



**South Okanagan
Similkameen**

CONSERVATION
PROGRAM

A Healthy Future for Water, Land and Wildlife in the Similkameen

**Bryn White, SOSCP Program
Manager**

**For Similkameen River Water
Planning, May 2012**



**South Okanagan
Similkameen**

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Partnering for Conservation

- **Since 2000, 50+ organizations working together to achieve shared goals**
- **Over 70,000 hectares in conservation lands and stewarded properties**
- **Significant investments in conservation each year; new partners engaged**



Maintain the rich biodiversity of the area, including species at risk.

Maintain a viable ecological corridor between the arid ecosystems to the south and the grasslands to the north.

Engage the community to conserve nature.



Vancouver

Cariboo

Fraser

Stikine

Seattle

Spokane

Columbia Basin

Portland

Image taken: Feb 2003

Like Nowhere Else

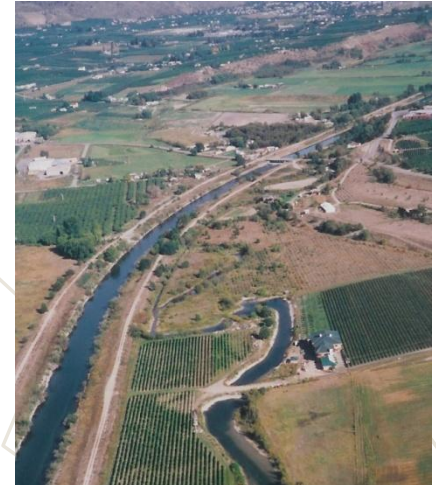
Richness

Rarity

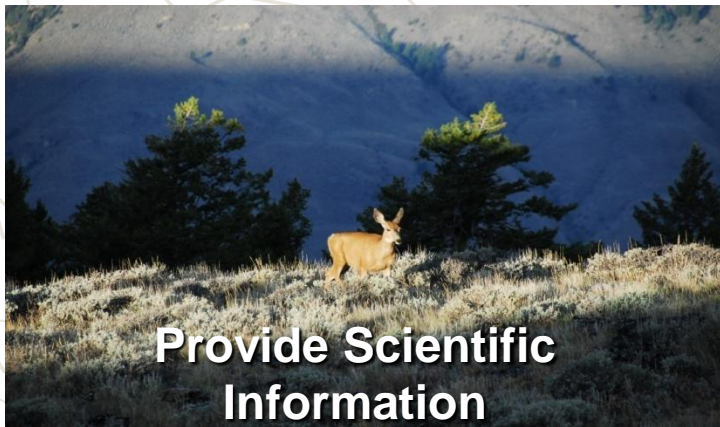
Risk



Loss, fragmentation and degradation



SOSCP Strategies:





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Strategies:

Promote Ecologically Sustainable Land Use

Assisting with land use planning processes; providing information and tools that support decision makers, and key stakeholders to achieve ecological objectives.

- Provide technical and policy support during Official Community Plan reviews, Comprehensive Community Plans, Regional Growth Strategy, Sustainable Similkameen Strategy
- Extension of science, mapping, workshops, capacity development (funding and expertise)
- Policy and conservation tools Green Bylaw Toolkit, bylaw language, technical advice



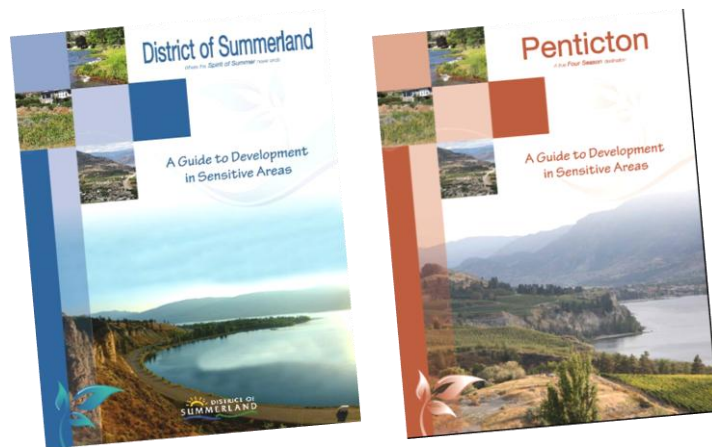
Photo: Lisa Scott

Facilitating Sustainable Land Use with Local Government

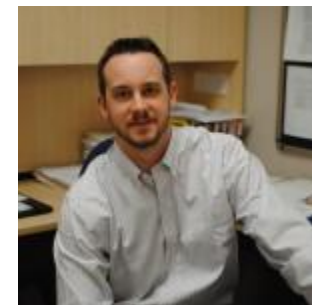


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- **Environmental Planning Roundtable – SOSCP** hosts regular sessions and established a community of practice for LG planners/CAO's.
- **Capacity and Partnership Building – SOSCP** built a technical and planning support team with local governments: full-time shared Environmental Planner.



Technical and policy support
- tools



South Okanagan
Similkameen Shared
Environmental Planner,
Wesley Miles.



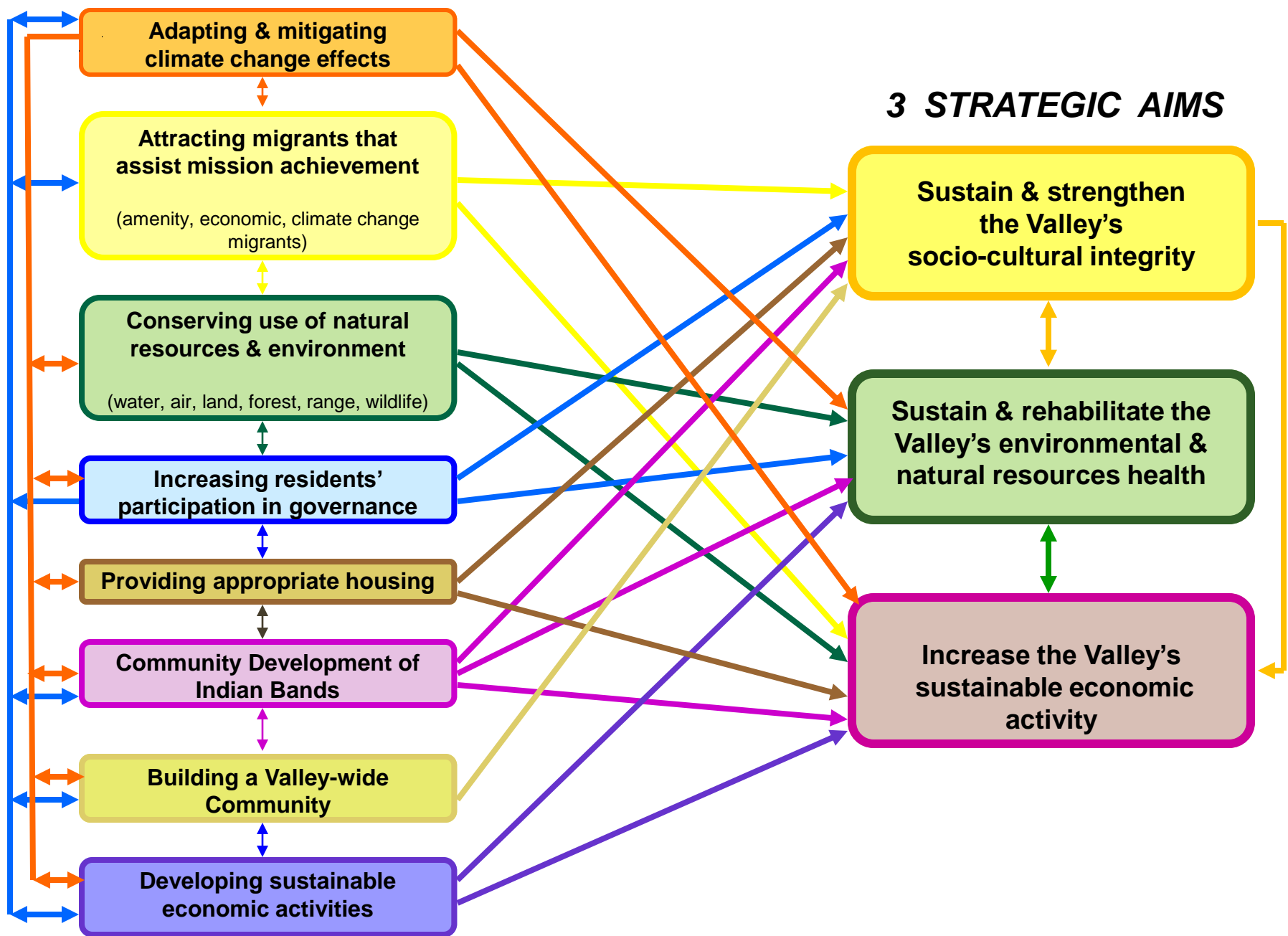
**A Biodiversity Conservation
Strategy for the South
Okanagan Similkameen**



Biodiversity Planning in the South Okanagan Similkameen

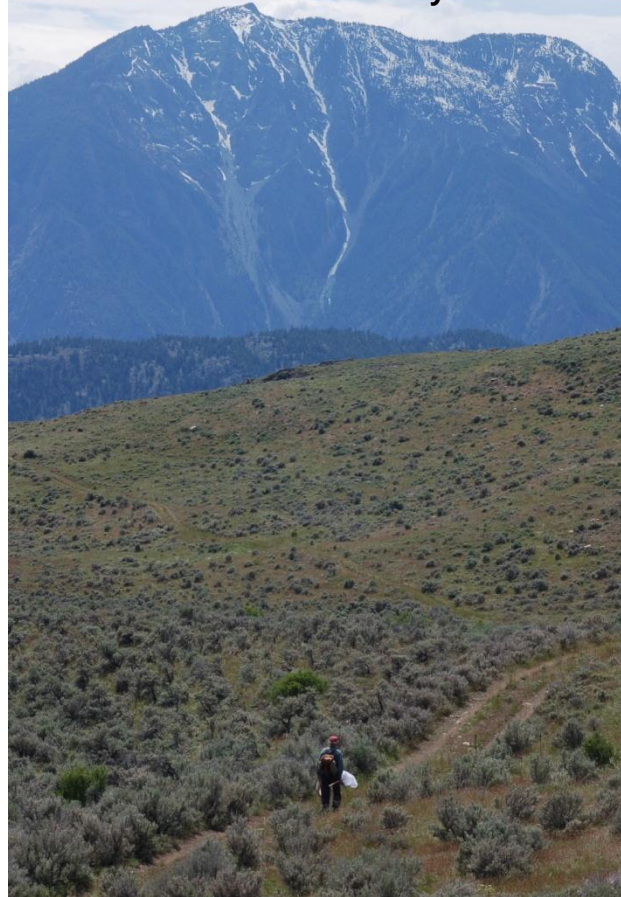
Purpose

- Pull together ecosystem and species data layers for decision support tools
- Identify valuable habitats, biodiversity 'hotspots' and linkages between them
- Identify threats from existing and/or planned human disturbance
- Organize information layers to develop a 'Management Picture' for biodiversity planning and inform strategic directions



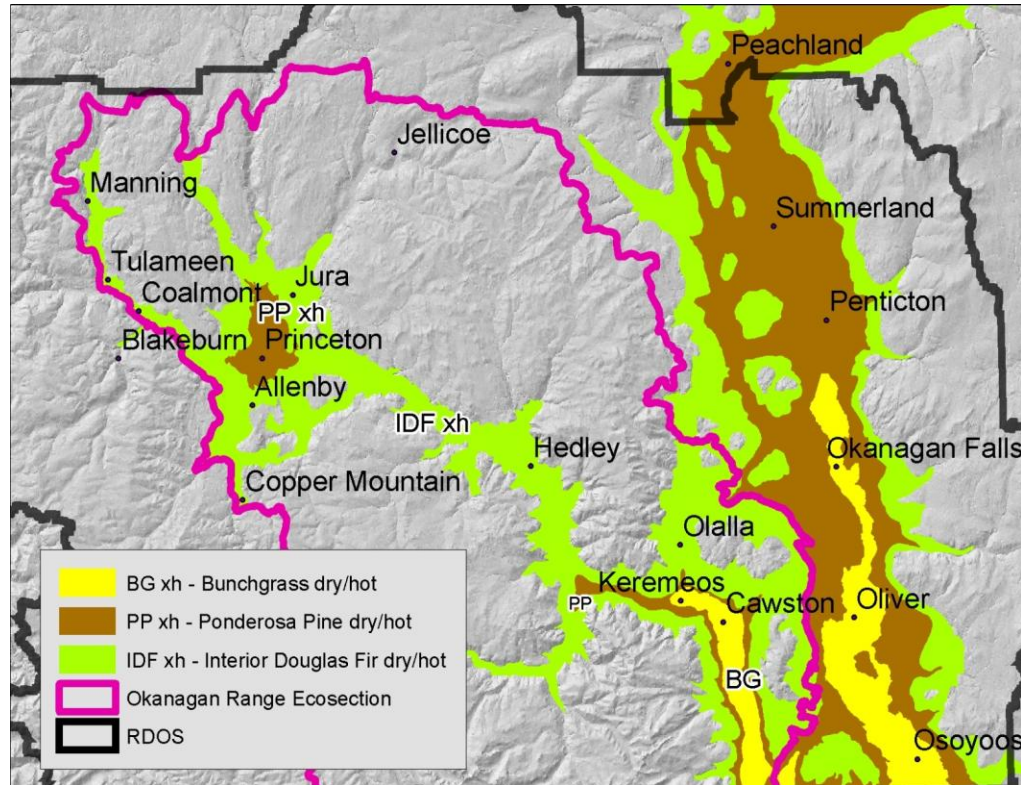
Highlights of the Ecology of the Similkameen – and maps.

**Sustainable Similkameen Project Internal Analysis Baseline Information:
Natural Environment and Biodiversity of the Similkameen Valley**



**Prepared for the Similkameen Valley Planning Society, Sustainable Similkameen Project
By the Bryn White Program Manager, South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP)
March 2010**

Ecosystems of the Similkameen Valley



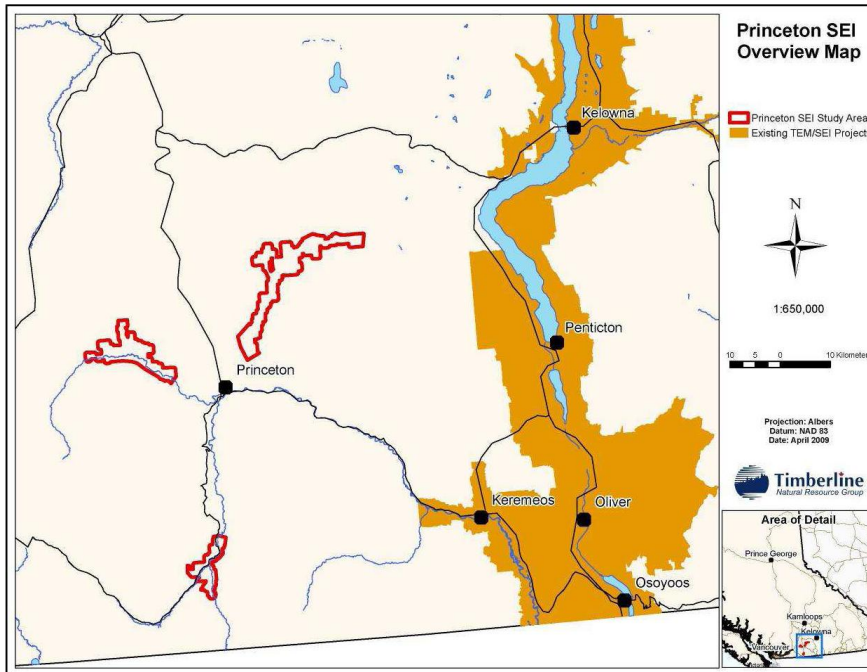
Of the 16 “bio-geo-climatic” zones in the province – the valley bottom areas in the **Similkameen** are home to three of the four most rare, and significant for conservation concern.

Who needs ecosystems?



Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory

– What is at risk?



- An historic mapping project shows the historic extent of ecosystems starting with the year 1800 and then observes losses over time.

- The hardest hit natural areas are grasslands, valley bottom forests, wetlands and riparian areas.

Similkameen Rivers and Lakes



- 500 kilometers of fish supportive rivers and streams. 16 tributary streams have high or very high significance for fish protection.
- Similkameen lakes generally have higher productivity than Okanagan Basin lakes (except for the main valley lakes).
- 17 fish species native to the river – 4 are consider rare and of conservation **CONCERN**

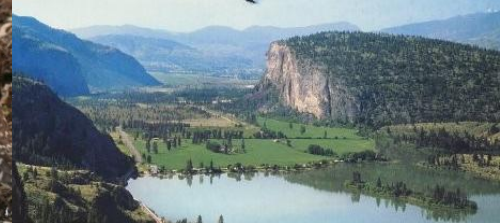
Similkameen Water



- Measurable human impact on lakes, streams, rivers and groundwater.
- By mid-90's – most surface water sources in the Similkameen Basin fully licensed.
- Long history of water quality monitoring on the Similkameen River.

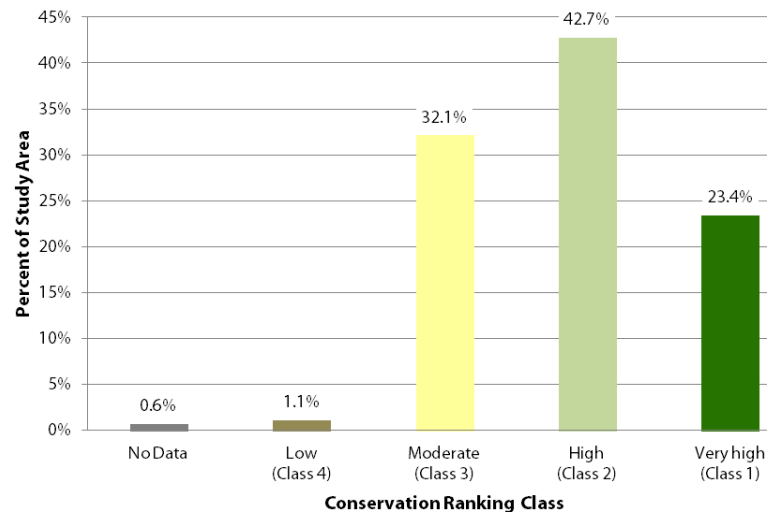
What is most important to conserve and how do we do it?

- Identify what is most important on the landscape for nature (maps, rankings and locations).
- Identify the most appropriate tools (official community plans, bylaws, zoning, development permit areas, parks master plan, crown land designations).
- Outline a framework for getting there together – all decision makers, stakeholders and citizens.
- Maps and draft strategy will be presented to decision makers and stakeholders late spring 2012.



Conservation Rankings

Figure 3 – Percent of Study Area by Conservation Ranking Class

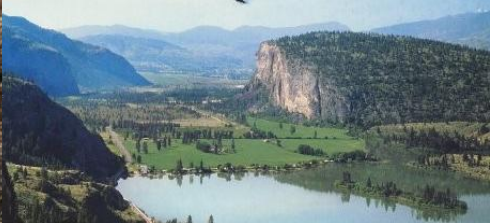


Conservation ranking

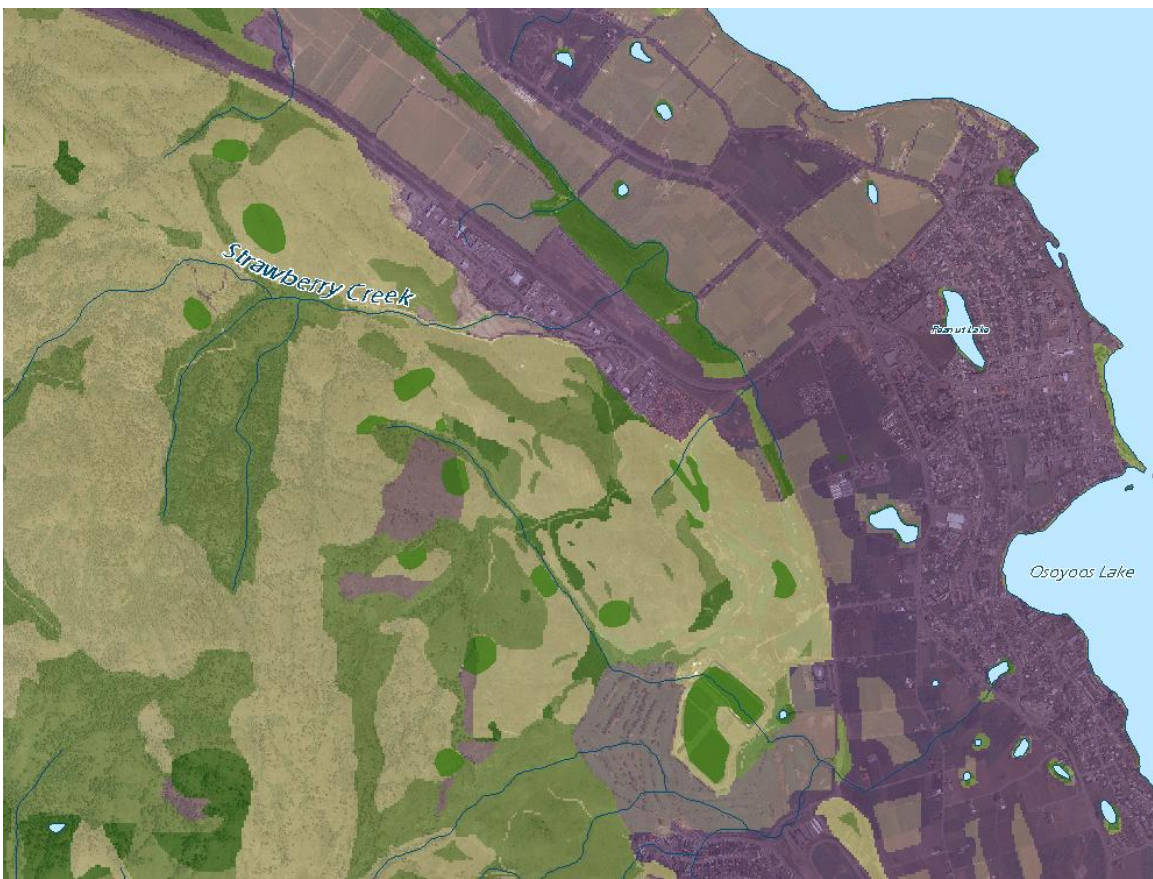
- Very high (Class 1)
- High (Class 2)
- Moderate (Class 3)
- Low (Class 4)

Maximum ranking

- 1
- 2

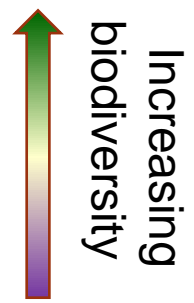


Relative Biodiversity



Relative biodiversity

-  Very high
-  High
-  Moderate
-  Low
-  Very low





Habitat Connectivity



Connectivity

- High
- Moderate
- Low

Barrier/Mortality Risk

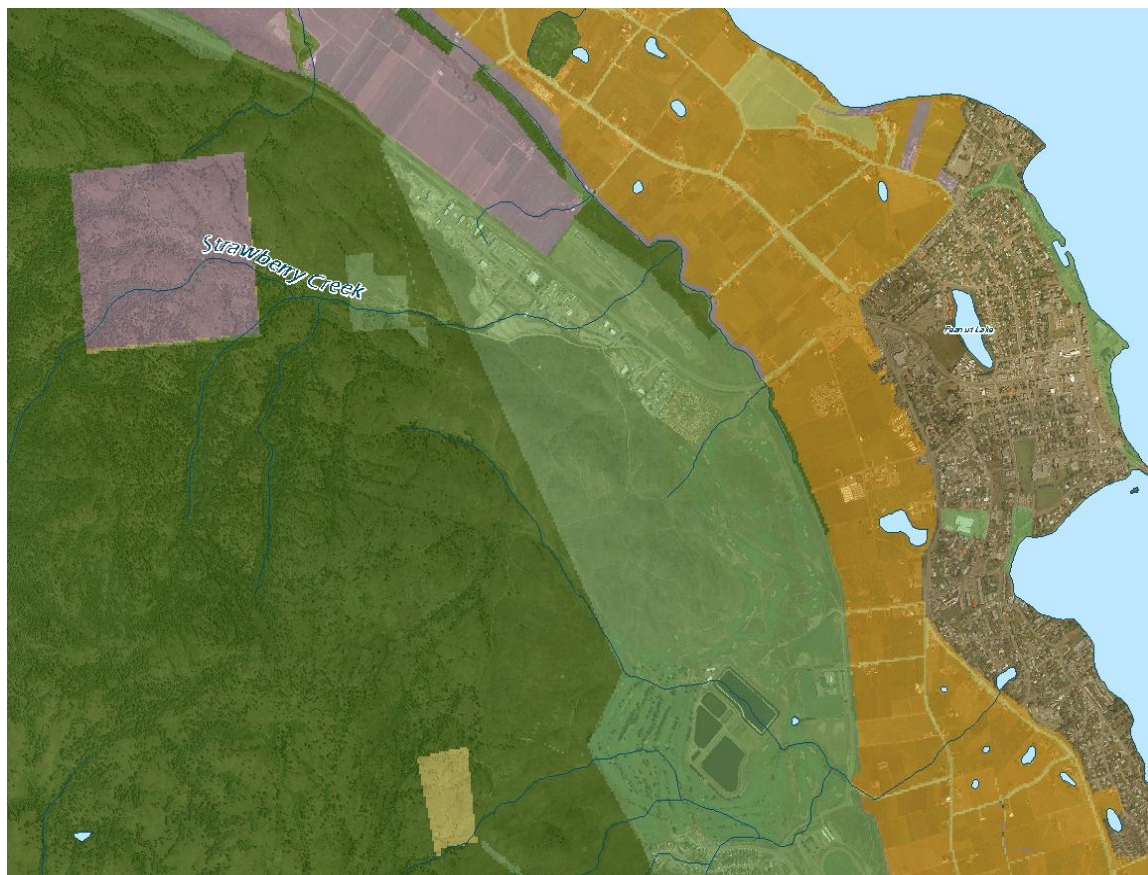
- Highway/Arterial
- Paved road
- Urban
- Cultivated field
- Orchard/Vineyard
- Rural area




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Management Classes



Management Class

-  Class 1
-  Class 2
-  Class 3
-  Class 4
-  Indian Reserve
-  Private