

Agricultural Conservation Easement Sponsorship



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

your window to healthy lands

2024 WWRP Funded Easements

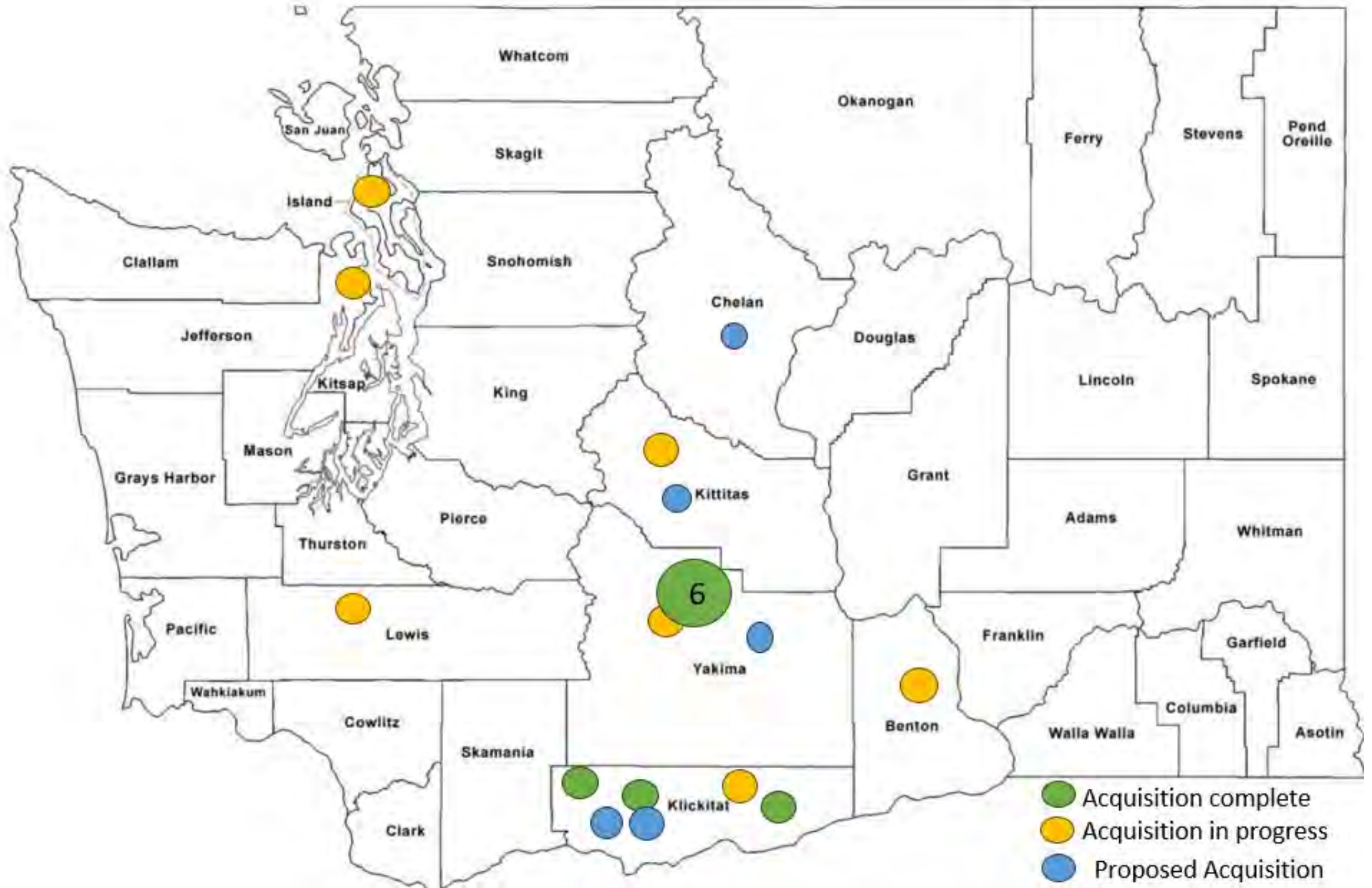
Paul D'Agnolo, Farmland Preservation Specialist

Kate Delavan, OFP Coordinator/Acting Policy Director

March Commission meeting, 3/21/24

Easement Portfolio and Pipeline

	SCC Easement Portfolio + Pipeline	
	# of Projects	Acres
Acquisition Completed		
Easement Holder	4	4,902
Third Party Right of Enforcement	5	321.26
Total Completed	9	5,223
Acquisition In Progress		
Easement Holder	4	9,018
Third Party Right of Enforcement	3	246.5
Total In Progress	7	9,265
Total Portfolio and Pipeline	16	14,488



Background

- SCC can act as a sponsor for WWRP Farmland applications developed by conservation districts (Policy #19-02).
 - SCC assumes legal and financial responsibility for easement acquisition and stewardship.
 - SCC works in partnership with local CD.
 - WWRP Farmland grant application is open for 2024.
- The Conservation Easement Sub-Committee selected five agricultural conservation easement projects to advance.
- Staff seek Commissioner authorization to proceed with grants.

ACES Program Development and Process

- Sponsorship application open Dec. 15 to Feb. 16
- OFP received 5 applications from four CDs
- Conservation Easement Sub-committee met on Feb. 27 to review applications for alignment with grant program and SCC easement priorities
- Easement Sub-committee members:
 - Addie Candib, American Farmland Trust
 - Vanessa Kritzer, Washington Association of Land Trusts
 - Tom Salzer, Washington Association of Conservation Districts
 - Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation District
 - Dave Hedrick, Ferry Conservation District
 - Kate Delavan, SCC



SCC Ag Conservation Easement Priorities

1. The parcel proposed for preservation is expected to continue to be used for, and is large enough to sustain, commercial agricultural production.
2. The land is also in an area that possesses the necessary market, infrastructure, agricultural support services, and the surrounding parcel sizes and land uses to support long-term commercial agricultural production.
3. Without preservation, the land proposed for protection is likely to be converted to nonagricultural use in the foreseeable future.

2024 ACES Applications

- North Yakima Conservation District (NCYD)
 - Williams Rangeland
- Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD)
 - Foothills Farm
- Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD)
 - Swale Canyon
 - Luna Gulch
- Cascadia Conservation District (CCD)
 - Hinterlands



NYCD – Williams' Rangeland Preservation Project

- 1,563 acres of rangeland located in the Moxee Watershed.
- Primarily used as winter and spring forage.
- Plans to use easement proceeds to expand ranch and allow family to live on site.
- The project includes enhancing rotational grazing capacity.
- Views as well as high-capacity power lines create a high threat of conversion to non-agricultural use.

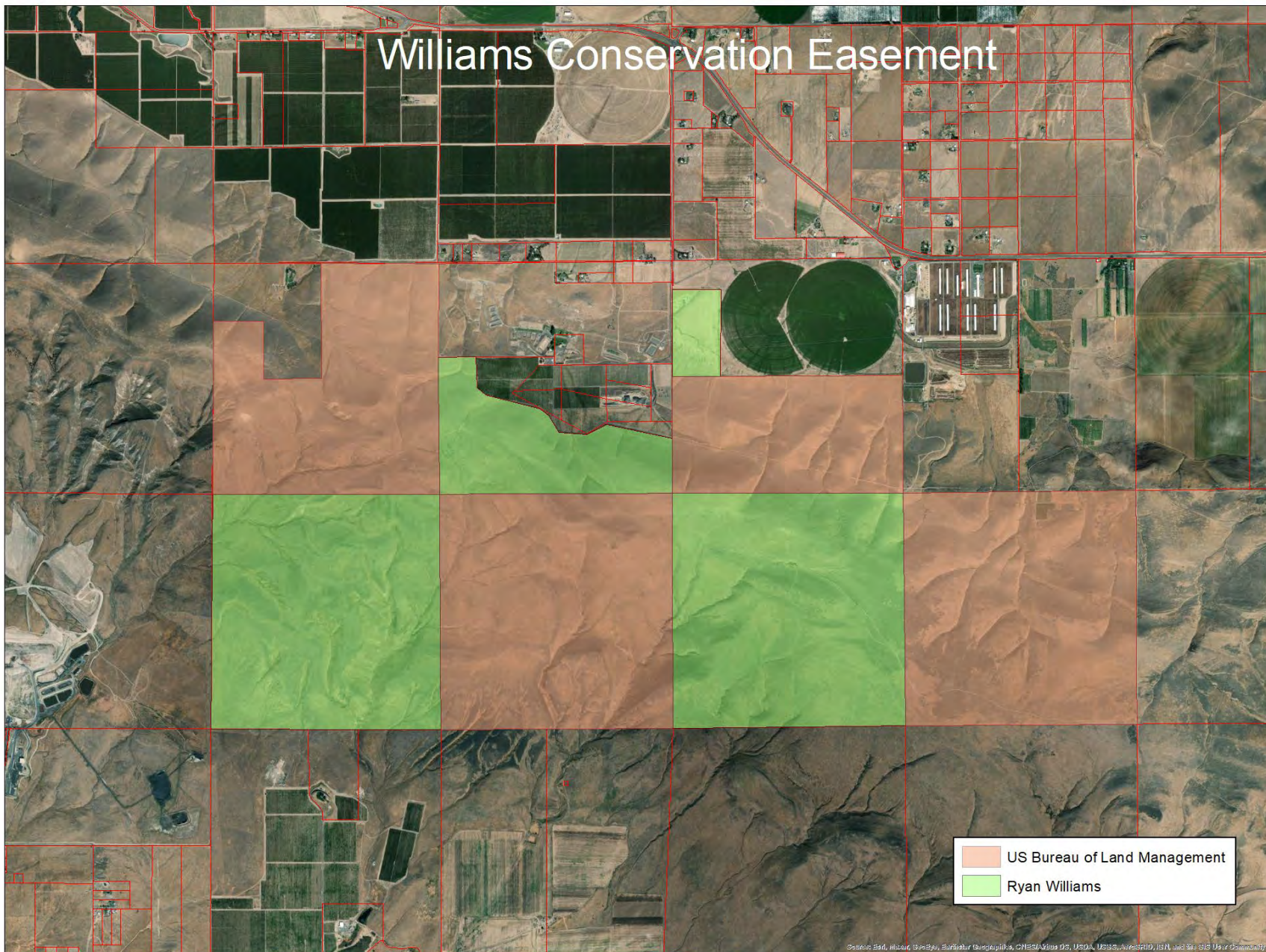
Yakima

24

INTERSTATE
82

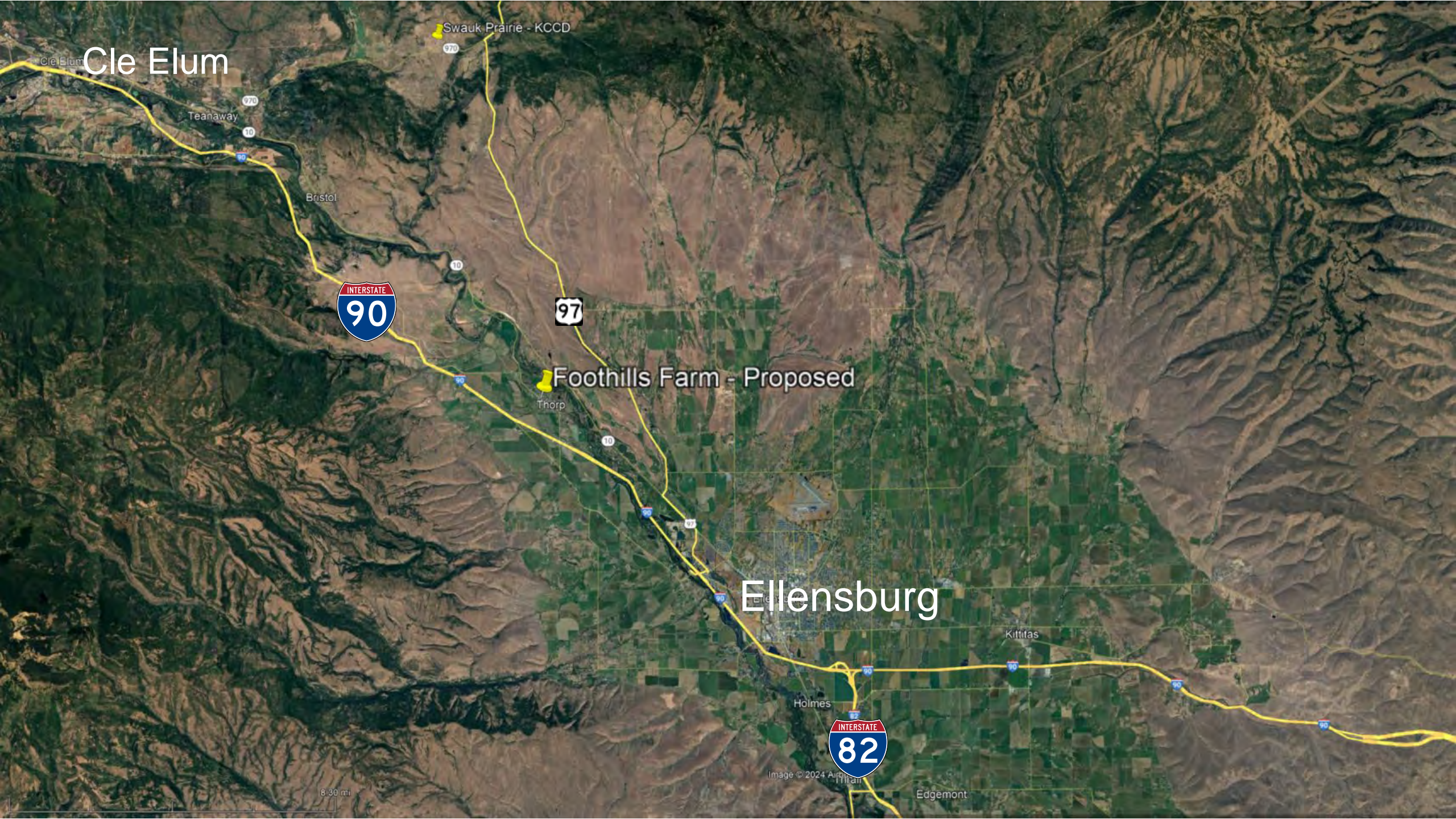
Williams - Proposed

Williams Conservation Easement



KCCD – Foothills Farm Conservation Easement

- 317-acre operation near Thorp with the fourth and fifth generations currently managing the land.
- The farm has supported diverse crops including timothy hay, wheat, oats, barley, corn, soybeans, triticale, alfalfa, teff grass, orchard grass, certified oat seed, and a variety of livestock.
- Irrigation water from the Kittitas Reclamation District, West Side Irrigating Company, and spring water.
- Rapid population growth and a scenic landscape in proximity to metro areas creates a high threat to conversion into non-agricultural uses.



Cle Elum

Swauk Prairie - KCCD

Teanaway

Bristol

Foothills Farm - Proposed

Thorp

Ellensburg

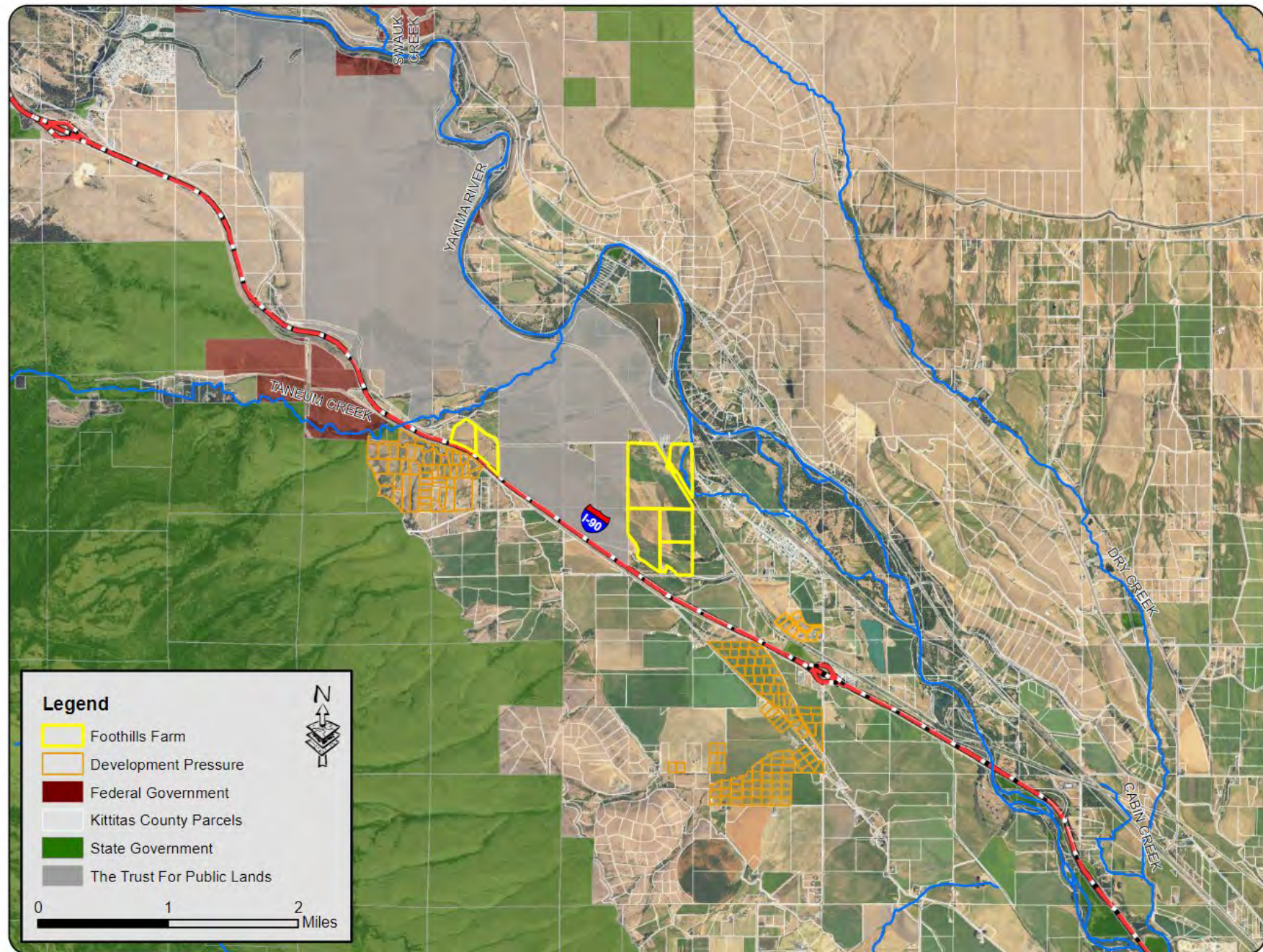
Kiltias

Holmes

Edgemont

8.30 mi

Image © 2024 Aerial





CKCD – Swale Canyon Conservation Easement

- 875-acre ranch operation that provides rangeland grazing and produces alfalfa-grass hay for livestock feed.
- The ranch is owned by three brothers who are aging out of their farming career and looking to ensure that the land they inherited will stay open for agriculture and conservation uses in perpetuity.
- Ranch operations are supported by a water right for stock water as well as several spring fed ponds and spring seeps.
- The property includes oak savanna, shrub steppe, canyon breaks, ½ mile of steelhead bearing stream corridor, ponds and associated wetlands.

Schmid Farm - FPLA
Trout Lake

Swale Canyon - Proposed

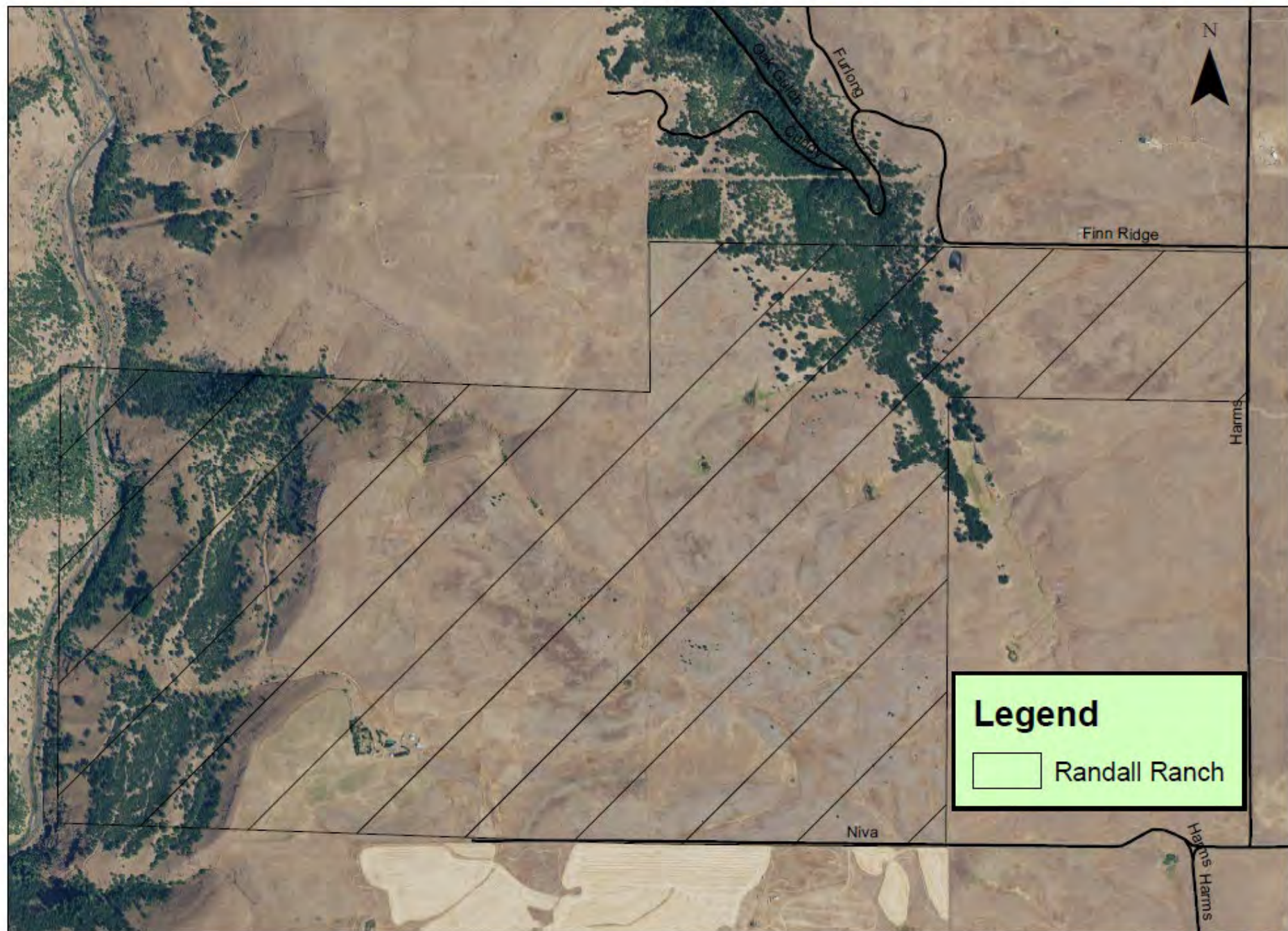
Hood River



Schuster - CKCD

Luna Gulch - Proposed

Davenport - CKCD



An aerial photograph of a vast, open landscape featuring rolling hills and fields. The terrain is a mix of light brown, tan, and green, suggesting a semi-arid or agricultural environment. In the distance, more hills and a hazy horizon are visible under a clear sky. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing text.

CKCD – Luna Gulch Conservation Easement

- 1,326-acre farm and ranch that is adjacent to an 1,850-acre property that has a permanent agricultural conservation easement in place, creating a contiguous 3,176-acre permanently protected area.
- Property currently supports 360-acres of cropland, 281-acres of pasture grazing, and 672-acres of rangeland grazing.
- 9 water rights
- The property includes habitat for steelhead, Golden Eagle, and Townsends Big Eared Bat.

Schmid Farm - FPLA
Trout Lake



Luna Gulch - Proposed
Schuster - CKCD

Davenport - CKCD

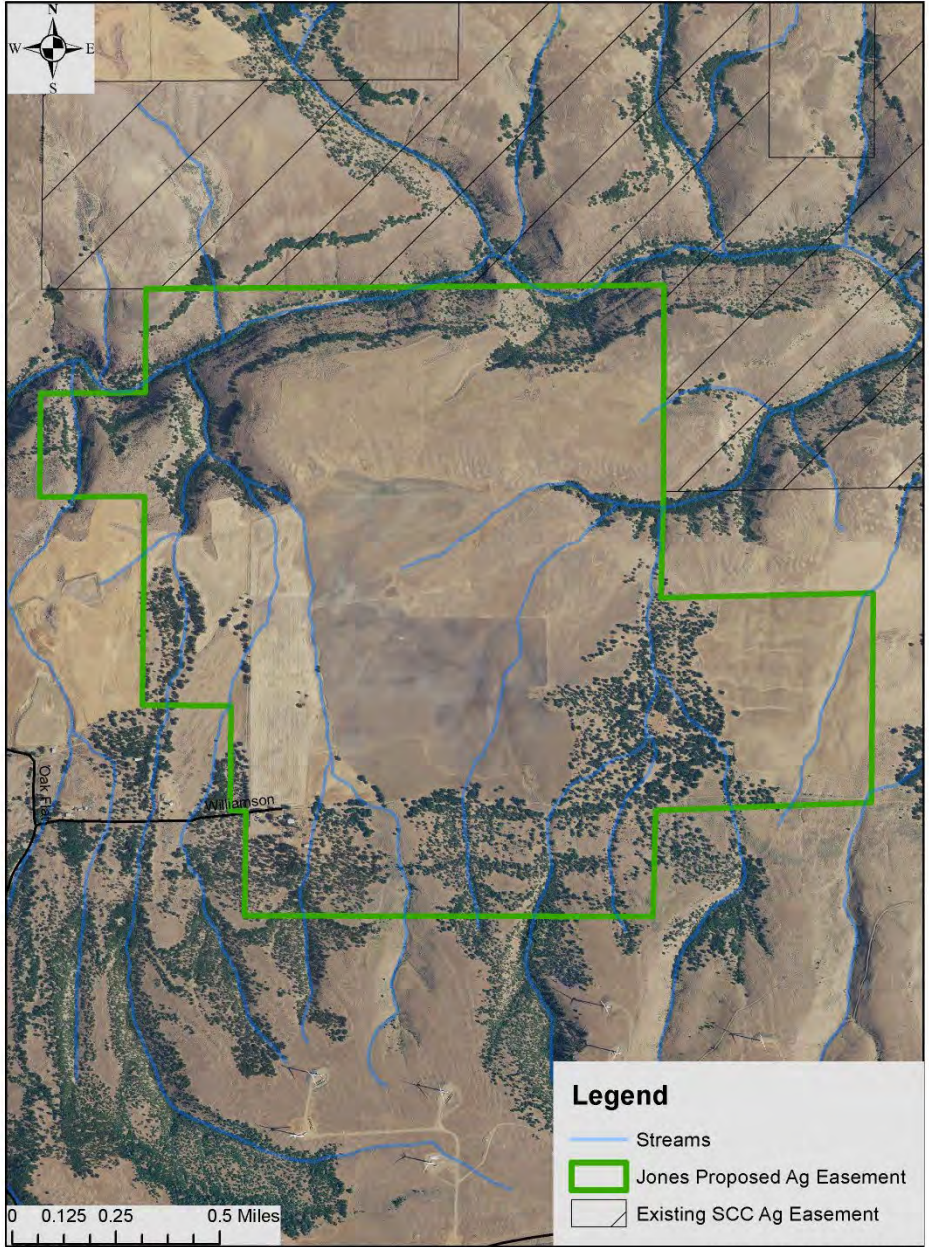
Swale Canyon - Proposed



Hood River



Proposed Agricultural Easement





CCD – Hinterlands Conservation Easement

- 336-acre proposed easement that includes approximately 150-acres of apple and cherry orchard as well as wetlands and shrub steppe habitat.
- Irrigation for the property is provided by the Lake Chelan Reclamation District and is secured by water shares tied to each parcel.
- The property has scenic views and close proximity to Lake Chelan, which creates a high threat to conversion from development of view homes.
- The soils and water availability support a diversity of fruit crops.



Pateros

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest



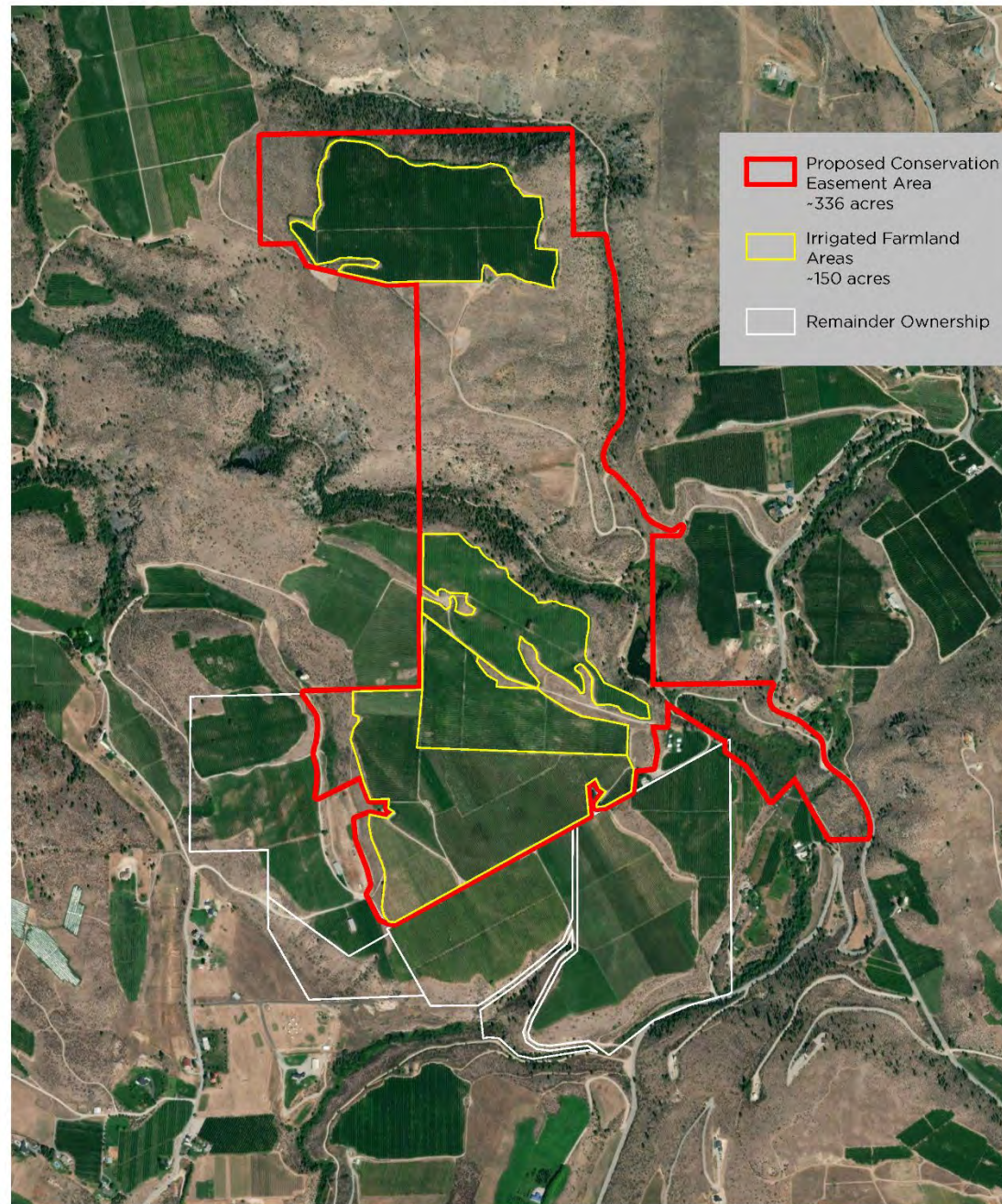
Hinterlands - Proposed

Chelan



Wenatchee

Image © 2024 Airbus
Image Landsat / Copernicus



Hinterland Farms Properties
Chelan County, WA



scale 1:12,500

0 Feet 1,500

All locations shown on the map are approximate and do not represent a legal survey.
Features are not drawn to scale. Map produced February 2024.

Sub-Committee Recommendation

- The subcommittee recommends that each of the five applications to the WSCC for approval to submit grant applications to WWRP Farmland in spring of 2024. The Sub-Committee finds these five projects to all be strong applications:
 - Williams Rangeland Preservation Project – North Yakima Conservation District
 - Foothills Farm Conservation Easement – Kittitas County Conservation District
 - Luna Gulch Conservation Easement – Central Klickitat Conservation District
 - Swale Canyon Conservation Easement – Central Klickitat Conservation District
 - Hinterlands Conservation Easement – Cascadia Conservation District

Recommended Action

The Conservation Easement Sub-Committee recommends the Commission formally authorize, by motion, the SCC's Executive Director to sign required documents to submit grants for agricultural conservation easements on five properties.

Draft Motion Language:

The Commission has determined acquisition of agricultural conservation easements on the five properties is consistent with the mission, duties, and purposes of the SCC.

The Commission hereby authorizes the State Conservation Commission Executive Director to sign required documents to submit grants for agricultural conservation easements on five properties:

- Williams Rangeland Preservation Project – North Yakima Conservation District
- Foothills Farm Conservation Easement – Kittitas County Conservation District
- Luna Gulch Conservation Easement – Central Klickitat Conservation District
- Swale Canyon Conservation Easement – Central Klickitat Conservation District
- Hinterlands Conservation Easement – Cascadia Conservation District



Thank you!

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