

Final Draft Memorandum

To: Michelle Mercer, Greg Wendt, Benton County Planning Division

From: Adam Cares, *AC Geo*, and Ben Floyd, *White Bluffs Consulting*

Date: August 23, 2025

Re: Open Space Corridors

Introduction

This memorandum supports Benton County's 2026 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by addressing requirements to identify open space corridors. The Growth Management Act (GMA) mandates the identification of open space corridors within and between urban growth areas.¹ Open space corridors include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and the connection of critical areas. Identification and protection of open space supports multiple goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan, including protecting and linking habitat and other critical areas,² promoting outdoor recreation,³ preserving rural character,⁴ and conserving unique scenic landscapes.⁵ This memorandum supports existing County plans and programs focused on open space lands.

The purpose of this memorandum is to:

1. Review applicable statutory requirements and regulations for protection of open space corridors and summarize ways that Benton County is currently meeting the requirements outlined in the GMA.
2. Identify the extent of open space corridors within and between UGAs.
3. Characterize the environmental functions and patterns of use within identified open space corridors.
4. Review strategies to align protection of open space corridors with other policies and plans and make applicable recommendations.

¹ [RCW 36.70A.160 - Identification of open space corridors—Purchase authorized](#)

² Comprehensive Plan CA Goal 4

³ Comprehensive Plan TE Goal 2, PL Goals 1, 2, 3

⁴ Comprehensive Plan LU Goal 6

⁵ Comprehensive Plan PL Goal 3

Legal & Policy Framework

The Growth Management Act (GMA) lists the retention of open space as one of fifteen “Planning Goals,” and requires jurisdictions to identify open space corridors to *“encourage the retention of open space and development of recreation opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks”* (RCW 36.70A.020(9)).

RCW 36.70A.160 requires counties and cities planning under the GMA to identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas, including lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and the connection of critical areas. The statute clarifies that corridor designation does not restrict ongoing agricultural, or forest uses unless the jurisdiction acquires sufficient interest to limit development or resource use.

WAC 365-196-335 outlines requirements for protecting open space corridors and provides recommendations for implementing this statutory obligation. Counties and cities must identify open space corridors and may acquire land or lesser interests using available conservation funding. The rule also recommends that local governments do the following:

- a. consider identifying open space corridors when reviewing and updating urban growth areas, critical areas designations, and the land use element of comprehensive plans.
- b. consider the various purposes and uses of identified corridors, and state the preferred uses anticipated for identified corridors.
- c. consider how identified corridors exist in relationship to designated critical areas and natural resource lands, the extent and trends of public demands for recreational lands and access to public lands for recreation, and specific existing and planned recreational uses that may make use of identified corridors for specific uses, including nonmotorized transportation.
- d. plan an integrated system of open space that uses identified corridors to link established large areas of open space such as parks, greenbelts, streams, and wildlife corridors
- e. consider the potential to use vegetated green spaces as part of an integrated system to absorb and treat stormwater.

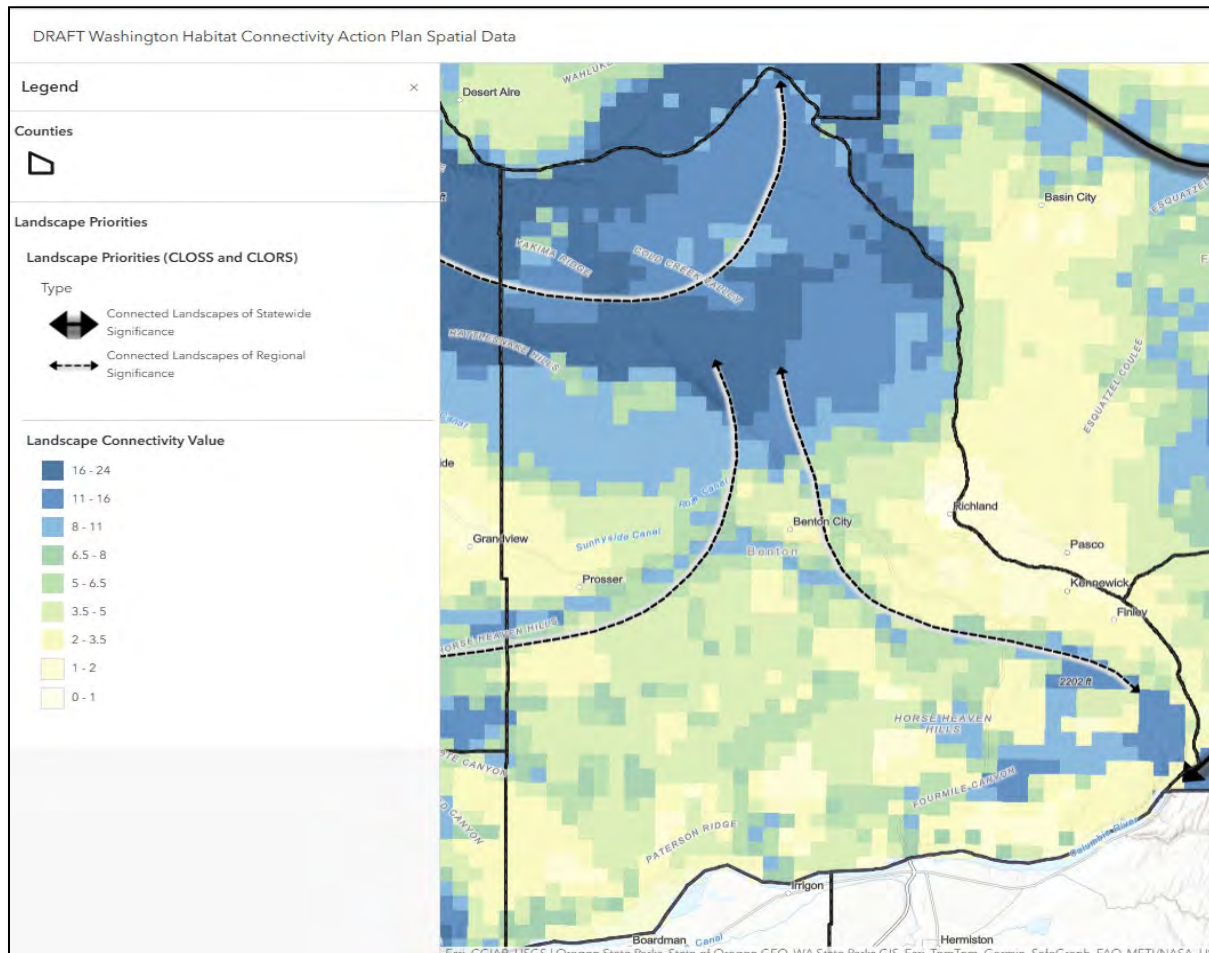
State Agency Guidance

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Habitat Guidance

Benton County contains protected habitats that are prioritized in various guidance and plans. WDFW’s Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) Program provides key fish, wildlife, and habitat information to inform land use decisions. Open space corridors that serve as biodiversity corridors and core habitat areas are mapped as PHS. WDFW’s Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan (WAHCAP) is a statewide strategy (currently in draft status) that guides habitat

connectivity planning by mapping key wildlife corridors and identifying priority areas to reconnect important landscapes. The Arid Lands Initiative (ALI) is a habitat conservation and recovery program that identifies priority areas for landscape-scale conservation and restoration within the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion, including “Priority Core Areas” and “Priority Linkage Areas”. The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) builds on the ALI and identifies core and corridor areas for shrubsteppe and other habitats. Guidance and spatial data from the PHS dataset, WAHCAP, ALI, and WSRRI were incorporated into the analysis of open space.

Figure 1: WDFW Habitat Connectivity Action Plan Spatial Data – Benton County



Critical Area and Shoreline Guidance

The Washington State Department of Ecology’s Wetland Guidance for CAO Updates (2022) emphasizes the protection of wetland functions—such as water quality, flood storage, and habitat connectivity—and supports the integration of wetlands into broader land use planning frameworks. Ecology’s SMP Handbook (2017) also offers guidance on shoreline vegetation conservation, recommending buffer and setback standards to preserve ecological functions, reduce flood risks, and maintain habitat - reinforcing the importance of vegetated open spaces. The extent of shorelines and critical areas were incorporated into the open space analysis.

Benton County Open Space Plans and Policies

Benton County has existing plans and policies that accomplish many of the requirements and recommendations for identification of open space in RCW 36.70A.160 and WAC 365-196-335. These include the Benton County Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Parks Plan, Shoreline Master Program (SMP), Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), and the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Work Plan. The open space priorities in this document align with those programs.

Parks, Recreation, and Trails

The Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan, adopted in 2014 and scheduled for update in 2025, identifies parks and other recreation areas, characterizes their public use, considers linkages between sites and critical areas, and presents strategies to improve connectivity⁶.

Critical Areas and Shorelines

The County's SMP is focused on protecting the functions and values of designated shoreline areas, including riparian corridors, floodplains, and wetlands, and applies specific standards for vegetation conservation, buffers, and public access. The CAO also identifies and regulates critical areas, many of which form or overlap with open space corridors. The VSP Work Plan supports the protection of critical areas on agricultural lands and identifies priority areas where conservation practices can maintain or enhance open space values such as vegetated buffers.

Shrubsteppe Protection and Recovery

Benton County and the Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts are developing a shrubsteppe mitigation bank and in-lieu-fee (ILF) program to allow compensatory mitigation for shrubsteppe impacts through a structured crediting system. The Benton Conservation District has created a shrubsteppe biodiversity potential model to prioritize shrubsteppe habitat for protection and restoration to inform the mitigation program and other protection efforts.

Current Comprehensive Plan

Open space is addressed in several sections of the existing Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes a range of goals and policies related to parks, open space, and natural resource protection, including:

- Preserving rural character through protection of open spaces and low-impact recreation (LU Goal 6, Policy 4, p. 14).
- Integrating natural features—such as rivers, ridges, and slopes—into a connected system of open lands (CA Goal 4, Policy 2, p. 23).

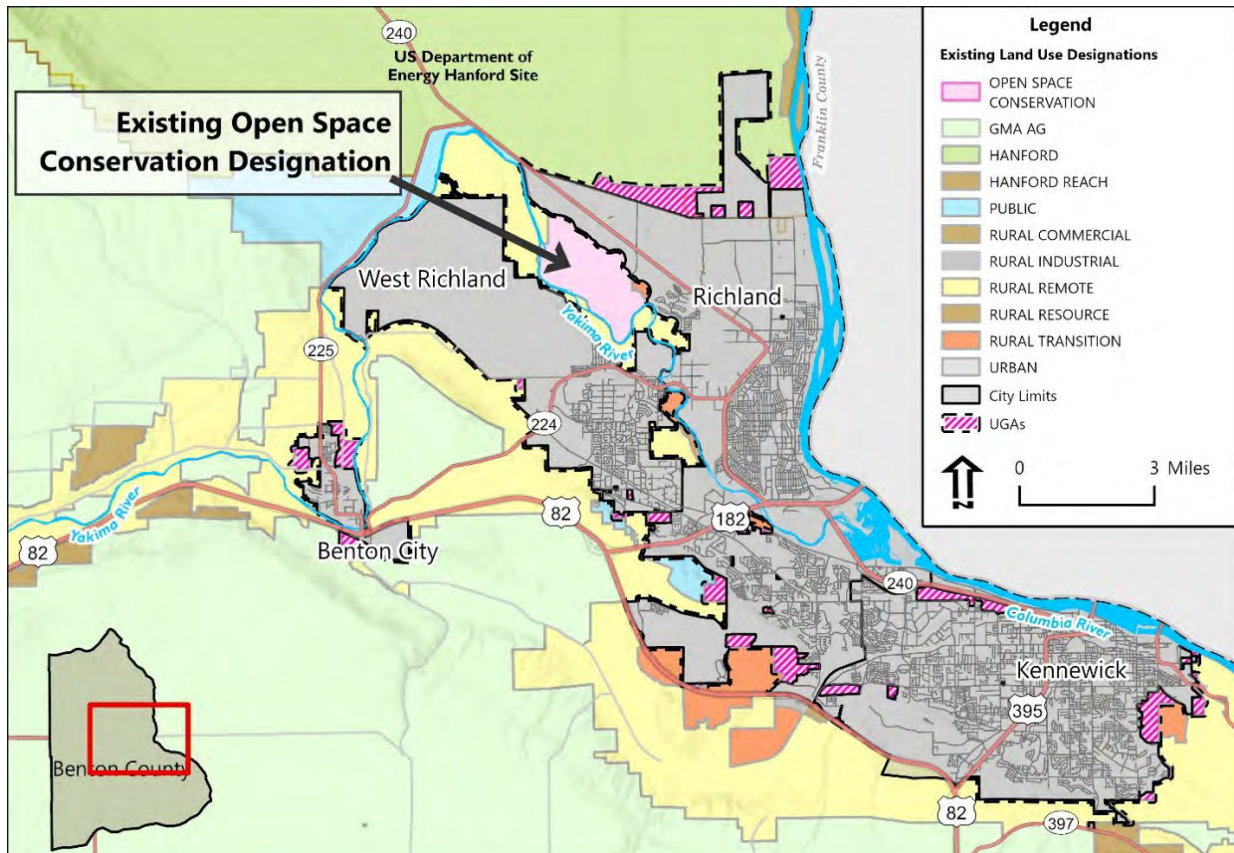
⁶ Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan, p. 26

- Expanding non-motorized transportation options, including trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian use (TE Goal 2, Policy 1, p. 27)
- Developing and maintaining a regional park and trail network that links with city networks (PL Goal 1, Policy 1, 2, 3, 4, p. 28)
- Working with cities and agencies to protect greenways and open spaces along the riverine corridor of the lower Yakima River and considering acquisitions as part of the park system (PL Goal 2, Policy 1 & 2, p. 28).
- Conserving visually prominent vegetated steep slopes and elevated ridges of the Columbia Basin Landscape (PL Goal 3, Policy 2, p.29).
- Using tools such as conservation easements, area plans, and land acquisitions to protect critical areas and scenic ridges, specifically Red, Candy, and Badger Mountains and the Horse Heaven Hills (Goal 3, Policy 3, p. 29).

Current Open Space Land Use Designations

The current land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan include an “Open Space Conservation” designation. The County currently has one area encompassing approximately 2,169 acres designated as Open Space. The area currently designated as Open Space Conservation is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Existing Open Space Land Use Designations



Mapping & Inventory of Open Space Corridors

GIS Methodology

Open space corridors were identified using a GIS-based analysis focused on open lands located within and between UGAs. The analysis focused on:

1. **Habitat**, with a focus on mapped core areas and wildlife corridors
2. **Critical areas** (other than habitat) providing functions such as flood storage and filtration
3. **Linkage routes** providing existing or potential connections to larger open spaces, supporting trail connections, and multimodal access.

Habitat data sources included PHS biodiversity areas and corridors as well as species and ecosystem specific areas such as shrubsteppe, talus slopes, and inland sand dunes. Habitat analysis also included the WSRRI and ALI datasets to identify and prioritize habitat cores and corridors. Other critical areas—such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes—were included due to their role in sustaining ecological functions and protecting public safety. Infrastructure features—including highways, local roads, railways, and canals—were also evaluated for their potential to support multimodal transportation and trail corridors. A full list of GIS data sources is provided in Table 1.

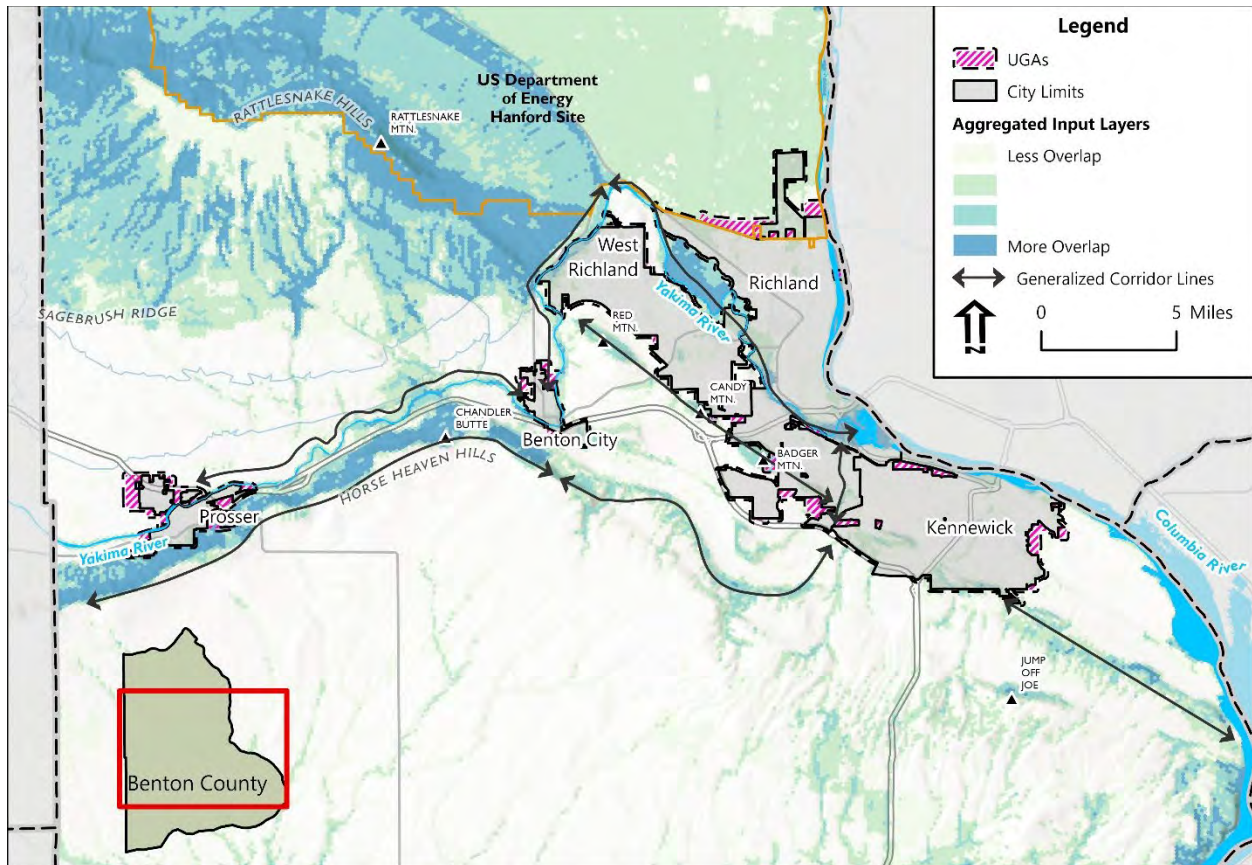
Table 1: GIS Data Sources

GIS Layer	Source
Public land parcels	WA Geospatial Open Data Portal
Conservation Easements	Natl. Conservation Easement Database
Federal & State Highways – 100’ ROW	Benton County GIS
Floodplains	Benton County GIS
Wetlands	National Wetlands Inventory
Shoreline Jurisdiction	Benton County GIS
Critical aquifer recharge areas	Benton County GIS
County roads – 60’ ROW	Benton County GIS
Canals & aqueducts – 60’ corridor	Benton County GIS, DNR Hydrography
Geologically hazardous areas	Benton County GIS
Railroads – 100’ ownership	WA Geospatial Open Data Portal
Public Trails	Benton County GIS, OpenStreetMap
WDFW Priority Habitats & Species (PHS)	WDFW
WSRRI Cores, Corridors, Growth Opportunity Areas	WDFW
Arid Lands Initiative Habitat Cores & Corridors	Arid Lands Initiative
Summits, fault lines and geologic uplift formations	USGS, WA DNR

Many of the open space input layers overlap on the landscape, as open space areas often serve multiple functions related to habitat and environmental processes. The GIS analysis first aggregated the input layers to identify areas of convergence. The initial analysis was followed by a desktop review using supplemental sources such as habitat and critical area guidance, park and trail plans, and GIS metadata to interpret spatial patterns and identify and characterize open space corridors.

Because the input data varied in scale, resolution, and accuracy, results were aggregated and generalized into a consistent resolution to support uniform evaluation across the study area. Figure 3 illustrates the generalized input data and the corridor network defined from further review. Maps showing all input data are included in Appendix B.

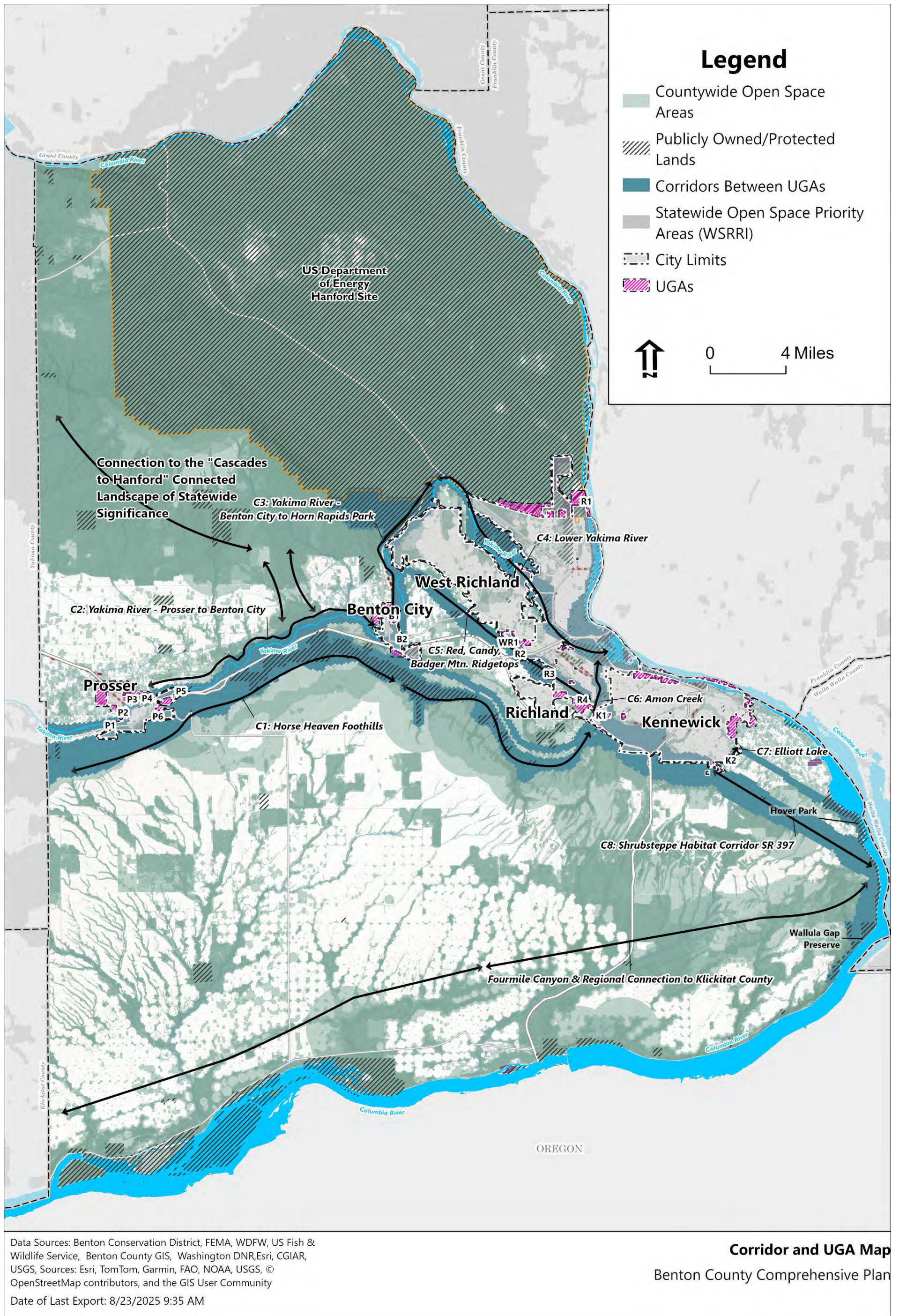
Figure 3: Aggregated Open Space Input Layers & Generalized Corridors



Analysis Conclusions

The primary open space corridors between UGAs are located along ridgelines of the Horse Heaven and Rattlesnake uplift formations and the Yakima River corridor. Smaller linkages also exist along highways, rail, and canal rights of way. The identified corridors generally overlap and align with other programs, plans, and mapping efforts, such as the ALI, PHS, WSRRI, and WAHCAP data and the Benton County Parks Plan. The open space corridors were identified and labeled based on unifying landscape characteristics or geographic features—such as ridgelines, highways, or river corridors—that help define each area’s role within the broader open space network. The open space areas within and between UGAs are summarized in Table 2 beginning on page 15. While the analysis focused specifically on open space within and between UGAs, these strategies can also be used to identify other open space lands throughout the County. A map showing countywide open space corridors and linkages to larger, regionally important areas, is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Countywide Open Space Corridors Map



Data Sources: Benton Conservation District, FEMA, WDFW, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Benton County GIS, Washington DNR, Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
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Corridor and UGA Map
 Benton County Comprehensive Plan

Identified Open Space Corridors

The GIS analysis identified eight primary open space corridors within and between UGAs. Descriptions of each corridor are included below and summarized in Table 2 on page 15.

C1: Horse Heaven Foothills

This corridor runs along the Horse Heaven geologic uplift formation south of I-82 and is characterized by steep slopes and shrubsteppe habitat. This area serves as a regionally significant wildlife habitat corridor, identified across several mapping efforts including WAHCAP, WSRRI, ALI, and shrubsteppe biodiversity potential modeling. The corridor supports lower-intensity outdoor recreation and trail use in areas, such as the Horse Heaven Hills Recreation Area. Large portions of this corridor are in public ownership, including a large contiguous block of public land near



Horse Heaven Hills Photo Credit: US BLM

Chandler Butte managed by the BLM and the Washington DNR. There are opportunities to protect the corridor through land acquisitions, easements, and statutory protection tools aimed at preserving and restoring shrubsteppe habitat and biodiversity. The eastern portion of the corridor has opportunities for trail development along existing rail or canal corridors, connecting non-motorized use - from Benton City through Badger Canyon to Kennewick.

C2: Yakima River Corridor - Prosser to Benton City

This corridor follows the Yakima River floodplain and designated shoreline areas between the cities of Prosser and Benton City. The Yakima River is designated as a shoreline of statewide significance, and the river itself and surrounding buffer vegetation form an important habitat corridor for fish and wildlife. The corridor is mostly under private ownership with limited public access except via the river itself. A desire for trail access along this corridor was identified in the Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan.⁷

C3: Yakima River Corridor - Benton City to Rattlesnake Hills and Horn Rapids

This corridor extends north along the Yakima River from Benton City through Horn Rapids County Park. It also connects to Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area and the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility. The Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area has a network of hiking trails and provides further habitat linkage to the Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. Horn Rapids Park offers over 800 acres of transitional river-to-upland shrub-steppe habitat, with an extensive trail network and

⁷ Benton County Comprehensive Parks Plan, p. 28

group day use and camping facilities. The Tapteal Trail provides non-motorized access along the Yakima River.

C4. Lower Yakima River

The Lower Yakima River Corridor encompasses a diverse set of protected habitats and greenbelt areas including restored wetlands, riparian buffers, and shrubsteppe habitat. The upper section includes a large wetland complex protected under the federal Wetlands Reserve Program and designated as Open Space Conservation in Benton County's current land use designations. The downstream portion within the City of Richland encompasses the Chamna Natural Preserve, a 276-acre public park with over 11 miles of trails. The Tapteal Trail also provides non-motorized connectivity throughout the corridor, linking neighborhoods and urban centers to natural areas. The corridor supports a broad range of critical ecological functions and is already well-integrated into Benton County's open space network. However, there are further opportunities to conserve properties with important riparian buffer functions on private property within the city.

C5. Red, Badger, and Candy Mountain Ridgetops

This corridor includes the ridgeline systems of Red Mountain, Candy Mountain, Badger Mountain, and Little Badger Mountain, forming an interconnected open space network adjacent to the West Richland, Richland, and Kennewick UGAs. The corridor contains popular trail systems used for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, while also supporting areas of relatively undisturbed shrubsteppe habitat. Recreational pressure is relatively high due to proximity to urban neighborhoods. Ownership along this corridor is interrupted by roads such as SR 224 and US 182 and privately owned parcels. Red Mountain is surrounded by more intensive agricultural use – primarily vineyards – and is not part of the existing public trail network. There are opportunities to pair future trail expansion with localized agritourism in and around the Red Mountain American Viticulture Area, and possibly other areas that could be connected to the ridge trail network.



Badger Mountain Trailhead. Photo Credit: Wikipedia Commons

C6. Amon Creek Corridor

The Amon Creek riparian corridor forms an urban greenway and open space link between portions of the Richland and Kennewick UGAs as it flows north to the Yakima River Delta. The area includes the Amon Basin Preserve and a loop trail system, and contains riparian, wetland, and shrubsteppe habitats. Parts of the corridor are under public ownership (City of Richland), with other portions in private ownership, including a portion within Meadow Springs Country Club.



Amon Creek Natural Preserve in Richland.

C7. Elliott Lake Corridor

Elliott Lake is a spring-fed lake located in a residential area, with surrounding forested buffers and wetlands that provide habitat for wildlife and support important ecological functions. Although there are no public trails or formal access points currently identified, the area's natural features form a small open space corridor connected to the Kennewick UGA.

C8. Shrubsteppe Habitat Corridor along SR 397

This corridor follows a band of shrubsteppe habitat and steep slopes extending southeast from Kennewick toward Hover Park and the Wallula Gap Preserve. It is bisected by SR 397 and includes designated PHS biodiversity corridors and mapped WSSRI habitat, including mesic and Sage Grouse habitats. The corridor currently has limited public access and no formal trail systems are in place.

Recommendations

1. Consider Open Space Conservation or Public Lands designations for publicly owned parcels adjacent to Candy Mountain Preserve, and for appropriate DNR and BLM owned parcels in Badger Canyon and the Horse Heaven foothills.

Two parcels with the Candy Mountain Preserve – one owned by the BLM, and one by the City of West Richland – are currently designated Rural Remote. Benton County should coordinate with the City of West Richland the BLM and consider designating these parcels as Public Lands or Open Space Conservation. An overview map of the parcels is included in Appendix A-1.

Benton County should also consider Open Space Conservation or Public land use designation for an open space site in the Badger Canyon area. The site includes two publicly owned parcels totaling 429 acres, consisting of 269 acres owned by DNR and 160 acres owned by BLM. The properties contain valuable shrubsteppe habitat and could provide non-motorized recreation opportunities such as mountain biking (analog and Class 1 e-bike), hiking, and horseback riding. A map of the parcels is included in Appendix A-3.

Benton County should also pursue appropriate open space protection and habitat restoration strategies for 7,015 acres of publicly owned land in the Horse Heaven Hills, located south of I-82 between Prosser and Benton City. These lands, managed by the BLM and DNR, form a critical habitat corridor characterized by extensive shrubsteppe and include areas identified as Biodiversity Corridors and Core Areas by the WDFW PHS and WSRRI spatial datasets. Protection of this area would maintain ecological connectivity while providing opportunities for low-intensity outdoor recreation, such as hiking on designated trails at low densities. A map of the parcels is included in Appendix A-4.

2. Work with the appropriate cities to identify and protect identified open space resources within and between UGAs

Work collaboratively with cities to integrate identified open space corridors and resources into their planning frameworks, including comprehensive plans, parks and recreation plans, critical areas ordinances, and zoning codes. Encourage the use of local tools such as land use designations, park and open space dedications, and conservation incentives to support the protection and enhancement of open space within UGAs, and connections between UGAs within cities. Specifically, coordinate with Cities to apply appropriate designations to parcels within and adjoining Candy Mountain Preserve and Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve within the West Richland and Richland UGAs

3. Implement a variety of tools to protect open space

Use conservation easements, land acquisitions, land swaps, and statutory requirements to expand and protect open space corridors. Prioritize areas with multiple benefits based on key datasets (WSRRI, WAHCAP, shrubsteppe biodiversity potential, parks plan, etc.). A list of potential protection mechanisms is included below for reference.

Direct Acquisition Tools

- Market Value Purchase: Purchase land at appraised fair market value.
- Bargain Sale: Acquire land below market value, allowing tax benefits for the seller.
- Life Estate or Bequest: Secure future ownership while allowing continued use.
- Gift Deed: Record a deed transferring property upon the owner's death.
- Option to Purchase Agreement: Secure future acquisition rights with pre-set conditions.
- Right of First Refusal: Obtain the opportunity to match any purchase offer when a property is put up for sale.

Conservation Easements and Dedications

- Conservation Easements: Permanently limit development to protect natural or recreational values while retaining private ownership.
- Access Easements: Secure public trail or recreation access across private lands.
- Park/Open Space Dedications: Require land set-asides or in-lieu fees as part of development review.

Landowner Incentive and Planning Tools

- Current Use Taxation (*RCW 84.34*): Leverage open space tax programs to reduce holding costs and support voluntary conservation.

Partner-Based and Alternative Tools

- Land Trust Partnerships: Work with non-profits (e.g., land trusts) to acquire or steward conservation lands.
- Utility & Transportation Corridor Agreements: Coordinate with utility providers to allow open space or trail use in managed corridors.
- In-lieu Fee Impact Mitigation Program: Leverage third-party programs where developers pay a fee to offset habitat impacts—such as shrubsteppe loss—through off-site conservation or restoration actions managed by qualified sponsors (e.g., mitigation banks or local governments).

4. Coordinate prioritization of high-value parcels.

Work with Cities and other partners such as DNR, WDFW, and Benton Conservation District to develop a ranked list of priority parcels for protection, using clearly defined evaluation criteria and the best available habitat and landscape data. Incorporate spatial information and modeling of shrubsteppe habitat quality into decision making.

5. Incorporate compatible outdoor recreation planning.

Promote recreation that aligns the type and intensity of public use with habitat sensitivity, ensuring protection of ecological functions. Incorporate these strategies into the Benton County Parks Plan, especially in areas within and near UGAs and designated wildlife areas along corridors

6. Enhance trail connectivity and multimodal access.

Explore opportunities to acquire trail easements, particularly along rivers, within existing rail and highway rights-of-way, or across strategic open space corridors. These connections can support regional trail continuity and improve non-motorized access. Work with irrigation districts to avoid trespassing but provide appropriate limited access to open spaces that may be adjacent to irrigation canals.

7. Support agriculture and agritourism through trail integration.

Explore trail connectivity projects to enhance access to value-added agricultural destinations and agritourism opportunities. For example, connecting multimodal trails to the Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA) can promote both outdoor recreation and agritourism development. Coordinate with agricultural stakeholders to identify mutually beneficial trail opportunities, ensuring trail alignments and usage avoid negative impacts to farm operations and enhance visibility for local producers.

8. Integrate open space planning with wildfire risk reduction.

Align open space protection with Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) and Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) strategies. Protecting natural open space in strategic buffers can reduce fire risk to nearby communities while maintaining habitat and recreational functions, but unmanaged vegetation can also pose a wildfire risk. Balance and integrate fuel modification with habitat and open space management to reduce the potential for conflicts between safety and environmental goals. Prioritize vegetation management and fuels reduction within open space areas, consistent with best management practices, as an appropriate measure to mitigate wildfire hazards.

9. Integrate open space protection into climate resilience strategies.

Incorporate open space corridors and natural lands into both the climate resilience and emissions reduction sub-elements of the Comprehensive Plan. In the resilience sub-element, open space areas—such as riparian buffers, floodplains, shrubsteppe habitat, and vegetated ridgelines—play a critical role in mitigating climate-related hazards. These areas help reduce the urban heat island effect, absorb stormwater, and preserve groundwater recharge. In the emissions reduction sub-element, protecting and enhancing open space supports carbon sequestration in soils and vegetation, reduces vehicle miles traveled by enabling non-motorized trail networks, and supports compact urban growth patterns by establishing natural growth boundaries.

Table 2: UGA Open Space Descriptions & Corridors Inventory Table

Areas (UGA, Corridor)	Map #	Open Space Description	Public access demand & trail use	Linkage to larger open space areas	Critical areas (non PHS)	Habitat Core/ Corridor (PHS or WSSRI)	Shrubsteppe Habitat	Riparian Tree/Shrub Canopy	Protection Status and Enhancement opportunities
Prosser UGA	P1 - P5	UGA intersection with Yakima River shorelines and floodplain with connections to railroad and highway rights of way.	No public access except from the water, no known trails		Yes			Yes	Protection through existing Shoreline and Critical Areas regulations and VSP on Ag lands. Monitoring tools in place to ensure no net loss of functions and values.
	P6	UGA intersection with shrubsteppe habitat, biodiversity corridors, steep slopes south of SR 221 near the intersection with SR 22.	No public access or trails	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		None identified at this time
Horse Heaven Foothills Corridor	C1	Horse heaven foothills running East- West on the south side of I-82. Characterized by shrubsteppe habitat, serving as a regionally significant wildlife corridor (see WSRRI and WAHCAP spatial data for reference). Corridor	Lower intensity trail systems in Horse Heaven Hills Recreation Area. Preference for low density/intensity recreational use due to habitat value.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Over 7,000 acres are protected by existing contiguous blocks of public lands surrounding Chandler Butte, managed by BLM and DNR. Opportunities for additional acquisition and restoration of shrubsteppe habitat throughout the corridor. Pursue a variety of means and mechanisms such as conservation easements, land acquisitions and trades, and statutory requirements to conserve and grow the existing open space corridor.
Yakima River Corridor - Prosser to Benton City	C2	Yakima River shoreline and floodplain between Prosser and Benton City	Private property with no public access except from the water		Yes			Yes	Trail right of way/easement acquisition along river or within existing highway or railroad rights of way. Desire for non-motorized trail along Yakima River referenced in Parks Plan (pg. 28)
Yakima River Corridor through Horn Rapids County Park	C3	Open space corridor extending from Benton City north along the Yakima River, connecting to large areas of public open space including the Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area and further to the Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. Between Benton City and Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area, land along the Yakima River is mostly in private ownership with fragmented riparian cover and habitat.	Higher intensity public use of Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility and Horn Rapids County Park. Tapteal Trail provides non-motorized access along the entire corridor and connects open space to urban areas. Lower intensity use occurs in the connected open space areas to the northwest into the Rattlesnake Hills.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Significant publicly owned lands and trail access already exist. WDFW could pursue future opportunities to protect/grow important habitat cores adjacent to Rattlesnake Slope Wildlife Area through acquisition of adjacent lands. Shrubsteppe biodiversity potential indicates potential opportunities for shrubsteppe restoration across large acreages - additional analysis needed to prioritize target parcel list.
Lower Yakima River	C4	Riverine corridors with multiple protected habitats. Upper extent includes a large restored wetland complex adjacent to the Yakima River protected under the Wetlands reserve program. Downstream on the Yakima River delta, the Chamna Natural Preserve is a 276-acre park with more than 11 miles of trails winding through shrub-steppe, riparian, and wetland habitat.	Tapteal Trail provides non-motorized access along the entire corridor, connecting to residential neighborhoods and urban cores. Additional trail network exists throughout Chamna Natural Preserve.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Significant publicly owned lands and trail access already exist.
West Richland UGA	WR1	UGA property with shrubsteppe habitat That is part of the Candy Mountain Preserve. consisting of one undeveloped, 17.6-acre parcel (ID 119981012826004) owned by Benton County. Also adjoins the City of Richland water tank.	Publicly owned and adjoining preserve property with higher recreational use. Currently no formal trail development on the parcel.	Yes			Yes		Protect and enhance shrubsteppe habitat as applicable, keep the parcel open as part of the larger Red/Candy/Badger ridgetops open space corridor. Consider Open Space Conservation land use designation for this parcel and adjoining County owned properties.

Areas (UGA, Corridor)	Map #	Open Space Description	Public access demand & trail use	Linkage to larger open space areas	Critical areas (non PHS)	Habitat Core/ Corridor (PHS or WSSRI)	Shrubsteppe Habitat	Riparian Tree/Shub Canopy	Protection Status and Enhancement opportunities
Red, Badger, Candy Mountain Ridgetops	C5	Interconnected ridge tops of the Rattlesnake uplift formation forming an open space corridor between Richland and West Richland UGAs. The corridor includes Candy Mountain Preserve, Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve, and Little Badger Mountain Preserve. The open space properties and trail system form a popular open space network supporting hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Connectivity within the corridor is interrupted by private ownership, SR 224, and US 182.	Higher levels of trail density and use due to proximity to urban areas. Many areas have multimodal (non-motorized) trails, while others are hiker-only. Habitat areas are considered in trail planning and large areas of undisturbed habitat are left intact.	Yes		Yes	Yes		Non-motorized trail system could be extended northwest to connect to Red Mountain and beyond toward the Yakima River corridor. Pursue a variety of means and mechanisms such as area plans, conservation easements, clustered developments, land acquisitions and trades, and statutory requirements to conserve an interconnected network of open space on Red, Candy, and Badger mountains. Consider Open Space Conservation or Parks land use designation for publicly owned properties currently in other designations (see Appendix A).
Richland UGA	R1	UGA area within the Hanford Site with industrial use connecting to large habitat core and corridors to the north.	None			Yes	Yes		Property is in federal ownership and expected to have primarily industrial use. Encourage conservation of shrubsteppe habitat.
	R2	Single parcel plus US 182 right of way between Badger and Candy Mountain preserves.	None currently.	Yes			Yes		Possible linkage between residential neighborhoods in Richland to the Badger Mt. to Candy Mt. Connector Trail via highway ROW.
	R3	County owned parcels forming part of the Badger Mtn Centennial Preserve. Contains WSSRI Xeric/Sage Grouse habitat.	Extensive trail network within and connecting to the site	Yes		Yes	Yes		Maintain existing protections.
	R4	Mostly residential portion of Richland UGA with connection to Amon Creek corridor and trails and proximity to Little Badger Mountain Preserve. Two large parcels (PID 102882070000068 & 102881000003011) with steep slopes and shrubsteppe in NE corner of UGA.	None. Proximity to loop trails in Amon Creek corridor.	Yes			Yes		Pursue strategies to preserve open space properties with steep slopes and shrubsteppe as applicable
Amon Creek	C6	Open space corridor within the City of Richland between portions of Richland and Kennewick UGAs.	Existing loop trail within City of Richland.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Existing protections through much of the corridor. Coordinate with conservation district and other conservation groups to promote voluntary stewardship and riparian plantings along upper reaches in Badger Canyon.
Kennewick UGA	K1	Mostly residential and commercial portion of Kennewick UGA with connection to Amon Creek corridor.	None					Yes	None identified at this time
	K2	Parcel in Kennewick UGA currently in agricultural use near Elliot Lake	None					Yes	Rely on existing regulations and program to protect functions and values of Elliot Lake wetlands and buffers through VSP.
Elliott Lake	C7	Elliott Lake is spring fed lake located in a residential area with wetlands and forested buffers providing habitat.	None known		Yes			Yes	
Shrubsteppe Habitat along SR 397	C8	Corridor of steep slopes and shrubsteppe habitat extending Southeast from Kennewick toward the Wallula Gap Preserve, bisected by SR 397. Mapped PHS biodiversity corridor, WSSRI Sage Grouse and xeric habitats.	Connects to Hover Park at eastern extremity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		

Appendix A

Parcels Reviewed for Open Space Designation

Table A-1: Parcels Reviewed for Open Space Conservation Designation

Area	Parcel ID	Acres	Owner	Land Use Designation	Zoning	Recommendations
Candy Mountain	118983000008000	25	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119981012138004	5.1	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119984011216002	5.39	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119984011216004	5.77	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119981012826004	17.61	Benton County	Urban/ Med. Density Residential (WR UGA)	Park District	Coordinate with West Richland to encourage applicable designations to protect open space use
Candy Mountain	119982000001003	36.58	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119981000001002	40	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	118983013485002	50.96	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	118983000006000	37.74	BLM	Rural Remote	RL-5	Coordinate with BLM to discuss designation as Public/Open Space Conservation Designation
Candy Mountain	119982000001001	2.5	City of West Richland	Rural Remote	RL-5	Coordinate with the City of West Richland to determine if Public designation is appropriate.
Candy Mountain	119981013189002	2.84	Friends of Badger Mtn.	Rural Remote	RL-5	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119981013189001	4.35	Friends of Badger Mtn.	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	119981012138003	5.69	Friends of Badger Mtn.	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Candy Mountain	118983013485001	5.02	Private	Rural Remote	RL-5	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	129982011930001	5	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	129982011930002	5	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	129982011930003	5	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	129982011930004	5	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	129981000001000	20	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128983000002003	23.03	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128983000002001	25	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128983000002002	25	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128984000000000	97.16	Benton County	Urban/ Natural Open Space (Richland UGA)	Park District	Maintain Existing. Property is designated Natural Open Space by City of Richland.
Badger Mtn	129981000002001	145.27	Benton County	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128982000002002	291.59	Benton County	Public/Natural Open Space (Richland UGA portion)	Park District	Maintain existing designation. Portion of property is in Richland UGA. Coordinate with City of Richland
Badger Mtn	128982000002001	20	Private	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Mtn	128983000001000	0.11	Private - Verizon	Public	Park District	Maintain existing designation
Badger Canyon	110883000000000	160	BLM	Rural Remote	RL-5	Coordinate with BLM to determine if Public/Open Space Conservation Designation is appropriate
Badger Canyon	116882020002000	269.37	DNR	Rural Remote	RL-5	Designate as Open Space Conservation or Parks. Coordinate with DNR to transfer ownership interest via trust lands transfer process or other mechanisms as appropriate.
Horse Heaven Hills	126961000001000	3	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	123964000002000	15	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	124954000002000	37.59	BLM	Rural Resource	RL-20	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	124962000002000	40	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	124963000000000	40	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	Coordinate with BLM and DNR to apply appropriate open space protections.
Horse Heaven Hills	114963000002000	60	BLM	Rural Resource	RL-20	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	108871000001000	75.03	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	134973000002000	80	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	119963020061001	97.21	BLM	Rural Resource	RL-20	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	104871000001000	106.44	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	Coordinate with BLM and DNR to apply appropriate open space protections.

Area	Parcel ID	Acres	Owner	Land Use Designation	Zoning	Recommendations
Horse Heaven Hills	120961000002000	118.74	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	136952000000000	120	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	105871000001000	136.07	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	121964000001000	156.9	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	121961000000000	160	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	122963000000000	160	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	115962000001000	179	BLM	Rural Remote	RL-5	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	119964020068000	200	BLM	Rural Resource	RL-20	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	130961000001000	203.65	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	135973000000000	208	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	129972000005001	212	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	134973000001000	227.6	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	124962000001000	240	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	121962000001000	280	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	120963000001000	316.56	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	122961000000000	320	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	125961000000000	380	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	125951000001000	400	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	123961000003000	437.04	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	132971000000000	480	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	133971000003000	494.47	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	130972000000000	523.54	BLM	GMA Ag	GMA Ag	coordinate with BLM and DNR
Horse Heaven Hills	116964000001000	188.28	DNR	Rural Resource	RL-20	Coordinate with BLM and DNR to apply appropriate open space protections.
Horse Heaven Hills	126953000003000	318.77	DNR	Rural Resource	RL-20	coordinate with BLM and DNR

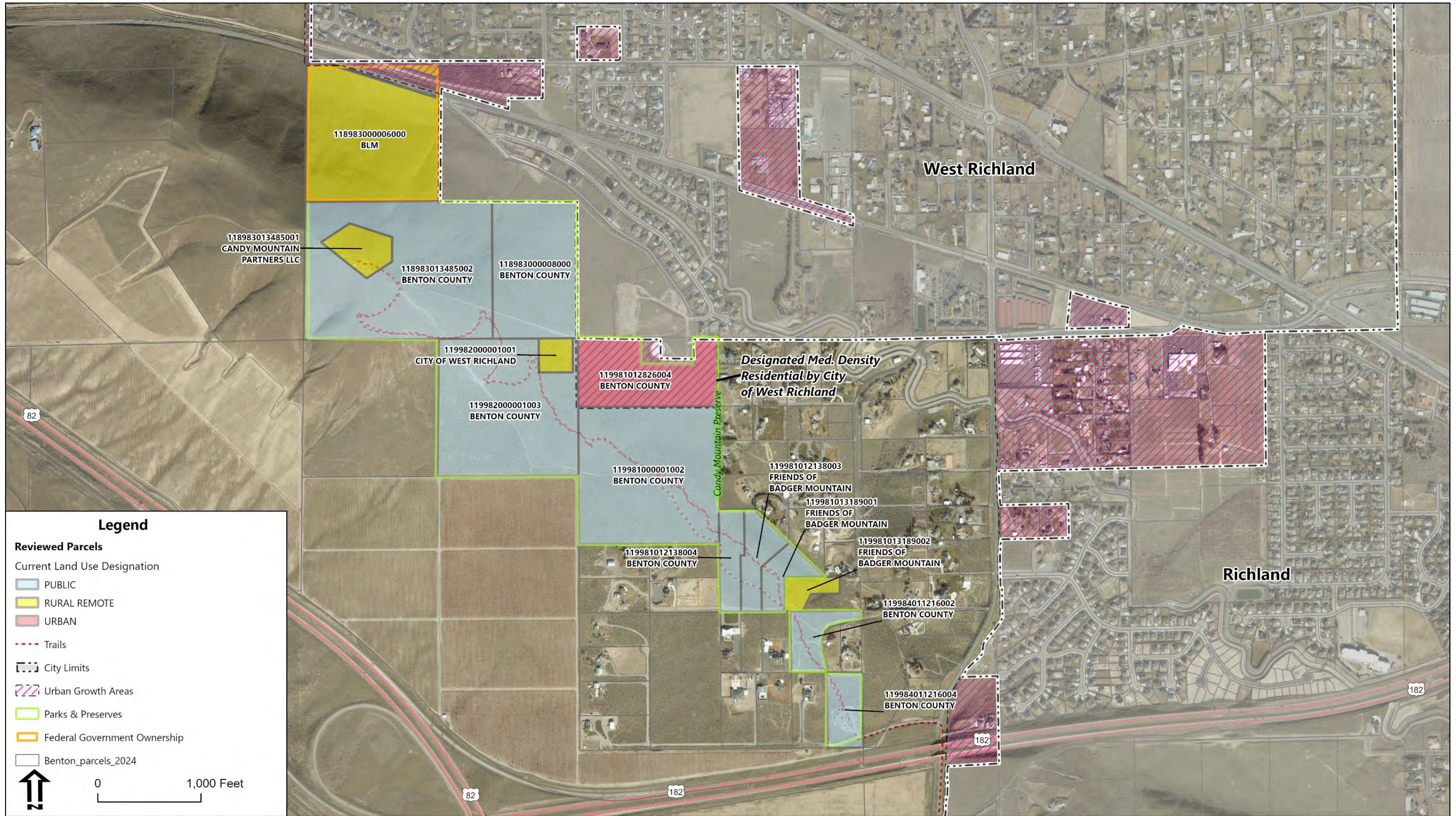


Figure A-1
Proposed Open Space Conservation Land Use Designation
Area 1: Candy Mountain Preserve

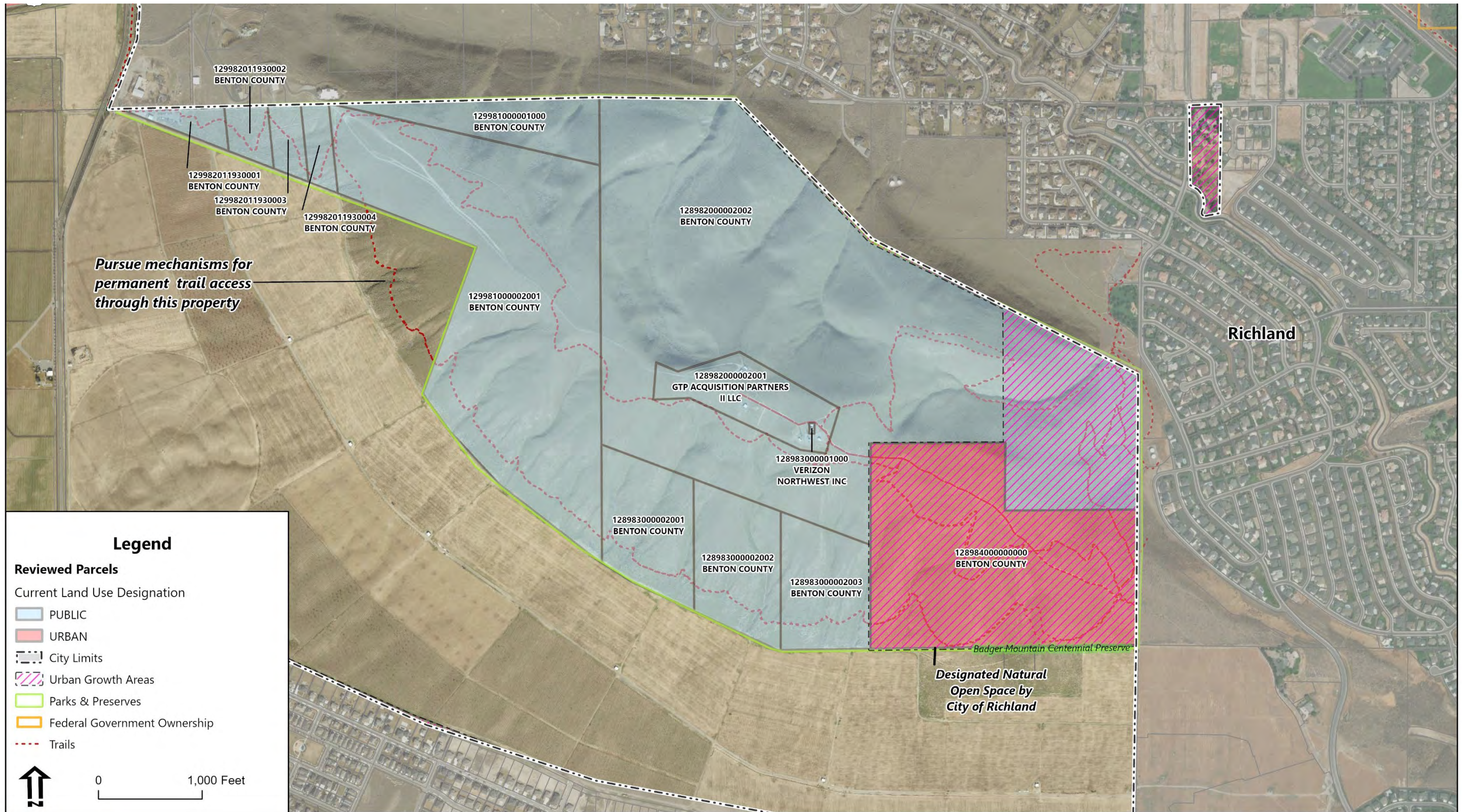


Figure A-2
Proposed Open Space Conservation Land Use Designation
Area 2: Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve



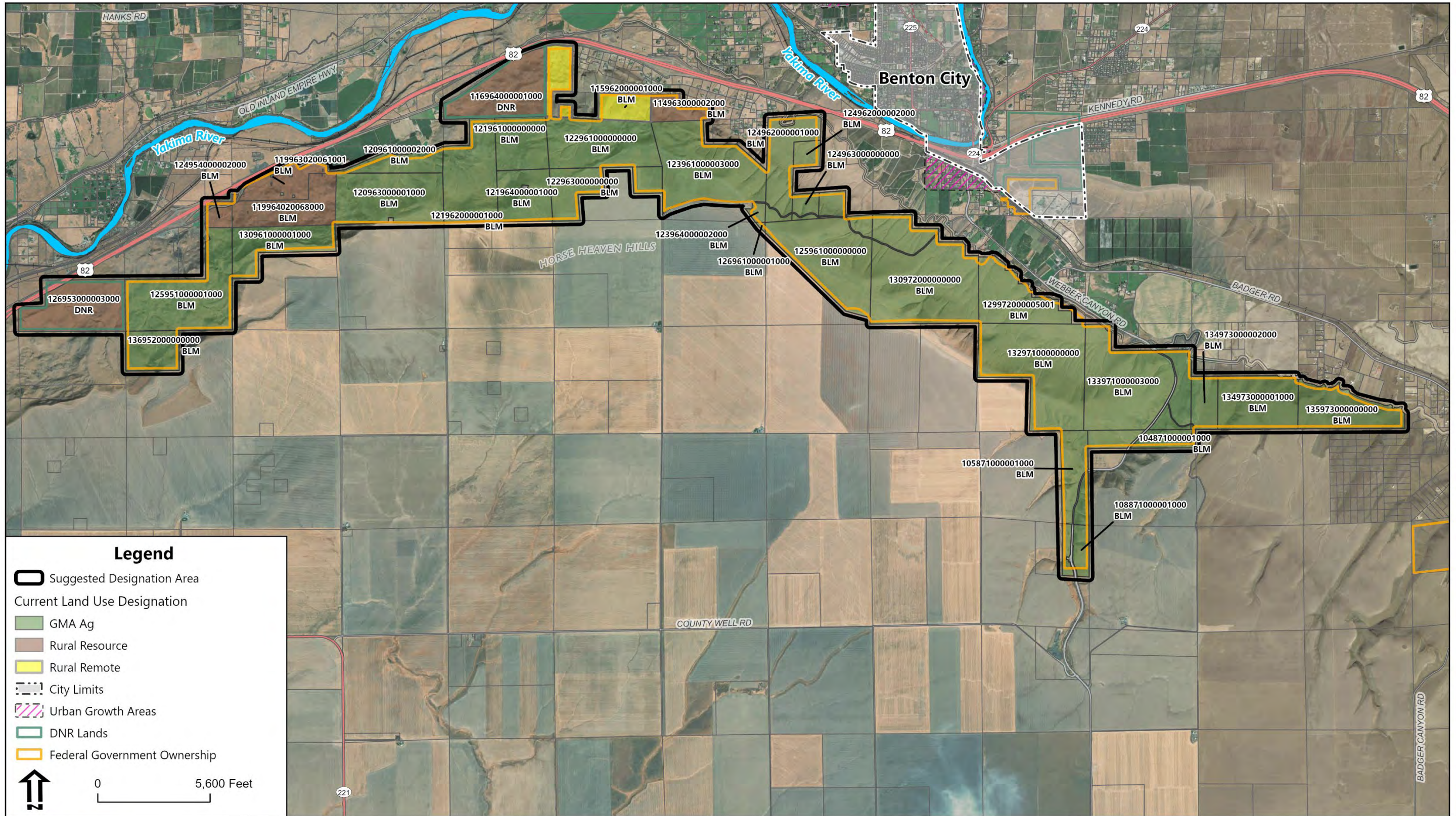


Figure A-4
Proposed Open Space Conservation Land Use Designation
Area 4: Horse Heaven Foothills

Appendix B

Open Space Corridors Analysis Maps

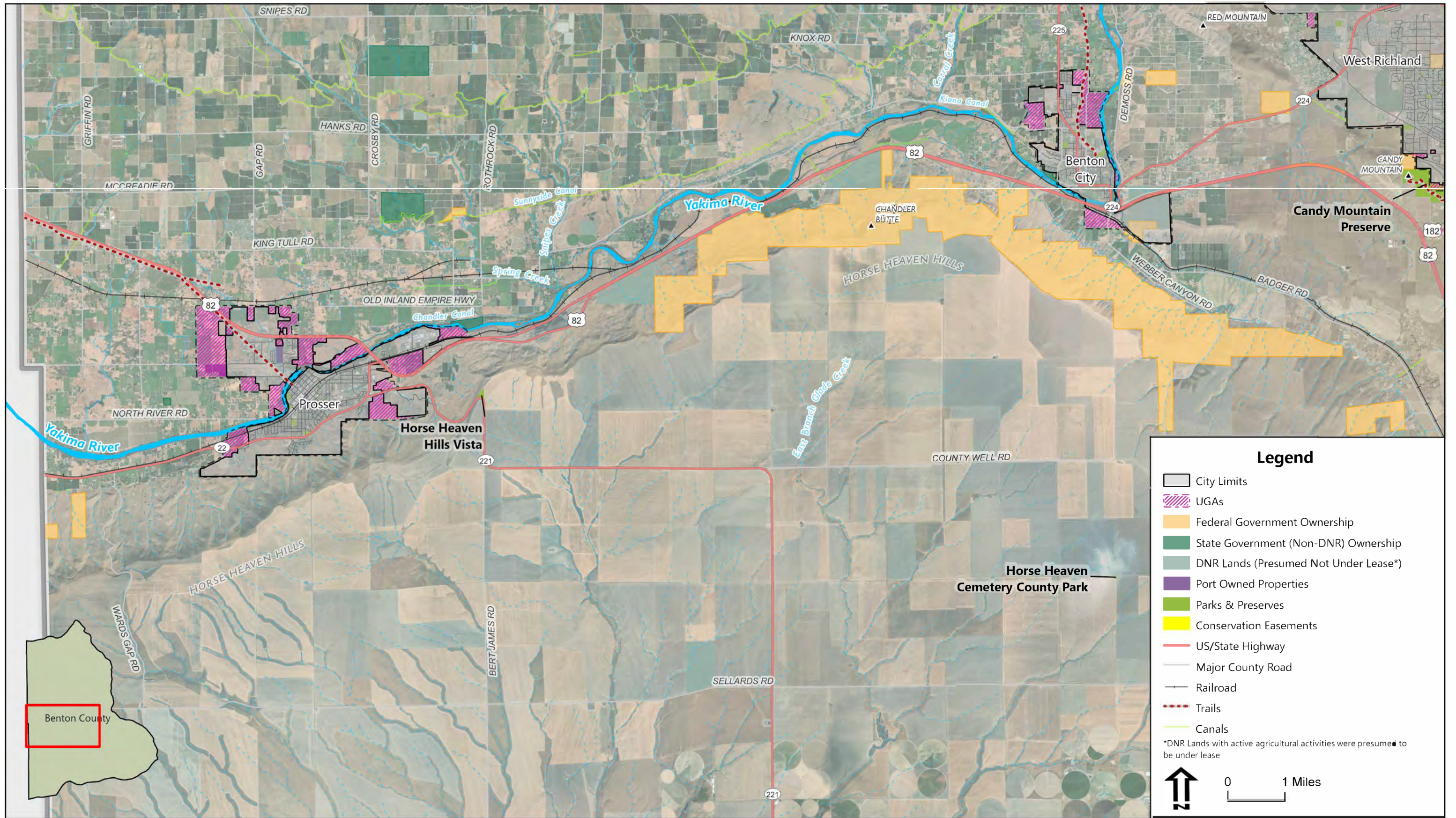


Figure B-1
Prosser - Benton City
Public Land, Parks, & Trails

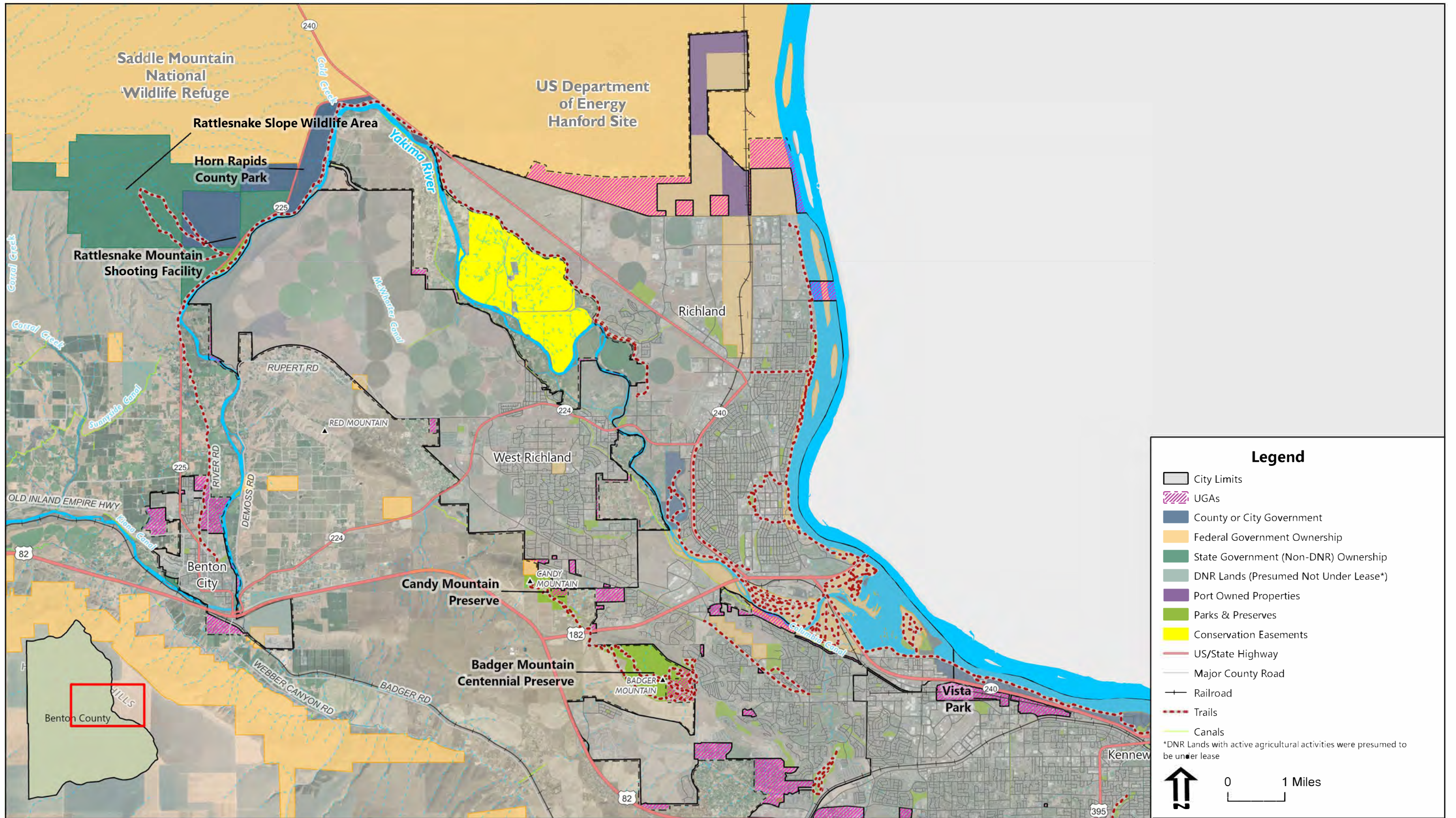


Figure B-2
Benton City - West Richland - Richland
Public Land, Parks, & Trails

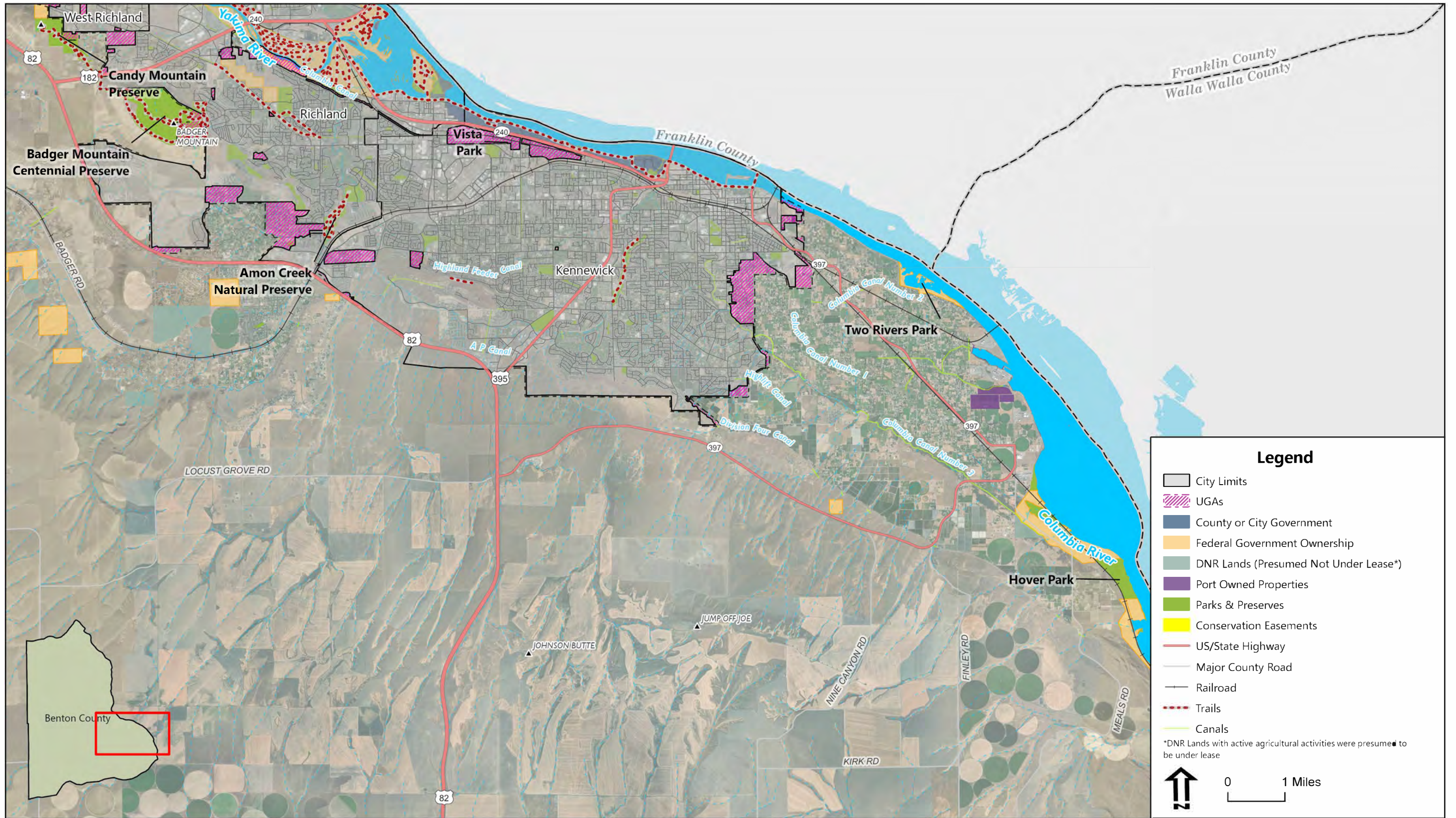


Figure B-3
Richland - Kennewick
Public Land, Parks & Trails

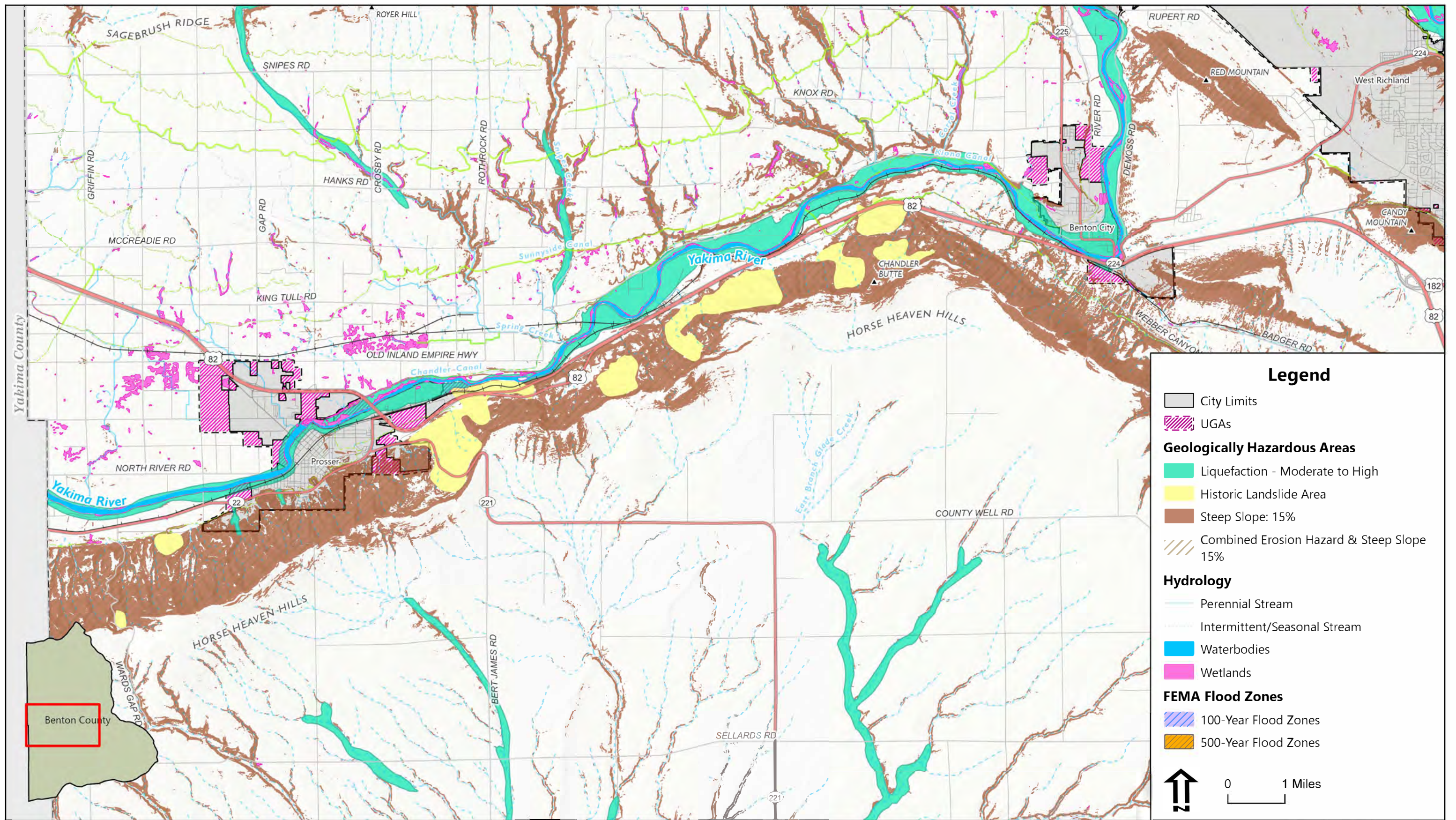


Figure B- 4
Prosser - Benton City

Wetlands, Floodplains, Geologically Hazardous Areas

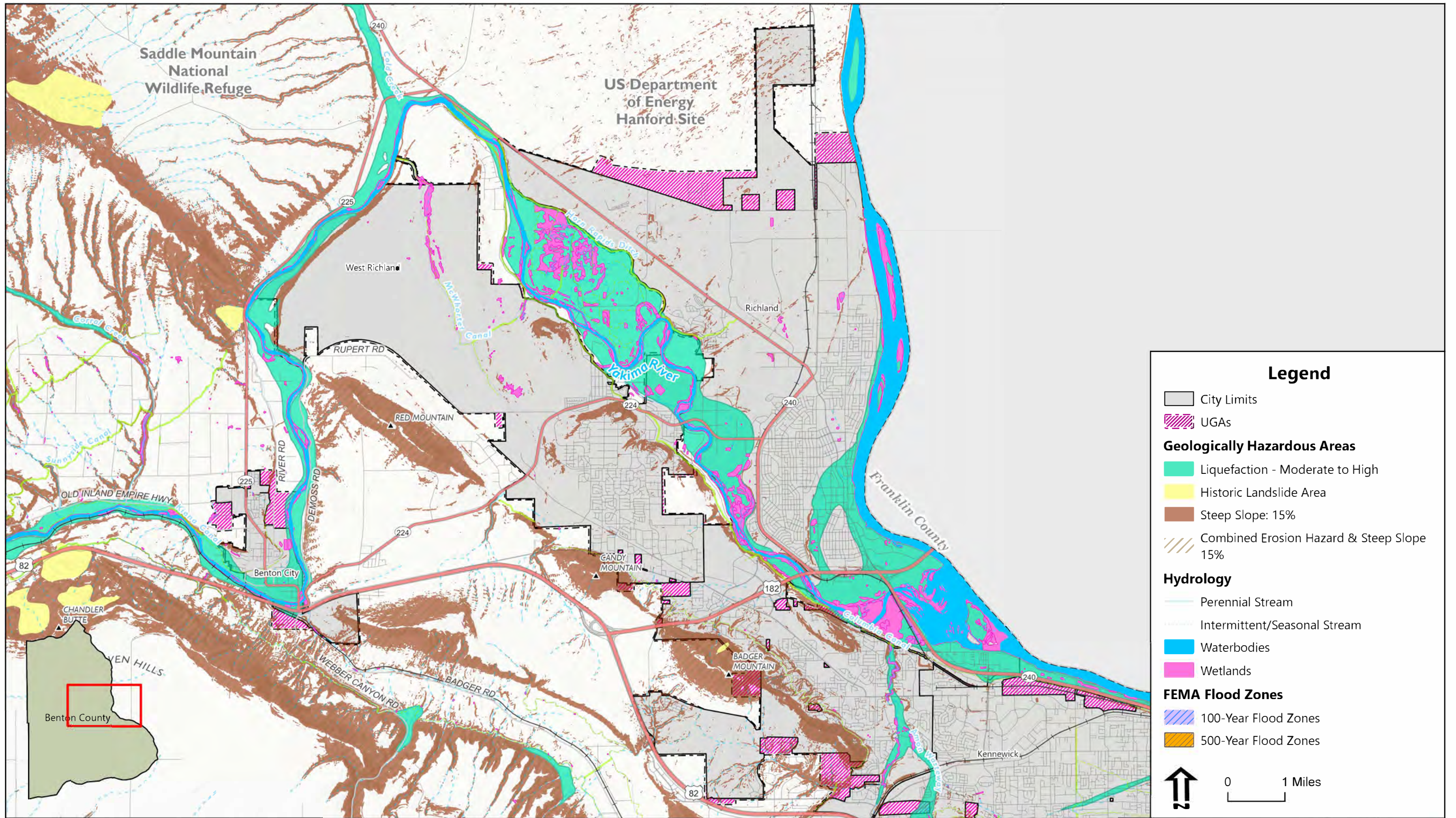


Figure B-5
Benton City - West Richland - Richland
Wetlands, Floodplains, Geologically Hazardous Areas

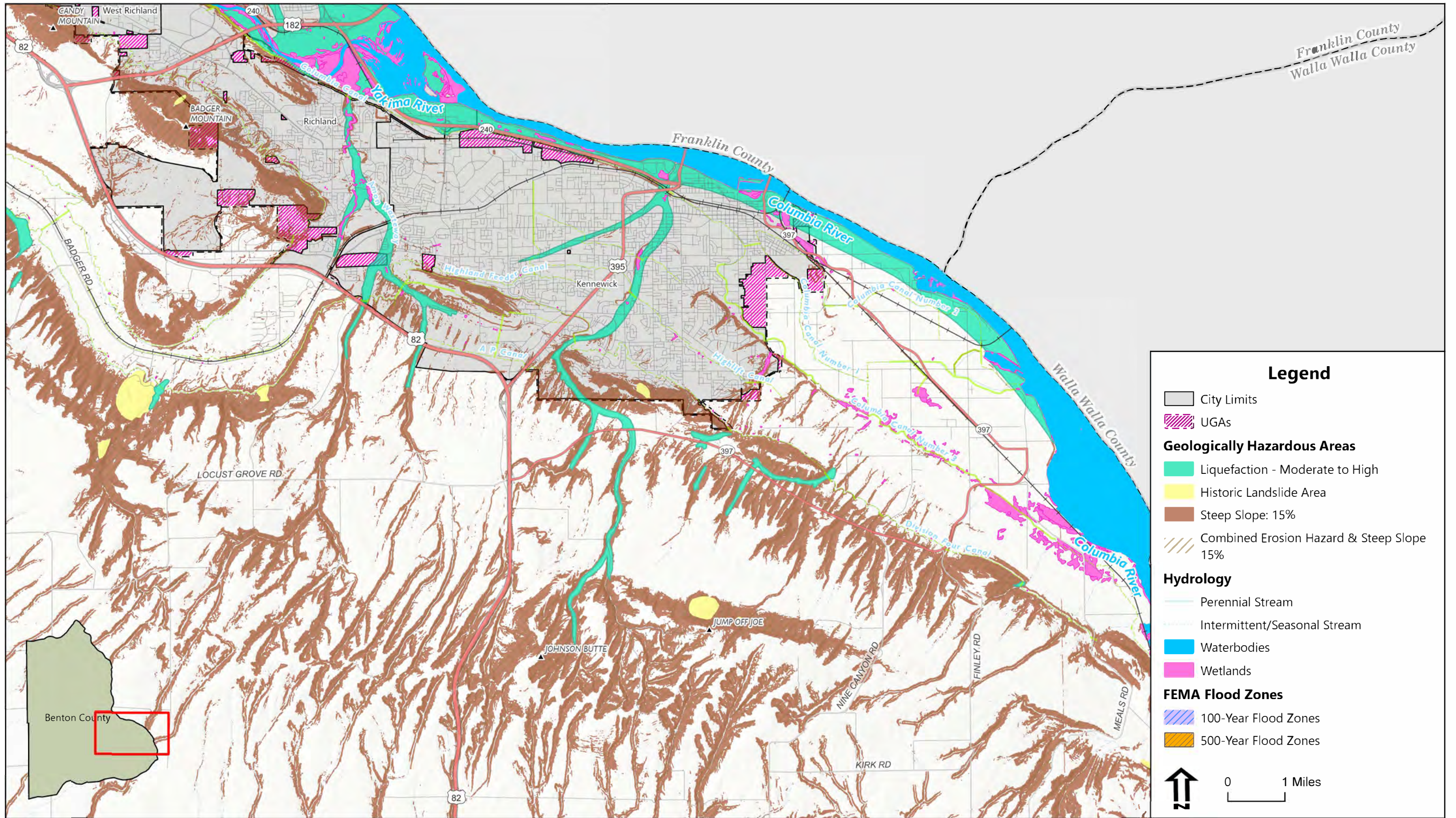
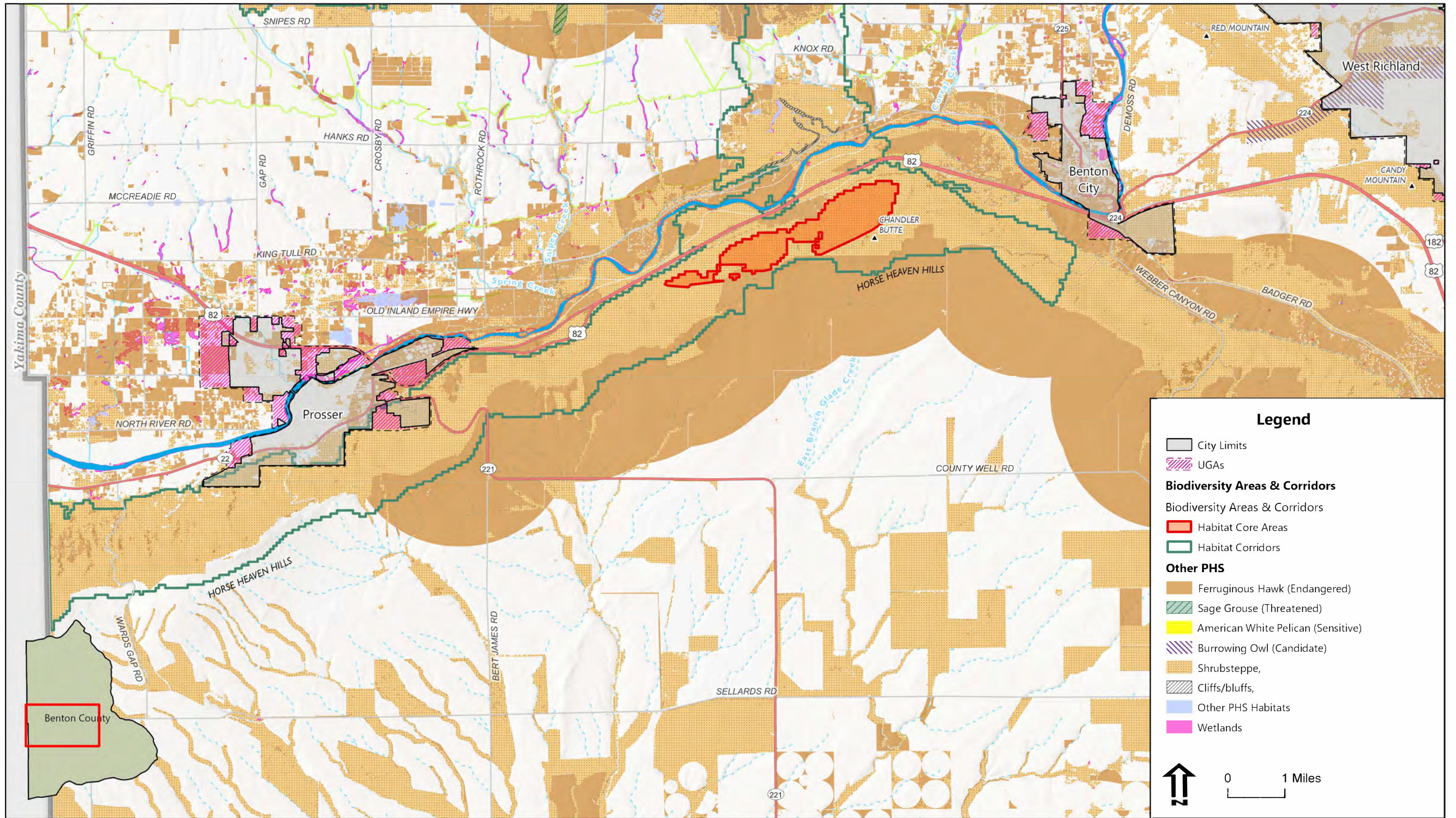


Figure B-6

Richland - Kennewick

Wetlands, Floodplains, Geologically Hazardous Areas



Legend

- City Limits
- UGAs

Biodiversity Areas & Corridors

- Habitat Core Areas
- Habitat Corridors

Other PHS

- Ferruginous Hawk (Endangered)
- Sage Grouse (Threatened)
- American White Pelican (Sensitive)
- Burrowing Owl (Candidate)
- Shrubsteppe,
- Cliffs/bluffs,
- Other PHS Habitats
- Wetlands

0 1 Miles

Figure B-7
Prosser - Benton City
WDFW PHS Habitats

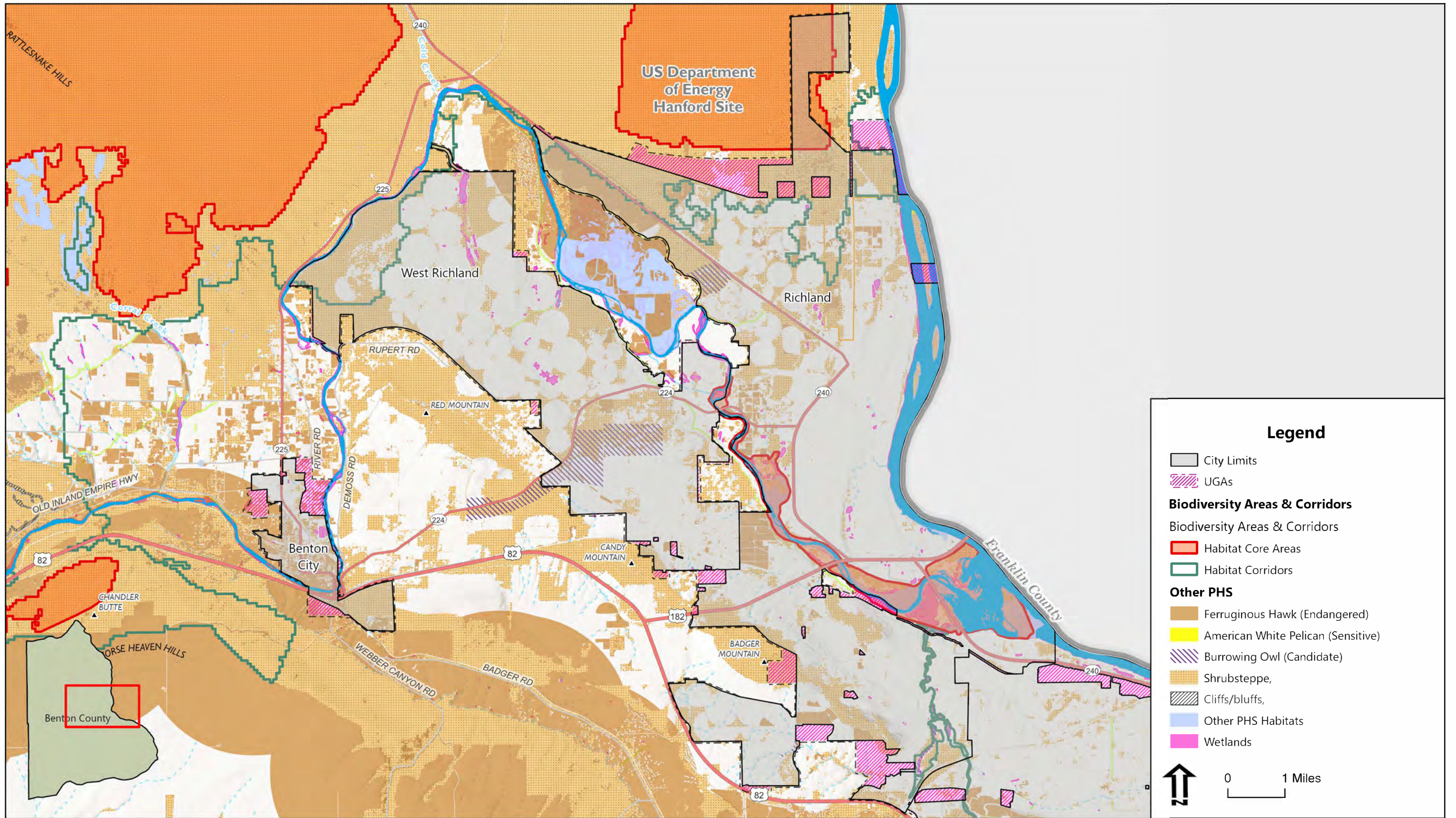


Figure B-8
Benton City - West Richland - Richland
WDFW PHS Habitats

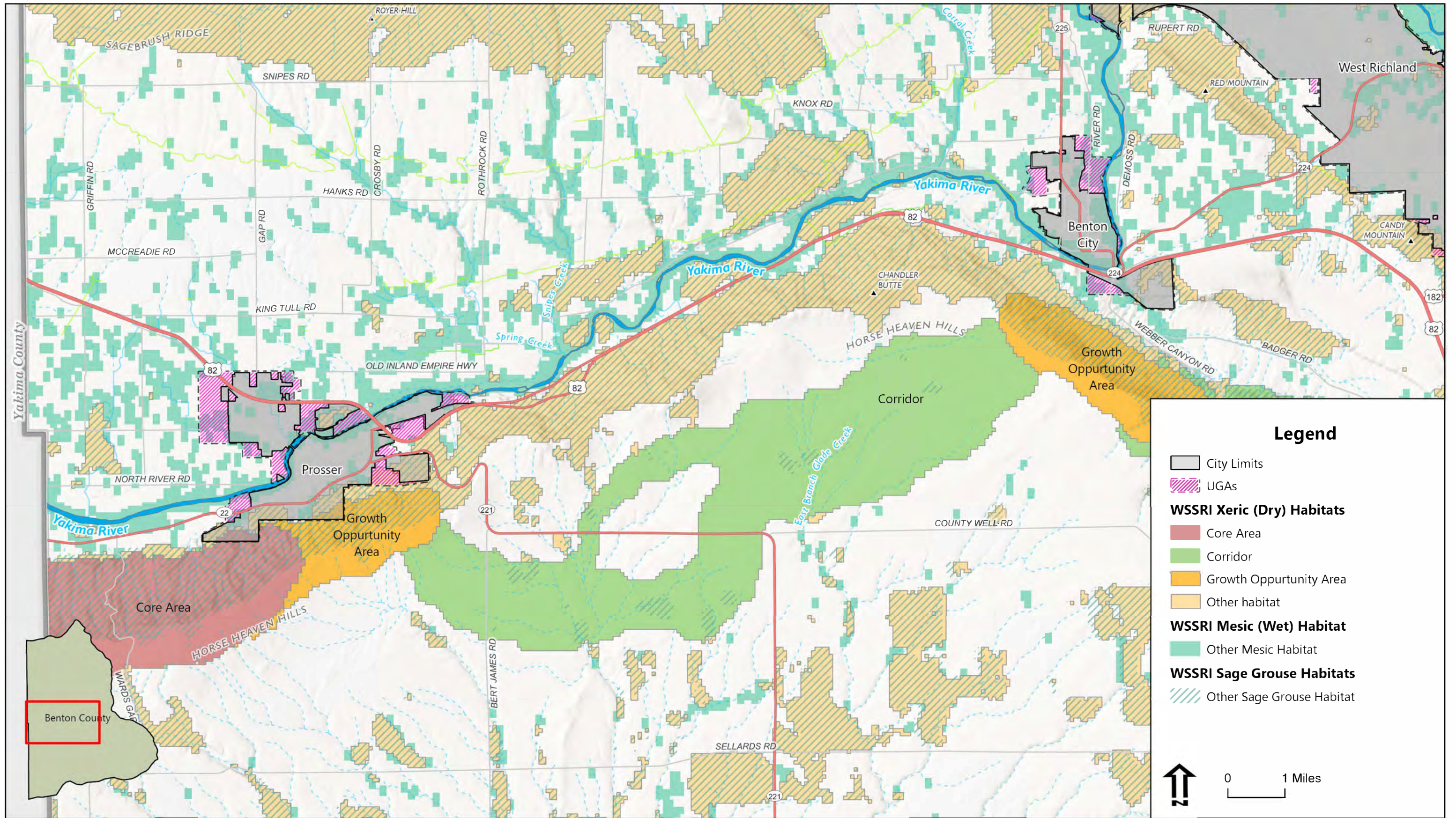


Figure B-10
Prosser - Benton City

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSSRI)

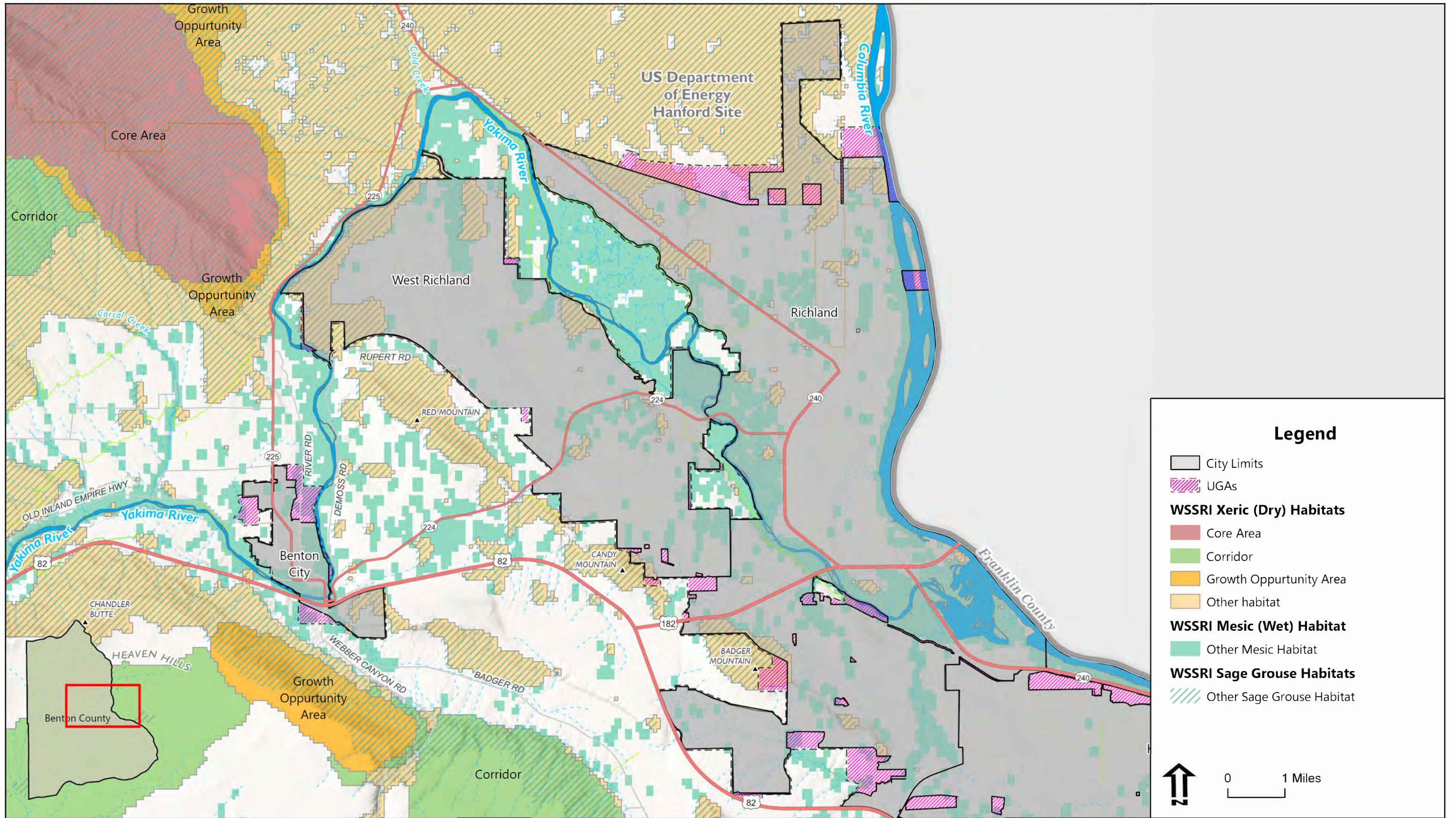


Figure B-11
Benton City - West Richland - Richland
Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSSRI)

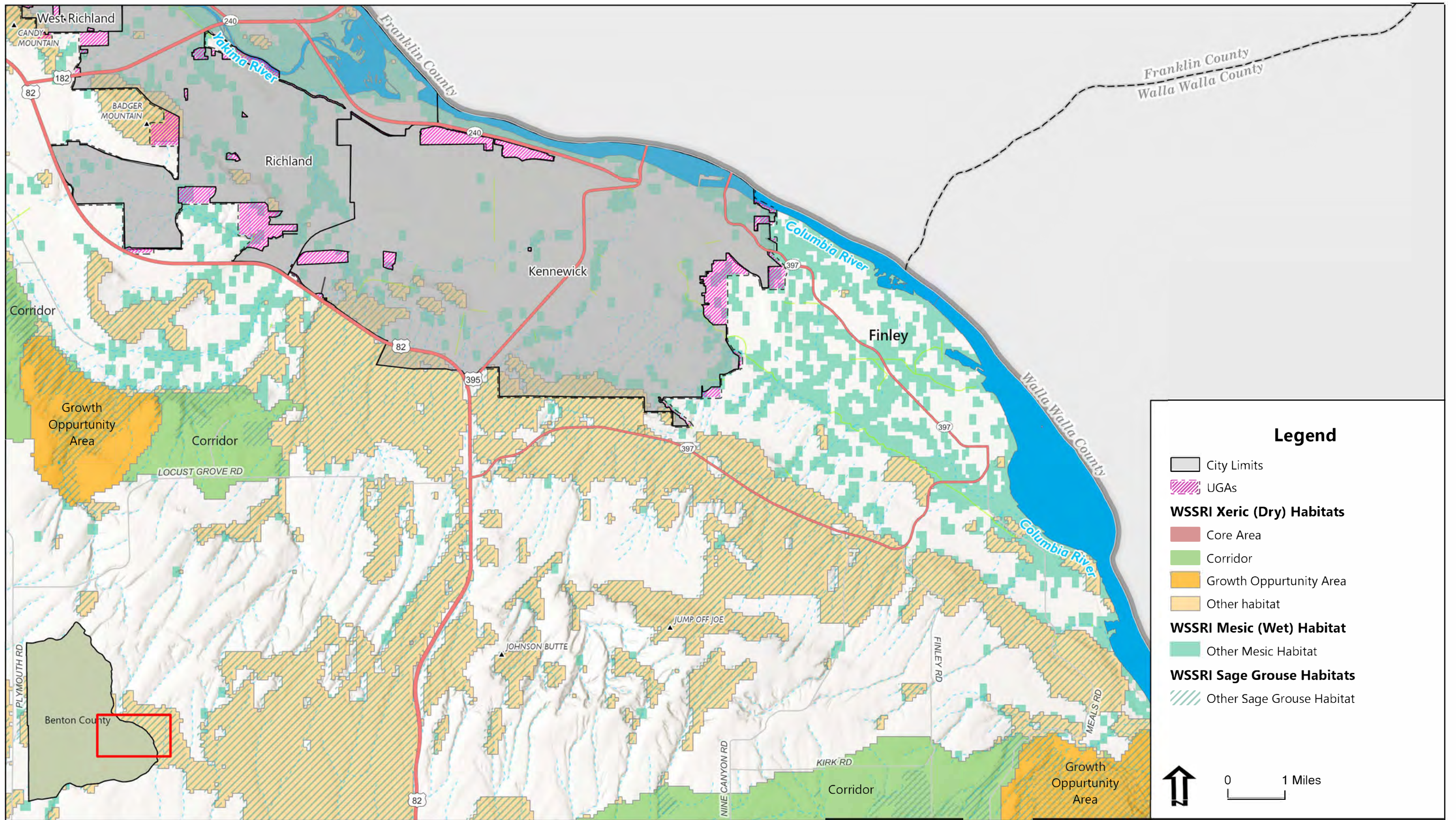


Figure B-12
Richland - Kennewick
Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSSRI)

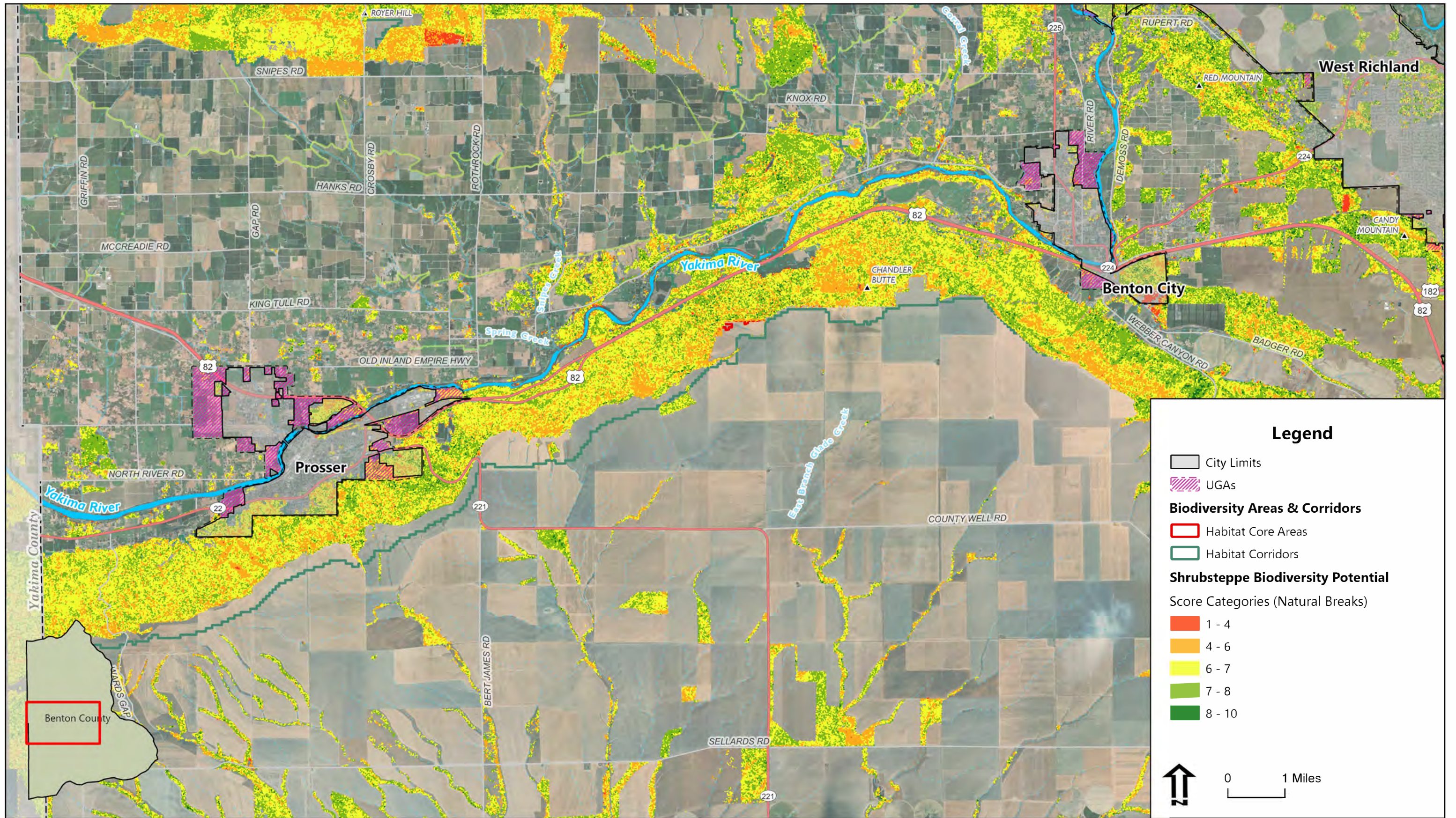


Figure B-13
Prosser - Benton City
Shrubsteppe Biodiversity Potential

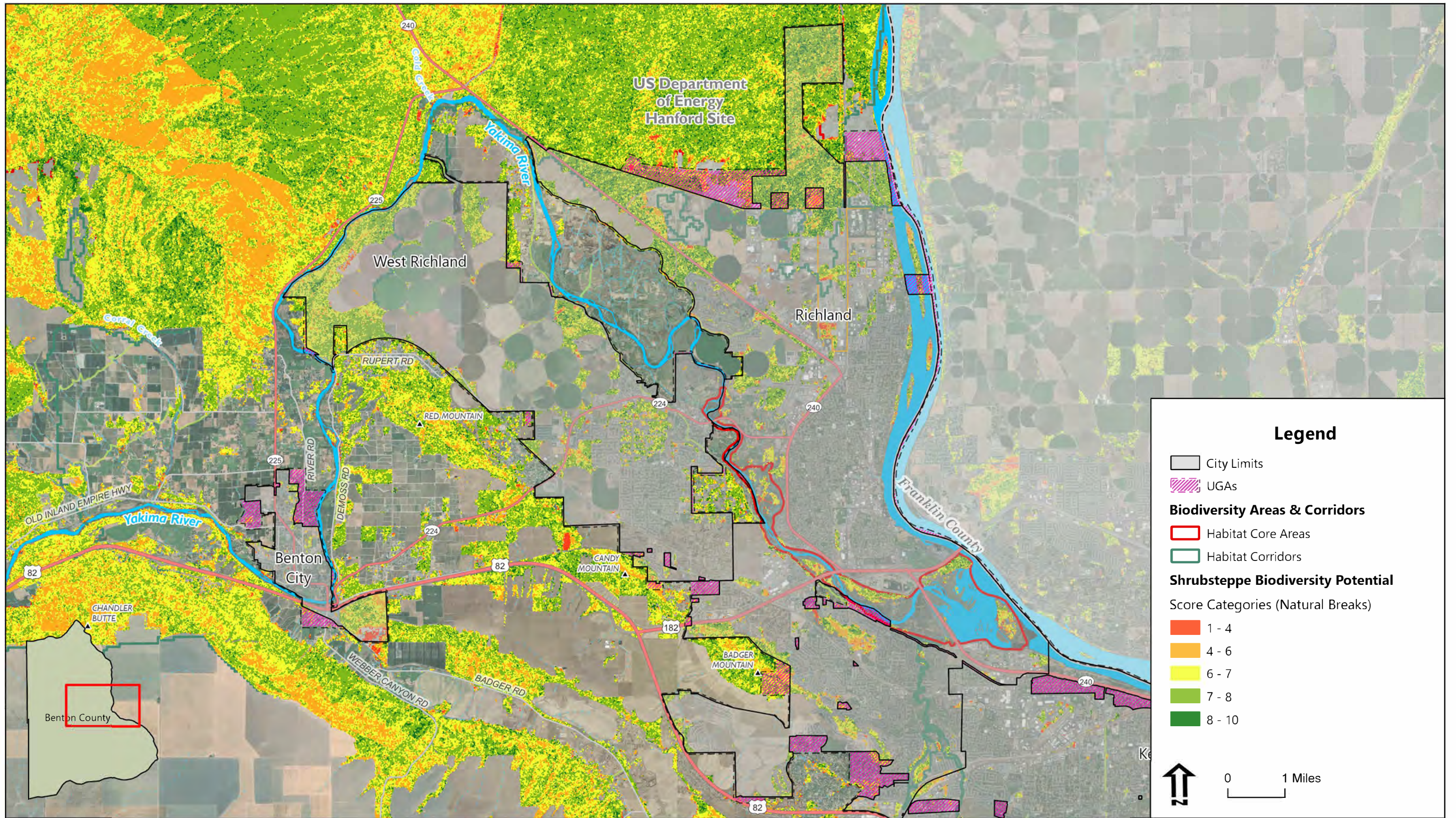


Figure B-14
Benton City - West Richland - Richland
Shrubsteppe Biodiversity Potential

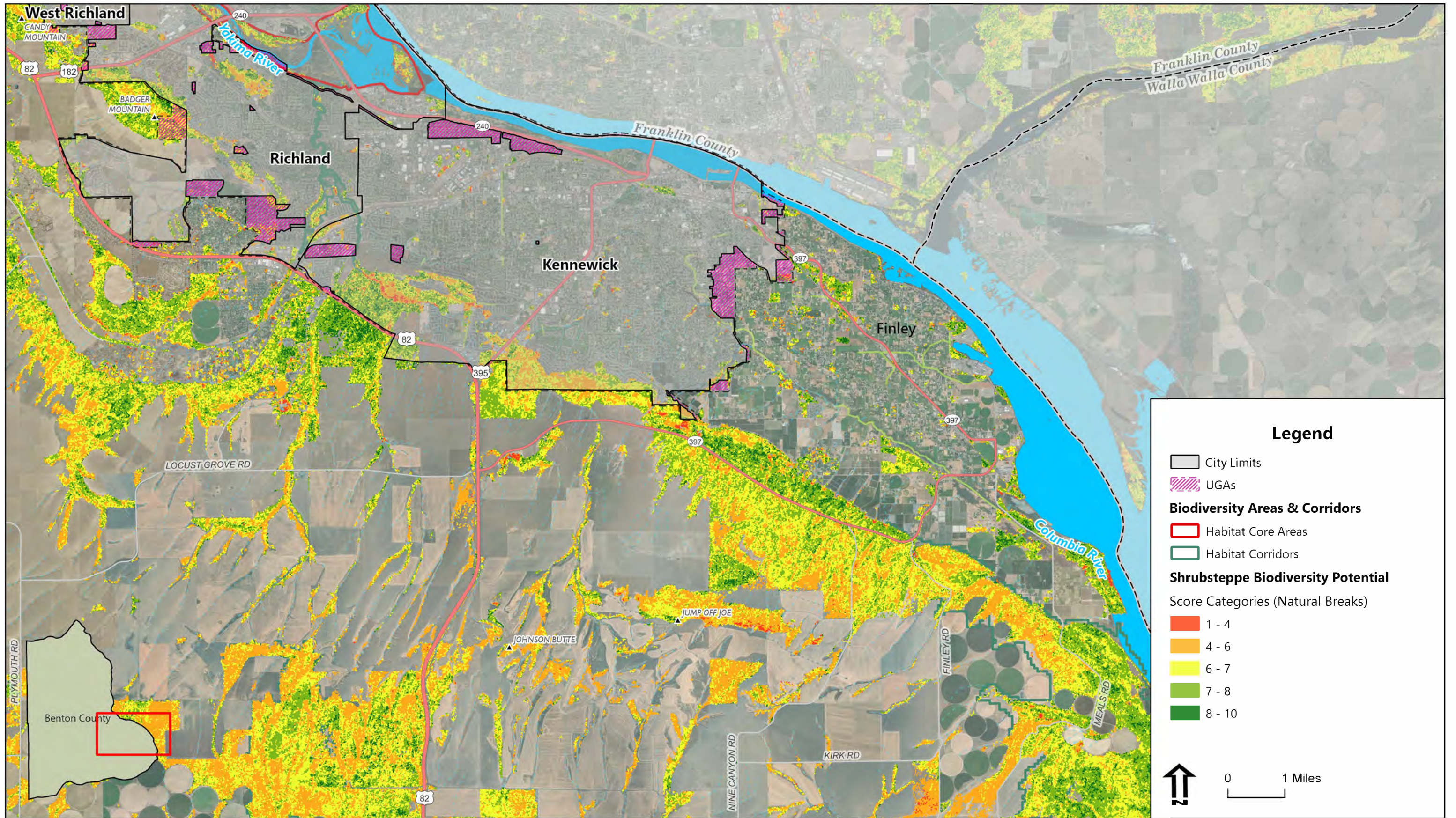


Figure B-15
Richland - Kennewick
Shrubsteppe Biodiversity Potential