

Shrubsteppe in Washington

Ecology, Status and WSRRI

Kurt Merg, Shrubsteppe Restoration Coordinator, WDFW



Steppe



Shrubsteppe

Arid grassland with a robust shrub component



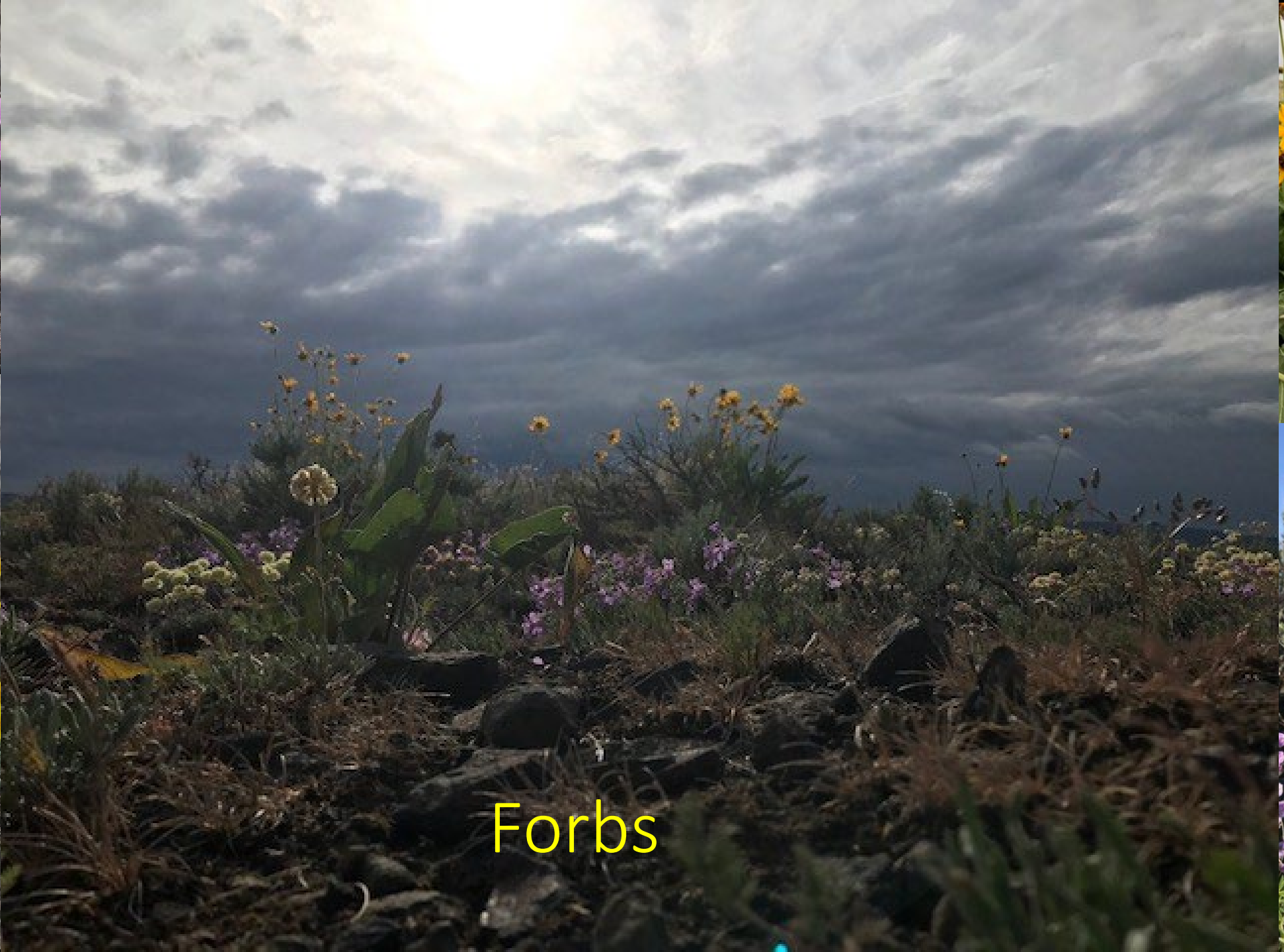


The Sagebrush Sea



Bunchgrasses





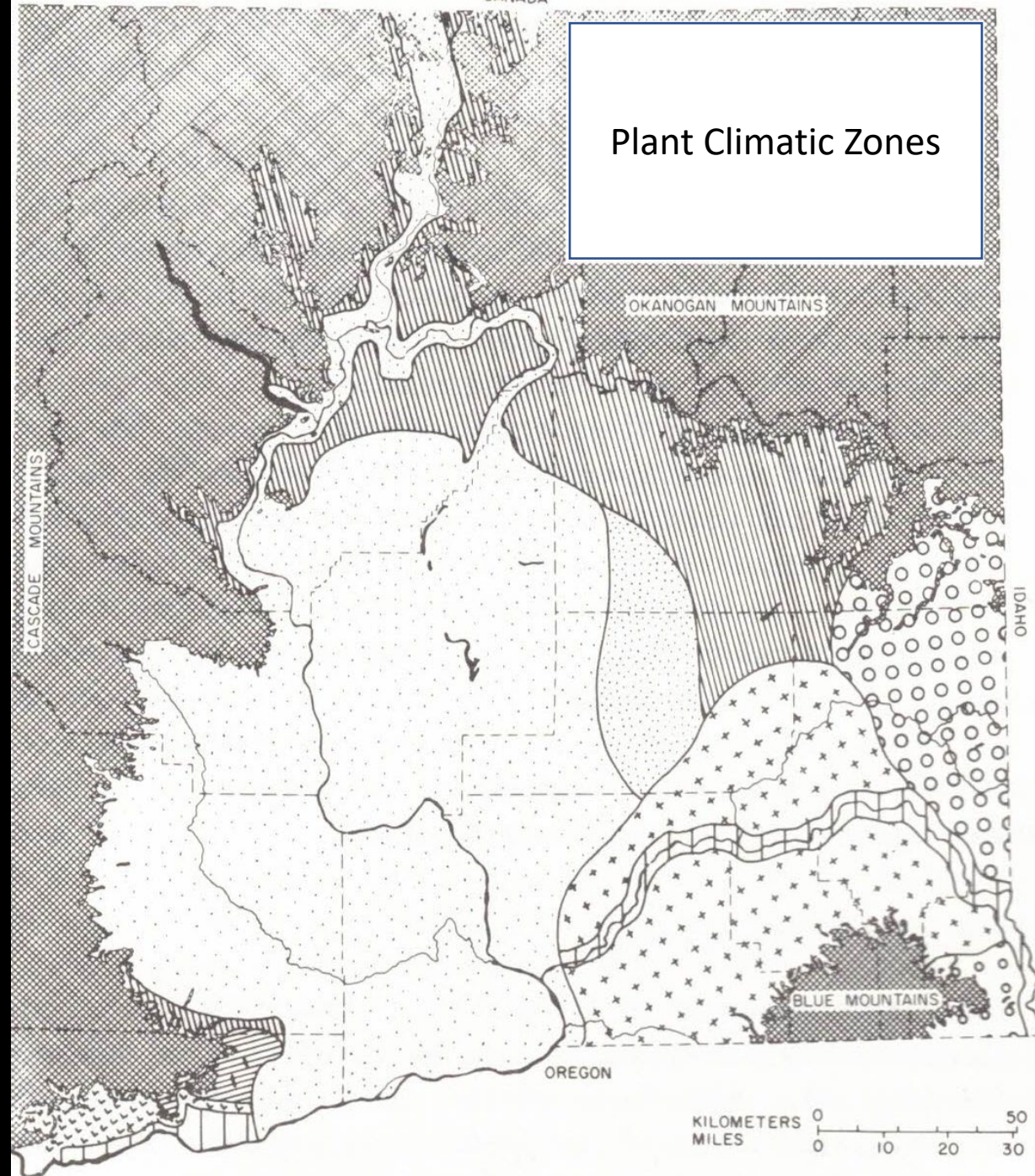
Forbs

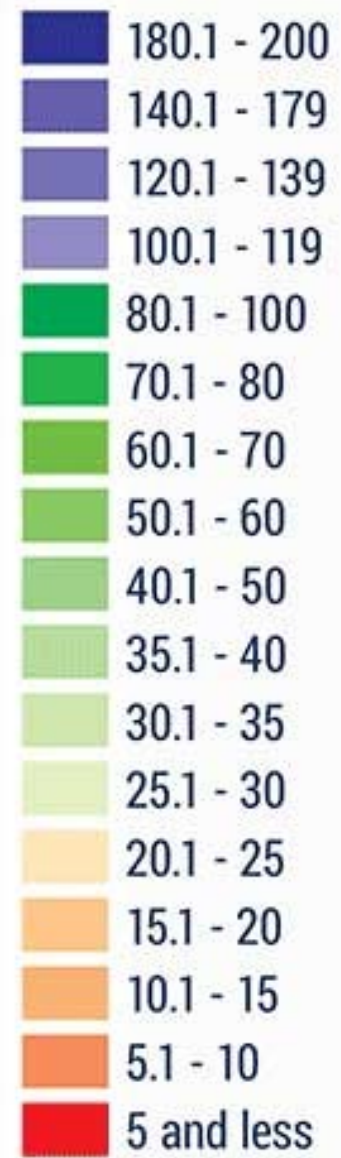
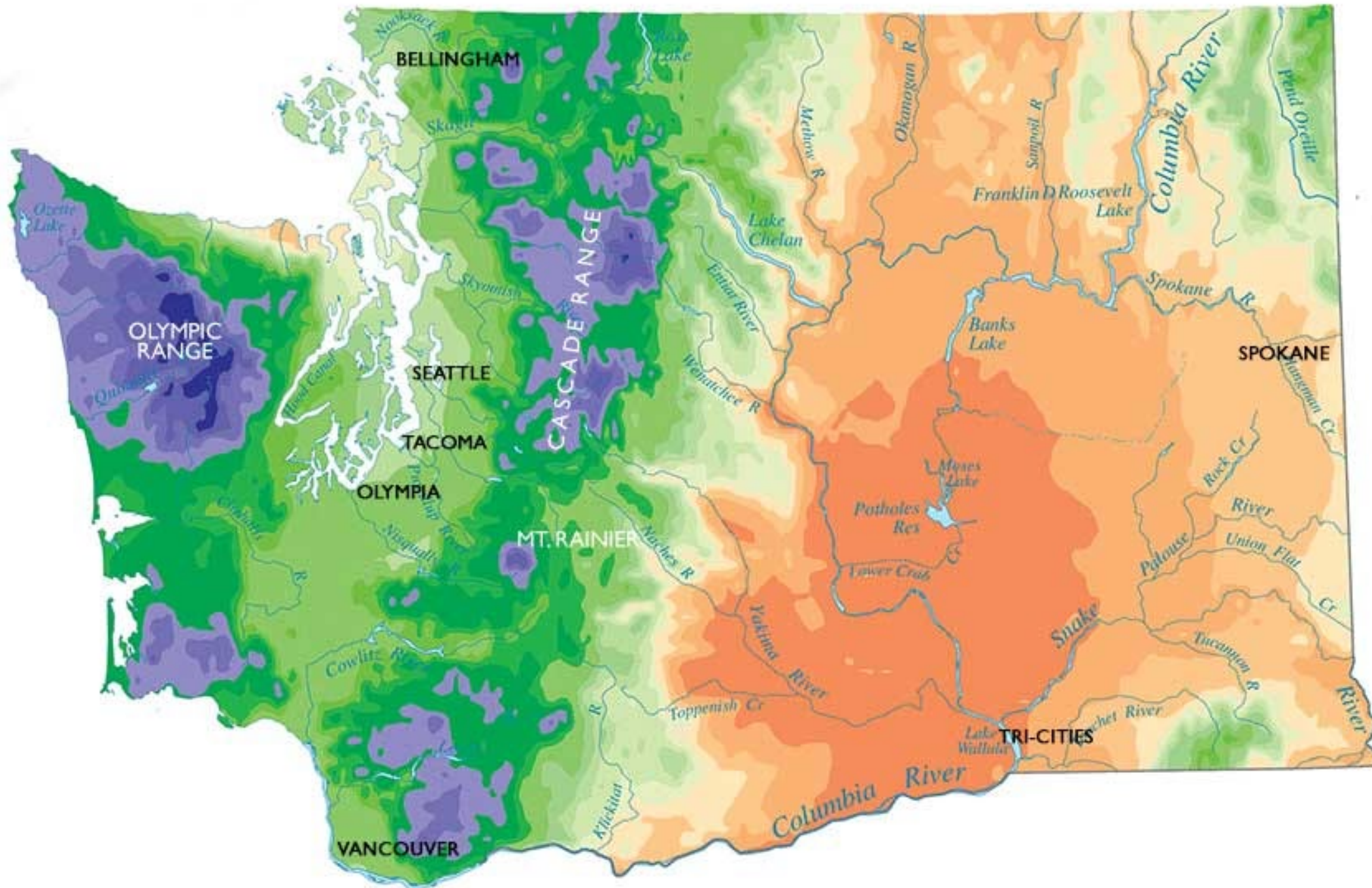


Shrubs



Plant Climatic Zones







White-tailed
jackrabbit



Black-tailed
jackrabbit



Sagebrush
sparrow



Pronghorn



Vesper
sparrow



Pygmy
horned lizard



Sagebrush
lizard



Brewster's
sparrow



Pygmy
rabbit



Washington
ground squirrel

Shrubsteppe obligates



Ferruginous
hawk



Sage
thrasher



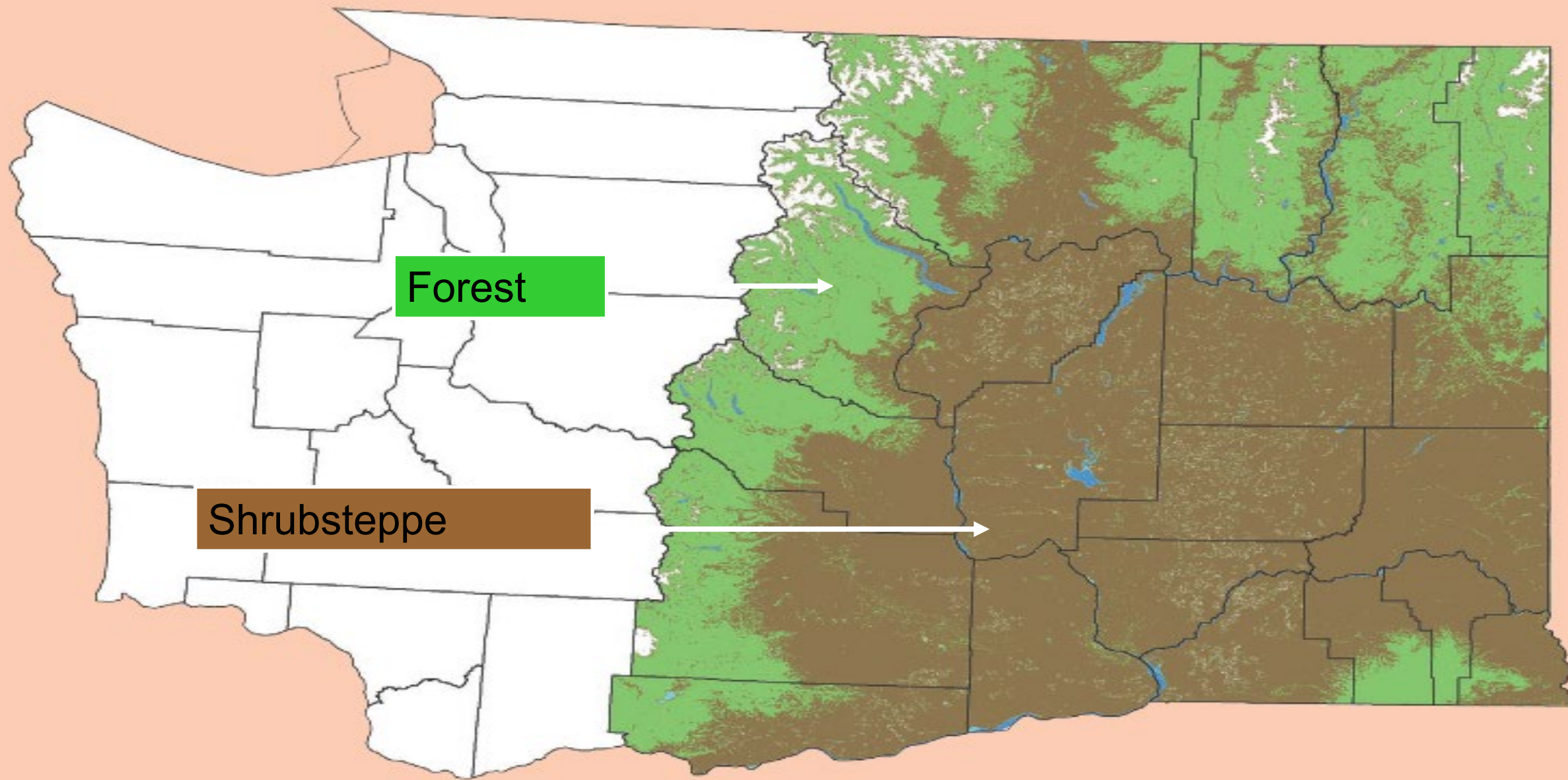
Golden
eagle



Greater
sage-grouse

Shrubsteppe-sparrow relationships

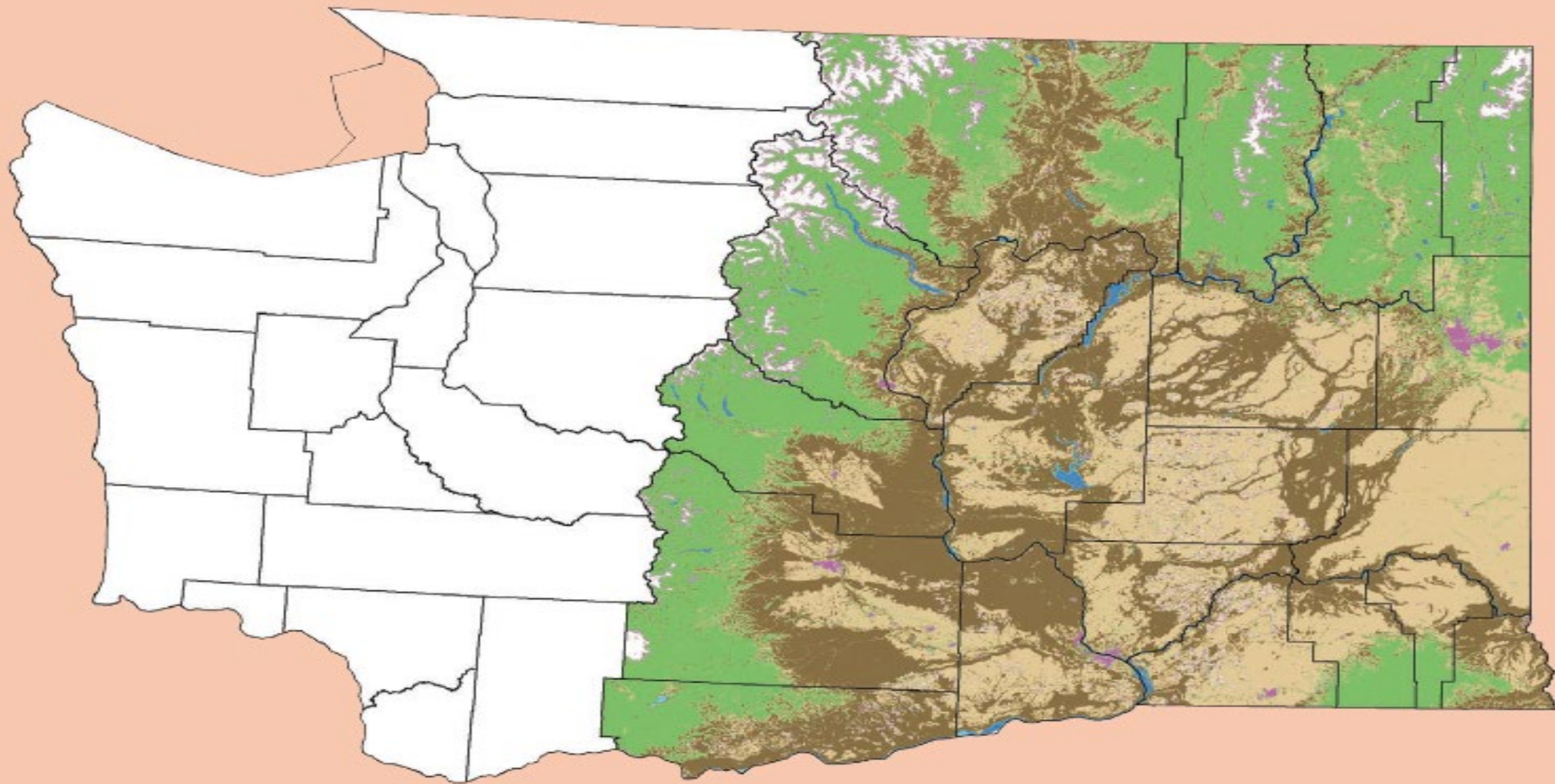




Forest

Shrubsteppe

Historic Shrubsteppe



Current Shrubsteppe

Loss of deep soil

Pygmy rabbit



Washington ground squirrel



Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration & Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI)



Restoration.

Recovering at-risk species.

Supporting working Lands.

Natural Disturbance and Succession

- Native shrubsteppe plants adapted to *modest* disturbance – mostly fire
- Rapid regeneration of grasses and forbs (wildflowers) followed by shrubs



Current Disturbance and Succession

- Disturbance increased
 - Frequent fire
 - Grazing
 - Cultivation of deep soils
- Successional interference
 - Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*)

