

# Chapter 10 – Environmental Considerations

The Environmental Considerations Chapter includes a discussion of potential environmental impacts, avoidance and mitigation activities at the policy and strategy level rather than from a project-specific level. This analysis is a specific requirement of the Moving Ahead for Progress for the 21st Century (MAP-21), signed into law in 2012.

This discussion was developed in consultation with federal, state and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies, as shown on Table 10.1.

**Table 10.1**

<i>Agency</i>
Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL)
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Oregon Department of Land and Conservation (DLCD)
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Environmental mitigation activities are defined in MAP-21 as strategies, policies, programs, actions and activities that over time will serve to minimize or compensate for the impacts to or disruption of elements of the human and natural environment associated with the implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

MAP-21 requires that metropolitan planning organizations, as part of the consultation process, discuss types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain

the environmental functions affected by the plan. These activities should also be developed in consultation with Federal, State and tribal wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies (23 U.S.C. 134(i)(2)(D)).

To fulfill this requirement, a comparison of projects in the RTP to historic and environmentally-sensitive areas was conducted to determine the environmental impacts and potential mitigation activities that could be implemented in areas where a project intersects a resource area.

MAP-21 requires a discussion of potential mitigation activities for each environmental resource affected by the RTP. These activities will be considered if the project, at the time of implementation, would produce any effect on the environment.

This RTP includes non-federally-funded regionally significant projects for air quality purposes and projects that receive federal funds. Some environmental laws and regulations are applicable regardless of the funding source. This chapter will outline the applicability of those laws and regulations as related to expected funding.

## **A. Inventory and Mapping**

The MRMPO inventoried historic and natural resources within the MPO planning boundary. The work was coordinated with the appropriate federal, state, tribal, wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies.

The MRMPO collaborated with consultation partners to identify and obtain the most current, complete and accurate data possible from which to develop the inventory in this chapter.

This framework consists of a library of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) shape files (data layers); and a set of maps highlighting ecologically important areas, linkages within and outside of the valley, and conflicts with planned transportation projects or existing transportation structures (e.g., culverts).

Data was incorporated into GIS to create the maps that illustrate important environmental areas. Inventory and resource data are included in the discussion sections of this chapter; all maps appear in numerical order at the end of the chapter.

Environmental Considerations Maps 10-1 through 10-8 depict information pertaining to:

- Prime Agricultural Soils, Viticulture Areas, Vineyards, and Orchards
- Wetlands and Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Fish Passage Barriers, Salmonid Habitat, and Water Quality (TMDL) Limited Streams
- Conservation Opportunity Areas, Wildlife Sensitivity, and Wildlife Linkages
- Wildlife Movements
- Wildlife Collision Hotspots
- Historic Places
- RTP Projects Intersecting Selected Environmental or Historic Areas

Details about selected maps appear below, with more in depth discussion of issues surrounding environmental features in the sections that follow. Map pages begin on page 10-18.

**Prime Agricultural Soils, Viticulture Areas, Vineyards, and Orchards Map 10-1** – RTP projects that are located on agricultural soils (irrigated soils classes 1-4). This soil information is derived from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) soils data, which categorize soils into eight capability classes. Viticulture areas represent the areas that meet the criteria for High Value farmland within the Viticultural Area per ORS 195. Vineyard information for both counties is provided by Greg Jones, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, Southern Oregon University.

**Wetlands and Special Flood Hazard Area, Map 10-2** – illustrates RTP projects that intersect the National Wetlands Inventory, Grants Pass Local Wetlands Inventory, and FEMA’s Special Flood Hazard Area (100 year floodplain). Note: The National Wetlands Inventory has limitations for planning efforts including the lack of mapping wetlands smaller than one acre, farmland wetlands, and some other smaller features. Due to the lacking information, some mitigation opportunities and potential impact areas may be missed if better location information is not available. (DSL 2015)

**Fish Passage Barriers, Salmonid Habitat, and TMDL (Water Quality Limited) Streams, Map 10-3** – Identifies fish passage barriers (primarily culverts and dams) and illustrates RTP projects that intersect with Salmonid habitat (Coho salmon, Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead) and TMDL approved streams (water quality limited streams). Streams for which management plans (Total Maximum Daily Load action plans) have been approved are shown.

**Conservation Opportunity Areas, Wildlife Sensitivity, and Wildlife Linkages, Map 10-4** – Identifies ODFW’s priority areas for conservation actions that directly benefit wildlife and habitats (conservation opportunity areas), wildlife sensitivity data, and key movement areas for wildlife (linkages).

**Wildlife Movements, Map 10-5** – illustrates RTP projects that overlap with ODFW wildlife movement data, which are key movement areas for wildlife, emphasizing areas that cross paved roads.

**Wildlife Collision Hotspots Map 10-6** –illustrates RTP Projects that overlap with high frequency wildlife carcass incidents (from Oregon Department of Transportation dispatch records of carcass reports). Includes only records of deer and elk.

**Historic Places, Map 10-7** – The National Parks Service National Register of Historic Places mapped with the RTP projects.

## **B. Environmental Justice**

Environmental Justice encompasses three fundamental principles:

1. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations
2. Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
3. Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay of these protections for minority and low-income populations.

These principles work to identify and appropriately address disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

Environmental Justice stems from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 of 1994. The latter, Executive Order 12898, states that federal agencies incorporate achieving Environmental Justice into their missions.

**MRMPO** maintains a separate civil rights plan:

[http://www.mrpmo.org/images/Planning%20Documents/MRMPO.TitleVIPlan.FHWA\\_2.2015.pdf](http://www.mrpmo.org/images/Planning%20Documents/MRMPO.TitleVIPlan.FHWA_2.2015.pdf)

One of the Middle Rogue Metropolitan Planning Organization's Environmental Justice goals is to achieve equal protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to decision-making for all citizens of the MRMPO area in an effort to promote quality of life.

Environmental Justice principles are addressed through policy, as well as through actions by the **MRMPO** to promote equality. Through constant and consistent assessment the **MRMPO** will work to assure Environmental Justice.

## **C. Environmental Considerations in Planning**

It is appropriate to begin considering the environmental consequences of any policy, project, and/or program that address transportation deficiencies. However, such consideration is not expected to be at the same level of detail as may be required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is important to note that a NEPA process is required for any transportation project having a federal nexus. A project has a federal nexus if it involves federal funding, a federal permit or approval, use of federal lands, or a federal program.

### **1. Early Consideration of Environmental Consequences**

A common principle of environmental laws and regulations is a stepped process that focuses on:

- Avoiding impacts to resources;
- Minimizing those impacts that are unavoidable, and

- If impacts are not avoidable, mitigating for those impacts.

If these processes can be considered at a regional level, projects may be able to advance through required environmental processes more quickly than projects whose impacts must be evaluated and considered independently.

## **2. Use of Environmental Information**

Environmental information is typically collected and analyzed in the transportation planning process. The **MRMPO** maintains a GIS library of environmental data that can be used to identify and document potentially affected environmental resources. This information can then be used to identify opportunities to avoid or minimize environmental impacts of any alternative transportation solutions being considered, modify alternatives being considered, or potentially eliminate alternatives with unacceptable or greater environmental consequences.

Maps 10-1 through 10-8 were created by overlaying the planned transportation projects with environmental data including wetlands, floodplains, fish (salmonid) habitat, wildlife critical habitats, and ecologically sensitive areas.

**Documentation** – Environmental information and/or analyses used in the planning process, and environmental impact avoidance or minimization actions taken, should be thoroughly documented. This will allow information to be used again, or incorporated as evidence of mitigation, resulting in effective and expedited environmental review.

## **3. Evaluation of Impacts**

The evaluation of the impacts a roadway project has on natural areas and historic resources shall take into account (23 CFR Part 777.7):

- a. The importance of the impacted wetlands and natural habitats. Evaluation shall consider:
  - Wetland and natural habitat functional capacity
  - Relative importance of these functions to the total wetland or natural habitat resource of the area
  - Other factors such as uniqueness, aesthetics, or cultural values; and
  - Input from the appropriate resource management agencies through interagency coordination.
- b. The extent of roadway impacts on the wetlands and natural habitats
- c. Actions necessary to comply with the Clean Water Act, Section 404; the Endangered Species Act of 1973; and other relevant Federal statutes. The short and long-term effects of the project on wetland or natural habitat functional capacity.

## **4. Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation**

The MRMPO, utilizing GIS, species accounts, soil types and other relevant data, seeks to avoid or minimize environmental impacts to the greatest extent possible. Agency review (NOAA Fisheries 2015 and ODFW 2015) has also emphasized the importance of avoiding and minimizing impacts.

Where impacts cannot be avoided, efforts will be made to ensure appropriate mitigation. Additionally, the MRMPO works with other agencies to provide greater benefits to the environment regionally. Additional discussion of avoidance, minimization and mitigation appears in subsequent sections addressing specific resources.

The Rogue Valley Council of Governments has a Natural Resource Department that coordinates and facilitates resource projects within the region. Subsequently, this internal knowledge of natural resources, combined with regional collaboration, will lead to improved avoidance measures and natural resource mitigation activities.

Mitigation is the attempt to offset potential adverse effects of human activity on the environment. Mitigation is the last step of the avoidance and minimization process. The National Environmental Policy Act regulations define mitigation (40 CFR 1508.20) as follows:

1. Avoiding adverse impacts by not taking an action.
2. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of action.
3. Rectifying by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
4. Reducing or eliminating impacts over time through preservation and maintenance activities.
5. Compensating for an impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. In most mitigation agreements, more of a resource or habitat must be provided than was originally present. Ratios greater than 1:1 are required in part to compensate for unrealized losses and the inability of technology to completely restore the natural environment.

## **5. Wetlands and Natural Habitats**

The MRMPO encourages progressive approaches to wetlands and natural habitat mitigation. These approaches include the development of conservation and mitigation banking agreements or the purchase of intact natural areas. Conservation and mitigation banks differ to some degree. Mitigation bank could refer to mitigation of any habitat, although they are typically referring to wetland mitigation per federal guidance for Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources, Federal Register / Volume 73, Number 70, Thursday, April 10, 2008 / Rules and Regulations, Army Corps of Engineers (COR), 33 CFR Parts 325 & 332, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 40 CFR Part 230 or State guidance ORS 196.600 to 196.655.

Whereas conservation banks are oriented toward endangered, threatened and other at-risk species; habitats are selected and managed based upon the needs of those specific species. Roadway projects are linear, often resulting in many small, incremental impacts. Subsequently, on-site mitigation sometimes results in isolated wetlands and natural habitat that might not provide benefits commensurate with costs and time required to establish wetland and natural habitat functions.

Wetland or habitat banks have the ability to provide more wetland or habitat values and benefits per acre; consequently, the increased habitat benefits result in greater benefits to fauna, and often result in increased biodiversity. It is noteworthy that large contiguous habitat provides more benefits than small isolated habitats due to facilitated species movements, increased colonization rates, and decreased local extinction rates and that the mitigation area needs to receive sufficient

management to ensure their functions will be sustained in perpetuity. In some cases it may be mutually beneficial, both in preserving the environment and creating an effective transportation system, to preserve the same or similar habitats in relatively close proximity to the habitats being impacted. The MRMPO recognizes that the Rogue Valley provides valuable habitat along the Pacific flyway, one of four flyways nationwide. Therefore, the MRMPO will strive to lessen impacts to habitats upon which species are dependent.

Additionally, efforts will be made to establish and maintain regional collaboration, both in identifying potential mitigation areas and ensuring their management in perpetuity.

**Reducing Impacts** – There are a number of actions that can be taken to minimize the impact of roadway projects on wetlands or natural habitats (23 CFR Part 777.9).

- Avoidance and minimization of impacts to wetlands or natural habitats through: realignment and special design, construction features, or other measures.
  - Using best management practices to avoid introduction and spread of invasive species is another key issue. Road construction actions to avoid soil disturbance should be used to reduce the spread of noxious invasive plants.
  - Avoiding soil disturbance should be used to reduce the spread of noxious invasive plants.
  - Employing seasonal restrictions around bird nest sites during a critical season, thus avoiding and reducing short-term impacts to sensitive nest sites for a number of bird species in the area that could be affected, including bald eagle, golden eagle, and osprey.
- Compensatory mitigation alternatives, either inside or outside of the right-of-way. This includes, but is not limited to, such measures as on-site mitigation, when that alternative is determined to be the preferred approach by the appropriate regulatory agency; improvement of existing degraded or historic wetlands or natural habitats through restoration or enhancement on or off site; creation of new wetlands; and under certain circumstances, preservation of existing wetlands or natural habitats on or off site. Restoration of wetlands is generally preferable to enhancement or creation of new wetlands.
- Improvements to existing wetlands or natural habitats. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, construction or modification of water level control structures or ditches, establishment of natural vegetation, re-contouring of a site, installation or removal of irrigation, drainage, or other water distribution systems, integrated pest management, installation of fencing, monitoring, and other measures to protect, enhance, or restore the wetland or natural habitat character of a site.

## **6. Rogue Wild and Scenic River Designation**

The Rogue Wild and Scenic River is best known for its outstanding natural scenery, fishing, whitewater boating, and wildlife and cultural resources. Eighty-four miles of the Rogue River was designated wild and scenic by Congress in 1968, under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, to preserve its outstanding qualities. The Applegate River (7 miles west of Grants Pass, Oregon) is the east boundary and Lobster Creek (11 mile east of Gold Beach, Oregon) is the west boundary.

The area gets over half a million visitors, annually. Recreation opportunities include: boating, fishing, guided motorized tour boat trips, guided whitewater fishing and float trips, camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking, wildlife viewing, and sun bathing.

Although the Wild and Scenic section is not within the MRMPO Boundary, consideration of downstream impacts of projects is recommended.

## **7. Mitigation Banks**

The MRMPO encourages the use of mitigation banks, or other habitat preservation measures, to offset habitat impacts. Banks will be approved in accordance with the Federal Guidance for Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources, Federal Register / Volume 73, Number 70, Thursday, April 10, 2008 / Rules and Regulations, Army Corps of Engineers (COR), 33 CFR Parts 325 & 332, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 40 CFR Part 230, State guidance ORS 196.600 to 196.655, or other agreement between appropriate agencies. Where feasible, the MPO will attempt to collectively conserve habitat areas that provide greater environmental benefits.

### **Mitigation Bank Areas in the MRMPO**

MAP-21 requires MPOs to provide a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities. This section of the chapter provides an overview of the potential areas to carry out mitigation activities.

There are no existing or proposed mitigation bank areas in the MRMPO area but the MRMPO area is part of the service area for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) operated Vernal Pool Mitigation/Conservation Bank (Bank) near Central Point, used for ODOT projects.

ODOT began an extensive search for prospective vernal pool complex bank sites in 2005. Several prospective sites were viewed in the field by staff from ODOT, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Bank is located near the intersection of Newland and Truax Roads, in White City, Jackson County, Oregon. Originally the Bank consisted of the two parcels that comprise 80.23 acres and located west of and directly adjacent to the Nature Conservancy's Whetstone Savanna Preserve (a registered Oregon Natural Heritage Resource) and are of similar character. In 2014, ODOT completed the purchase of four additional parcels (106 acres) adjacent and to the west and north of the original Bank parcels to serve as Individual Permittee Responsible Mitigation for ODOT's Highway 62: Interstate 5 to Dutton Road Project.

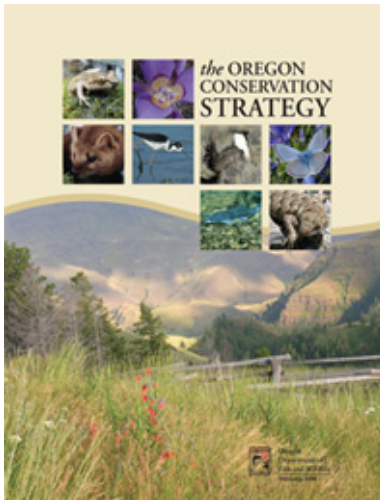
The adjacent preserve's acreage is approximately 106 acres of which roughly 13 acres is high functioning. The remaining 100 plus acres will be enhanced and restored to high functioning habitat. In 2014, approximately 14 acres of the property was restored, with additional phases of restoration slated for 2015 through 2017. Cumulatively, upon completion of restoration



activities, approximately 196 acres of contiguous high functioning vernal pool complex will be protected and under management to sustain wetland functions and values.

## 8. Wildlife Habitat

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) follows a conservation strategy that focuses on habitat restoration and maintenance to address the needs of game and nongame species.



The strategy highlights specific actions that can conserve Oregon's fish and wildlife when the chances of success are greatest before they become sensitive or endangered.

The strategy provides information about species and habitats in every region in Oregon and the issues affecting their present and future health. This information is included in the RTP for the purpose of:

- Landowners and land managers who want to improve conditions for at-risk wildlife;
- Agencies and organizations interested in making conservation investments more effective and efficient; and
- Oregonians who want a better understanding of the conservation issues of concern in their area.

The link below offers more information on the ODFW Conservation Strategy for Oregon:  
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/contents.asp>

### Conservation Strategy for Oregon – Klamath Mountains Ecoregion

The **MRMPO** is situated within the Klamath Mountains ecoregion which covers much of southwestern Oregon, including the Umpqua Mountains, Siskiyou Mountains and interior valleys and foothills between these and the Cascade Range. Several popular and scenic rivers run through the ecoregion, including: the Umpqua, Rogue, Illinois, and Applegate.

Within the ecoregion, there are wide ranges in elevation, topography, geology, and climate. The elevation ranges from about 600 to more than 7400 feet, from steep mountains and canyons to

gentle foothills and flat valley bottoms. This variation along with the varied marine influence support a climate that ranges from the lush, rainy western portion of the ecoregion to the dry, warmer interior valleys and cold, snowy mountains.

The Klamath Mountains ecoregion boasts a high rate of species diversity, including many species found only locally. In fact, the Klamath-Siskiyou region was included in the World Wildlife Fund's assessment of the 200 locations most important for species diversity world-wide.

The region is particularly rich in plant species, including many pockets of endemic communities and some of the most diverse plant communities in the world. For example, there are more kinds of cone-bearing trees found in the Klamath Mountains ecoregion than anywhere else in North America. In all, there are about 4,000 native plants in Oregon, and about half of these are found in the Klamath Mountains ecoregion.

The ecoregion is noted as an Area of Global Botanical Significance (one of only seven in North America) and world "Centre of Plant Diversity" by the World Conservation Union. The ecoregion boasts many unique invertebrates, although many of these are not as well studied as their plant counterparts.

While the Klamath Mountains ecoregion is ecologically unique, it embodies many of the conservation issues facing other parts of Oregon. For example, increasing population growth and development in rural residential and urban communities strain resources, particularly in the southern and eastern portions of the ecoregion. The Klamath Mountains is the second fastest-growing ecoregion in Oregon (the Willamette Valley is experiencing the fastest rate of expansion). Much of the population growth is concentrated in valleys along the Interstate 5 corridor. Demands for choice building sites often coincide with good quality habitat.

Land use conversion and urbanization, loss of habitat connectivity and invasive species are limiting factors identified by the Strategy for this ecoregion. Appropriate transportation planning as well as project design and implementation can be a valuable tool in addressing these factors.

Recent indicators suggest that water quality and riparian condition in the ecoregion may be improving. Much of this change could be attributed to local collaborative conservation efforts via watershed councils and other groups.

For more information on the Klamath Mountains Ecoregion and possible actions recommended to restore habitats identified in this ecoregion click on the link below:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/document\\_pdf/b-eco\\_km.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/document_pdf/b-eco_km.pdf)

### **Habitat Conservation Opportunities**

As defined in the Conservation Strategy, Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) are landscapes where broad fish and wildlife conservation goals would be best met. COAs were developed to guide voluntary, non-regulatory actions. ODFW is in the process of updating COA's and have expanded the North Medford COA so that a portion of the MRMPO planning area is now included.

## 9. Barriers to Wildlife Movement

Barriers to wildlife movement is identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as one of the key conservation issues facing Oregon's habitat and species. Highway and road networks are particularly disruptive to carnivore species that require long-distance movements to meet their life-history requirements, herptiles such as Pacific Giant Salamander, Northwestern Garter Snake, Common Kingsnake, Common Gartersnake and Western Pond Turtles in the area and migratory deer that are especially vulnerable during fall and spring to vehicle collisions ODFW is working with the Oregon Department of Transportation, county transportation departments, and other partners to identify and reduce fish passage barriers and areas where wildlife mortality on highways occurs. ODFW's fish passage rules can be found here: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/passage/> (OAR Chapter 635 Division 412).

ODFW notes that stream crossing designs must meet fish passage criteria in order to provide fish passage for Oregon's native migratory fish species. Barriers to migration are a big challenge to recovery for the fish species in the Rogue Basin. In the MRMPO area numerous tributaries have significant barriers near their confluence with the Rogue River. Restoration of native fish populations will lag if fish are not able to utilize the habitat available in the watershed, including urban stream areas.

During a project near a stream, it may be possible to utilize equipment and personnel to do smaller scale restoration projects on the nearby waterbody, such as adding some minor retrofits to improve fish passage. This can be scoped with ODFW pre-project.

ODOT is a cooperator on the Oregon Wildlife Movement Strategy, an interagency partnership to inventory and prioritize wildlife movement barriers on the state highway system. ODOT's Geo-Environmental Section is developing a Wildlife Collision Prevention Plan that addresses Federal Highway Administration and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife concerns for animal-vehicle collisions on the state highway system.

The effects of roads on wildlife can be mitigated through the design and construction of underpasses and overcrossings. For more information on wildlife and roads, click on the links below:

<http://www.wildlifeandroads.org/decisionguide/>

[http://www.defenders.org/programs\\_and\\_policy/habitat\\_conservation/habitat\\_and\\_highways/index.php](http://www.defenders.org/programs_and_policy/habitat_conservation/habitat_and_highways/index.php)

## 10. Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides for the conservation of species that are endangered or threatened, as well as the conservation of the ecosystems on which they depend. Table 10.2 identifies a list of species (birds, fish, flowers, and mammals), their status at the local, state, or federal levels, and if there is critical habitat in the MRMPO area.

**Table 10.2**

<i>Species common name</i>	<i>Species scientific name</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Critical Habitat (CH)</i>
<b>Birds</b>			
Northern Spotted Owl	<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>	T	Y
<b>Fish</b>			
Coho salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	T	Y
North American Green Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>	T	N
Pacific eulachon	<i>Thaleichthys pacificus</i>	T	N
<b>Flowers</b>			
Gentner's Fritillary	<i>Fritillaria gentneri</i>	E	N
<b>Mammals</b>			
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	E	N
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>	pT	N

“incidental take” of a protected species. For the three fish species listed as threatened under the ESA potentially affected; Southern Oregon/Northern California Coasts (SONCC) coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), and Pacific eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*), as well as critical habitat designated for SONCC coho salmon, section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires entities to consult with NMFS when their actions adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH) (NOAA Fisheries 2015).

### **11. Addressing Impaired Water Resources**

This portion of the Rogue Valley, like many regions in the United States, has experienced development and modification of the natural landscape. Subsequently, modifications of the natural landscape have led to water resource impacts. Surface waters and associated vegetation have been altered, leaving bodies of water with impairments, such as increased temperatures, decreased dissolved oxygen levels, high levels of bacteria, and other concerns.

As a result of combined impairments to water bodies across the nation, the Clean Water Act was established. The Act includes a system for identifying and working to repair impaired water bodies. The system for identifying impaired water bodies is known as the 303(d) list and requires states to identify impaired waters within their state. The list identifies both the body of water and what impairments it has. The states are then required to prioritize their impaired water bodies and develop action plans, known as total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), to improve water quality of the listed systems.

TMDLs for the streams within the **MRMPO** (Rogue River Basin) have been approved that meet the requirements of Section 303(d) of the Federal 1972 Clear Water Act. Map 10.3 illustrates TMDL water bodies and fish passage barriers; the Rogue River is TMDL listed for bacteria (*E. coli* and Temperature). Table 10.2 lists TMDL stream segments within the **MRMPO** along with their identified impairments.

**Table 10.3**

<i>Stream/River</i>	<i>Pollutant(s)</i>
Applegate River	pH, mercury, flow modification, dissolved oxygen, and temperature
Birdseye Creek	temperature
Cheney Creek	dissolved oxygen
Evans Creek	bacteria and biological criteria
Galls Creek	temperature
Jackson Creek (Applegate)	dissolved oxygen
Jones Creek	E. coli and dissolved oxygen
Jumpoff Joe Creek	temperature
Kane Creek	biological criteria
Quartz Creek	temperature
Rogue River	bacteria, and temperature

## **12. Stormwater Monitoring and Management**

Stormwater is the flow of water created by impermeable surfaces, such as roads, highways, bridges, sidewalks and parking lots. There are additional forms of development that contribute to stormwater runoff, such as commercial and residential buildings. Ultimately, the combinations of these impervious surfaces prevent water from infiltrating and percolating through the soils and into the groundwater (groundwater recharge). Consequently, water that used to be available through groundwater, as well as seeps, which may be needed by streams and other surface waters during the summer months may no longer be available. Therefore, a variety of interrelated impacts can occur.

A consequence of decreasing groundwater is a decrease in the amount of water available to surface waters, such as through seeps or springs. Typically during the warmer months when water levels are lower, seeps may be needed to augment stream flows in order to prevent surface waters (e.g., streams) from becoming shallow and warmer. Surface waters that do not receive appropriate inflow from seeps or springs may not properly function. Subsequently, the lower volumes of surface water lead to temperature increases which result in changes to aquatic and terrestrial species.

Impervious surfaces also lead to increased flows during months with high precipitation. Precipitation runs off and flows downhill (path of least resistance), and ends up in a receiving water body. It is noteworthy that increased runoff causes increased flow rates (seasonal peaks) which in turn cause scour and erosion, often resulting in modifications to the shape of the stream channel. For example, months with a lot of rain create peak flows in stream systems from the increased water being conveyed to them as a result of an increase in impervious surfaces.

Consequently, stream channels can scour and banks can erode resulting in the channel being altered and subsequent changes to habitats and composition of species.

As stormwater runoff flows over ground surfaces, it can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm drain untreated is discharged into the water bodies. Pollutants commonly found in stormwater include nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), oil, bacteria, fertilizers, and metals (e.g., copper, lead, and zinc from automobile brake pads).

Impacts to aquatic and terrestrial habitats and associated fish and wildlife can result from roads and other impervious surfaces. Erosion and scour that changes a stream channel will modify flow, vegetation and temperature, and subsequently favor species adapted to the newly created conditions. In addition, pollutants draining from roads and parking lots can contribute to impaired water quality and degraded wildlife habitat. In relation to fish and aquatic species, these pollutants are a source of potent adverse effects to the biotic ecosystem, even at ambient levels. They are known to accumulate in the prey and tissues of juvenile salmon where they cause a variety of lethal and sub lethal effects including disrupted behavior, reduced olfactory function, immune suppression, reduced growth, disrupted smoltification, hormone disruption, disrupted reproduction, cellular damage, and physical and developmental abnormalities (NOAA Fisheries 2015). Therefore, care in the design of the transportation system is important. Stormwater discharge is regulated under the Clean Water Act, Section 402. Projects will need to meet requirements of any local programs (e.g., NPDES Phase II) and design manuals (e.g. Rogue Valley Stormwater Water Quality Design Manual).

### **13. Historic and Archeological Considerations**

Protection of historic and archeological resources must be considered as part of the decision-making process for transportation projects.

Numerous laws and regulations call for preservation and/or enhancement of cultural resources. These include the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979 and the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987. In addition, regulations by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR, Part 1500-1508) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) (36 CFR, Part 800) have been promulgated to assure that effects on historic properties are considered in the development of federal undertakings. Historic properties are any historic district, site, building, structure or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

Transportation officials are required to make a good faith effort to identify historic properties that may be affected by a transportation project. A discussion of the effects on historic properties must be included in the environmental documentation. This discussion is to be commensurate with the importance of the historic properties as well as the magnitude of the project's impacts on those properties.

The primary provisions related to historic preservation for transportation projects are Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the DOT Act. These provisions are applicable to actions that require federal approval or are undertaken with federal funds.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) as amended through 2000 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment on the undertaking. The historic preservation review and consultation process mandated by Section 106 is outlined in regulations issued by ACHP. Revised regulations, "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR Part 800), became effective January 10, 2001 and were further amended in August 2004.

Federal agencies are responsible for initiating Section 106 review, most of which takes place between the agency and state and tribal officials. Appointed by the governor, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) coordinates the state's historic preservation program and consults with agencies during Section 106 review. Agencies also consult with officials of federally recognized Indian tribes when tribal lands or historic properties of significance to such tribes are involved. Some tribes have officially designated Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), who function as a SHPO on tribal lands, while others designate representatives to consult with agencies as needed.

At this time, none of the Tribes in the Region have a THPO. The MPO will consult with the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz; and Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians for each Regional Transportation Plan update. The appropriate Tribe to consult will be determined based upon historic and current information provided.

According to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Section 106 review and consultation requires federal agencies to do the following:

- Determine if Section 106 of the NHPA applies to a given project and, if so, initiate consultation;
- Gather information to decide which properties in the project area are listed in or eligible for the National Register Historic Places;
- Determine how historic properties might be affected;
- Explore alternatives to avoid or reduce harm to historic properties; and
- Reach agreement with the SHPO/THPO (and the ACHP in some cases) on measures to resolve any adverse effects to historic properties.

Another protection to park and wildlife areas is provided by Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. This environmental regulation applies to projects that receive Department of Transportation (FHWA or FTA) funds. Section 4(f) (recodified in 49 USC 303, but still known as Section 4(f)) includes provisions prohibiting federal transportation agencies from using land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or any land from an historic site of national, state, or local significance unless:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land, and
- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use.

In assessing the environmental effects of an action through the National Environmental Policy Act process, FHWA includes an evaluation of the use of land protected under Section 4(f). The environmental regulations for applying Section 4(f) to transportation project development can be found at 23 CFR 771.135. For other detailed guidance on applying the requirements of Section 4(f), the FHWA wrote the Section 4(f) Policy Paper, which discusses such topics as the history of Section 4(f), alternatives analysis, mitigation, and how Section 4(f) relates to other statutes and regulations which protect the same types of resources, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In order for FHWA field offices to make key determinations on projects having minor impacts or a net benefit on areas protected by Section 4(f), the agency issued several Nationwide Section 4(f) Programmatic Statements. Section 4(f) is considered by the preservation community to be one of the most effective tools in the protection of historic properties. But its stringent standards and interpretations by various court rulings have had the transportation community seeking revisions to provide more flexibility in implementing the law.

#### **14. RTP Projects and Environmental Features**

Table 10.4 below lists 2016-2040 projects that intersect with a resource identified in this chapter. The projects are identified with RTP project number, location, and timing (reflected in the color of the text), and the corresponding environmental resource or feature.

The environmental and historic resources and concerns addressed in the chapter and listed in the tables below are: National Historic Districts, wetlands listed in Local Wetlands Inventories and/or National Wetlands Inventory; Special Flood Hazard Area; and fish habitat (Coho, and Steelhead habitat). Projects are mapped with environmental features beginning on Page 15.



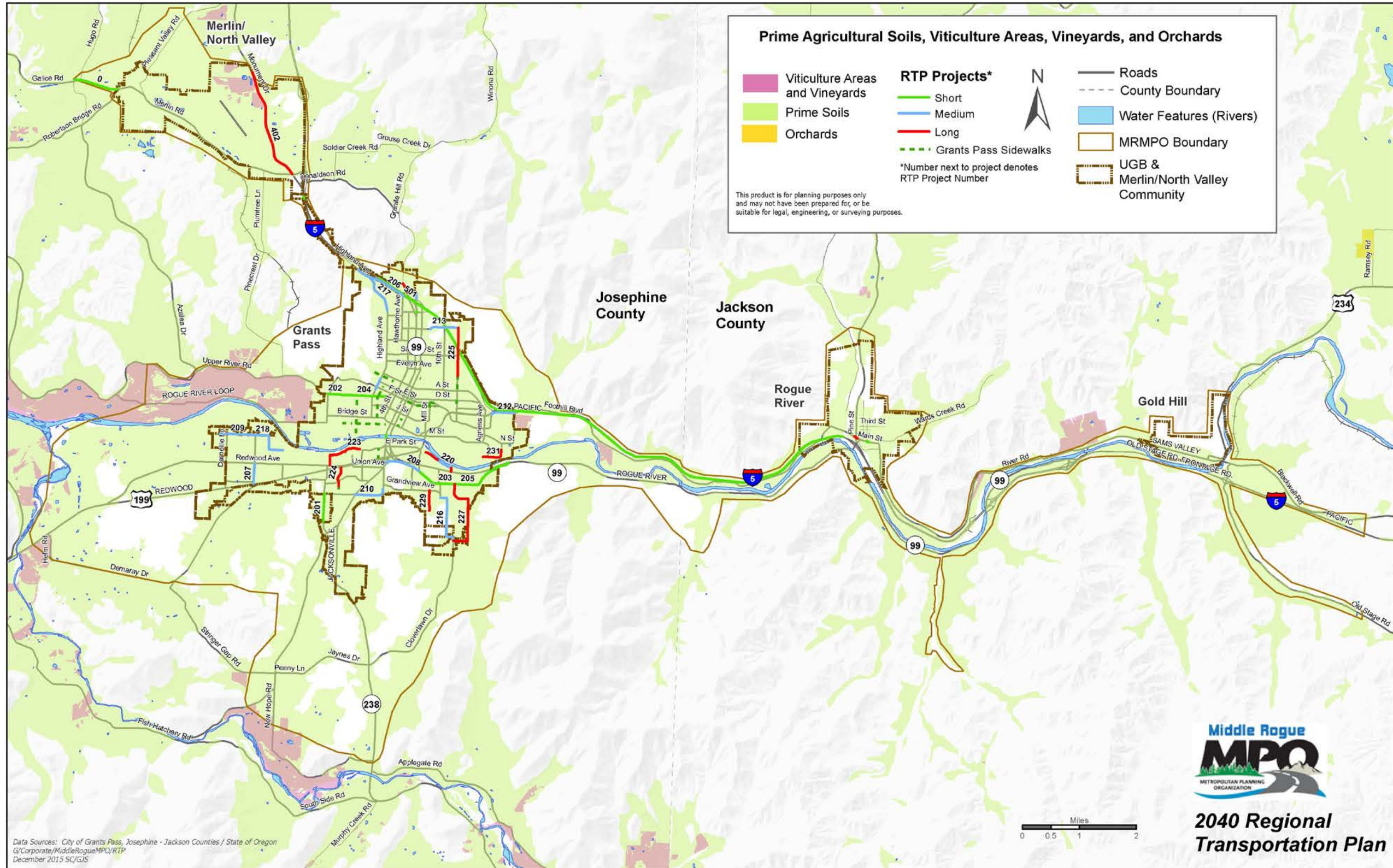
**Table 10.4**

<i>RTP Project Number</i>	<i>Project Location</i>	<i>Project Sponsor</i>	<i>Wetlands</i>	<i>Special Flood Hazard Area</i>	<i>Wildlife Movement</i>	<i>National Historic District</i>	<i>Steelhead</i>	<i>Coho Salmon (Threatened)</i>
201	Allen Cr Rd-W Harbeck to Denton Rd	Grants Pass	X					
202	G Street-Lincoln Rd to Leonard St	Grants Pass	X			X		
203	Fruitdale Dr-Parkdale to Overland	Grants Pass	X	X			X	X
204	G St-Leonard to 3rd St	Grants Pass	X	X		X	X	
205	Fruitdale Dr-Overland to RR Hwy 99	Grants Pass	X	X			X	X
206	Vine St-Highland to Hawthorne Ave	Grants Pass	X					
209	Leonard Rd- Willow Ln to school	Grants Pass	X					
212	Foothill: City Limits-Ament Rd	Grants Pass	X				X	X
213	Hillcrest: 9th to 10th Street	Grants Pass	X					
216	Cloverlawn Dr:Eastview-Hamilton Ln	Grants Pass	X				X	
217	Highland Av:S line sect 6 to NW UGB	Grants Pass	X					
218	Leonard Rd:Dowell to Willow Ln	Grants Pass	X					
220	E Park St:Clara to Hamilton	Grants Pass		X				
222	Hamilton Ln:Park St-RR Hwy	Grants Pass		X				
223	W Park St:Ringuette to Pansy Ln	Grants Pass	X	X			X	
227	Hamilton Ln:Overland Dr-Cloverlawn	Grants Pass	X	X			X	X
228	E Park St: Gold River Ln-Clara Av	Grants Pass		X				
230	Portola Dr: 450ft west of Gladiola	Grants Pass		X				
231	Portola Dr: Gladiola to Shannon Ln	Grants Pass		X				
232	Shannon Ln: Portola-N RR ROW	Grants Pass	X	X				
402	Monument Dr: Merlin Rd-Timber Ln	Josephine County	X	X			X	X
500	OR199-Bridge, 6th St (Cavemen)	ODOT	X				X	X
501	I-5: N Grants Pass-Evans Creek	ODOT	X	X	X		X	X
601	E. Main Street Bridge	Rogue River	X	X			X	
602	Main Street	Rogue River			X			

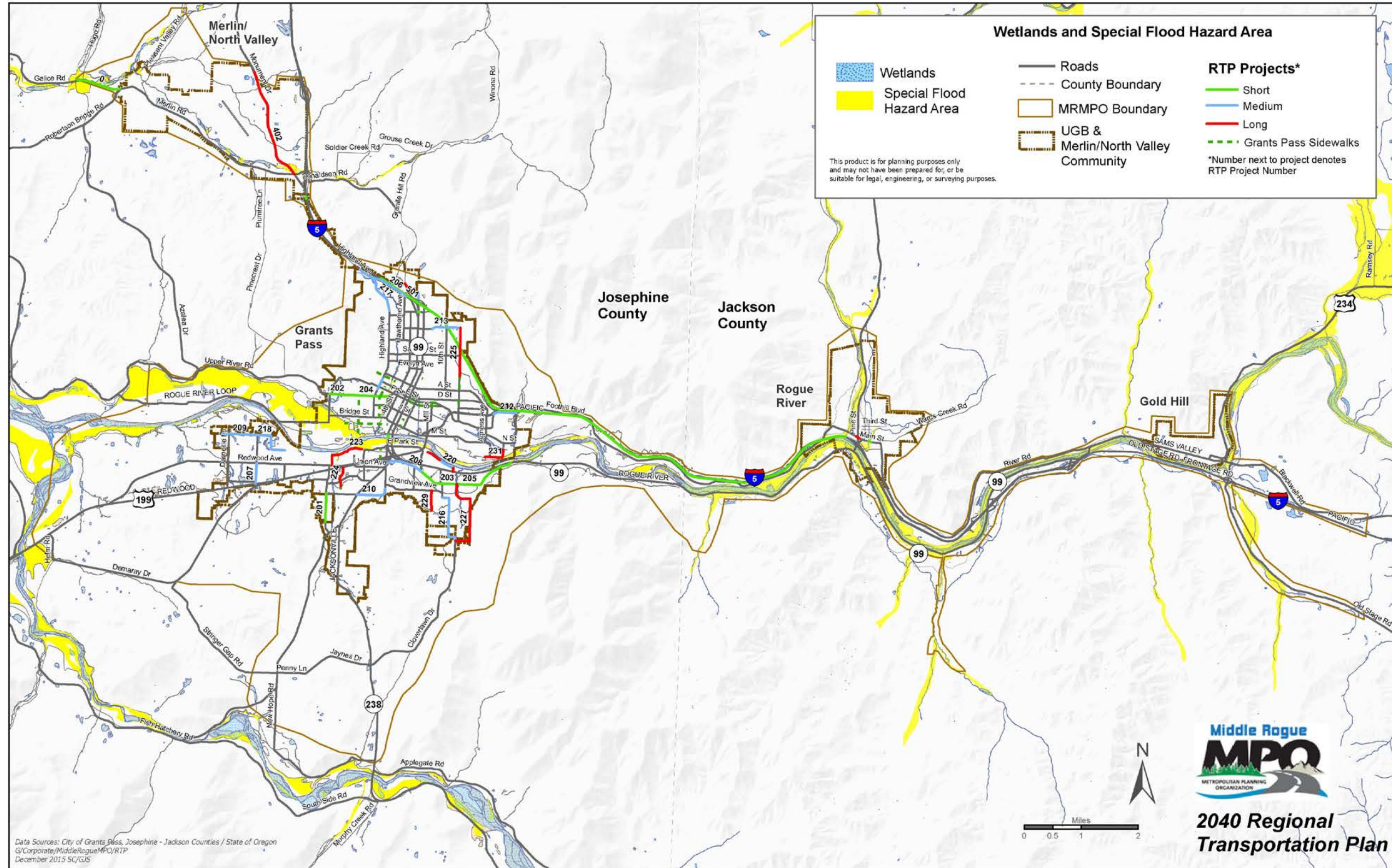
Green      Short range projects.  
 Blue      Medium range projects.  
 Red      Long term projects.



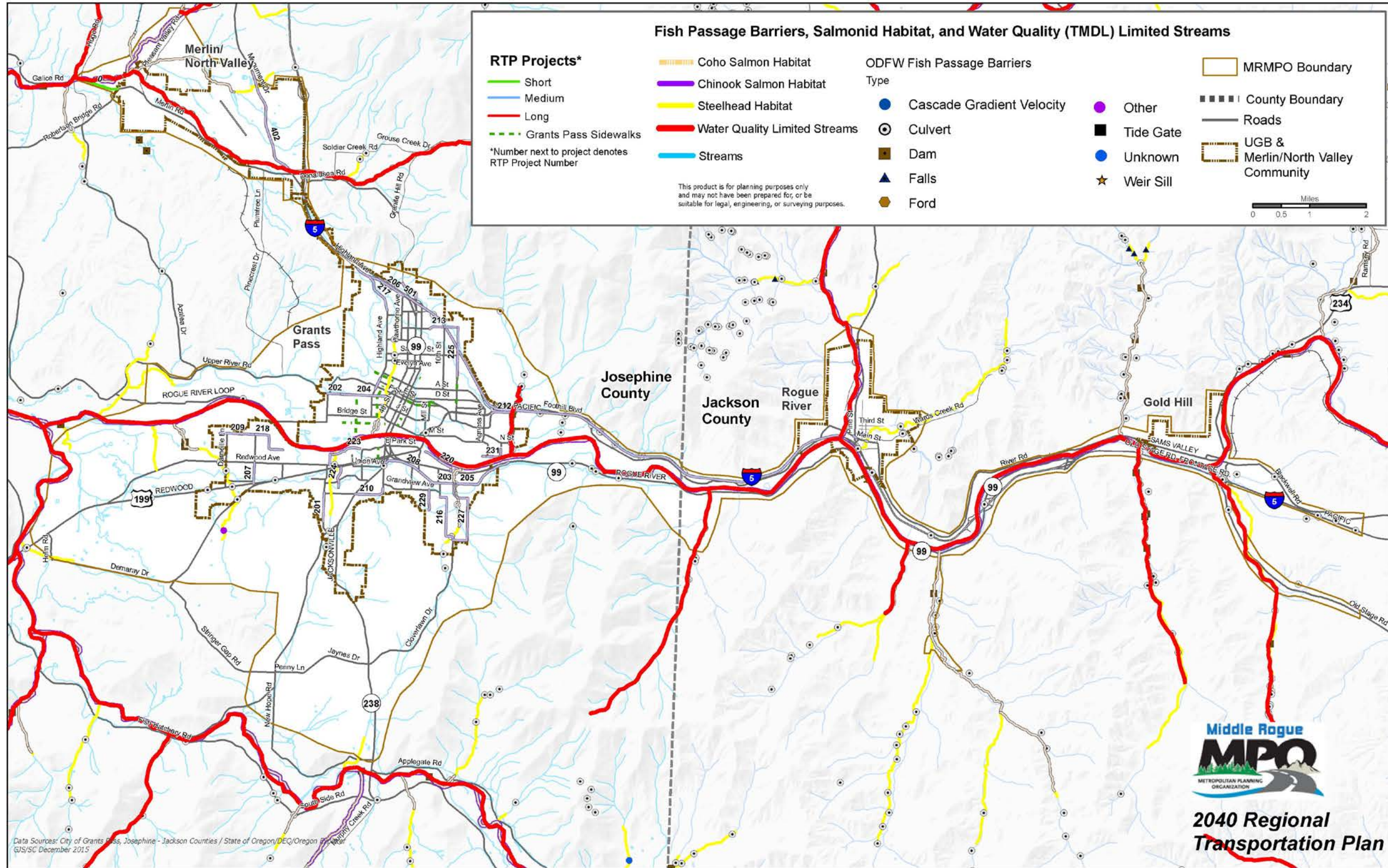
Map 10-1 – Prime Agricultural Soils, Viticulture Areas, Vineyards and Orchards



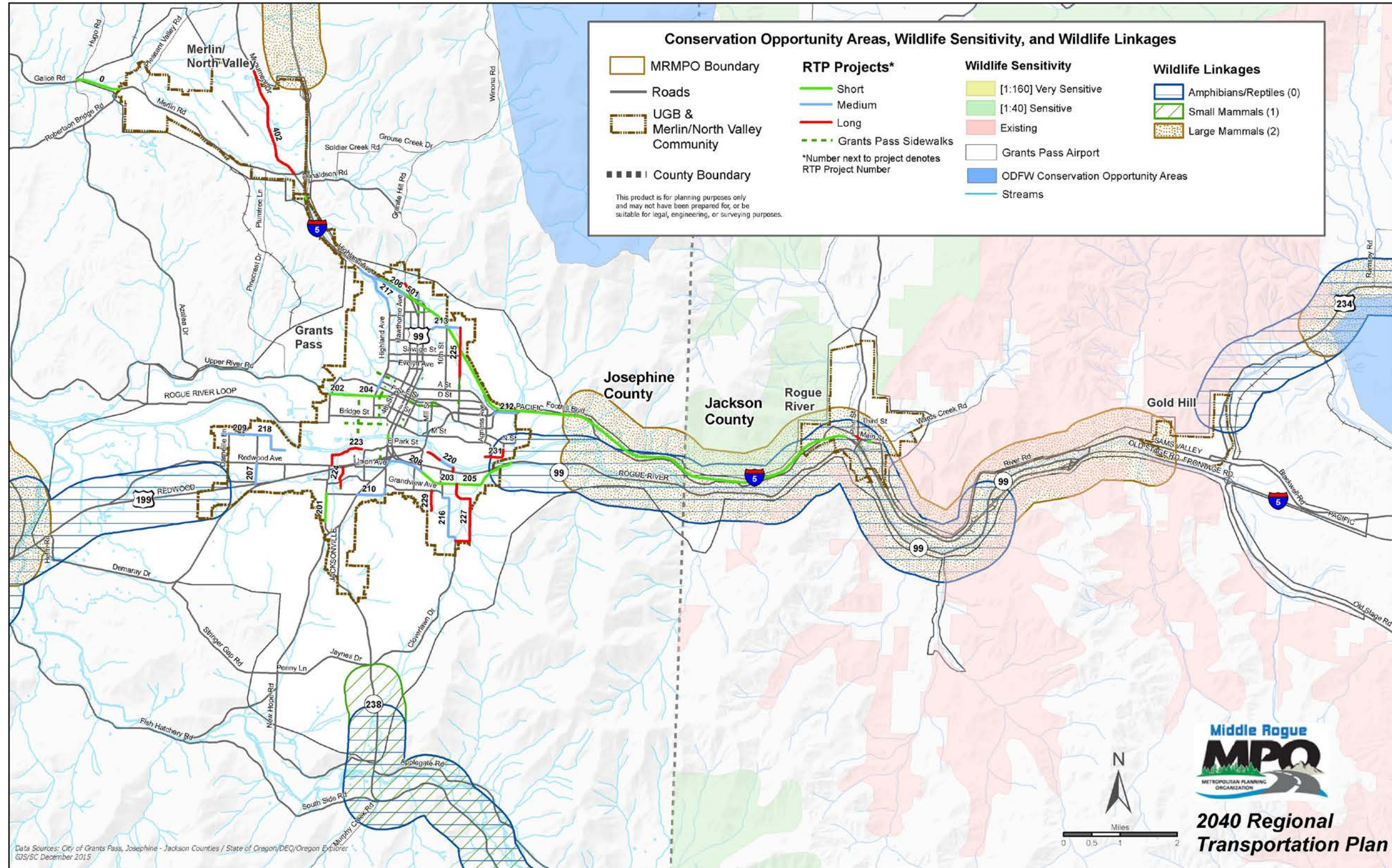
Map 10-2 – Wetlands and Special Flood Hazard Area



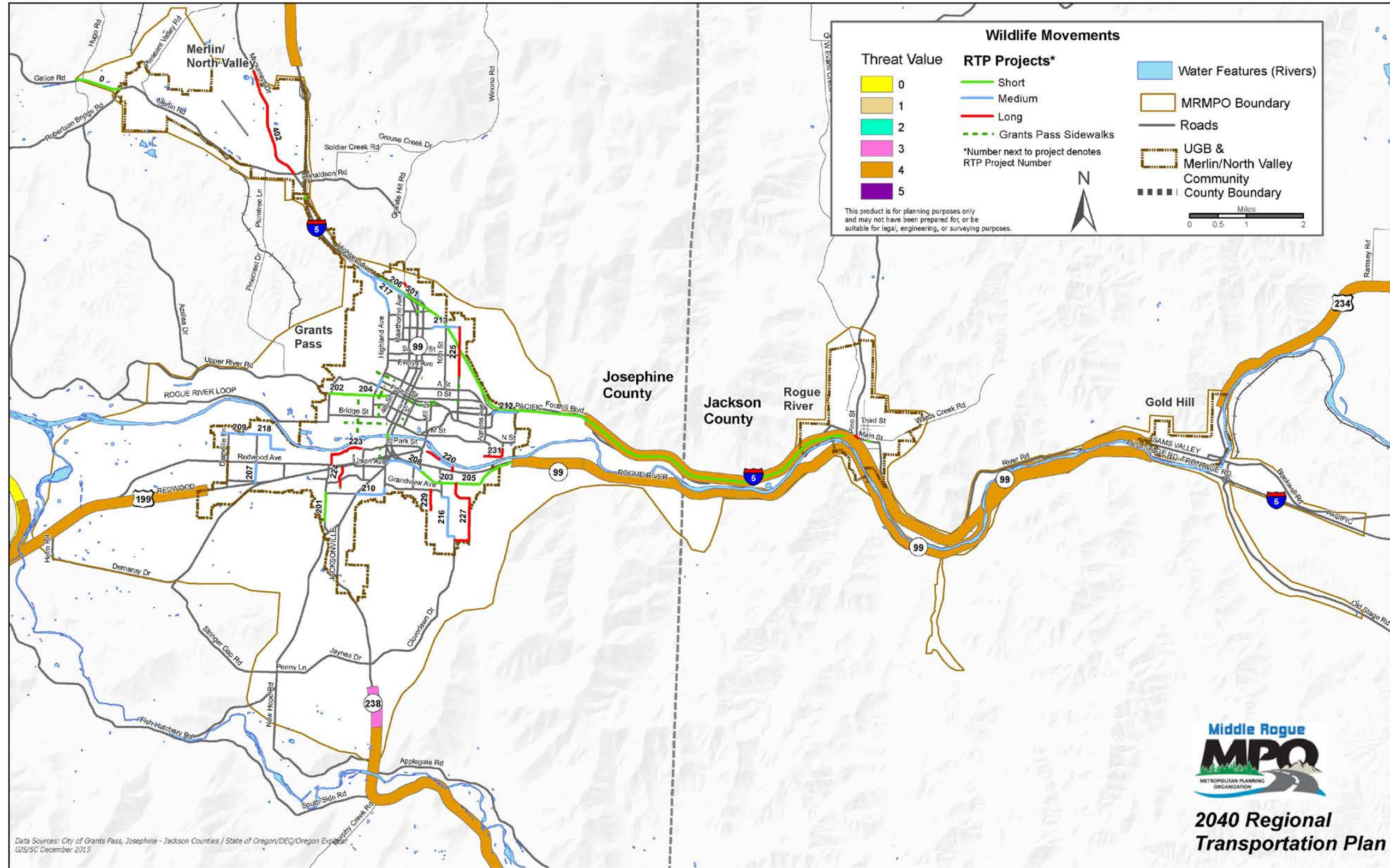
Map 10-3 – Fish Passage Barriers, Salmonid Habitat, and Water Quality (TMDL) Limited Streams



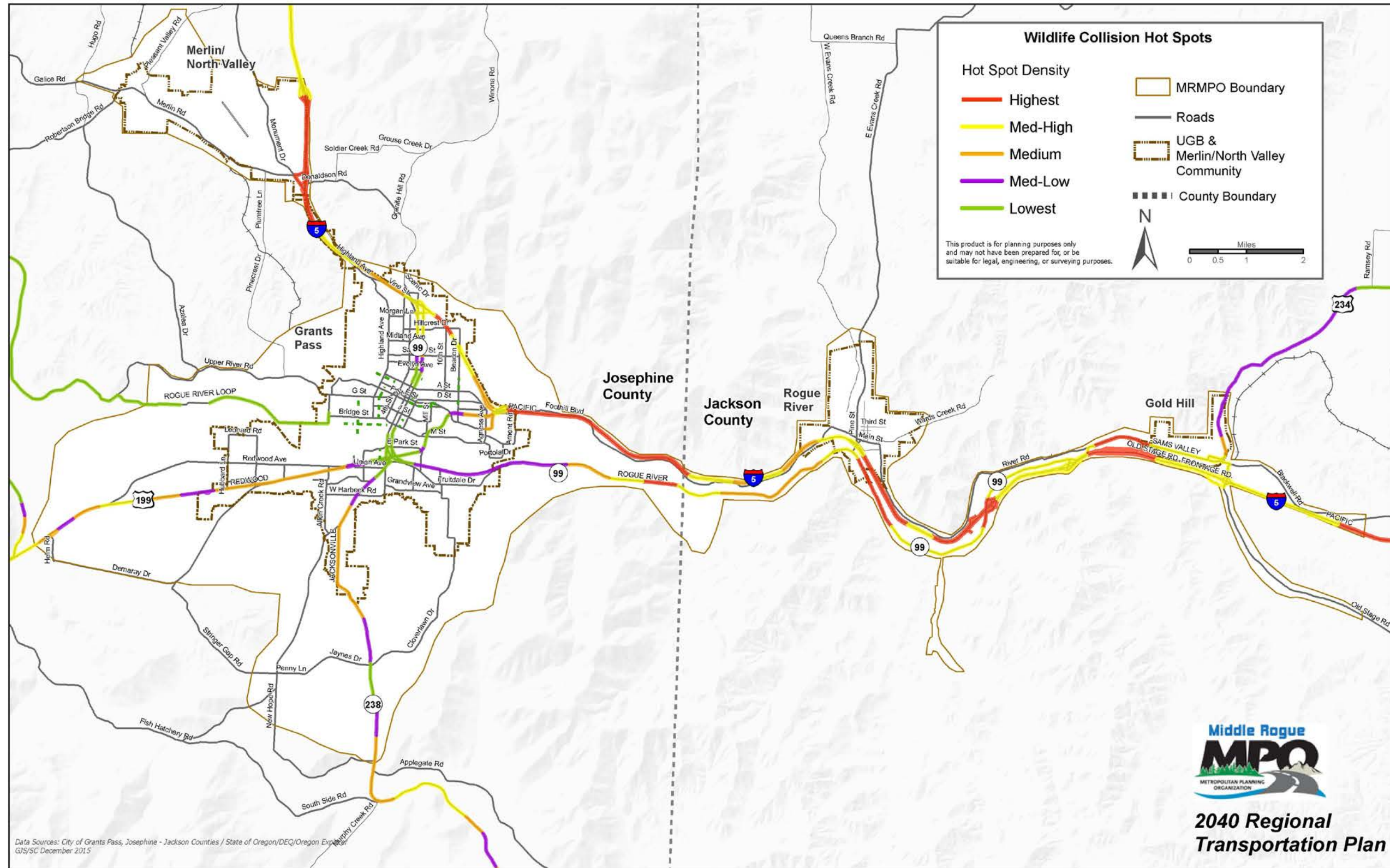
Map 10-4 – Conservation Opportunity Areas, Wildlife Sensitivity, and Wildlife Linkages



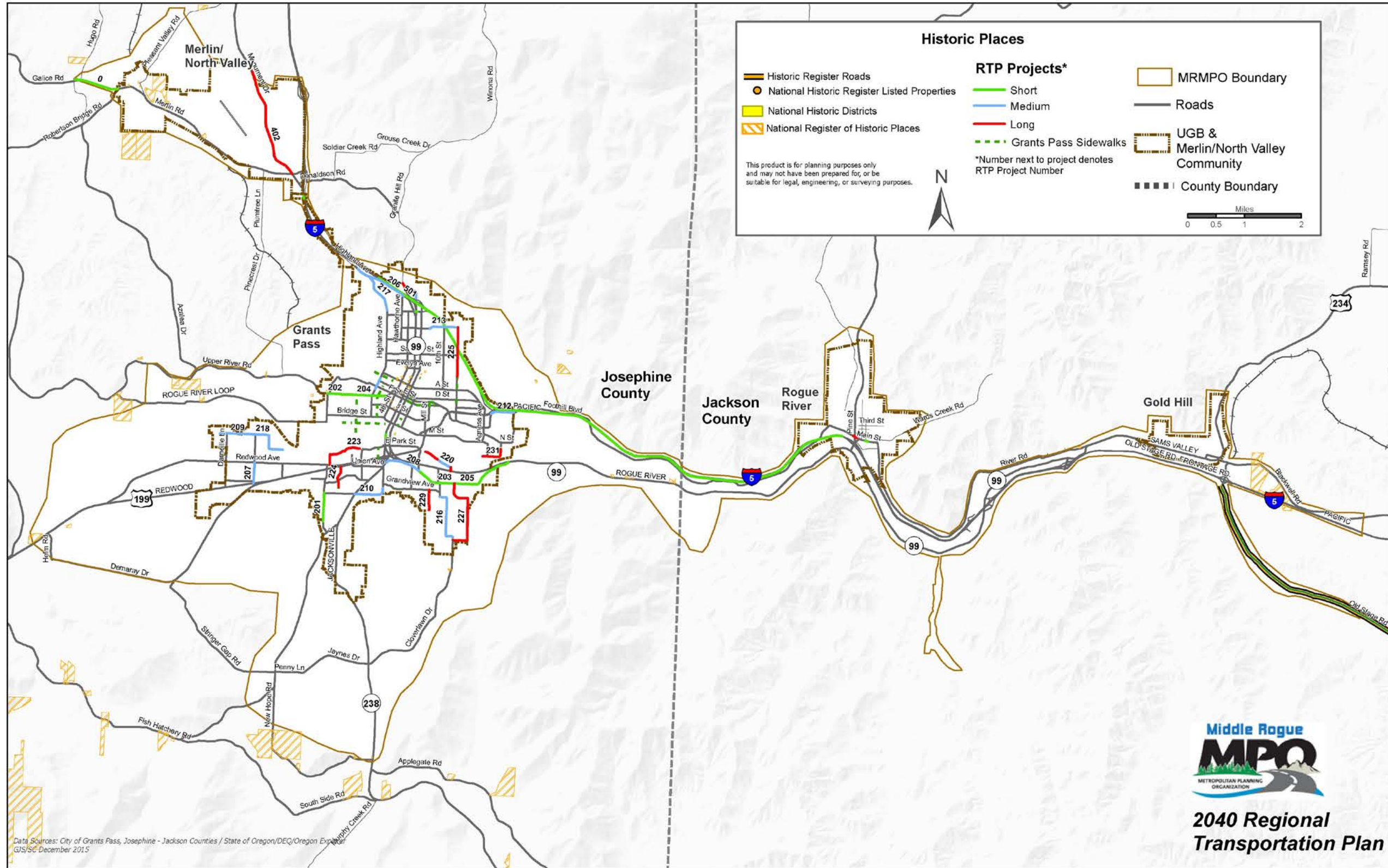
Map 10-5 – Wildlife Movements



Map 10-6 – Wildlife Collision Hot Spots



Map 10-7 – Historic Places





Map 10-8 – RTP Projects Intersecting Environmental or Historic Areas

