USDA FOREST SERVICE
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
CONSISTENCY REVIEW APPLICATION

U.S.D.A. Forest Service
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
902 Wasco Avenue, Suite 200
Hood River, OR 97031

Telephone: 541-308-1700
Fax: 541-386-1916

Project Name: CD-25-05-S Oregon Eastside Forest Health and Resilience Project

Date of Application:

Name of Applicant(s)	**Name of Property Owners**
Donna Mickley, Forest Supervisor, CRGNSA	Same as applicant
Mailing Address 902 Wasco Ave, Suite 200 Hood River, OR 97031	Mailing Address Same as applicant
Applicant's Signature and Date	Property Owner's Signature and Date Same as applicant
Phone: 541-308-1700	Phone: Same as applicant
E-Mail: SM.FS.r6crgnsawfb@usda.gov	E-Mail: Same as applicant
Location of Property (Township, Range, Section, Quarter Section And Tax Lot)	**Property Address** (If Applicable)
The project area covers all NFS lands within the CRGNSA in Oregon east of Perham Creek near Mitchell Point. See attached maps.	
Parcel Size (Acres): Total project area is approximately 4,868 acres. Total treatment area is approximately 2,588 acres.	County, State: Hood River County, Wasco County
Existing Land Use: Primarily forested, on lands designated SMA and GMA Agriculture, SMA and GMA Forest, SMA and GMA Open Space, SMA and GMA Residential, and GMA Recreation	

Project Description

The Forest Service, in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA), proposes a range of non-commercial treatments to improve forest health and wildlife habitat on National Forest System (NFS) lands and to reduce wildfire risk to Gorge communities. This proposed project builds on the Rowena Thin project (2006) and Seven Mile Fuels Treatment Underburn Project (2010), while expanding restoration treatments to additional areas.

The purpose of this project is to improve forest health, ecosystem resilience, and wildlife habitat while also reducing the risk of impacts from wildfire to communities adjacent to NFS lands. National Forest System lands within the project area are characterized by a range of ecological zones and vegetation types, including ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir dominated forests, conifer-hardwood mixed forests, hardwood dominated woodlands, oak savanna, grasslands, and meadows. While each of these areas has unique ecological attributes, they are all experiencing increasing threats from drought, more frequent and intense outbreaks of insects and disease, and spread of non-native invasive species that have increased the risk and intensity of wildfires.

Previous restoration efforts included a range of management actions including small diameter thinning, piling, pile burning, prescribed burning, native plant restoration, invasive weed treatments, and some large tree removal. Research shows that areas thinned and treated with prescribed fire are healthier and exhibit improved stand structure and forest diversity. Previously treated areas within the project area need ongoing management to maintain and accelerate ecosystem recovery, while untreated areas are in even greater need of management intervention to meet the purpose and need. In all areas proposed for treatment, current condition assessments and field data collection show increased stress and mortality of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and Oregon white oak.

Healthy functioning forests are not only important for the ecosystem services they provide across the CRGNSA, but also because they provide resilience in the face of increasingly intense and lengthy wildfire seasons. Nearly every unit proposed for treatment on NFS lands is less than 2 miles from a community or residential area. Without intervention, these natural areas would continue to decline in health over time, remain more vulnerable to increased spread of insects and disease, and become more at risk of experiencing uncharacteristic, large-scale wildfire.

Proposed forest practice treatments include small diameter conifer thinning (≤ 10 inches DBH), small diameter oak thinning (≤ 6 inches DBH), select tree release involving removal of trees up to 30 inches DBH within 40 feet of select high habitat value trees, ladder fuel reduction up to 10 feet from the ground, mowing and brushing, piling and pile burning, underburning, snag creation, down wood creation, and mechanical removal of vegetation along roadways. Implementing these actions will reduce competition between trees, improving growth conditions for the trees that remain and increasing their resilience to drought, insects and disease, invasive species, and wildfire.

Approximately 2,588 acres would be analyzed for treatment across the project area. Table 1 shows the number of acres proposed for treatment by vegetation type. Vegetation types are defined as ponderosa pine-Douglas-fir dominated forests (referred to as conifer), conifer-

hardwood mixed forests (referred to as conifer/hardwood), hardwood dominated woodlands (referred to as hardwood), and grasslands.

Table 1. Number of acres proposed for treatment within the project area by vegetation type.

Vegetation Type	Number of Acres within Project Area
Conifer	681
Conifer/Hardwood	417
Hardwood	885
Grassland	605
Total Acres Proposed for Treatment	2,588
Total Acres within Project Area	4,868

The Forest Service proposes to reduce tree density through non-commercial thinning, increase the number and quality of snags and large downed wood, and implement pile burning and prescribed fire across the project area to improve wildlife habitat and ecological health while increasing resilience to wildfire.

The proposed action is being developed to be consistent with the Desired Forest Structure and Pattern table in the Management Plan (CRGNSA Management Plan, pg. 200). No openings would be established as part of this project and no measurable changes in unit-wide canopy cover would occur from treatments since larger overstory trees would remain and primarily understory vegetation would be removed. Proposed treatments would vary by vegetation type as described in *Table 2*.

Table 2. A summary of proposed actions for each vegetation type within the project area.

Treatment Type	Vegetation Types			
	Conifer	Conifer/Hardwood	Hardwood	Grassland
Small Diameter Conifer Thinning (≤ 10 inches DBH)	X	X	X	X
Small Diameter Oak Thinning (≤ 6 inches DBH)	X	X	X	-
Select Tree Release	X	X	X	-
Ladder Fuel Reduction (LFR)	X	X	X	-
Mowing/Brushing	X	X	X	X
Piling and Pile Burning	X	X	X	X
Underburning	X	X	X	X
Snag Creation	X	X	X	-
Down Wood Creation	X	X	-	-
Mechanical Removal	X	X	X	-
An X indicates which treatments could occur within each vegetation type.				

Proposed treatments include a suite of activities to achieve the desired habitat enhancement and wildfire risk reduction outcomes. These activities include:

Small Diameter Conifer Thinning: Cutting of small diameter trees less than or equal to 10 inches Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) to reduce vertical and horizontal connectivity of fuels, to reduce competition among growing trees, and to shift species composition toward drought and fire tolerant species. In conifer and conifer-hardwood mixed stands, target species for removal would include Douglas-fir, grand fir, ponderosa pine, and bigleaf maple. In hardwood stands and grasslands, target species would include but are not limited to Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine.

Small Diameter Oak Thinning: Cutting of generally less than or equal to 6 inches DBH oak underneath existing trees to reduce stem densities, increase vigor of remaining trees, and promote forest health. In hardwood and conifer-hardwood mixed stands, oak dominated areas with greater than 200 stems per acre would be thinned to that density. Materials would be either lopped and scattered or piled for pile burning. Areas currently showing increased oak tree mortality or symptoms of drought stress would be prioritized for treatment.

Select Tree Release: Felling Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, big leaf maple, and other non-native tree species less than or equal to 30-inch DBH within a 40-foot horizontal distance from select high habitat value trees. Releasing select trees would improve structural diversity, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem function with the goal of protecting the oldest, largest, most mature trees in the stand.

Ladder Fuel Reduction: Cutting of limbs and shrubs to reduce ladder fuels up to 10 feet from the ground. Treatments reduce vertical and horizontal connectivity of fuels and reduce the potential for fire to move into the tree crowns. This treatment shifts forest structure toward fire resilience.

Mowing/Brushing: Using machinery or hand equipment to reduce fuel loading among grasses and forbs in key areas at high risk of human caused ignitions. Treatments would improve native plant communities and species diversity and reduce horizontal connectivity of fuels. Treatments would target grasslands, meadows, oak savanna, and to a lesser extent, oak woodlands.

Piling and Pile Burning: Piling materials smaller than 8-inches DBH generated from treatments and their burning. Pile burning is used near values at risk such as the wildland urban interface or during initial burning where fuels reduction is needed to achieve the objectives of a future underburns. Some piles may be retained for wildlife habitat. Piles would be burned within 3 years of treatment. Pile burning would be conducted in accordance with requirements of state and local agency air quality regulations and Oregon Smoke Management instructions. Additional public notification and engagement would occur prior to any prescribed fire activities.

Underburning: Prescribed burning in a forested stand that reduces surface fuels and ladder fuels but minimizes mortality of the overstory trees. Underburning encourages nutrient cycling, promotes low and patchy shrub and herb cover, and reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfire while contributing to ecological restoration. Underburning would be conducted in accordance with requirements of state and local agency air quality regulations, Oregon Smoke Management

instructions and would include additional public notification and engagement prior to any prescribed fire activities.

Snag Creation: Creating snags where possible for wildlife habitat. The Desired Forest Structure and Pattern Table in the Management Plan provides snag requirements by Management Plan vegetation type (CRGNSA Management Plan, pg. 200) and would be implanted to meet these requirements. Snag requirements applicable to this project include five snags greater than 10 inches DBH and 3 snags greater than 20 inches DBH. Snags must be at least 20 feet in height. Dead branches of live oak trees within the diameter threshold are acceptable as snags. Snag creation would be implemented based on recommendations of the Forest Service Botanist and Wildlife Biologist.

Down Wood Creation: Trees greater than 8-inches in diameter would be left on the ground and intact, where possible, to provide wildlife habitat, structural diversity, and long-term sources of organic material for soil health. The Management Plan requirements range from 1-to-3 pieces per acre in the Ponderosa Pine and Oregon Oak type to 3-to-6 pieces per acre in the East Conifer type. These pieces must be greater than 20 inches in diameter at the large end and 30 feet long. This applies to the Conifer vegetation type identified for this project.

Mechanical Removal: Along existing roadways where heavy equipment can reach trees without traveling off road, trees associated with any of the above prescriptions may be removed, either cut or with root wads attached, for non-commercial purposes using heavy equipment.

Treatment units were identified by the CRGNSA's Interdisciplinary Team for the project. The attached maps show the location of treatment units as well as natural features. No new roads, skid trails, or other ground disturbing activities are proposed. Volume and species of removed trees will vary by treatment unit. Proposed treatments should not have noticeable effects to canopy closure across the project area and will not reduce canopy closure below what is required by the Management Plan.

Application Checklist

The following is required to complete your application

[X] Application form completed and signed
[X] Site Plan
[X] Key viewing areas checklist (attached)
[X] Names and addresses of adjacent property owners within 200 feet of parcel
[X] *Any additional information as required on the NSA Application Checklist form.*

Key Viewing Areas

Key viewing areas are important public viewpoints and areas that afford opportunities to view the Gorge scenery. Key viewing areas are listed below. Please check those sites which can be seen from your property. *If you are unsure, contact the planner you are working with for assistance in determining your visibility.*

[X] Historic Columbia River Highway
[] Sandy River
[] Portland Women's Forum State Park
[] Crown Point
[] Rooster Rock State Park
[] Multnomah Falls
[] Larch Mountain
[X] Highway I-84, including rest stops
[] Bonneville Dam Visitor Centers
[] Sherrard Point on Larch Mountain
[X] Rowena Plateau/Nature Conservancy Viewpoint
[] Larch Mountain Road
[] Wyeth Bench Road
[X] Old Highway 8 (County Road 1230/Old WA St. Route 14)
[X] Washington State Route 14
[] Washington State Route 142
[] Washington State Route 141
[X] Cook-Underwood Road
[X] Dog Mountain Trail
[] Beacon Rock
[] Cape Horn
[X] Columbia River
[] Pacific Crest Trail
[] Oregon Highway 35

Project Site Plan

A plan drawn in black ink at a scale of about 1 inch equal to 200 feet (1:2400) or at a scale providing greater detail must be included with the application.

If the parcel is very large, you may show the project on the portion of the parcel affected by the proposed use. Be sure, however, to show enough of the parcel or some adjacent features, such as roads, so that the reviewers can orient themselves on your map. A small vicinity map showing the subject parcel and surrounding parcels may help.

At a minimum, you must show the following features:

[X] Applicant(s) name

[X] Location and width of existing and proposed roads, driveways, and trails

[X] Scale and north arrow

[X] Location and size of existing and proposed structures

[X] Boundaries of parcel with dimensions and size

[X] Location of existing and proposed services including wells or other water supplies, structures, power and telephone poles and lines and outdoor lighting.

[X] Significant terrain features or landforms

[X] Location and depth of all proposed grading and ditching

[X] Groupings and species of trees or other vegetation on the parcel

[X] Location and species of vegetation that would be removed or planted

[X] Water courses, bodies of water, and applicable buffers of existing waterbodies

Adjacent Property Owners and Existing Land Use On Adjacent Parcels Within 200 Feet Of Project Property:

Due to the scale of the project, there are a significant number of adjacent landowners within 200 feet of the proposed treatment areas. A list of adjacent property owners who received notice of the project is included in the project record.

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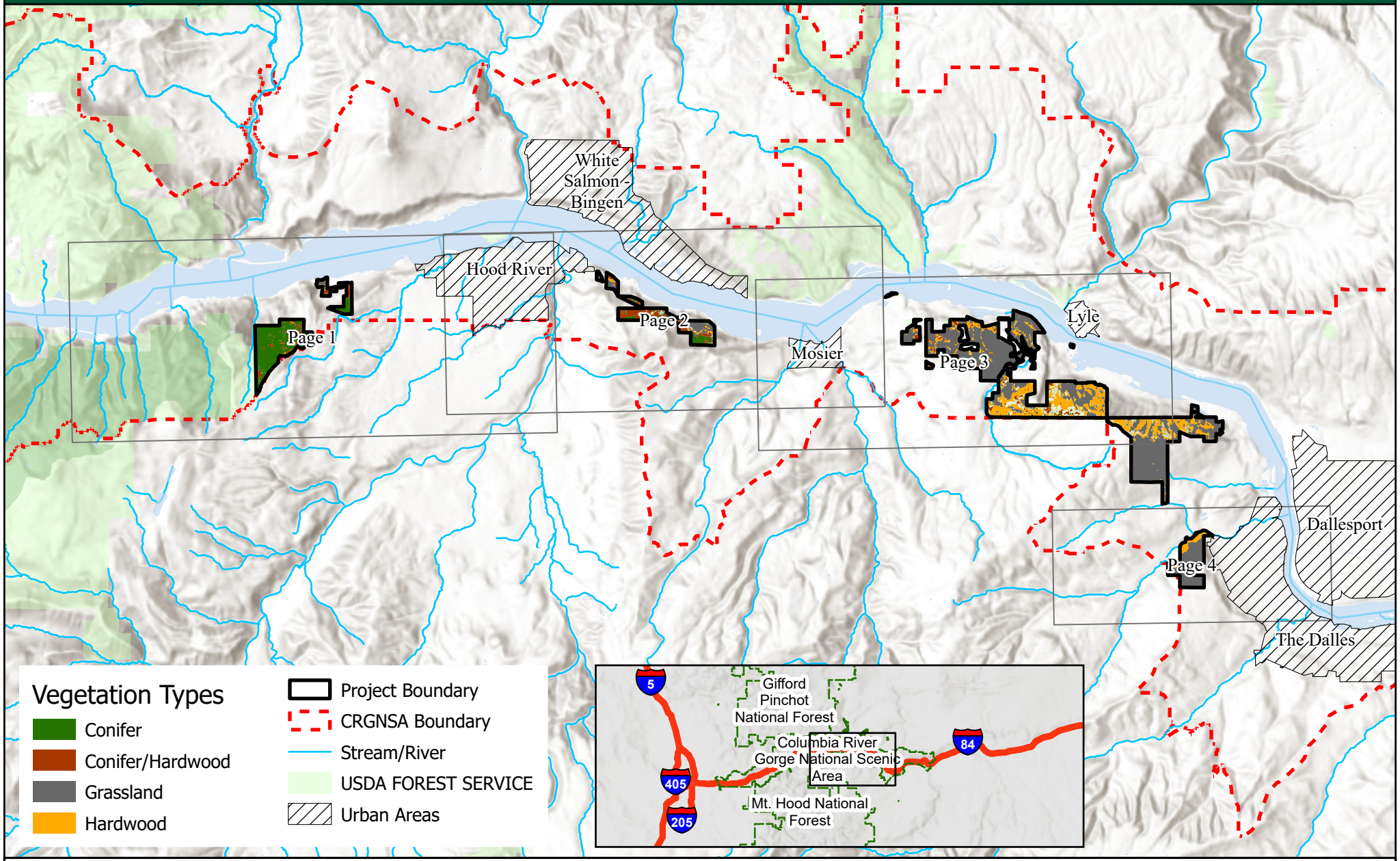

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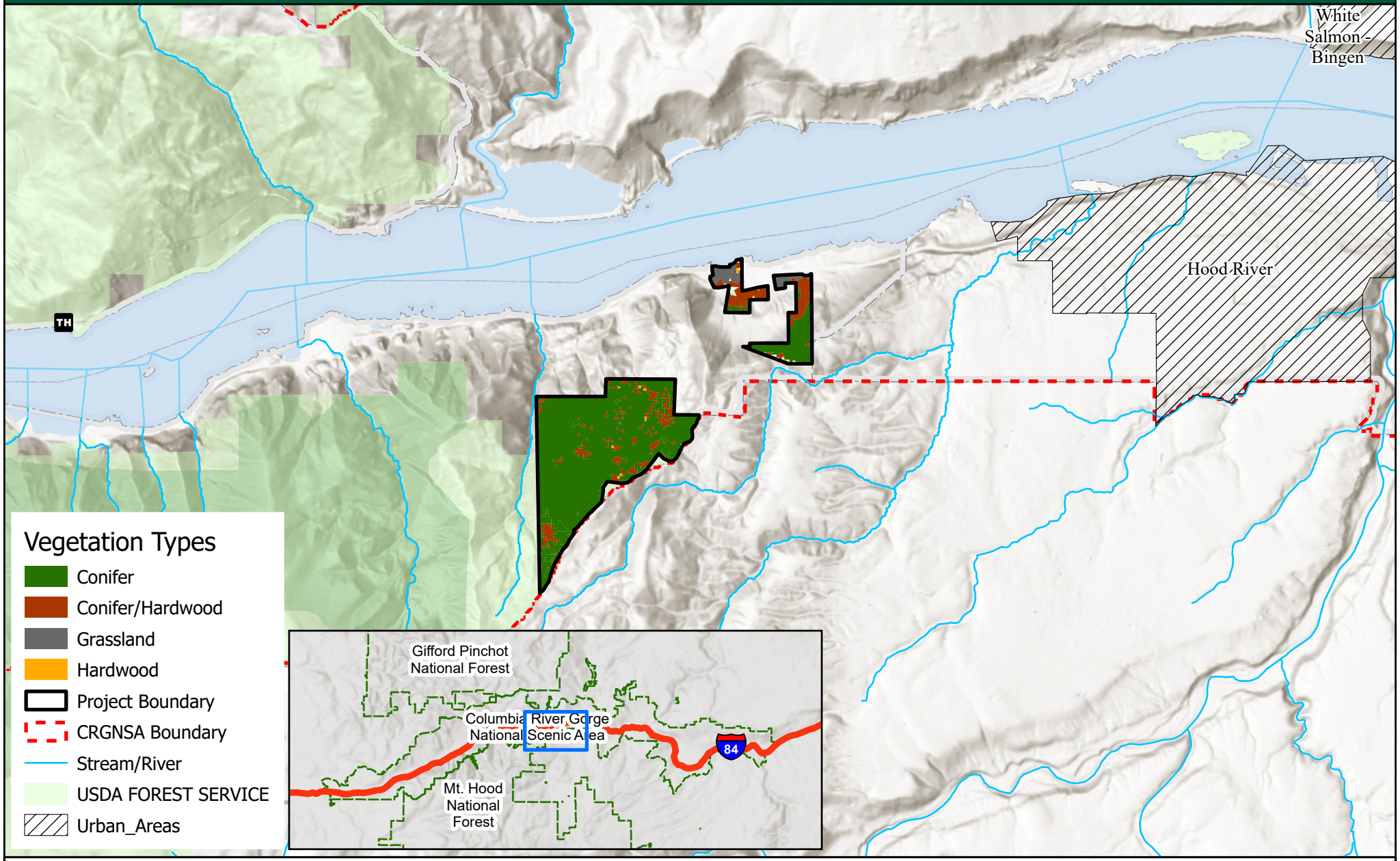

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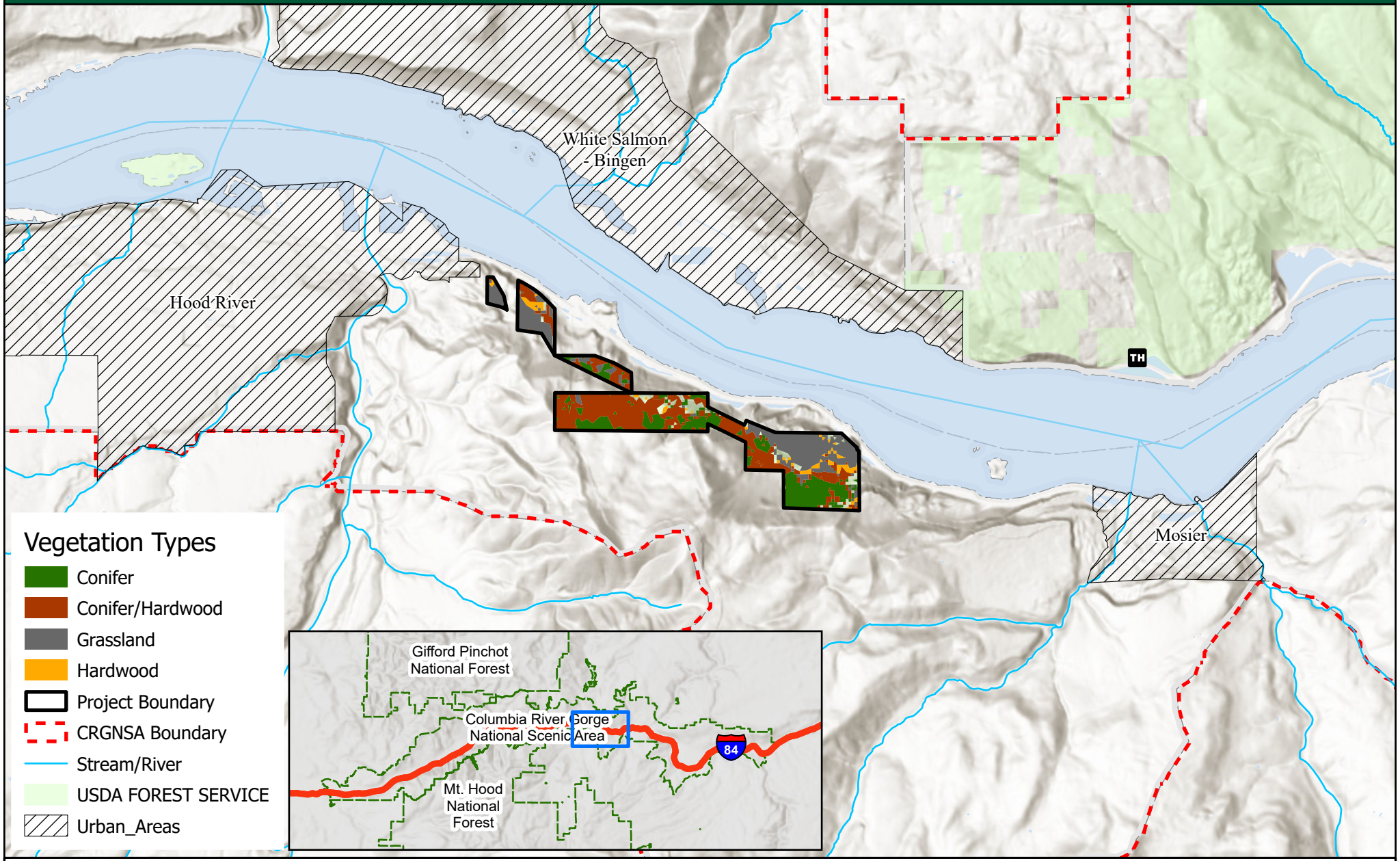

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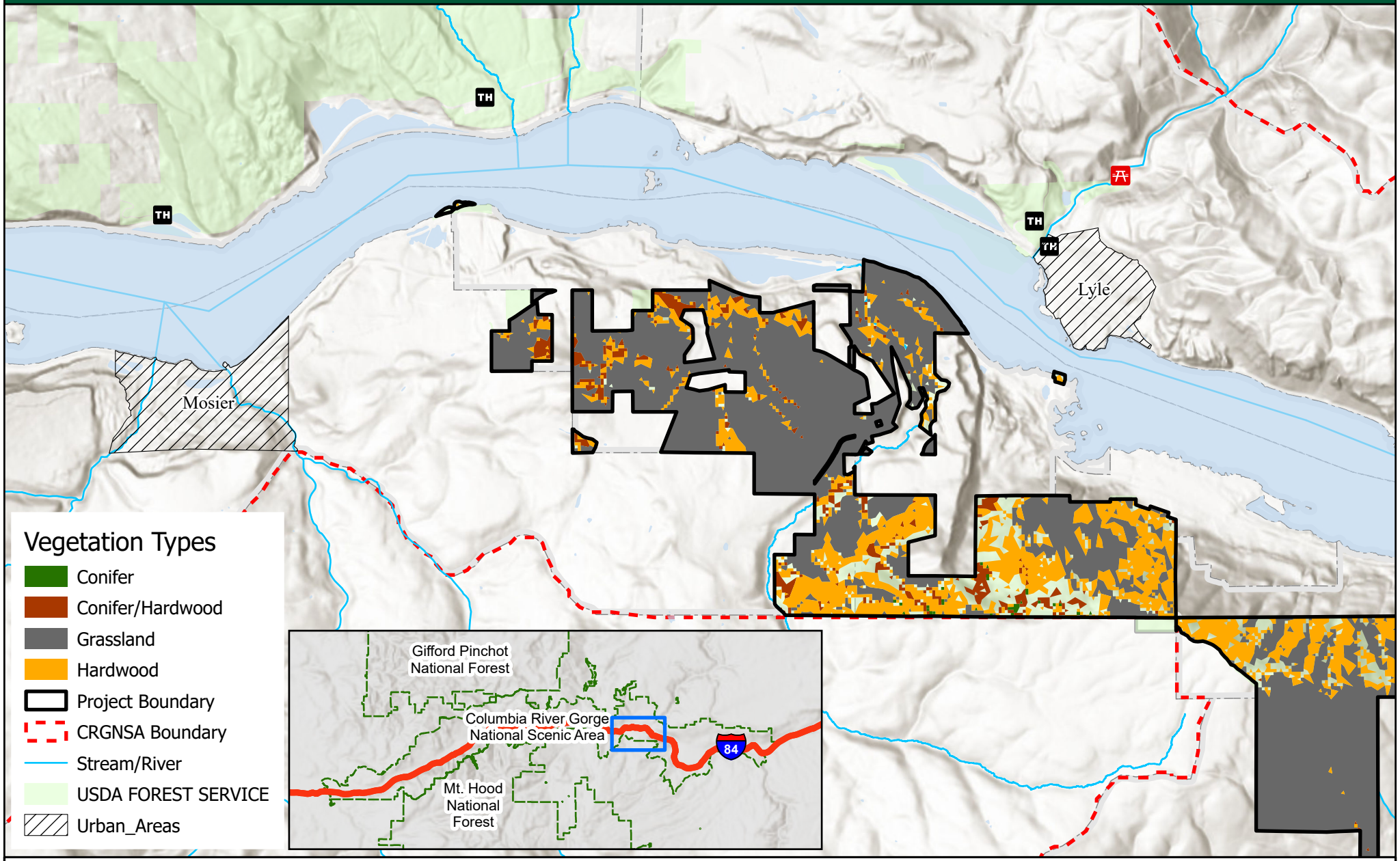

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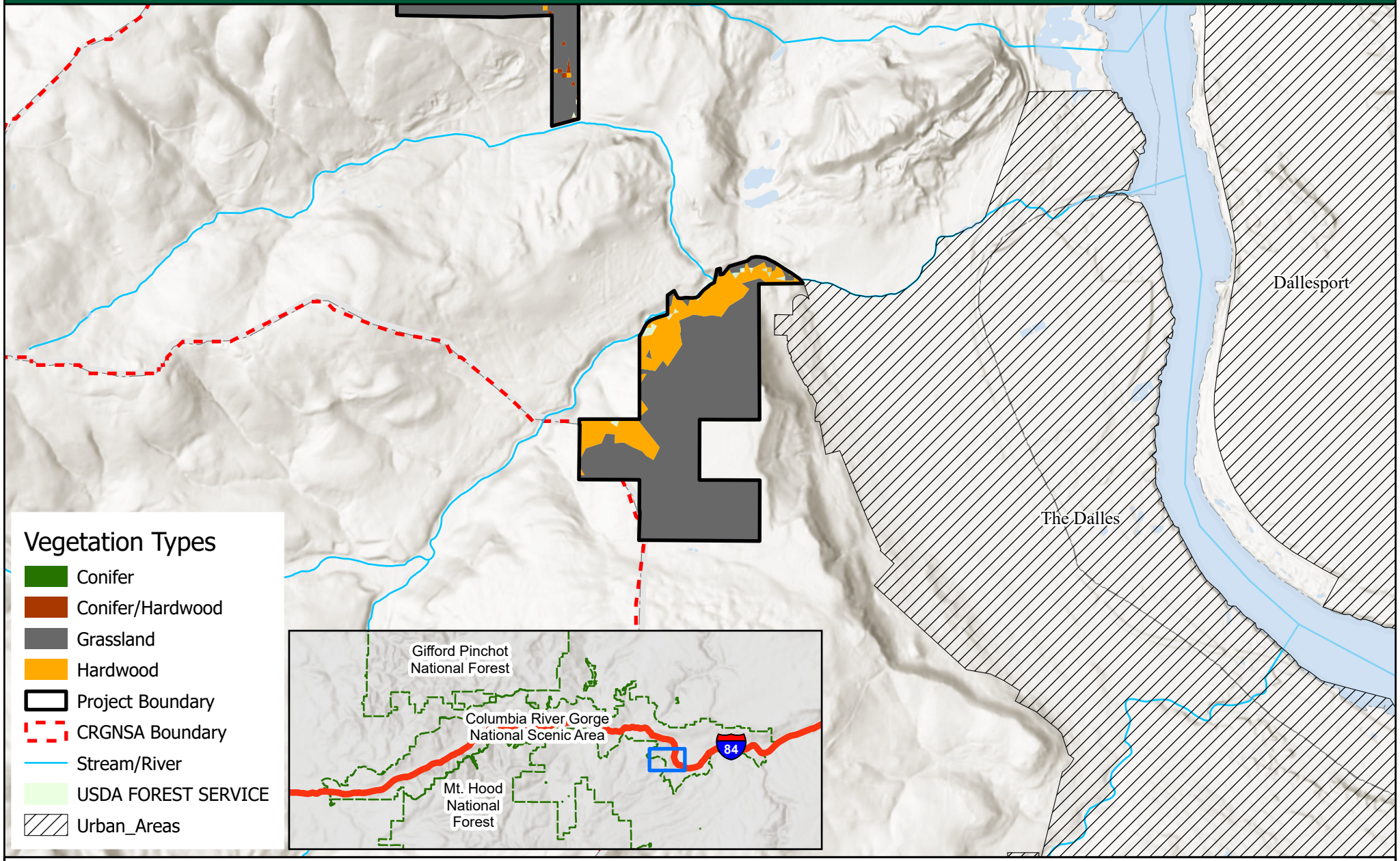

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