

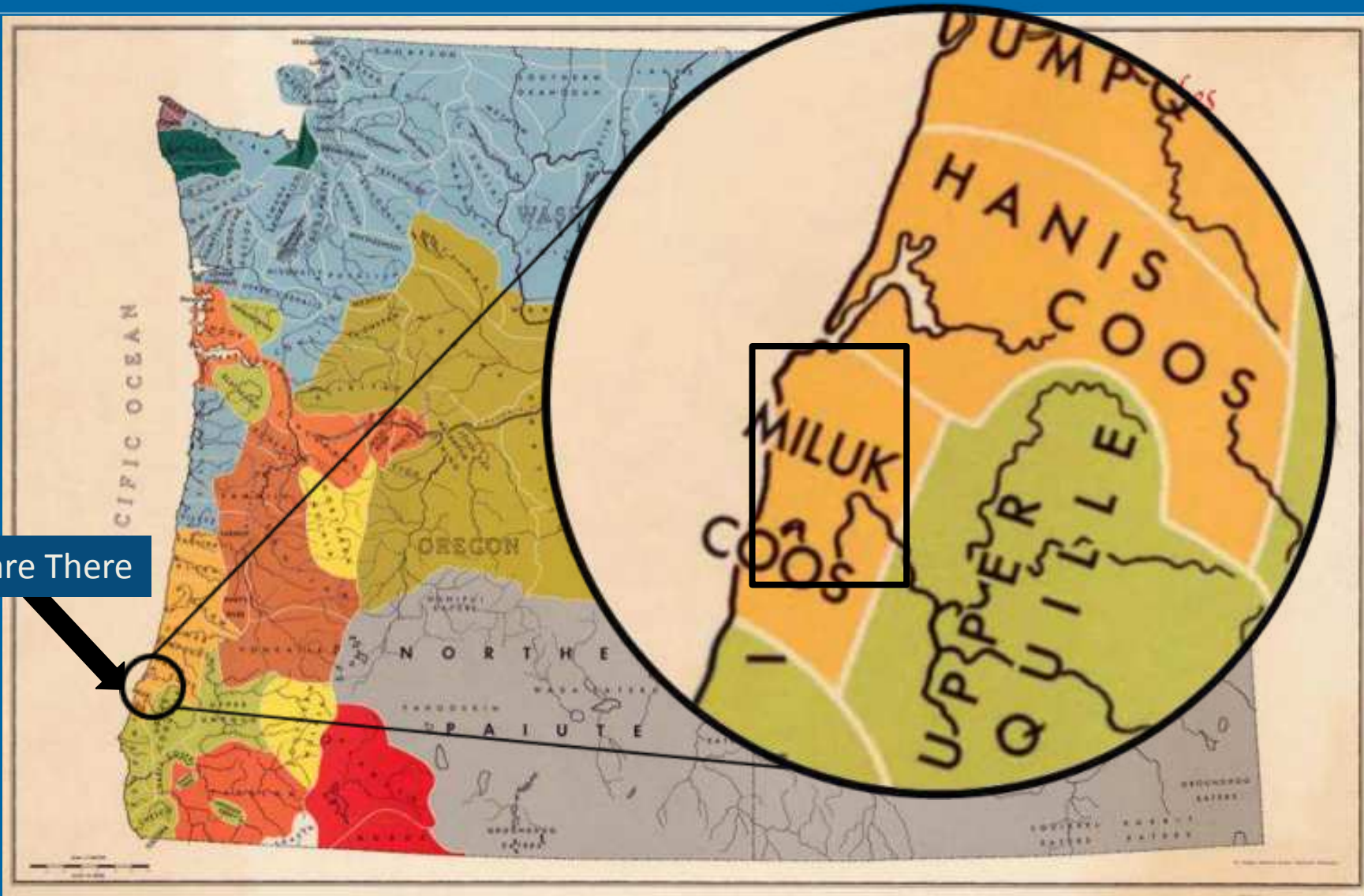
Implementing process-based restoration: lessons learned from the Wasson Creek Restoration project

Dr. Alice Yeates | Stewardship Coordinator
South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Oregon Dept. of State Lands

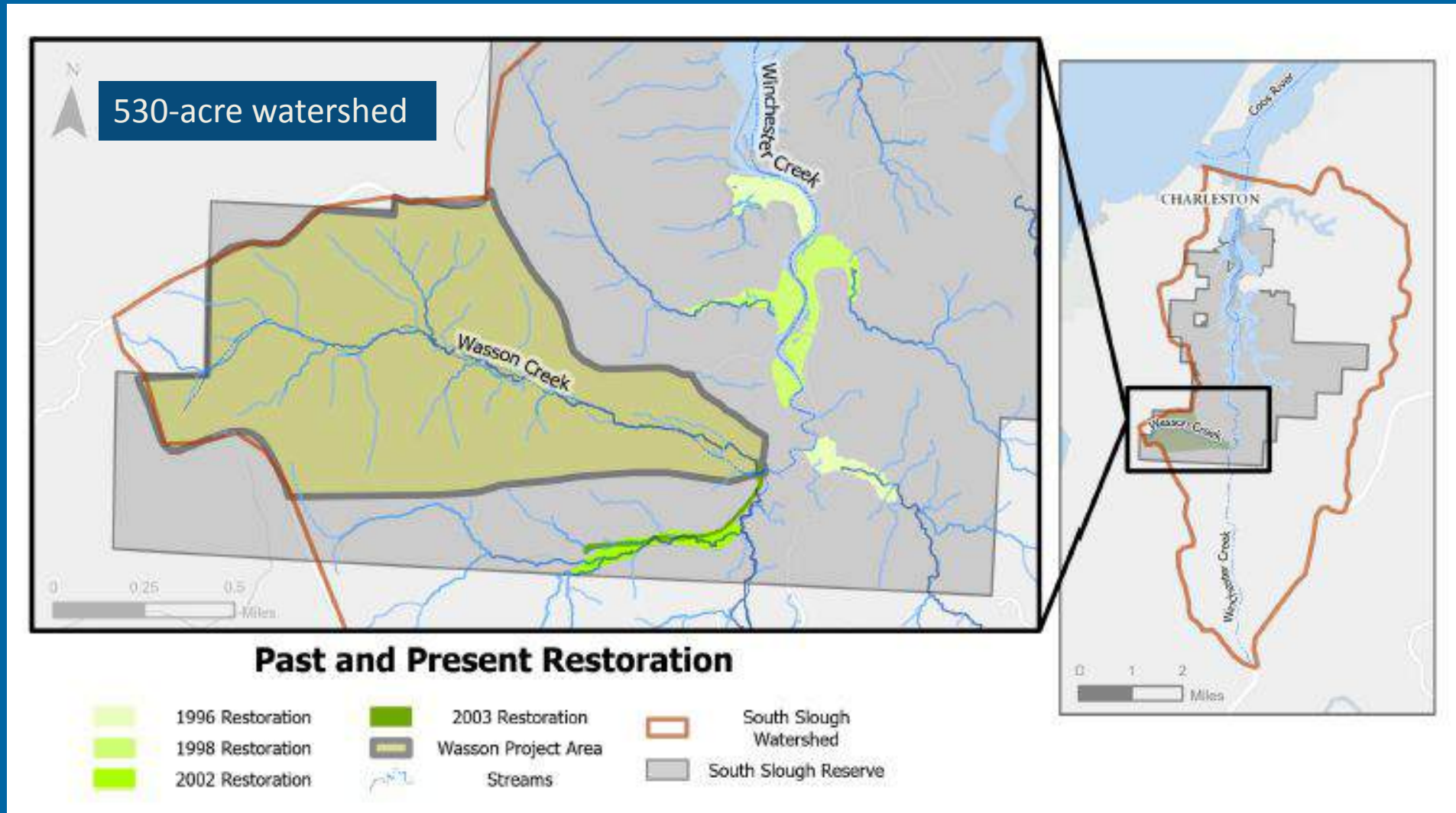


Project Location

We are There



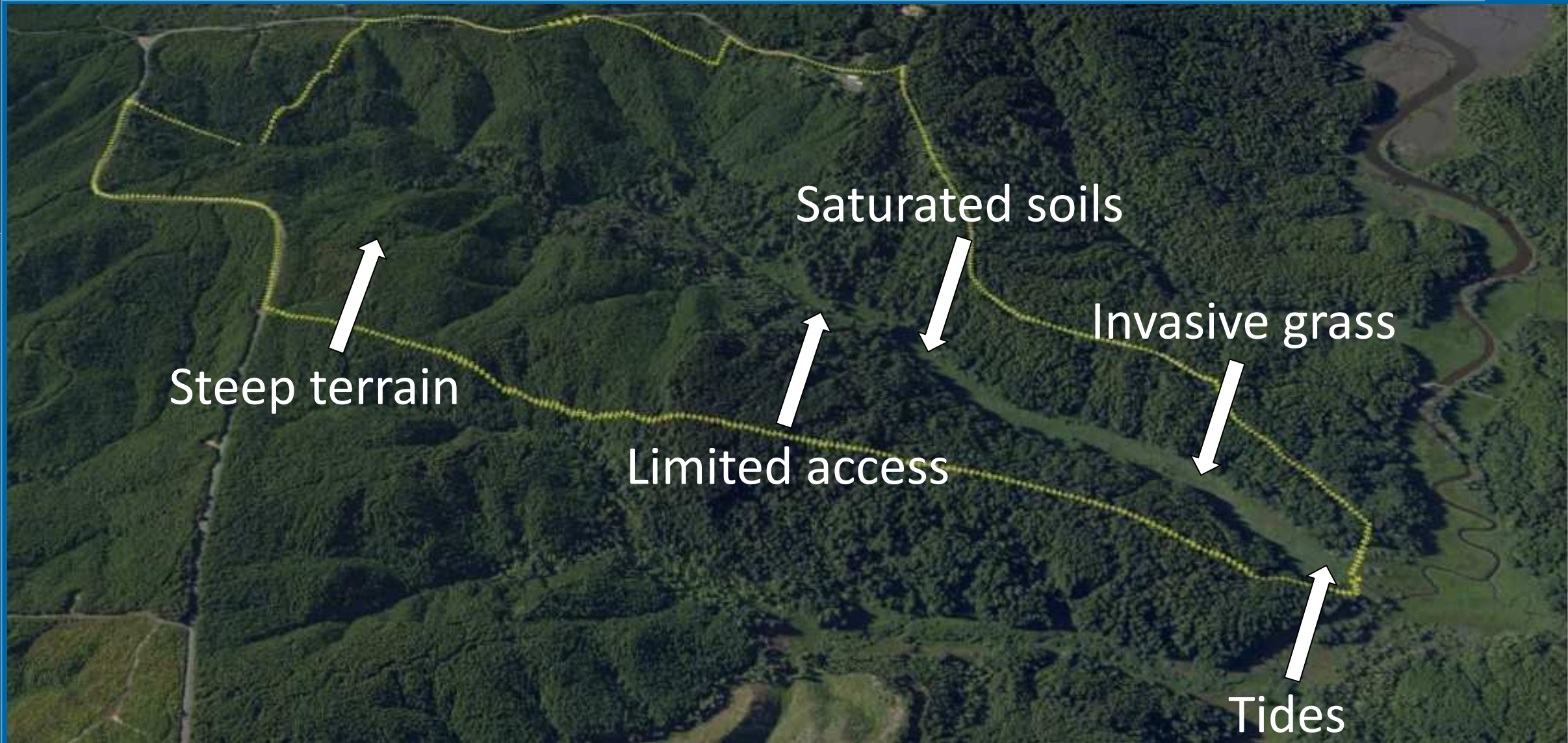
Project Location



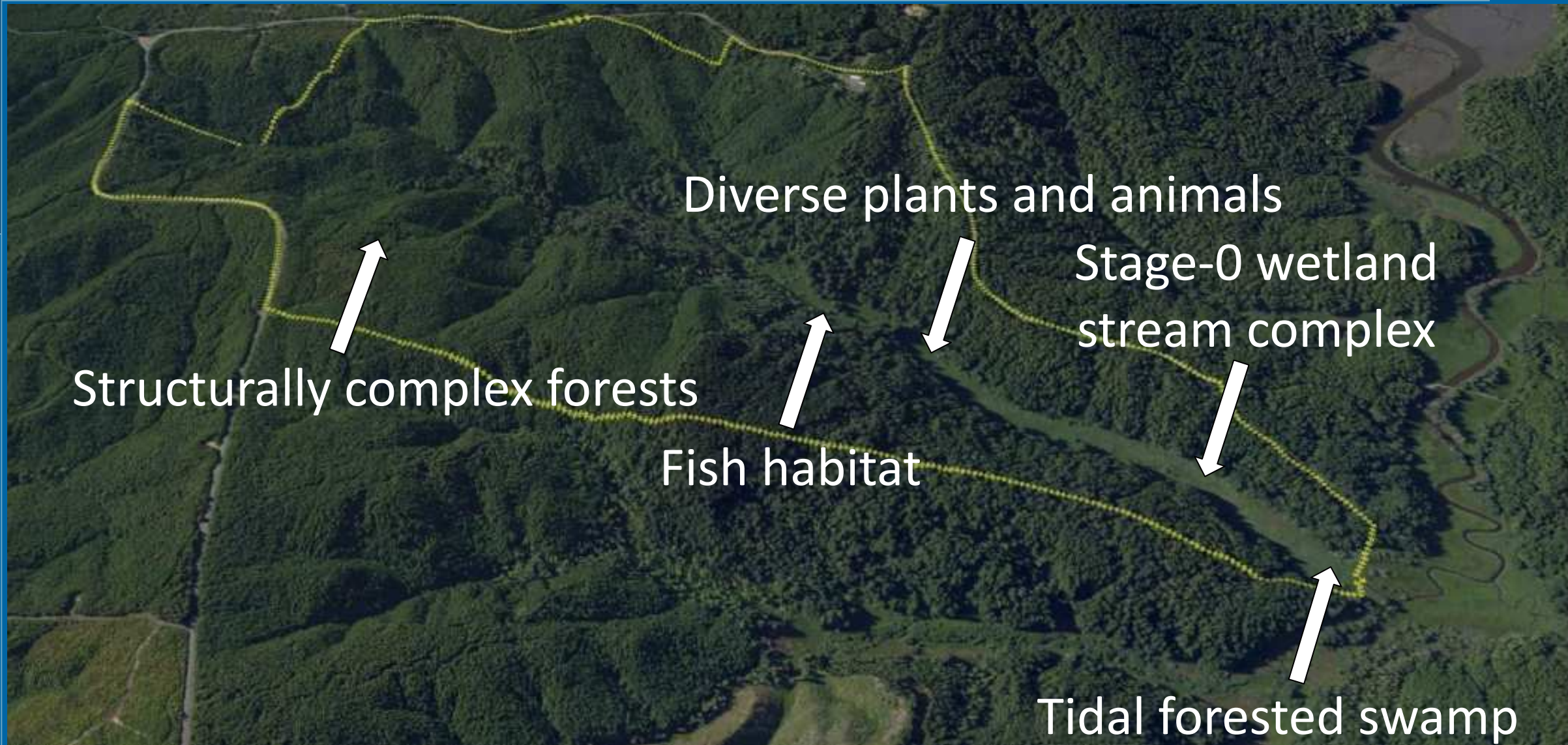
Simplified System



Complex Challenges



Diverse Objectives



Diverse Restoration Techniques



Implementation pathways

1. Restoration contractors
2. Training events for restoration practitioners
3. Co-stewardship events with Tribes
4. Community volunteers and school groups

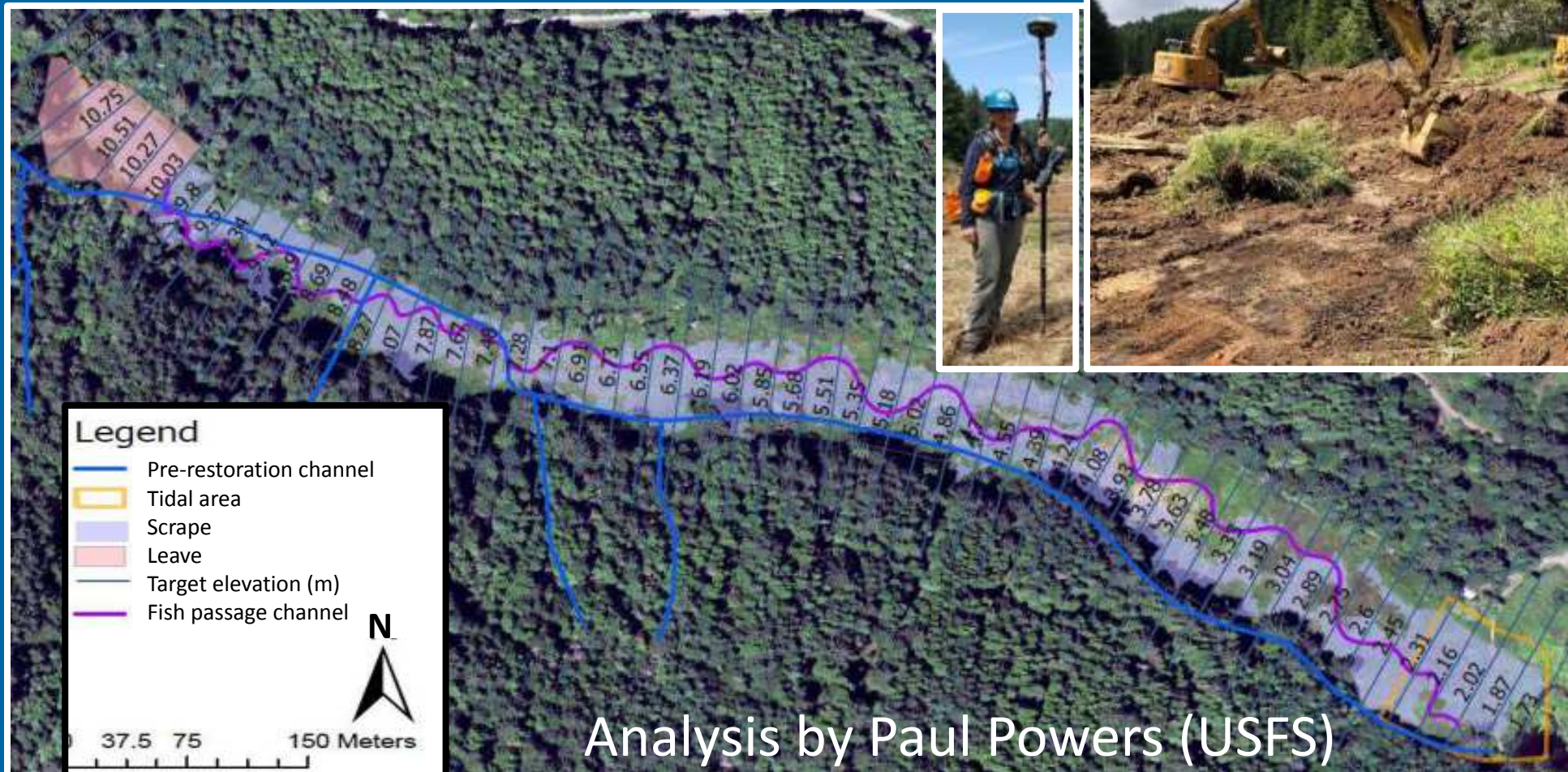


Contractors



Geomorphic grade line analysis (1%)

Northwest Watershed Restoration



Large wood Placement

Northwest Watershed Restoration & Columbia Helicopters



Lessons Learned

Adequate funding and established relationships

- Include THPO monitor and archaeologist costs in the budget
- Communicate early in the process and have a comprehensive IDP ready

Clear expectations and different interpretations

- Relocating 9,897 fish was beyond contractor expectations
- Complete fish salvage sections at least a day ahead of contractors filling channels

Lessons Learned

Fish passage channel

- Water saturated floodplain immediately and flow pathways established
- Fish passage channel has caused some downcutting and minor channelization
- Hard to implement in grade line method



Training events for restoration practitioners



Beaver Dam Analogs



Beavers returning to restoration site in year 2!

Nurse cribs for tidal forested swamp



Mimics decaying nurse logs to plant Sitka spruce, twinberry, and crab apple in tidal areas

Biochar



Created from upland thinning, exploring research options for use in restoration projects.

Lessons learned

“... because of my participation in the restoration trainings at [Wasson]. It is where my understanding of low-tech restoration projects came full circle ...”

- Melody Rudenko (2026), Workshop Participant

Learning something takes time, but practitioners take that knowledge with them!



Co-Stewardship



“Biocultural restoration focuses on restoring relationships between Indigenous people and their places, as well as between them and the biodiversity that shaped the language and identities of their ancestors.”

- Dr Kawika Winter

Co-Stewardship

“This is what I really needed, to be out here connecting with my ancestral lands”

— Adam Bolling; Co-Stewardship Event (2026); Enrolled Citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians



Community volunteers and school groups



Community volunteers and school groups

“Getting dirty was out of my comfort zone, [and now] my comfort zone has expanded”

–Destinations highschool student (2026)



Community volunteers and school groups



Check out the process-based restoration theme song:

“BDA (Beaver Dam Analogs)”
on the album

“Wasson” by Tiller of the Moon

Put it together and what do you get?

Process-based restoration to jumpstart

1. Ecological function
2. Long-term stewardship

Multiplying co-benefits

Over 560 people with hands on experience



Multiplying co-benefits



Inter-generational
knowledge
exchange



Inform restoration
outside the
watershed
(BDAs in Alaska)



Training teachers
(Teachers on the
Estuary Program)

Thankyou to ... Advisory Team

Tribes

Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians
Coquille Indian Tribe

Universities

University of Oregon
OR State University Extension

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
US Forest Service (USFS)

State Agencies

OR Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW)
OR Department of Forestry (ODF)

Watershed Association

Coos Watershed Association



Thankyou to ... Project Team

- 
- Alice Yeates (Project Lead)
 - Jenni Schmitt (Monitoring Lead)
 - Jennifer Kirkland
 - Chris Janousek
 - Trevor Williams
 - Shon Schooler
 - Ryan Scott
 - Adam DeMarzo
 - Ali Helms
 - Juliana Ruble

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- Coquille Tribe Community Fund

Questions?

