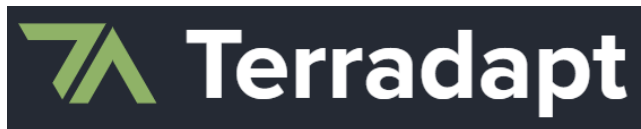


# Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan (WAHCAP)

Public lands workshop



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

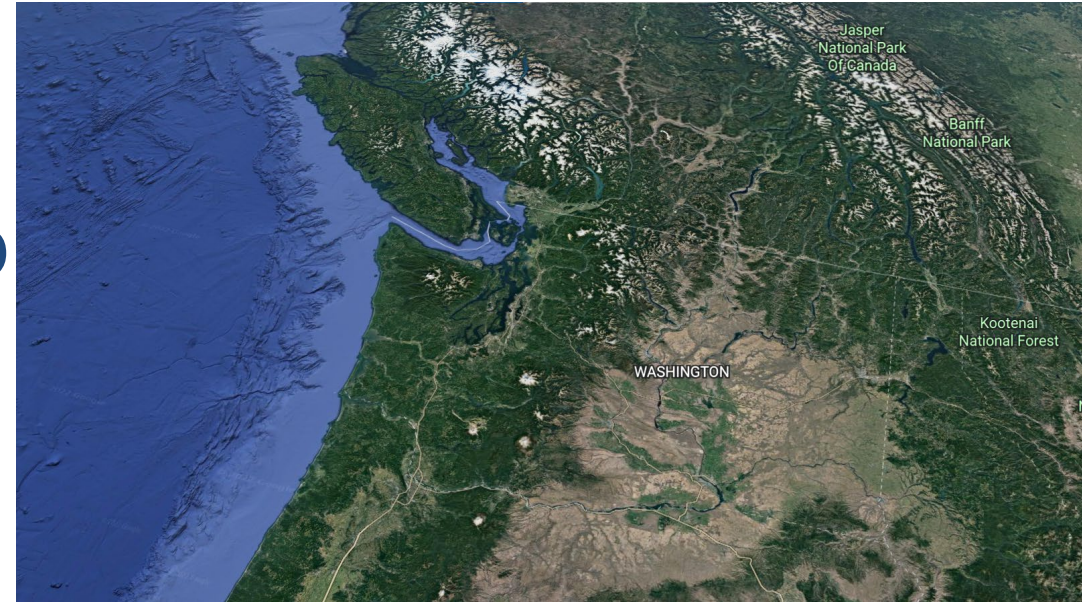


The Wildlife  
Connectivity  
Institute



# Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan

Collaborative partnership to  
prioritize **places and projects** to  
**protect and enhance** habitat  
connectivity statewide.



Providing spatial data and technical assistance to help planners *designate* and *protect* critical fish and wildlife habitat including

Biodiversity Areas and Corridors







Harriet Morgan  
Climate Change  
Coordinator



Steph DeMay  
Climate Change  
Research Scientist



Zaneta Kaszta  
PHS Connectivity  
Biologist



Jeff Azerrad  
PHS and Landscape  
Conservation







Jen Syrowitz  
Sr. Manager, Conservation Programs  
Conservation Northwest



Patty Cramer, PhD  
Founding Director  
Wildlife Connectivity Institute





# Public Lands Workshop Objectives

- Provide an overview of and update on the WAHCAP project.
- Present example implementation pathways associated with public lands.
- Identify implementation actions for protecting and restoring habitat connectivity on public lands.
- Identify and discuss implementation options for specific regions, locations and organizations.





Duration	Description	Lead
1:00-1:10	Welcome and brief overview of agenda	Julia Michalak, WDFW
1:10-1:30	WAHCAP overview: 1) Project introduction, overview, and updates 2) Landscape connectivity values and maps	
1:30-1:50	Transportation analysis and priority list: 1) Safety and ecological priorities analyses 2) Priority locations a. Full state highway ranking map b. Long list of transportation priorities c. Short list of transportation priorities	Glen Kalisz, WSDOT
1:50-2:05	Q & A	Jessica Shafer, Shafer Consulting
2:05-2:15	Break	





10:15-10:35	Overview of connectivity on public lands, plans and planning, types of actions, and key challenges	Patty Cramer, Wildlife Connectivity Institute & Jen Syrowitz, Conservation Northwest
10:35-10:45	WAHCAP maps and public lands	Julia Michalak, WDFW
10:45-11:30	Breakout Group Discussion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What actions are most urgently needed to mitigate threats and protect or restore habitat connectivity on public lands?</li> <li>2) How can WAHCAP be used to integrate habitat connectivity into public lands planning and management processes?</li> <li>3) What actions or strategies are needed to address implementation challenges and conflicting priorities when working on connectivity on public lands?</li> <li>4) What partnerships, funding sources, or other opportunities have helped (or could help) support connectivity efforts on public lands?</li> </ol>	Small groups facilitated by WAHCAP Core Team
11:30-11:50	Group share-outs	Jessica Shafer, Shafer Consulting
11:50-12:00	Next Steps	Julia Michalak, WDFW



# Connecting Habitat for Washington's Wildlife

Developing the Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**



The Wildlife  
Connectivity  
Institute



# Guiding principles

Both road crossings and landscape connectivity.

Focus on terrestrial connectivity.

Build from what we have.

Support and amplify existing connectivity work.

Focus on action not analysis.



# Tribal engagement

June 2023 – Tribal Briefing Webinar

Feb 2024 – Email invitation first to Tribal Chairs, next to Natural Resource staff

- Provided survey on
  - Preferred options for engagement.
  - Data priorities.
  - Sensitivities around mapping Tribal lands.
- Offered to meet 1:1 with WDFW about tribal data and priorities.
- Offered Advisory Group participation.

April 2024 – hosted a booth and presented at ATNI Tribal Climate Summit

Sept 2024 – Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan Tribal Webinar – Data review

Feb 2025 - Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan Tribal Webinar – Priorities review

April 9, 2025 – Tribal Strategies Workshop





# Technical Advisory Group

- Developing and reviewing new models
- Species data deep dive
- Prioritization metrics
- How to combine/weight data
- Trouble shooting results

Information about Tribal participation and engagement is available upon request.



# Implementation Advisory Group

- What connectivity work do you do?
- What are limitations of existing data we can improve on?
- How do we prioritize locations?
- What data format or displays do you need?

Information about Tribal participation and engagement is available upon request.



Department of Fish and Wildlife





# State Connectivity Action Plans

Maps showing *where* connectivity is.

*Priorities* for taking action.

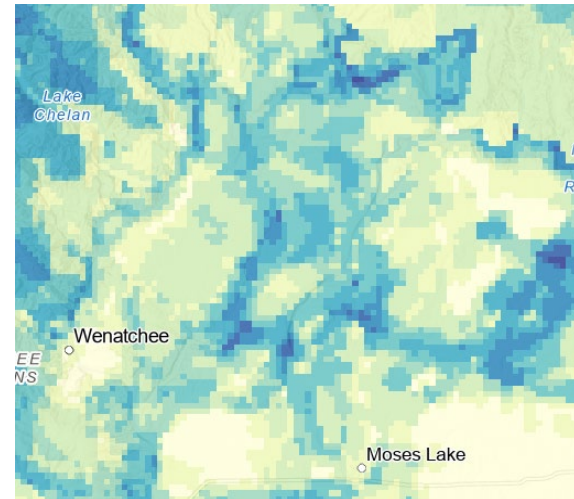
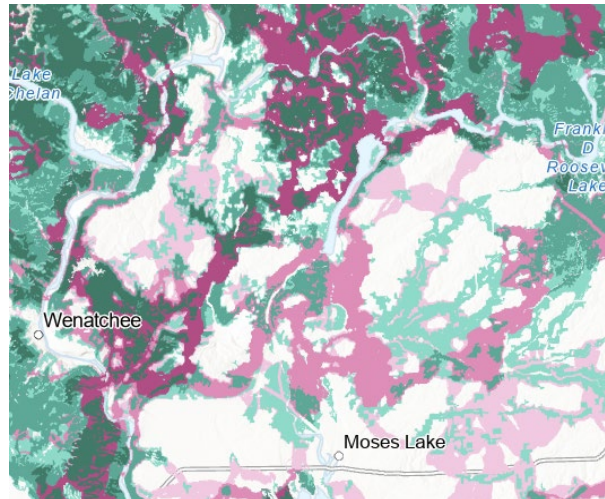
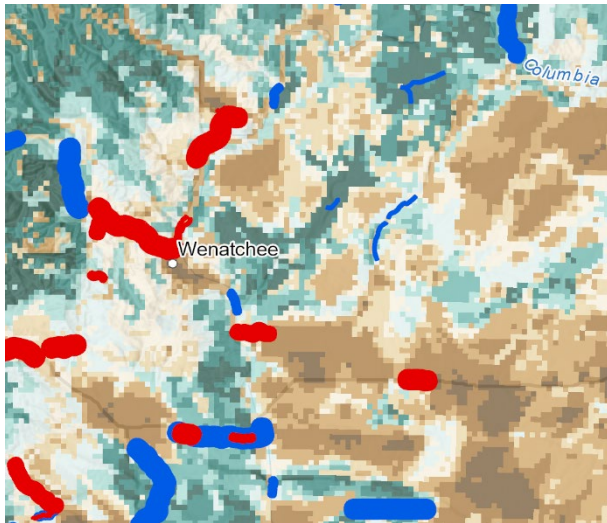
Strategies for coordinated *implementation*.



# Goal 1: Provide spatial data to inform connectivity conservation at multiple scales

Objective 1: Avoid negative impacts to biodiversity functions and values through planning.

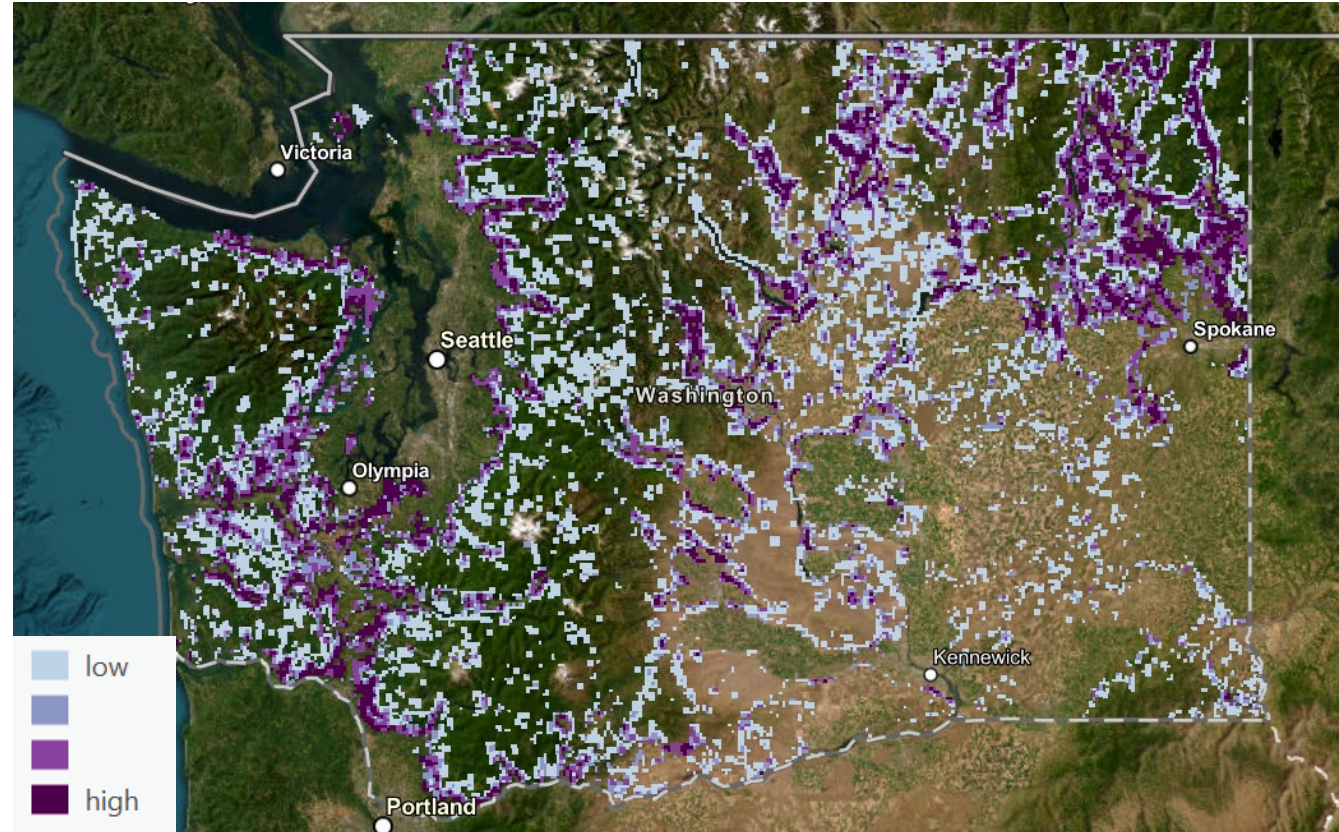
Objective 2: Direct conservation actions to the highest value locations.





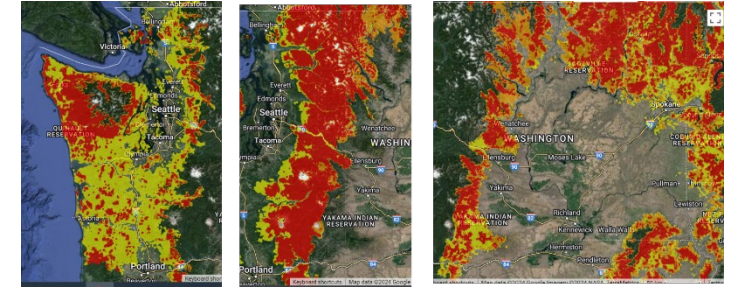
# Goal 2: Identify priority locations

- Critical to statewide connectivity.
- High conservation value based on multiple connectivity values.
- Urgently threatened with loss or degradation.
- Different priorities for different actions, funding opportunities, and scales.

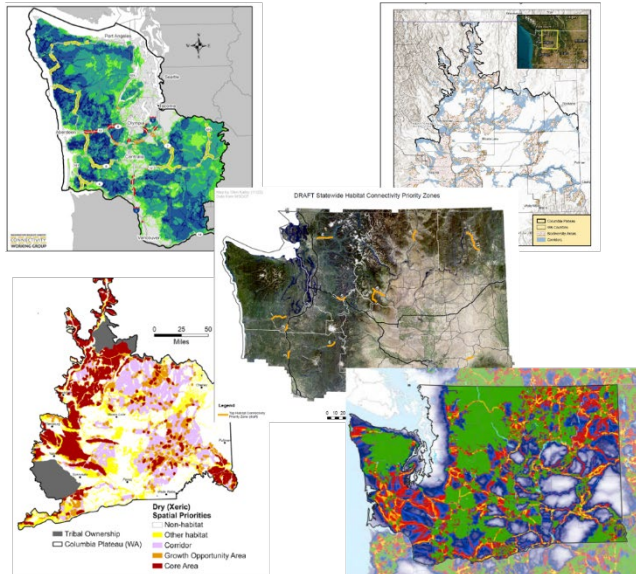


Review Compare Understand

New Data



Existing data and priorities



WAHCAP  
synthesis

WAHCAP  
Maps and  
Priority  
Locations

Select  
Prioritize  
Revise

Review and revise in future years

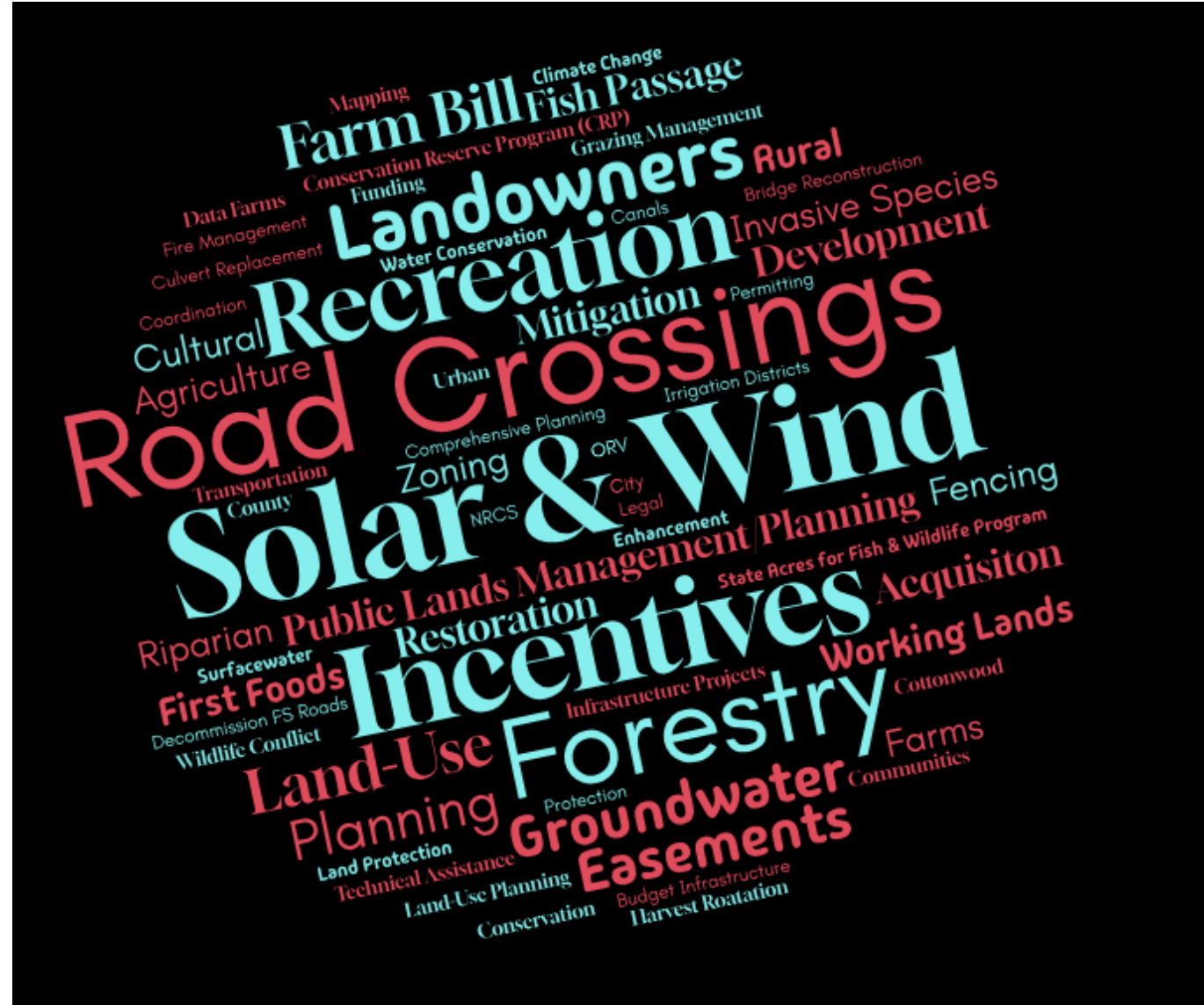
Goal 3: Develop an  
adaptive process





## Goal 4: Mainstream connectivity conservation

- Identify priority implementation actions for habitat connectivity.
- Help existing plans, policies, programs, and funding opportunities support connectivity priorities.
- Identify regional needs and opportunities for improved connectivity implementation.
- Clarify how WDFW, WSDOT, and WAHCAP partners can support these efforts.

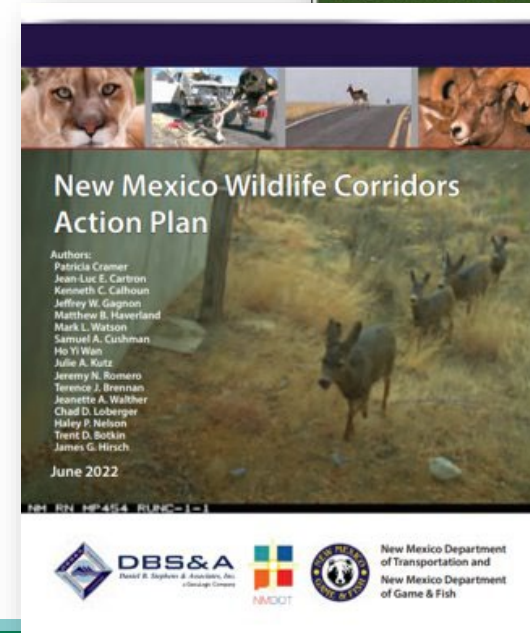
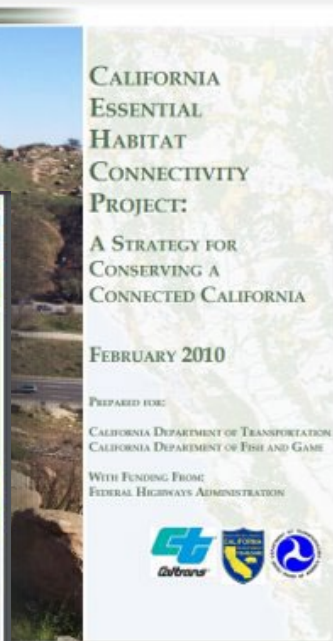
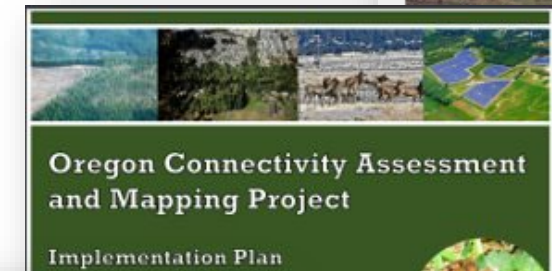


# State Connectivity Action Plans

Maps showing *where* connectivity is.

*Priorities* for taking action.

Strategies for coordinated *implementation*.





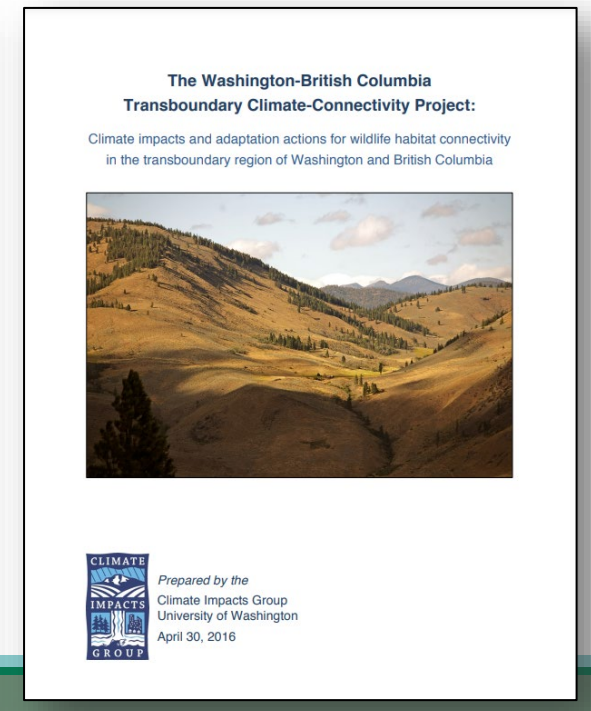
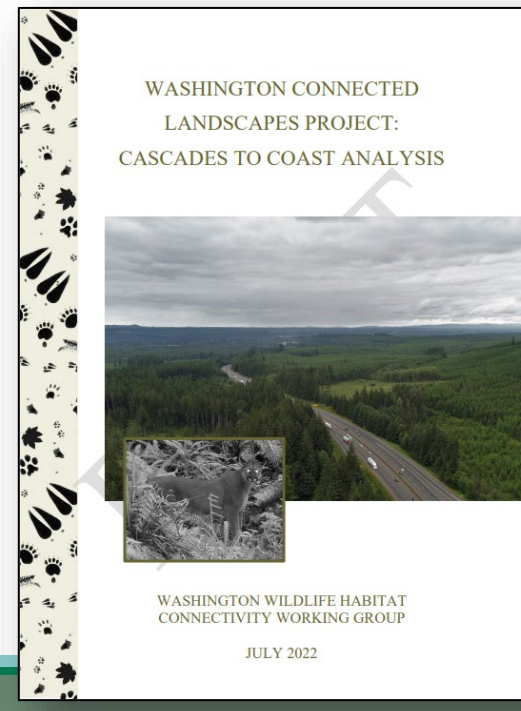
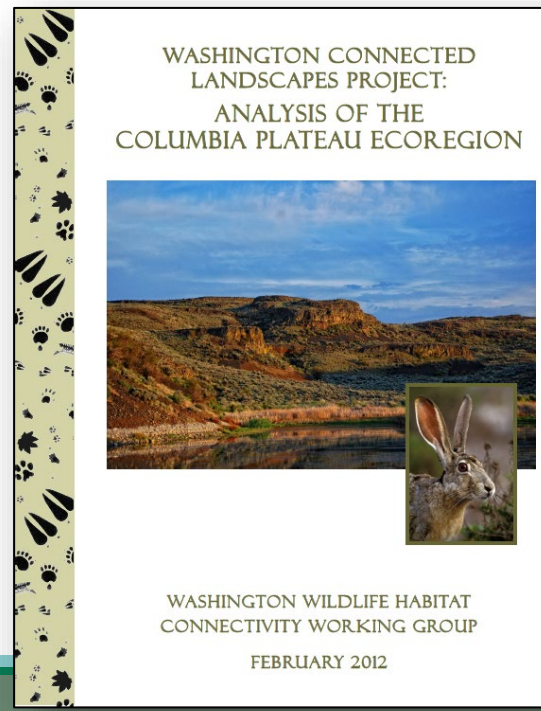
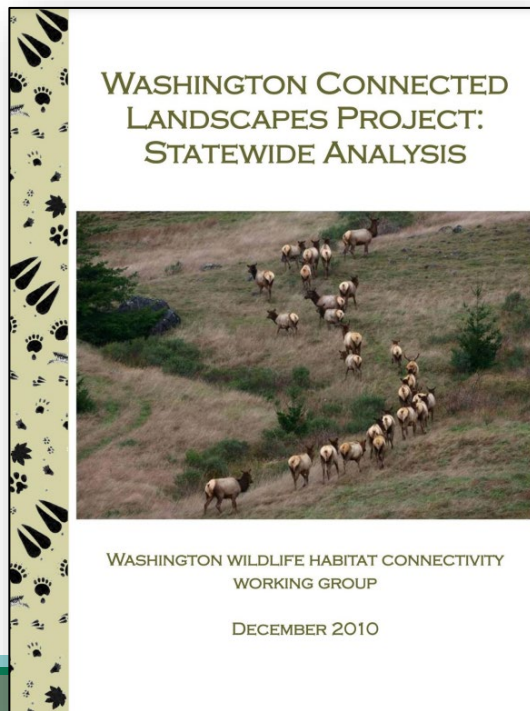
# Existing work...

Washington Connected Landscapes Project: Statewide Analysis

Columbia Plateau Ecoregional Analysis

Cascades To Coast Analysis

The Washington-British Columbia Transboundary Climate-connectivity Project

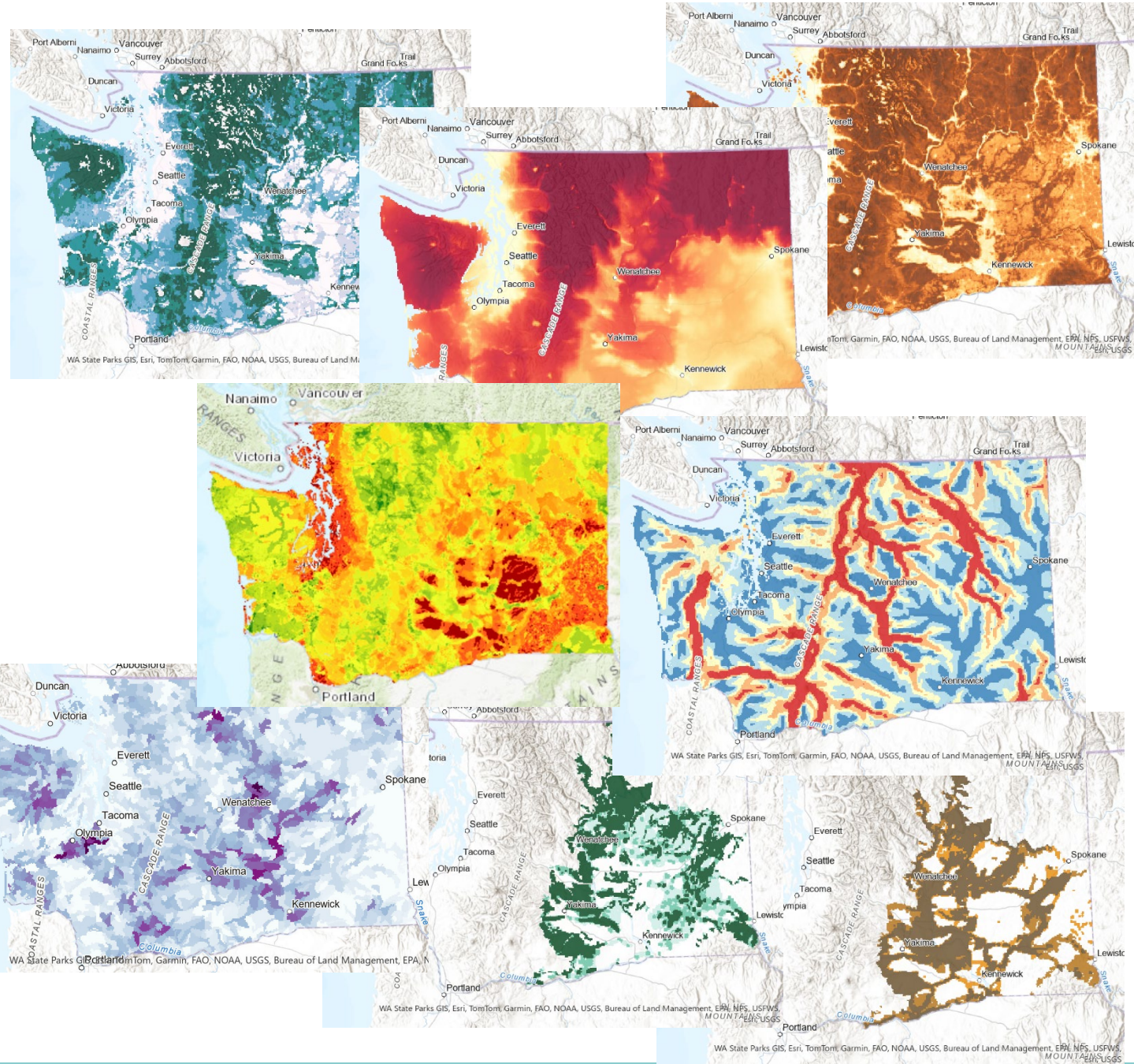




# WAHCAP

## Connectivity values

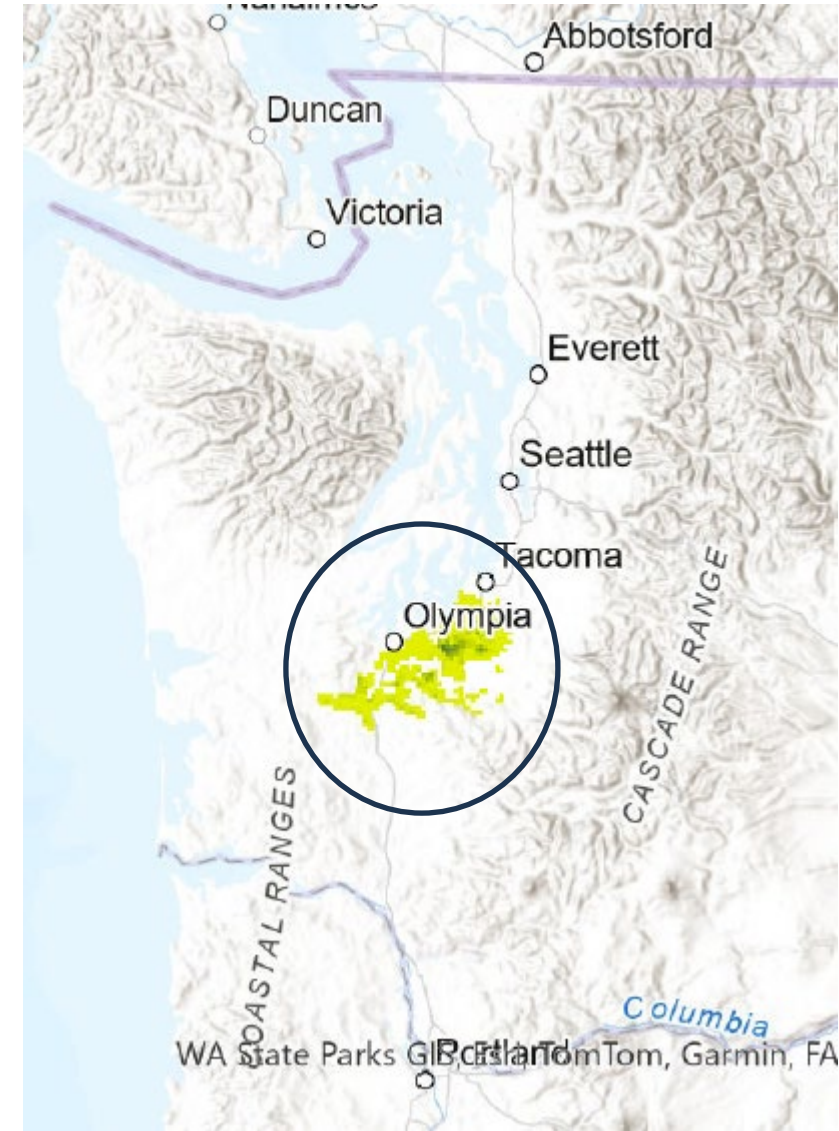
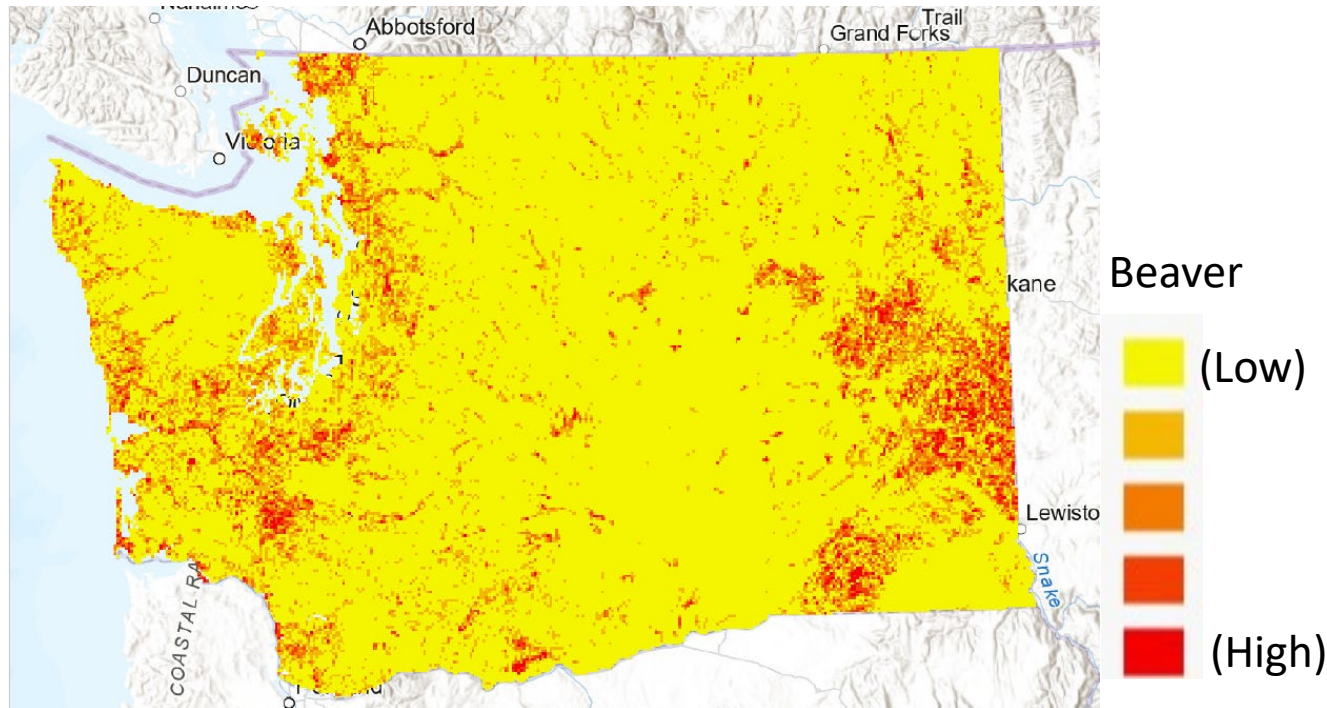
1. Ecosystem (structural) connectivity
2. Network importance
3. Local landscape permeability
4. Focal species models
5. Existing prioritizations – ALI-BAC
6. Existing prioritizations - WSRRI
7. Species of greatest conservation need
8. Climate connectivity





# WAHCAP Connectivity Values Additions and Changes

- Westside prairie soils
- Beaver Potential Habitat (added to Focal Species)
- Made some corrections to the SGCN layer
- Weighted Focal Species by model confidence

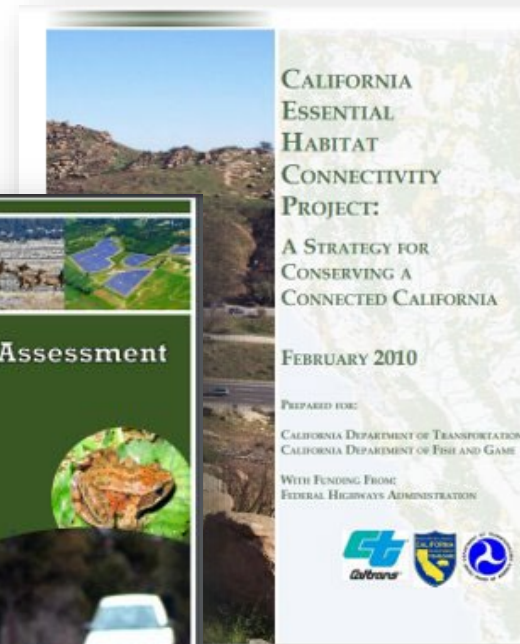
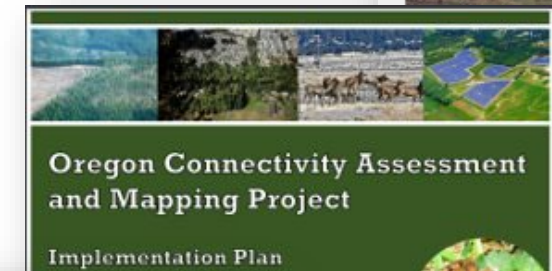
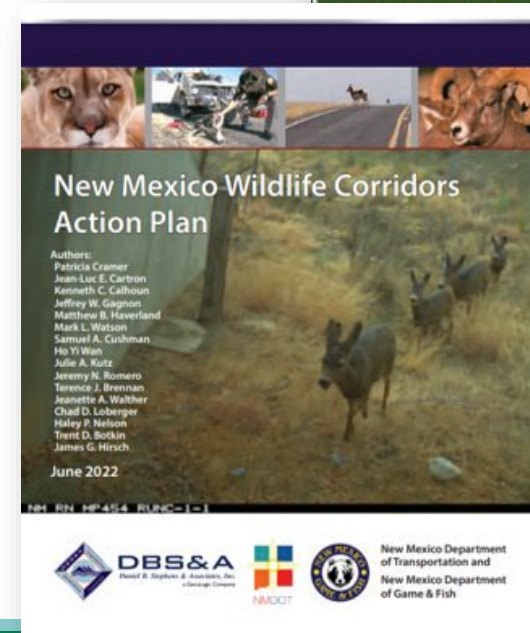


# State Connectivity Action Plans

Maps showing *where* connectivity is.

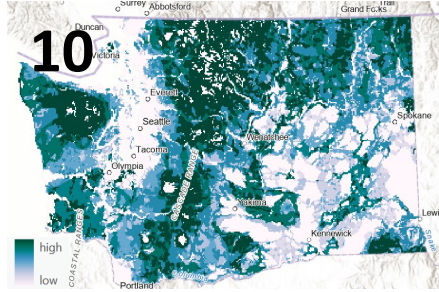
*Priorities* for taking action.

Strategies for coordinated *implementation*.

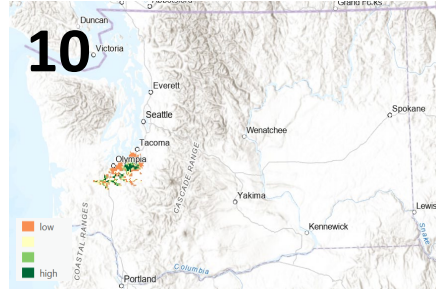




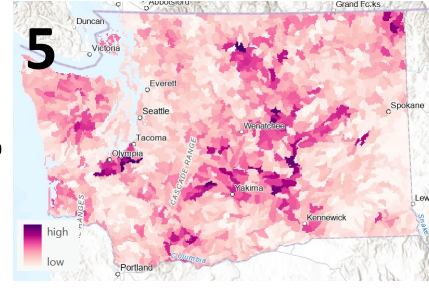
# Combining all layers



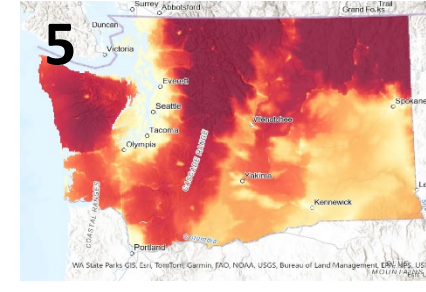
**Locally rescaled  
ecosystem  
services**



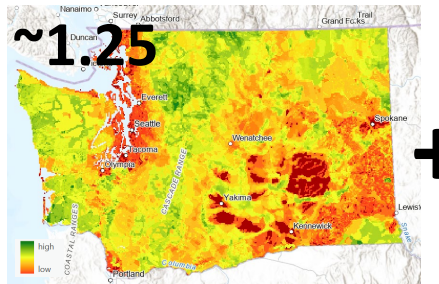
**Prairies**



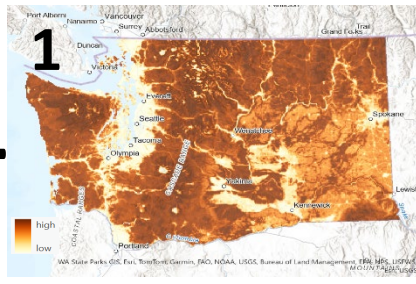
**Species of Greatest  
Conservation Need**



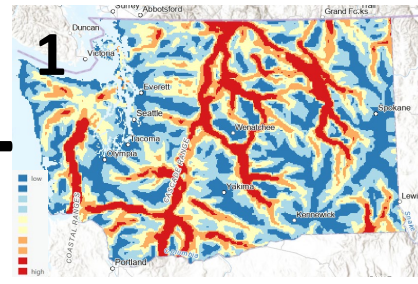
**Network  
importance**



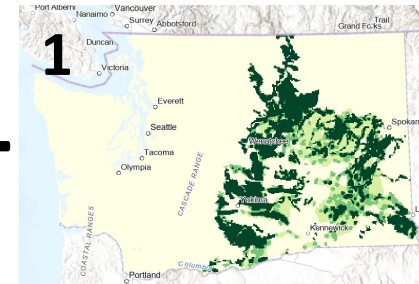
**Locally rescaled  
focal species**



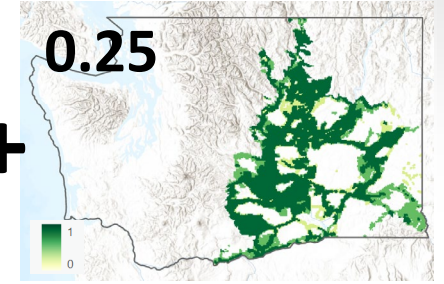
**Permeability**



**Climate path  
corridors**



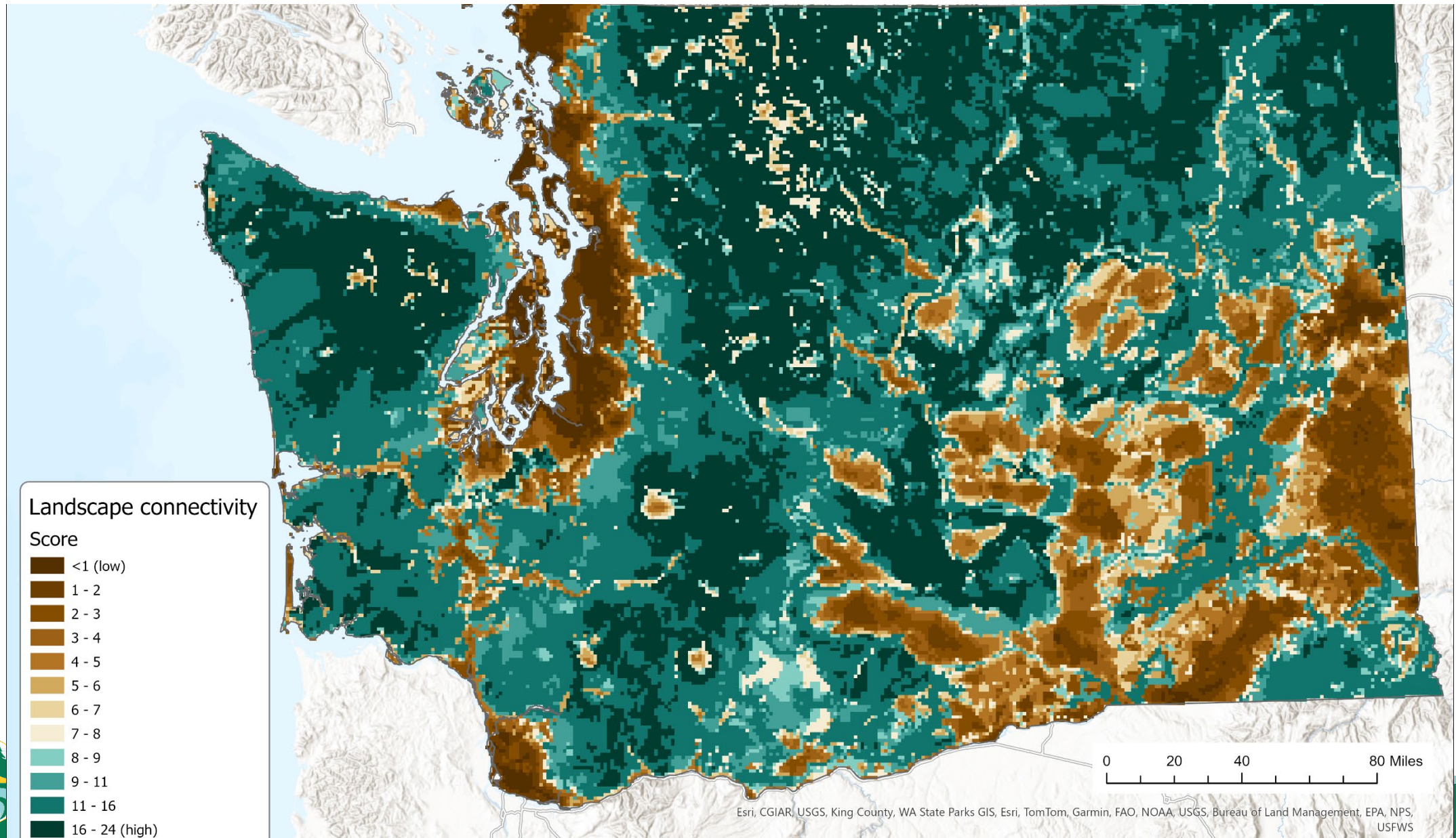
**WSRRI**



**ALI-BAC**

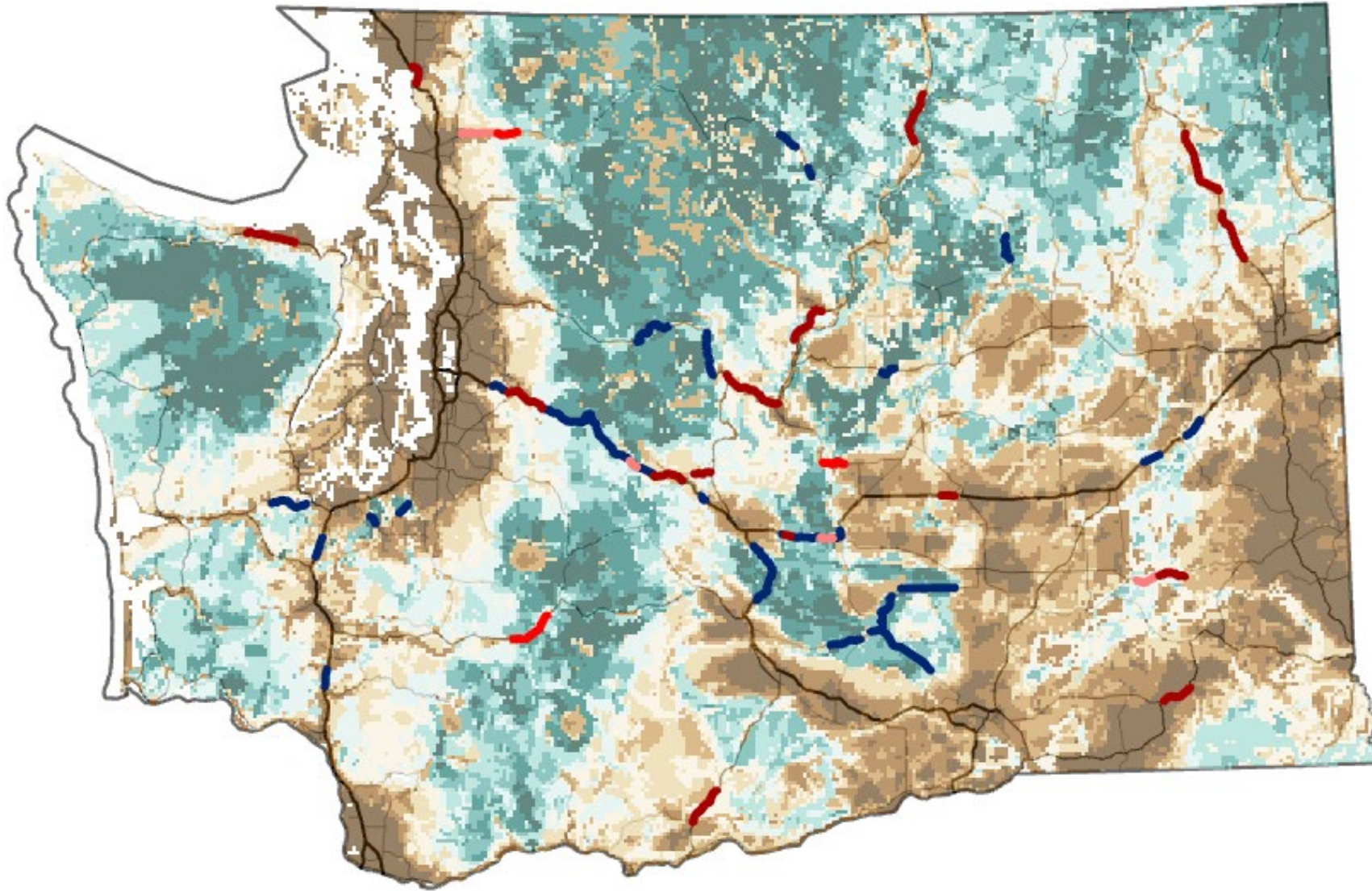


# Synthesized landscape connectivity values





# Identify priority locations - Transportation









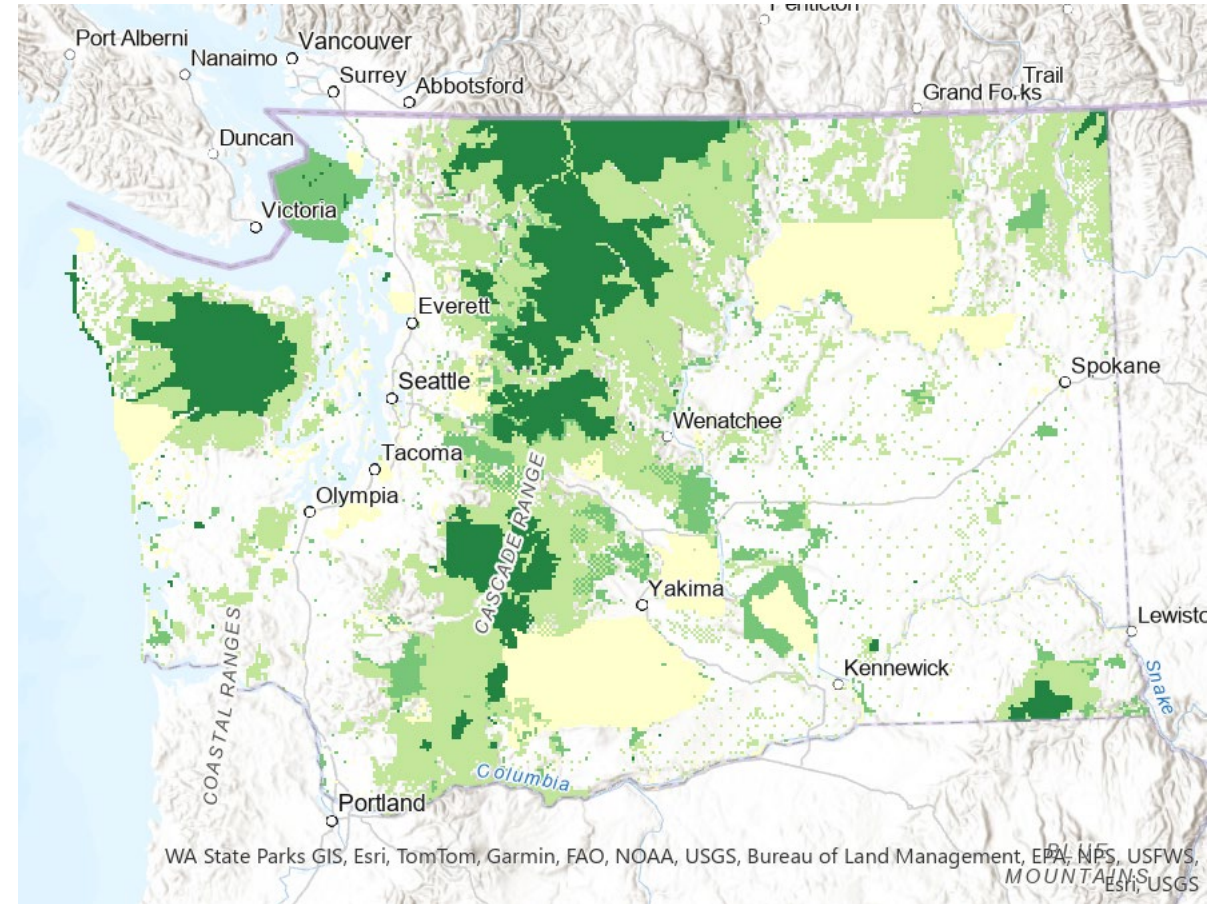
# **WAHCAP applications for public lands**

# Public and private lands

Both critically important.

Both need conservation attention.

Conservation actions, approaches, funding, and opportunities are very different.



GAP 1: Managed for biodiversity – natural disturbance allowed



GAP 2: Managed for biodiversity – natural disturbance suppressed



GAP 3: No conversion, extraction permitted



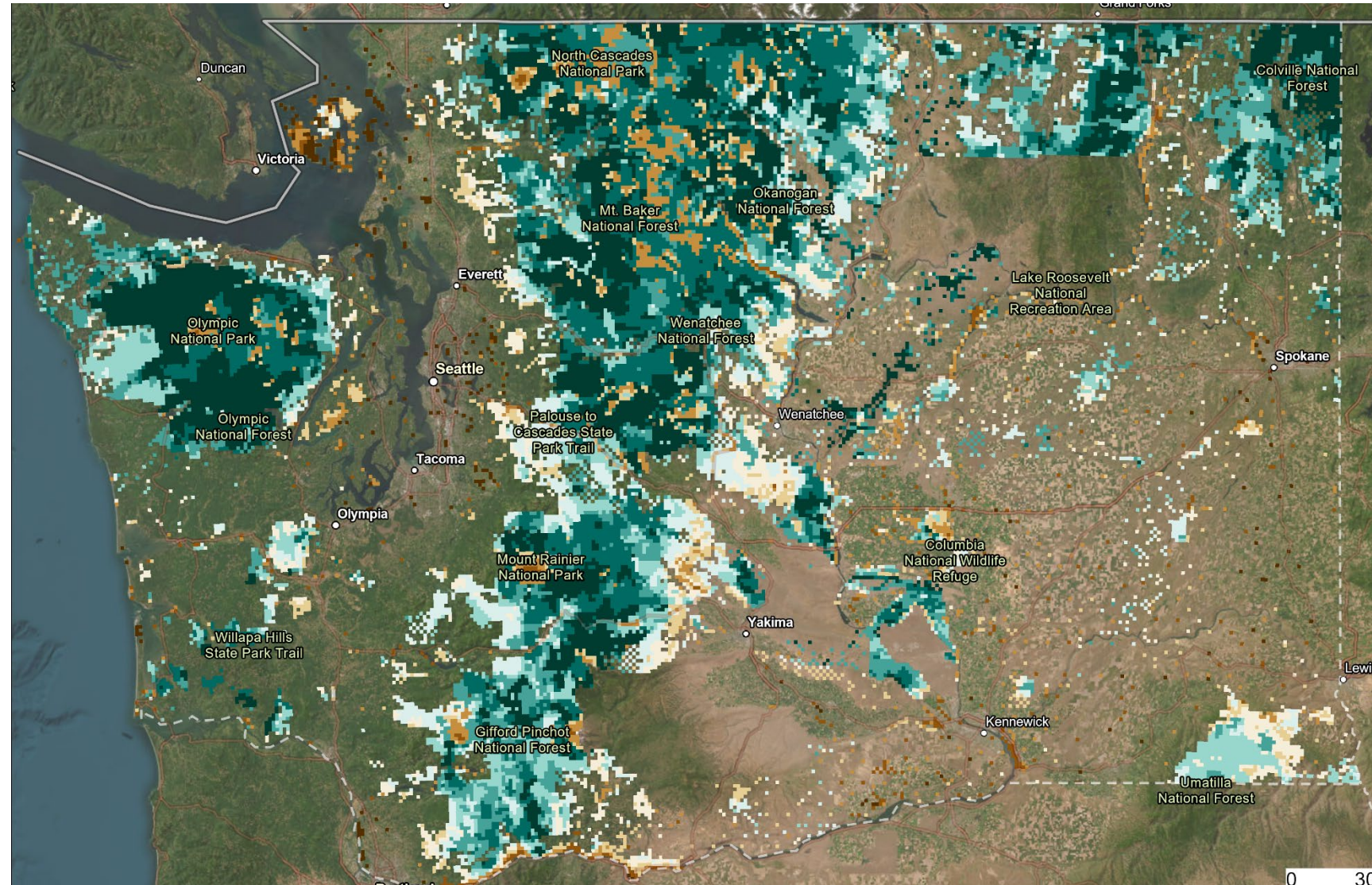
GAP 4: No protection mandate





# Cascades and Olympics

- Consistently identified in State and National assessments as important.
- Comparatively high ecological integrity.
- Diffuse connectivity.
- Climate connectivity.



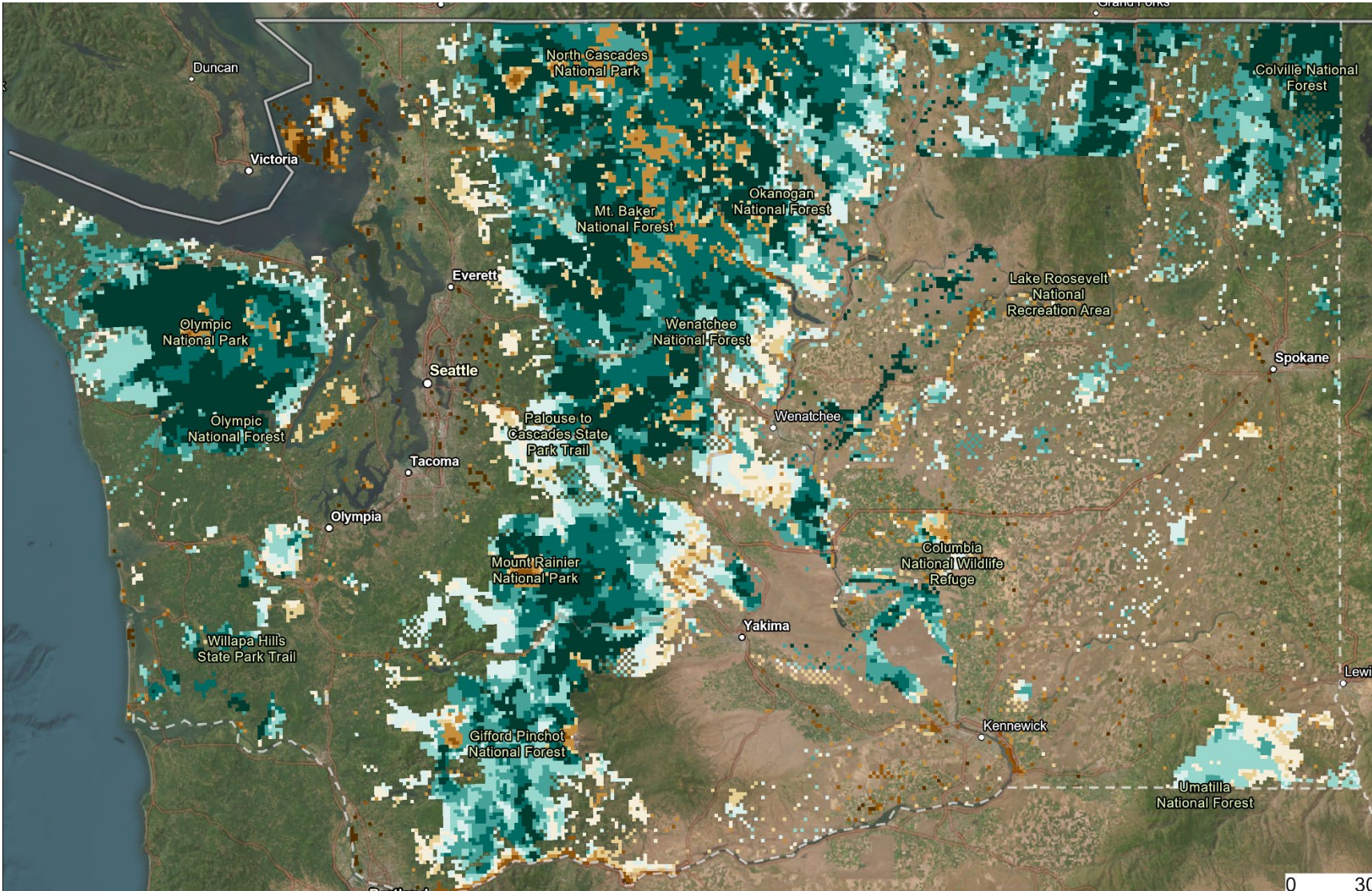


# Cascades and Olympics – high priority, highly threatened

Recreation impacts are devastating and increasing.

Looking for improved mapping and representation of recreation impacts.

State and Tribal Recreation Initiative (STRI).

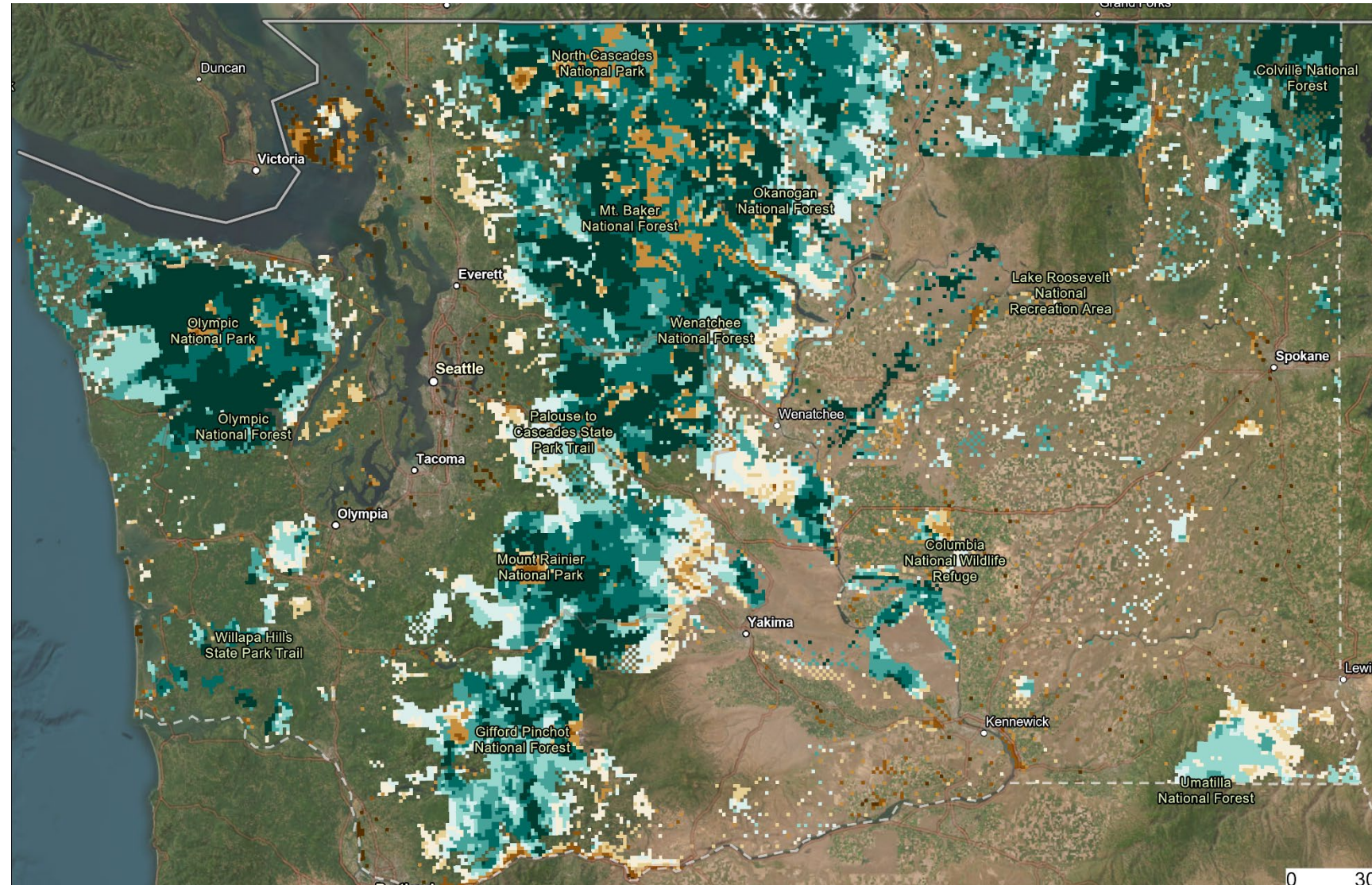




# Cascades and Olympics – Public lands

Issues identified so far:

- Road barriers.
- Forest service and access roads.
- Forest management.
- Fire management.
- Development pressure outside public lands.

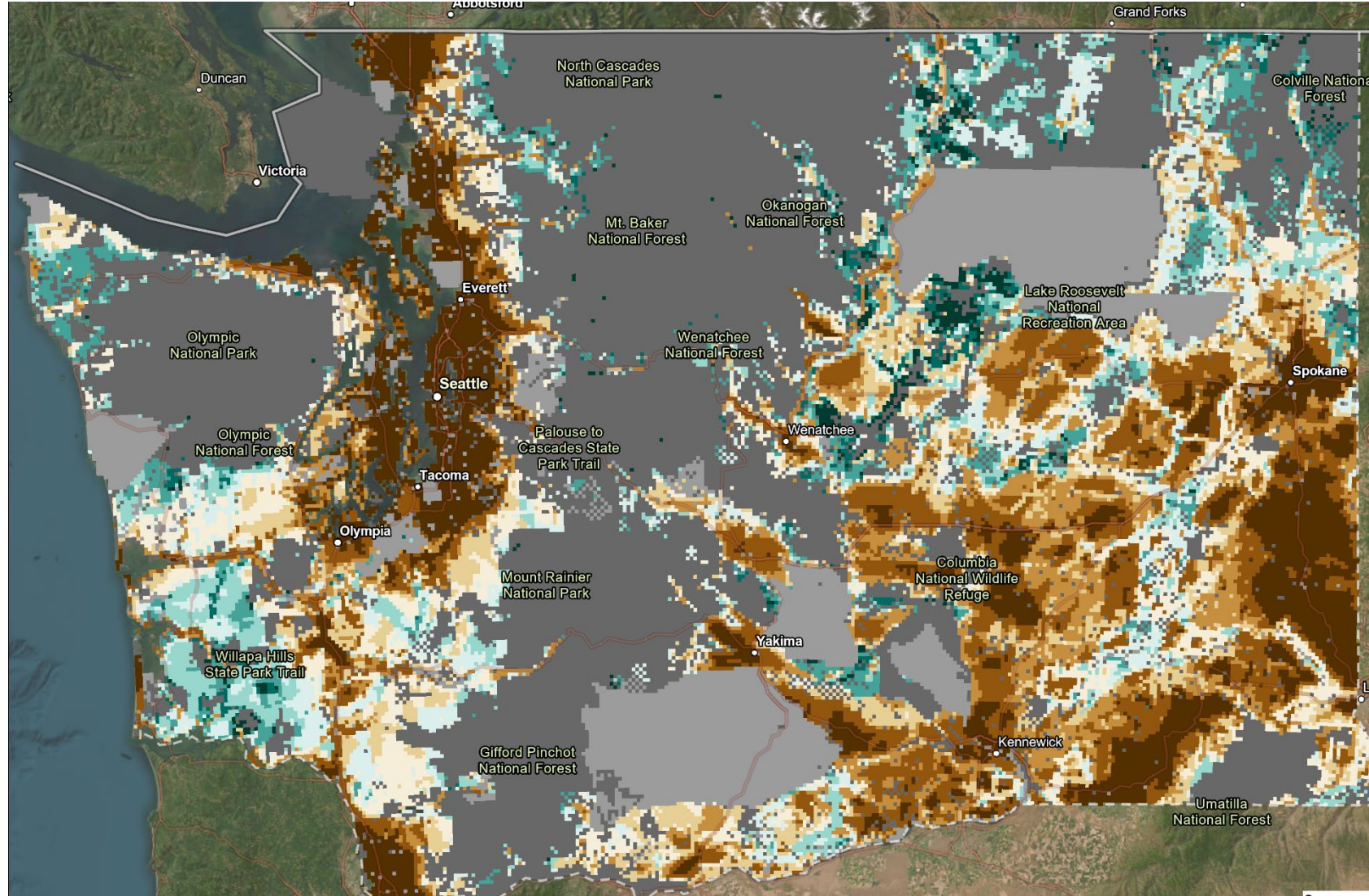




# Public lands buffers and connections

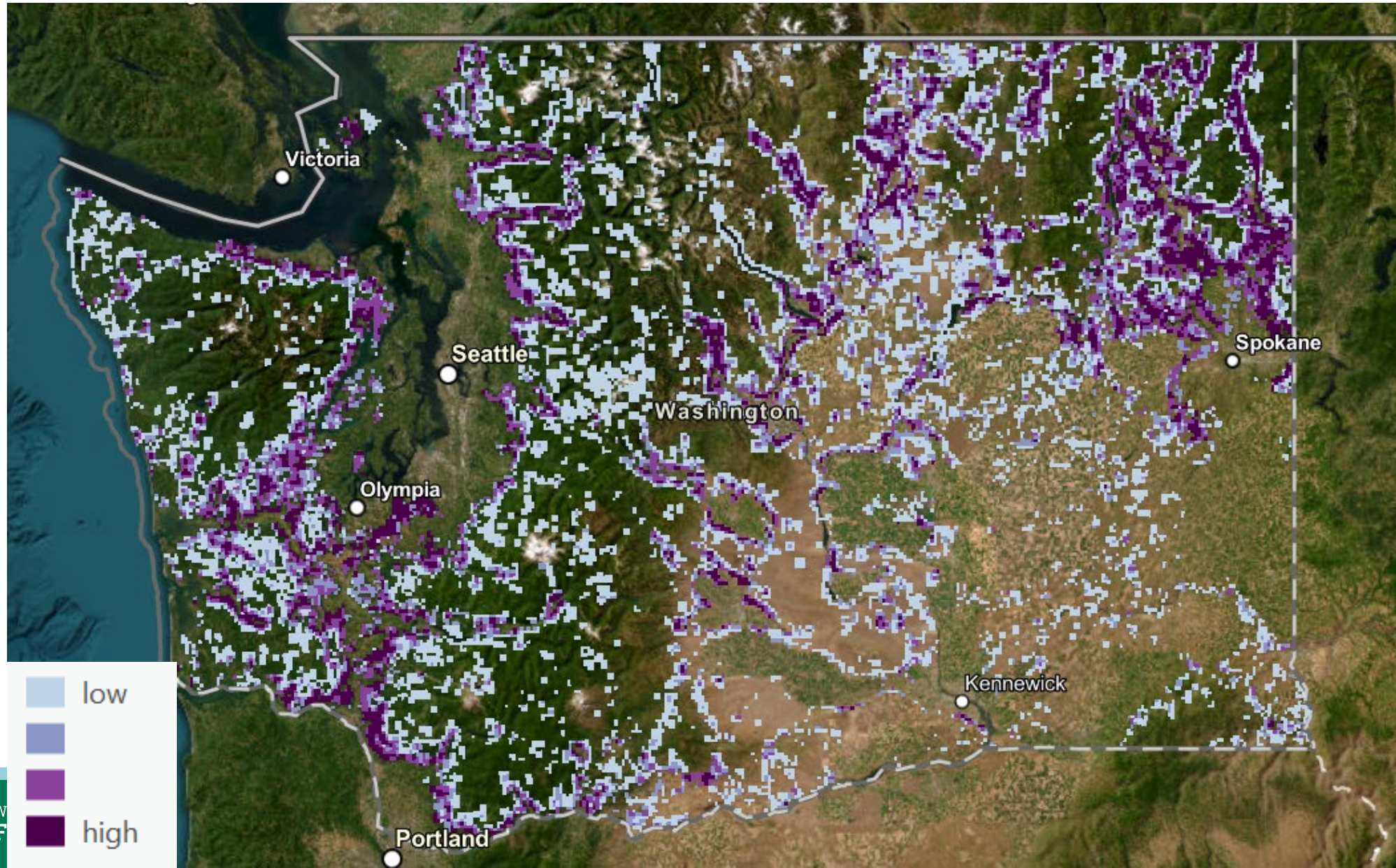
- Connect existing protected lands.
- “Buffer” impacts from activities adjacent to public lands.

NOTE: Reservation lands are grayed out but not assumed to be protected or unprotected



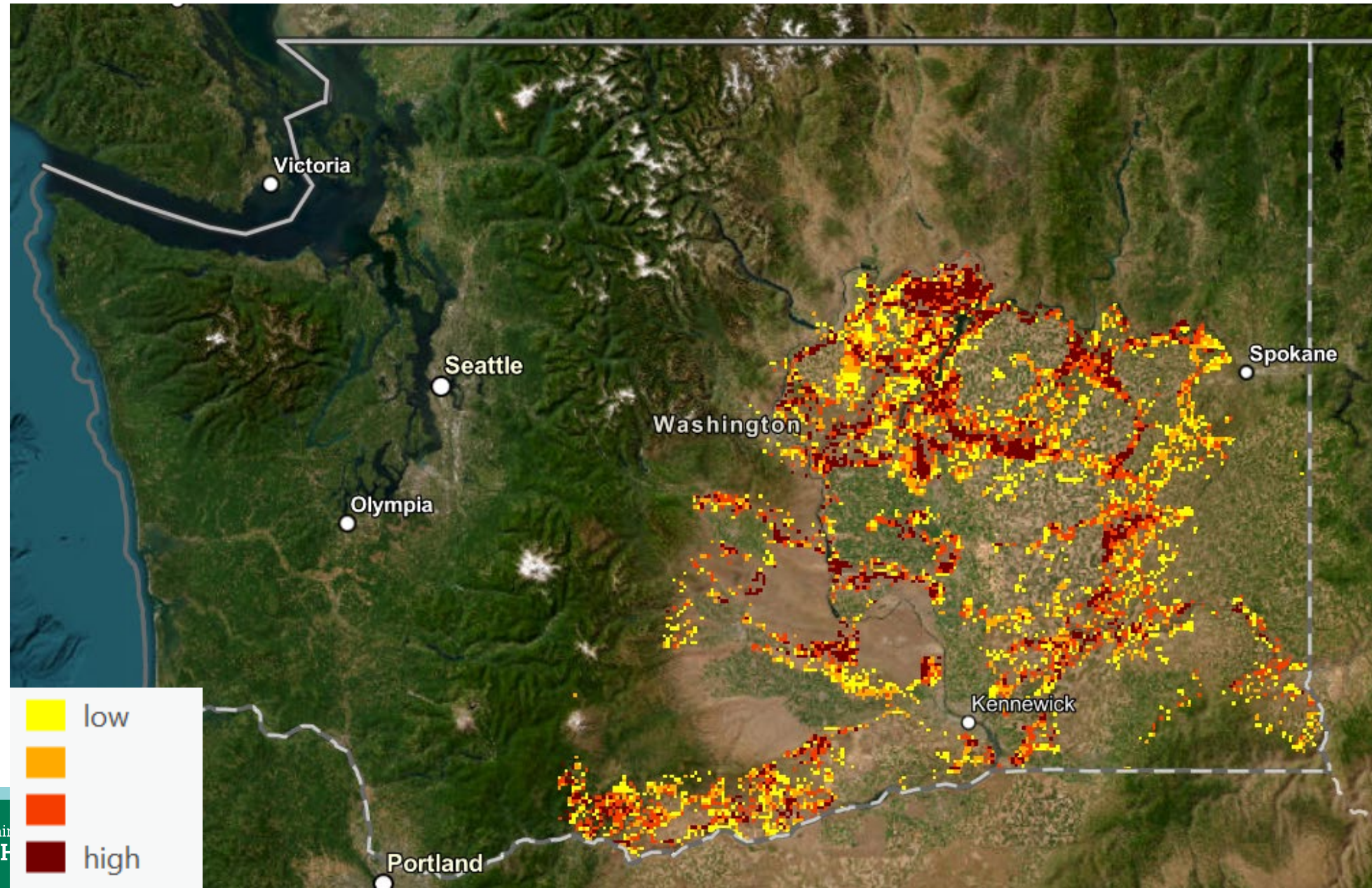


# High value connectivity and high development pressure





# High value connectivity and high solar development pressure









## Wrap-up and next steps



# Next steps

Emailed comments are welcome any time. Our last formal comment period will be May 1-23 on the full report.

## April 1-10, 2025:

- ~~Land Use Planning, Tuesday, April 1, 1-4pm~~
- ~~Public Lands Management, Wednesday, April 9, 9am-12pm~~
- Voluntary Conservation Incentives, Thursday, April 10, 9am-12pm
- Dedicated Tribal Workshop, Wednesday, April 9, 1-4pm

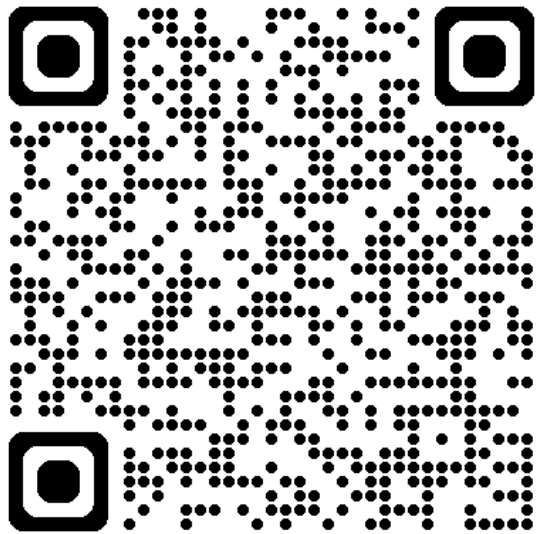
May 1-23, 2025: Final comment period on draft report.

June 30, 2025: Final report.



# Thank you!

[Julia.Michalak@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Julia.Michalak@dfw.wa.gov)



<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/connectivity/action-plan>



## Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan Mailing List

