

# Conservation Vision & Values



September 29, 2016

County Executive's Land Conservation Advisory Group 1

# Meeting #1 Discussion Themes

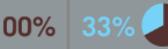
- Reviewed original work plan, as well as updated cost & revenue projections.
- Questions emerged:
  - What does “high conservation value” mean?
  - What are the threats to these lands?
  - What happens if we don’t accomplish these goals?
  - How to balance urban and rural priorities?
  - What are the benefits of this work?
  - How were lands selected?

# Overview of Today's Presentation

- Respond to your questions in each of the five “Conservation Categories” of land
  - Definition
  - Benefits of land conservation
  - Threats
  - Selection criteria
  - What does “finishing the job” mean?
  - Acreage identified
  - General location
- Next week:
  - Cost calculations & assumptions
  - Existing funding sources
  - Proposed funding sources

# What Lands Should We Consider?

## Updated 2016 Acreages By Category and Total Cost

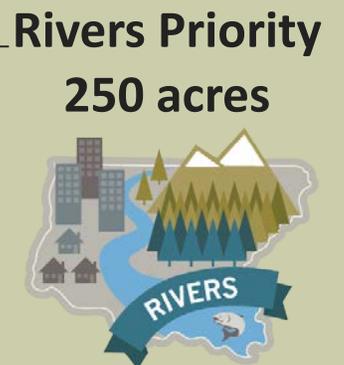
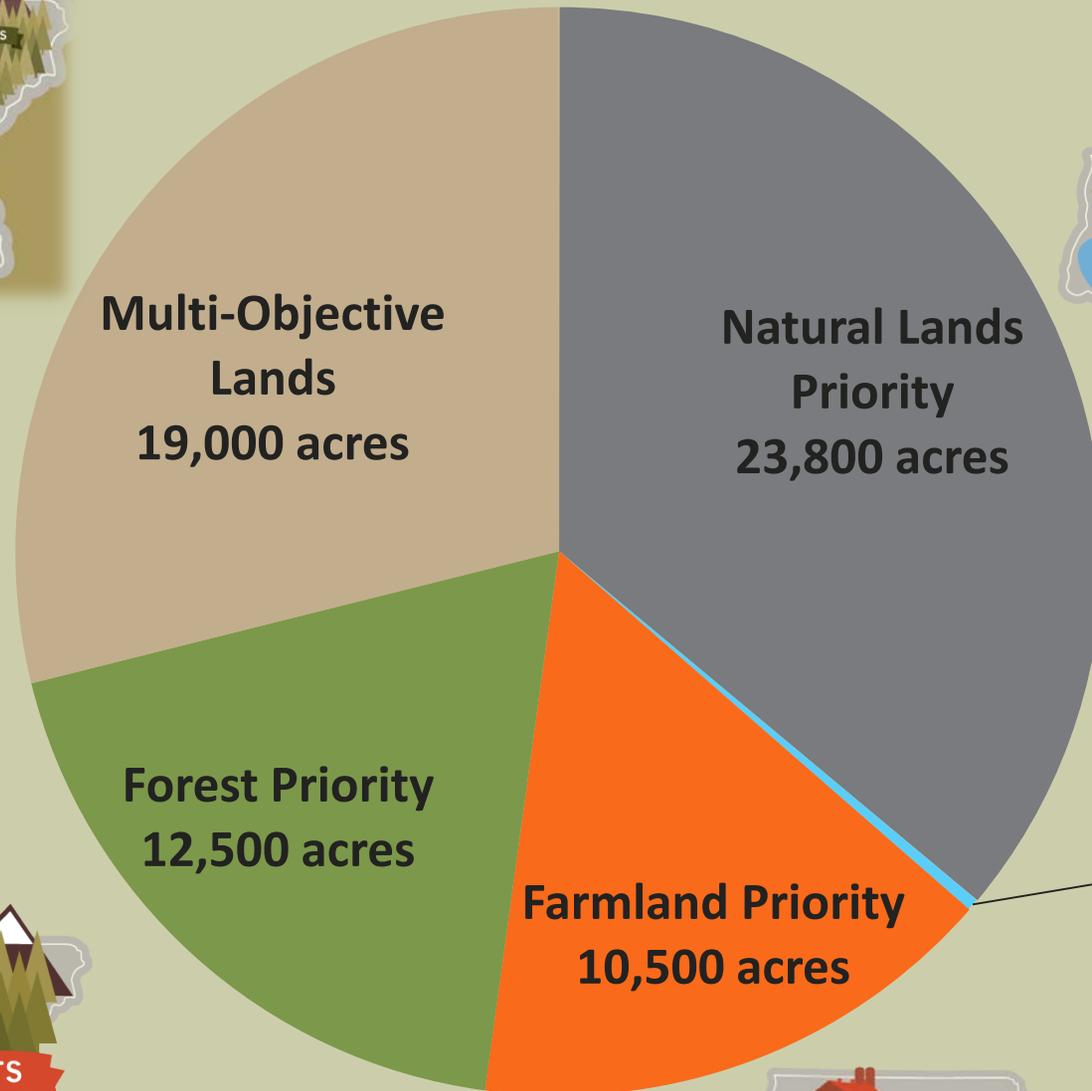
CONSERVATION CATEGORY	NATURAL LANDS		RIVERS		FORESTS		FARMLAND		TRAILS	
	Ecological Protection & Passive Recreation	Multi-Objective (Urban & Rural Zones)	Protecting Communities from Floods	Forest Production & Resiliency	Multi-Objective (Forest Zones)	Agricultural Production	Multi-Objective (Agricultural Zones)	Regional Trail Corridors	Specific Parcels not identified	
PARCELS	2,920	650	150	430	180	980	210			
ACRES	23,800	6,600	250	12,500	8,750	10,500	3,700			
FEE / EASEMENT (by acreage)	59%  41%	87%  13%	100%  0%	1%  99%	25%  75%	0%  100%	33%  67%			

TOTAL PARCELS: **5,500**

TOTAL ACRES: **66,000**

TOTAL EST. COST: **\$1.5 to \$1.8 B** *includes acquisition & transaction costs and 30 years of O&M.*

# Acres by Conservation Category

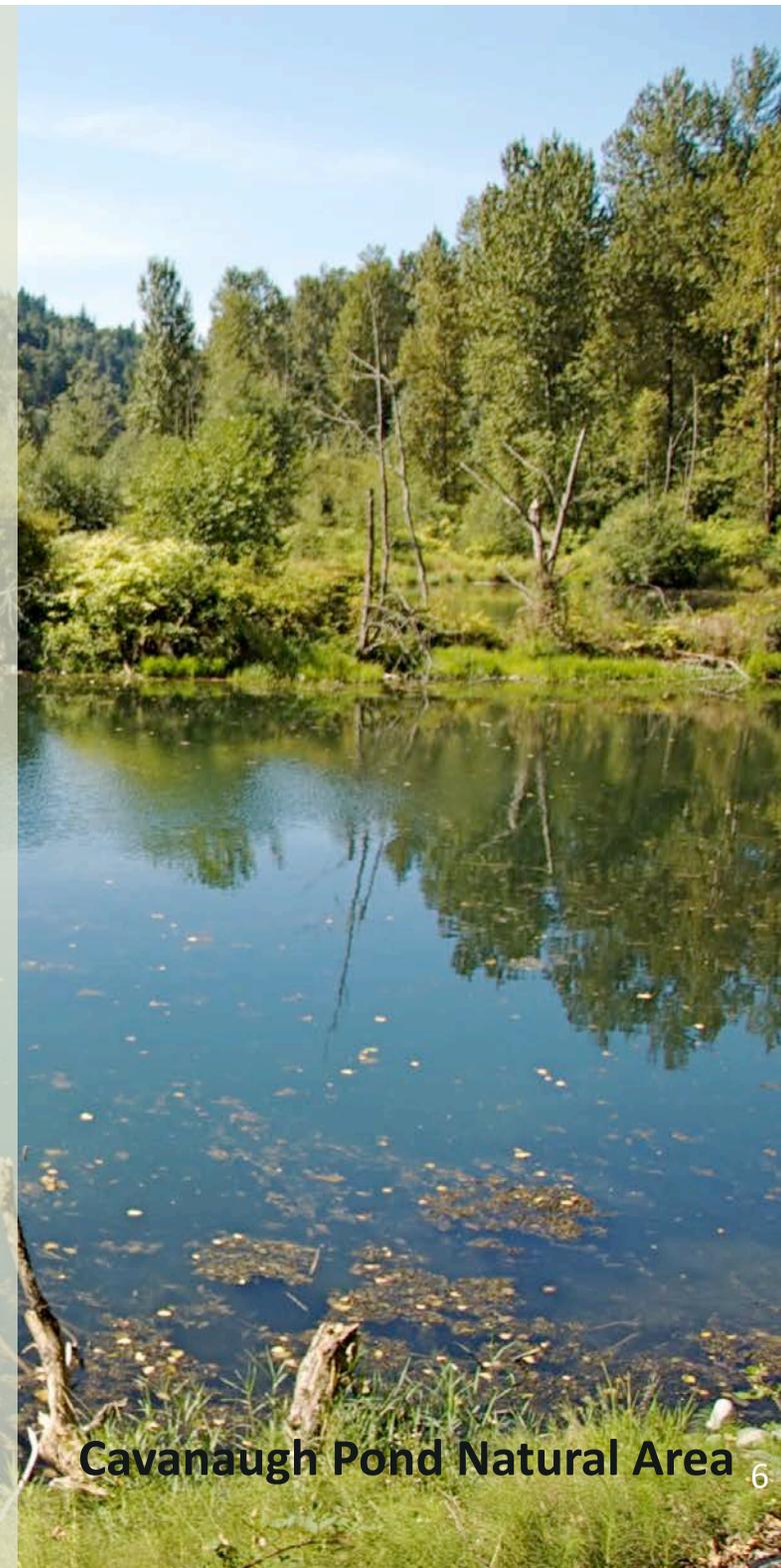




## *What are natural lands?*

### **DEFINITION**

- High quality natural communities or high value restoration opportunities
- Streams and rivers, wetlands, small lakes, riparian corridors, meadows, forests
- Important areas for fish & wildlife habitat
- Provide passive recreation opportunities
- May provide buffer between land uses
- May seek protection through fee or easement ownership



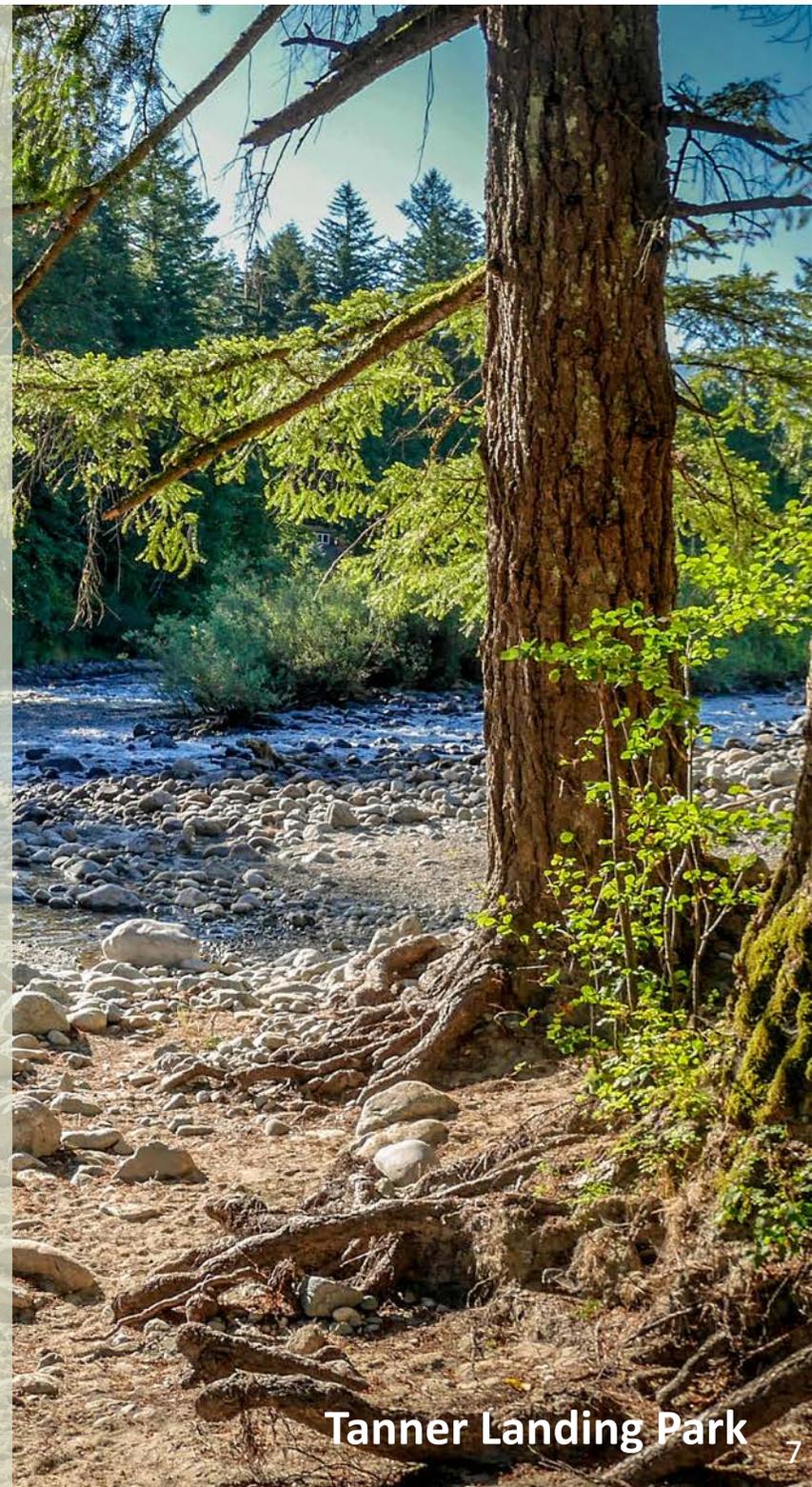
**Cavanaugh Pond Natural Area** 6



***What values are supported by conserving natural lands?***

## **BENEFITS OF LAND PRESERVATION**

- Preserve and restore ecological processes & functions
- Protect fish and wildlife habitat and support salmon recovery
- Complete natural land corridors
- Protect water quality
- Connect people with nature through passive recreation



**Tanner Landing Park**



## *What are threats to natural lands?*

### **THREATS**

- Development or fragmentation within natural corridors
- Habitat degradation
- Loss of restoration opportunities
- Loss of public access opportunities
- Potential overuse/overcrowding of existing trailheads and lands

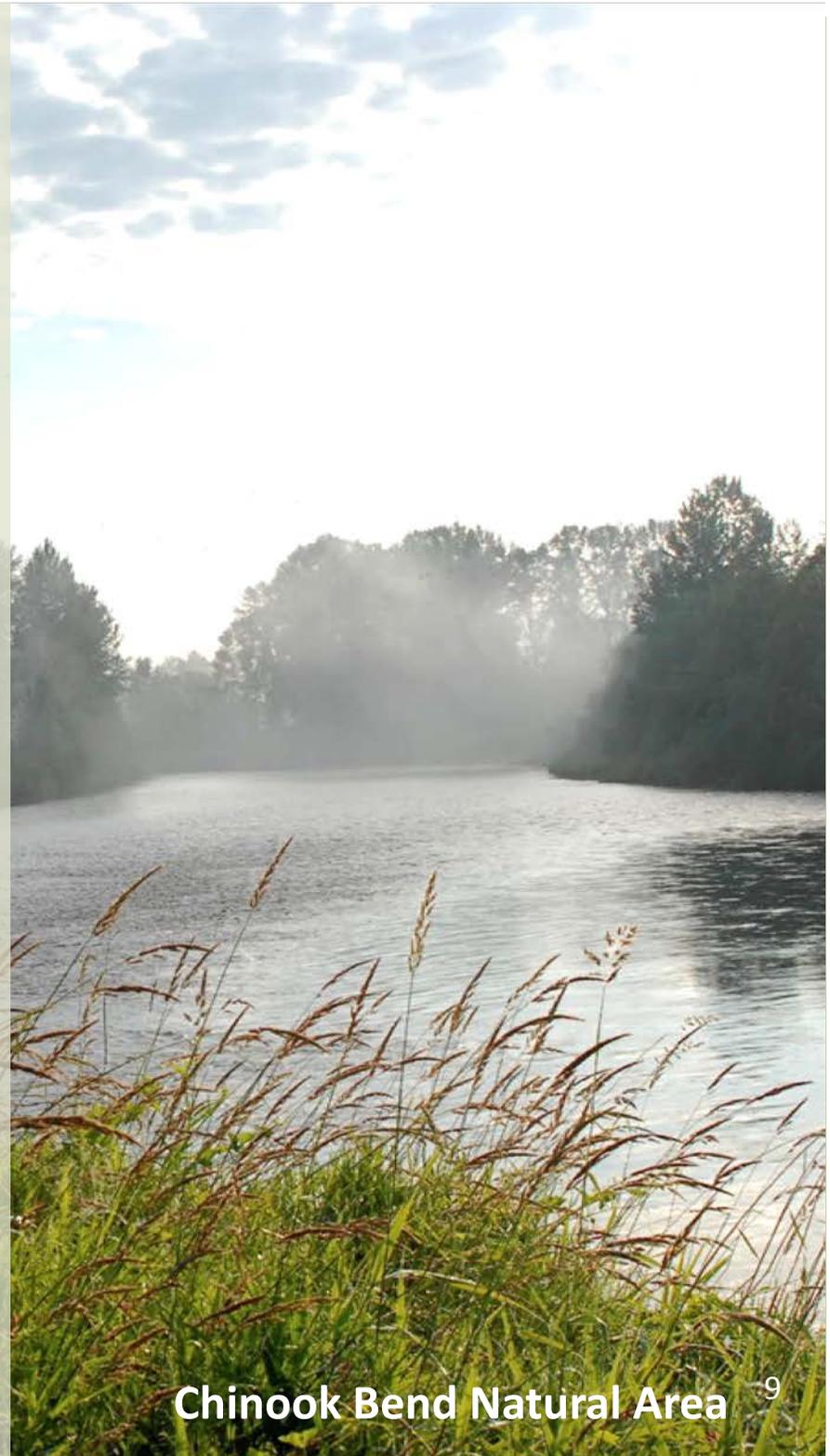




## *How were the lands selected?*

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Selected considering best available science (e.g. WRIA Plans, basin studies, etc.) and staff expertise
- Preserve intact habitat
- Lands along known wildlife and biodiversity corridors
- Priority restoration areas
- Completion of public land corridors
- Passive recreation opportunities





## ***What does “finishing the job” mean for natural lands?***

**Finishing the job** means filling in the missing pieces to complete WRIA plan-prioritized acquisitions; a combination of fee and easement acquisitions to complete protection of riparian corridors; primarily easements on large tracts of intact rural forest in order to encourage environmentally responsible development; acquiring backcountry trail linkages and access opportunities.

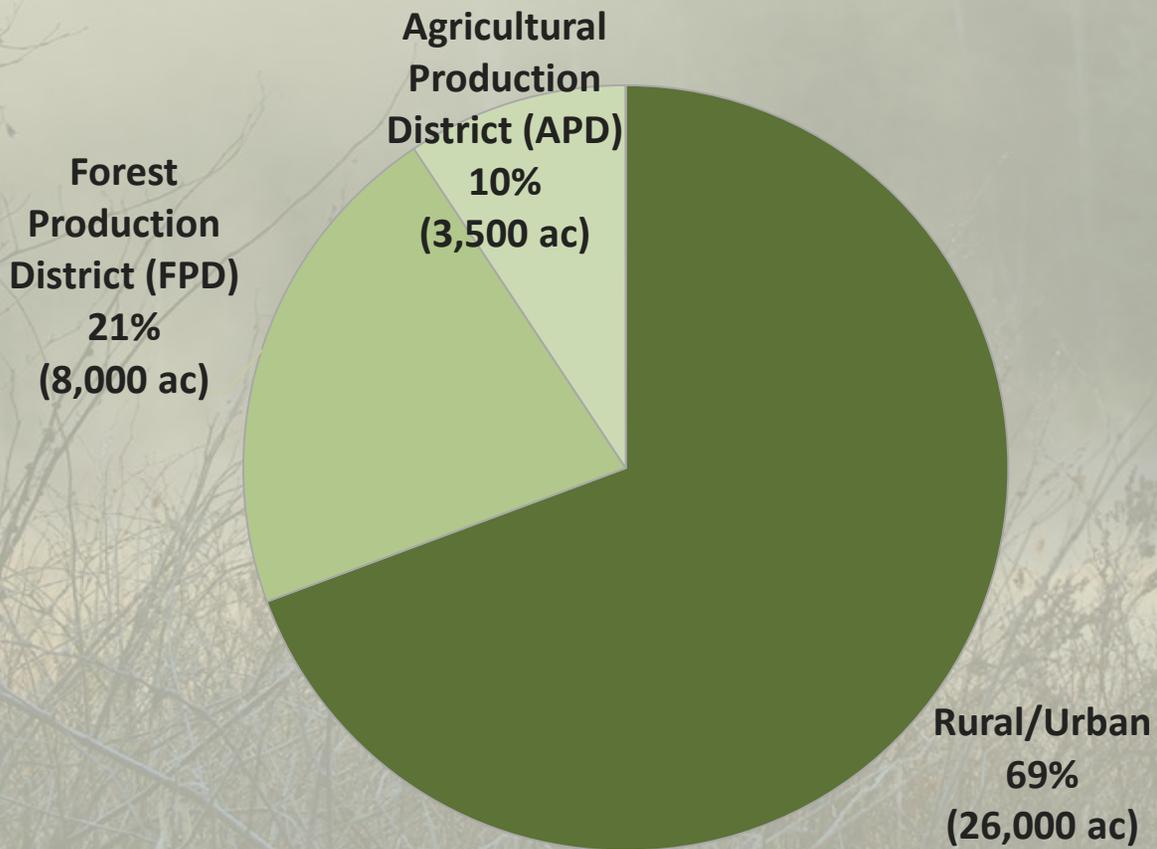
This work supports a system of large and connected natural areas and watersheds that function naturally and co-exist harmoniously with people.



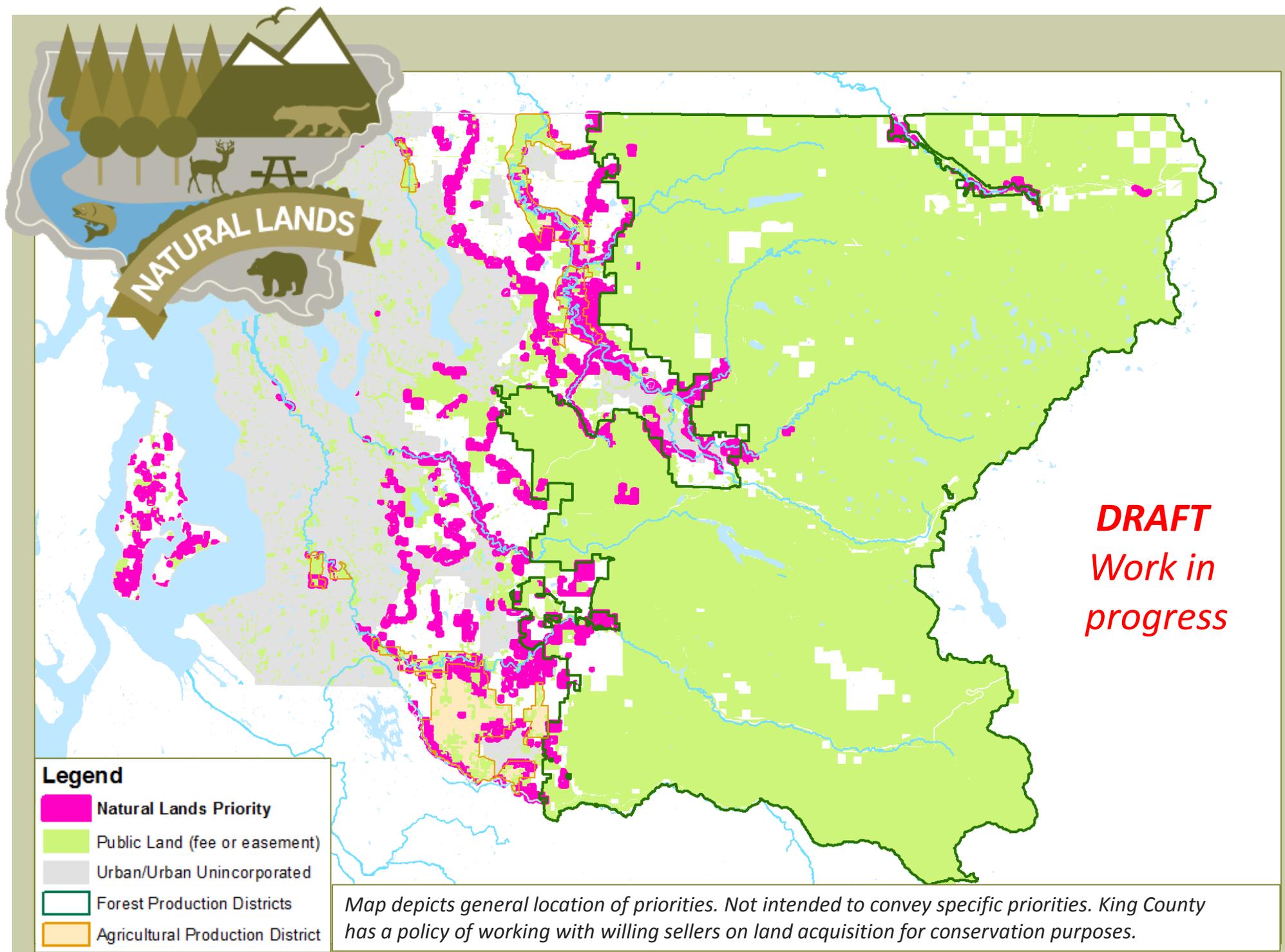
**Cougar Mtn. Regional Wildland Park 10**



**Natural Lands priority identified  
on 37,500 acres (including multi-objective)**



**Moss Lake Natural Area**





## *What is forest land?*

### **DEFINITION**

- Working forests, primarily in King County's Forest Production District
- Land with large-scale or small-scale forest production and stewardship opportunity
- Areas of intact forest or degraded forest with potential for restoration

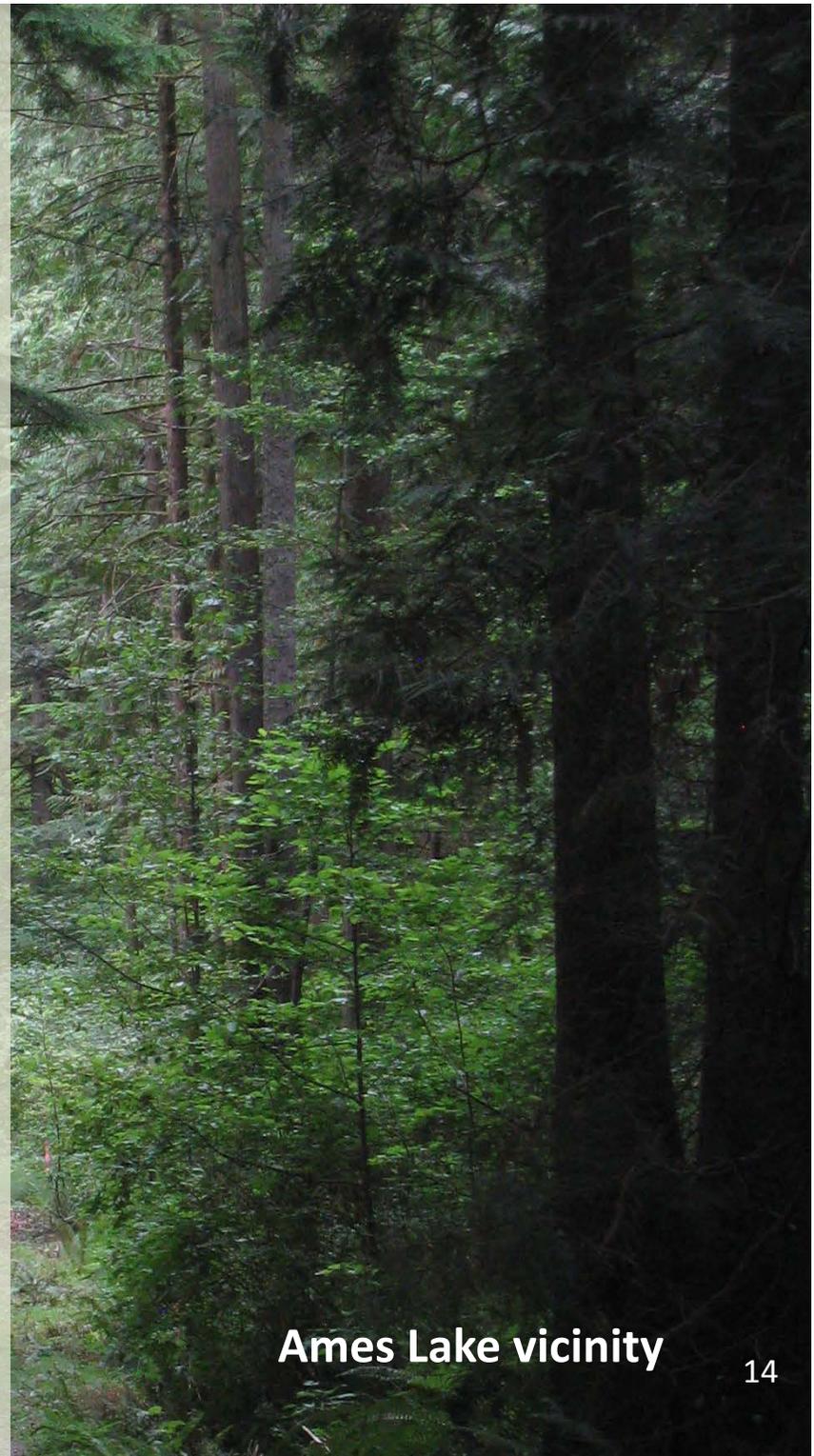




## *What values are supported by acquiring forest land?*

### **BENEFITS OF LAND PRESERVATION**

- Support resource-based economies
- Provide a barrier against sprawl
- Provide wildlife habitat
- Protect water quality, reduce flooding and augment low flows
- Resilience in response to climate change
- Support Strategic Climate Action Plan forest land protection goals
- Help keep our air clean and sequester carbon
- Places for people to work, play, explore



**Ames Lake vicinity**



## *What are threats to forests?*

### **THREATS**

- Subdivision and development within Forest Production District
- Over the last decade, Puget Sound counties lost 1000-2000 acres of forest land per year; development pressure remains in our current economy
- Decline of resource-based economies may lead to more conversion
- Even minimal residential development can lead to fragmentation from roads





## *How were the lands selected?*

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Identification of area in a watershed study or other scientific plan
- Private inholdings in protected areas
- Buffer between commercial forestland and residential development
- Completing a green wall against sprawl
- Lands along known wildlife corridors
- Staff expertise
- Opportunity for trailheads





## *What does “finishing the job” mean for forest land?*

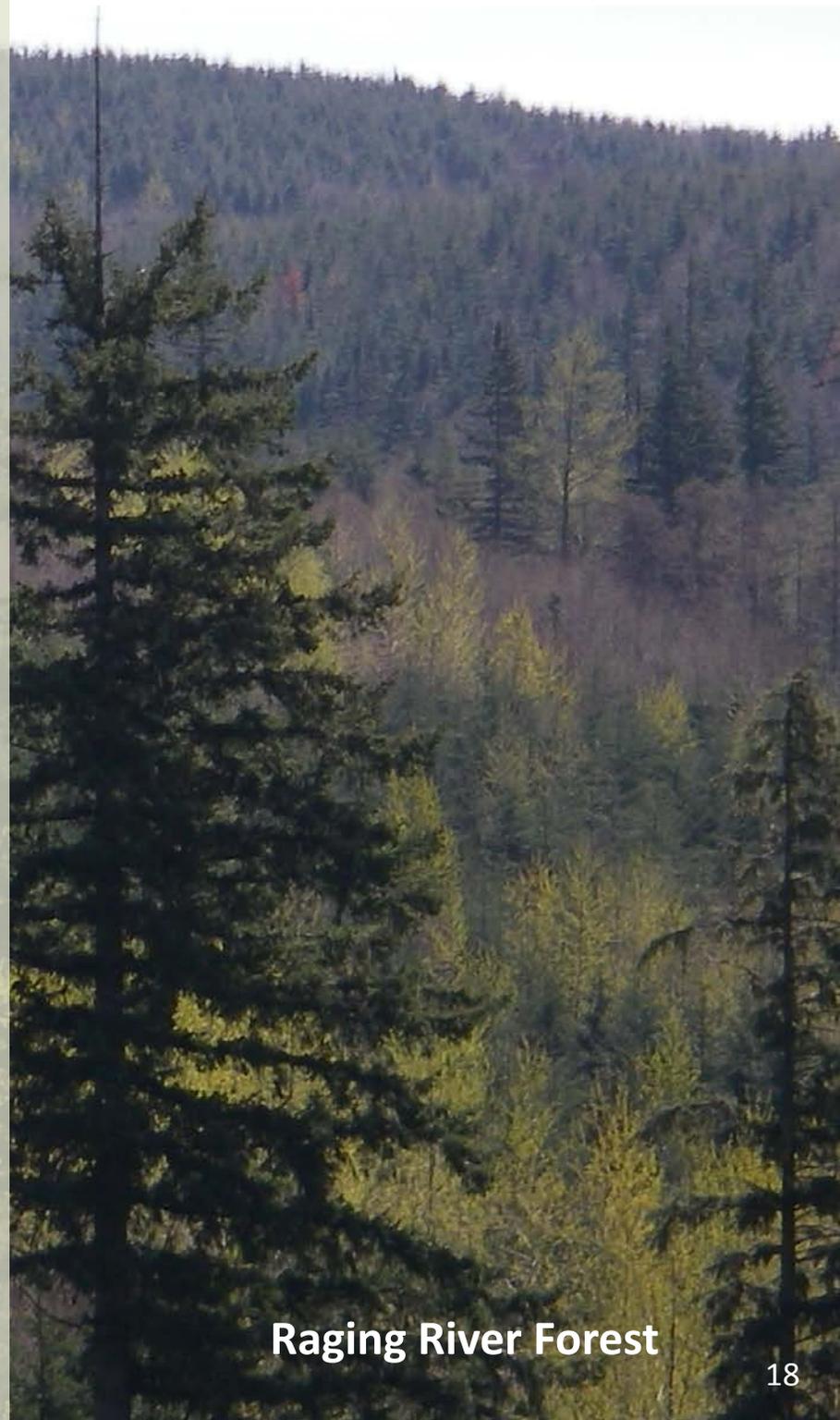
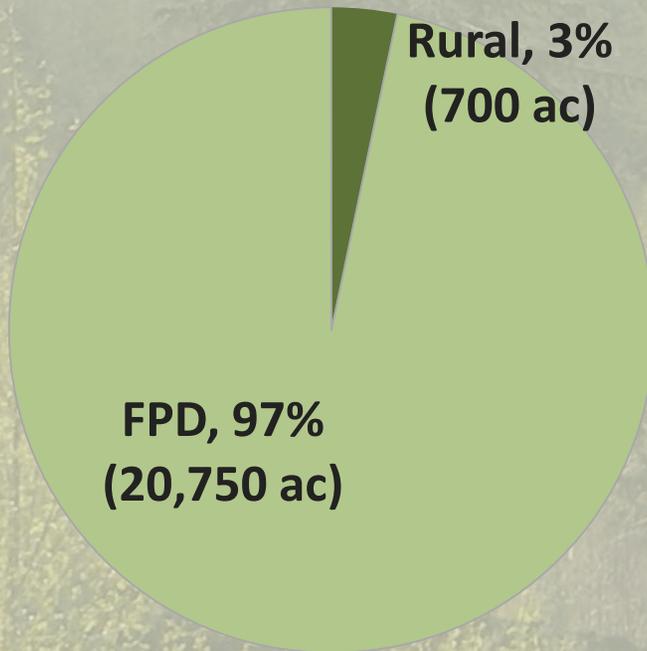
**Finishing the job** means filling the final gaps around the edges of existing working forests to build on our past successes (200,000 acres of forest land protected by easement/agreement in the past dozen years) by targeting primarily conservation easement purchases to fill key gaps in the green wall against sprawl; protecting key inholdings that remain unprotected; limiting conversion to residential uses.

This work supports a system of large, contiguous, forests that provide ample fish and wildlife habitat, support watershed functions and salmon recovery, support a sustainable forestry industry, help prevent sprawl and provide a place for people to play, explore, and relax.

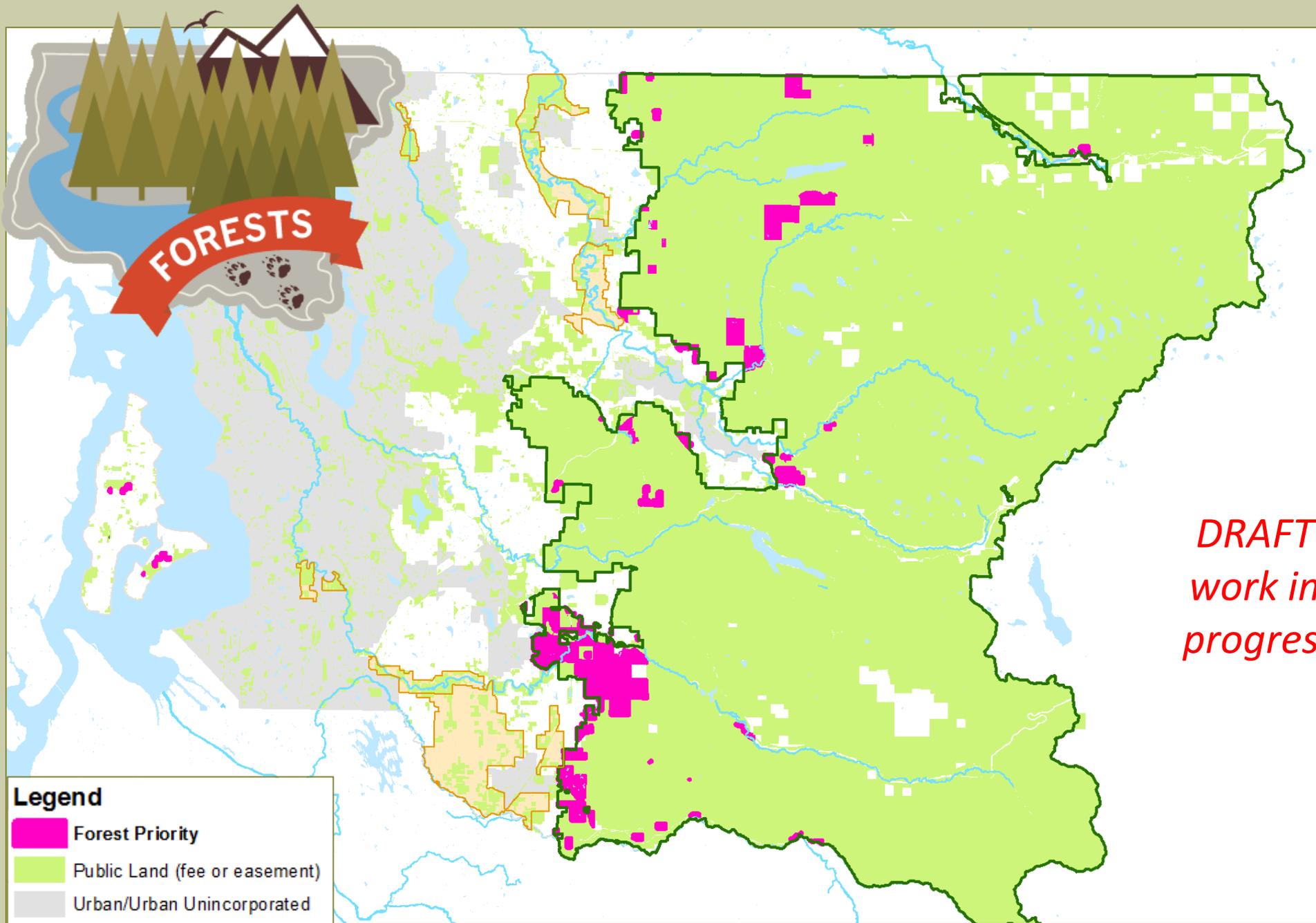




**Forest priority identified  
21,500 acres (including multi-objective)**



**Raging River Forest**



*Map depicts general location of priorities. Not intended to convey specific priorities. King County has a policy of working with willing sellers on land acquisition for conservation purposes.*



## *What is farmland?*

### **DEFINITION**

- Lands supporting agricultural production or with potential to do so
- Local food production is a key focus
- Individual farm parcels, or farm units (collections of parcels under one owner)
- In King County's Agricultural Production District, or in rural areas where there are small-scale farm economies





*What values are supported by acquiring farmland?*

## **BENEFITS OF LAND PRESERVATION**

- Maintain abundant agricultural land for food production
- Keep land affordable for farmers
- Contribute to the vitality of the agricultural economy
- Access to locally produced food
- Support King County's Local Food Initiative goals for farmland preservation



**Snoqualmie Valley**



## *What are threats to farmland?*

### **THREATS**

- Farming population is aging (average age is 57); land may be sold off with generational changes
- Conversion of farmland to residential, non-farming uses (5.2% loss of acres farmed between 2007-2012)
- Escalating land costs price out farmers
- Need to develop a new generation of farmers with access to land (6% decline in number of beginning farmers 2007-2012)
- Loss of co-located farms, local economies, and markets – leading to loss of local food production



**Horseneck Farm  
Lower Green River APD**



## *How were the lands selected?*

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Best soils for food production
- Unprotected farmland surrounded by protected land
- Adjacency to APD boundary
- Protecting farm units (assemblages of parcels in a farm under one ownership)
- Agricultural community infrastructure needs
- Collections of co-located farms in the rural area



**Sammamish Valley**



***What does “finishing the job”  
mean for farmland?***

**Finishing the job** means building on past successes (preserving 15,000 acres of farmland) by acquiring easements to protect the most threatened and important farmland; preserving land for farming in both the APD and the rural area; filling the gaps to protect the APD boundary against sprawl.

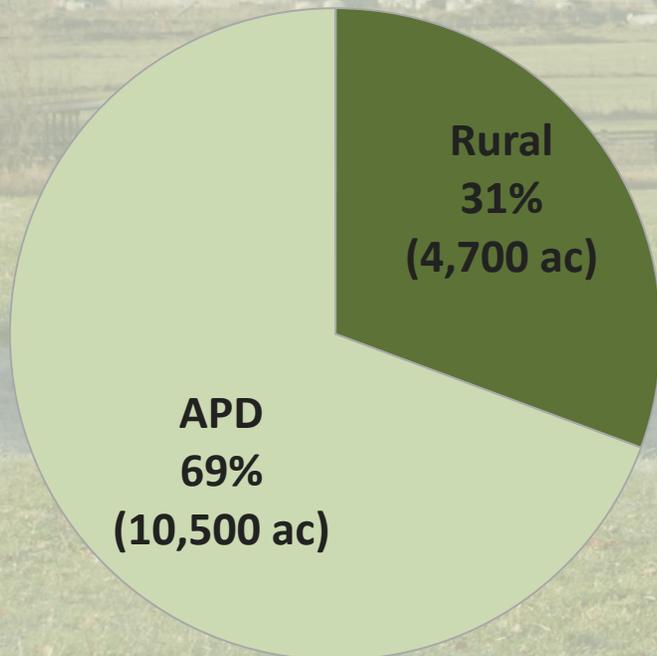
This work supports an increase in the amount of locally grown food and expansion of our agricultural economy.

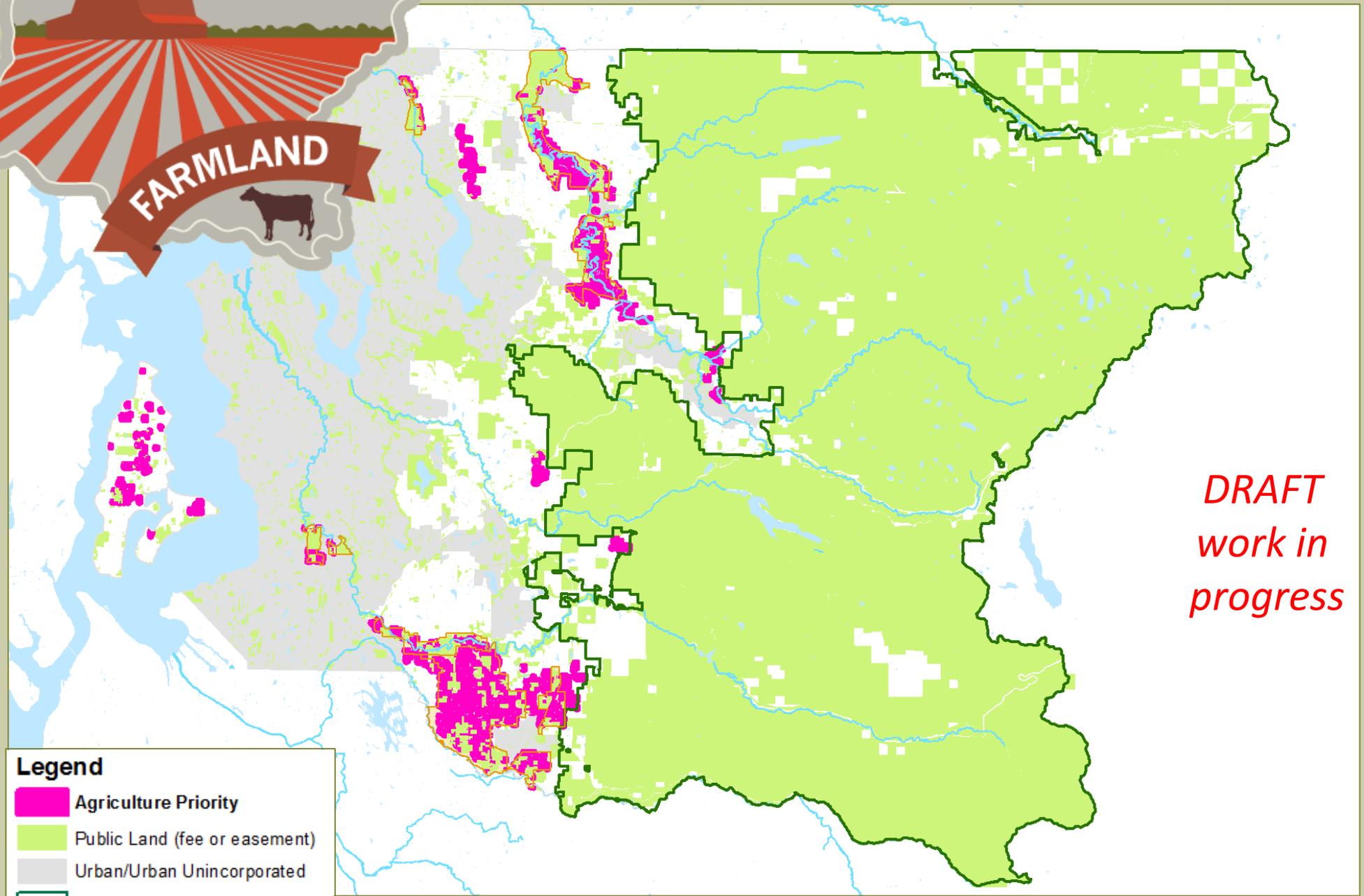


**Enumclaw near Pinnacle Peak**



**Farmland priority identified  
on 15,200 acres (including multi-objective)**





*DRAFT  
work in  
progress*

**Legend**

-  Agriculture Priority
-  Public Land (fee or easement)
-  Urban/Urban Unincorporated
-  Forest Production Districts
-  Agricultural Production District

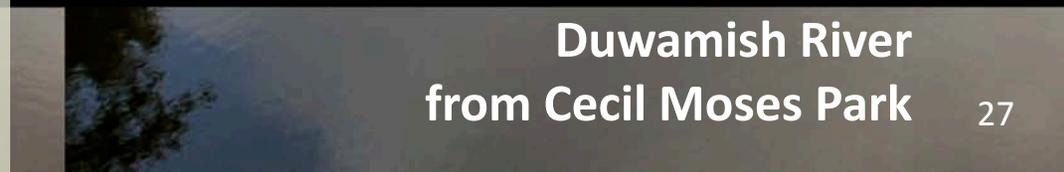
*Map depicts general location of priorities. Not intended to convey specific priorities. King County has a policy of working with willing sellers on land acquisition for conservation purposes.*



## *What is river corridor priority land?*

### **DEFINITION**

- Located along rivers, in both rural and urban areas
- Repetitive loss properties
- Locations for future flood risk reduction projects



**Duwamish River  
from Cecil Moses Park**



*What values are supported by acquiring land along river corridors?*

## **BENEFITS OF LAND PRESERVATION**

- Protect communities from floods
- Protect fish and wildlife habitat and support salmon recovery
- Promote natural watershed functions
- Protect water quality by storing and filtering water
- Provide places for people to play and explore



**Cedar River flooding at  
Rainbow Bend**



*What are threats to rivers priority lands?*

## THREATS

- New development in areas at risk of damaging floods
- Existing and new development requiring levees and other control structures that limit natural processes and functions



Cedar River  
capital project 29



## *How were the lands selected?*

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Identified in a flood plan
- Identified in a Salmon Recovery Plan
- Staff expertise
- Repetitive loss areas, projects and facility upgrades to protect communities and infrastructure from floods
- Updated river corridor plans in the next few years will confirm existing identified lands and may identify additional lands for capital projects to modify river facilities





## *What does “finishing the job” mean for river corridors?*

**Finishing the job** means securing lands along our major rivers where repetitive losses have negatively impacted residents; implementing Flood Plan priorities; acquiring land for capital projects to reduce flood risk and provide ancillary habitat benefits.

This work supports river corridors where natural processes unfold with minimized flood risk to river valley communities, provide habitat to support fish populations, and support recreational uses.



**Snoqualmie River  
capital project**



## Rivers priority identified on 830 acres (including multi-objective)

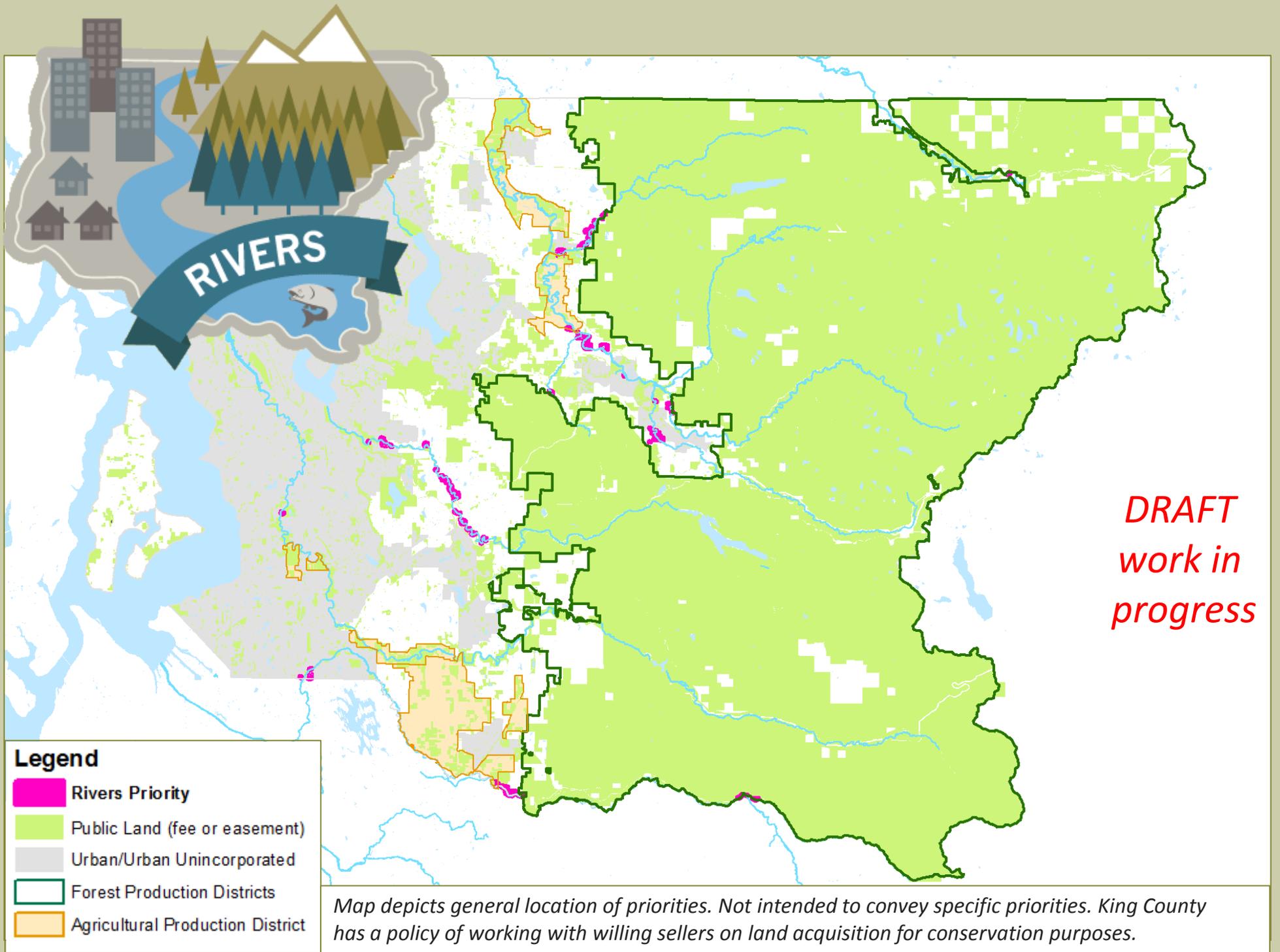
APD, 4%  
(35 ac)

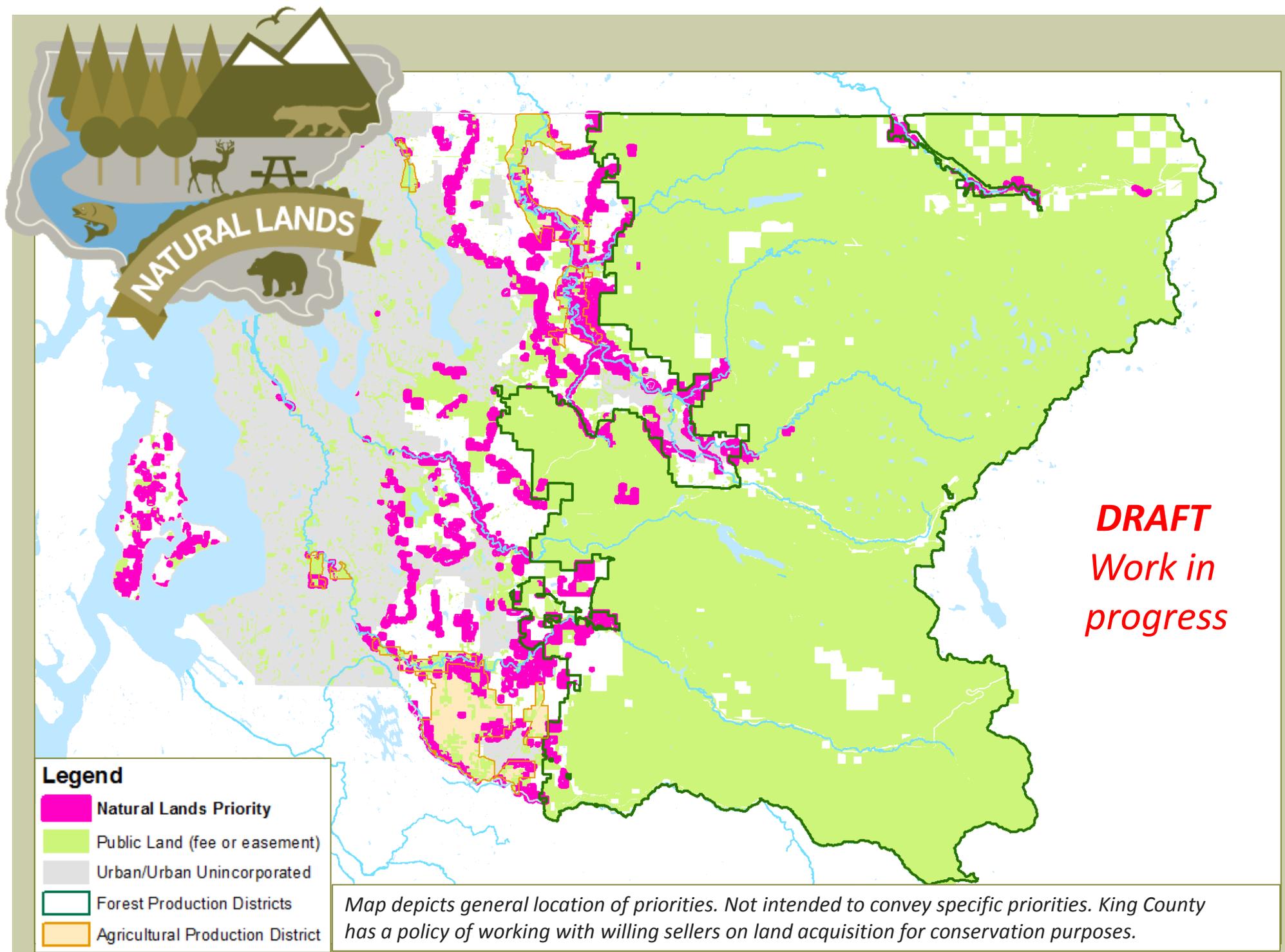
FPD, 2%,  
(15 ac)

Rural/urban  
94%  
(780 ac)



Cecil Moses Park





**DRAFT**  
*Work in progress*

- Legend**
- Natural Lands Priority
  - Public Land (fee or easement)
  - Urban/Urban Unincorporated
  - Forest Production Districts
  - Agricultural Production District

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## *What are regional trails?*

### **DEFINITION**

- Shared use, multi-purpose trails for non-motorized travel
- Provide mobility and recreation opportunities
- Developed as paved or soft-surface trails
- Regional corridors spanning King County, linking jurisdictions and rural areas





## *What values are supported by acquiring regional trail corridors?*

### **BENEFITS OF LAND PRESERVATION**

- Expand recreation opportunities
- Improve mobility throughout region
- Enhance environmentally sustainable travel options
- Promote active, healthy lifestyles
- Provide open space opportunities within and between communities
- Improve access to recreation by connecting urban areas with rural lands



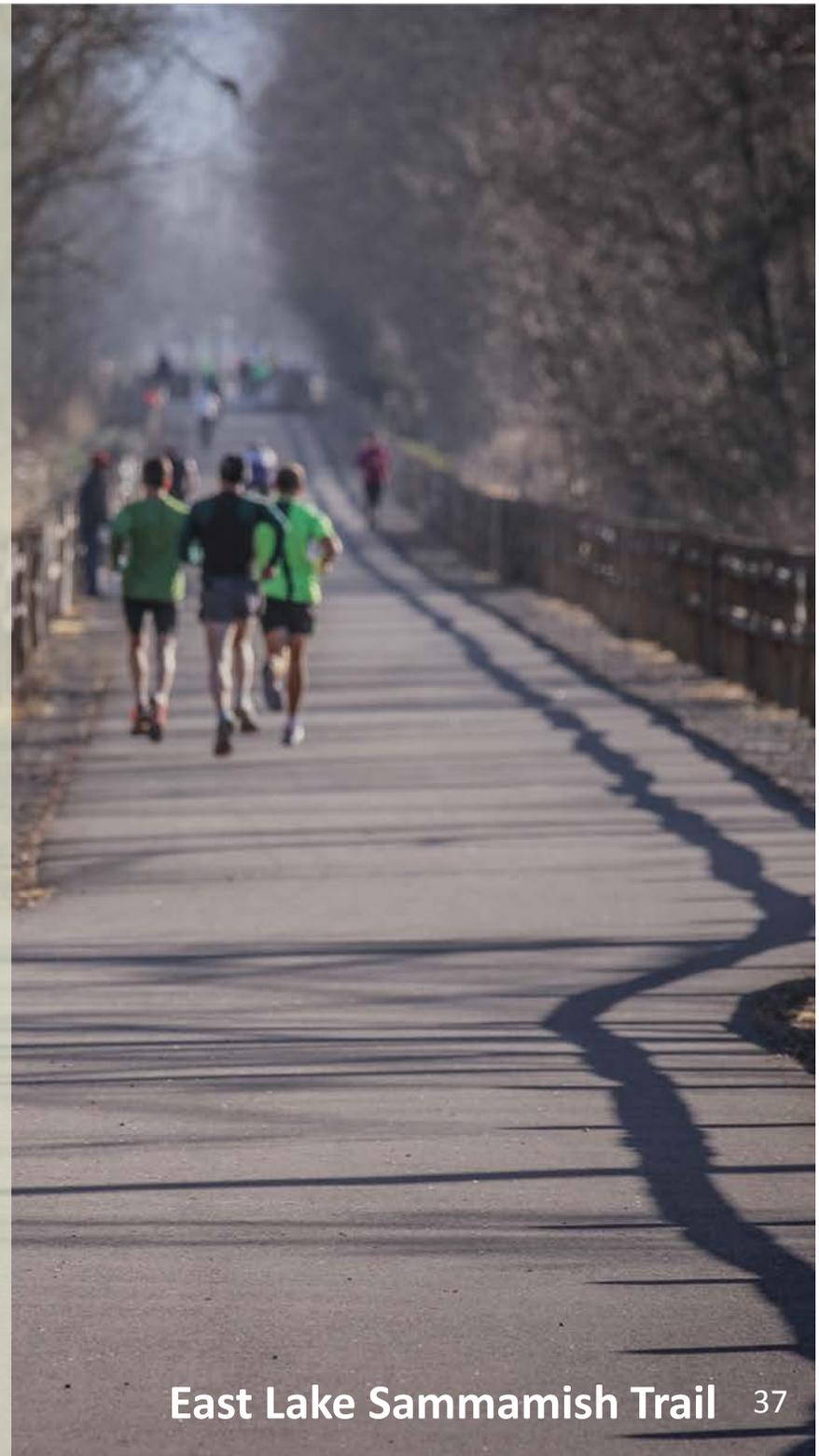
**Snoqualmie Valley Trail  
at Tokul Creek**



## *What are threats to regional trails?*

### **THREATS**

- Regional trails require acquisitions along a relatively narrow linear corridors
- Development presents challenges to making key connections in existing trail routes, and establishing new trails along prioritized routes
- Accelerating land costs particularly affect urban areas where trails may be located





## *How were the lands selected?*

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

- Identification in Regional Trails Long-Range Plan (Regional Trails Needs Report)
- New trail corridor opportunities to enhance the network and provide network connectivity
- Facilitating new regional trail interconnections





*What does “finishing the job”  
mean for regional trails?*

**Finishing the job** means completion of our 300-mile trail network, by filling in gaps in existing 175-mile system; adding access opportunities; establishing new trail corridors for planned regional trails.

This work supports an expansive, well-connected network of regional trails for recreation, healthy active lifestyles and sustainable mobility.

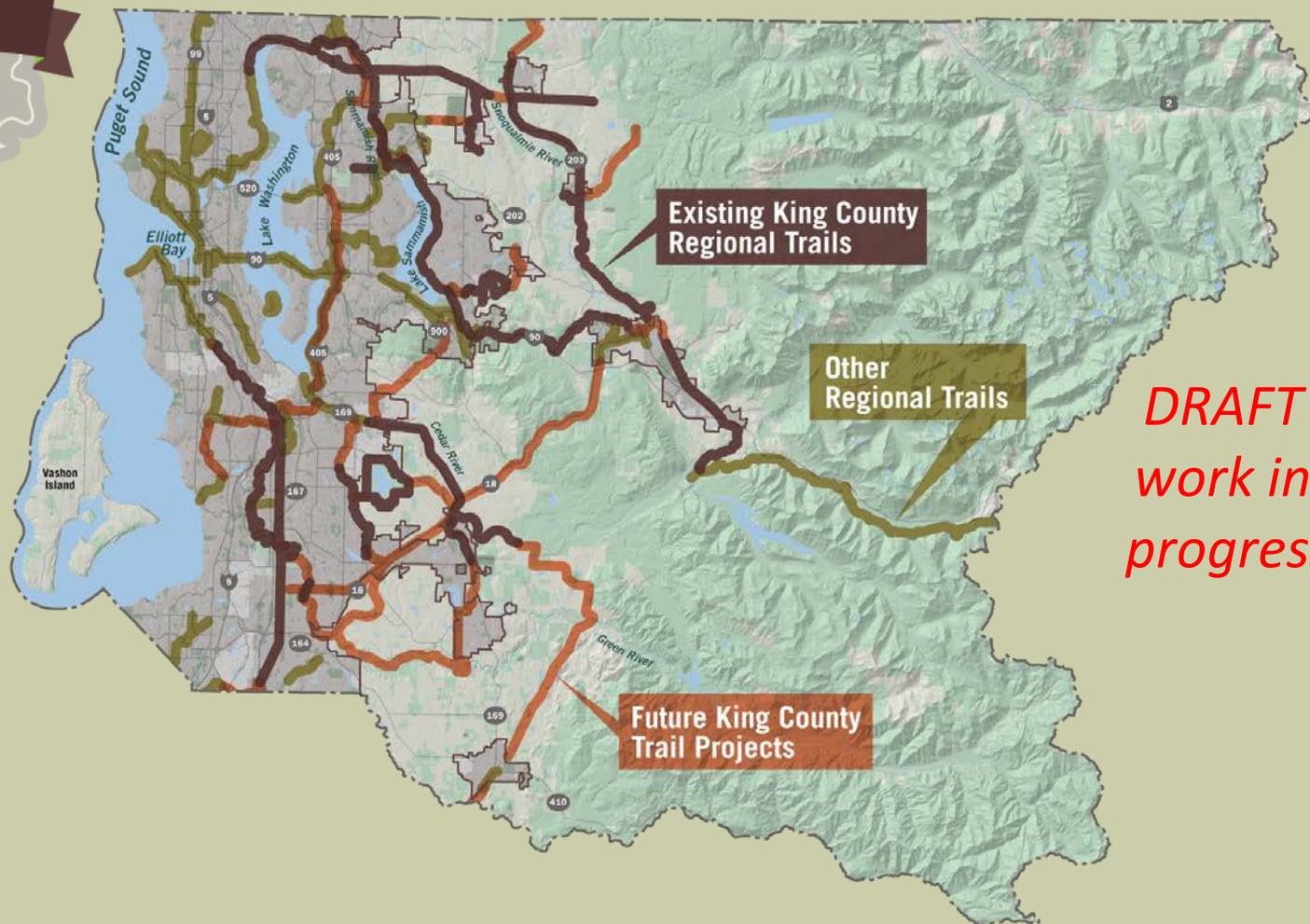




## Completing Regional Trail Connections

### Acreage

Not specified;  
approximately  
\$75 million in  
estimated  
acquisition costs



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# Additional Lands

## City Conservation Lands (in process):

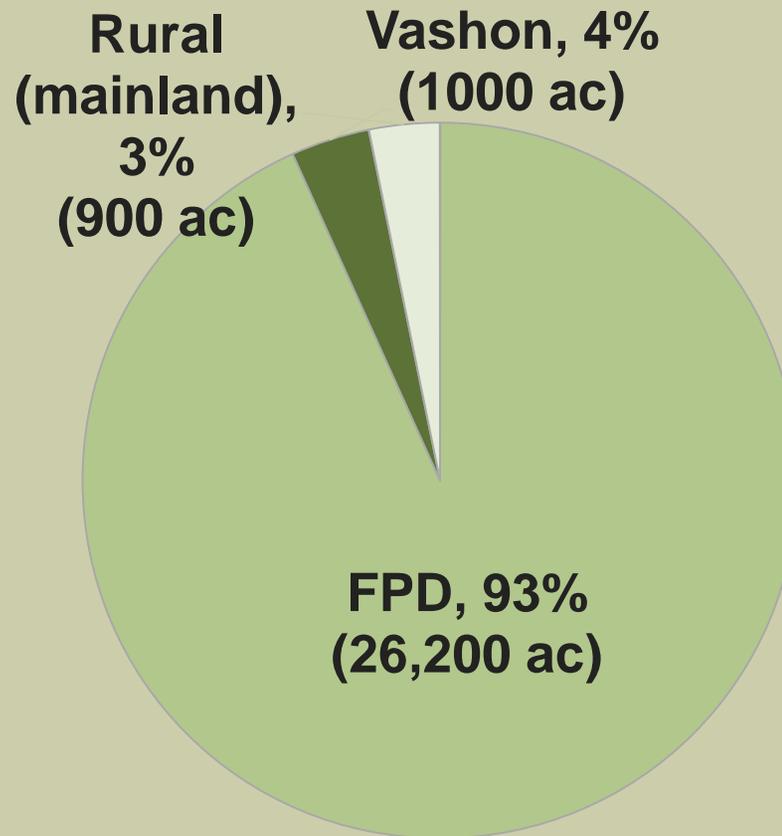
- City-identified open space priorities (acreage and cost estimates to be determined)
- WRIA Salmon Recovery Plan priorities
- Lands to improve equity and public health



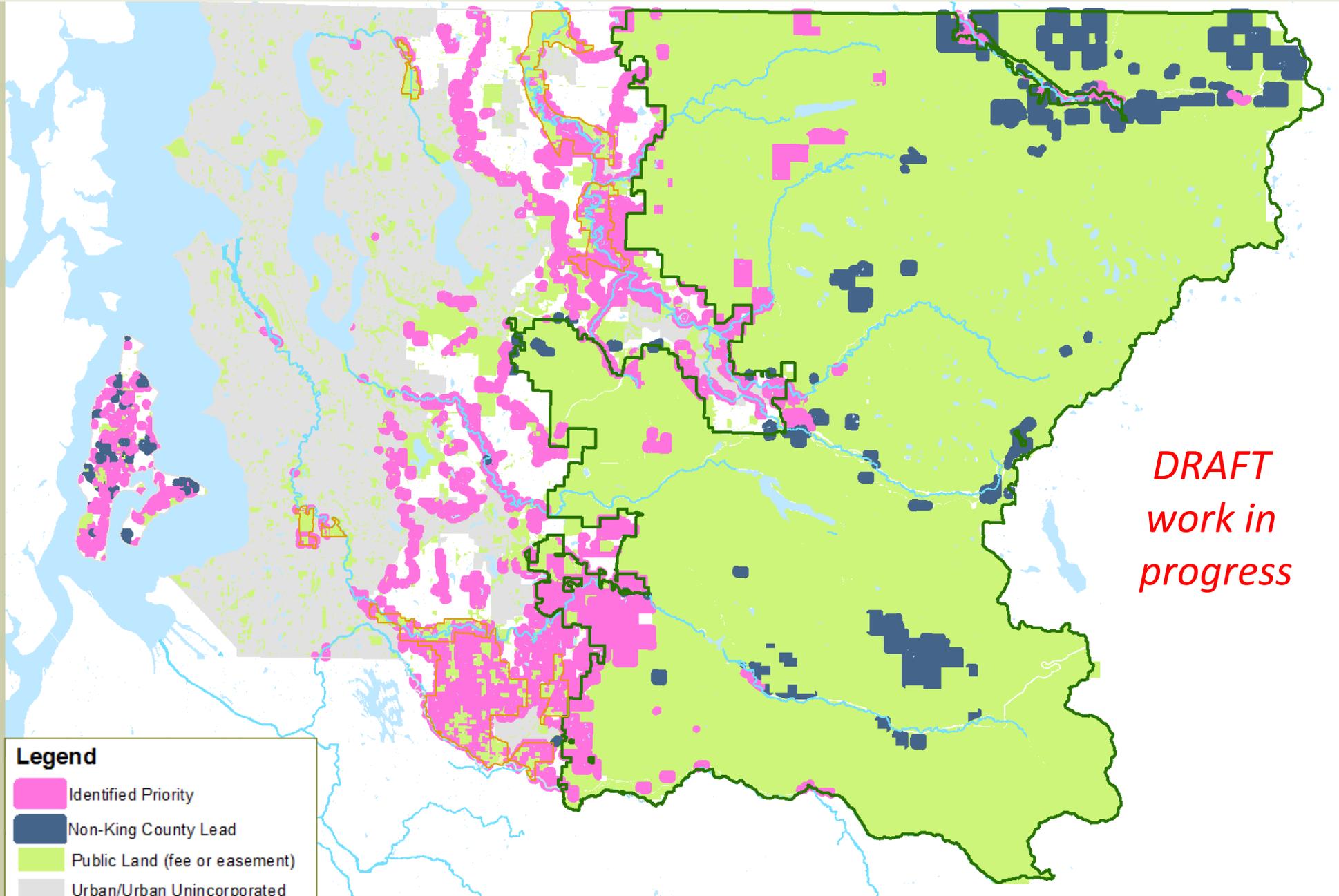
# Rural/Forest Land Conservation led by Other Entities

- Suggested federal, state, city utility, land trust priorities
- Not included in proposed scope of funding measure

## Non-King County Lead (28,100 acres)



# Conservation Priorities



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work in  
progress*

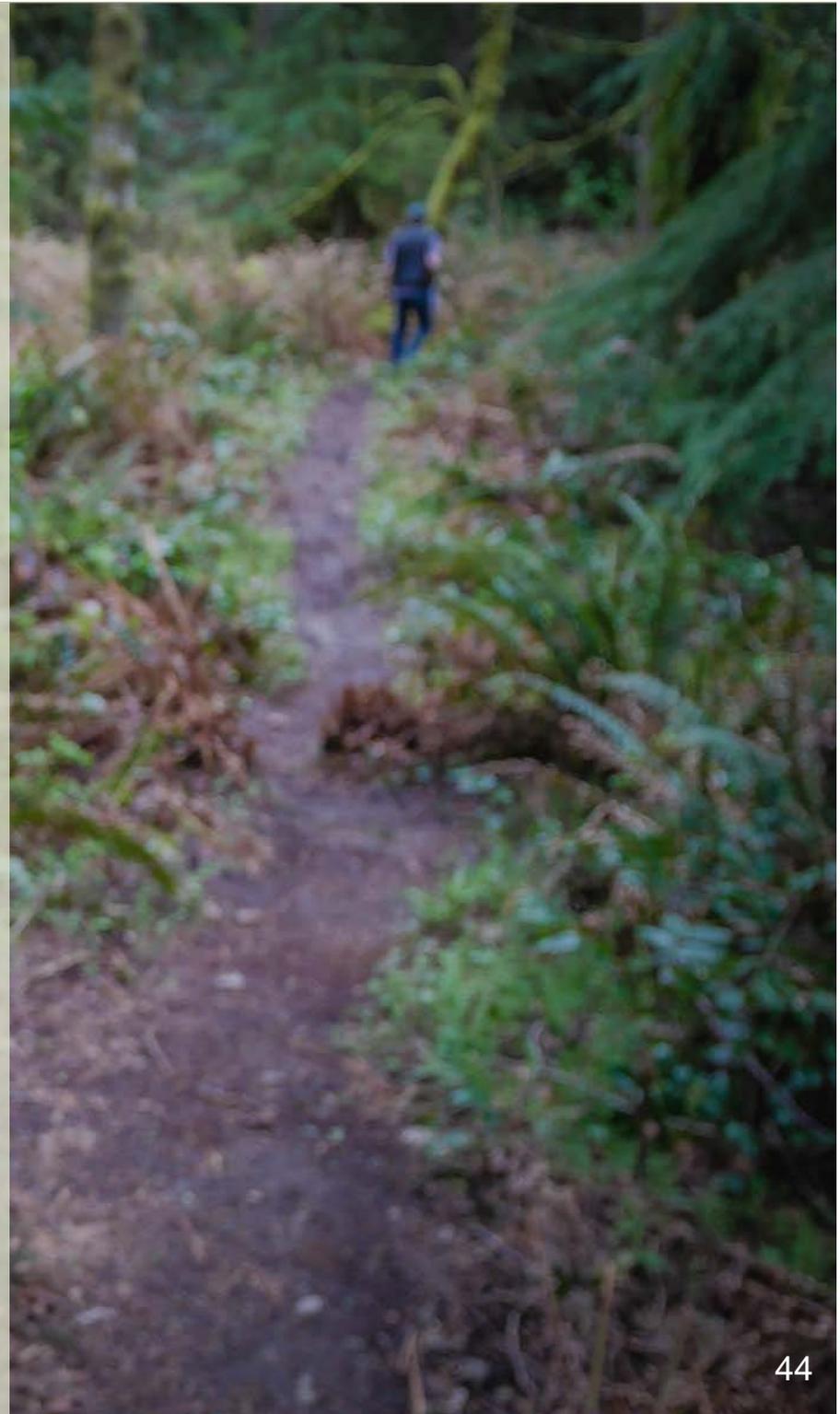
## Legend

- Identified Priority
- Non-King County Lead
- Public Land (fee or easement)
- Urban/Urban Unincorporated
- Forest Production Districts
- Agricultural Production District

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***Finishing the job*** across all conservation categories will ensure the next generation has:

- A landscape more resilient to effects of climate change
- Clean air
- Healthy water
- Sustainable forests
- Biodiversity
- Fresh local food
- Strong resource-based economies
- Access to recreation
- Public land ownership patterns that permanently hold the line against sprawl and uphold growth management goals



THE TIME IS

**NOW**

TO CONSERVE  
KING COUNTY'S LANDS



FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS