



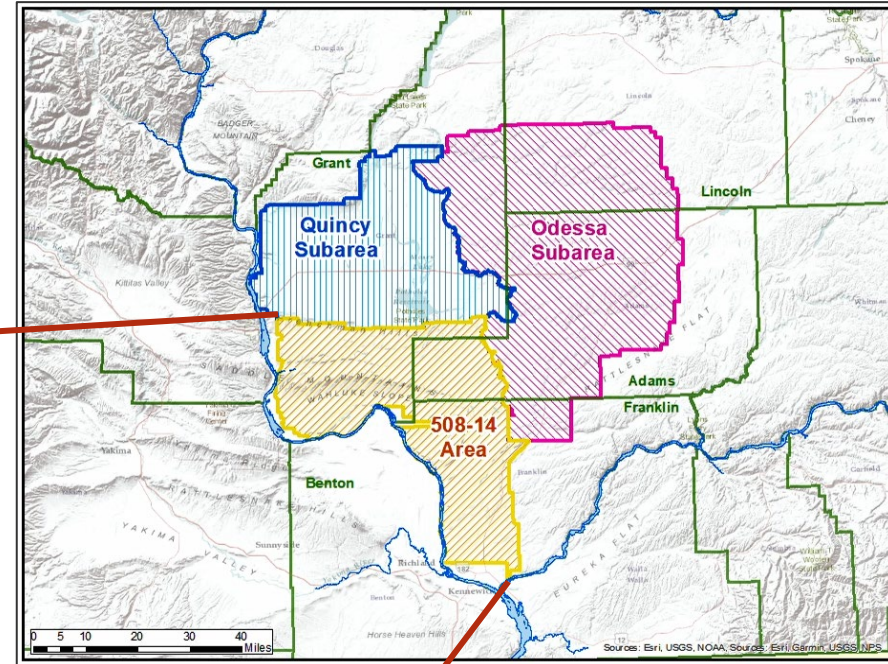
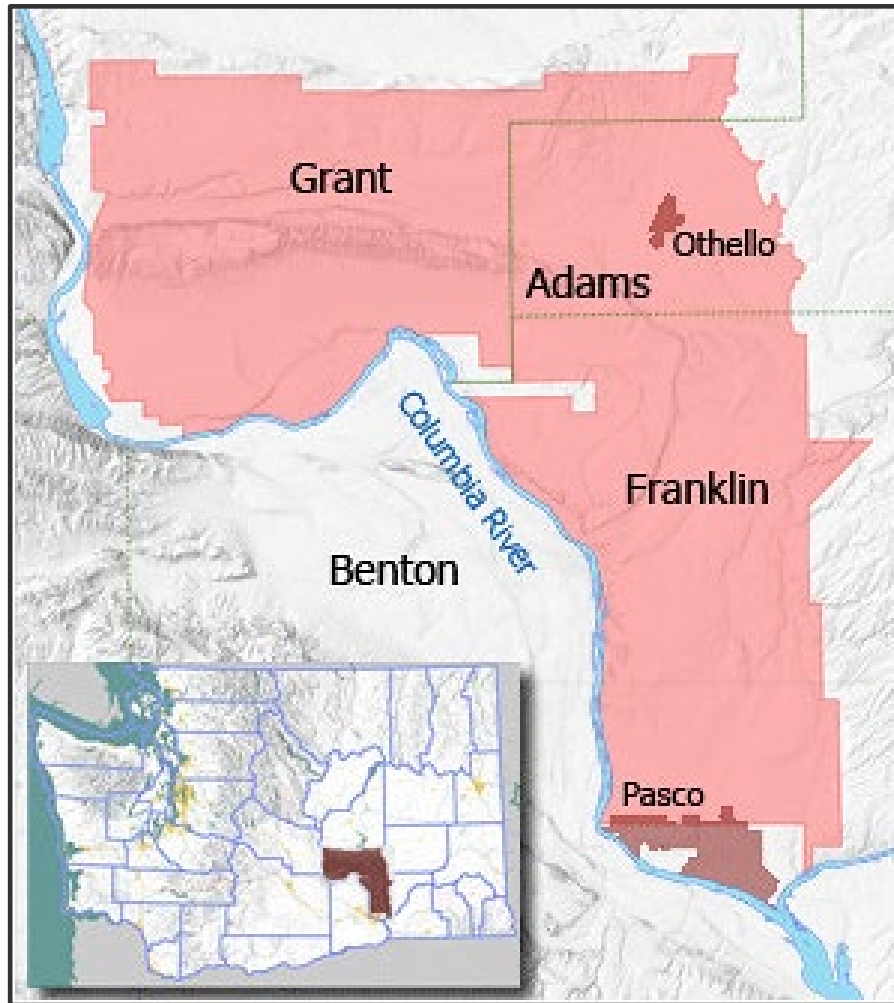
# Pasco Basin Groundwater Management Efforts

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group

October 3, 2024

Karl Rains  
Department of Ecology

# Pasco Basin Area



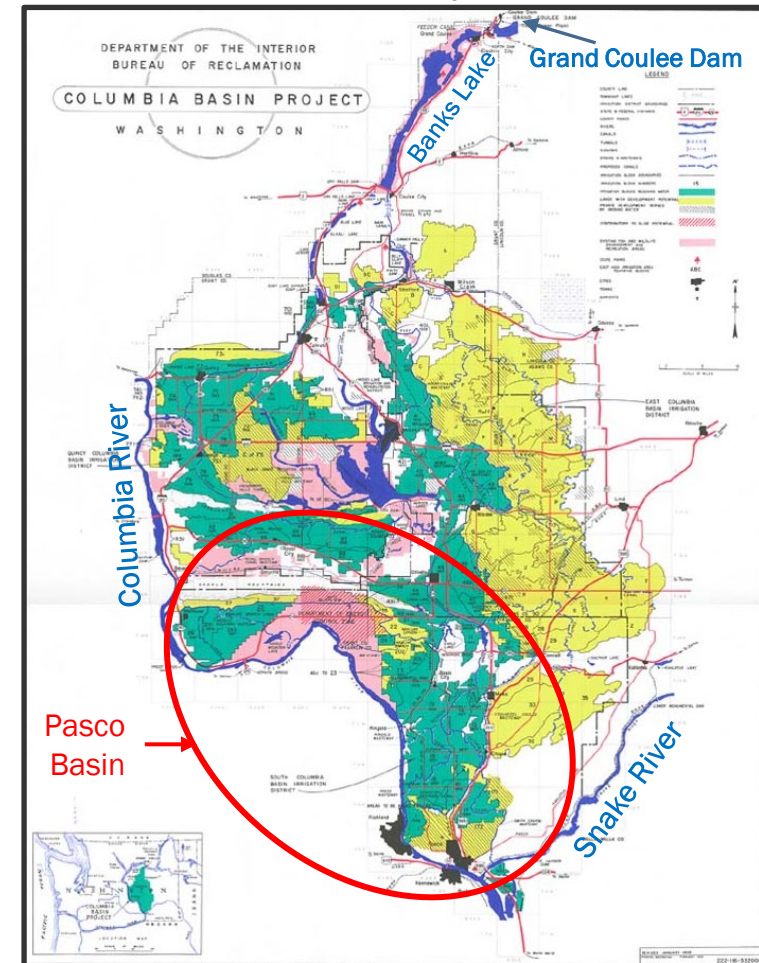


# Columbia Basin Project Irrigation

- Columbia Basin Act – early 1940s
- Irrigation in the basin relies on surface water from Federal Project (~680,000 acres)
- Return flows seep into ground and commingled with natural groundwater
- State issues withdrawal of groundwater in coordination with Reclamation, later designated as interim rule 508-14 WAC

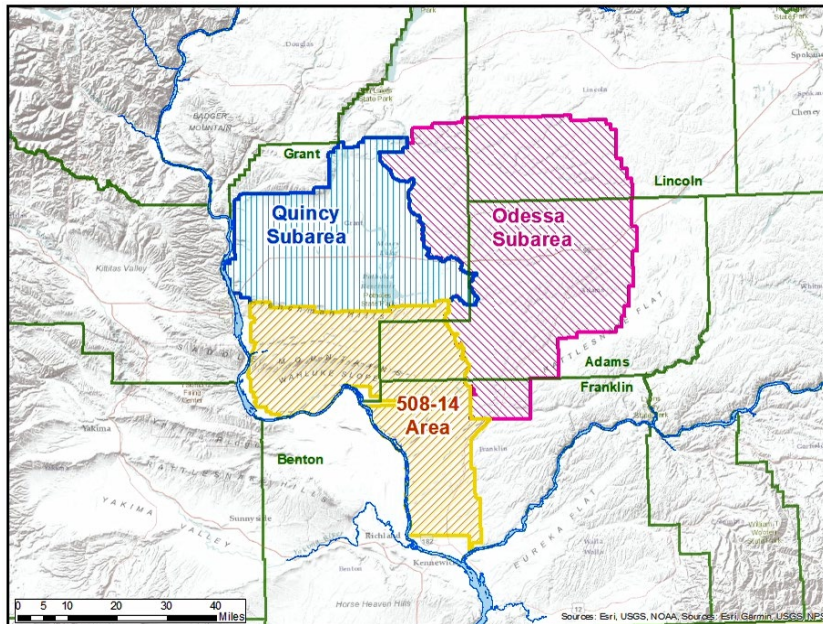
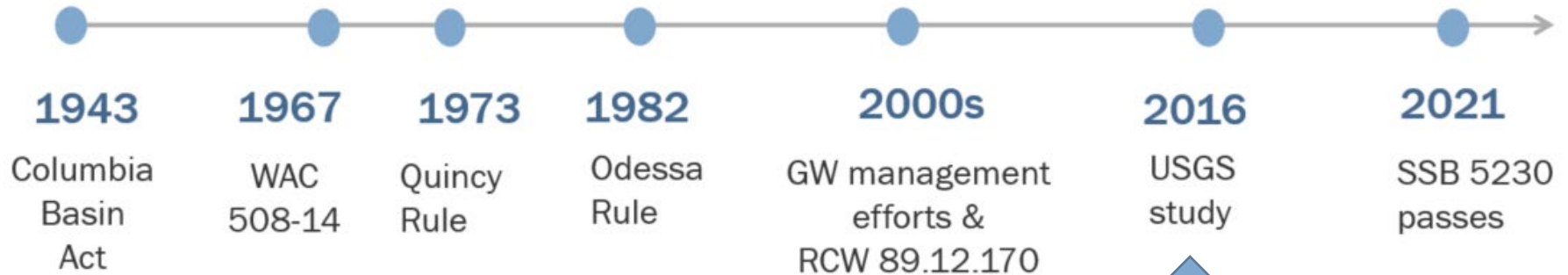


Bureau of Reclamation  
Federal Columbia Basin Project

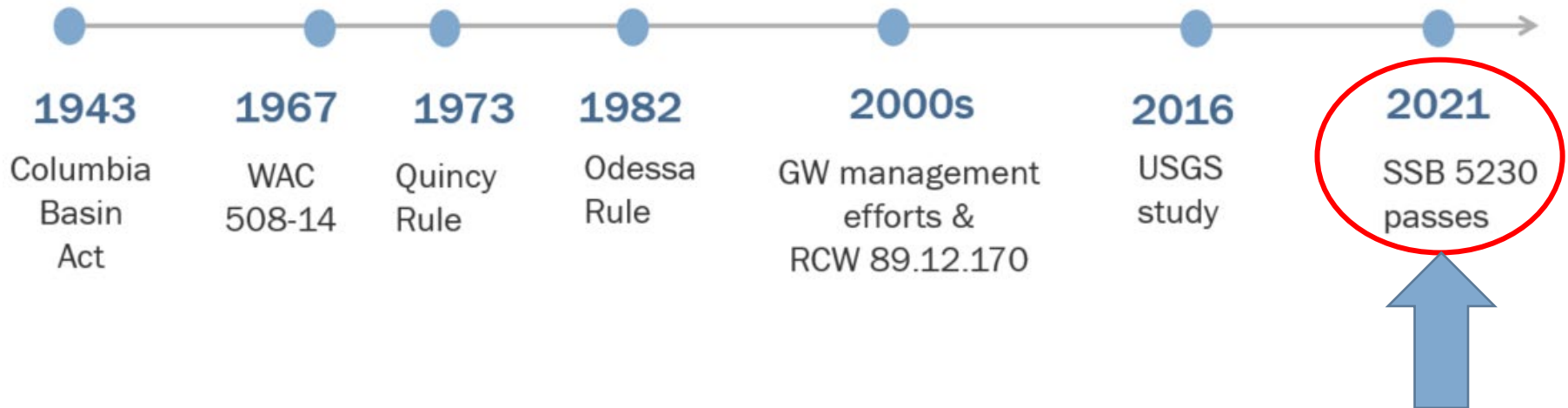


Adapted from DOI, Bureau of Reclamation Columbia Basin Project Map

# Pasco Basin History

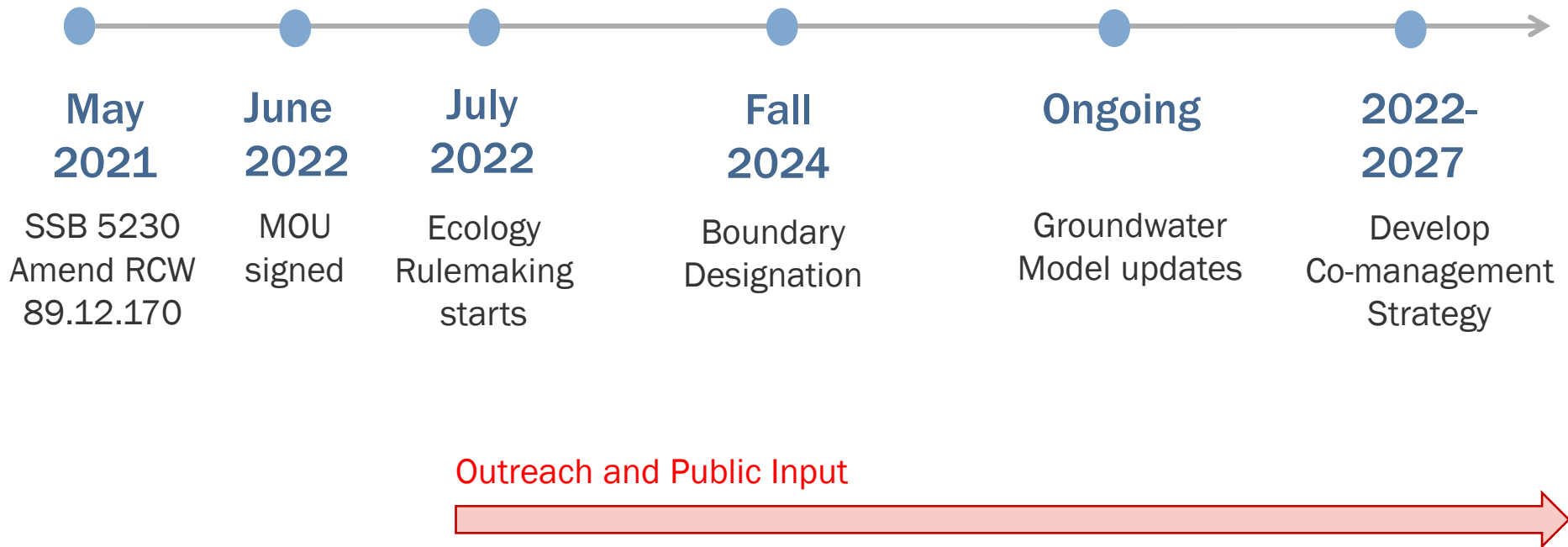


# Pasco Basin History: 2021 Legislative Amendment



- Allocation through agreement of groundwater that exists as a result of the Columbia Basin Project
- Clarify process with subarea Boundary Designation under RCW 90.44.130
- Agreements fulfill requirements for groundwater availability
- Directs Ecology to conduct rulemaking including outreach

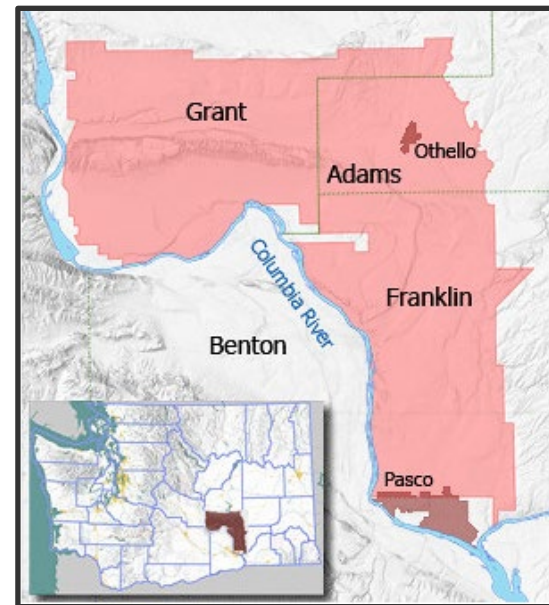
# Current Efforts and Next Steps





# Boundary Designation

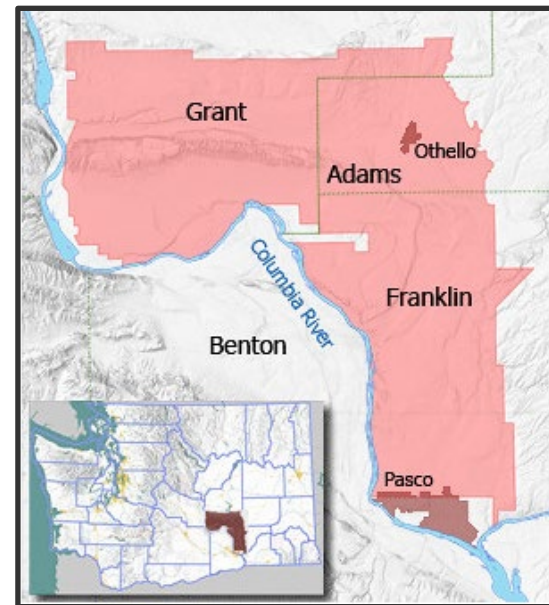
- Designate boundary under RCW 90.44.130
- Process: public notices, Ecology findings, and final order
- Boundary is defined by order, but volumes to be allocated within the boundary are determined through agreement and supported by groundwater studies



Outline of 508-14 area [filed 1986]

# Boundary Designation Schedule

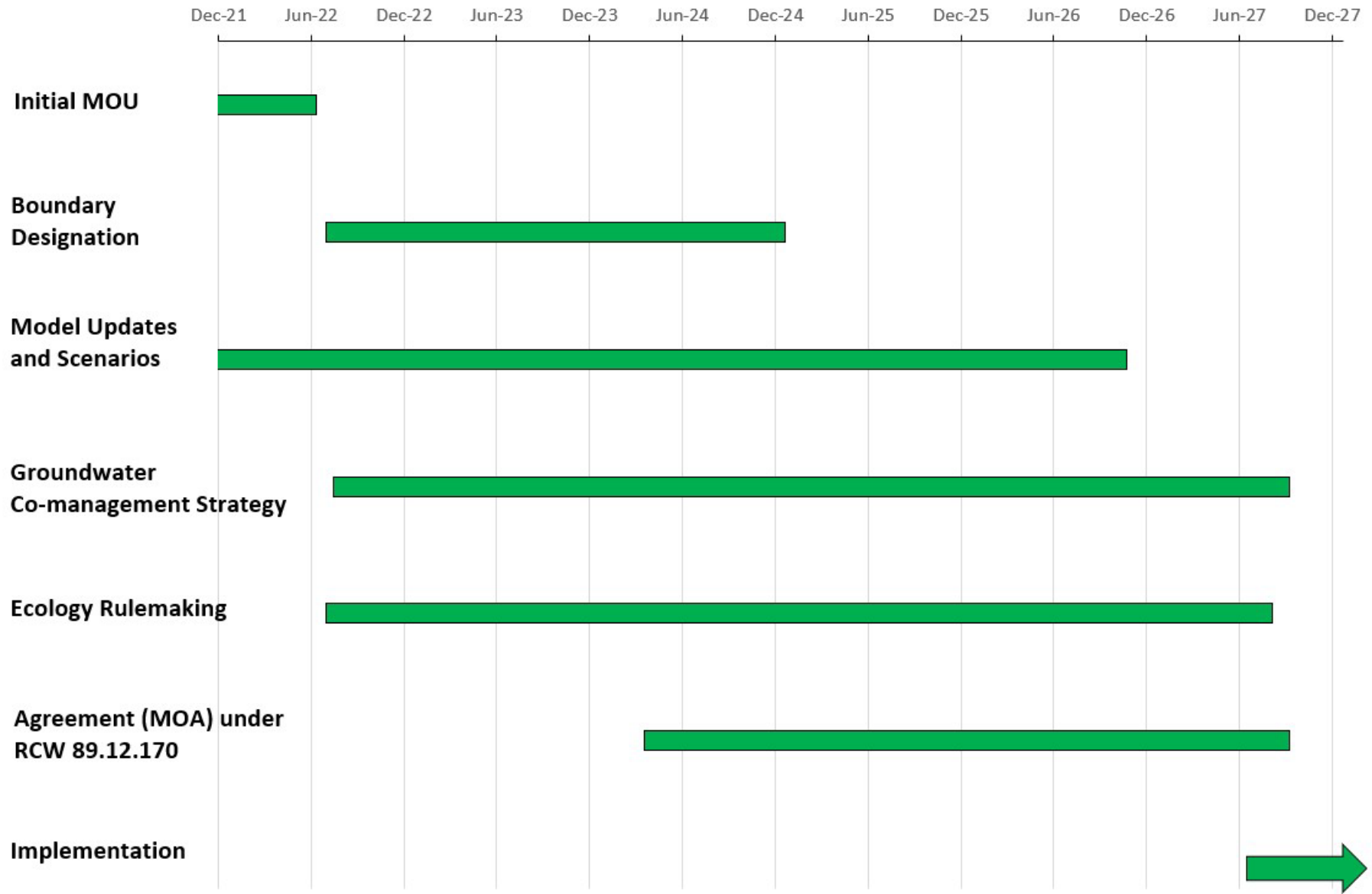
- Draft Order: Released in 2-3 weeks for public review/comment
- Notice in Tri-City Herald and Columbia Basin Herald, as well as posted to the [Project webpage](#).
- Includes Legal Description, Map, and SEPA Determination and Checklist
- Virtual Hearing anticipated in mid-November



Outline of 508-14 area [filed 1986]



# Draft Schedule



# Thank you!

## Questions?

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Laws-rules-rulemaking/Rulemaking/WAC-173-135>

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# USGS Study and Groundwater Model

- Study seeks to quantify increases in groundwater storage as result of Columbia Basin Project return flows
- Majority of mounded water in sedimentary deposits that overlie the basalts
- Revisions and recalibration underway to update model
- Next steps: peer review and modeling scenarios to:
  - support development of co-management strategy
  - help inform agreement on groundwater allocation volumes and depth/location

