Wilson Creek Restoration and Grazing Innovation Project

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Disclaimer

Project Partners

- Cascade Land Conservancy – project sponsor and manager
- Kittitas Environmental Education Network – provision of volunteers for planting and monitoring
- Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group – coordination of planting and fencing efforts
- Kittitas County Conservation District – planting and monitoring assistance
- WSU Extension – management of flash grazing, monitoring of available forage
- John Eaton – rancher lessee, management of flash grazing
- Washington State Department of Parks and Recreation – landowner

Grant Funds

National Fish and Wildlife Federation

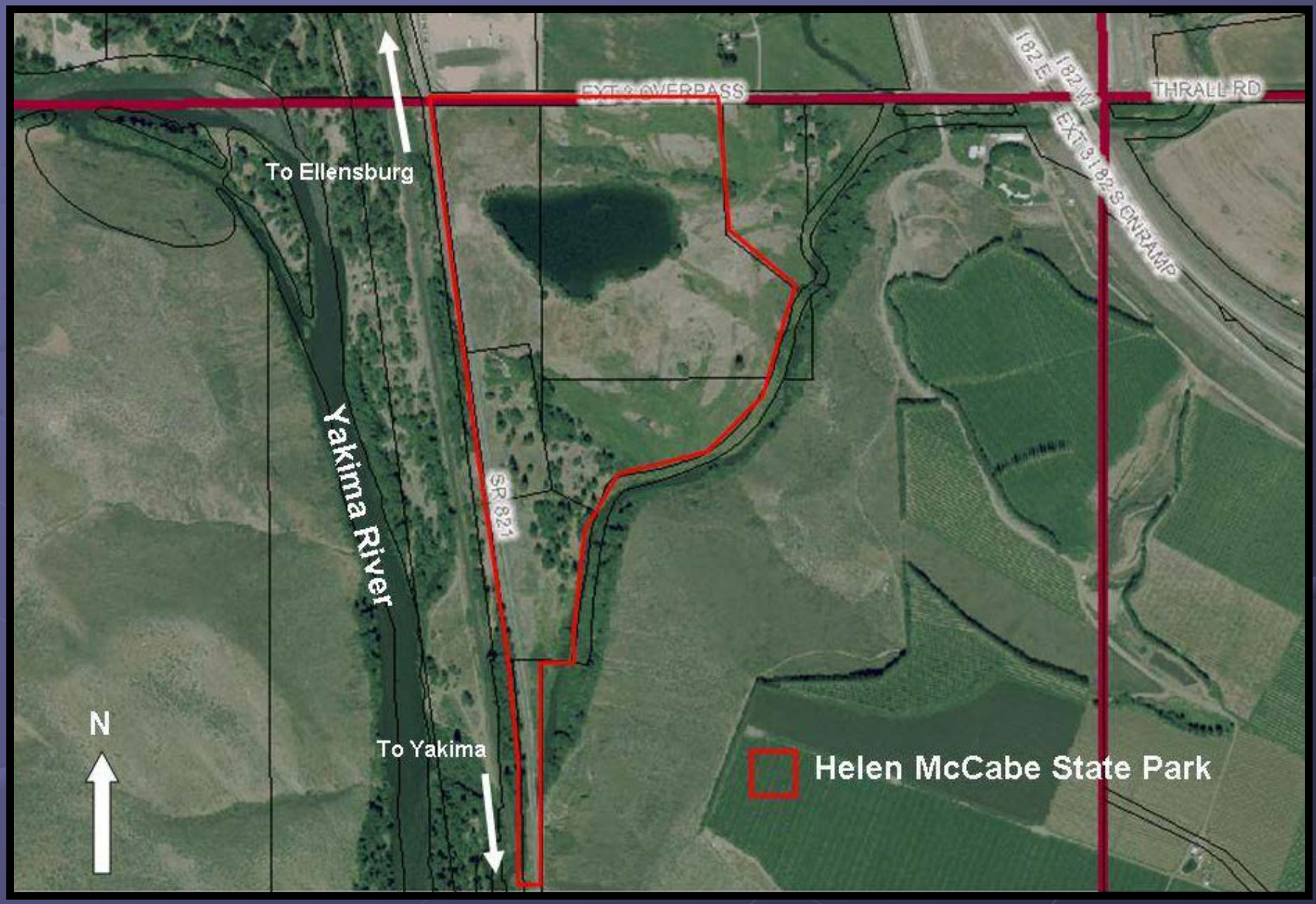
Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program

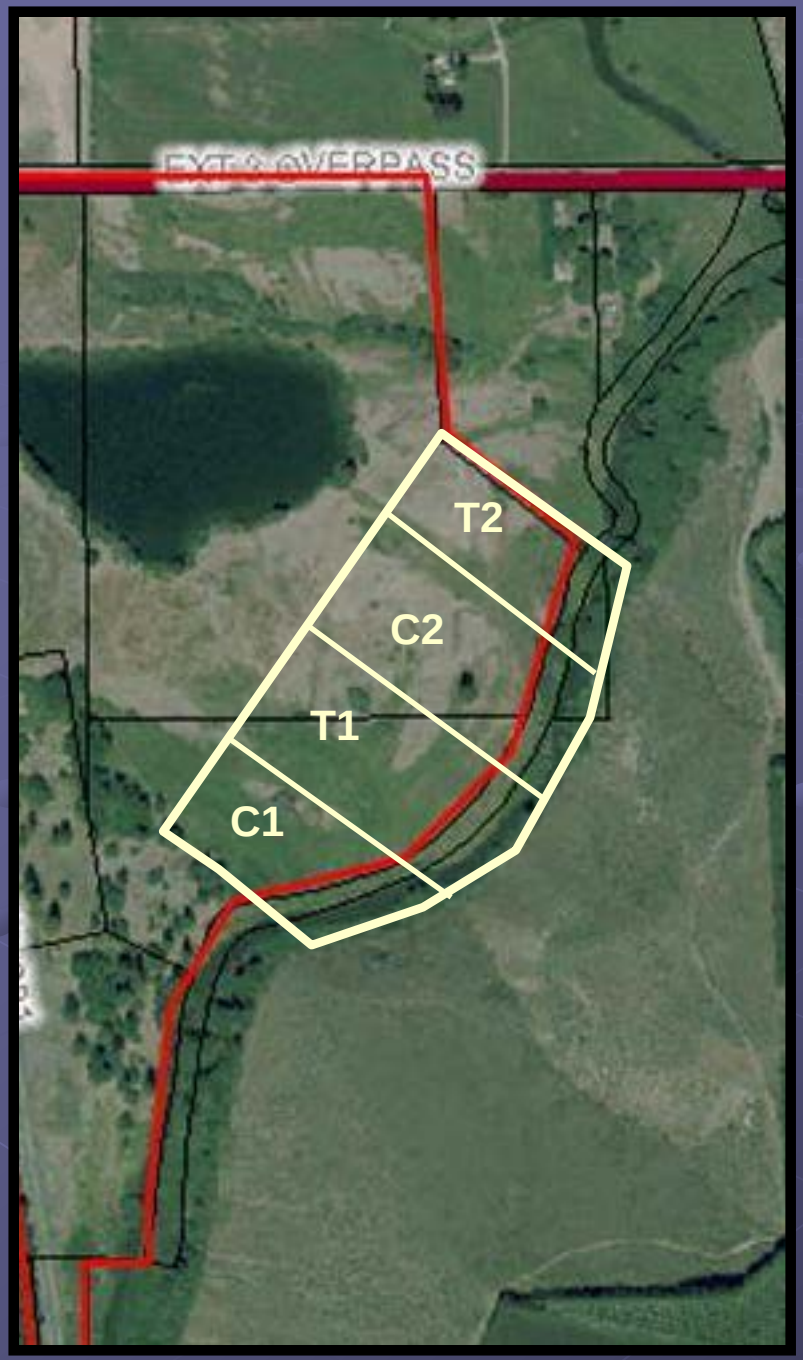
with program support from American Farmland Trust

Problem…

- Farmers and ranchers in Eastern Washington are reluctant to embrace stream buffer programs that require total livestock exclusion from the riparian area.
- Riparian planting and livestock exclusion often lead to invasive or noxious weed establishment, causing a management challenge for the landowner.

Subject Property





Project Abstract

- ¼ mile of stream = traditional livestock exclusion and riparian planting
- ¼ mile of stream = flash grazing

- compare the relative effectiveness for:
  - weed prevention
  - cost
  - forage availability

- Hypothesis: flash grazing = effective tool in riparian management

- Result = compromise solution to an ongoing conflict between habitat improvement and economic livelihood

- This method will result in less economic loss for farmers and ranchers AND better invasive weed control

Goals

1. Enhance shade, floodplain roughness, and in-stream structure through riparian plantings along ½ mile of Wilson Creek.

Habitat in the proposed restoration reach not functioning:

- **Temperature TMDL**
- **No LWD**
- **Riparian cover severely limited**
- **Channel constrained by topography**
- **Reduced floodplain roughness**

Goals

2.Plant 16,000 trees and shrubs

- increase shade
- increase floodplain roughness
- increase the potential for in-stream structure
- provide cooler water

High flood = sediment scour

Increased roughness = sediment deposit

Flood water infiltration= cooler water

Process

- Test the relative efficacy of flash grazing versus standard livestock exclusion
- Two treatment reaches and two control reaches
- Fenced at 150 feet from streamside
- Planting densities will be the same: average spacing of 5-feet on center
- Riparian plantings of Ponderosa pine, black cottonwood, willow, dogwood, and golden currant
- Volunteers and crews will plant in fall 2009 and spring 2010
- Monitoring over next 10 years

Exclusion Works

But at what cost?

Questions?