

Minam River Wildlife Area

Management Plan

March 20, 2026



Oregon Department
of Fish and Wildlife

Minam River Wildlife Area

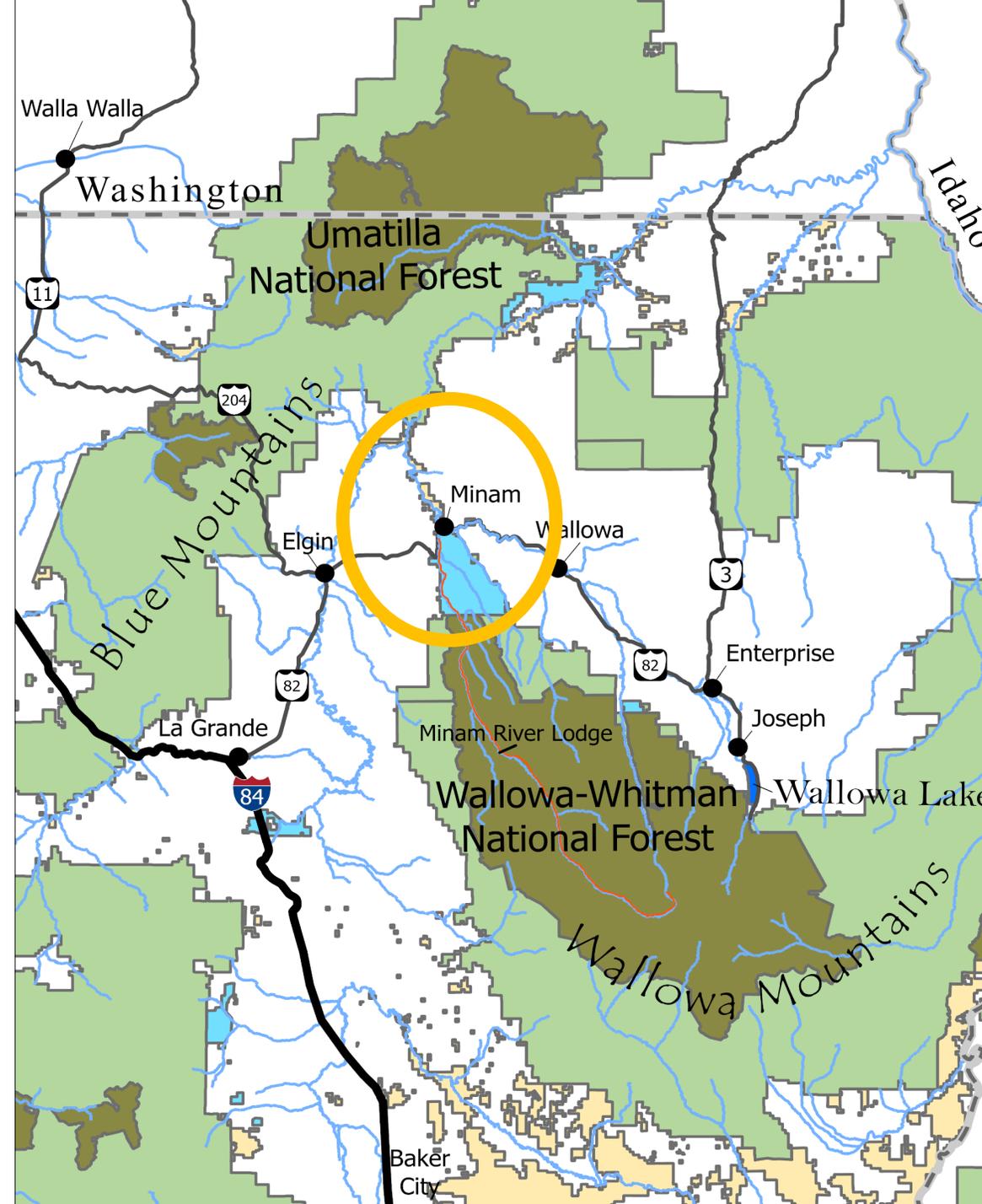


The Minam addition links a landscape vast enough to rival Yellowstone

Important Features

- Minam River & Trail
- Forested Habitats
- Grassland / Canyons

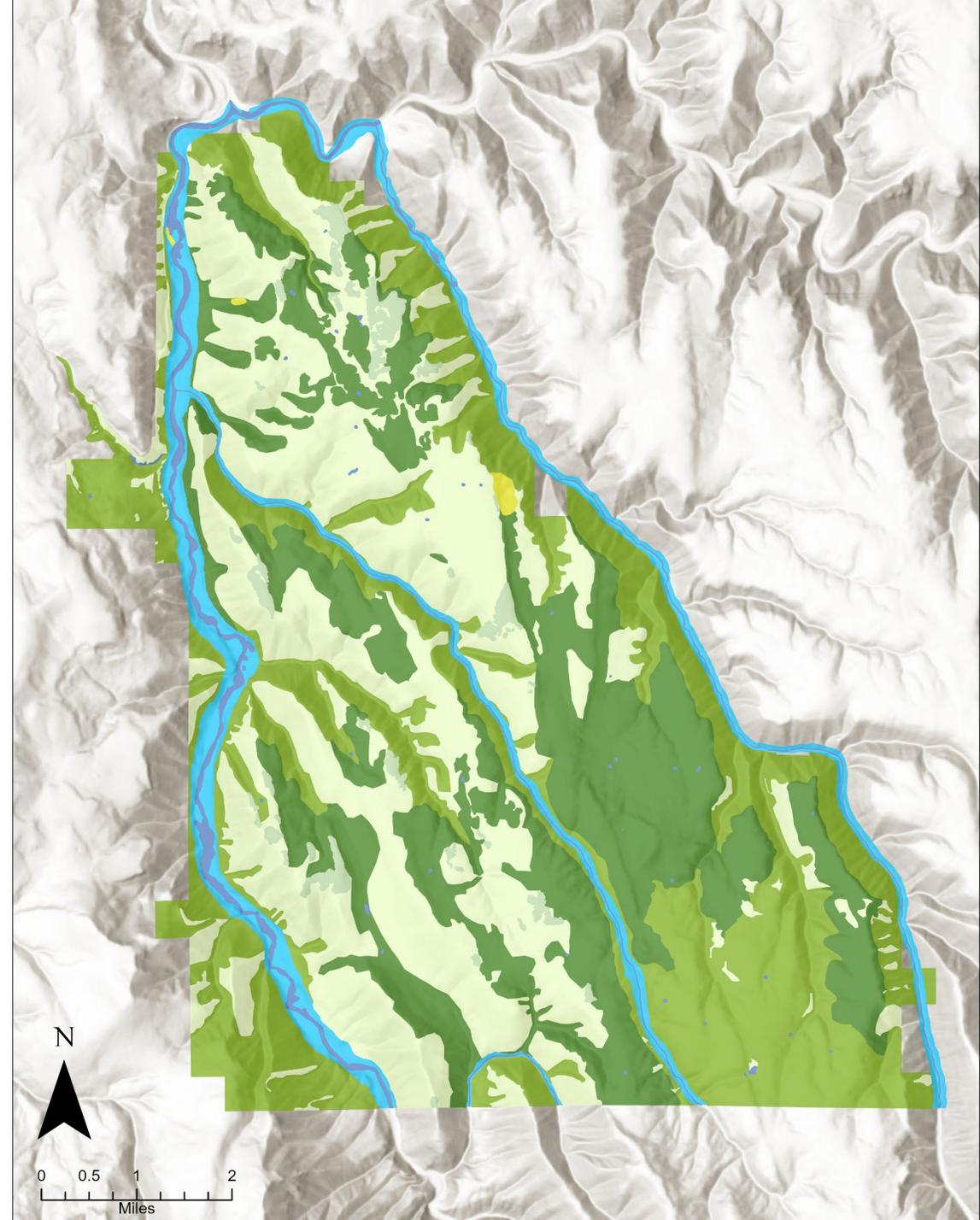
Five primary access points



Connecting a Diversity of Habitat Types

MRWA has seven major habitat types that support a diversity of species and create connectivity for use at different life stages

- Grassland/shrubland
- Mixed Conifer
- Ponderosa Pine Woodland
- Riparian
- Fresh Water Aquatic
- Sagebrush Steppe
- Aspen Woodland



Wildlife and Habitat Values

- Winter range
- Wildlife migration corridor
- Public access
- Threat of subdivision

Opportunities

- Manage elk distribution
- Protect high-functioning habitats
- Enhance habitats currently limited by historic land use impacts



Purchase History

Original Wildlife Area

● 441 acres (1967)

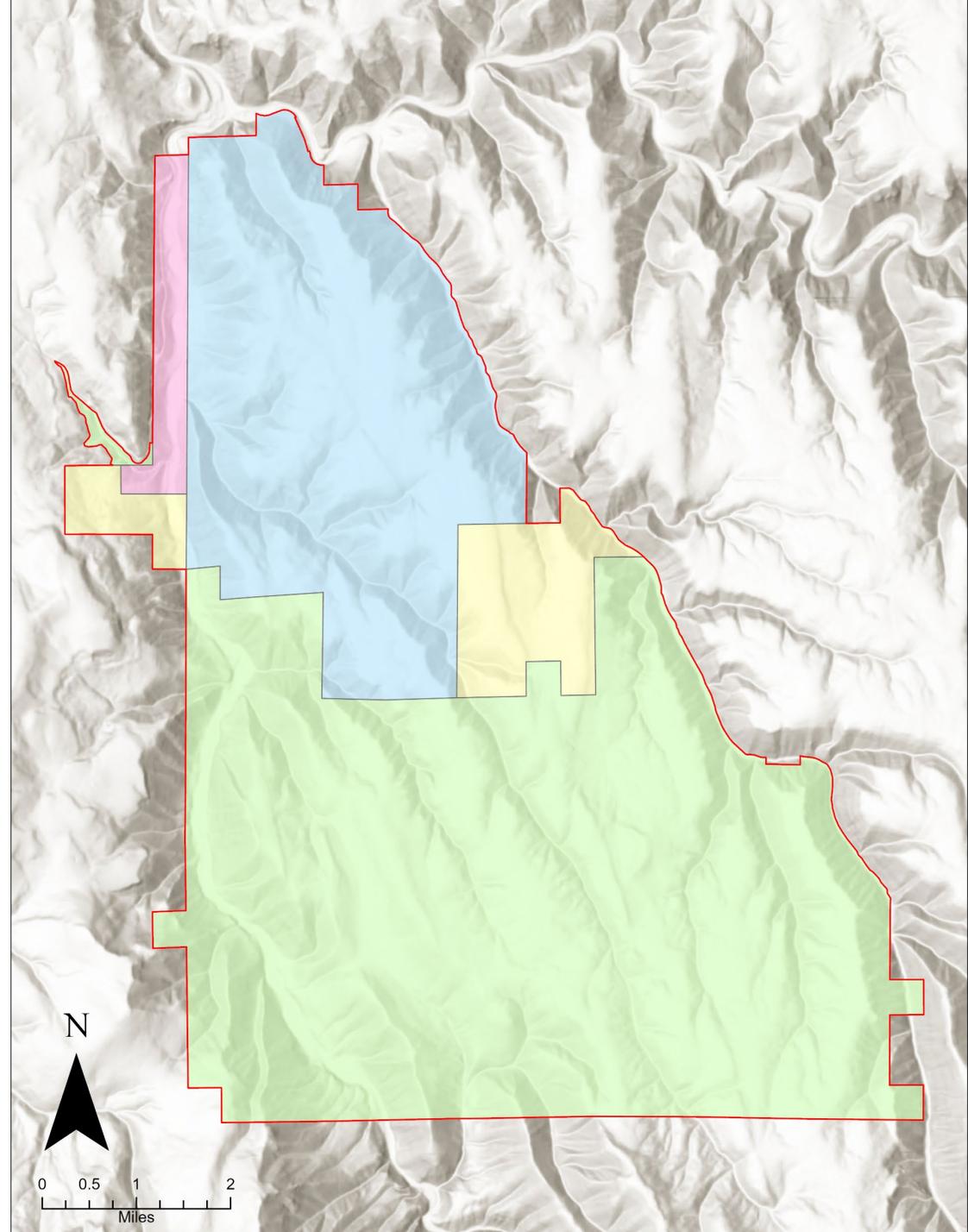
Three-phase acquisition

● Phase 1 = 4,609 acres (2021)

● Phase 2 = 10,964 acres (2023)

● Phase 3 = 1,073 acres (2024)

Total Acreage = 17,087



Partnerships & Funding

Project Partners

- ODFW
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Manulife Investments

Funding

- Forest Legacy Program (USDA)
- Pittman-Robertson
- Private Donations



**Oregon Department of Fish
and Wildlife**



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ELK FOUNDATION**



Manulife

Investment Management





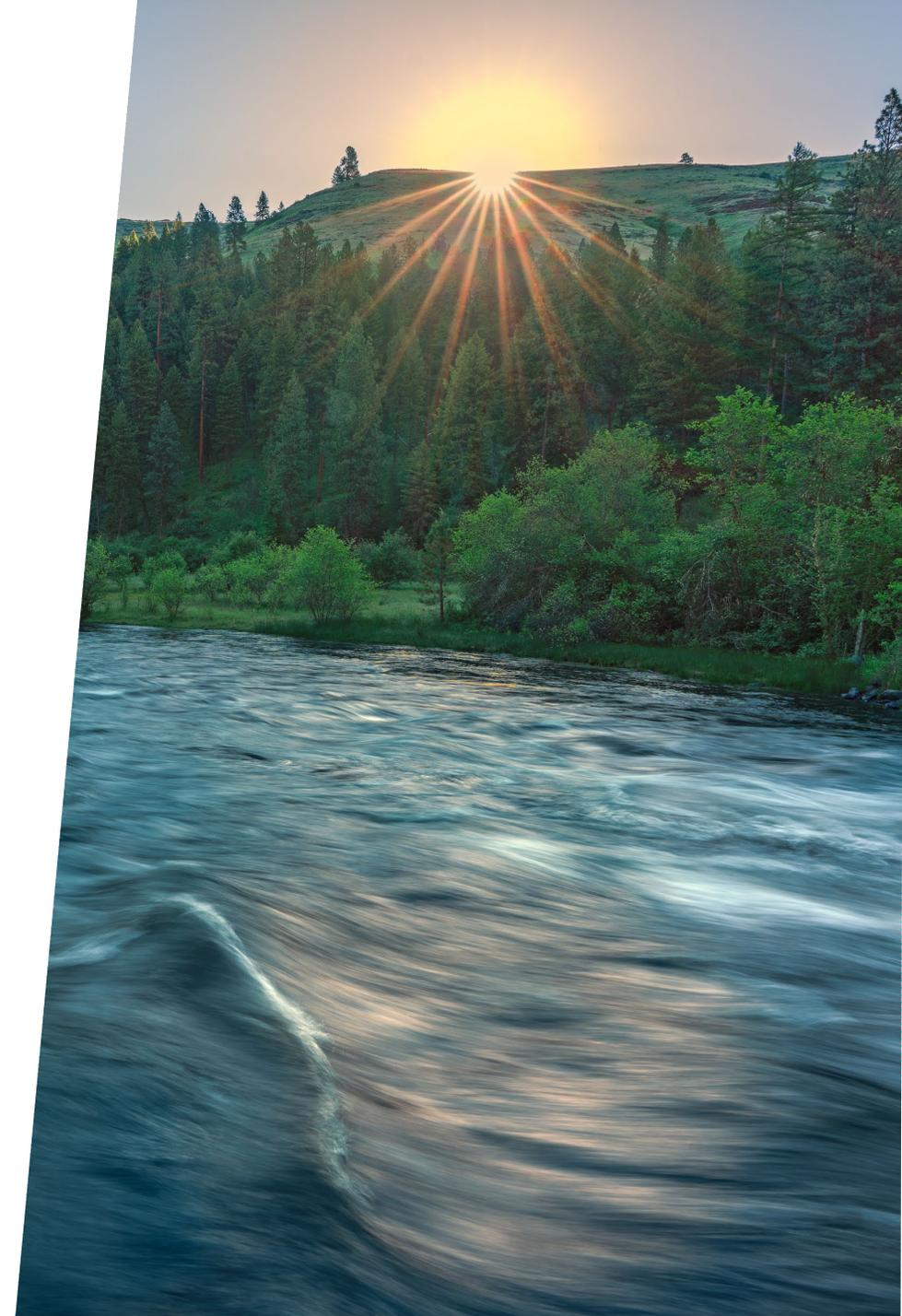
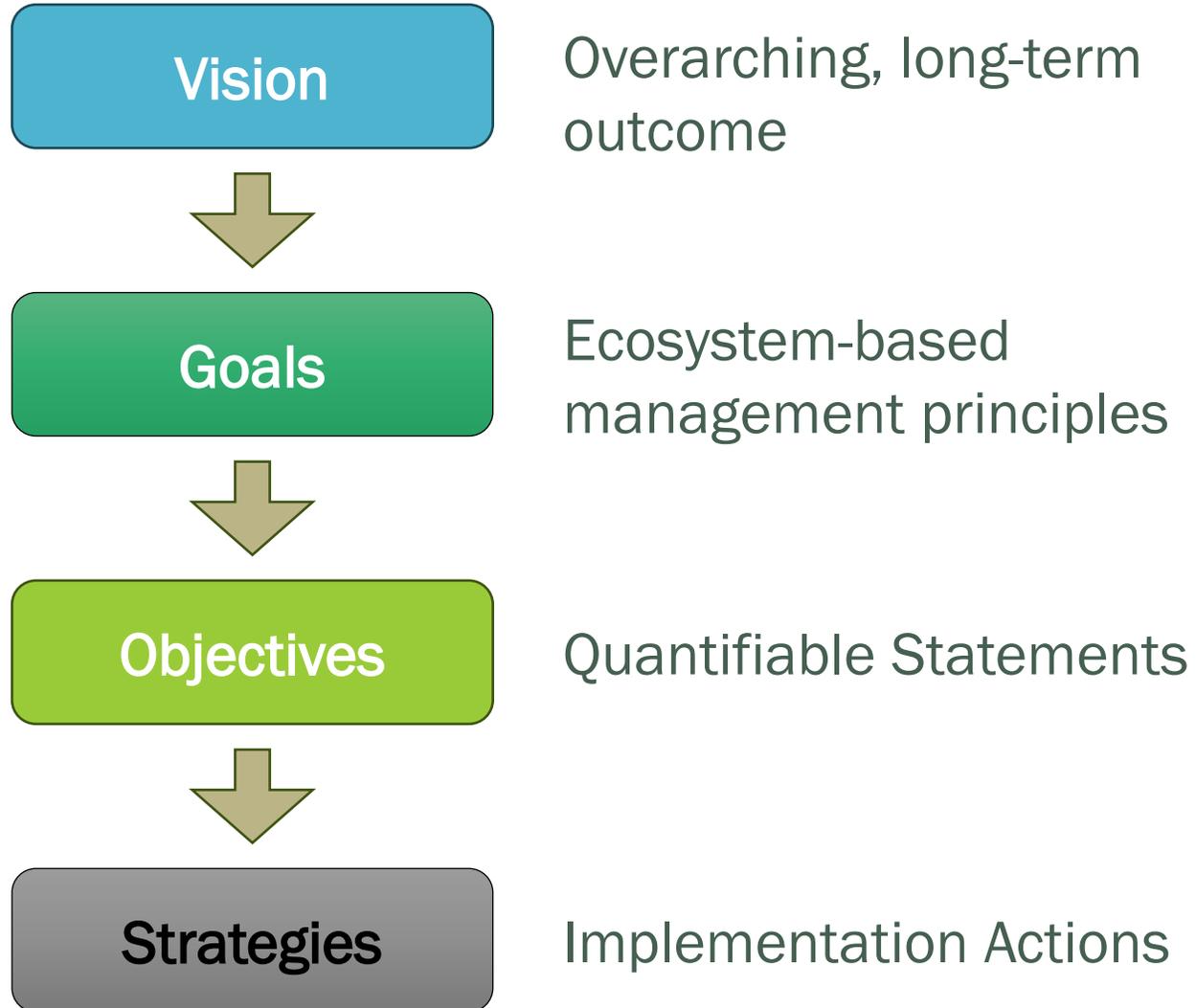
Management Plan



**Oregon Department
of Fish and Wildlife**



Plan Organization



MRWA Vision Statement

“Protect, enhance, and promote landscape level connectivity and ecological functions that provide high-quality, resilient habitats for terrestrial and aquatic species for use and enjoyment by present and future generations of Oregonians.”



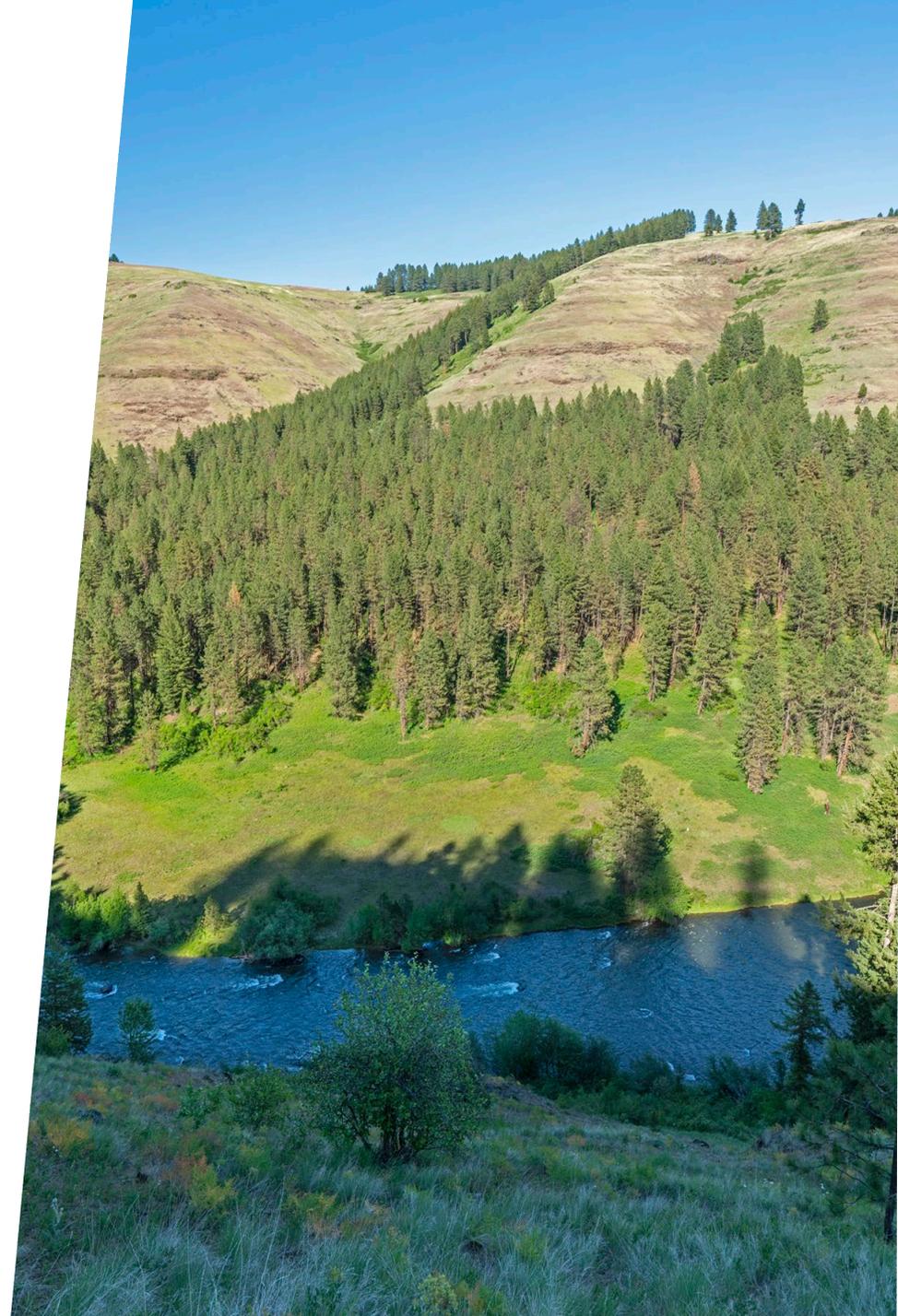
Management Philosophy

Habitat Management Themes

- Restore and enhance limited habitats
- Build landscape resilience to climate change impacts

Ecosystem Based Management

- Natural disturbance regimes alone cannot maintain habitats
- Working lands approach acts as a surrogate
- Benefits lands and local communities



Goal 1 - Protect and Enhance Regional and Local Connectivity



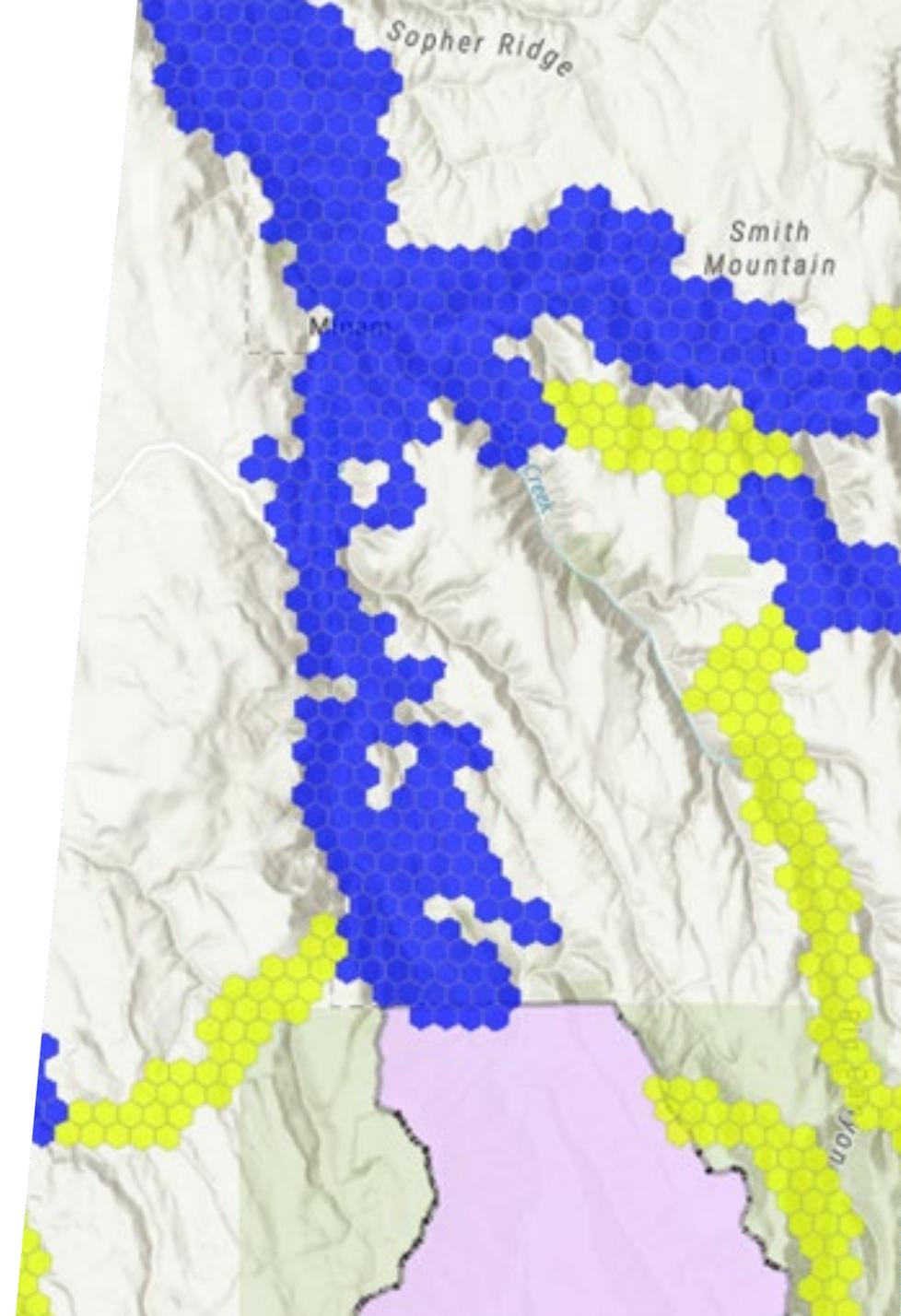
Enhance Terrestrial Connectivity

- Minimize disturbance
- Remove fences
- Increase habitat diversity
- Condition forage



Enhance Aquatic Connectivity

- Mainstem restoration
- Road obliteration / culverts
- Aquatic organism passage



Goal 2 – Actively Manage for High Quality and Resilient Habitat

Support Fish and Wildlife Diversity

Forests



9,000 + acres
Forest Habitat:
PP Pine and Dry
Mixed Conifer;
SWAP Habitat

Grasslands



5,500 + acres
grasslands & 200 +
sage/shrublands

Riparian/Aquatic



1,000 + acres
Riparian Habitat
and 187 stream
miles



Goal 3 – Provide Access and a Variety of Recreational Opportunities

“In a manner compatible with Goals 1 and 2”



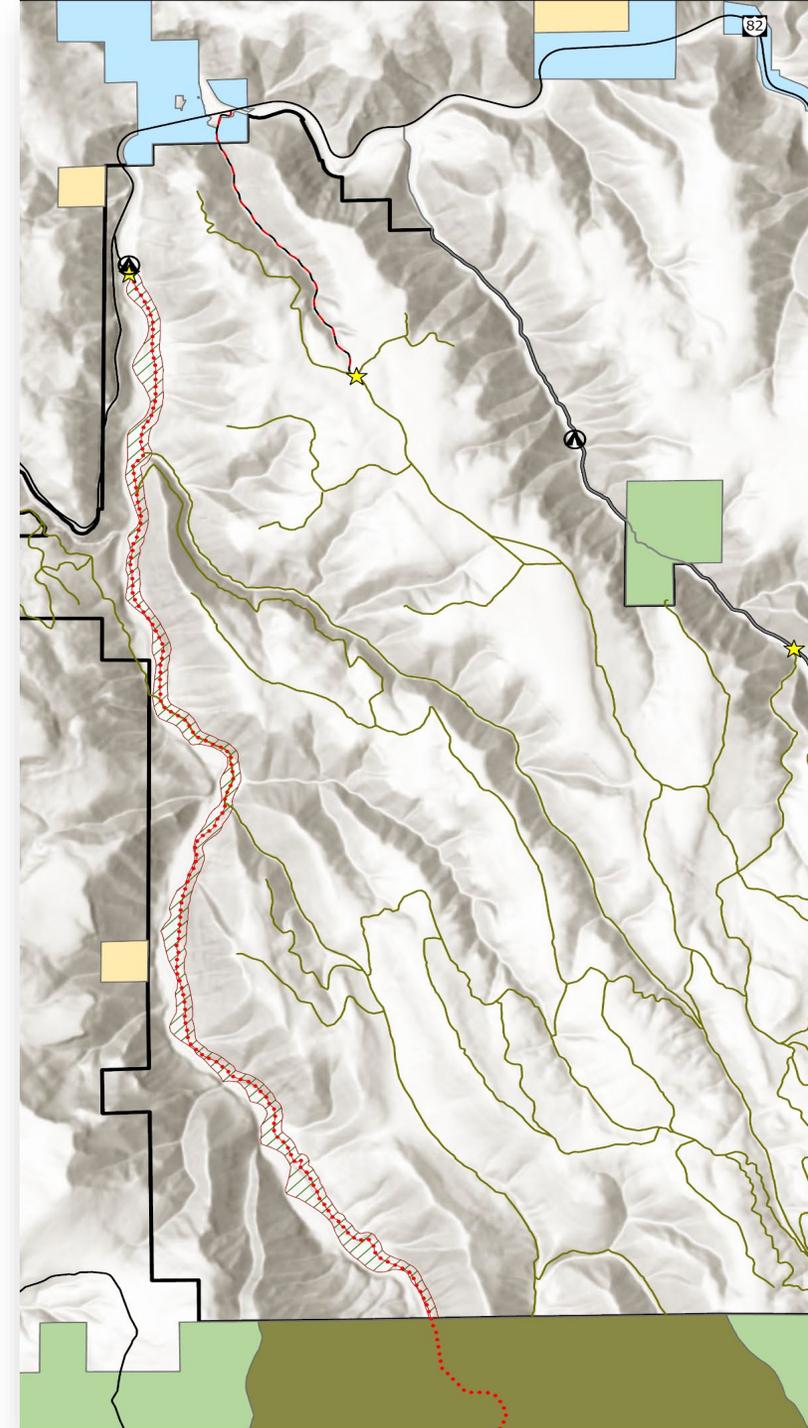
Provide Opportunities

- Hunting / fishing
- Foraging / gathering
- Wildlife watching / hiking / riding
- Education programs



Enhance and Maintain Infrastructure

- Access points and amenities
- Minam River trail (year-round access)
- Partner with neighboring land managers



Goal 4 – Administer MRWA to Successfully Accomplish Goals 1-3



Maintain Infrastructure to Carry Out Goals

- On and off-site facilities
- Fencing
- Bridges and administrative roads



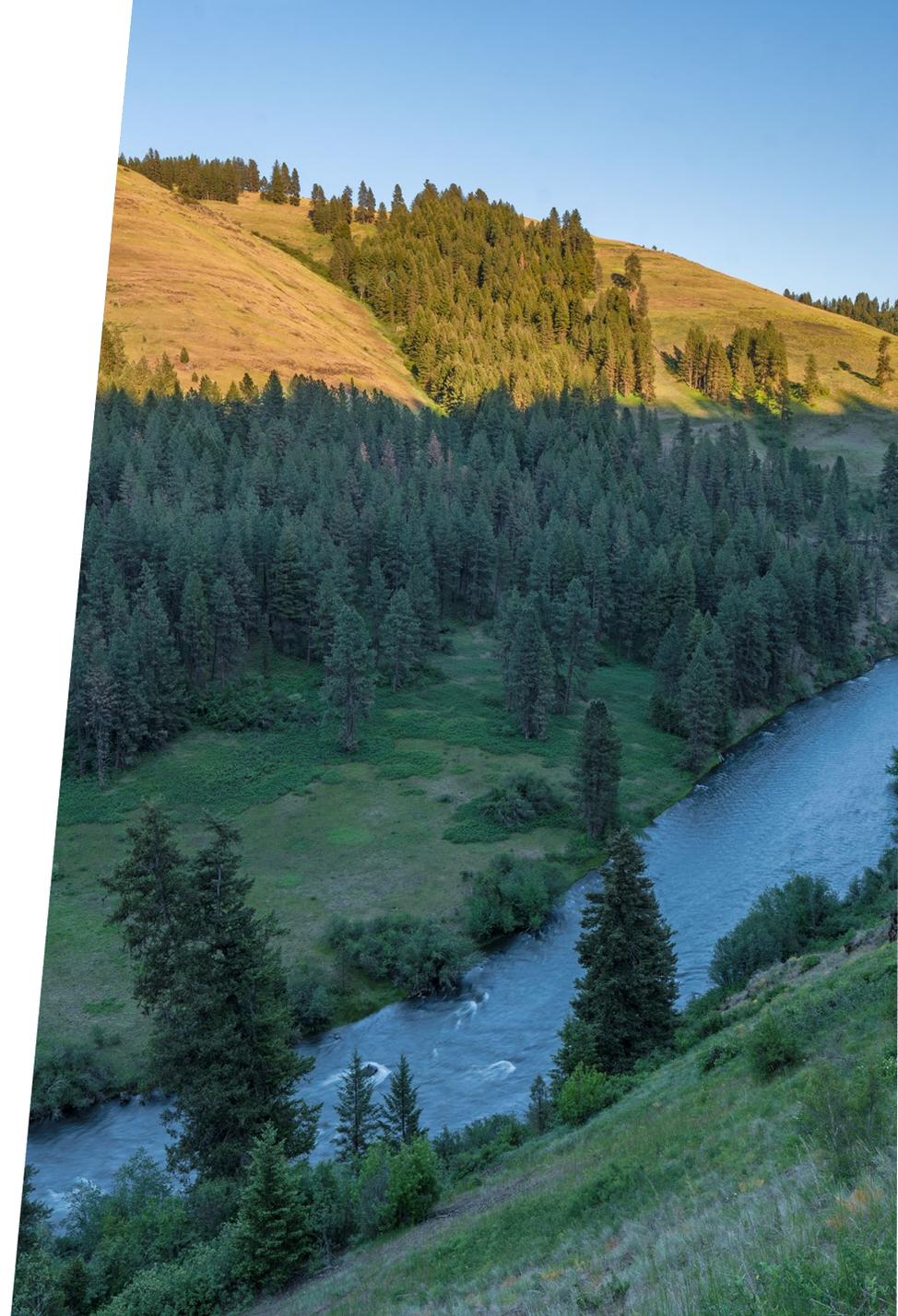
Historical Preservation

- Compliance with all pertinent laws and regulations
- Partnering with internal staff, SHPO, Tribes
- Completing archeological surveys



Plan Implementation

- **Funding**
 - Federal (P-R)
 - State (License)
 - Program Income (Permits, Grazing, etc.)
 - External Grants
- **Staffing**
 - Grande Ronde Watershed Wildlife Area Program
- **Other Partnerships**
 - OSP, Agencies, Tribes, NGO's, Private Landowners and Individuals Volunteers
- **Adaptive Management / Monitoring**
 - Fish, Wildlife, Habitat, Recreation





Appendix A
Habitat and Botany



Appendix B
Fish and Wildlife



Appendix C
Deeds & Agreements



Appendix D
Rules and Regulations



MRWA Plan Development



**Oregon Department
of Fish and Wildlife**



Public Engagement

Up Front Conversations



- > 43 Meetings/Tours/Discussions
- > 100 Letters of support

Desired Public Topics



- Protection of fish & wildlife species and habitat (esp. SWAP)
- Commitment to a continued working landscape
- Commitment to continued traditional recreational use
- Manage for climate resiliency



Public Engagement Cont.

Draft Plan
Release

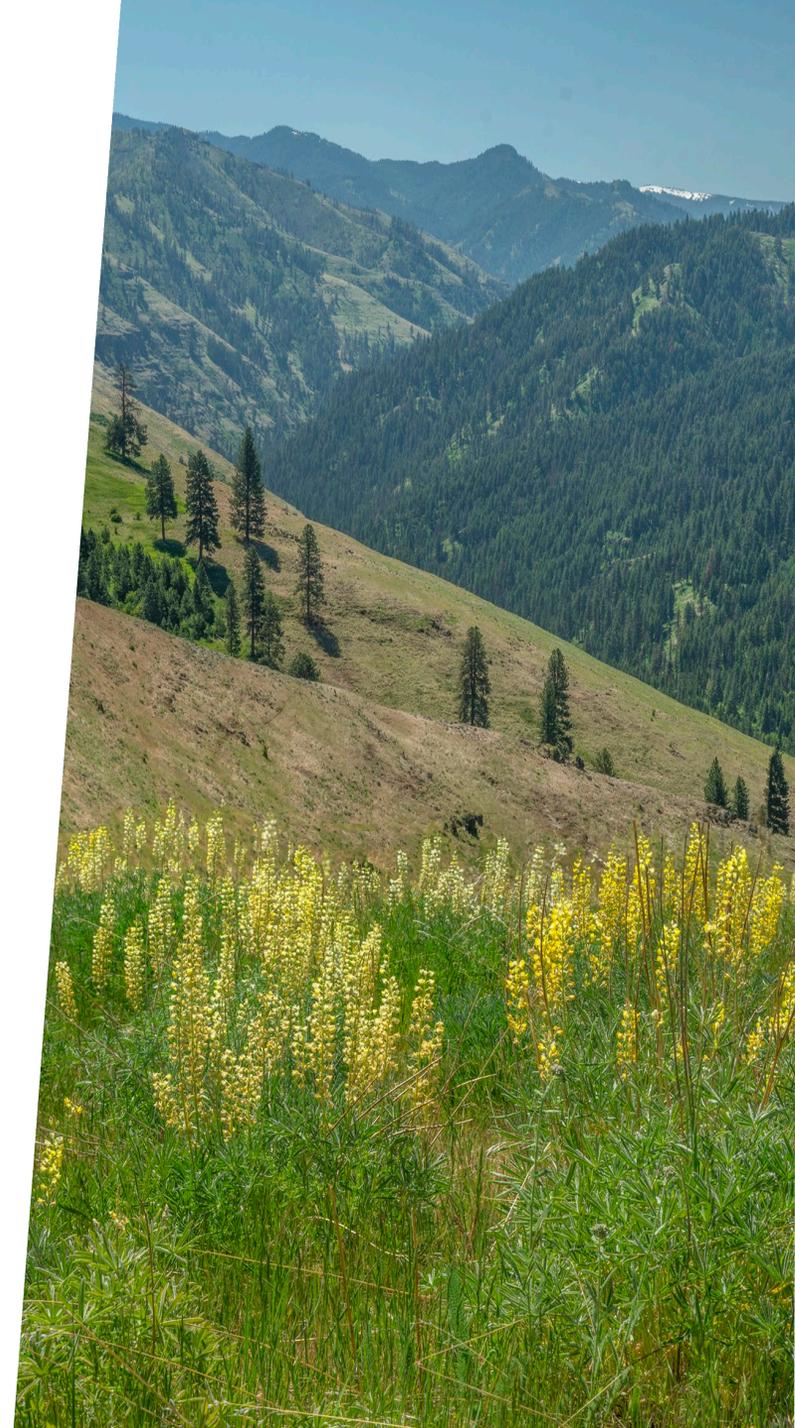
- Late August / Early September 2025
- Local Officials, Tribes, Collaborators
 - General Public

Public
Webinar

- September 17, 2025
- Recorded and Posted

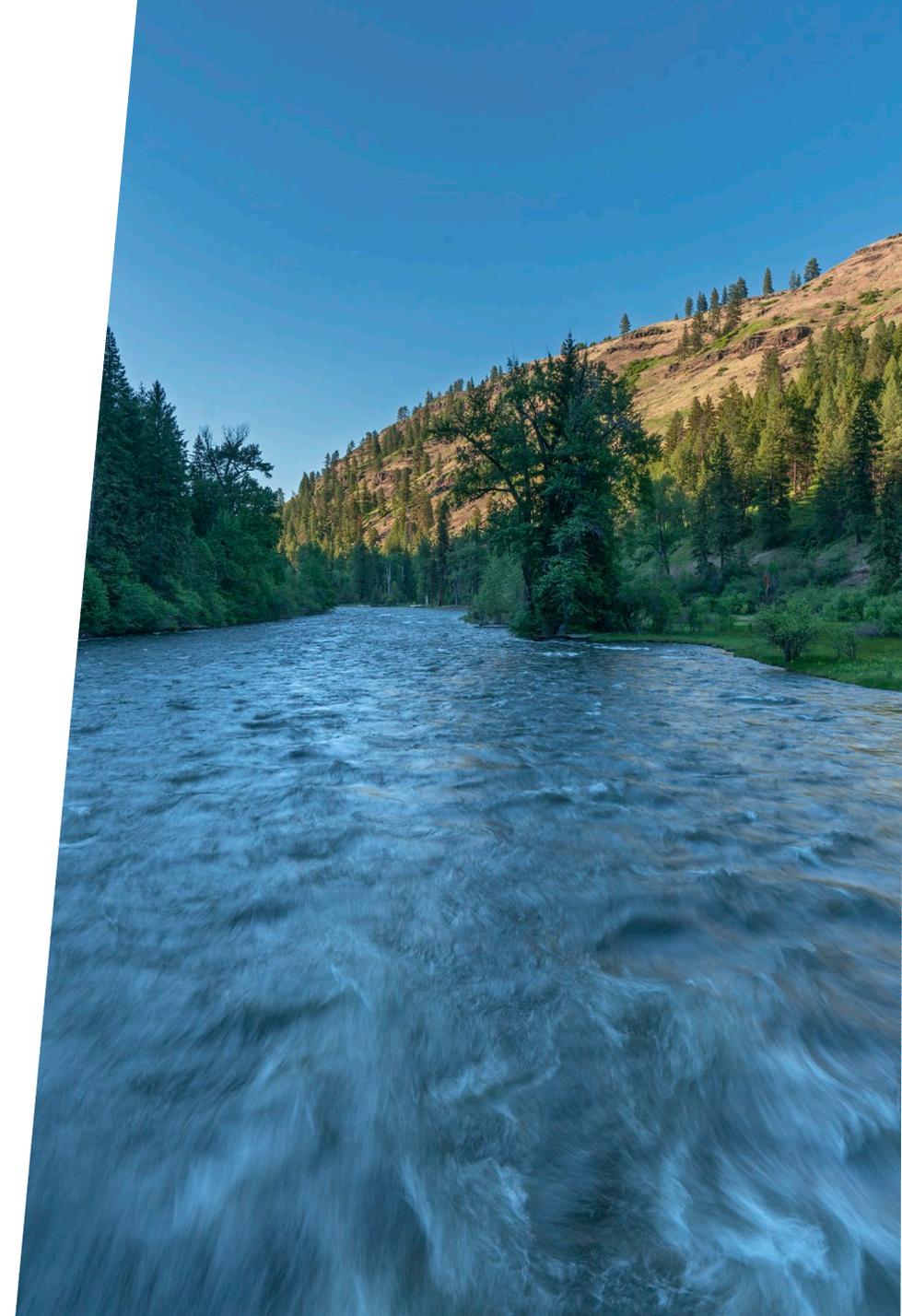
Public
Comment
Period

- Sept 17 to Oct 17
- Meetings and Discussions with Stakeholders



Plan changes following public comment

- **Winter Closure Date Change: from 12/1 to 1/1**
 - Preserve youth and upland bird hunting opportunities
- **Camping**
 - Acknowledged concerns with interior camping while providing perimeter camping
- **Wildlife Area Parking Permit**
 - Distribute investment across user groups
- **User Voluntary Survey**
 - Allows for continued monitoring and learning to optimize management
- **Sheep and Goat Ban**
 - Acknowledges risk of disease transfer to nearby Bighorn Sheep populations



Staff Recommendation

“ADOPT THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MINAM RIVER WILDLIFE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE AMEDED DIVISION 008 RULES; SPECIFCALLY, 635-008-0126.”

