

Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Thursday, May 3, 2018 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Benton PUD Auditorium, 250 N Gap Rd, Prosser, WA 99350

Notes

Attending:

ADVISORY MEMBERS: Mike Estes, Dick Jacobson, Tom Elliott (for Dave Blodgett), Betsy Crysel, Vic Reeve, Craig Adams

WDFW Staff: Ross Huffman, *Region 3 Lands Operations Manager*; Phillip Buser, *Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Manager*; Pat Kaelber, *Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager*; Patricia Jatczak, *Wildlife Area Planner*

Welcome & Introductions

Ross kicked off the meeting in a pleasant breeze outside while we waited to get in the building with welcomes and introductions. Staff will make sure to be ready for you next time!

Advisory Committee Roles & Responsibilities

Patricia went over the roles and responsibilities of the Wildlife Area Advisory Committee. Committee members brought up questions of alternates and attendance at meetings. WDFW staff will address these issues in subsequent communications. Members were asked to review the charter and send comments to WDFW.

Wildlife Area Planning Process

Patricia went over the Wildlife Area planning process and Advisory Committee input.

Overview of the Wildlife Area

Phillip provided an overview of the Wildlife Area so that members could be informed about all of the units and some of the concerns that will be addressed in the plan.

A few notes on some of the units:

- Clark Pond has milkweed plants and butterfly surveys have been conducted there.
- On Nipper, there is an on-going issue with beavers.
- Esquatzel Coulee is cooperatively managed, and there are some access issues.
- Glover is surrounded by private property, but there is an easement on a private driveway.

- The Sunnyside HQ unit is a hot spot for waterfowl. Up to 90% of it can be flooded at times. It displays 1000 years of river history. Giffen Lake is no longer a fishing spot as it hasn't been stocked in many years.
- I-82 Ponds unit gained two new parcels in the last year, Grow and McDonald.

Other topics that came up during discussion included biological control for whitetop (underway); that we need to be aware of culturally used plants on the wildlife area (sensitive topic); and need to continue coordination with county and tribes on purple loosestrife. Members noted some errors on the website, which staff will correct.

Review proposed work at I-82 Unit - Ponds 4&5

Ross gave a brief summary of work submitted for an RCO (Recreation and Conservation Office) grant to re-connect Pond 5 to the Yakima River and protect Pond 4.

Review Ag Leases on Wildlife Area

Topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Next Steps

WDFW will send out electronic version of the charter and advisory handbook, as well as timeline for the plan.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area!

Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area



Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

May 3, 2018

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome & Introductions
- ❖ Agency Mission & Goals
- ❖ Advisory Committee Roles
- ❖ Wildlife Area Planning Process
- ❖ Overview of the Wildlife Area
- ❖ Preliminary Issues
- ❖ Discussion & Comments



WDFW Mission

*Preserve, protect and perpetuate
fish, wildlife and ecosystems
while providing sustainable fish and wildlife
recreational and commercial opportunities*



Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Role

The role of the advisory committee is to bring the perspectives of the public and other stakeholders in the WDFW wildlife area planning and management activities.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

Responsibilities

- Attend WAAC meetings
- Provide input during plan development & updates
- Represent interests of stakeholders
- Understand WDFW mission & plan goals
- Act in an advisory capacity
- Work in a collaborative manner
- Sign up as a volunteer

Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area

Advisory Committee Meetings

During Planning Process

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Introduction, review issues | May 2018 |
| 2. Review goals & objectives | Sept 2018 |
| 3. Review draft plan | January 2019 |

After plan, twice per year or as appropriate

Purpose of the Plan

- Sets vision for 8-10 years
- Provides opportunities for engagement
- Guides activities on the WLA
- Ensures lands are managed consistent with mission and funding obligations
- Identifies priority actions and plans
- Integrates Agency priorities

Wildlife Area Planning Process

Phase 1

- Scoping

Phase 2

- Goals & Objectives

Phase 3

- Draft Plan

WLA Planning Process

Scoping – Phase I

Internal Scoping Meeting

WAAC Meeting

Public Meeting

- Present statewide framework and goals
- Share resource info
- Identify preliminary issues & priorities
- Collect public input

Public Outreach Strategy

- Interested parties list
- Fact sheet, announcements
- Web site, email
- Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meetings
- Public meetings
- SEPA



The Plan

January 2018

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan



Washington
Department of
FISH and
WILDLIFE

Key Issues & Plan Priorities



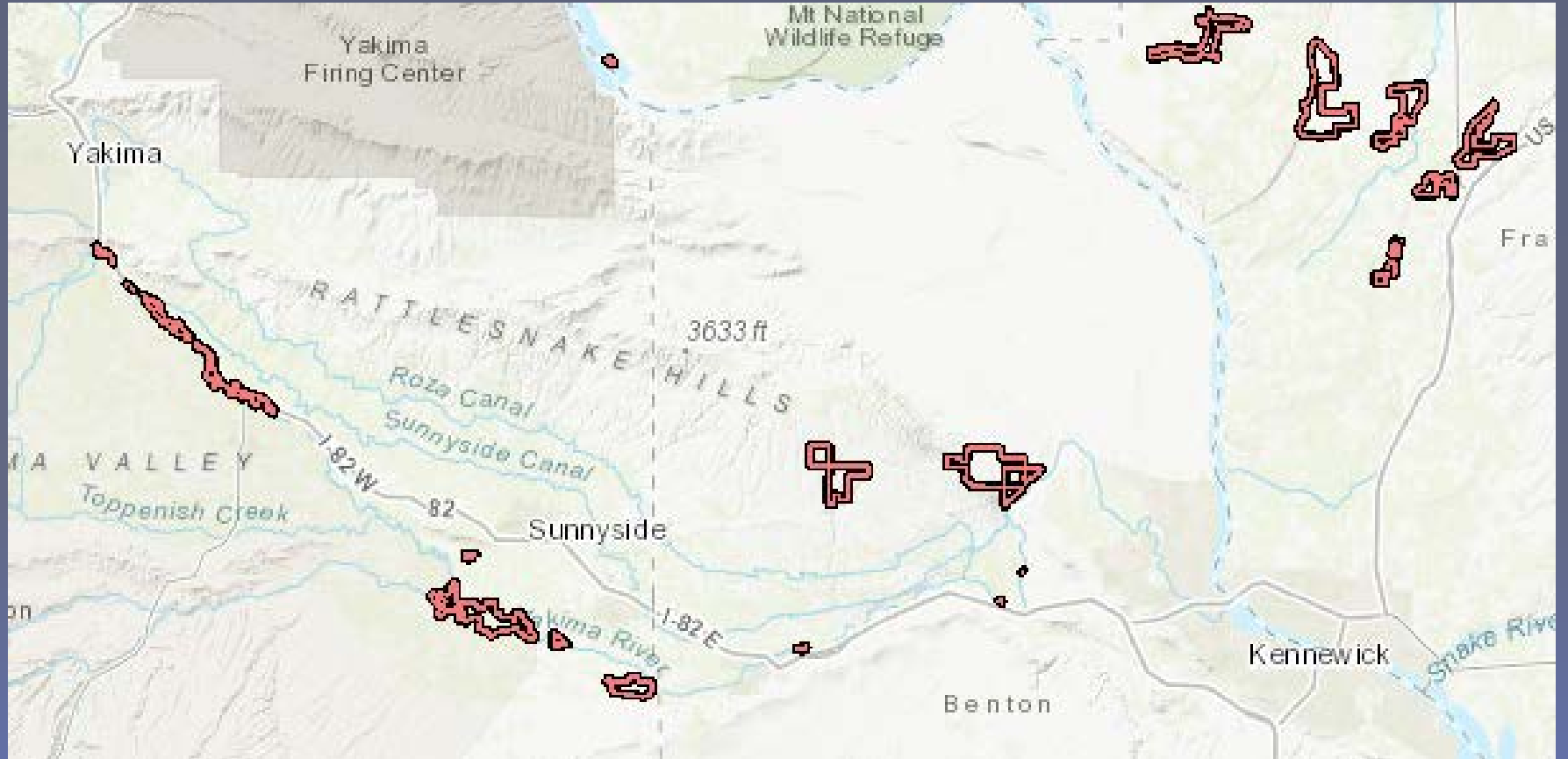
Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area



**Wildlife Area Advisory Committee
Initial Meeting**

May 4, 2018 – Prosser

Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area



Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch

Overview

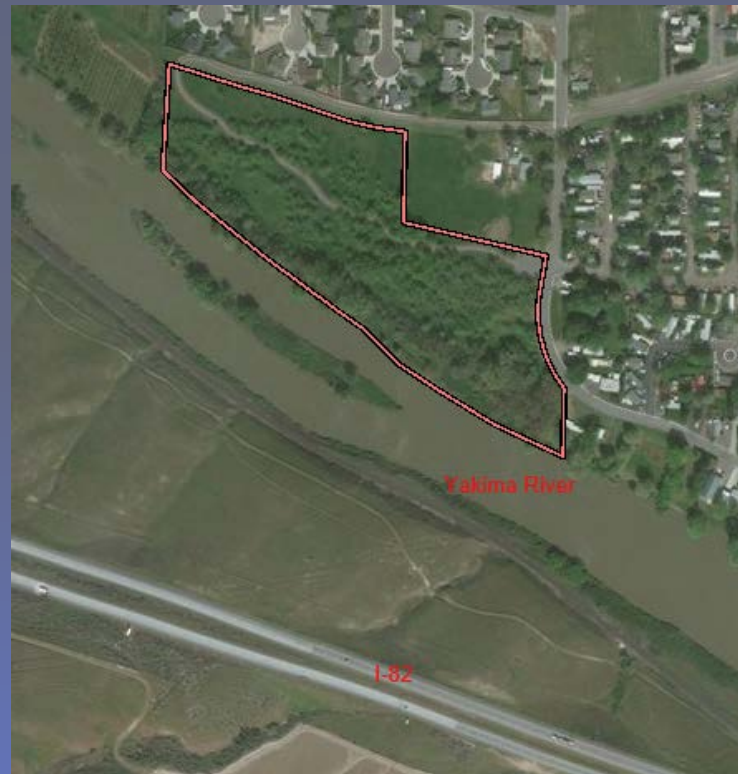
- 3,897 acres in Franklin County
- Privately owned ranch.
- WDFW has a perpetual easement to allow public hunting.
- Easement allows for coordinated management efforts.



Benton City

Overview

- 15.5 acres in Benton County
- Fish Access Site on the Yakima River
- Routine maintenance provided by Benton City



Byron

Overview

- 1,031 acres in Yakima County
- Wetlands and ponds interspersed in dry upland grasslands
- Two Closures – Byron Reserve and a seasonal closure
- Coordinate with the City of Grandview



Byron



Clark Pond / Hope Valley / Nipper



Clark Pond

Overview

- 286 acres in Franklin County
- Bureau of Reclamation property
- Water quality is an issue



Hope Valley

Overview

- 160 acres in Franklin County
- Upland Grassland and Shrub-steppe
- Pheasant release site



Nipper

Overview

- 60 acres in Franklin County
- Adjacent to Clark Pond



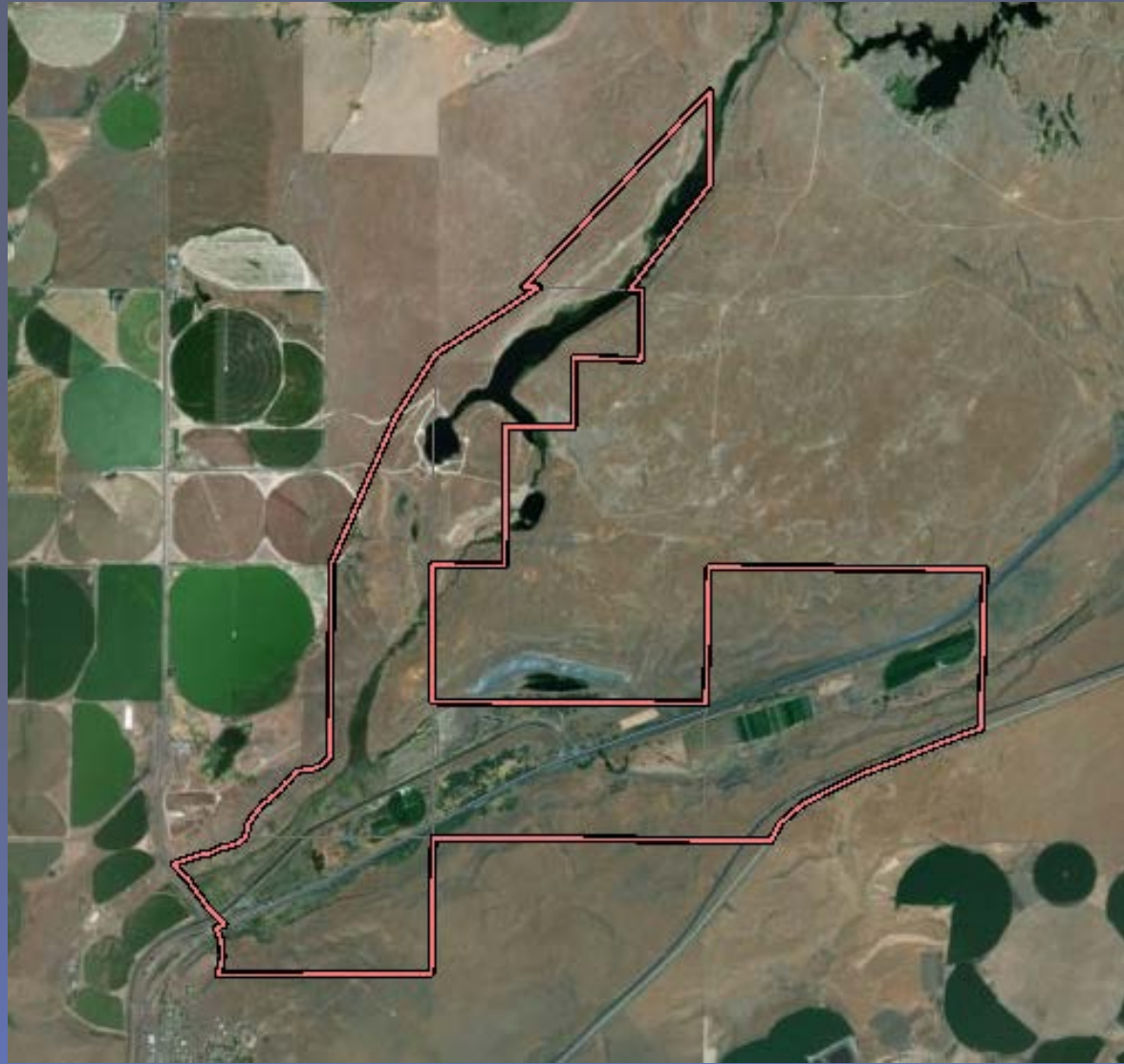
Esquatzel Coulee

Overview

- 1,785 acres in Franklin County
- Bureau of Reclamation property
- Cooperative management with SCB Irrigation District and Pheasants Forever



Esquatzel Coulee



Glover

Overview

- 50 acres in Yakima County
- Landlocked by private property
- Purchased under RCO grant



Headquarters

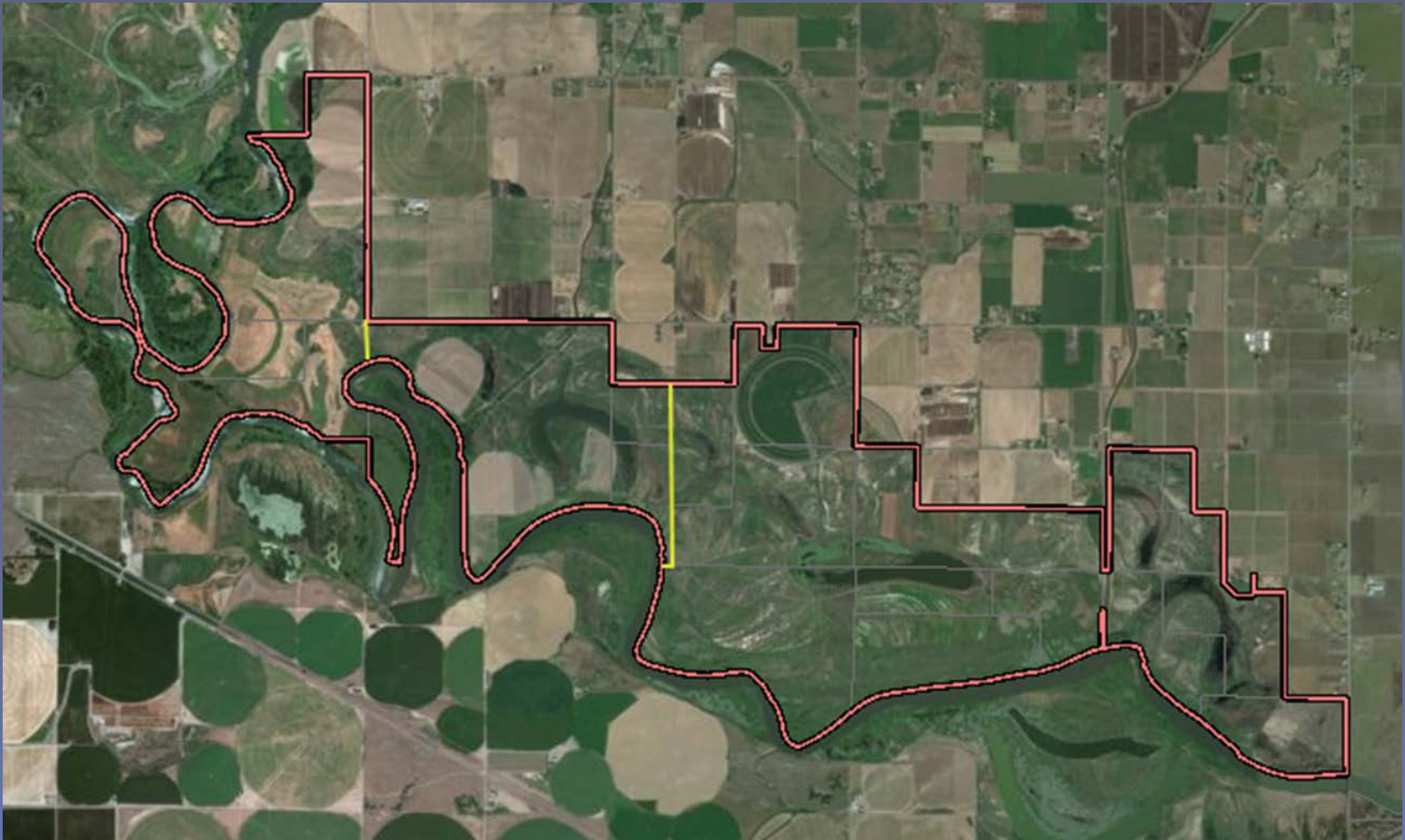
Overview

- 2,786 acres in Yakima County
- 13 miles of Yakima River access
- Wetlands, Lakes, Riparian Corridor, Upland Grasslands and Shrub-Steppe



Headquarters

- BPA funded for mitigation credits
- Snipes Reserve for wildlife refuge



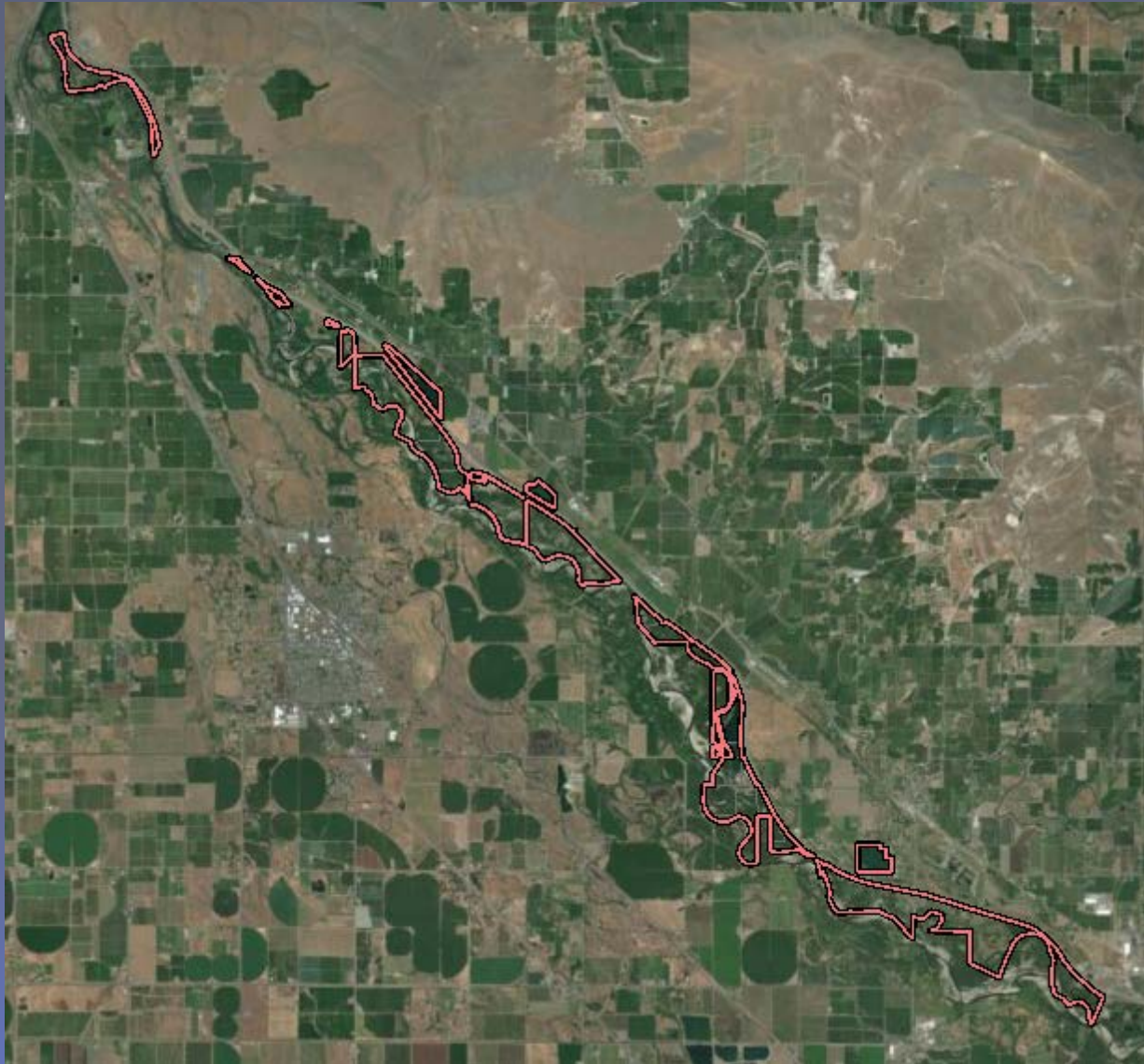
I-82 Ponds

Overview

- 980 acres in Yakima County
- 17 parcels along the Yakima River
- Fishing access to the Yakima River and borrow ponds from I-82 construction



I-82 Ponds



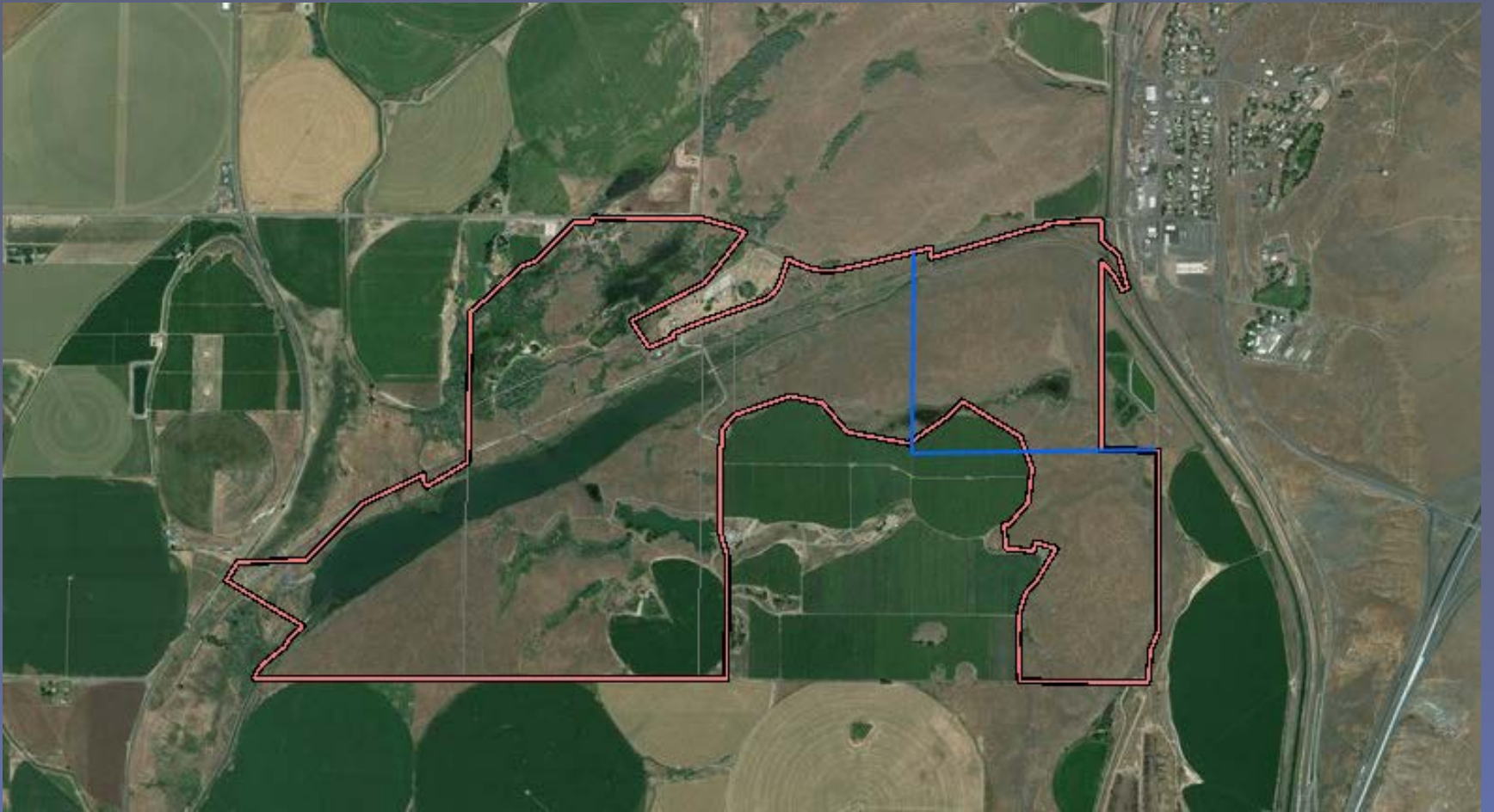
Mesa Lake

Overview

- 720 acres in Franklin County
- Mesa Lake, Wetlands and Upland Grasslands
- Purchased in 2010 from a private hunting club



Mesa Lake



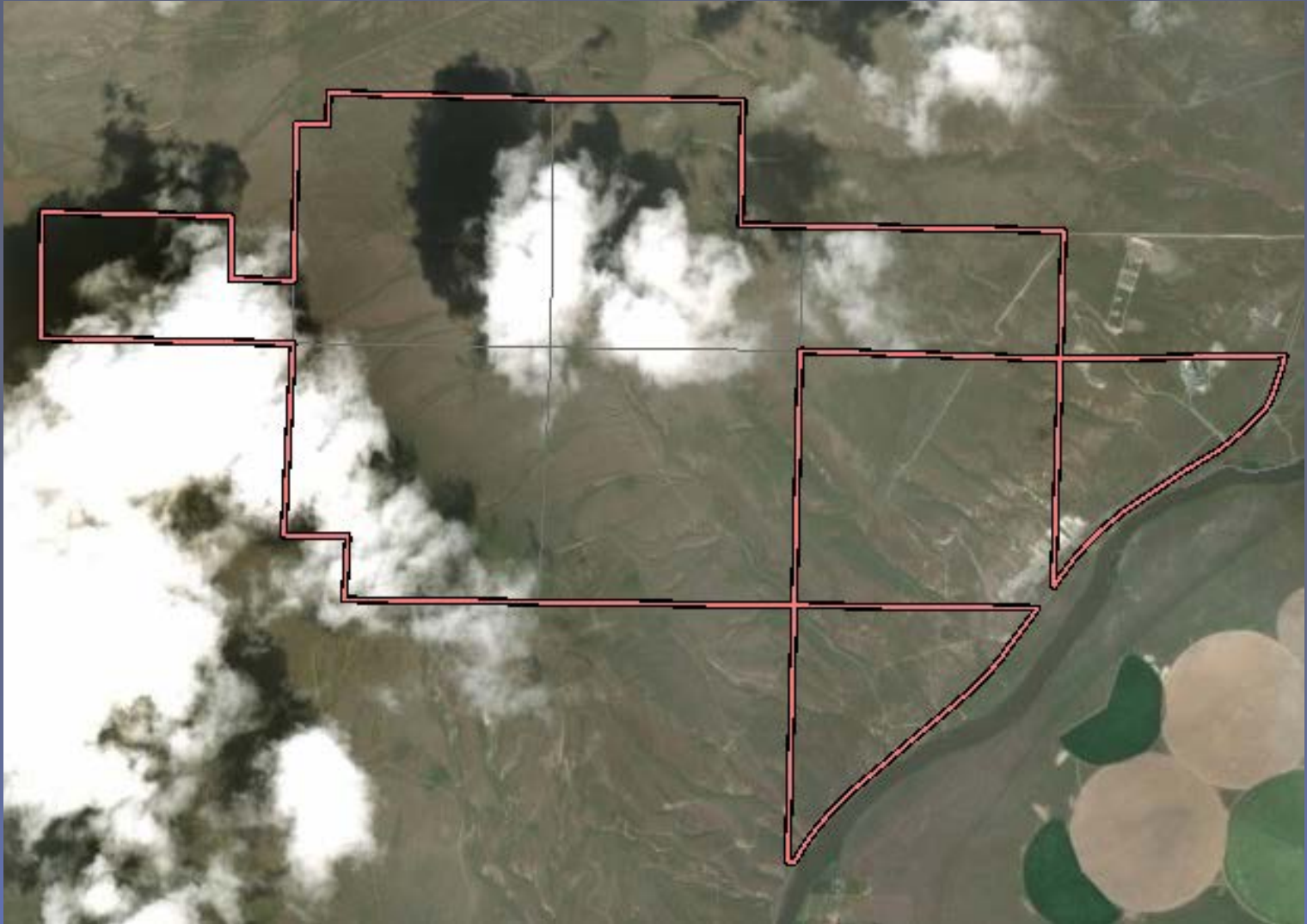
Rattlesnake Slope

Overview

- 3,661 acres in Benton County
- Dry Upland Grasslands and Shrub-steppe
- Heavily impacted by fire
- Developed shooting range



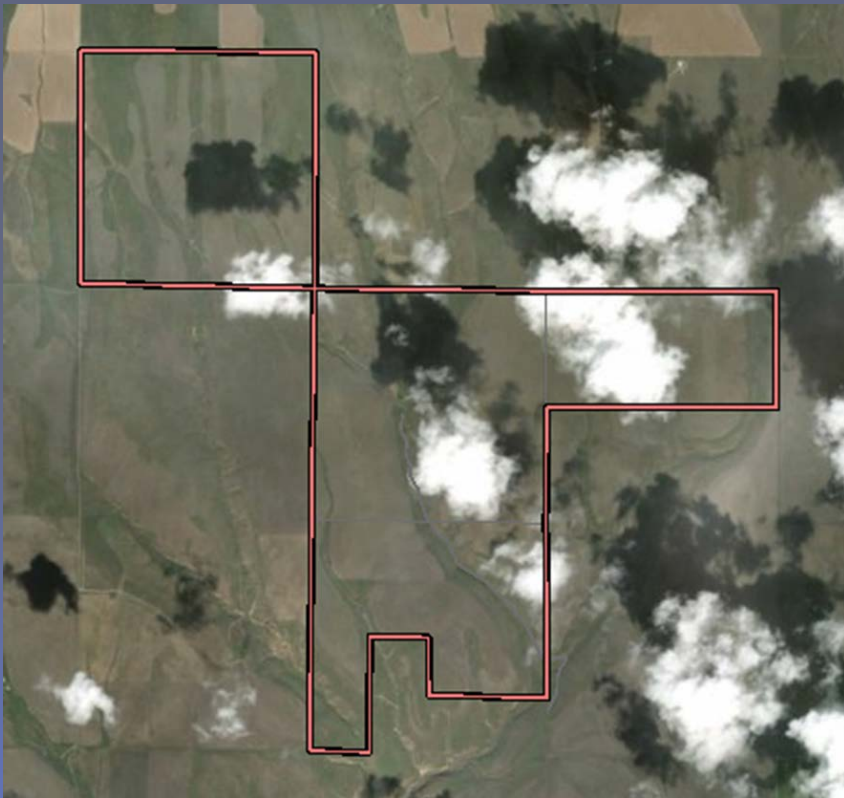
Rattlesnake Slope



Thornton

Overview

- 2,080 acres in Benton County
- Upland Grasslands and Shrub-steppe
- Supports transitory elk



Vance-Ferry Road

Overview

- 156 acres in Yakima County
- Provides 1 mile of access on the Yakima River
- 2/3 lies within the Yakima River Waterfowl Closure



WB-10 Wasteway

Overview

- 1,893 acres in Franklin County
- Bureau of Reclamation property



WB-10 Wasteway



Whitstran

Overview

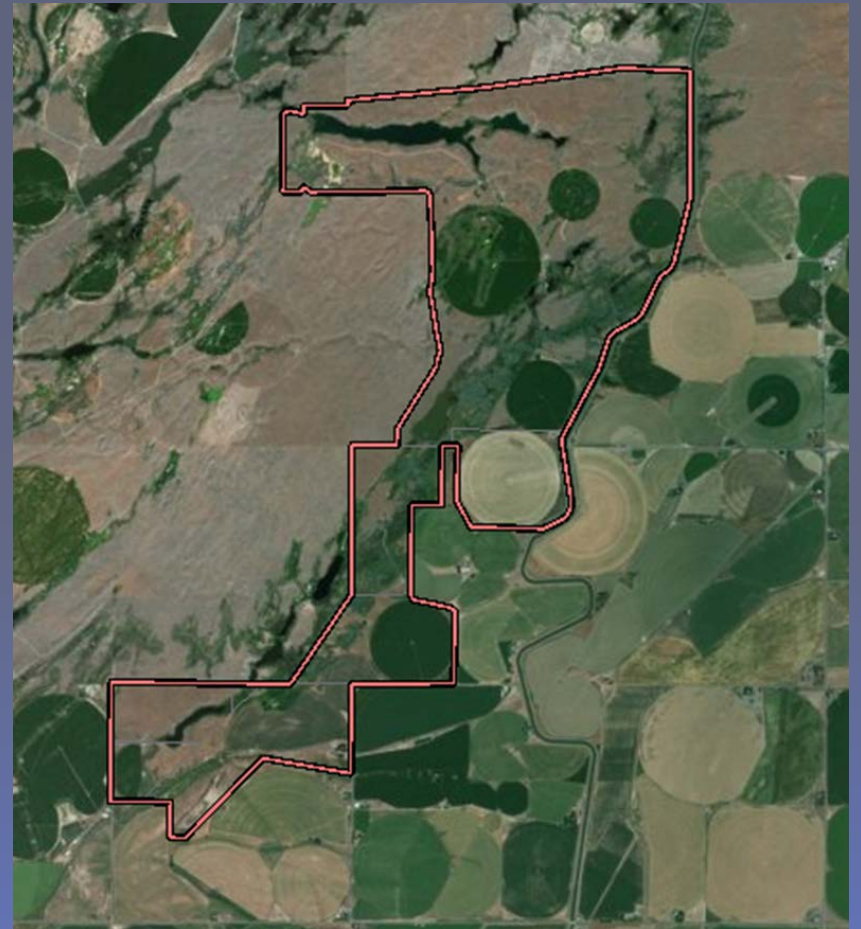
- 40 acres in Benton County
- Fish access site on the Yakima River
- Parking / Access is a growing issue



Windmill Ranch

Overview

- 2,000 acres in Franklin County
- Wetlands, Upland, Grasslands
- Agriculture and Shrub-steppe



Weeds and Restoration

Methods

- Bio-control
- Mechanical
- Chemical



Weeds and Restoration

Bio-Control

- Knapweed
- Whitetop
- Purple Loosestrife



Weeds and Restoration

Real Problems

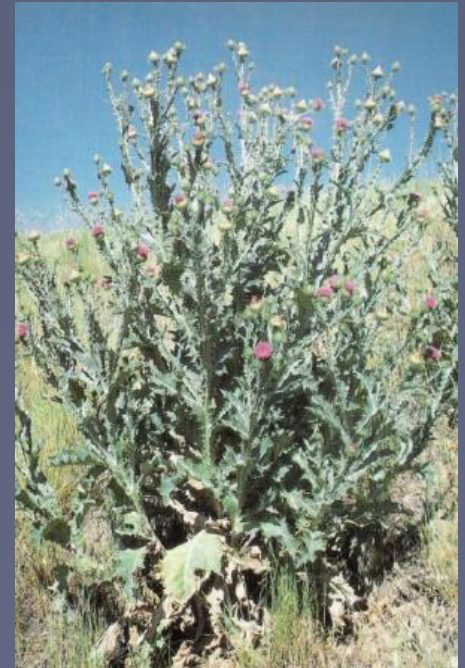
- Poison Hemlock
- Houndstongue



Weeds and Restoration

More Problems - Thistles

- Canada Thistle
- Scotch Thistle
- Russian Thistle
- Yellow Star thistle



Weeds and Restoration

Other problems?

- Rush Skeletonweed
- Kochia
- Russian Olive



Weeds and Restoration

What about these?

- Cattails
- Reed Phragmites



Weeds and Restoration

Habitat – What is our goal?



Use and Issues

Recreation and habitat priorities?

How does the wildlife area fit into the big picture?