

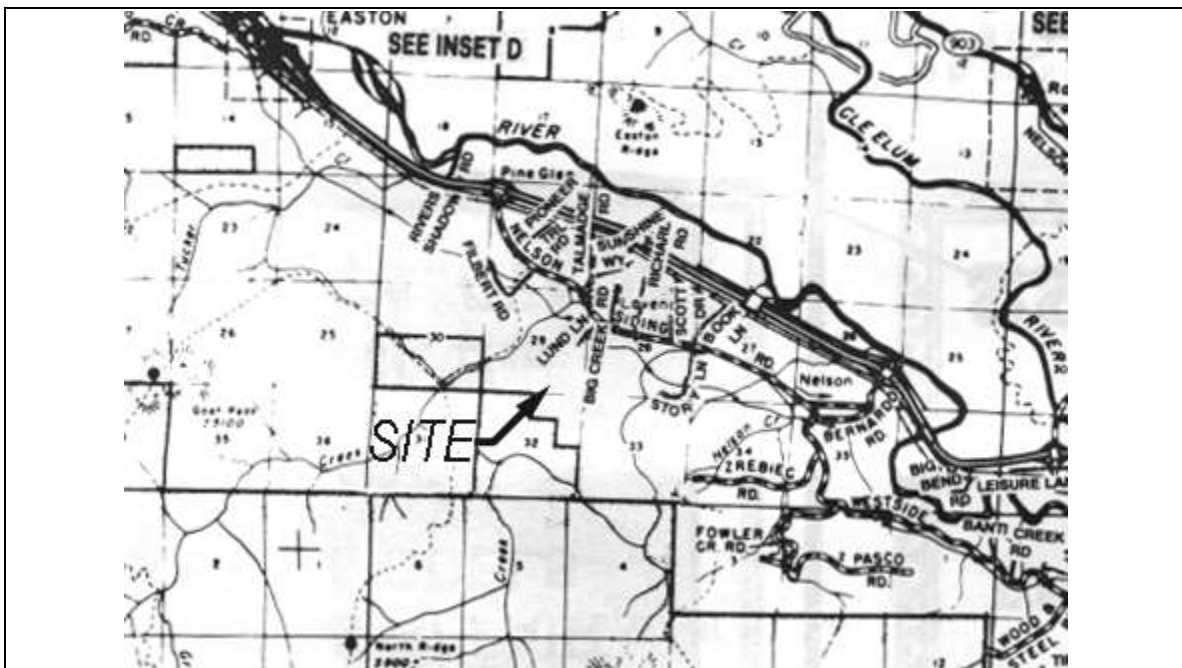
October 28, 2015

D.K. Professional Consultants, Inc.
304 West 1st Street
Cle Elum, Washington 98922

RE: Big Creek Habitat Report
Kittitas County, Washington
SWC Job #A7-168

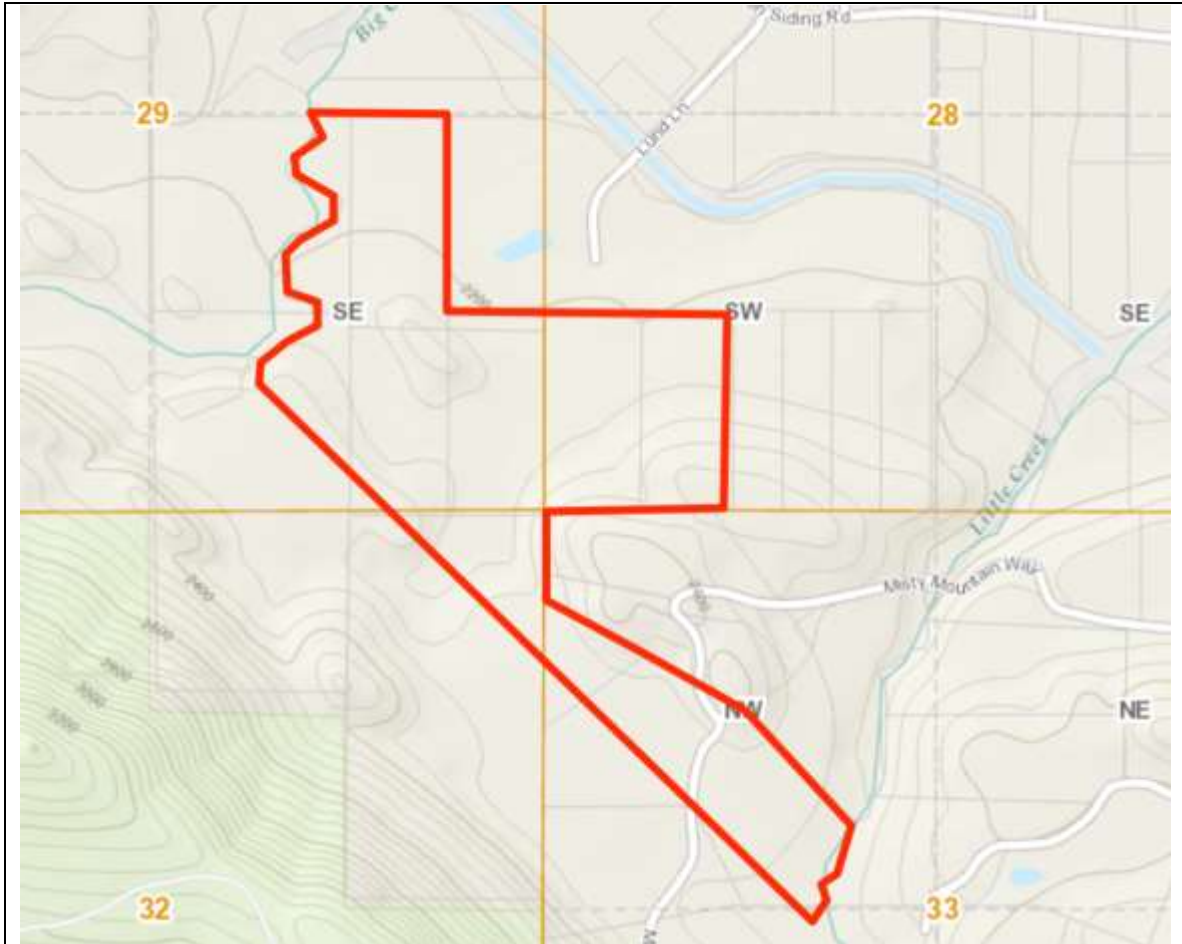
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of observations, as well as a review of available data on the use of the site or areas near the site by state or federally listed threatened or endangered species on or near the Big Creek site located off Lund Lane and Nelson Siding Road in unincorporated Kittitas County, Washington (the “site”).



Above: Vicinity Map of the site.

Specifically, the site is a 340 acre, irregular shaped property located in a portion of Sections 28, 29, and 32, Township 20 North, Range 14 East of the W.M. in Kittitas County Washington. The site is accessed from Nelson Siding Road by heading south on Lund Lane crossing the KRD Canal, and then heading to the west on a gravel road. Gravel Roads pass through the site as well as two major streams, Little Creek and Big Creek.



The site consists primarily of recently logged and thinned conifer forest. The northwestern corner of the site, as well as the steep mountain slope on the south side contain some un-thinned conifer forest. The BPA transmission lines pass through the center of the site and consist of a maintained cleared area typical of power line easements. Several utility maintenance roads pass through the easement. Agricultural land, single family homes, and a recreational campground abut the north side of the site. Private forest land abuts the west side of the site, National forest land abuts the south side of the site, and large lot single family parcels abut the east side of the site.

3.0 OBSERVATIONS

3.1 Existing Site Documentation.

3.1.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program Search

A data search for threatened and endangered plant and animal species has been conducted for the site. A search of the data on file with Washington State Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program revealed no records for rare plants or high quality ecosystems in the vicinity of the site. In addition a review of the latest listing of threatened and endangered species known in Washington State was reviewed.

WDFW Priority Habitats Maps

According to the WDFW Priority Habitat Website with Public access layers activated, there is a wetland located along the east side of the site bordering Little Creek. Wetlands are considered a priority habitat by wdfw (*see page 8 of this report*). Little Creek and Big Creek are both identified as containing westslope cutthroat trout and rainbow trout. These two trout species are regulated as game fish and have no special protection.

The site is also noted to be located within a Township that contains spotted owl occurrences and management buffers. The northern spotted owl is a federally listed threatened species and a state listed endangered species. It should be emphasized that the level of accuracy of these observation are within the Township. This means that somewhere within the Township, these species occur. There are none identified specifically on the site that we are aware of

Northern Spotted Owl

According to the US Fish and Wildlife service, the Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) was first observed in 1858 in the western portion of the Tehachapi Mountains in southern California and it was first documented in the Pacific Northwest in 1892. Though observed only occasionally prior to the 1970's, the northern spotted owl since that time has been found to be more common in certain types of forested habitat throughout its range.

Present Status: The spotted owl has been a focal point of the Pacific Northwest forest debate since it was Federally listed as a threatened species in July of 1990 due to extensive loss of habitat in old-growth and late-successional forest. The survival of the owl in the Pacific Northwest and northern California depends on maintaining adequate,

well-distributed nesting, roosting, and foraging (NRF) habitat throughout the species' range. Because of the owl's dependency on old-growth and late-successional forests in much of its range, loss of these forest habitats due to timber harvest activities threaten the future of the northern spotted owl.

General Habitat: Northern spotted owls generally have large home ranges and use large tracts of land containing significant acreage of older forest to meet their biological needs. Northern spotted owl habitat consists of four components: (1) Nesting, (2) roosting, (3) foraging, and (4) dispersal. The attributes of superior nesting and roosting habitat typically include a moderate to high canopy closure (60 to 80 percent closure); a multi-layered, multi-species canopy with large overstory trees; a high incidence of large trees with various deformities (e.g., large cavities, broken tops, mistletoe infections, and debris accumulations); large accumulations of fallen trees and other debris; and sufficient open space below the canopy for owls to fly (Thomas, et al. 1990).

Spotted owls use a wider array of forest types for foraging, including more open and fragmented habitat. Habitat that meets the spotted owl's need for nesting and roosting also provides foraging habitat. However, some habitat that supports foraging may be inadequate for nesting and roosting. In much of the species' northern range, large, dense forests are also chosen as foraging habitat, probably because they provide relatively high densities of favored prey, the northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*), as well as cover from predators. Because much of the flying squirrel's diet is fungal material, old decadent forests provide superior foraging habitat for owls. In southern, lower-elevation portions of the owl's range, the species often forages along the edges of dense forests and in more open forests, preying on the dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*).

Although habitat that allows spotted owls to disperse may be unsuitable for nesting, roosting, or foraging, it provides an important linkage among blocks of nesting habitat both locally and over the range of the northern spotted owl. This linkage is essential to the conservation of the spotted owl. Dispersal habitat, at a minimum, consists of forest stands with adequate tree size and canopy closure to provide some degree of protection to spotted owls from avian predators and to allow the owls to forage at least occasionally.

Site Conditions: A review of the site reveals that the fragmented, open and immature status (average tree age @25-40yrs) of the forested areas of the site and the fact it is crossed by roads, power line and some development generally preclude its use by spotted owls. There are no known observations of spotted owls on or near the site. While it is possible for a spotted owl to fly into or through the site, it would seem unlikely due to the fact the site lacks appropriate habitat for this species.

3.2 *Field Observations*

3.2.1 General

The site is used by typical species found along the eastern slope of the cascades including elk, deer, coyote, black bear, cougar, bobcat and numerous small species of wildlife.

No unique or unusual habitats or habitat features were noted on or near the site.

No fish, plant or wildlife species were noted on the site that are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered.

4.0 CONCLUSION

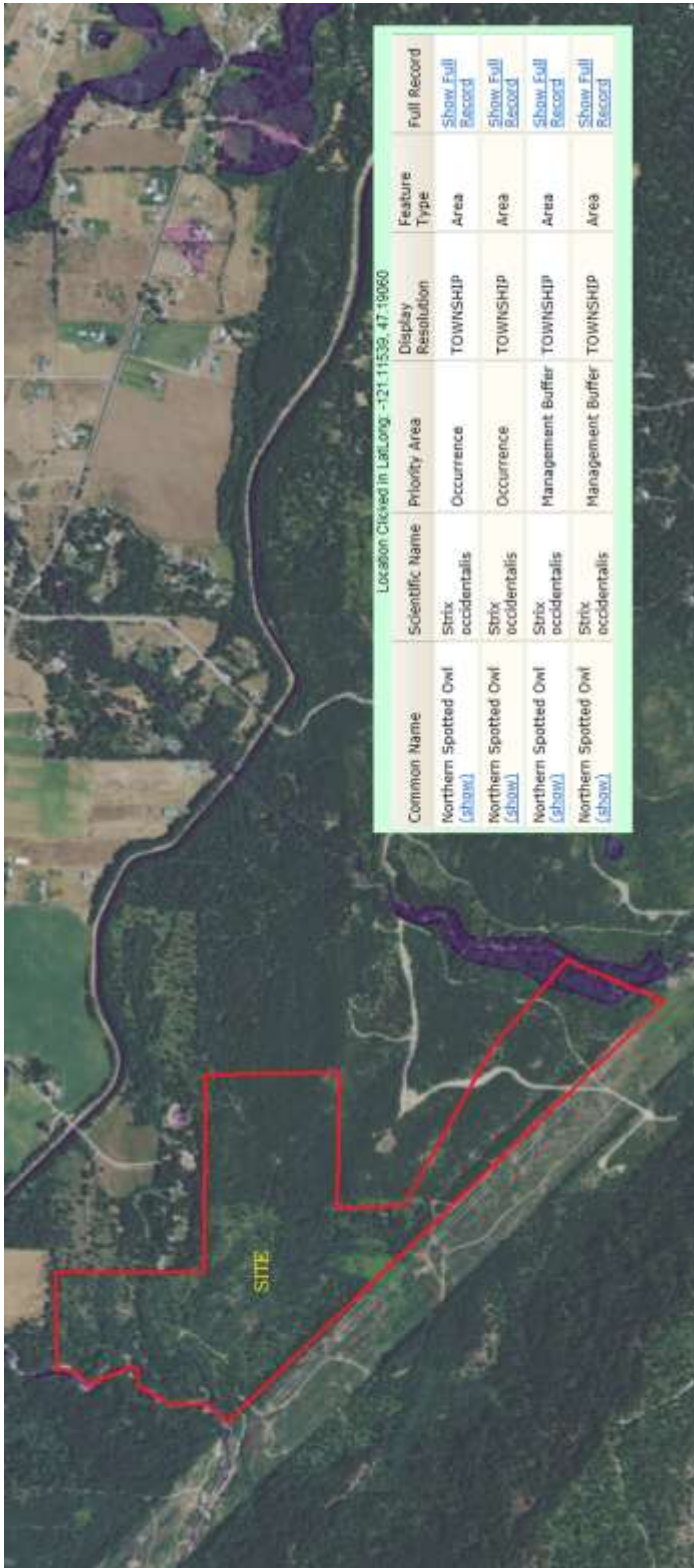
No state or federally listed threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species were observed on the site.

If you have any questions or require any additional information please feel free to contact me at (253) 859-0515 or at esewall@sewallwc.com.

Sincerely,
Sewall Wetland Consulting, Inc.



Ed Sewall
Senior Wetland Ecologist PWS #212



Above: WDFW Priority Habitats Map of the site

Lindsey Ozbolt

From: Pat Deneen <patdeneen3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2015 12:48 PM
To: Lindsey Ozbolt
Subject: Big creek wild life report
Attachments: A7168HabLtr.pdf; ATT00001.txt