

CONSERVATION FINANCE
WORK IN PROGRESS:
**CAPITALIZING ON OUTDOOR
RECREATION**
IN THE CENTRAL CASCADES OF WASHINGTON



PRESENTER

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WHAT WE DO

OUR MISSION

We collaborate with diverse partners to drive **sustainable** outdoor recreation initiatives in North Central Washington.

HOW WE DO IT

OUR APPROACH



Trails & Recreation



Engagement



Advocacy



Development





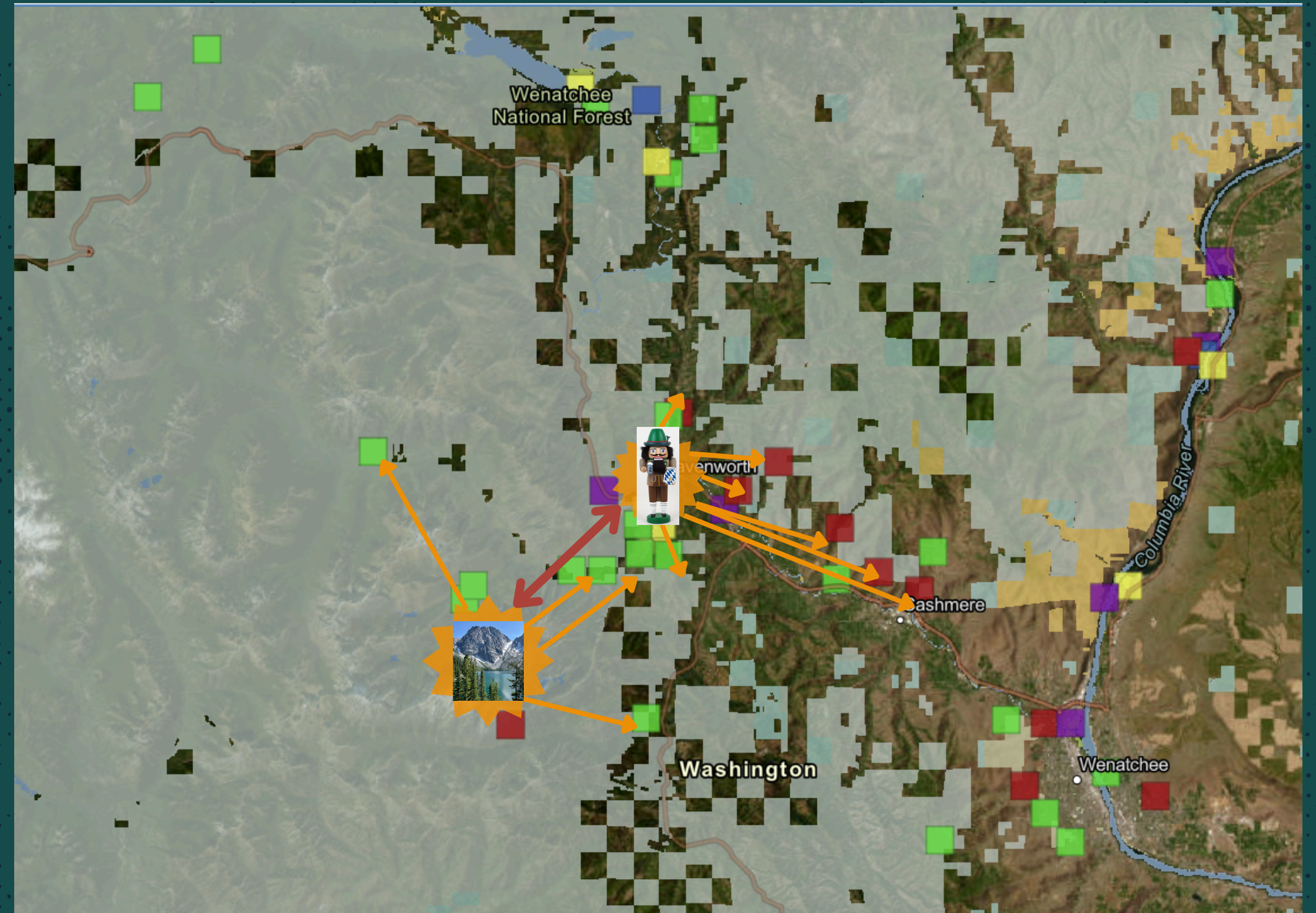
CONTEXT

HIGH DEMAND, LIMITED CAPACITY

- The eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains in WA are in close proximity to the metropolis of Seattle, but the rural gateway communities do not have the infrastructure to support visitation.
- The Alpine Lakes Wilderness has seen a 400% increase in visitation over the last decade.
- Chelan County is in the top 3 destinations statewide for access to trails and lakes.
- Overcrowding creates user-led dispersal to unmanaged or under-managed recreation sites near gateway communities.
- Outdoor recreation is a tourism-based economic driver, and unmet demand for resources means **lost opportunities**.

CONTEXT

HIGH DEMAND, LIMITED CAPACITY



PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

INTERRELATED CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

1. Funding Feasibility for Enhanced Recreation in North Central WA

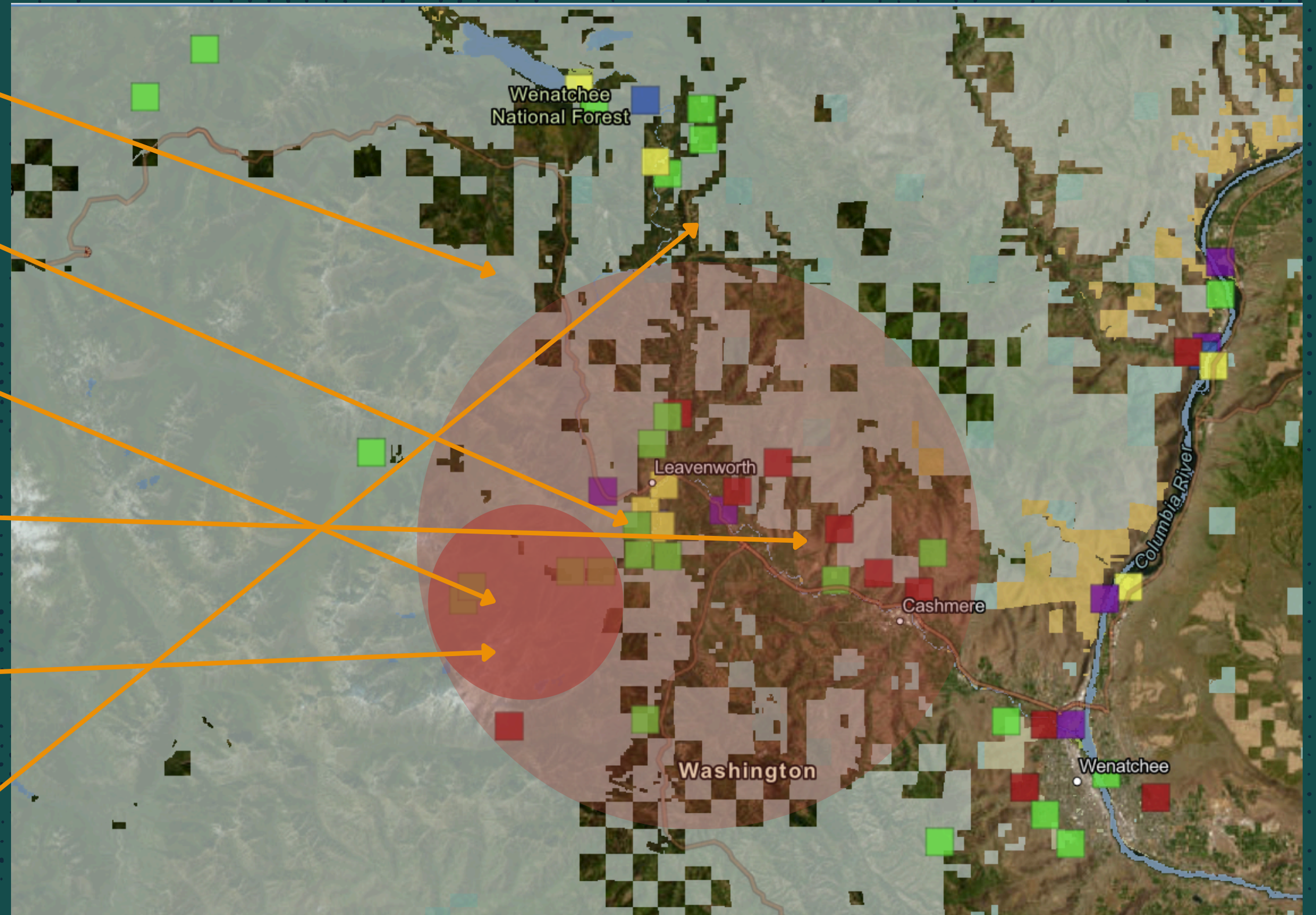
2. Quantified Ventures' 'Explore' project for Enchantments+

3. Enchantments Visitor Access Management Pilot

4. Upper Wenatchee Sustainable Trails Project

5. Univ. of WA Visitor Use Predictive Modeling

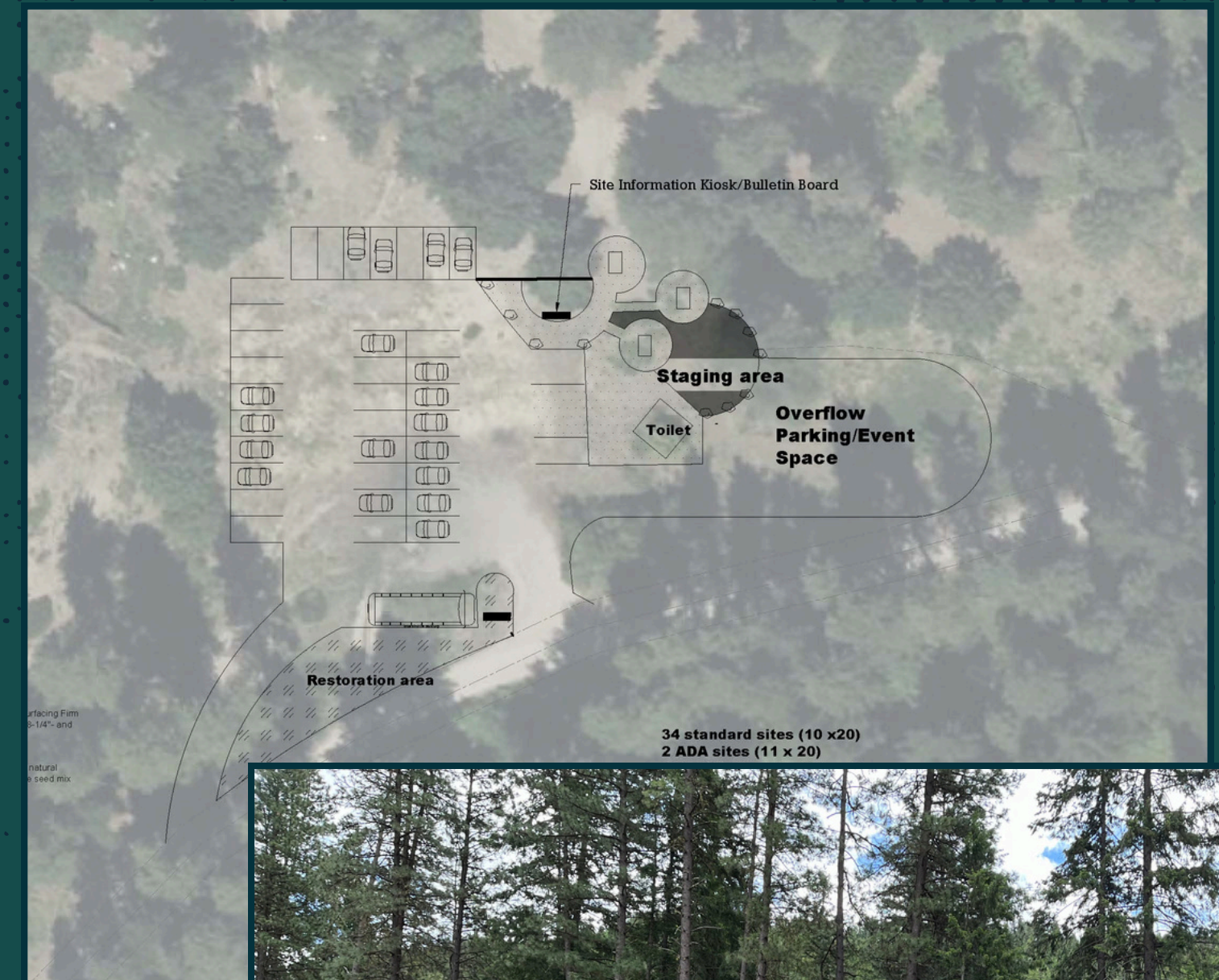
6. Nat'l Wildfire Crisis Strategy: Central WA Initiative



OUTCOMES ANALYSIS

INCREASE OUTDOOR RECREATION, RETURNS, AND REINVESTMENT

- Catch up to and anticipate demand by improving un- or under-managed recreation resources
- To capture a diversity of revenue streams, establish local recreation management entity operating
 - at scale
 - with authority





STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

WHO'S AT THE TABLE?

- **Recreation user groups and land managers:** Forest Service, local land trust, state agencies, organized user group representation
- **Destination management organizations:** Visit Chelan County, Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce
- **Local government:** Chelan County, City of Leavenworth
- **Specialized consultants and researchers:** Quantified Ventures, Forest Service Enterprise, Forest Service and University of WA research scientists.



EXPLORING: STRUCTURE

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Council of Governments/Regional Council

- Pool resources to collaboratively fund and manage outdoor recreation

Federal Agency : Local Government Agreement(s)

- MOU
- Good Neighbor Authority
- Cooperative Agreements
- Collection Agreements

EXPLORING: PAYORS WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES?

Residents

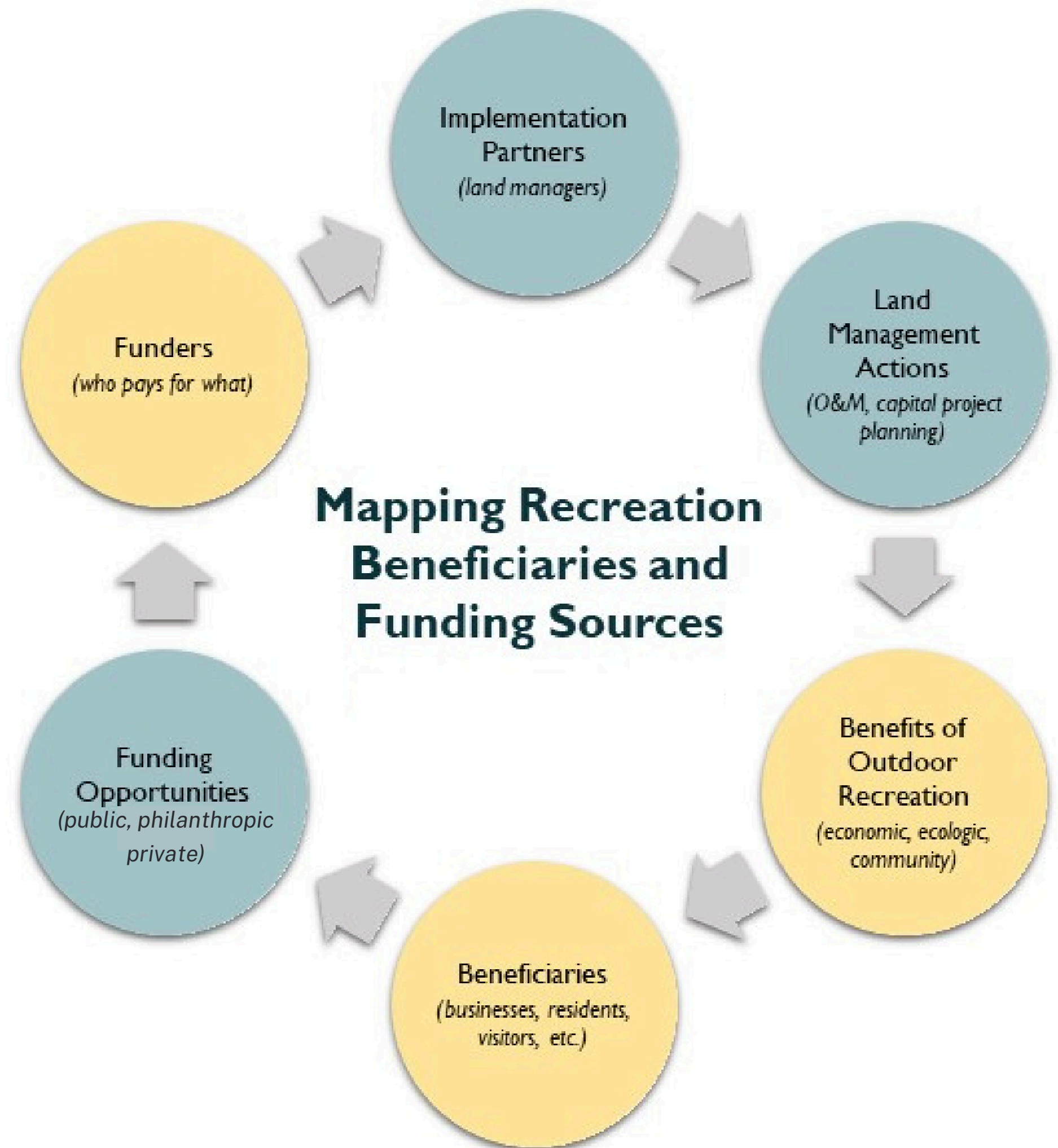
- Quality of life, economic gains, decreased negative impacts of overcrowding, unmanaged recreation

Recreation Users

- More and improved opportunities

Businesses/Corporates

- Increased economic gains, positive positioning in the community, more sustainable tourism.



EXPLORING: FUNDING **LOCAL PUBLIC FUNDING**

Special Purpose Districts

- Property tax or sales tax collected within specified geographic jurisdiction for dedicated purpose

Specific Public Sources to Fund a Governmental Department

- Some use of real estate excise taxes
- Some use of lodging/transient tax
- Park impact fees

Challenges: Establishing dedicated public funding typically requires voter approval, and/or political will of elected officials.





EXPLORING: FUNDING

USER PAYS

Parking/Trailhead Fee (Pass)

- Annual or daily fee for use at certain trailheads/parking areas

Recreation Area Fee

- Annual or daily fee for use in a designated recreation area

Challenges: Establishing recreation fees imposed by federal agencies can be slow without partnership agreement with local entity.

EXPLORING: FUNDING VOLUNTARY GIVE-BACK PROGRAM

- Businesses participate voluntarily, and donation is collected from customer at point of transaction.
- **One for the Outdoors** is in pilot status, intended to be locally-advised grant-making directed at improving and enhancing outdoor recreation

Challenges: Funding raised is typically modest, supplemental, and locally competitive



EXPLORING: FUNDING

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Local corporates

“Our outdoor recreation resources benefit your employees and your standing in the community”

- Can contribute to employee well-being, improve retention
- Can positively impact positioning within the local community as a supporter of community vitality beyond immediate economic contributions

Aligned corporates

“Our outdoor recreation resources drive your economic returns”

- Products or services are directly impacting recreation resources; improvement of sustainable recreation resources provides visible accountability.

One avenue we're exploring: Initiate outreach through employee volunteer opportunity, establish relationship & awareness to capture employee giving programs

CURRENT CLIMATE

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Federal uncertainty:** policy, agency capacity
- **Political will:** local government recognition of opportunity and support for solutions
- **Scale:** relatively small project area may limit investors and other support
- **Complexity:** multiple projects occurring simultaneously

- **Decreased federal and state capacity:** local support is critical to maintain sustainable economic benefits, greater local influence
- **Post-pandemic importance:** widespread recognition of the importance of recreation to rural economies
- **EXPLORE Act:** projects are poised to take advantage of the various frameworks