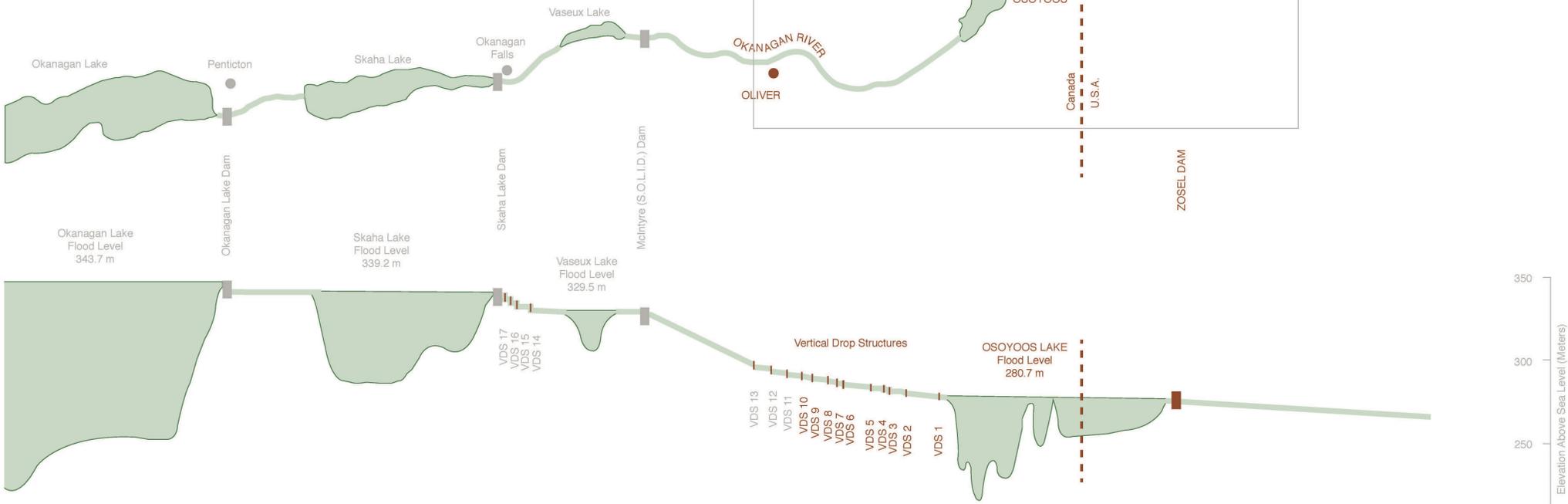


Food Desert challenges the notion that the best way to protect a thriving natural ecosystem is leave those communities alone, with as little human intervention as possible. The project recognizes the network of reciprocity between humans and landscape and humans and other beings, particularly present in indigenous communities, and proposes the rethinking of conservation as the protection of both biological and cultural diversity.

Within this scheme, food operates as the main network of reciprocity between humans and the landscape. Thus, food sovereignty is the collective goal of the proposed Internationally Protected Area. Questioning the political boundaries that were once superimposed in pre-colonial patterns of settlement dictated by food, the alternative Internationally Protected Area crosses political boundaries to encompass the traditional territory of the Okanagan Nation. It recognizes the cultures developed over millennia that harvested and cultivated these landscapes. The project sees the interconnectedness between ecosystems beyond just the Antelope Shrub Steppe ecosystem as integral to both wildlife and human survival.

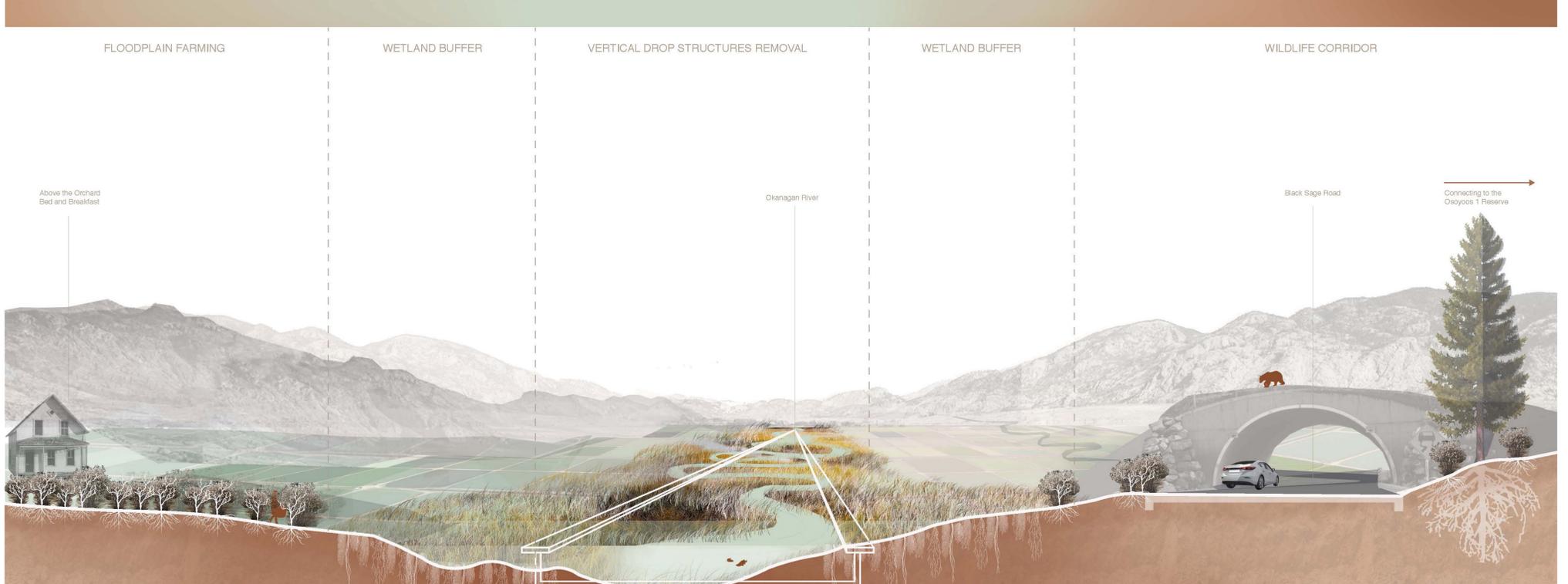
Dams & Vertical Drop Structures



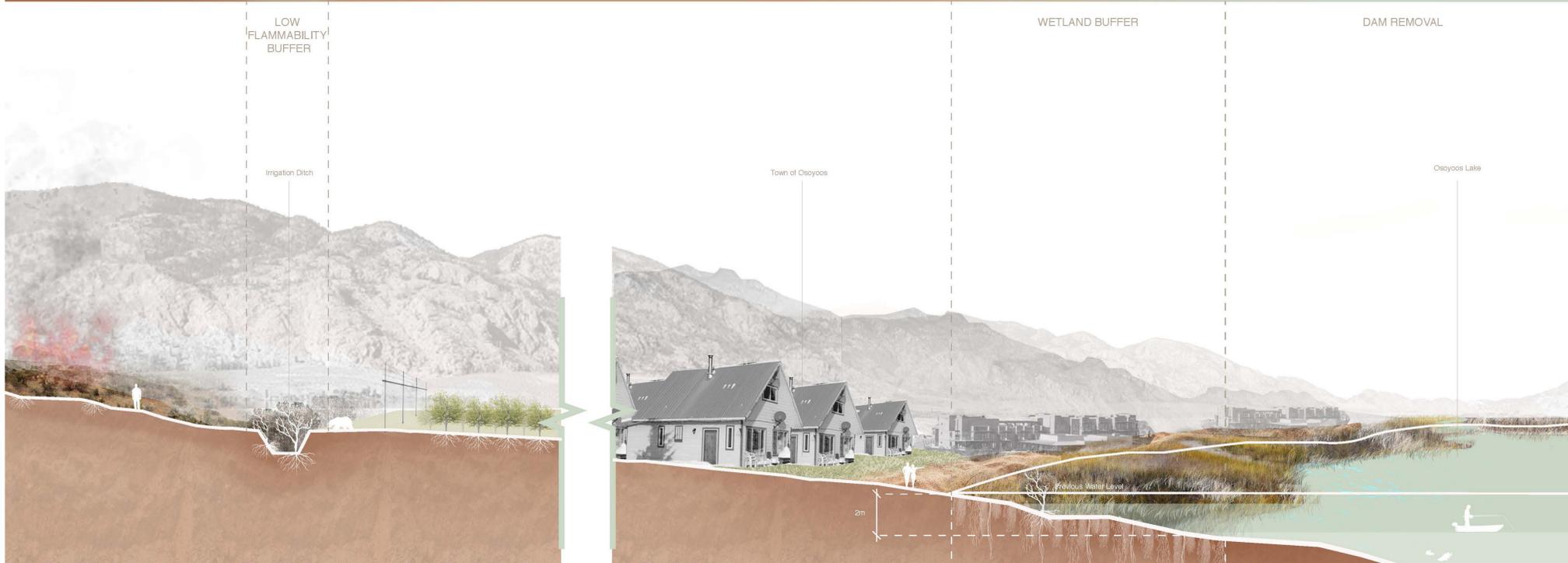
After Dam & Vertical Drop Structures Removal



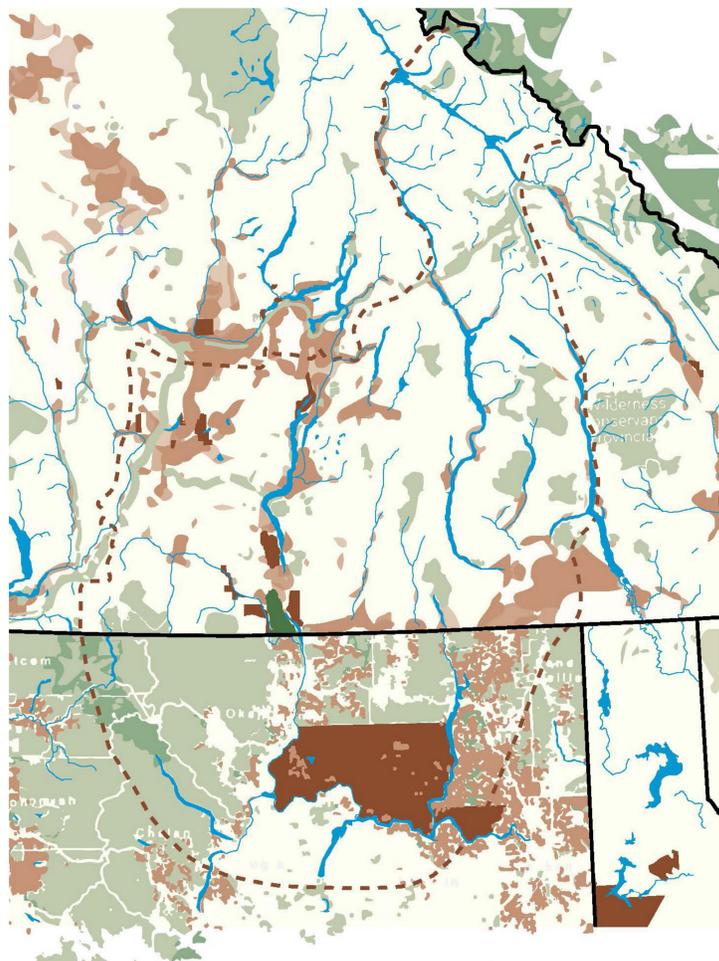
The River



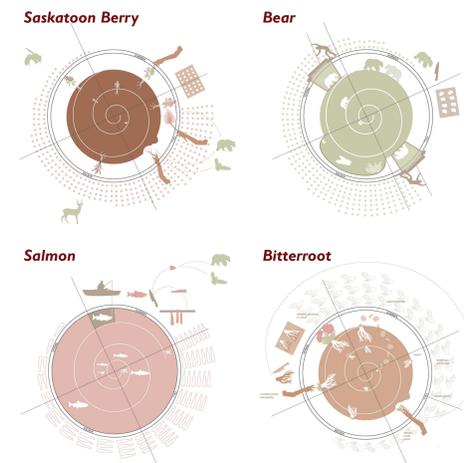
The Lake



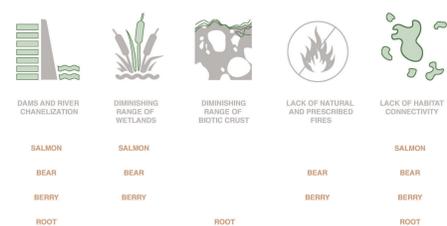
The removal of the dam would cause the lake to drop 2m enabling the introduction of a wetland buffer along the lake and river. As the topography varies greatly along the lake, this buffer would range between 7 - 115m. This buffer would serve as habitat for fish as well as bird species and help filter the run-off from the Osoyoos, Oroville, and Oliver cities as well as filter the run-off from the agricultural land along the river to improve habitat quality for aquatic species. It would also bring benefits to agriculture in the area by maintaining water quality to be used for irrigation. At the same time, the optics of water abundance due to the dam and boosted the agricultural industry in the area will be challenged with the shrinking symbol of fertility, further supporting conservation tactics. The removal of the dam will reintroduce a wider threshold between wet and dry increasing the growth of plants that have been traditionally found in floodplain areas, including Saskatoon berry. Historically, indigenous communities have practiced prescribed burning to maintain the Antelope Shrub Steppe ecosystem. Saskatoon Berry was one of the plants that benefitted from this practice, thriving after fires. To reinstitute prescribed burning practices, low flammability buffers composed of plants resistant to fire, will be planted along the edges between development and Steppe ecosystems. As water levels drop, areas that have been traditionally wet will dry up and the Antelope Shrub Steppe ecosystem will be allowed to return along the waterfront. Cut and fill operations, will intensify the difference in topography to more clearly delineate wetland and steppe ecosystems. Bitterroot beaches, partially accessible to the public will create networks of biotic crust along the waterfront. As fish and berries are a major food source for bears, connecting them to this network is imperative. Strategic wildlife crossings between Osoyoos lake and the Okanagan river and the Osoyoos Reserve, and Provincial and State Parks will provide further connectivity to land species.



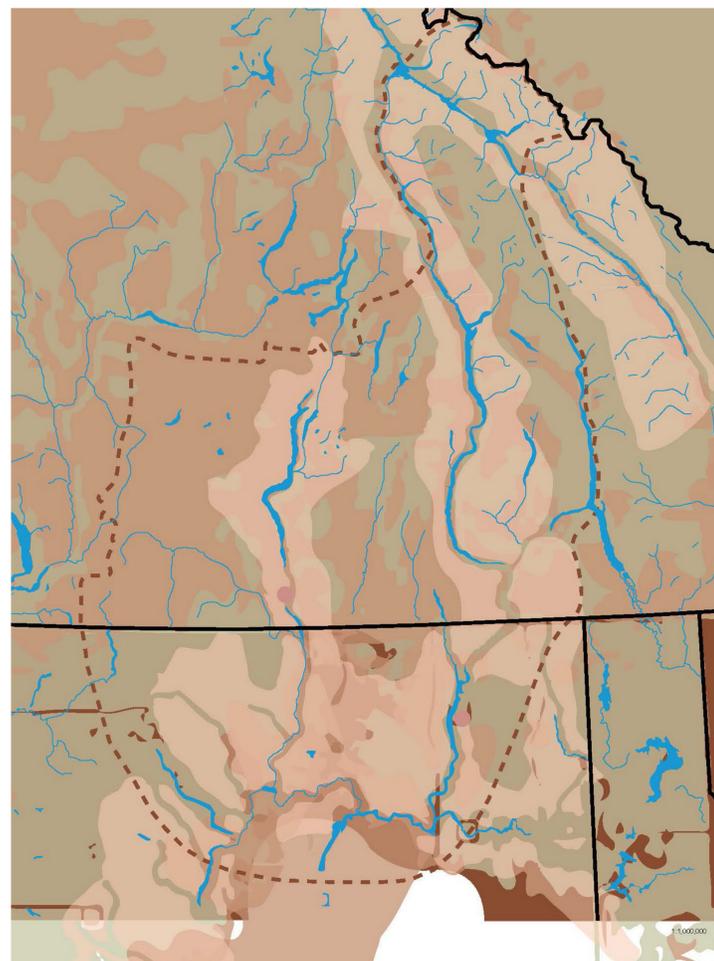
Food Chiefs



Obstacles



Interventions



Haynes Point

