

Development Suitability Analysis:
PacifiCorp Ownership along the Lower White Salmon River
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Prepared by
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I. Overview

The goal of a development suitability analysis is to examine regional landscapes to identify areas of developable land that are not currently fully developed, lands that are not suitable for development due to physical constraints and lands that are not developable due to land ownership or land use controls. Such an analysis typically considers historical development trends, constraints and opportunities of the present landscape, and anticipated future land development patterns and conditions.

For this project a development suitability analysis was conducted for land owned by PacifiCorp along the lower White Salmon River. PacifiCorp is a utility company that serves approximately 1.8 million customers in six states; Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Northern California. PacifiCorp currently owns 534 acres along the lower White Salmon River as part of the Condit Hydroelectric Project. These holdings are split between two different counties, with 10 parcels covering 399 acres in Skamania County and 18 parcels covering 135 acres in Klickitat County.

Condit Hydroelectric Project was constructed in 1912 and 1913. In the fall of 2012, PacifiCorp removed the Condit Hydroelectric Dam on the White Salmon River in accordance with the Condit Hydroelectric Project Settlement Agreement. The dam was a 125-foot high, 471-foot long concrete gravity diversion dam. The Condit Dam was located approximately 3.3 miles upstream from the confluence of the White Salmon and Columbia rivers. The dam formed a 91 acre impoundment known as Northwestern Lake. The Lake extended approximately 1.8 miles upstream of the dam.

The dam removal action included draining Northwestern Lake through a tunnel constructed through the dam, removing the dam, removing the wood pipeline, the surge tank and the two penstocks, and filling in the tail race at the power house. The removal of the Condit Dam enabled the river and watershed to return to the conditions of a free-flowing river and opened up approximately 33 miles of new spawning and rearing grounds for steelhead and 14 miles for salmon in the White Salmon River basin.

II. Approach

This analysis reviewed six different land use and geographic information sources in an effort to characterize the development suitability of individual tax lots within the PacifiCorp ownership. Those information sources included the following:

- Columbia River Gorge Commission Zoning
- Klickitat County Zoning

- Skamania County Zoning
- Terrain Suitability
- Shoreline Management
- Critical Areas Ordinance

This report will focus largely on land use zoning data provided by Columbia River Gorge Commission, Klickitat County, Skamania County zoning and the suitability of the terrain for development.

II. National Scenic Area Zoning

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area stretches 85 miles along the Columbia River and includes portions of three Washington counties. A total of 292,500 acres were designated for special protection on both sides of the Columbia River. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act was signed into law in 1986. The Act mandates the protection and enhancement of scenic, cultural, natural and recreation resources and the protection and support of the Columbia Gorge economy.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is categorized into three management area types: Special Management Areas (SMA), General Management Areas (GMA) and Urban Areas. The Special Management Area covers approximately 114,600 acres and contains some of the Gorge's most sensitive resources. The General Management Area covers approximately 149,400 acres of land and all of the Columbia River – which contains a mixture of land uses including farming, logging, cattle grazing, public recreation and rural residential.

The Scenic Area Act is administered by both the Gorge Commission and the Forest Service. The Forest Service develops the policies and guidelines that protect and enhance Scenic Area resources in the Special Management Area. As a result, there are two halves to the National Scenic Area Management Plan. GMA provisions are developed by the Gorge Commission and SMA provisions are developed by the Forest Service. The Act also requires Forest Service concurrence for GMA provisions prepared by the Gorge Commission. If the Forest Service does not concur, the Gorge Commission can pass the rules with a super majority.

Development on private lands within the General Management Area is administered by individual counties except in Klickitat County where it is administered by the Gorge Commission. Within the Scenic Area thirteen Urban Areas are exempt from the Scenic Area regulation, including the town of White Salmon. Lands held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs are also exempt from Scenic Area regulation. A significant portion of the PacifiCorp ownership is found within the General Management Area of the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. Along the main canyon of the lower White Salmon River within the Scenic Area, PacifiCorp ownership largely falls into the *open space* land use designation (Figure 1). The *open space* land use designation does not allow development.

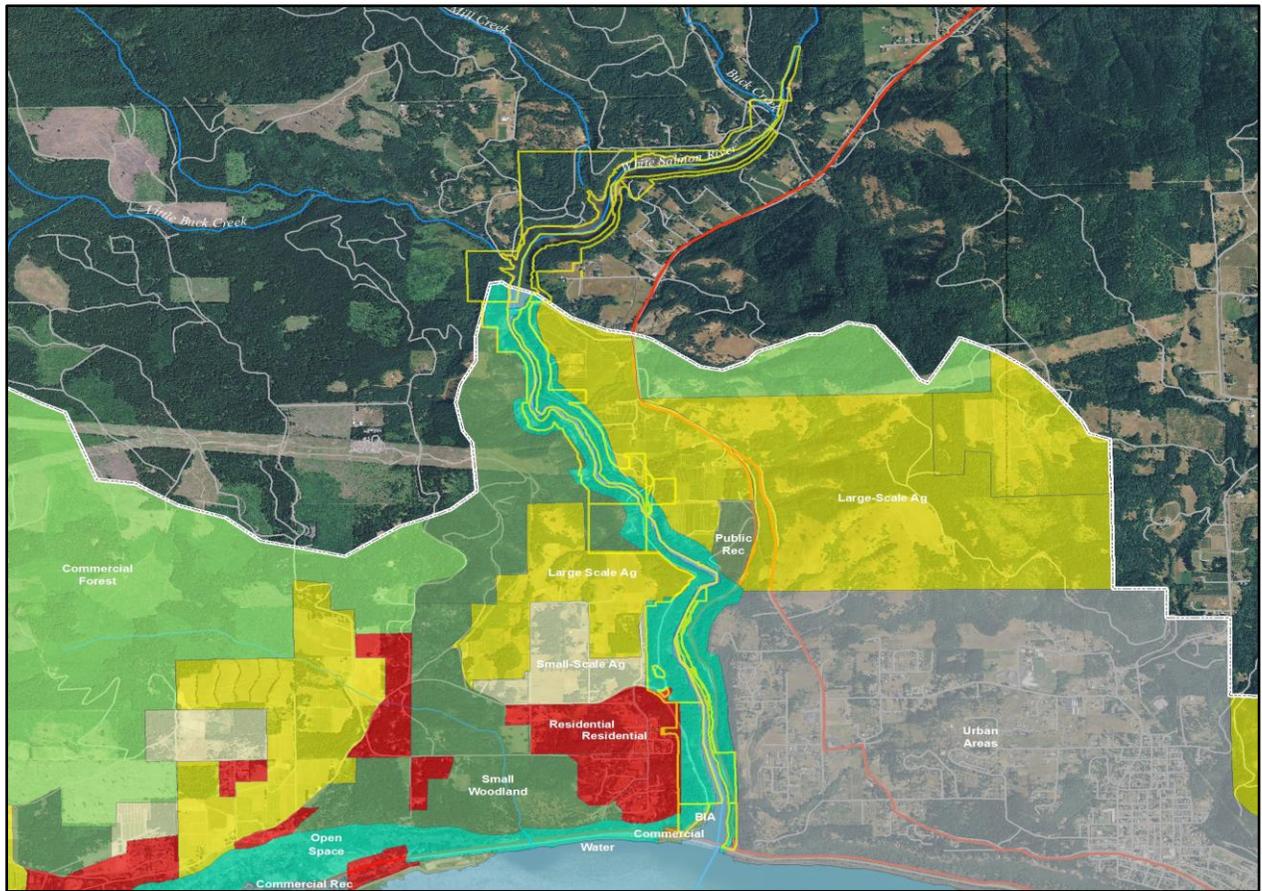


Figure 1. Columbia Gorge Scenic Area Zoning

III. Skamania County Zoning

Zoning is a technique of land use planning used by local governments (Skamania and Klickitat Counties in this analysis) to manage the use of land, and of the buildings thereon within their jurisdiction. Areas of land are divided by authorities into zones within which various uses are permitted or prohibited. The principal purpose of zoning is to segregate land uses that are thought to be incompatible. Zoning is also used to prevent new development from interfering with existing uses and/or to preserve the "character" of an area.

Zoning regulates the types of activities which are deemed acceptable on a particular tax lot (open space, residential, agricultural, commercial, etc.), the densities at which those activities can be performed, the amount of space a structure may occupy, the location of a building on the lot, and the proportions of the types of space on a tax lot such as how much space is impervious surface. Zoning systems typically have a procedure for granting variances to zoning rules because of some perceived hardship caused by the particular characteristics of a property. Skamania County implements the National Scenic Area zoning designations and regulations.

Notable to Skamania County zoning is Northwestern Lake Zoning (Figure 2) overlay found below. There are two zones within the Northwestern Lake Zone; Northwestern Lake Zoning Residential 2 Zone Classification (R-2) and Northwestern Lake Zoning Residential 5 Zone Classification (R-5). This zoning designation is intended for residential development on tax lots both 2 acres (R-2) and 5 acres (R-5) in size. This type of zoning is suitable for residential development. Additionally, some of the sites developed within these zones may be "grandfathered

uses.” A grandfathered use is typically a use that is already established before a zoning change. The use is lawful under the old zoning and is considered a “lawful prior non-conforming use.” In many instances a use may continue even under a new owner since it is the status of the land and not ownership which controls. In other words, you can transfer the property to a new owner without losing the right to the existing use. Whether a use is considered “grandfathered” is determined on a site specific case by case basis.

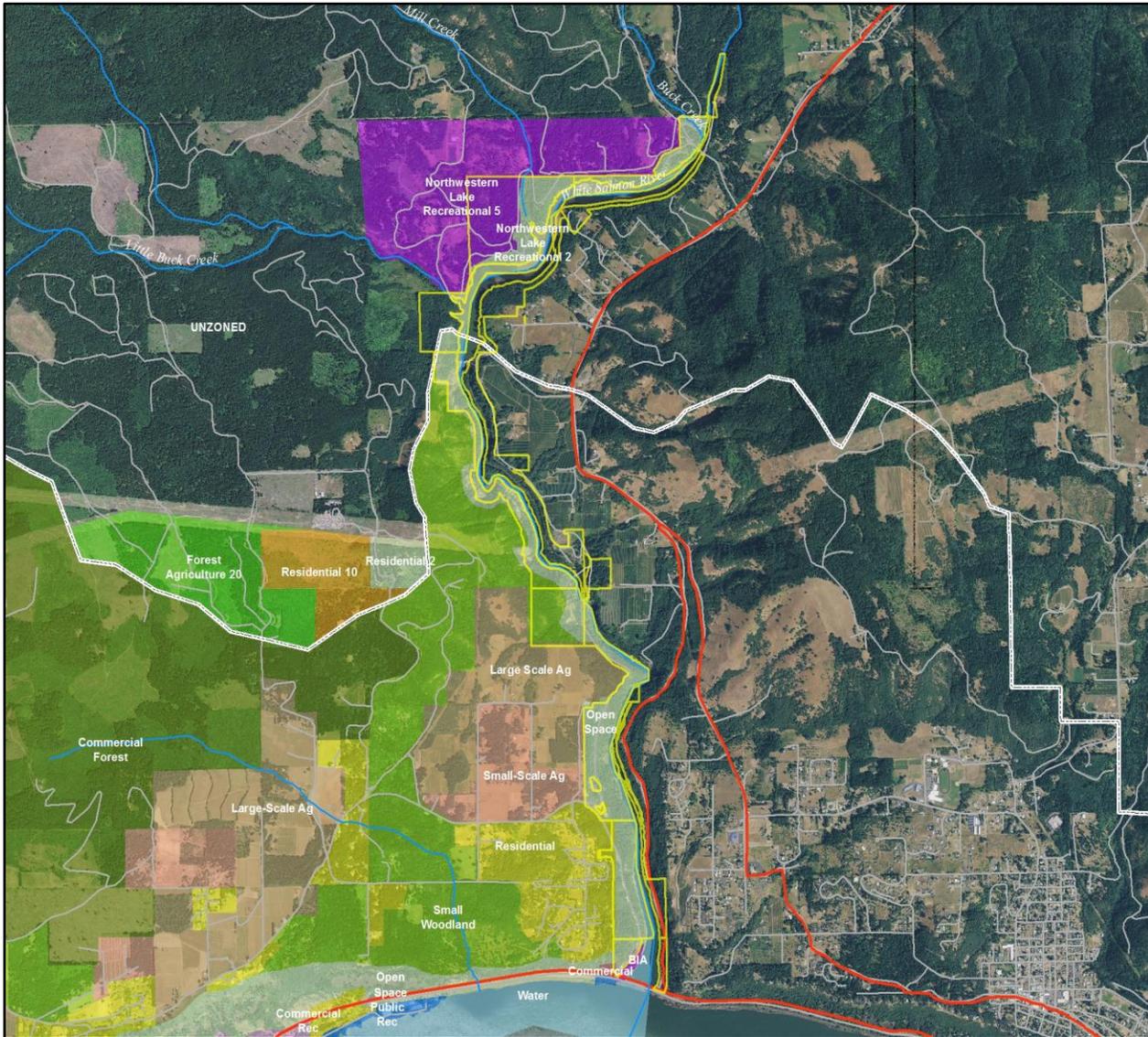


Figure 2. Skamania County Zoning

IV. Klickitat County Zoning

National Scenic Area zoning supersedes Klickitat County's zoning designations within the Scenic Area. Klickitat County does not have general zoning authority in the National Scenic Area. The Columbia Gorge Commission implements the zoning provisions within the scenic area. An important zoning designation related to PacifiCorp ownership and development suitability is the Resource Zone (Figure 3). The Resource Zone contains a number of permitted uses favorable to development including: Single family dwellings, mobile homes and seasonal homes. The Resource Zone increases the development suitability on 10 tax lots of PacifiCorp ownership totaling

110 acres. The development potential of these tax lots is somewhat reduced by the overlapping Columbia Gorge Scenic Area Open Space classification described in Section II.

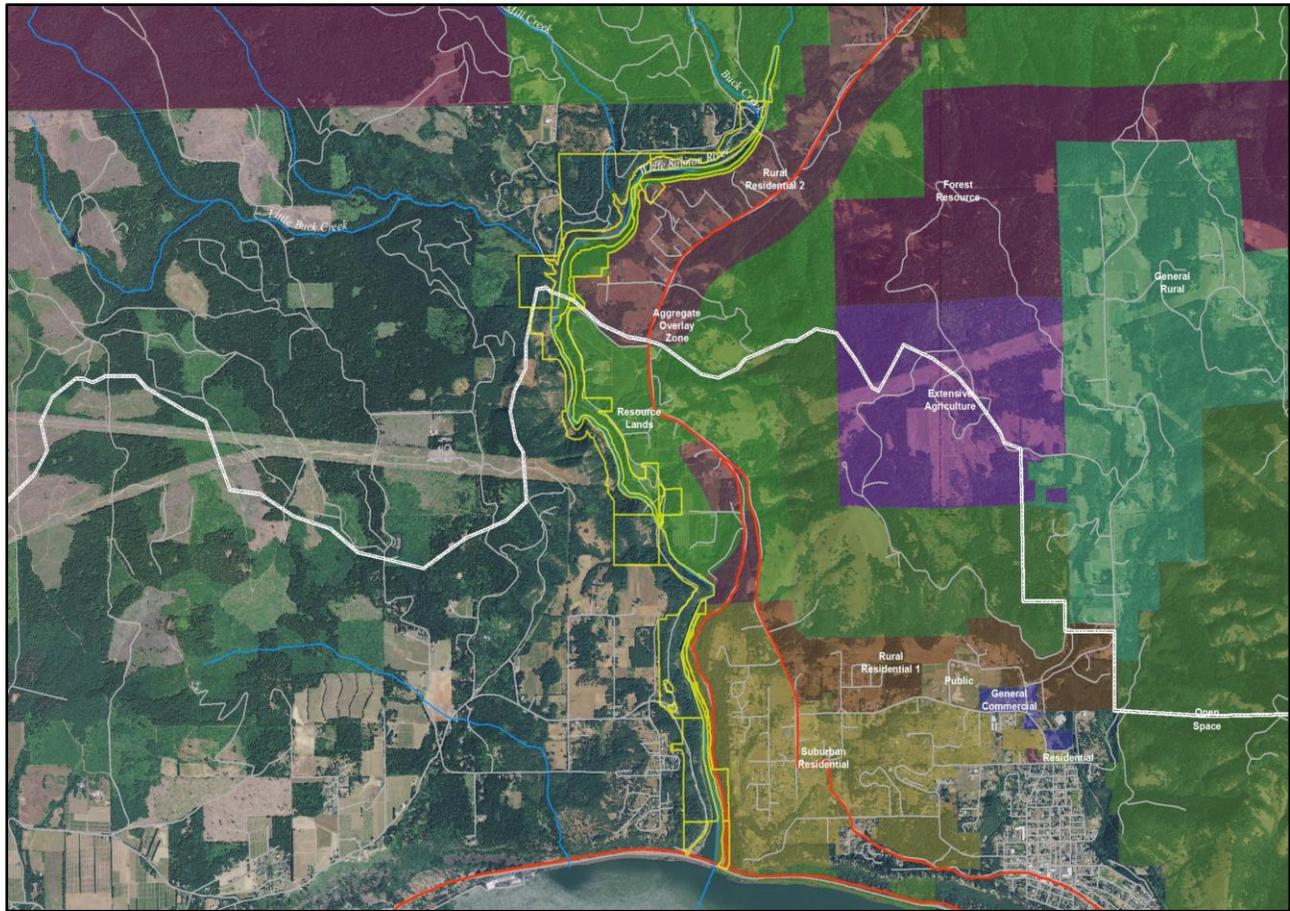


Figure 3. Klickitat County Zoning

V. Terrain Suitability

A significant portion of the PacifiCorp ownership is located in steep, rugged basalt canyon which is bisected by the White Salmon River. This topography creates unique and imposing challenges to the ability to develop access roads, site utilities and develop suitable building sites (Figure 4).

On the Klickitat County side of the river the topography is least severe within the middle and upper sections of the study area. The topography and aspect have historically favored agricultural land use rather than rural residential development. The existing network of roads that access the PacifiCorp property is more developed in Klickitat County than on the Skamania County side of the river side. These access roads have historically served the hydroelectric infrastructure on the Condit dam as well as serving as farming roads, but could be converted where the zoning is appropriate for residential development.

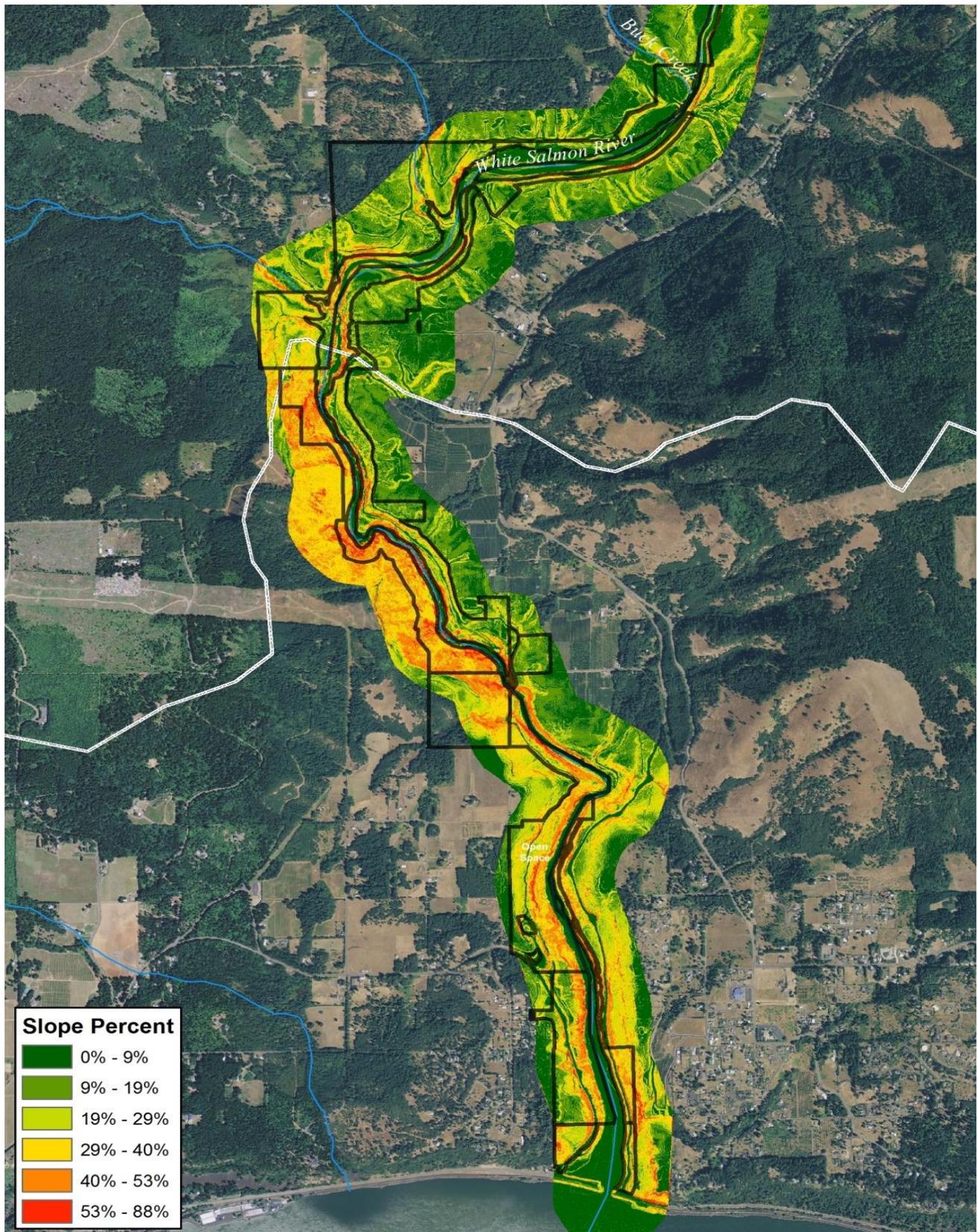


Figure 4. Terrain Suitability

VI. Other Considerations

Growth Management Act - The State of Washington enacted a Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 that called for local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and development regulations consistent with 14 goals set forth in the act. Those goals include:

Urban growth	Reduction of sprawl	Transportation
Housing	Economic development	Property rights
Permits	Natural resource industries	Open space and recreation
Environment	Citizen participation and coordination	Public facilities and services
Historic preservation	Shoreline protection	

As slower growing counties, both Klickitat and Skamania Counties have the choice to “opt in” to all requirements of the GMA. Both counties chose not to “opt in” and consequently are required to comply with only the minimum requirements of GMA. Those minimum requirements include the designation of resource lands (agriculture, forest and mineral lands) and adoption of critical area development regulations. The GMA requires counties to periodically review, evaluate, and determine whether to revise the natural resource lands designations and critical area regulations. Both Klickitat and Skamania County have zoning provisions to provide a level of protection for Shorelines and designated Critical Areas. The White Salmon River and its associated shore land are included in these protections. These zoning provisions provide both setback distances from the water’s edge for building structures as well as how natural vegetation is managed along the shoreline. There are differences of opinion as to whether each county has met the expectations of the Act. The scope of this report is not able to provide an in depth review of these legal matters.

Cultural Resources - Both Skamania and Klickitat Counties lie within the Ceded Land area of the Twelve Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation. Indian tribes have special rights, interests and concerns in historic and cultural preservation matters, which extend well beyond their current reservation boundaries. Members of the Yakama Nation, as well as Indians of the Columbia River tribes, have historically and today rely on many important cultural resources in these counties. At the center of local Indian life are the region’s rivers: the Columbia, the Klickitat, the White Salmon and other waterways. Indian rights to river access and fishing areas are preserved by legal treaty rights. Many locations of traditional cultural significance are found along these waterways. In the case of the White Salmon River, Indian uses of the river extend from the confluence with the Columbia River well upstream through the study and beyond. These uses have been extensive and sustained since time immemorial. Certain wild plants are still collected and used in the area and fishing is important. Ceremonial sites, burial locations, and other cultural resources exist throughout both Skamania and Klickitat counties.

Cultural resources are protected through state statute, as implemented by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and through the County’s review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Where cultural resources are likely to be impacted by a development project, the County, DAHP and affected tribes should coordinate with each other at the earliest possible opportunity in the review of a proposal. When the presence of cultural resources which are protected by state or federal law have been identified, with a reasonable degree of probability, within an area proposed for development, a County typically requires a cultural resources survey and report to be prepared by a professional archaeologist.

VII. Conclusions

In a regional context for the project area is dominated by lands rural in nature, with forestry and agricultural related activities providing the primary economic base. Agricultural crops produced include: pears, apples, cherries and alfalfa, as well as cattle. Forestry activities focus on the harvest of fir and pine for wood products.

The agricultural and forest economy of the area is still strong. Tourism is growing, but not at the expense of resource based economy. Within the NSA the resource based economy is protected pursuant to the express mandates of the Scenic Area Act. The economy of the western part of the Klickitat County and eastern Skamania County has seen greater recreation based tourist-industries. Recent development trends in the White Salmon/Husum/BZ Corner corridor attest to this trend. Second home and rural residential development in the area continues to occur and may be a development pressure on PacifiCorp and other rural lands. Much of the southern portions of the PacifiCorp ownership are found within the Scenic Area's GMA Open Space designation. This designation is one of the most stringent categories for the protection of natural resource values in the Gorge. As a result of this zoning designation, development suitability for much of the southern portion of PacifiCorp ownership is not favorable.

Throughout this White Salmon corridor steep topography is found and presents significant challenges to development. In the northern section of the study area, beyond the boundary of the Scenic Area, development suitability in both Skamania and Klickitat increases as zoning designations in both Skamania (Northwestern Lake R-5 and R-2) and Klickitat County (Resource Zone) allow residential development and have the highest development suitability.

Development Suitability Index - PacifiCorp Parcels

Lower White Salmon River

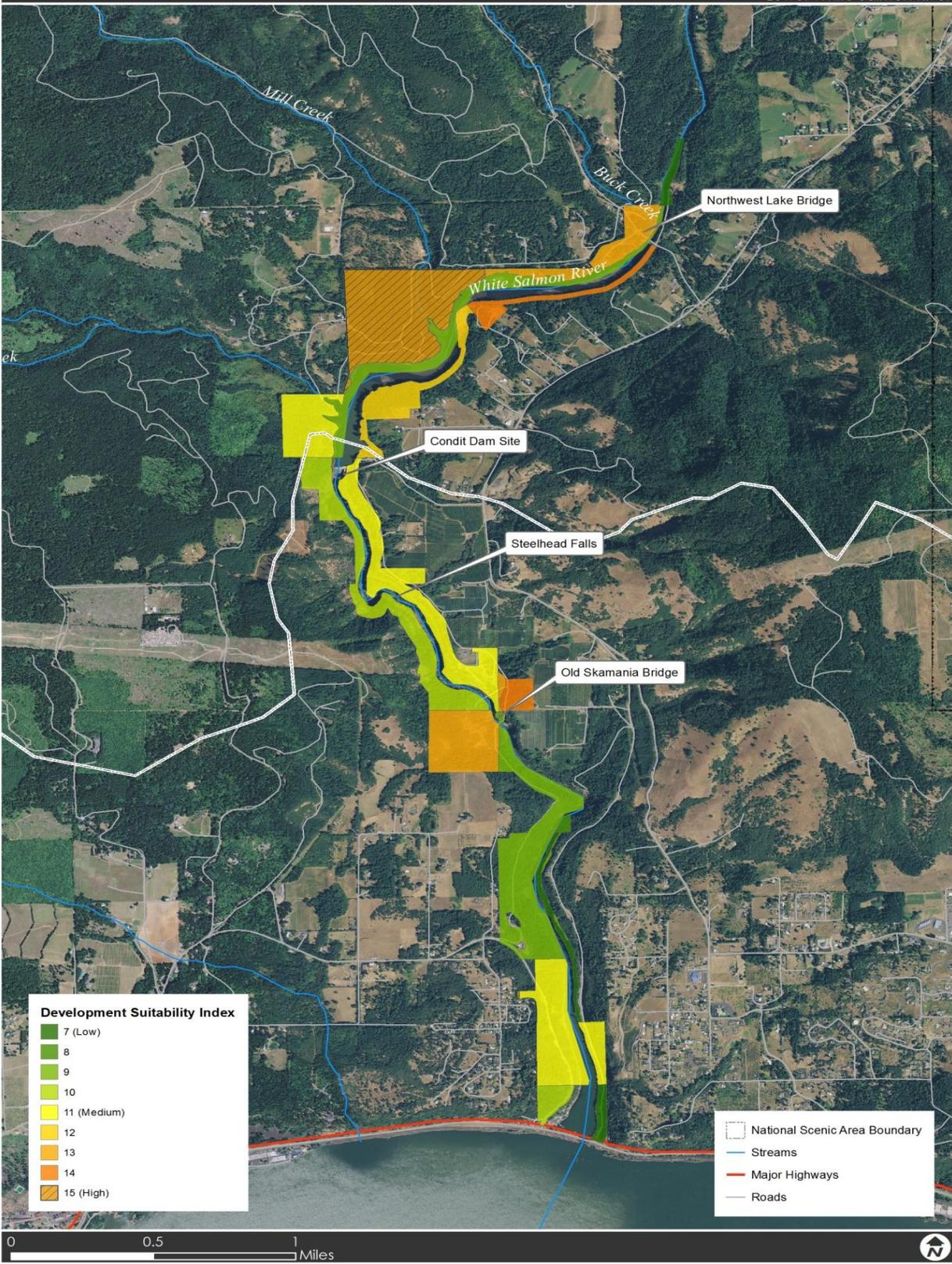


Figure 5. Overview of the Development Suitability Analysis