



WASHINGTON  
POLICY CENTER

# Intro to WPC



## ➤ **Todd Myers, VP for Research**

- Department of Natural Resources, 2001-2005
- Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council, 2014 – 2023
- Author, *Time to Think Small: How nimble environmental technologies can solve the planet's biggest problems*



## ➤ **Pam Lewison, Agriculture Director**

- Farmer extraordinaire, lifelong
- Journalist, 2004-2012
- A connoisseur of fine cooking and literature

# Ag research

## ➤ Sustainability

- U.S. farms have decreased water use 57.7% since 1950
- U.S. farms have decreased pesticide use by 95% since 1950
- Modern farms feed ~170 people/acre
- Farms in 1960 fed 26 people/acre



# Ag research



## ➤ Food security

- 230M pounds of food distributed through food pantries in 2024
- Highest rates of food insecurity are in Eastern WA; average cost of a meal in WA is \$4.28
- 11% of WA producers sell directly to consumers

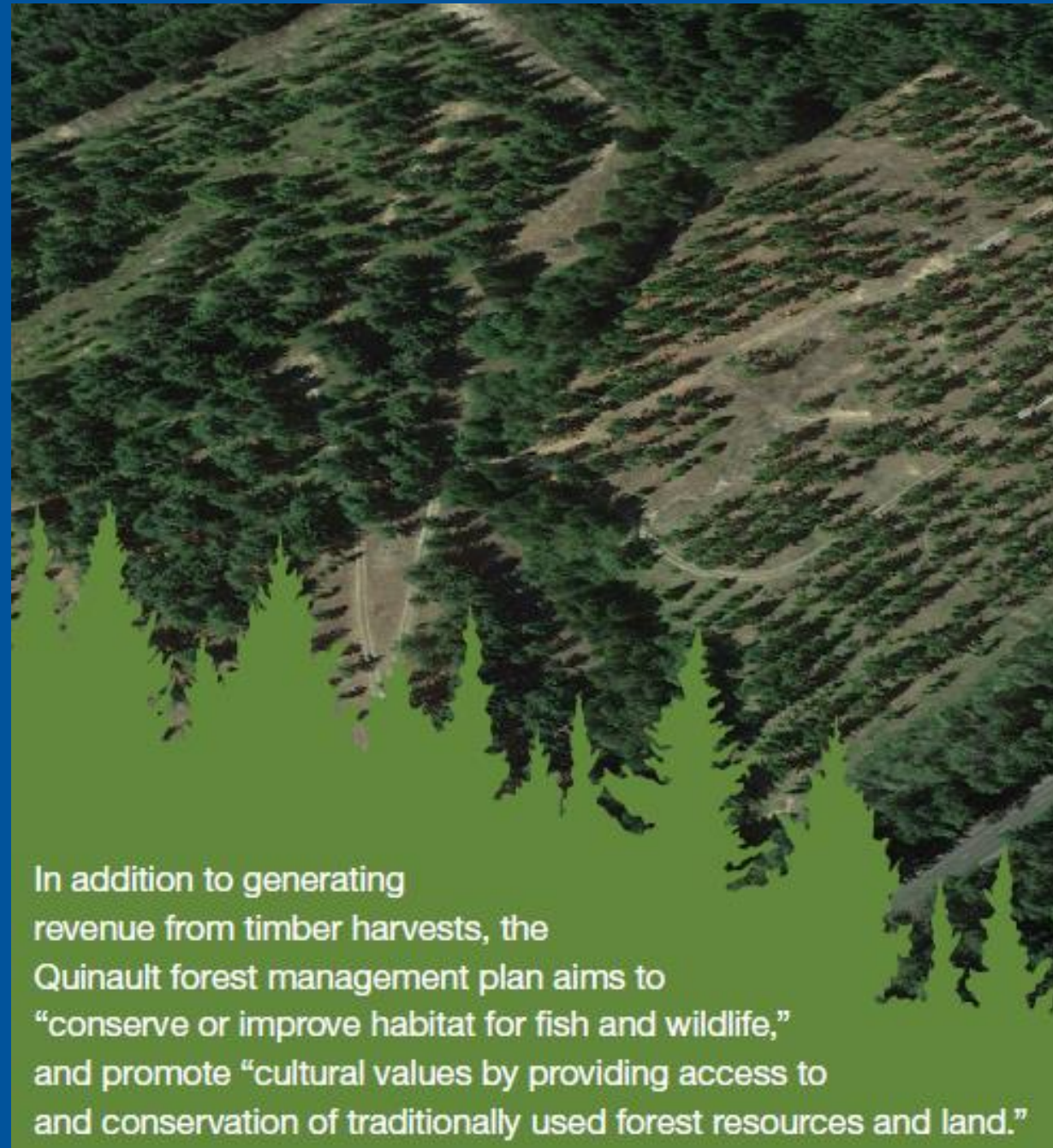
# Ag research

## ➤ Irrigation

- 5.1M acres of farmland is irrigated by the Columbia River in WA
- Water governance is shared between local, state, and federal jurisdictions
- Dryland farming is not an option for much of the state



# Learning from tribal stewardship of forests



In addition to generating revenue from timber harvests, the Quinault forest management plan aims to “conserve or improve habitat for fish and wildlife,” and promote “cultural values by providing access to and conservation of traditionally used forest resources and land.”

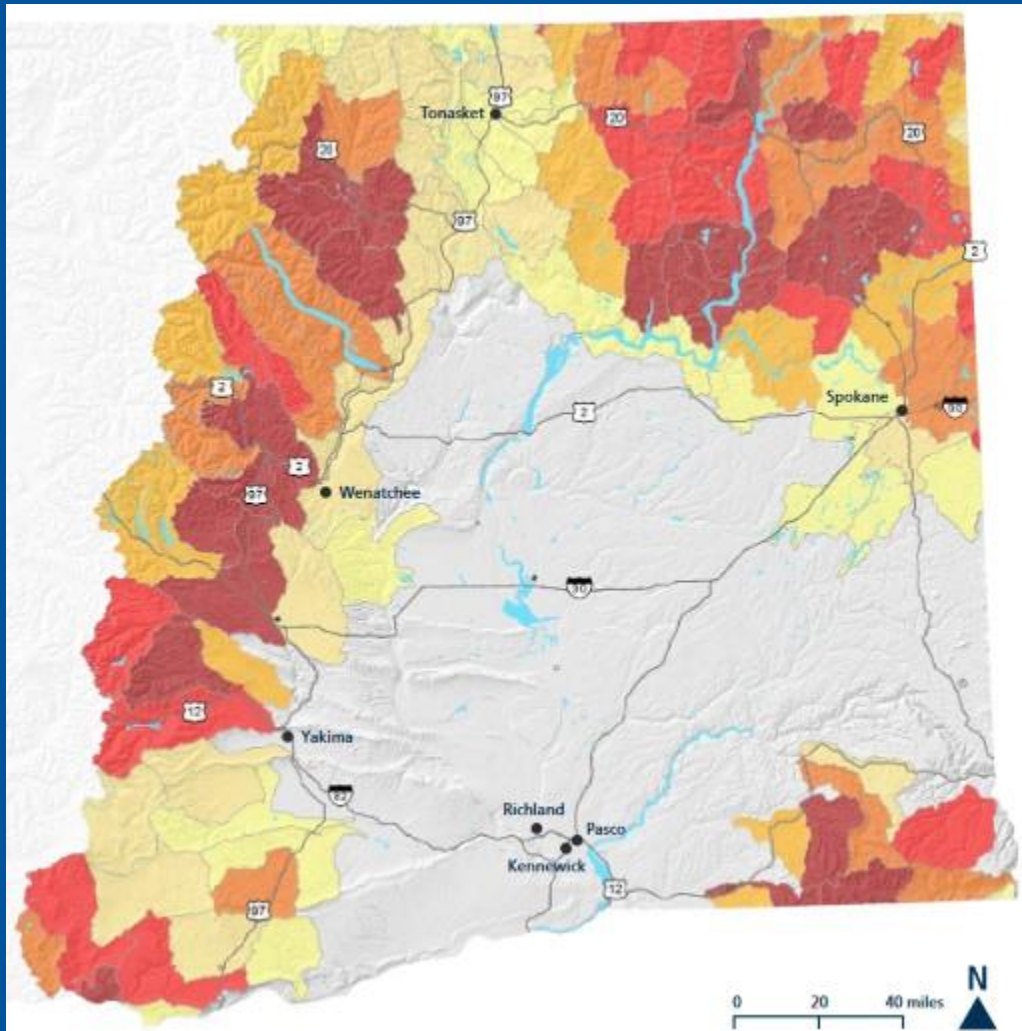
## ➤ Quinault

- BIA managed forests for decades and left a mess
- Quinault tribe was given control and began harvest and restoration

## ➤ Colville Tribes

- Harvesting to restore forest health and generate revenue

# Reducing the risk of wildfire



In a Zoom meeting with federal wildland firefighters last month, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the only way to reduce catastrophic wildfire was to “significantly increase the level of management on our forests” — including thinning out vegetation and intentionally setting fires that mimic the effects of natural burns.

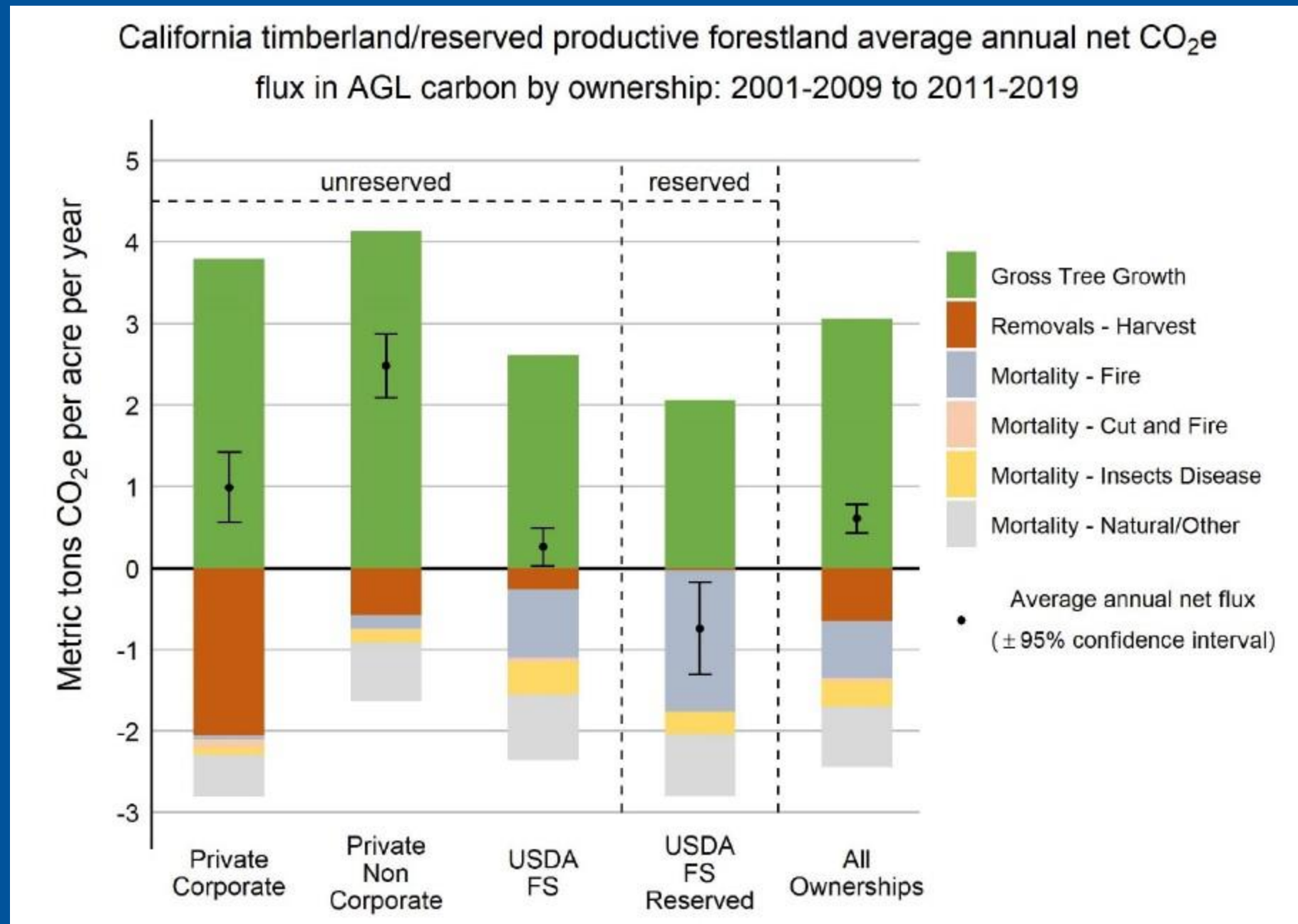
## ➤ Restore healthy forests

- About 1.25 million acres - about 42% on federal land - need treatment

## ➤ Good Neighbor Authority

- State, county and tribes help treat federal forests through restoration
- Revenue goes into revolving fund for next treatment, plus local funding
- Also used to repair roads and habitat

# Carbon storage in forests



## ➤ Carbon sequestration

- “Sustainably managed forests can provide greater greenhouse gas mitigation benefits than unmanaged forests while delivering numerous environmental and social benefits.” – USFS PNW Research Station
- Old growth is good for habitat, but bad for CO<sub>2</sub> storage



# Getting salmon recovery on track



## ➤ No silver bullets

- Salmon returns declined due to many small factors

## ➤ Three keys to recovery

- Set priorities locally
- Grants should be science-based
- Flexibility to remove regulatory barriers



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