Resources Protection, Water Resources, Fisheries, Wildlife, Range/Ag, Forestry, Energy and Environmental Sciences, and First Foods Policy programs, who work throughout a geographically extensive and diverse area of Tribal rights and interests.

More info: CTUIR DNR Homepage <https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/>

The Umatilla River Vision <https://ctuir.org/media/25chgmwn/ctuir-dnr-umatilla-river-vision-v2-051811.pdf>

First Foods Upland Vision <https://ctuir.org/media/ez1g3wp1/ctuir-dnr-upland-vision-april-2019.pdf>



Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Dept. of Natural Resources First Foods Management

4.12.26

Presentation

1. First Foods Management Overview.
2. Management Examples.
3. Looking Forward.



Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Treaty of 1855

Confederation of:

- Umatilla;
- Walla Walla; and
- Cayuse.

6.4 million acre Ceded Lands

UIR Land Base

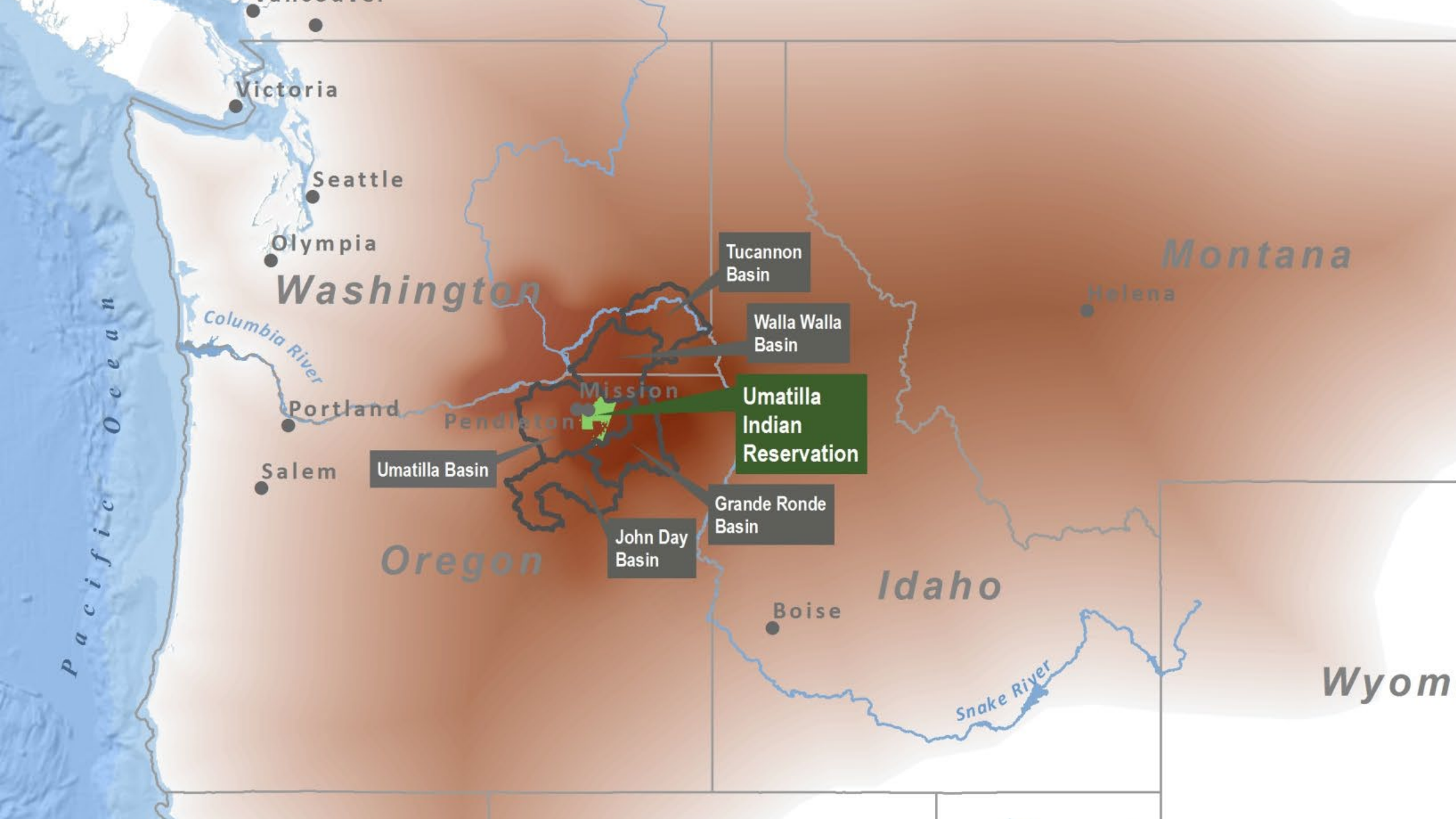
1859 Survey - 254,699 acres

Dawes Allotment Act: 158,000

Restoration: 172,000

“checkerboard” ownership

Currently about 3,100+ members



Victoria

Seattle

Olympia

Washington

Columbia River

Portland

Salem

Umatilla Basin

Oregon

Pendleton

Mission

John Day Basin

Grande Ronde Basin

Tucannon Basin

Walla Walla Basin

Umatilla Indian Reservation

Boise

Idaho

Snake River

Montana

Helena

Wyom



Northwest **Power** and
Conservation Council

CHALLENGES

...ensure an adequate, efficient, economical, and reliable power supply for the region.

The Council occupies a unique niche amongst these regional partners. The Council's work gives particular attention to salmon and steelhead, but also includes measures designed to benefit sturgeon, Pacific lamprey, bull trout, cutthroat trout, a variety of wildlife, and more. The goals of the Council's Program are broader as well, as mitigation extends beyond recovery for listed species to **all fish and wildlife affected by the hydropower system.**



CTUIR Department of Natural Resources Mission Statement

To protect, restore, and enhance the First Foods and medicines for the perpetual cultural, economic, and sovereign benefit of the CTUIR. We will accomplish this utilizing traditional ecological and cultural knowledge and science to inform:

- 1) population and habitat management goals and actions; and
- 2) natural resource policies and regulatory mechanisms.



Community Values & Engagement



"We need cold, clear, pure water and salmon."

- átway Louie Dick, CTUIR Member, 1981-82, 1988-89

"You're always talking about the men's foods.

Who is going to take care of the women's foods?"

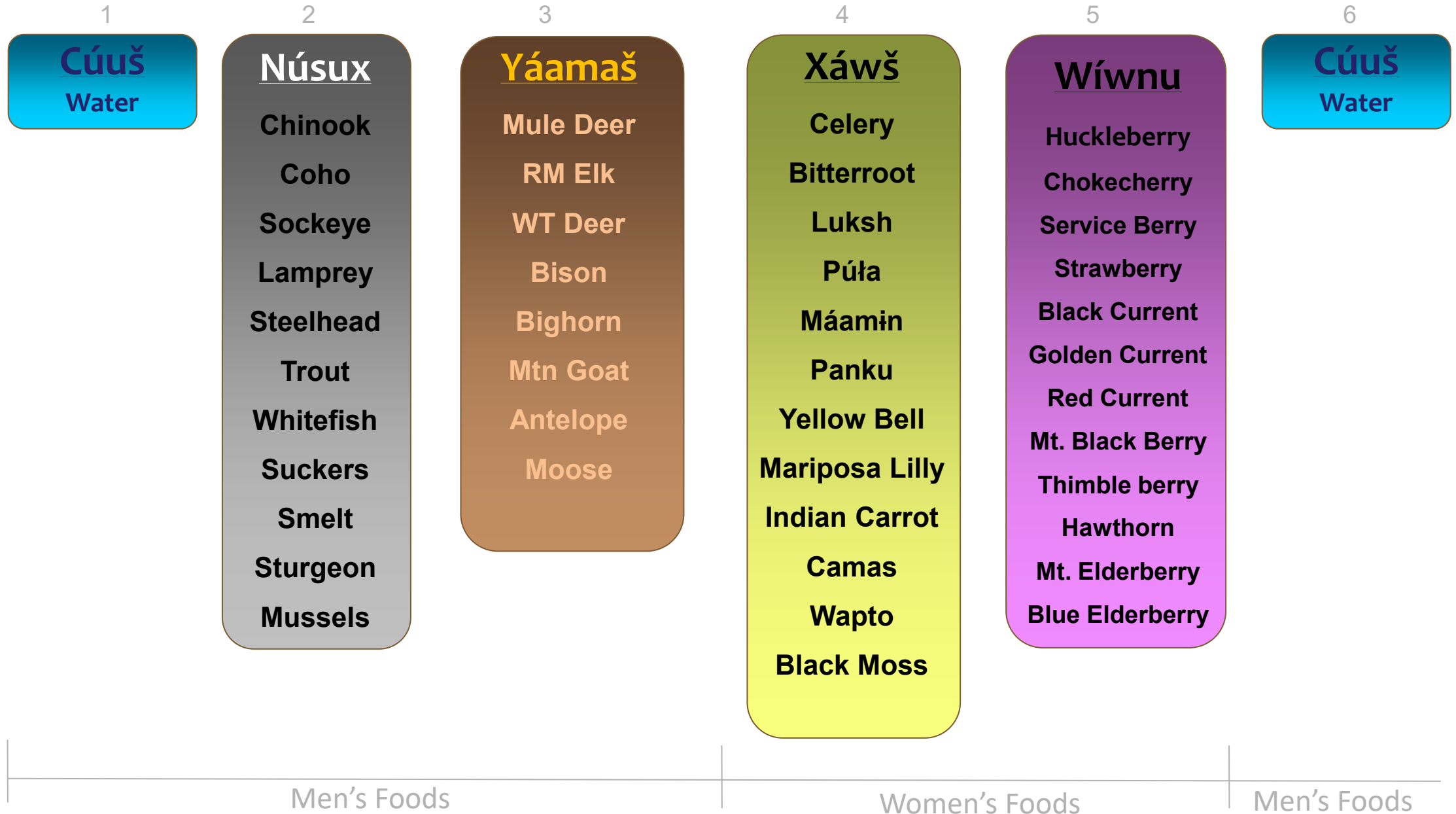
- Marie "Butch" Dick, CTUIR Member and wife of Louie,
1988-89





Photo by Joel Davis

First Foods Serving Example



First Foods Feasts



Priest Rapids



Reciprocity Necessary for “Sustainability”



Food-Dependent Culture

DNR: First Foods Physical & Ecological Processes

Access



Reciprocity:
Sharing;
Care



Consumption
Celebration

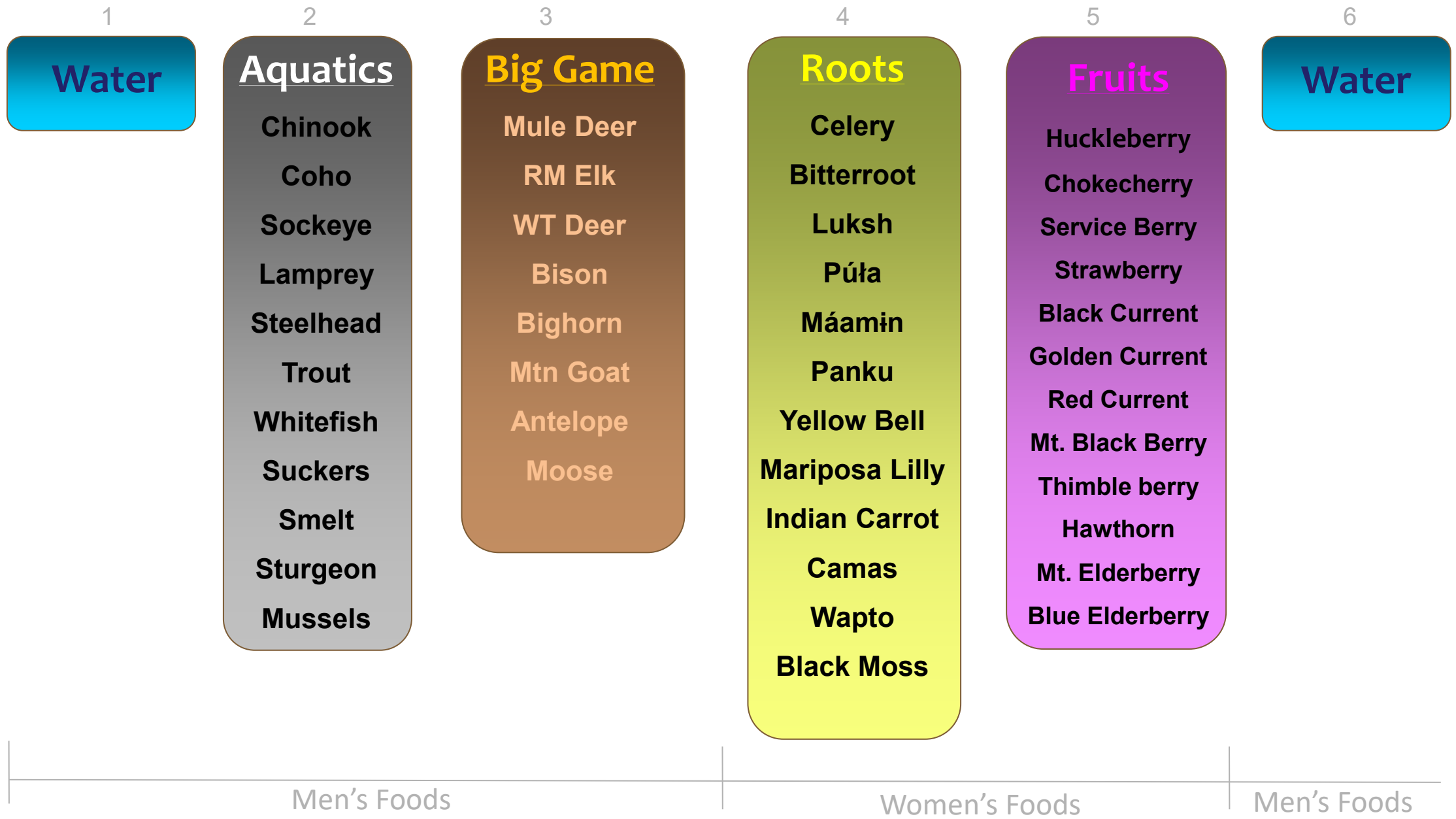


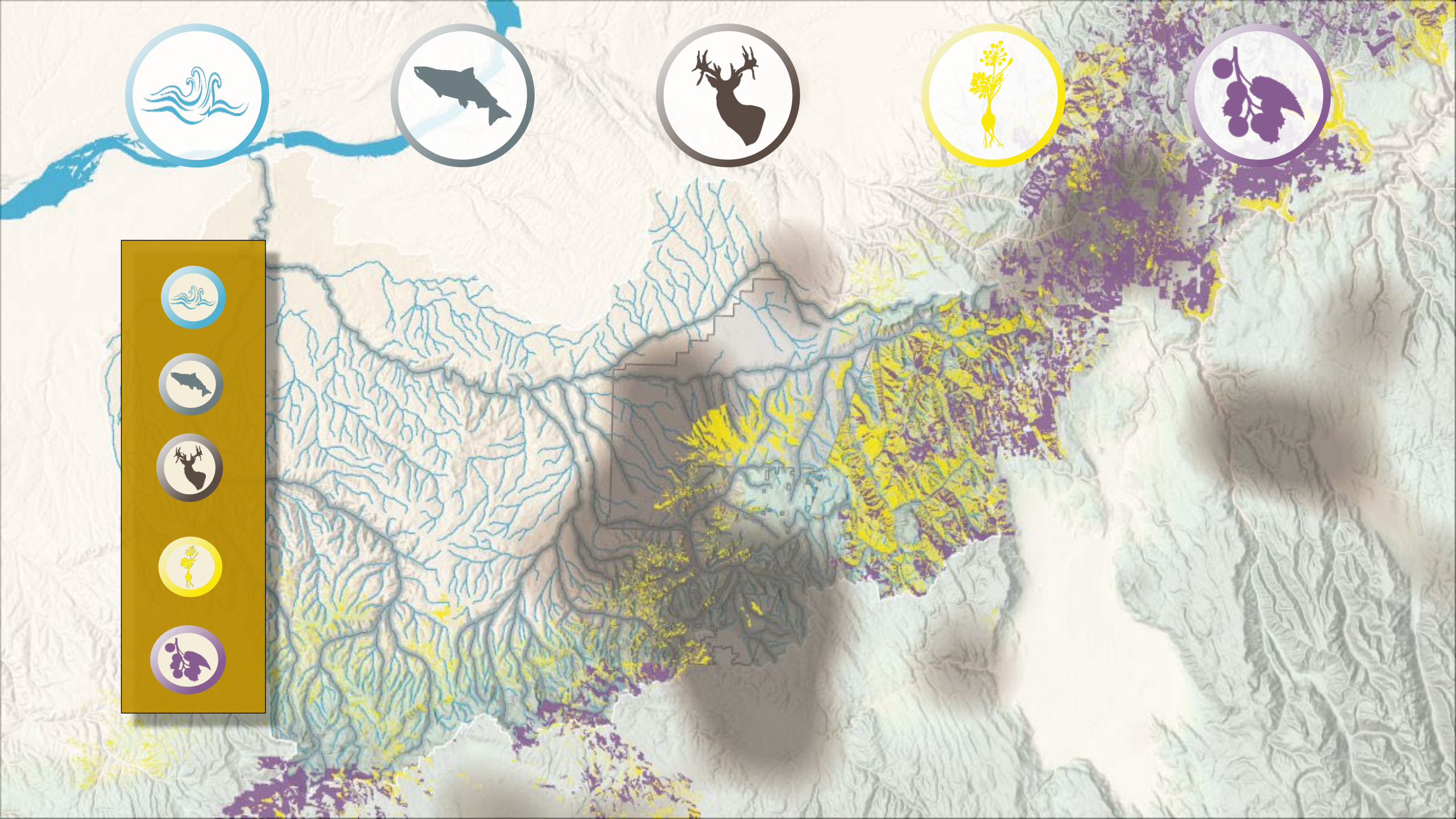
Teaching
Learning
Harvesting
Preparing

Ceremony



First Foods Ecology – Between & Among Foods, Between Foods & People

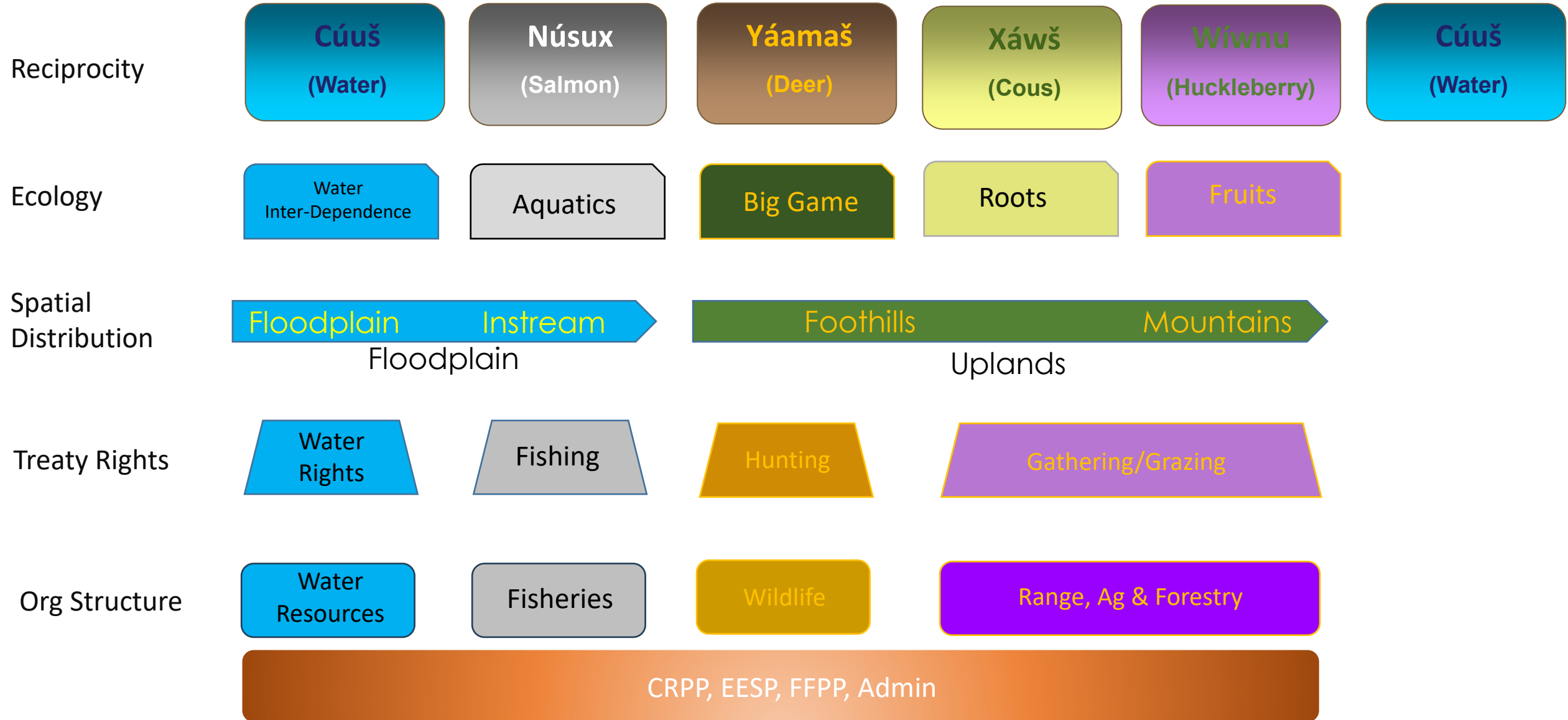




Treaty of 1855, Article 1

....Provided, also, that the exclusive right of taking fish in the streams running through and bordering said reservation is hereby secured to said Indians, and at all other usual and accustomed stations in common with citizens of the United States, and of erecting suitable buildings for curing the same; the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries and pasturing their stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens is also secured to them.

First Foods Management Approach



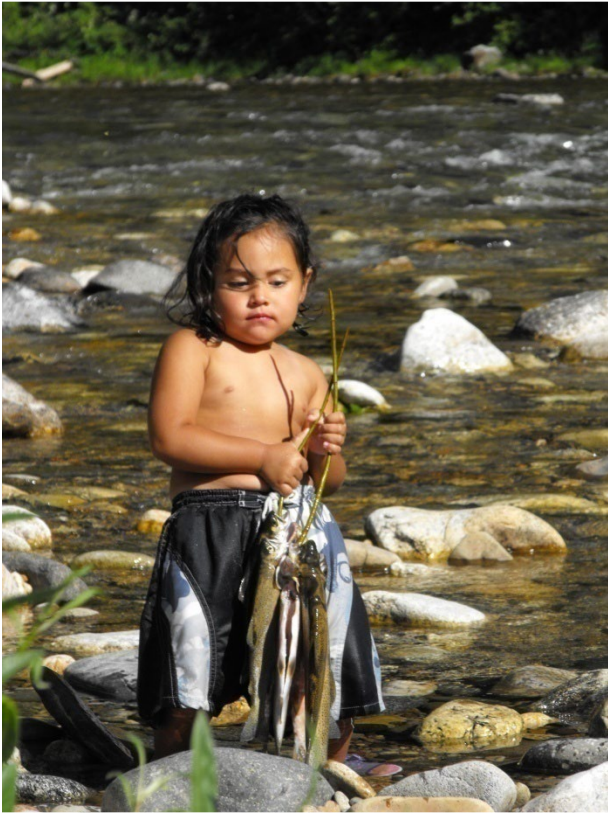
The Need for a Vision

Sound river (water) management and restoration include the need to develop a systemic and holistic vision of a functional river.

A vision provides:

- 1) a framework for planning management or restoration efforts;
- 2) a benchmark for assessing management progress and outcomes; and
- 3) context necessary for understanding the role of any specific management decision or action in the context of other decisions or actions.

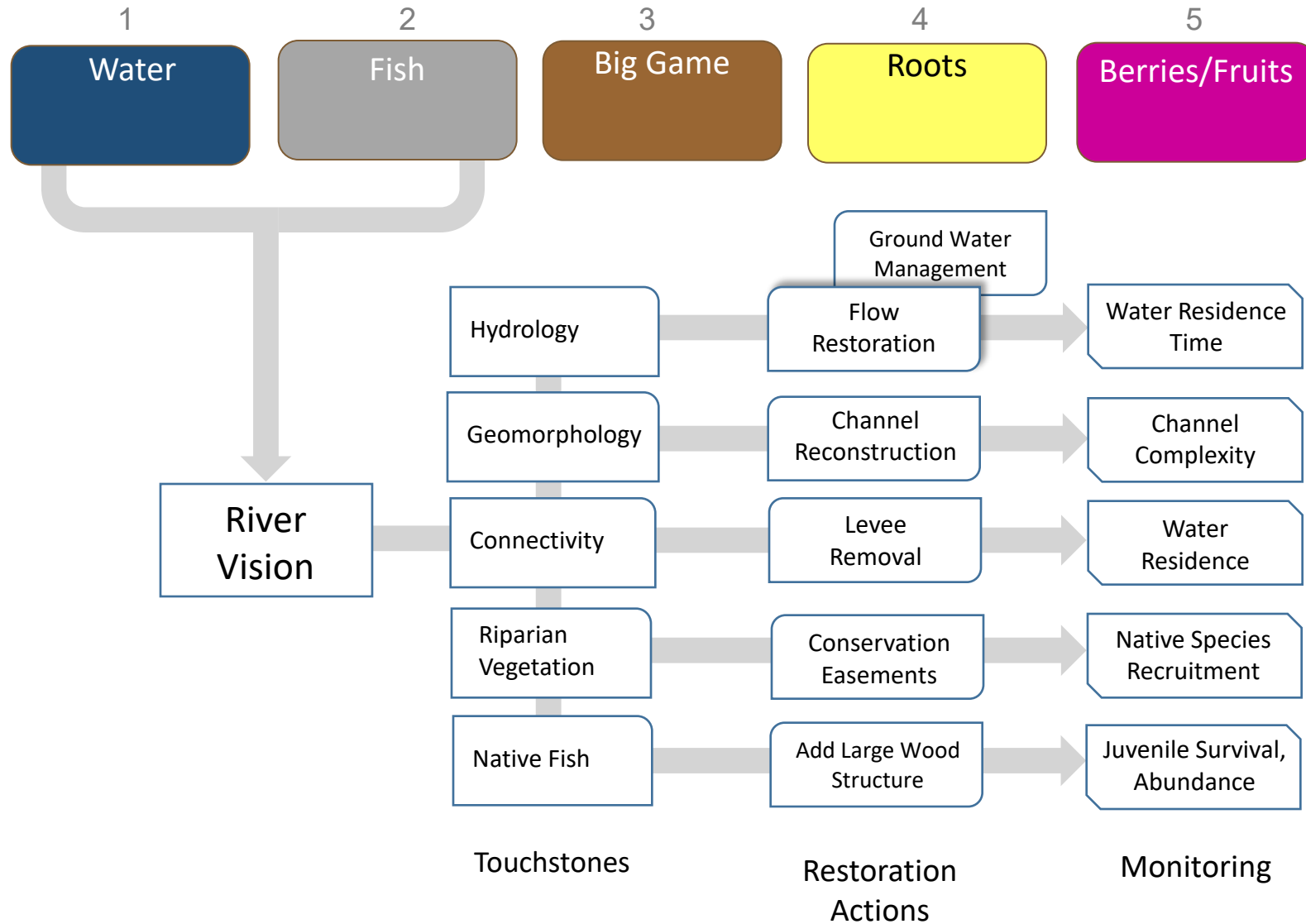
CTUIR River Vision



...a healthy river capable of providing First Foods that sustain the continuity of the Tribe's culture. This vision requires a river that is dynamic, and shaped not only by physical and biological processes, but the interactions and interconnections between those processes.

Community, Science, & Management

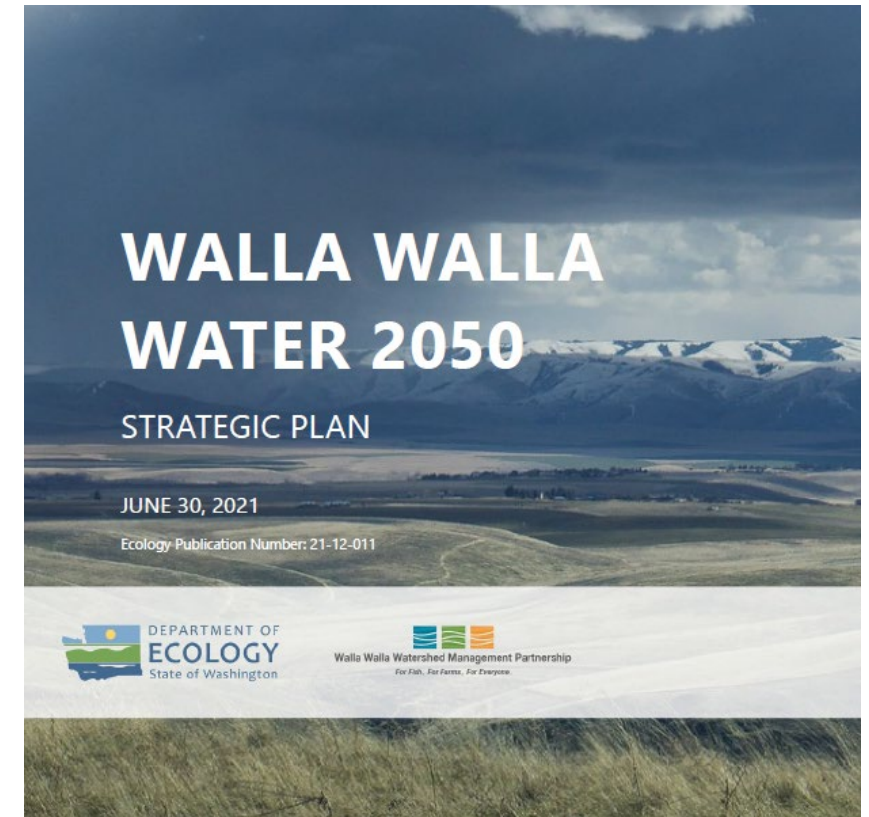
Community Serves:



HYDROLOGY EXAMPLE

Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050

- 30-year effort to improve streamflow and water supplies in the Walla Walla watershed
- Employs an integrated water resource management approach
- Integrates goals and solutions from the basin's diverse stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon
- Developed over 2 years
- Identified 50 strategies in 5 separate focus areas



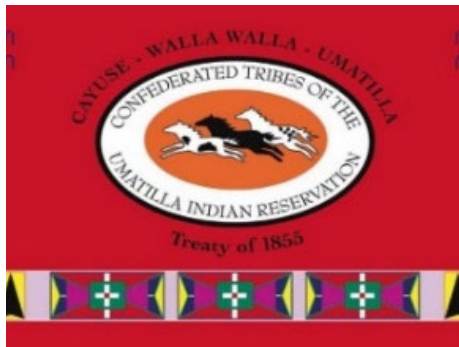
HYDROLOGY EXAMPLE

Goals for the Basin – Tri Sovereign Perspective

OREGON

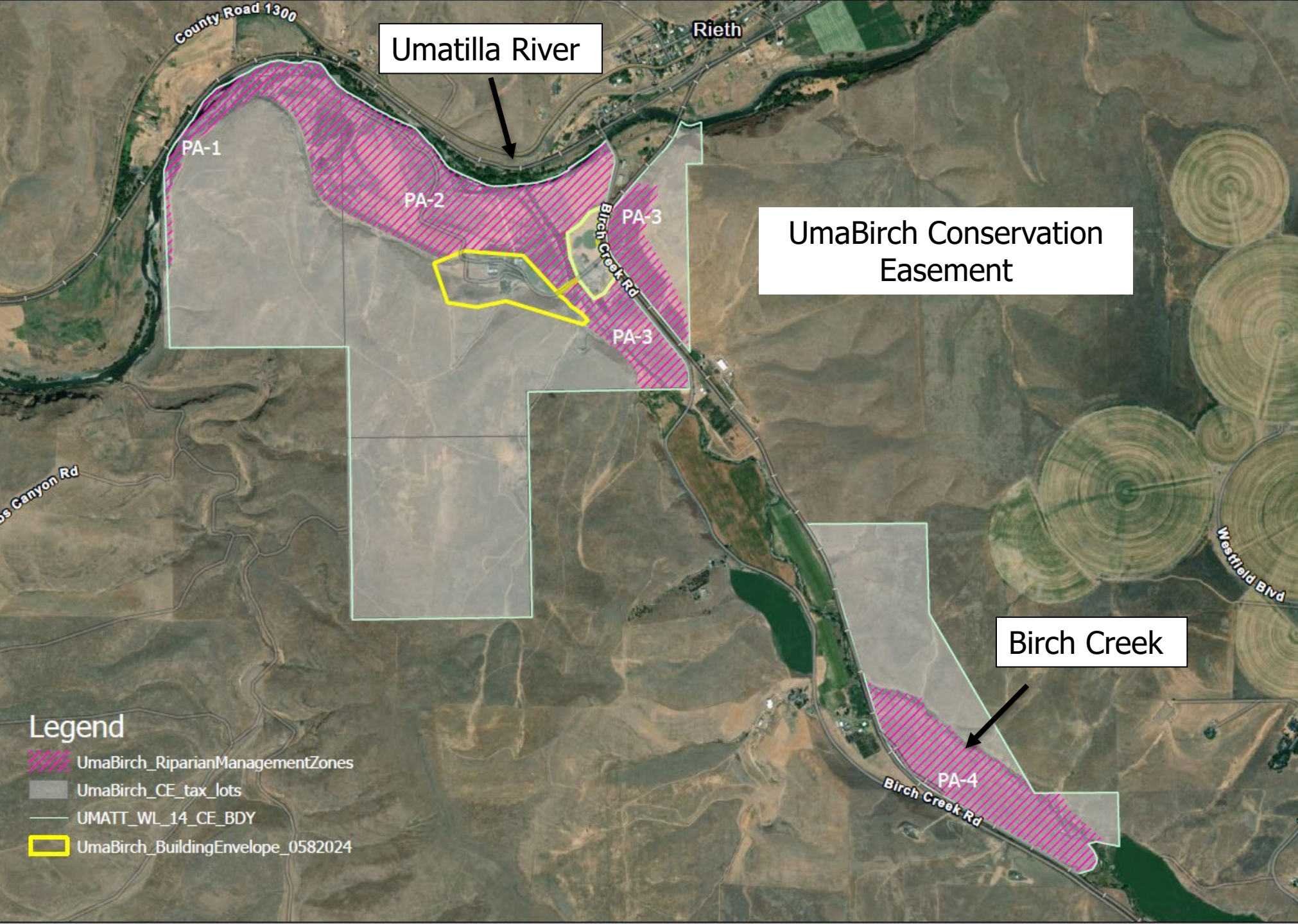


WATER RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT



- Long-term commitment to Walla Walla Basin watershed health
- Retain quality of “The Land of Many Waters”
- Achieve meaningful fish recovery
- Balance public water resources and public funding for both instream and out-of-stream needs
- Manage surface water & groundwater conjunctively and consistently across the bi-state Walla Walla Basin
- Plan for climate change and water reliability now and for future basin inhabitants





Umatilla River

UmaBirch Conservation Easement

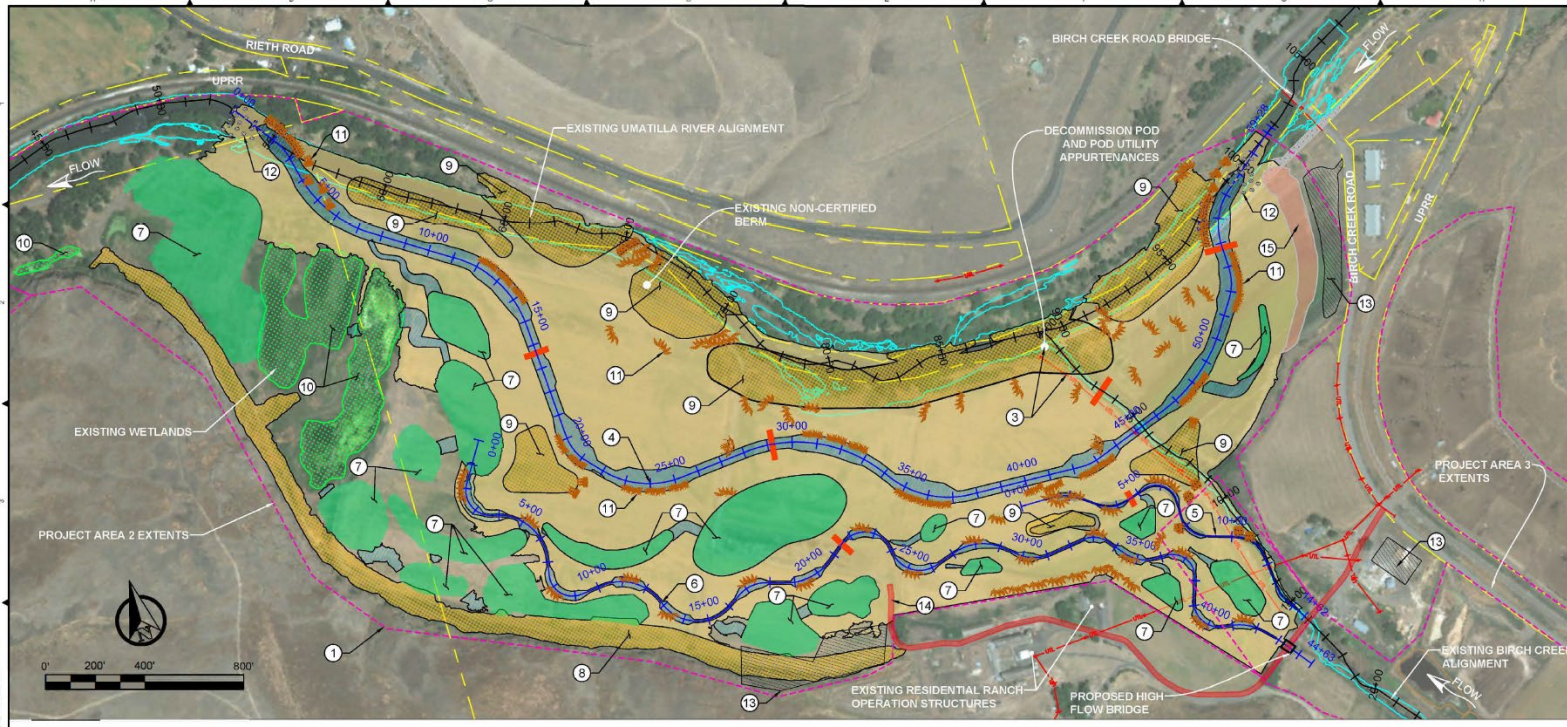
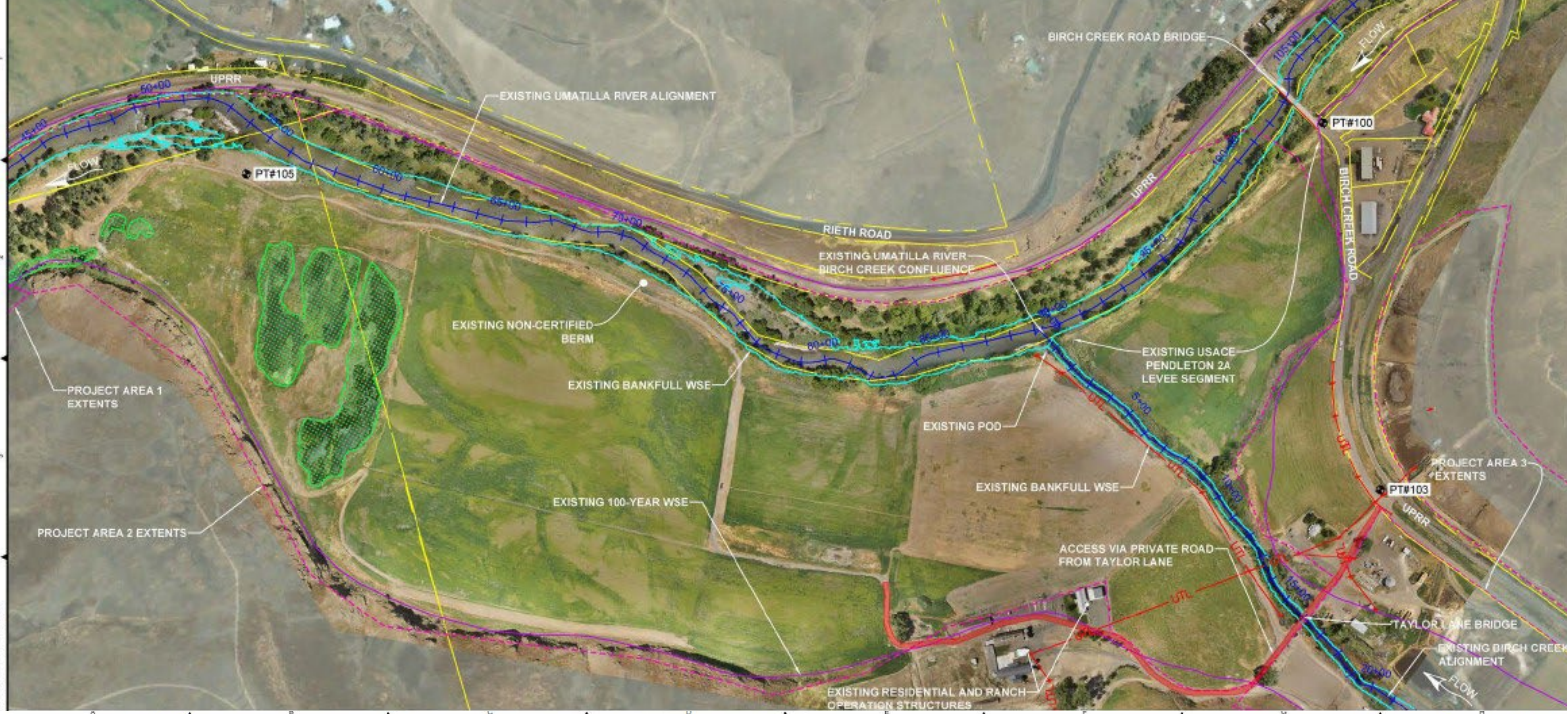
Birch Creek

- Legend**
- UmaBirch_RiparianManagementZones
 - UmaBirch_CE_tax_lots
 - UMATT_WL_14_CE_BDY
 - UmaBirch_BuildingEnvelope_0582024

UmaBirch Floodplain Restoration Project

Umatilla River – Birch Creek (UmaBirch) Confluence Conservation Easement

- 950 acre Conservation Easement
- 3.5 cfs water rights transfer converted to instream flow
- Total of 3.2 river miles of floodplain and habitat restoration

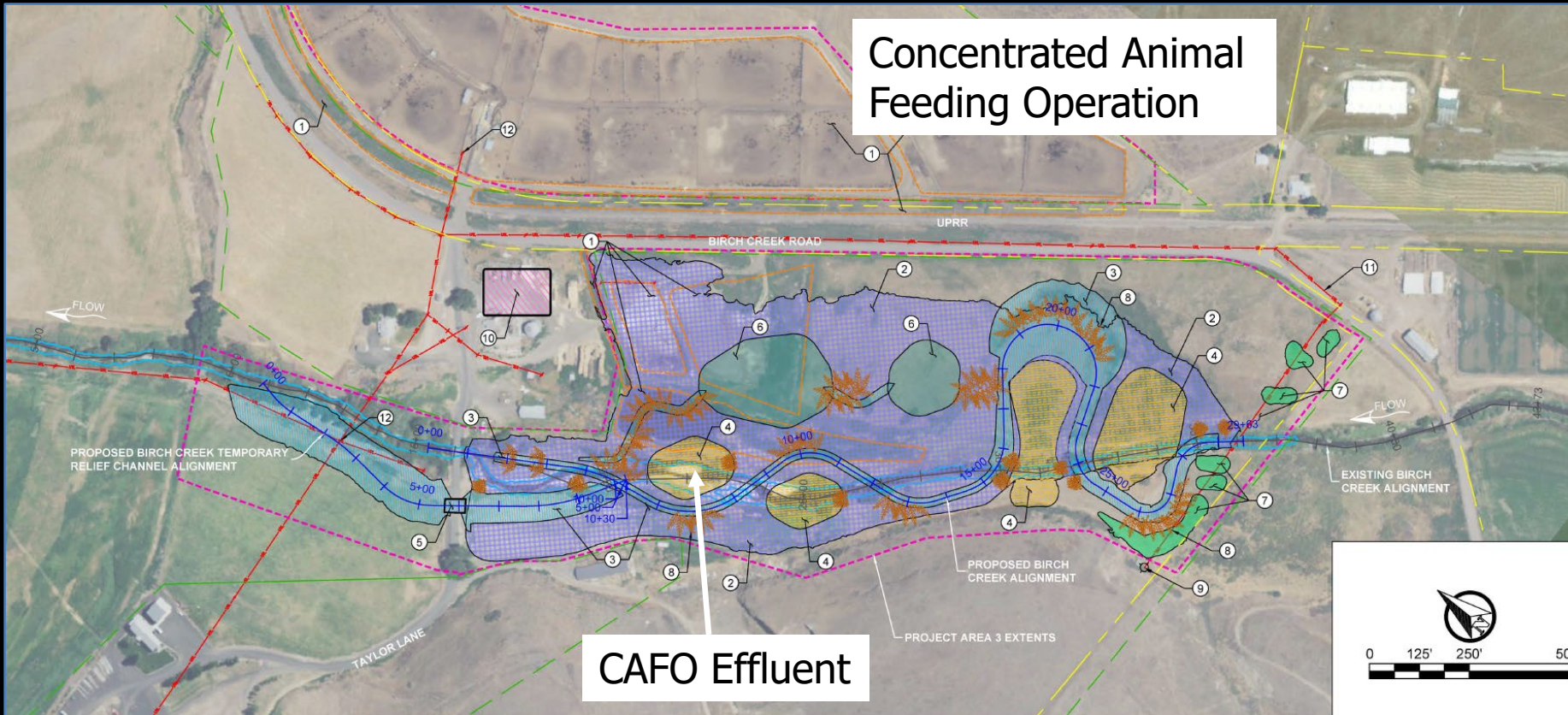


UmaBirch Project Area 1-2 Design

- 1.9 RM
- 205 acres
- Army Corps Levee Setback
- Removal of Irrigation Infrastructure and Electrical
- Implementation 2025-2027

Proposed Conditions Overview 90%

UmaBirch Floodplain Restoration (Project Area 3)



- 0.4 RM
- 63 acres
- Decommissioning of CAFO (Feedlot 26 acres)
- Secondary High Flow Bridge
- Implementation 2025-2026

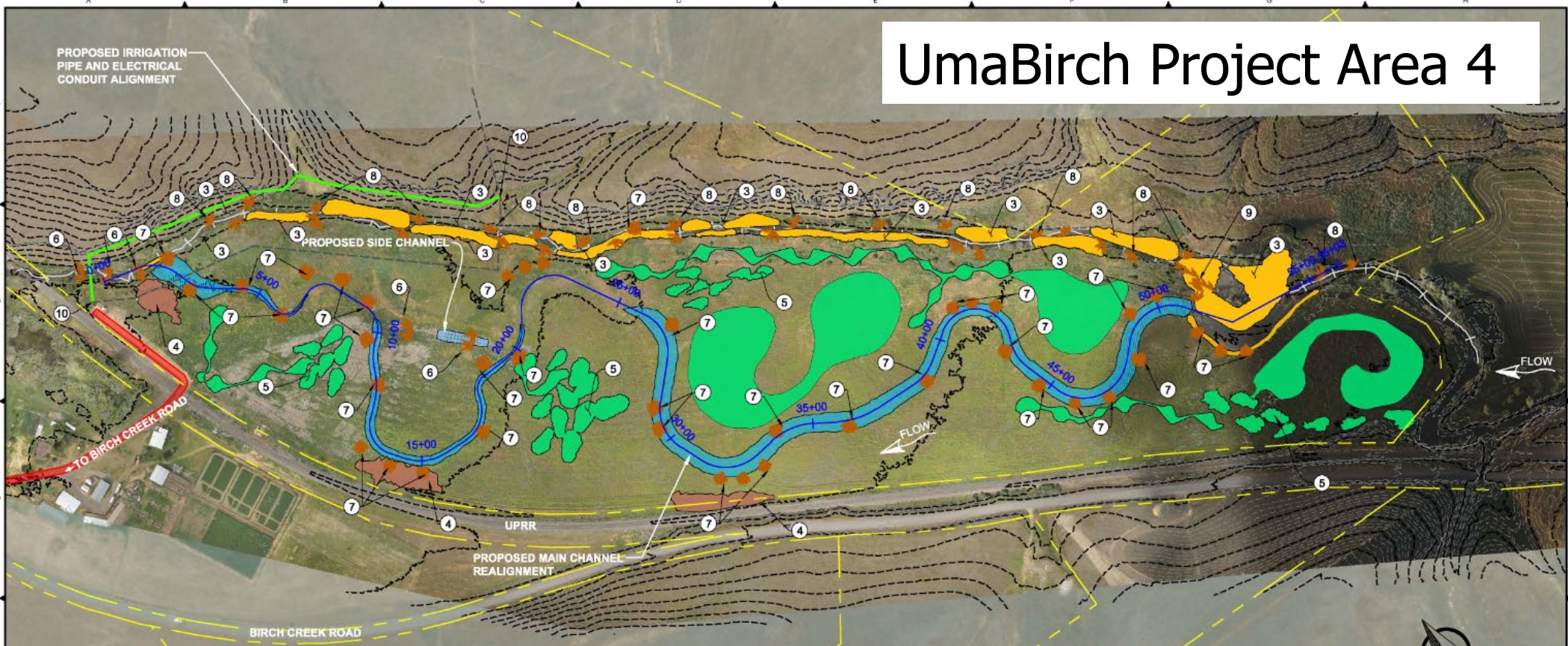
NOTES:

1. CAFO DECOMMISSIONING LIMITS. SEE SHEETS C-311 AND C-312 FOR DETAILS.
2. PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN BENCHING. SEE SHEETS C-321 THROUGH C-324 FOR DETAILS.
3. PROPOSED BIRCH CREEK CHANNEL. SEE SHEETS C-331 THROUGH C-334 FOR DETAILS.
4. PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN TERRACE. SEE SHEETS C-341 AND C-342 FOR DETAILS.
5. INSTALL FISH PASSABLE FLOODPLAIN RELIEF BRIDGE. SEE SHEETS C-351 THROUGH C-353 FOR DETAILS.
6. PROPOSED PONDS. SEE SHEETS C-361 AND C-362 FOR DETAILS.
7. PROPOSED PRAIRIE POTHOLE SECTION SEE SHEETS C-363 AND C-364 FOR DETAILS.
8. PROPOSED LARGE WOODY MATERIAL. SEE SHEETS C-381 THROUGH C-383 FOR DETAILS.
9. EXISTING IRRIGATION WELL TO BE PROTECTED AND PRESERVED.
10. PROPOSED STAGING AREA.
11. LOCATIONS OF UTILITIES ARE APPROXIMATE. CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY LOCATION OF ALL UTILITIES PRIOR TO PROJECT WORK.
12. OVERHEAD POWER POLE AND UTILITY TO BE RELOCATED BY OTHERS PRIOR TO PROJECT WORK. COORDINATE WITH CTUIR FOR UTILITY REMOVAL AND RELOCATION.

LEGEND

- EXISTING CHANNEL ALIGNMENT
- EXISTING PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OHW
- ⊕ EXISTING IRRIGATION WELL
- PROPOSED LARGE WOODY MATERIAL (LWM)
- PROPOSED ALIGNMENT
- PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY
- CONSERVATION EASEMENT BOUNDARY
- EXISTING UTILITIES
- ▨ PROPOSED STAGING AREA
- ▨ PROPOSED CAFO REMOVAL AREA
- ▨ PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN BENCHING
- ▨ PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN TERRACE
- ▨ PROPOSED BIRCH CREEK CHANNEL
- ▨ PROPOSED PRAIRIE POTHOLE
- ▨ PROPOSED POND

UmaBirch Project Area 4



Metric	Birch Creek Project Area 4	
	Pre-Project	Post
Primary Channel Length	3,860	4,700
Secondary Channel Length	492	2,000
Sinuosity	1.08	1.4
Floodplain inundated at 2-year flow	5%	30%
Pools / mile	4	25
LWM Pieces / mile	0	976

LEGEND

- EXISTING 2-FOOT CONTOUR
- EXISTING 10-FOOT CONTOUR
- EXISTING IRRIGATION PIPE
- CHANNEL ALIGNMENT
- EXISTING ACCESS ROAD
- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED IRRIGATION PIPE ALIGNMENT
- LARGE WOODY DEBRIS (LWD)
- PROPOSED ALIGNMENT
- PROPOSED CHANNEL REALIGNMENT
- PROPOSED CHANNEL FILL
- PROPOSED TERRACE
- PROPOSED SIDE CHANNELS
- PROPOSED WETLAND AREAS
- PROPOSED ALCOVE

PLAN SHEET SIZE ANSI B (11" X 17")	DRW	ENG	CH-K	APP
REVISION DESCRIPTION				
30% DESIGN	JB	JA	CM	CJ
15% ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS	JA	JA	CM	CJ

CTUIR
UMABIRCH ENHANCEMENT DESIGN
PROJECT AREA 4

**PROPOSED
CONDITIONS**

DWG. NO.:	C-402
CREATED:	9/10/19

Z:\PROJECTS\1817\UMABIRCH\IN-STREAM DESIGN\NFA & SHEET FILES\MOL\PROPOSED CONDITIONS_I.DWG

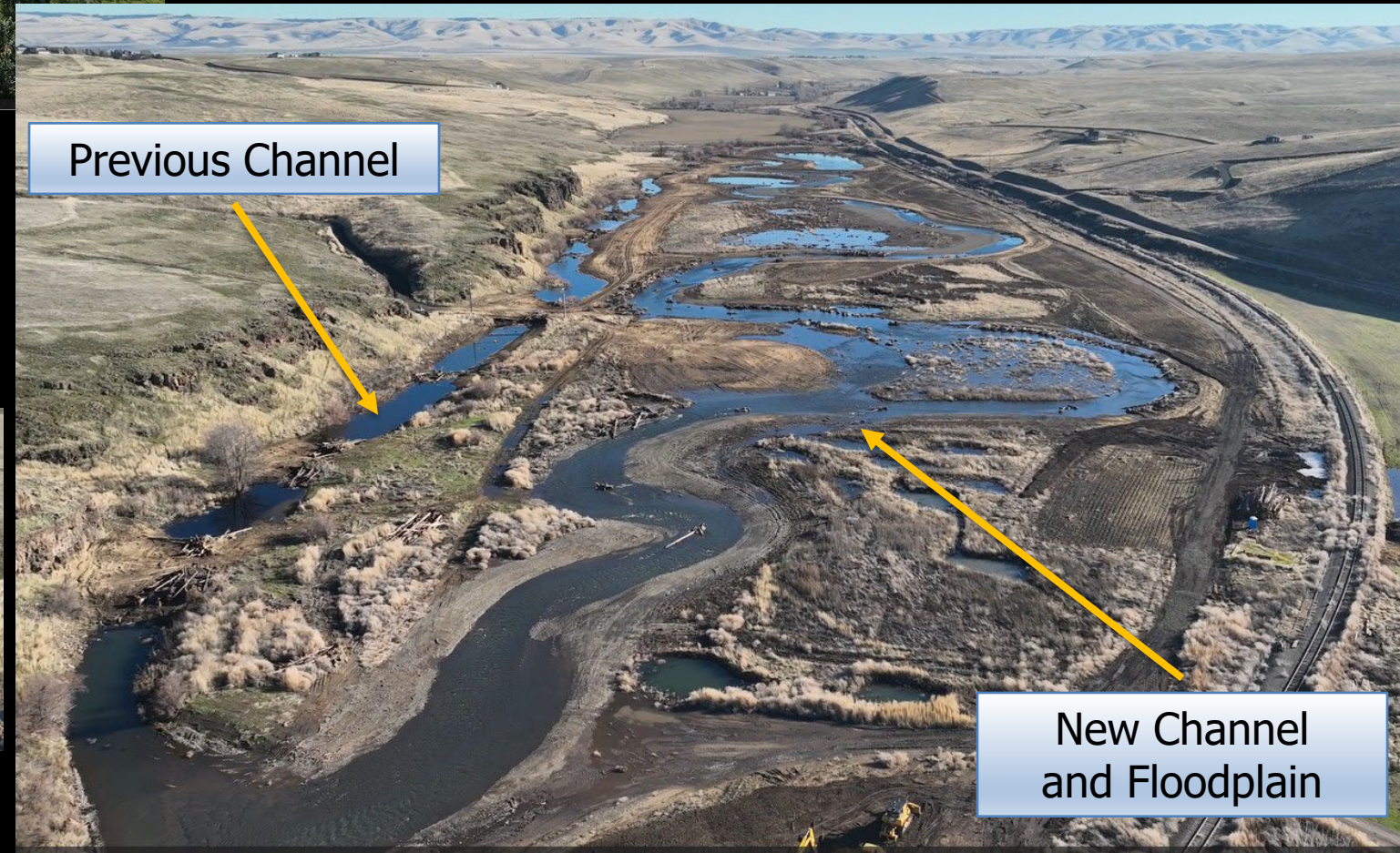


UmaBirch Project Area 4

Post-construction (Jan 2025)
(looking upstream)

Pre-Project (looking upstream)

Downstream Viewpoint



Previous Channel

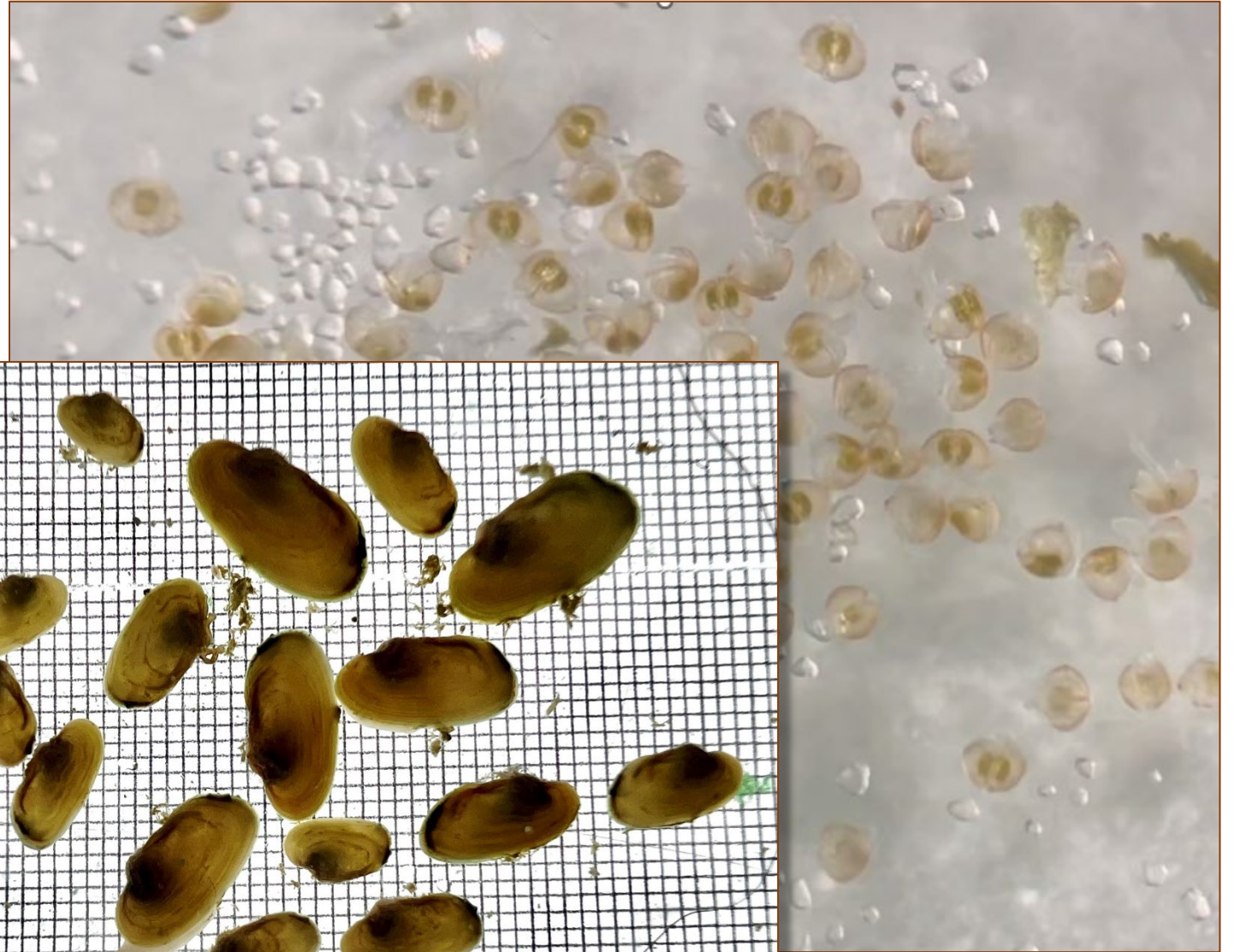
New Channel and Floodplain

A photograph of a calm body of water, likely a stream or pond, with a large log and branches floating across the top. The water is dark blue and reflects the sky and the surrounding vegetation. In the foreground, there are several tall, thin, dry grasses or reeds. The text "UmaBirch Project Area 4" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

UmaBirch Project Area 4

Freshwater Mussel Propagation

July 16
Newly transformed
Avg. length = 0.16 mm



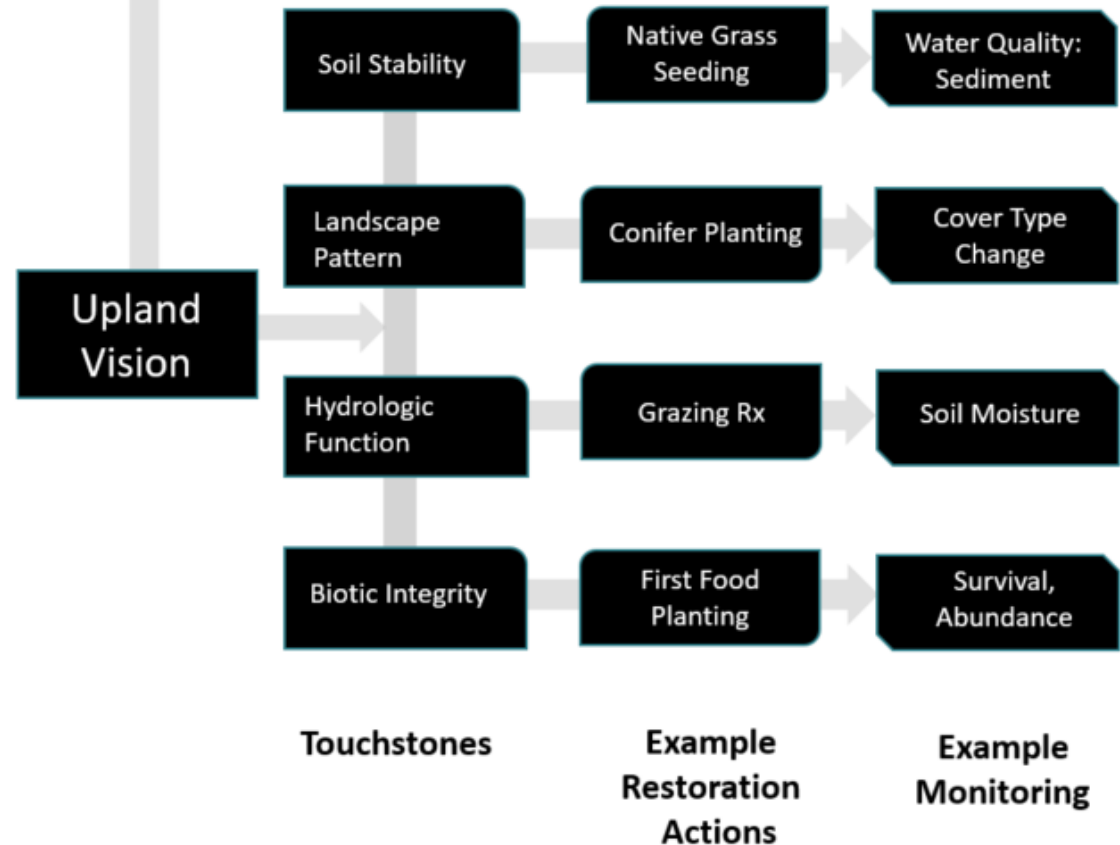
Oct 24
14 weeks post transformation
Avg. length = 8.9 mm



Upland Vision



Serving Order



Commercial Thinning



Thinning Beetle Killed Trees

Post-Project

Pre-Commercial Thinning



Fuels Management



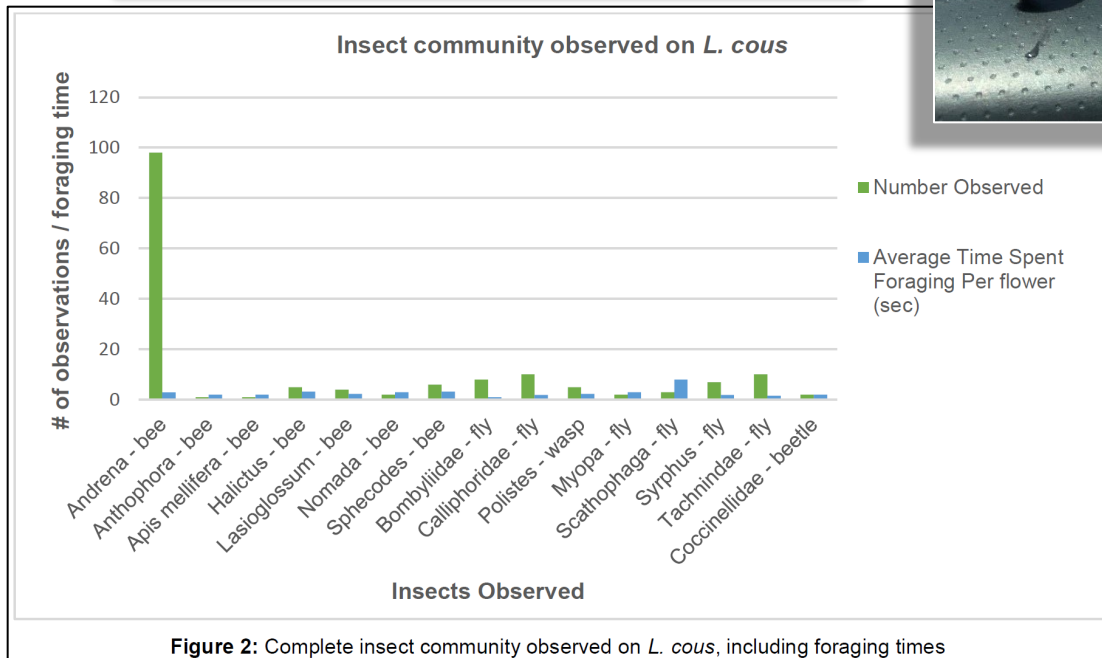
Commercial: Broadcast



Pre-commercial



First Foods Pollinator Ecology



First Foods Pollinator Ecology

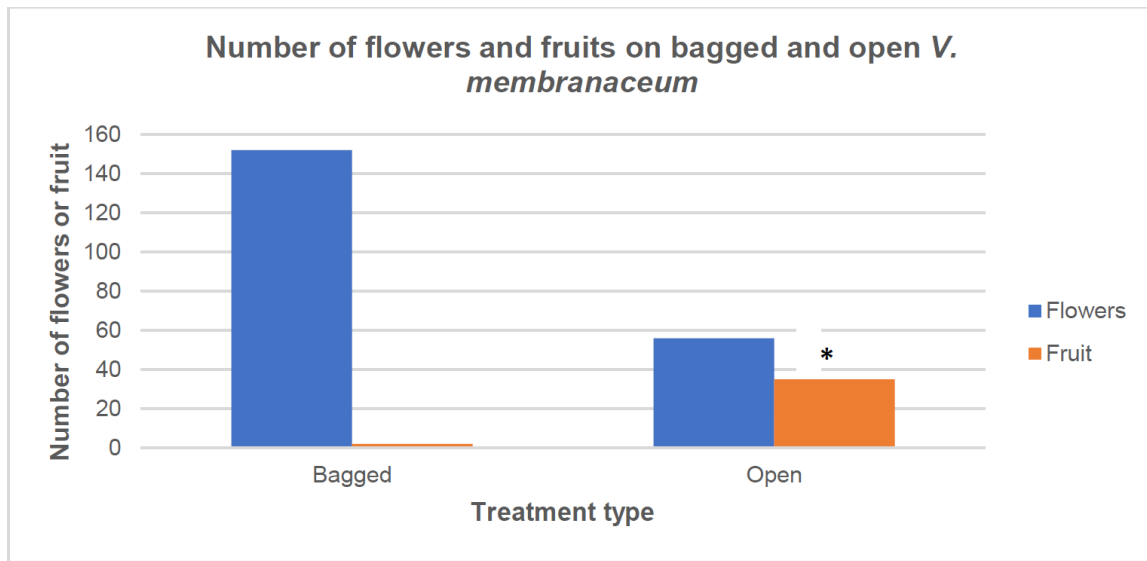
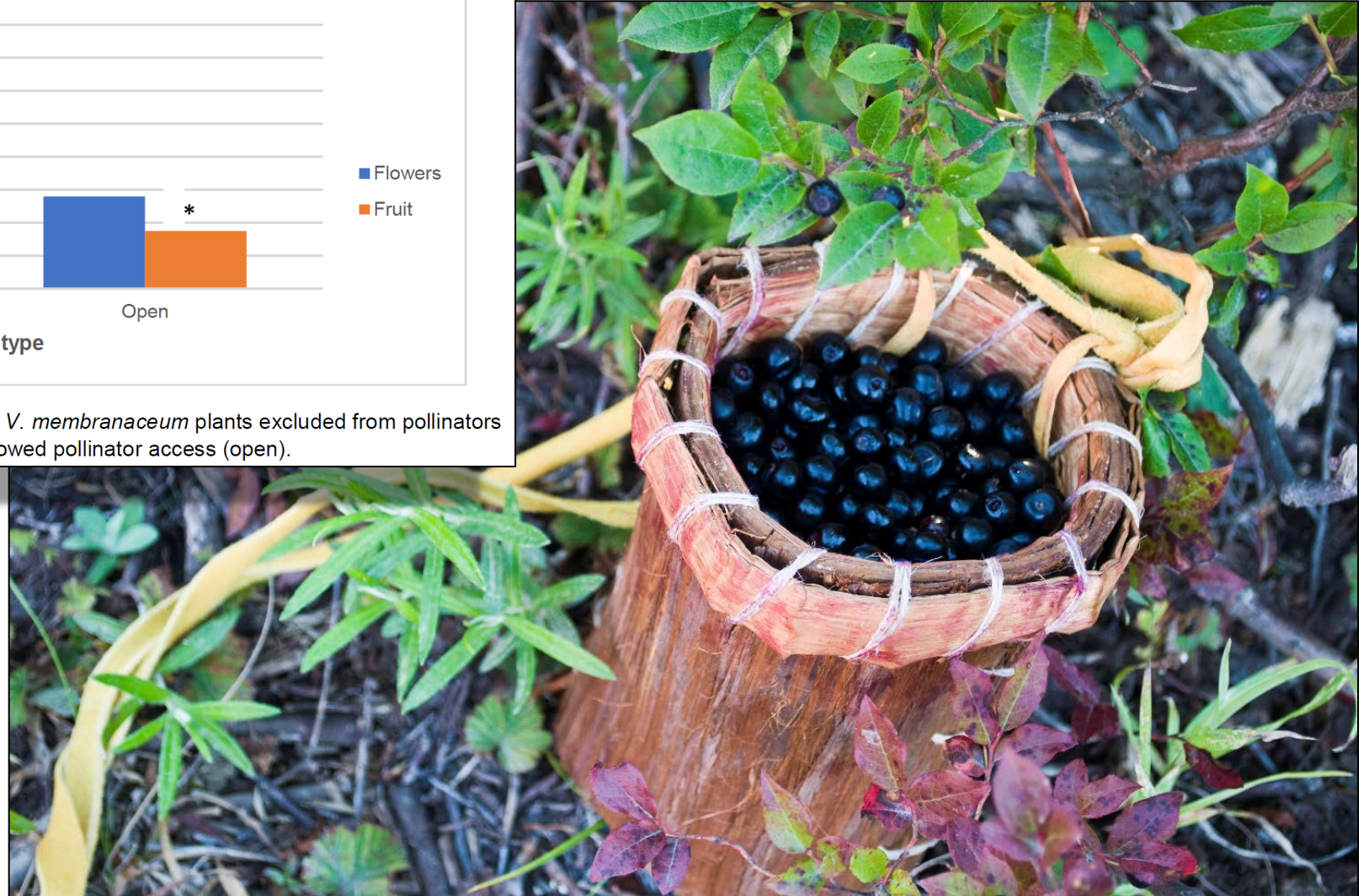


Figure 3: All flowers counted versus fruits produced on *V. membranaceum* plants excluded from pollinators (bagged), and those that were allowed pollinator access (open).



Huckleberry Phenology




Next:

Climate Variability

River Vision Update

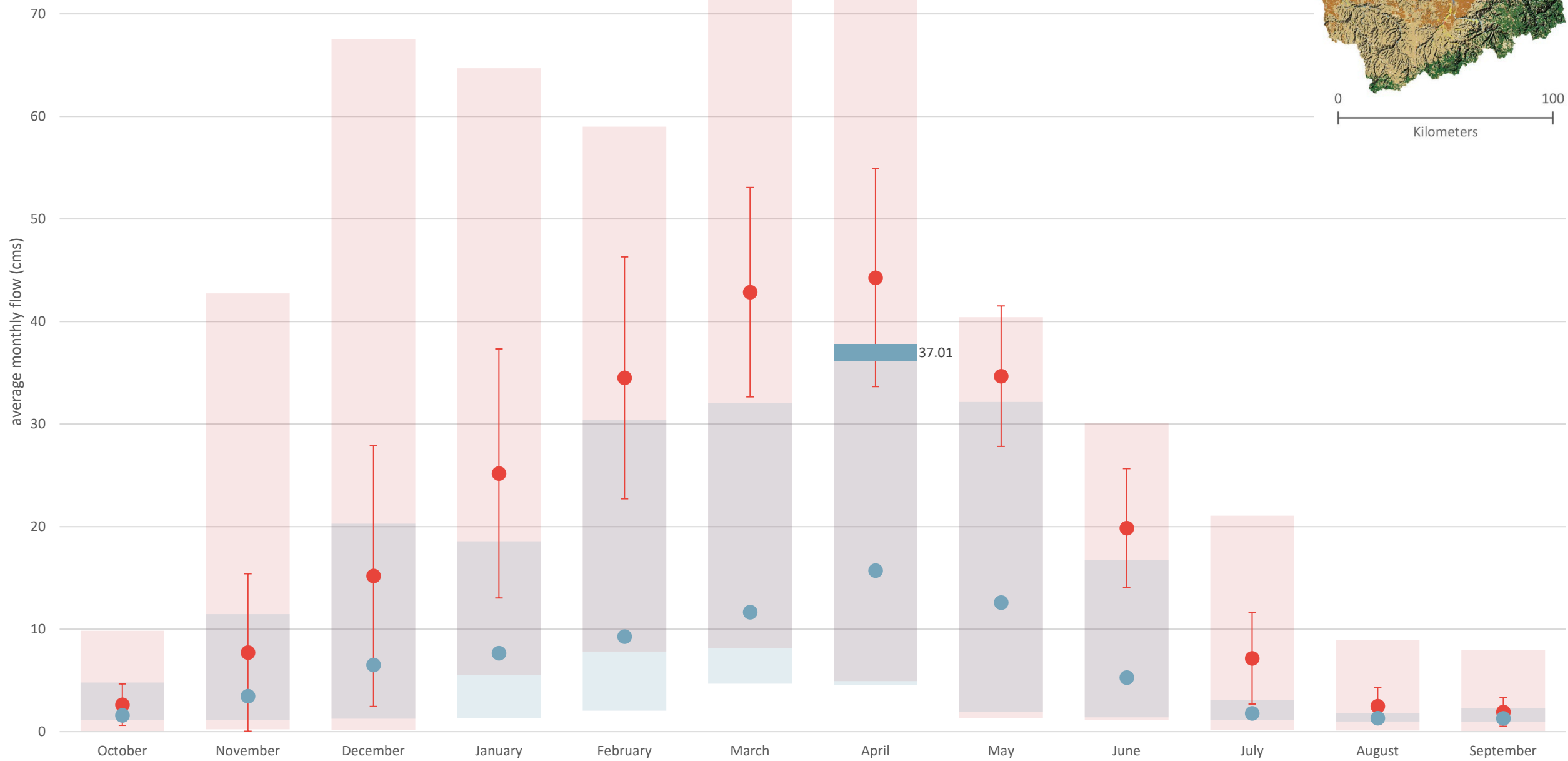
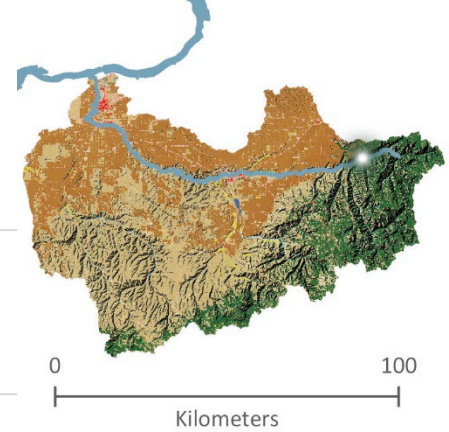
First Foods Policy



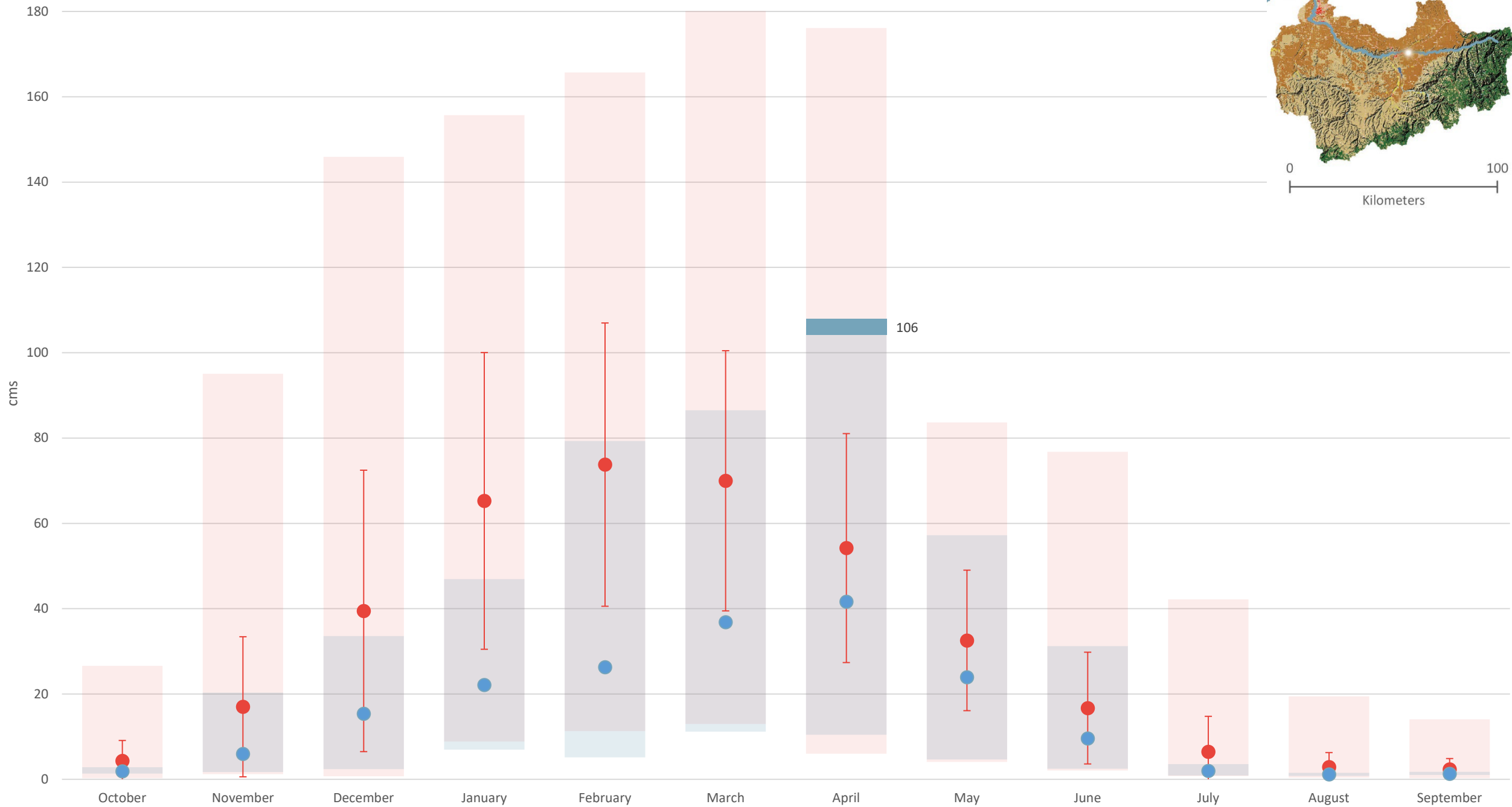
Future Flows for the Upper Umatilla River

Scott O'Daniel, & Bethy Rogers-Pachico, CTUIR GIS Program

Gibbon



West Reservation Boundary



Conclusions

Increased flow variability is predicted for the Upper Umatilla River

- As the form of precipitation changes from snow to rain, the Umatilla River will likely receive higher winter flows.
- Regional scale climate patterns, atmospheric rivers, will likely increase in frequency and intensity toward the end of the century.

Patterns of predicted stream flow, for the Upper Umatilla River, are consistent with regional forecasts

- Like other Mid-Columbia Rivers the Umatilla will likely have increased flow variability – higher highs and lower lows.
- Implications for native fish and aquatic animals will likely be widespread

Considerations for next steps

Floodplains are distinct landscapes and should be managed appropriately

- Floodplains are largely self maintaining and among the most diverse habitats on the planet (Tockner, Stanford et al. 2006)
- Broad guidance for floodplain management is outlined in the CTUIR River Vision, Floodplains by Design and ASFM (Association of State Floodplain Managers)

Next:

River Vision Update

1. "Access" added as sixth Touchstone. Different from, complimentary to, Treaty Rights.

2. Updated literature review reaffirms Touchstones.

3. Explicitly identifies broader area of applicability.

4. Undergoing peer review process.

The integration of external authors and science reviews strengthens our work proposals while maintaining integrity with our First Foods Mission.

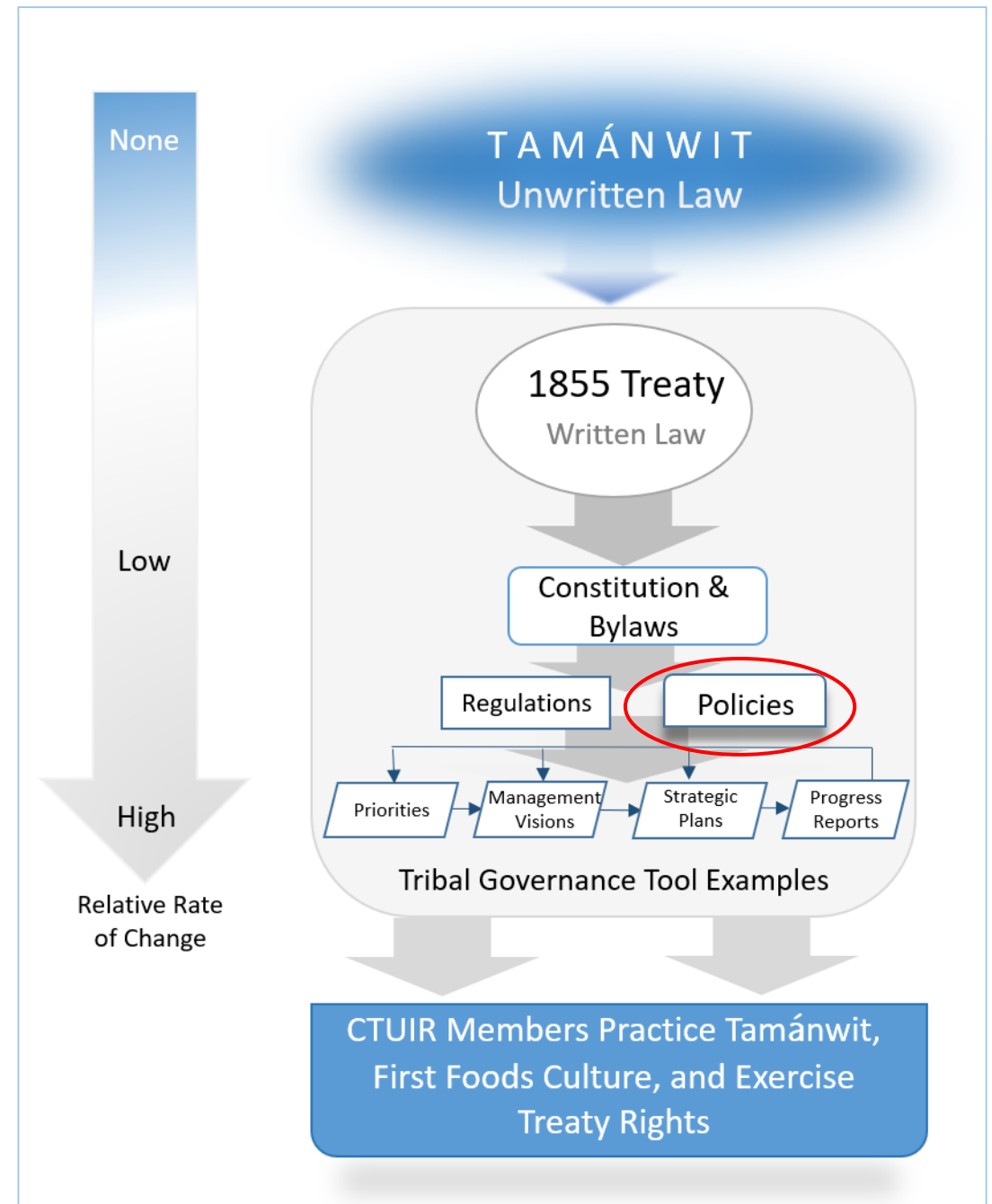


First Foods Policy



Adopted 11.24.26, BOT Resolution #25-090
About 30 pages long, 10 Sections

- Introduction
- Purpose & Need
- Threats & Impacts to First Foods
- Threats to CTUIR Members from First Foods Losses
- Challenges & Opportunities
- Goals
- Key Guiding Principles
- Areas of Applicability
- Time Period of Applicability - 10 years
- Policy Statements
- Appendix A - Additional CTUIR Information Resources
- Appendix B - Authors, Contributors, Reviewers



First Foods Policy



Goal Examples

Assist in protection & restoration of First Foods and others for CTUIR member and community use to promote physical, mental, nutritional, cultural, and spiritual health.

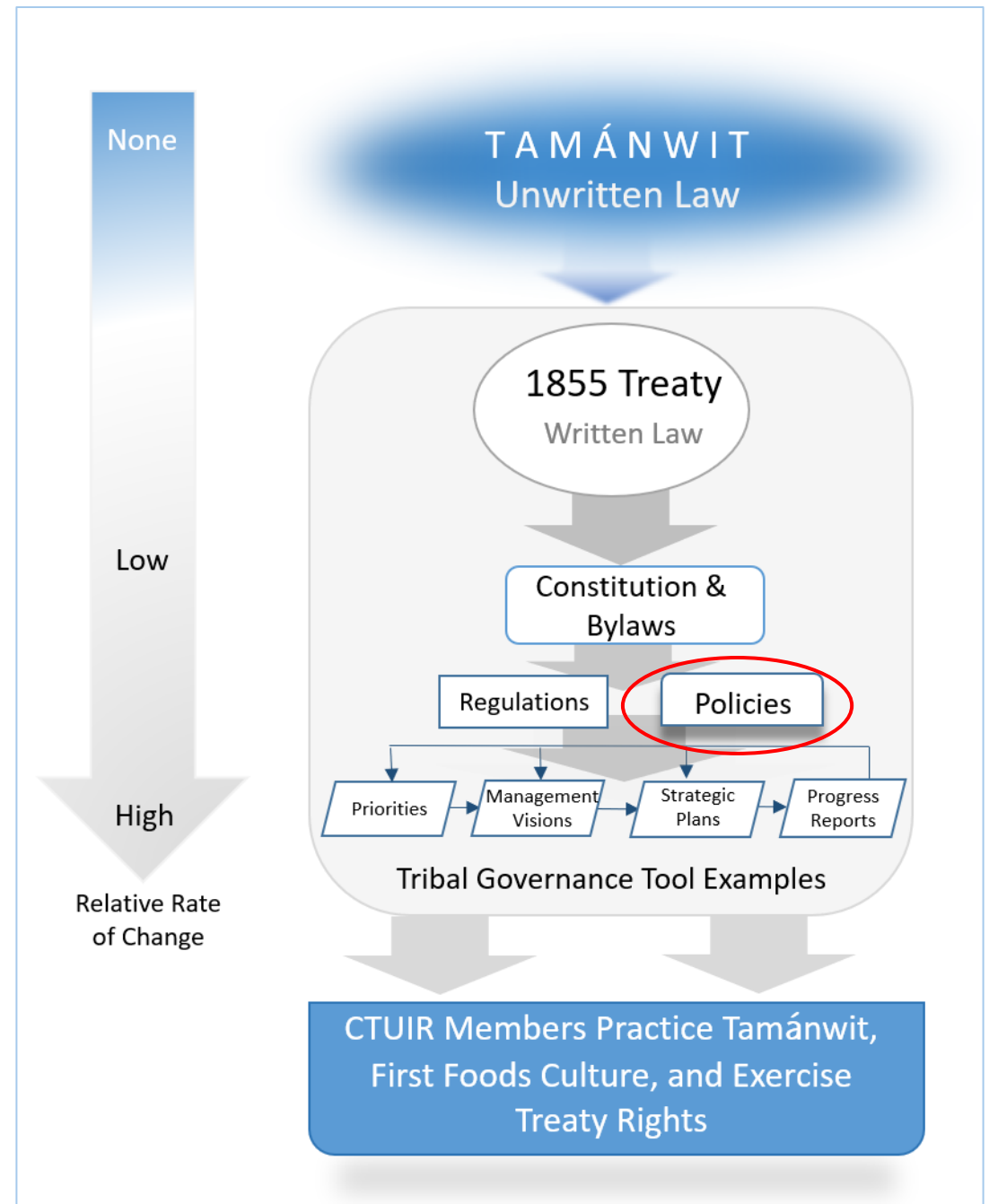
Contribute to long-term resilience of the CTUIR & Tribal Community.

Increase consideration for First Foods in decision making processes.

Principles Examples

Reciprocity.

The health of the people and the First Foods depend on the healthy of the air, water, and land.



First Foods Policy

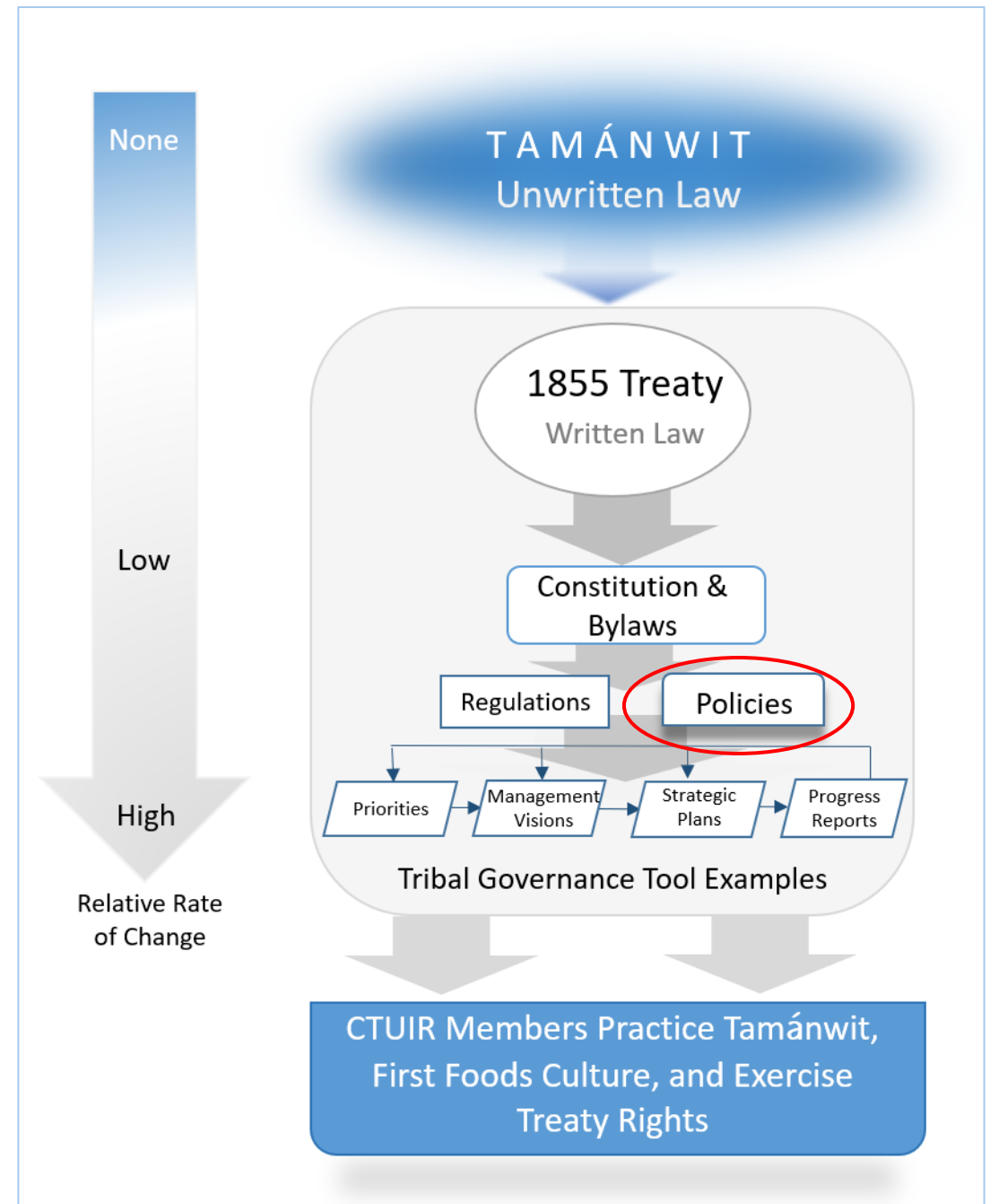


Policy Statements

Organized around those that apply to all First Foods, then through each of the Foods, then "Materials and Medicines."

Brings forward modernized Salmon Policy statements, Salmon Policy rescinded.

Policy statements are broad and intended to be applicable to, and useful to, other organizational units.



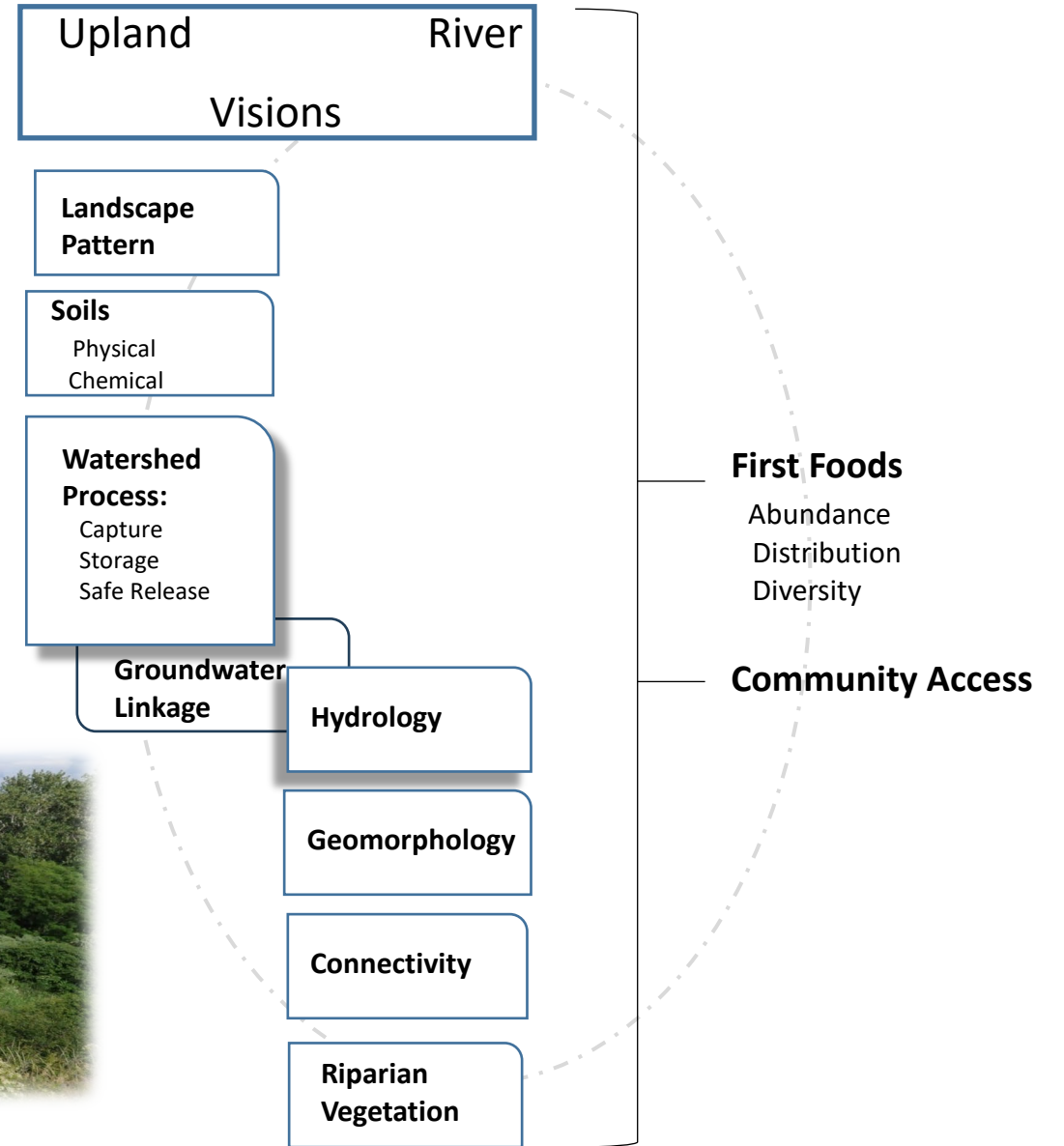
Management Visions



Upland



River



Acknowledgements

CTUIR Community Members

Peter Quaempts

Louie and Marie “Butch” Dick

Rooney and Janie Pond

Steve and Rose Sohappy

River Vision Authors:

Scott O’Daniel, CTUIR Research Geographer

Dr. Krista Jones, USGS

Dr. Geoff Poole, Montana State University

Dr. Tim Beechie, NOAA

CTUIR GIS Program

Bethy Rogers-Pachio, Stacy Schumacher

Jim Webster, Hydrologist



THANK YOU