



## Oregon Coordinated Aquatic Bird Monitoring: Description of Important Aquatic Bird Site



# Silvies Valley

## BCS number: 49-6

### Site description author(s)

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### Site location (UTM)

Datum: NAD 83, Zone: 11, Easting: 342701, Northing: 4865086.

### General description

The Silvies Valley lies along Highway 395, approximately 30 miles north of Burns, Harney County Oregon. The habitat at this site is flood-irrigated hay meadows and several adjacent impoundments.

### Boundaries and ownership

*Boundaries:* The site is comprised of areas in green and associated impoundments. See Figure 1 for larger map of the area (Google Earth 2009).

*Ownership:* Primarily private land with some Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) land. See Figure 2 for BLM Burns District ownership map.

### Water levels

The Silvies River is the dominant water feature and its levels depend on runoff from snow melt which is highly variable depending on annual local snow conditions. Most of the wetland habitats here are provided by flood-irrigation of the extensive private wet meadows from April through June. There are a few small impoundments that also support waterfowl and waterbirds.



## Focal Species Use and Timing

<b>Focal Guild/Species</b>	<b>Wintering</b>	<b>Breeding</b>	<b>Migration</b>
Secretive Marsh Birds*		Present	
Ground-based Aquatic Birds		Present	Present
Bufflehead			Present
Greater Sandhill Crane		Present	
Long-billed Curlew		Present	
Upland Sandpiper		Possible	
Yellow Rail		Possible	
Trumpeter Swan		Occasional	

\*The focal species for Oregon's aquatic secretive marsh bird monitoring are PBGR, LEBI, AMBI, VIRA, SORA, YERA. In general focal species above are present from late March through November.

## Location of Type 1 and 2 habitat within the site

<b>Functional Group</b>	<b>Type 1 Habitat</b>	<b>Type 2 Habitat</b>
Ground Based Aquatic Birds	Irrigated meadows	Woody riparian along Silvies River
Secretive Marsh Birds	Irrigated meadows	
Colonial Nesters		
Migrating Shorebirds		

## Access to Type 1 and Type 2 habitats

Most of this site is privately-owned, so landowner permission must be obtained to enter private property. Cranes can be surveyed from the highway and adjacent public roads. Waterfowl can be surveyed from the air. See Figure 3 for general road map of the area (Google Map 2009).

## Audibility/visibility of focal species

Highway noise would affect secretive marsh bird surveys.

## Conservation issues

It is important to maintain flood irrigation to continue to support breeding sandhill cranes and other waterbird populations.

## Conservation measures taken, in progress, or proposed

Conversion to sprinkler or drip irrigation systems should not be implemented here.

### **Past and current surveys**

- Surveys of breeding sandhill crane pairs were conducted in 1986 and 2000 (Littlefield et al. 1994, Ivey and Herziger 2000).
- Surveys of breeding waterfowl have been conducted from the air by ODFW (contact is Brad Bales, ODFW Waterfowl Coordinator).

### **Potential survey methods**

- a. Description:* I suggest including this site in future state-wide surveys of breeding sandhill cranes. Annual aerial breeding waterfowl surveys, may be ongoing. Because of the mixed ownership and limited road access, this would not be an easy site to establish secretive marsh bird surveys.

Manning and Hartley (2006) suggest that determining whether an aerial survey for waterfowl, a secretive marshbird survey, a ground-based waterbird survey, a migrating shorebird survey, and/or a colony survey would be beneficial.

### **Potential pilot studies**

## Literature cited

Bureau of Land Management, Burns District ownership map.

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns/images/BurnsDetailedMap.jpg> . Accessed March 20, 2009.

Google Earth version 5.0. 2009. Image: Silvies Valley, Oregon. Accessed March 20, 2009.

Google Map. 2009. Map of Silvies Valley, Oregon.

<http://maps.google.com/maps?ll=43.98038,-118.95715&z=12&t=h&hl=en>

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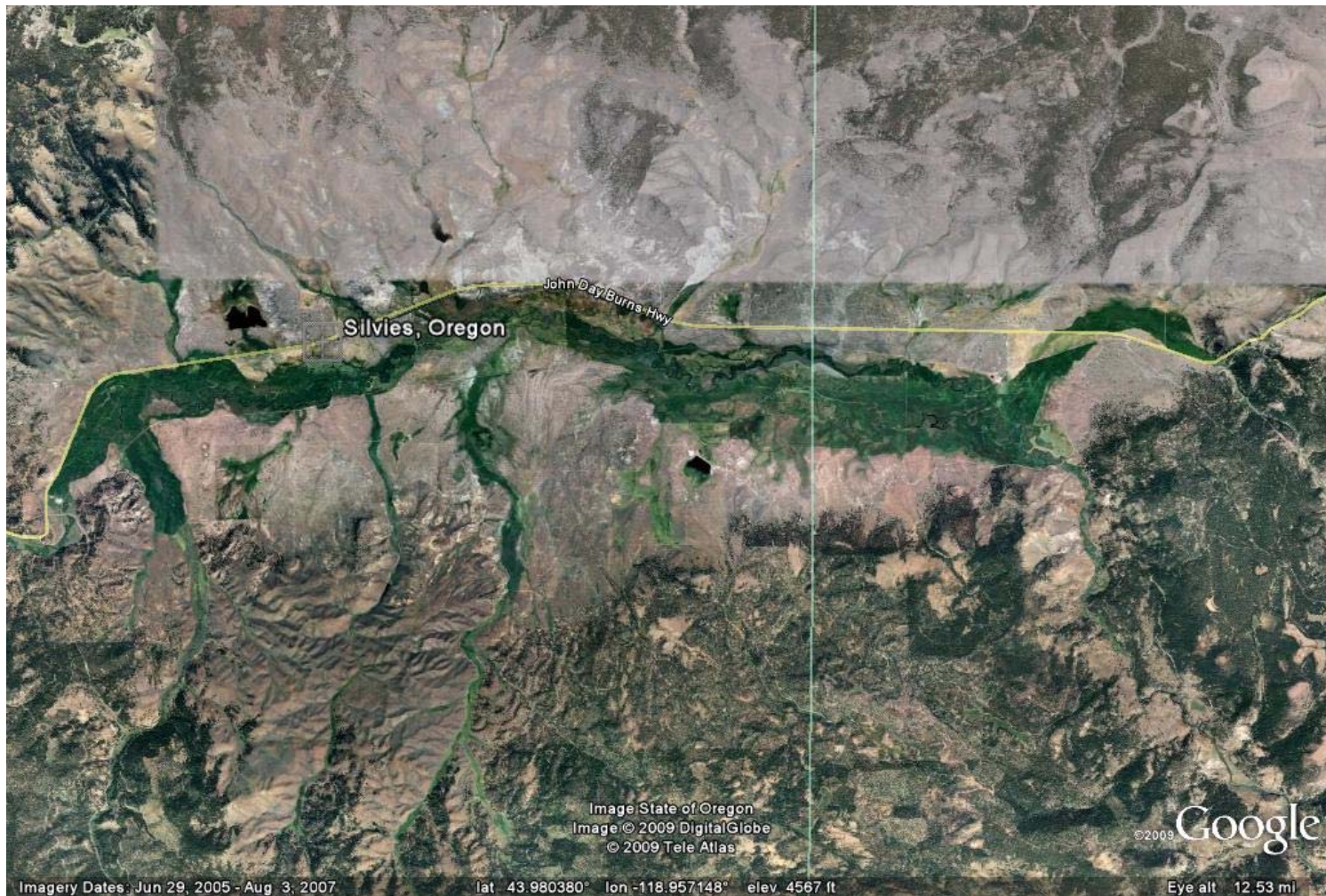
Ivey, G. L., and C. P. Herziger. 2000. Distribution of greater sandhill crane pairs in Oregon, 1999/00. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Nongame Technical Report #03-01-00. Portland, OR.

Littlefield, C. D., M. A. Stern, and R. W. Schlorff. 1994. Summer distribution, status, and trends of greater sandhill crane populations in Oregon and California. *Northwestern Naturalist* 75:1-10.

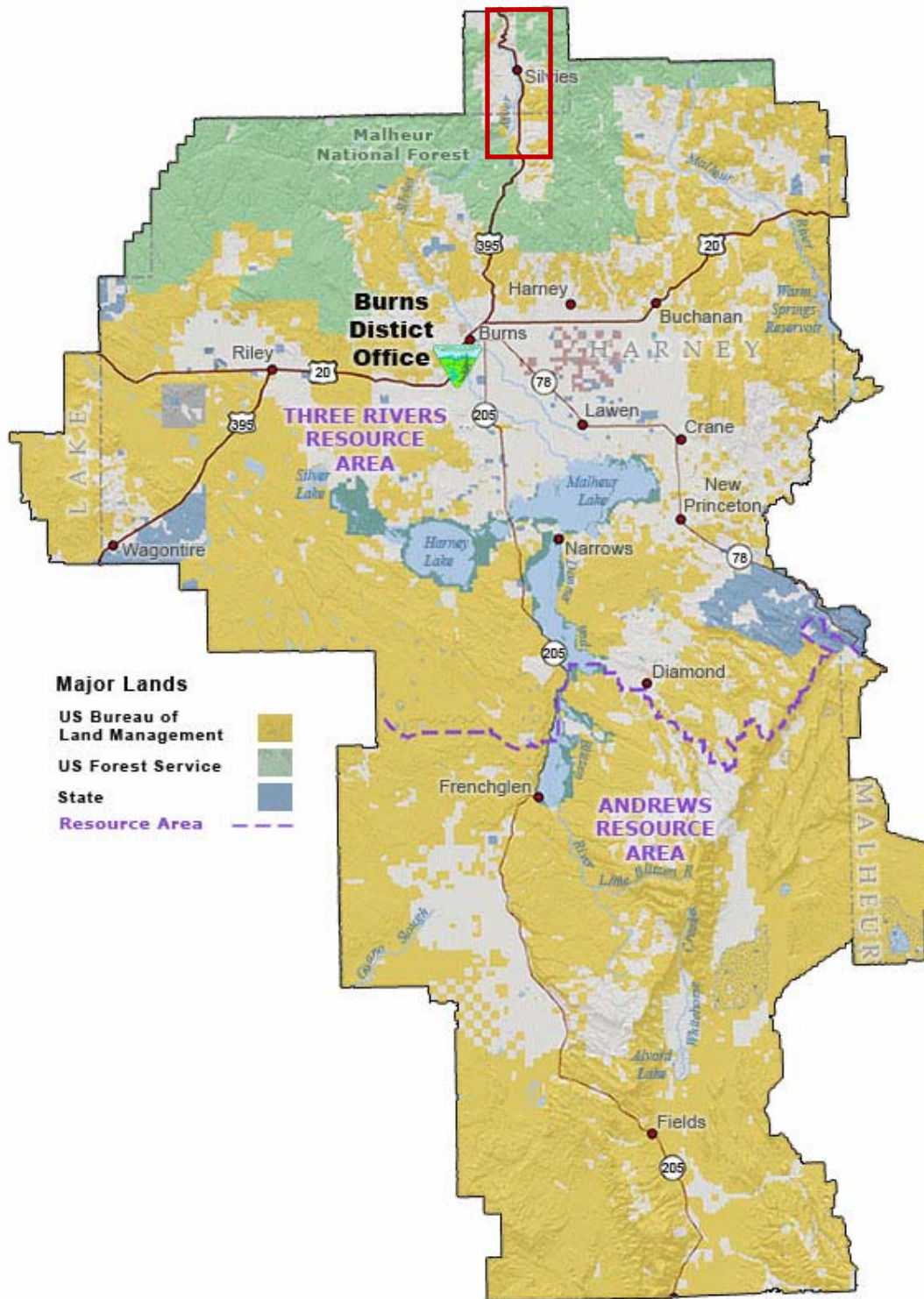
Manning, Ann and Laura Hartley. March 2006. Important sites for aquatic birds in Eastern Oregon. Version 2.0.



**Figure 1:** Google Earth (2009) of Silvies Valley. North is to the left in this image.



**Figure 2:** BLM Burns district ownership map. The red box indicates Silvies Valley.





**Figure 3:** Google Map (2009) of Silvies Valley.

