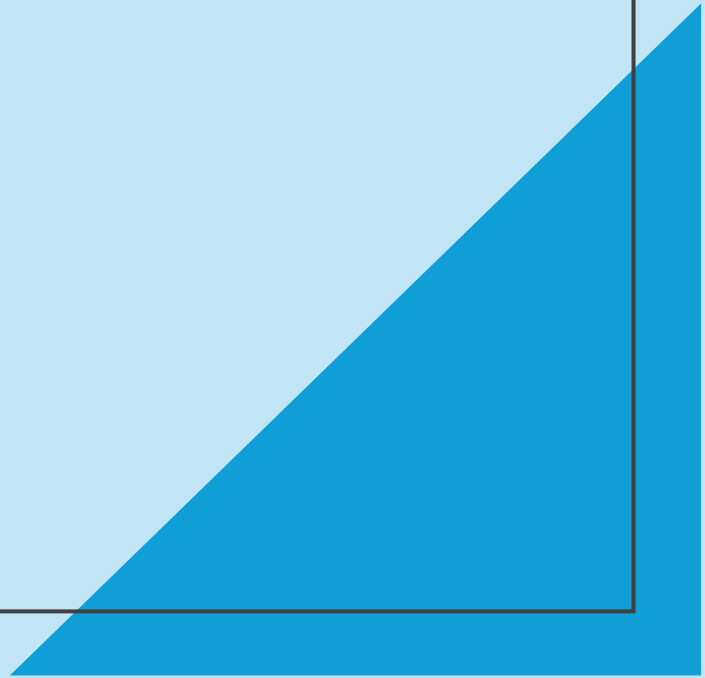




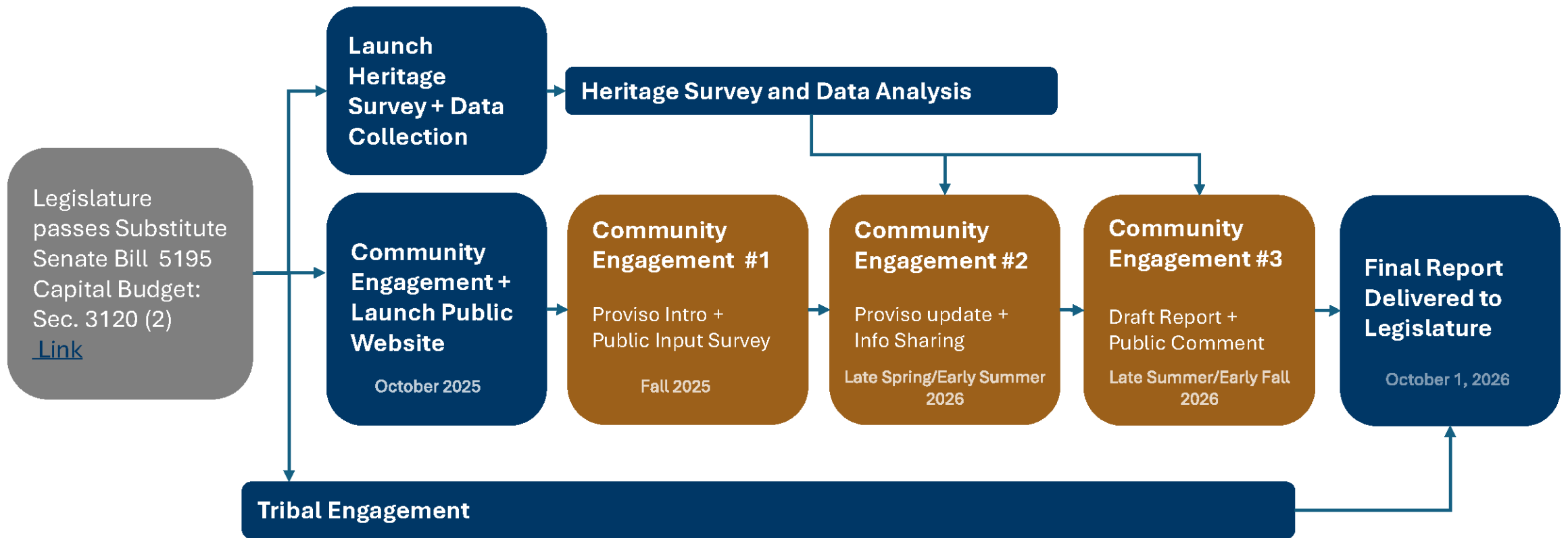
Elwha Watershed Study

Community Meeting #1



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Engagement Process
- The Proviso
- The Elwha Watershed
- Natural Area Designation & Natural Heritage Survey Process
- Questions & Closing



Elwha Proviso – Process Diagram *DRAFT*

10.23.2025 - draft update

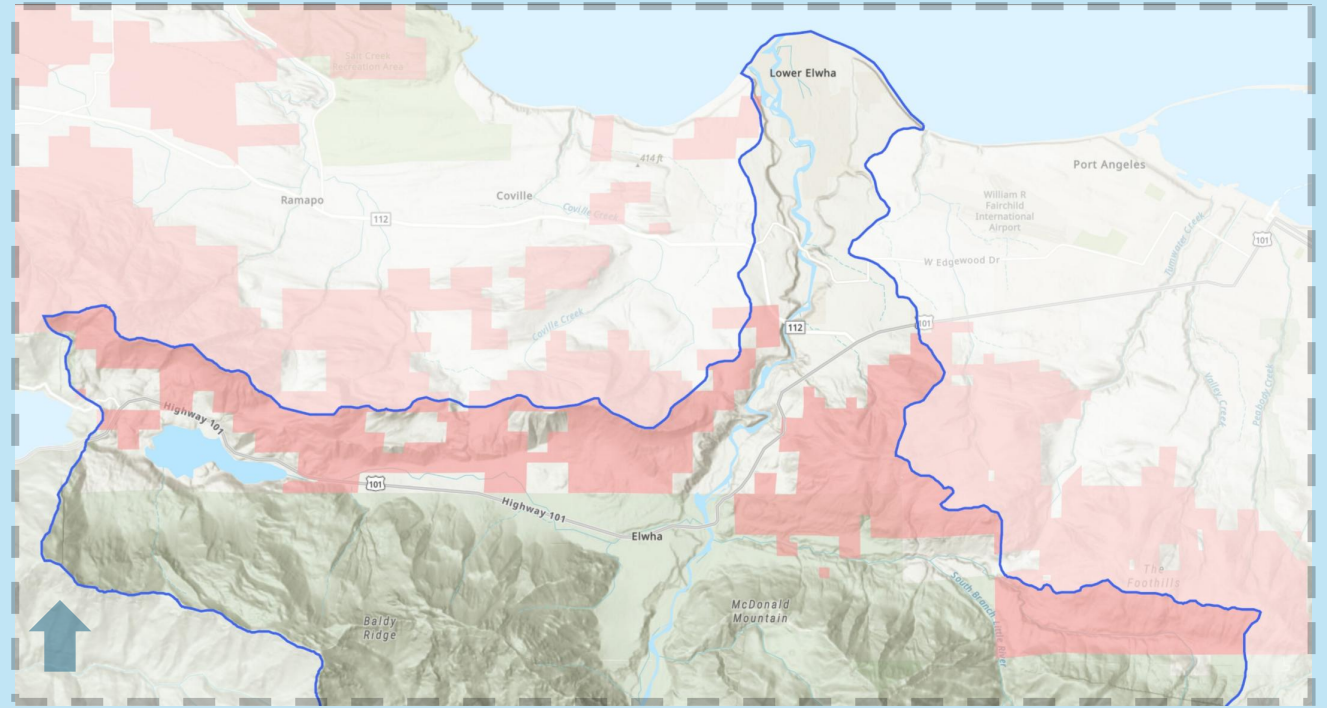
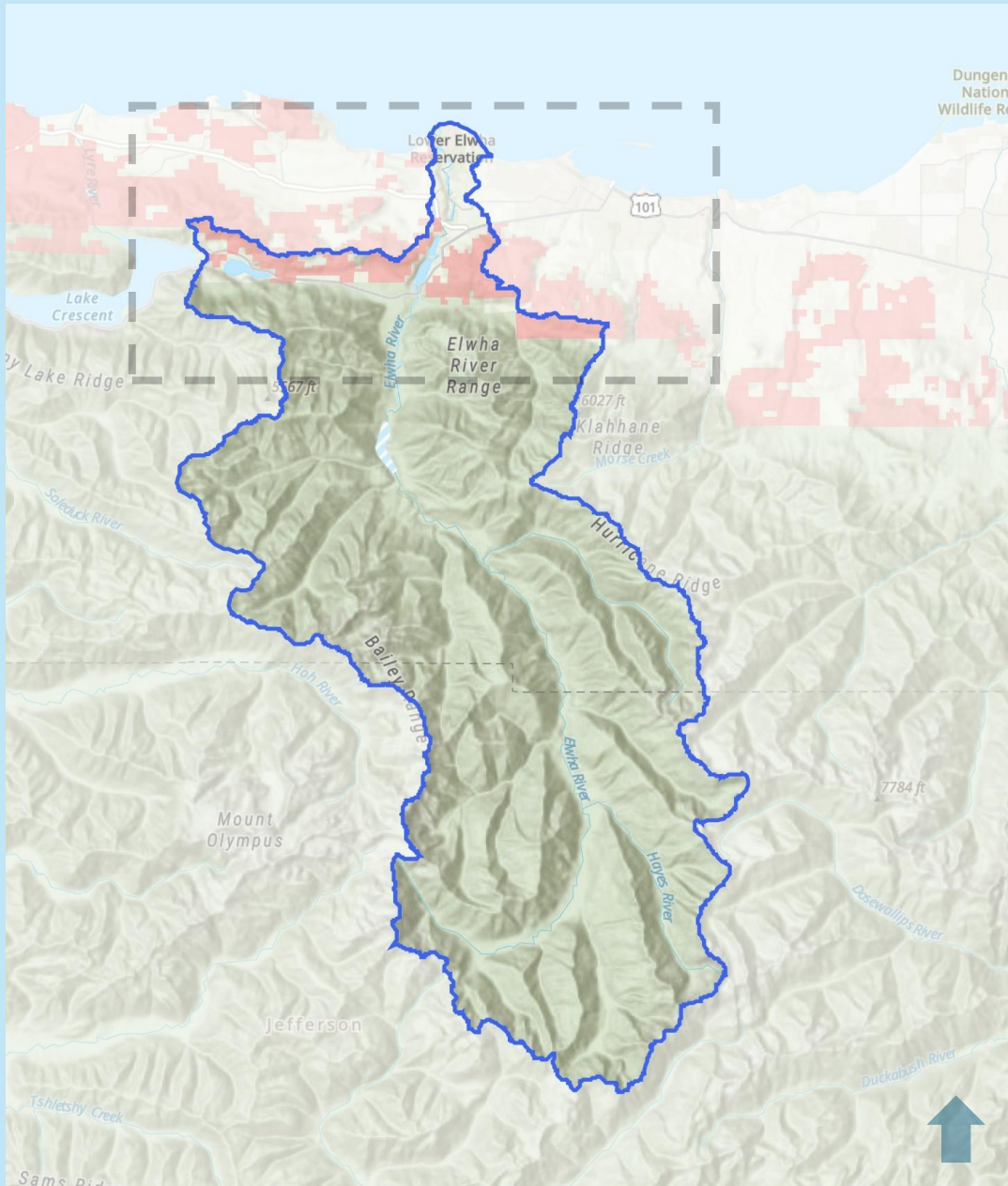


The Proviso

- Capital Bill (**SSB 5195**), under Trust Land Transfer (Sec. 3120)
- Directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct an analysis of the ecological and conservation values of the Elwha watershed on state-owned lands managed by DNR.
- Designated \$250,000 for this purpose.
- DNR must provide the Legislature with a report by October 1, 2026

The Proviso Deliverables

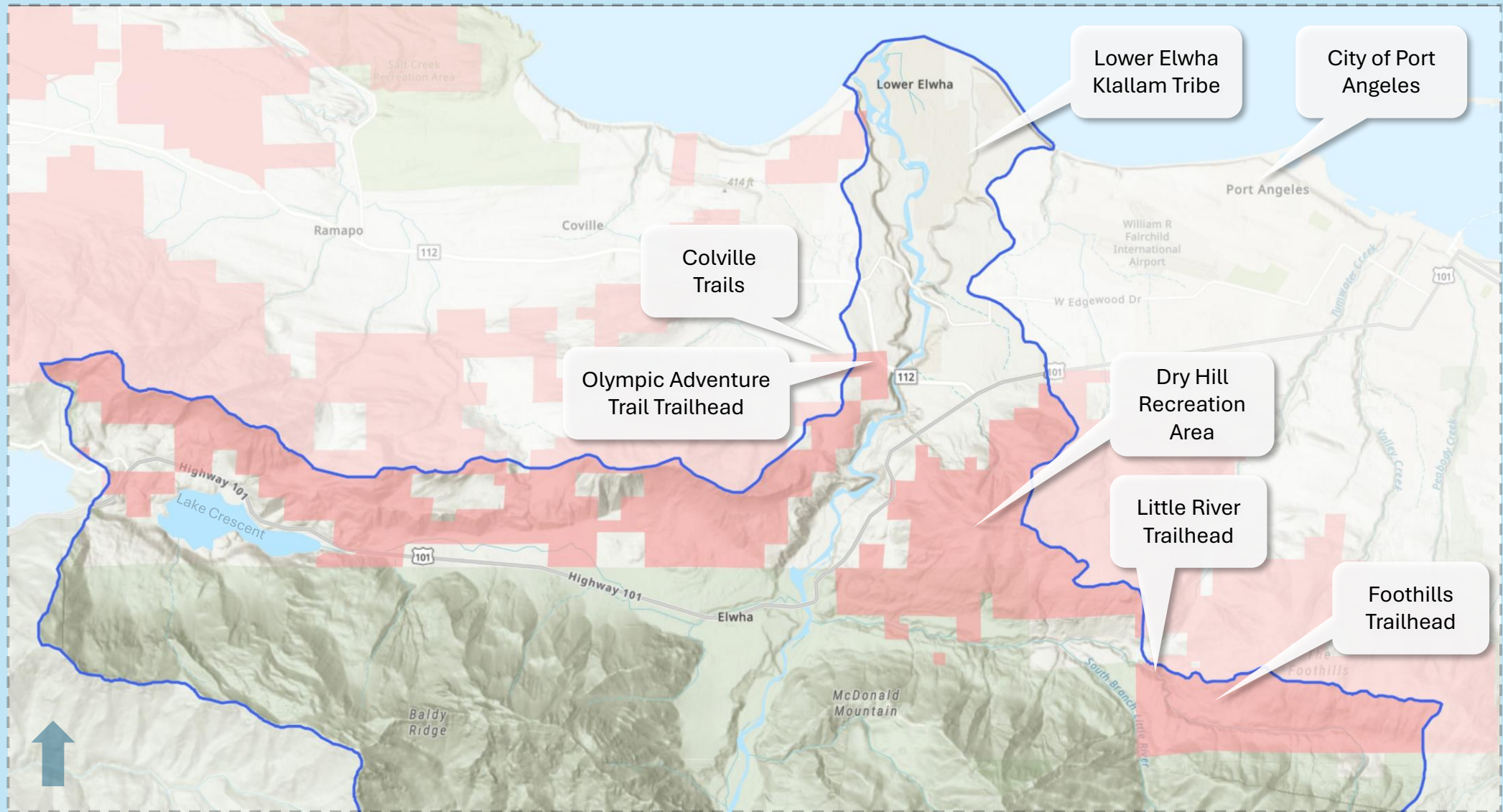
- A Washington Natural Heritage Program site survey to identify rare flora, native ecological communities
- Locations of structurally complex forests
- Scenic or other natural features worthy of consideration for conservation
- Current uses, including recreation and cultural practices
- Identification of lands appropriate for NAP or NRCA conservation, and if applicable a proposed boundary.



Uplands Elwha Watershed | DNR Managed Lands

- Federal (Olympic National Forest + USFS)
- DNR Managed Lands
- Other Lands – Mix of Public, Private, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

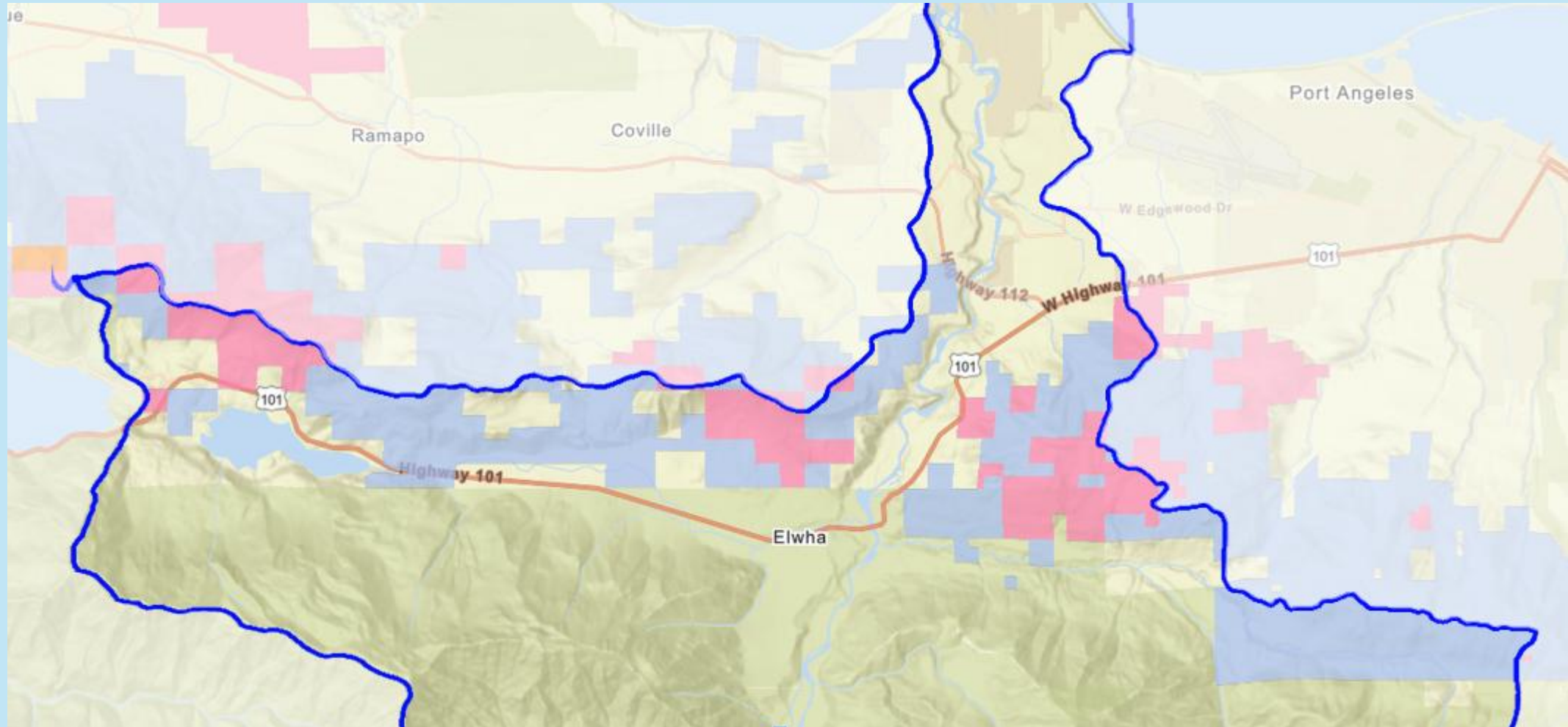
Note: Maps are working drafts with approximated information to be further developed as the study progresses from Nov. 2025 – Oct. 2026



- Federal (Olympic National Forest + USFS)
- DNR Managed Lands
- Other Lands – Mix of Public, Private, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

Note: Maps are working drafts with approximated information to be further developed as the study progresses from Nov. 2025 – Oct. 2026

DNR Managed Trust Lands



- Common School Trust
- State Forest Transfer Land

Note: Maps are working drafts with approximated information to be further developed as the study progresses from Nov. 2025 – Oct. 2026

DNR Managed Trust Lands

State Forest Transfer Land

- Statutory Trust
- Benefits the county and specific junior taxing districts
- Tax code area specific

Common School Trust

- Federally granted trust
- Benefits K-12 construction fund
- Pooled trust

Natural Area Designation Process





Natural Heritage Survey

→ Are there any rare species or rare & high-quality ecosystems present at the site?

- Conservation Targets: species & ecosystems listed in 2025 State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan
- Natural Heritage survey of site





Gather Existing Data

- Natural Heritage databases / files
- WDFW databases
- Herbarium records / iNaturalist records

WNHP Data Explorer Home **Rare Plant and Ecosystem Locations** Ecological Integrity Assessment Data Feedback

User Guide Layers Legend Locations Coordinates Bookmarks Filter Select Draw Print Info Request

Known Rare Plants and Rare & High-quality Ecosystems

Zoom to

Increase opacity

Decrease opacity

Details

Historical Rare Plants and Rare & High-quality Ecosystems

Reference Standard Wetlands

State Route Mileposts

County Tax Parcels

DNR Natural Area Preserves (NAP)

DNR Natural Resources Conservation Areas (NRCA)

Ecological Integrity Assessments

PLSS

Boundaries

Hydrography

DNR Managed Surface Lands by Surface Trust

WADNR - Contours 40-foot

Public Lands

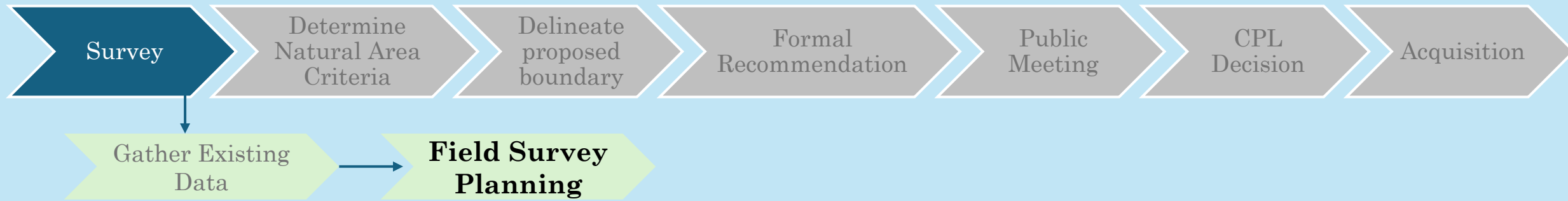
Wilderness Areas

Tribal Lands

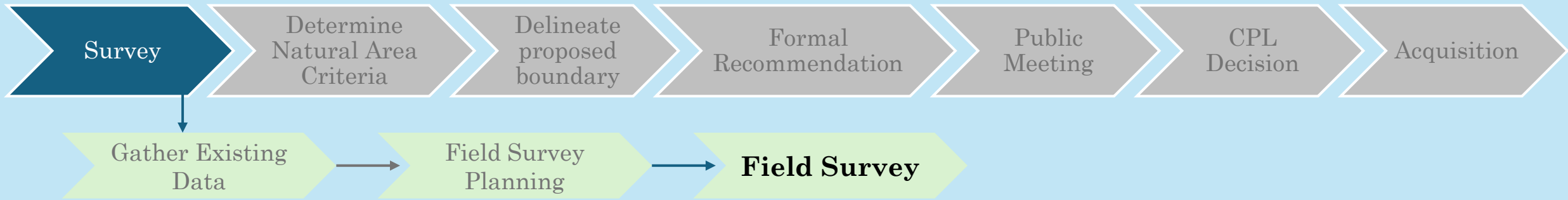
Non-DNR Major Public Lands

KNOWN PLANT AND ECOSYSTEM LOCATIONS REFLECT KNOWN OCCURRENCE LOCATIONS BUT MAY NOT REFLECT ALL OCCURRENCES OF RARE PLANTS OR ECOSYSTEMS

Esri, USGS | King County, WA State Parks GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS Powered by Esri



- Prioritized DNR lands for survey
- Excluded lands with existing data, were previously surveyed, or recently harvested
- Prioritized survey effort of remaining ~4,500 acres
 - Priority 1 = Structurally complex forests (SCF)
 - Priority 2 = Large balds/cliff systems
 - Priority 3 = Mature forests not in SCF layer
 - Priority 4 = All other DNR land not previously surveyed
- Plan survey according to phenological needs of species / ecosystems
 - Mesic Forests –December to June
 - Dry forests / balds – April to June
 - Wetlands – December to June



Ecosystems

- Classify ecosystems - U.S. National Vegetation Classification
- Assess ecosystem quality - Ecological Integrity Assessment method

Species

- Survey for suspected rare plants & assess their viability



WASHINGTON NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

2024 Washington Vascular Plant Species of Conservation Concern

Jesse E. D. Miller, Sienna Wessel, and Walter Fertig
Washington Natural Heritage Program
July 3, 2024

Natural Heritage Report 2024-07

FACTOR	COMPONENT	species	comm.
Size	area of occupancy	√	√
	population abundance	√	
	population density	√	
	population fluctuation (average population and minimum population in worst foreseeable year)	√	
Condition	reproduction and health (evidence of regular, successful reproduction; age distribution for long-lived species; persistence of clones; vigor, evidence of disease affecting reproduction / survival)	√	
	development/maturity (stability, old-growth)		√
	species composition and biological structure (richness, evenness of species distribution, presence of exotics)	√	√
	ecological processes (degree of disturbance by logging, grazing; changes in hydrology or natural fire regime)	√	√
	abiotic physical/chemical factors (stability of substrate, physical structure, water quality) [excluding processes]	√	√
Landscape Context	landscape structure and extent (pattern, connectivity, e.g., measure of fragmentation/ patchiness, measure of genetic connectivity)	√	√
	condition of the surrounding landscape (i.e., development/maturity, species composition and biological structure, ecological processes, abiotic physical/chemical factors)	√	√

WASHINGTON NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

Field Manual for Applying Rapid Ecological Integrity Assessments in Upland Plant Communities of Washington State (Version 1.5)

Prepared by
F. Joseph Rocchio, Tynan Ramm-Granberg, and Rex C. Crawford

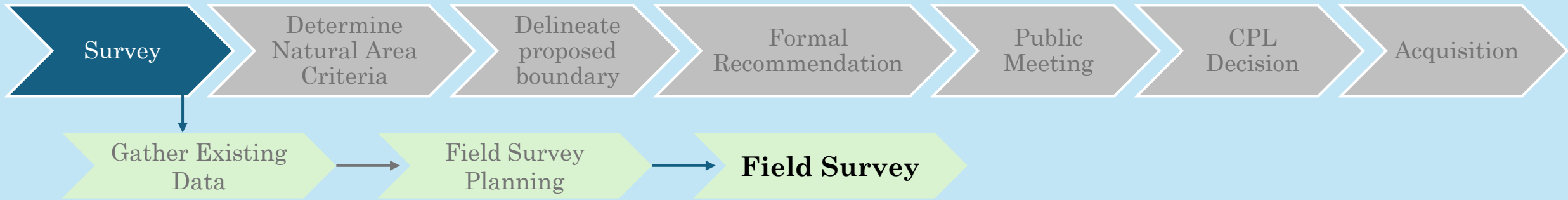
Natural Heritage Report 2024-04

Key to the Plant Associations of the Puget Sound Drainage Basin

Tynan Ramm-Granberg
Draft: April 22, 2024

Instructions for field application of the key:

1. Select a relatively uniform area of vegetation and topography within the stand.
2. This key is not dichotomous. If the stand or plot meets the criteria in a line, read to the right, or (if blank) to the next indented line. If the stand or plot does not meet the criteria, skip to the next line that is not indented from the current line.
3. Some associations may be distinguished by multiple characteristics—these associations may be reached via more than one path in the key.
4. Percentage values refer to crown cover—the vertical projection below the entire crown of the plant. Do not subtract for spaces between leaves and branches.
5. "Present" species are typically found in a representative plot (they regularly occur in the stand).
6. "Prominent" species are common within most plots (generally 3-15% cover) but do not make up the dominant vegetation.
7. "Dominant" and "Codominant" species are diagnostic species that have the greatest cover within their physiognomic stratum (tree/shrub/herb).
8. "+" = add the crown cover of each of the species indicated (e.g., 7+22 = 29% cover). Overlap between species is counted twice. Any one species may be absent.
9. Abbreviations for the national parks(s) in which an association has been documented are listed in brackets after the key criteria (e.g., [MCOBA, OLWRE]). If no parks are listed, the association has been documented in all three units OR has not been documented in any of the national parks.
10. **Important note:** Stands with greater than 10% tree cover are considered forests or woodlands in current USNVC guidelines. This represents a lower threshold than the 25% cut-off used in Crawford et al. (2009), as well as NCCN map products and plot assignments. When keying stands with 10 to 25% tree cover, we suggest keying through both the forest and shrubland keys to find the best fit. The same applies for the cutoffs between shrublands, herbaceous, and sparse types.
11. **Wetland associations:** If the wetland association is not described in appendix A, the key will direct you to the appropriate alliance description in appendix B.
12. **The key is not the classification.** After keying a stand, always read the association description for additional details on vegetation composition, geographic distribution, and the typical environmental setting. If the description fits in most regards, you have likely made an accurate identification. If there are multiple inconsistencies between the stand and the description, consider trying the key again following slightly different leads or by increasing the flexibility of your cover estimates. Alternatively, the stand might represent an undocumented association, or an expansion of an existing association concept.
 - a. Associations from the Revised Vegetation Classification for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks (Ramm-Granberg et al., 2021) are included within this document.
 - b. To find descriptions for any other associations, see the listed reference (e.g., Chaparral 2008a) or click the EL Code (e.g., [SEGL00788](https://explorer.natureserve.org)) to view the description on NatureServe Explorer (<https://explorer.natureserve.org>).



Element Occurrence?

- Element occurrence (EO)
 - “rare species population / ecosystem occurrence with practical conservation value”
- Determine if rare elements meet “Element Occurrence” criteria

Determine Whether AA Meets EO Criteria

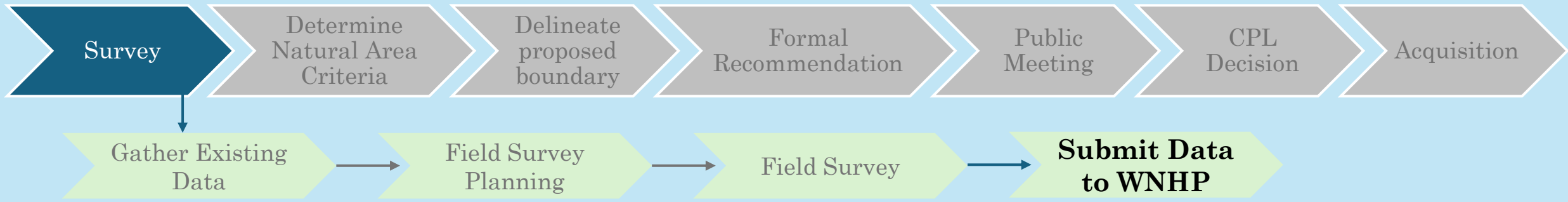
EO RANK	Global Rank State Rank	G1S1, G2S1, GNRS1, GUS1	G2S2, GNRS2, G3S1, G3S2, GUS2	GUS3, GNRS3, G3S3, G4S1, G4S2, G5S1, G5S2, any SNR	G4S3, G4S4, G5S3, G5S4, G5S5, GNRS4, GNRS5, GUS4, GUS5
A+ (3.8 to 4.0)		EO	EO	EO	EO
A- (3.5 to 3.79)		EO	EO	EO	EO
B+ (3.0 to 3.49)		EO	EO	EO	Not Element Occurrence
B- (2.5 to 2.99)		EO	EO	EO	
C+ (2.0 to 2.49)		EO	EO		
C- (1.5 to 1.99)		EO		Not Element Occurrence	
D (1.0 to 1.49)		EO	Not Element Occurrence		

ELEMENT OCCURRENCE DATA STANDARD

February 6, 2002

NatureServe

in cooperation with the
Network of Natural Heritage Programs
and Conservation Data Centers



- Submit observations to WNHP
 - Only species/ecosystems identified in 2025 State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan
- WNHP staff will review/confirm submissions as capacity allows
- Confirmed submissions meeting EO criteria entered into WNHP database
- Unconfirmed submissions will be documented in final report



SUBMITTING DATA TO THE NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

Our program relies on information from outside contributors to continue to maintain the most complete database of rare plants and ecological communities in Washington. If you have site specific information for any of the species on our rare plant or nonvascular [lists](#) or information on rare/high quality ecological communities, choose the appropriate form below and submit your data (our program mailing address and email are found on the upper right-hand side of this page).

Species

Rare Plant Sighting Form ([PDF](#), [Word form](#))- Contribute your sightings of rare plants; for identification verification, refer to our online [Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington](#).

Ecological Communities

[EIA Field Form for Wetlands and Riparian Areas](#)
[Field Manual for Applying EIAs in Wetlands and Riparian Areas](#)

[EIA Field Form for Upland Ecosystems](#)
[Field Manual for Applying EIAs in Upland Ecosystems](#)

[Stressor Checklist for Human Stressor Index \(HSI\)](#)

[Ecological Systems of Washington \(GIS\)](#)



Determine if Site Meets Natural Area Criteria

- Rare species/ecosystems are identified as having a **Natural Area Representation** need in NH Plan
- Rare species and/or ecosystems at site are among best examples in the state
- Site and landscape characteristics are feasible for long-term management and/or restoration
- Natural area designation is compatible with existing or nearby land uses





**Proviso Report Submitted
(October 2026)**

Delineate Proposed Natural Area Boundary

Boundary considerations

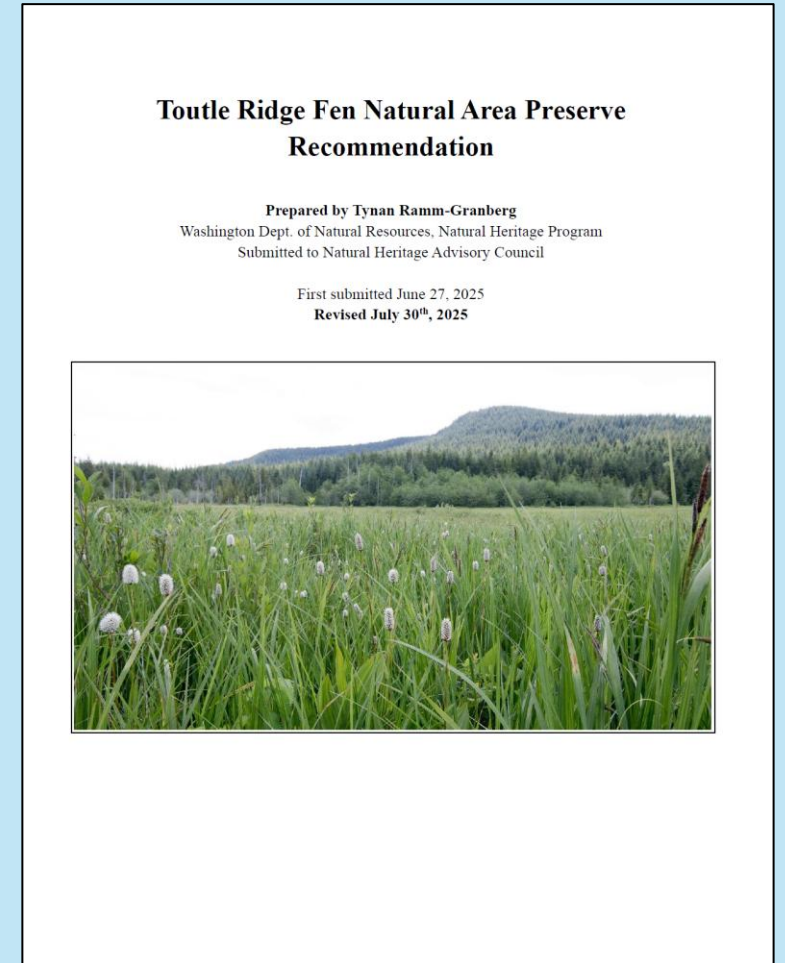
- ecological needs of elements
- area needed for management
- other land uses and interests in the landscape





Formal Recommendation to Natural Heritage Advisory Council

- DNR staff submit formal recommendation
- Council votes on recommendation
- Council submit their recommendation on proposal to CPL





Public Meeting

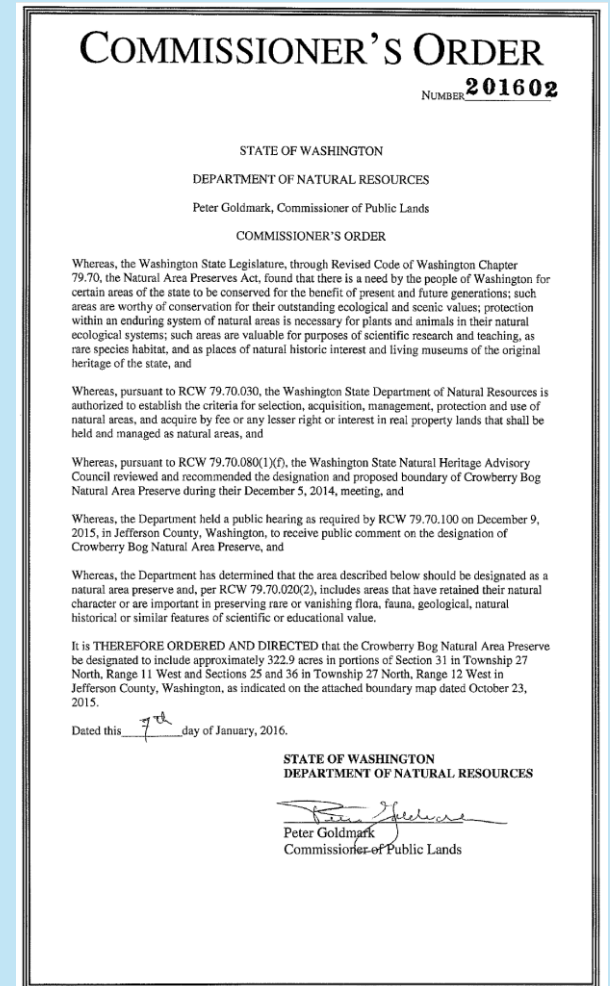
- Discuss recommendation proposal
- Receive public input
- Compile and submit input to Commissioner of Public Lands





Commissioner of Public Lands Decision

- Reviews public input & Council recommendation
- Makes final decision on proposal
- Issues Commissioner’s Order
- Commissioner’s Order establishes “approved natural area boundary”






Acquisition of Natural Area

- DNR Conservation Acquisition teams works with willing landowners on acquisitions
- Seek funding for acquisitions
 - Trust Land Transfer (DNR lands)
 - Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program grants

Crowberry Bog Appraised Value

	Land Value	Timber Value	Total Value
Common School	\$95,000	\$176,000	\$271,000
Capitol Building	\$11,000	\$34,000	\$45,000
Total	\$106,000	\$210,000	\$316,000

*Admin fees paid for by WWRP grant


6

Crowberry Bog, 02-098315
 Board of Natural Resources;
 September 3, 2019

Natural Area Designation

Survey

Determine
Natural Area
Criteria

Delineate
proposed
boundary

Formal
Recommendation

Public
Meeting

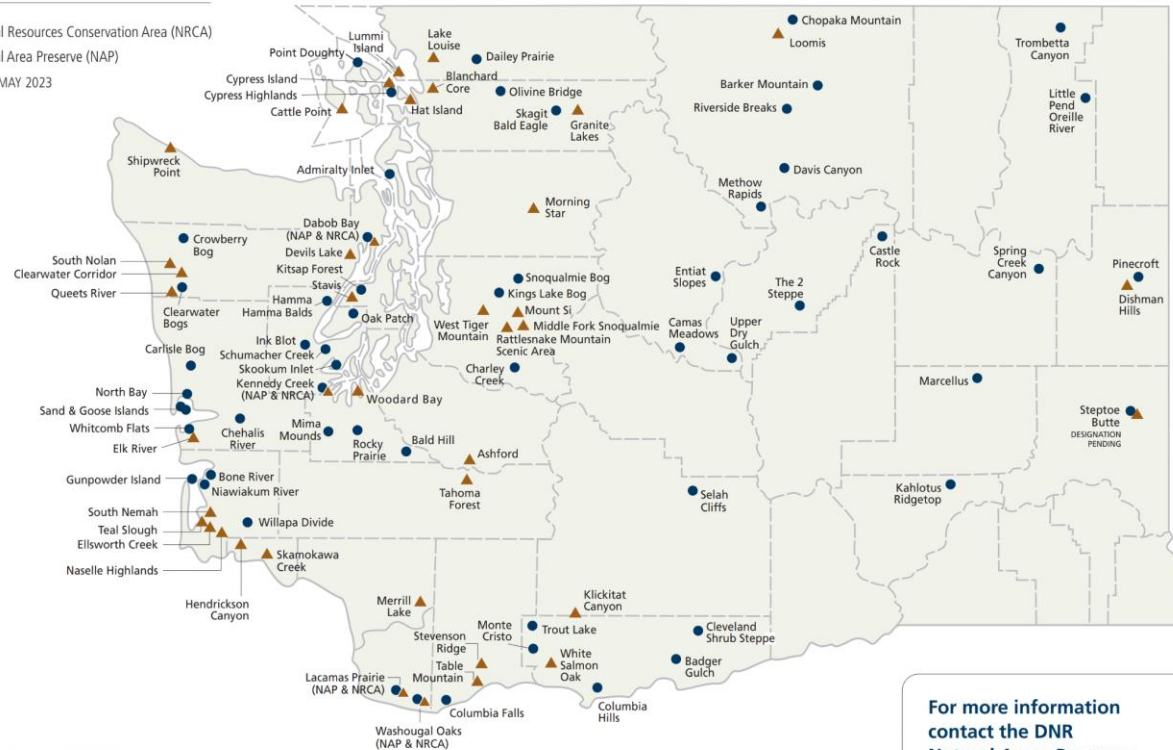
CPL
Decision

Acquisition

Washington DNR Natural Areas



▲ Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA)
● Natural Area Preserve (NAP)
AS OF MAY 2023



Exceptional Places

Quality examples of Washington's native grasslands, woodlands, marshes and more are protected in natural areas managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These special sites offer opportunities for research and education. Some have interpretive or recreation trails. Others require DNR permission to visit because features are sensitive to human disturbance.

For more information
contact the DNR
Natural Areas Program
PO Box 47014
Olympia, WA 98504-7014
360-902-1600
TRS: 711
dnr.wa.gov

Elwha Watershed Public Survey



Questions?

Project contact: Sarah Ogden sarah.ogden@dnr.wa.gov

