

Habitat Conservation Area Assessment Proposed Big Lake Dock

18141 Big Lake Boulevard
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

For
Henry Darakhovskiy
18141 Big Lake Boulevard
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

May 11, 2026

William G. Cantrell, M.S.
1510 Mill Avenue, Bellingham WA 98225

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Introduction

This Critical Area Assessment Report presents our habitat analysis, OHWM determination and analysis of potential impacts associated with the installation of a dock on the west shore of Big Lake at 18141 Big Lake Boulevard (see *Figure 1. Vicinity Map*). Big Lake is a designated Rural Residential Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) carrying a 100' buffer. This analysis concludes that under the current proposal, with mitigation measures, no adverse impacts to critical areas, aquatic or shoreline habitat, wildlife species or shoreline functions will occur as a result of the proposed project.

Shoreline Permit Summary

Skagit County regulates activities within designated Habitat Conservation Areas under the Shoreline Master Program (SCC Chapter 14.26). Dock installation standards are presented under the Boating Facilities Regulations portion of that chapter (SCC 14.26.420). The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife requires compliance with Chapter 77.55 RCW under a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) process. Key provisions from WAC 220-660-140 include limiting the width of residential piers and docks to six feet for the first 30 feet from the shoreline (measured from mean low water). Design and location of structures must follow the mitigation sequence to protect freshwater habitats of special concern, including designing and locating structures to protect fish spawning areas and juvenile salmonid migration, feeding, and rearing areas where shading impacts are a concern.

The proposal is to construct a new dock that would allow the reasonable use of the shoreline for the purpose of mooring and recreation. The area of impact is within a Habitat Conservation Area. The recommended mitigation includes removal of the existing retaining wall blocks, wooden deck, and associated footings to allow for the formation of a pocket beach.

The design of the project will be compatible with other permitted activities in the area and will not create any view obstruction or cause adverse effects on adjacent properties. Public right of navigation and use of the shorelines will not be adversely affected by the proposal. Potential cumulative effects are inevitable with the ongoing installation of docks as reasonable uses of the shoreline for the purpose of mooring and recreation. However, it is our opinion that the proposed 60 ft. dock, as conditioned with mitigation, would not result in any significant adverse ecological impacts and complies with the policies and regulations of Chapter 14.26, including the Shoreline Exemption requirements of SCC 14.26.720.

Project Description

The proposed project is to install a new residential dock at the beach access to 18141 Big Lake Boulevard on the west shore of Big Lake. The new dock and ramp are of minimum dimensions and are designed to conform to current WDFW standards (see *Viking Marine*

Sheets 1 and 2 of 2.) The dock portion will be 240 sf (4' x 60') to be composed of prefabricated aluminum with eight 8" diameter steel piles for support. Decking will be 100% Sunwalk grated panels. A 4' x 14' aluminum ramp with ThruFlow decking will connect the upland bank to the dock.

Methods: HCAs, Wetlands and Wildlife Habitats

We consulted DNR maps, WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data and WDFW Salmonscares mapping to determine whether any potential known on-site or off-site streams or fish and wildlife habitats were present on or within 300' of the subject property. In February 2020 we made a site visit to assess wildlife habitats such as nesting structures, wetlands, streams, riparian areas, aquatic vegetation on and in the vicinity of the subject property. We did not record data because of the obvious upland habitat and absence of wetland conditions in the historically built environment.

Methods: OHWM Determination

Ordinary High Water Mark is defined in RCW 90.58.030 (b) Definitions and concepts: *"Ordinary high water mark" on all lakes, streams, and tidal water is that mark that will be found by examining the bed and banks and ascertaining where the presence and action of waters are so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to mark upon the soil a character distinct from that of the abutting upland, in respect to vegetation as that condition exists on June 1, 1971, as it may naturally change thereafter, or as it may change thereafter in accordance with permits issued by a local government or the department: PROVIDED, That in any area where the ordinary high water mark cannot be found, the ordinary high water mark adjoining salt water shall be the line of mean higher high tide and the ordinary high water mark adjoining fresh water shall be the line of mean high water.*

We examined vertical in-water structures for marks of the regular presence of water. We examined the abutting uplands for evidence of "racking" of woody debris into linear features on the beach. We noted vegetation composition and patterns for evidence of the common presence of surface water on vertical surfaces. We mapped OHWM to local landmarks using a steel tape.

Results: Site Description and Habitat Observations

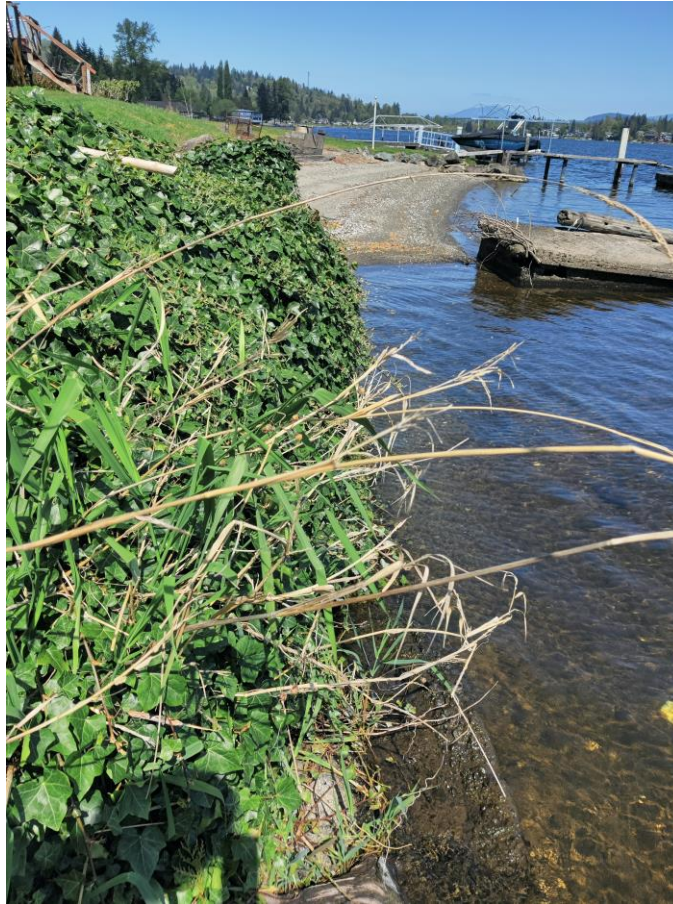
The subject property consists of a 0.42 acre lot on the western side of Big Lake. The eastern portion of the lot is a beach access stem improved with access stairs, a wooden deck and associated footings, and a block wall at the OHWM line. The 20' wide beach access portion of the parcel is also improved with landscape plantings at the edges and an interior of lawn. The property is bounded by developed lakefront residences on the north and south and by Coots Cove Lane to the west. The shoreline in the vicinity of the property is improved with

numerous docks and piers. The bounding docks extend into the lake from the OHWM 66' (north dock) and 63.5' (south dock).

The access portion of the lot is southern portion of the lot is within the 100' Shoreline Habitat Conservation Area buffer to Big Lake. The shoreline in the vicinity of the parcel has a winter-season gravel substrate with a few cobbles. The OHWM is at the vertical wall surface (see *Photographs 1 & 2*). We did not observe any aquatic vegetation within 100' of the shoreline in the lake or on the beach. NWI categorizes the lake in the vicinity as (L1UBH) lacustrine, limnetic, unconsolidated bottom, permanently flooded habitat.



Photograph 1. Shoreline facing south.



Photograph 2. Shoreline facing north.

Results: Ordinary High Water Mark

Distinct markings indicating the location of the OHWM were visible on vertical surfaces to the north and south. The OHWM appears to be driven by wave action during summer high water levels. At the subject property the OHWM was at the face of the block wall.

Results: Fish and Wildlife Habitat

WDFW lists fall chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), fall chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*), winter steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), summer steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*), pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) as present or potentially present in Big Lake. Sport fishing sources list the presence of black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed sunfish (*Lepomis gibbosus*), and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*).

The WDFW Priority Habitats and Species database shows Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*) at the township level of resolution in the larger vicinity of the subject parcel. Waterfowl wintering areas are shown in Big lake which provide food resources and important loafing habitat for diving ducks and swans

We did not find any other indicators of priority habitats or rare, threatened or endangered species or habitats in the vicinity of the subject property. We did not observe any raptors nests, cavity nests, pileated woodpecker foraging signs, Townsend's big-eared bat roosting habitat or other signs of priority species on or near the subject property.

Analysis of Potential Impacts, and Impact Avoidance and Minimization

1) Existing shoreline uses. **The existing deck and associated support are non-conforming and will be removed along with the existing wall to restore a pocket beach.**



Photograph 3. Showing deck to be removed to create a pocket beach.

2. Cumulative impacts as defined in the CAO. **The Corps of Engineers lists numerous indirect and accumulative impacts potentially associated with new dock construction. The primary indirect effects of the authorized activities within this RGP include degradation of the shoreline habitat (mitigated with this project by removal of wall and creation of pocket beach), creation of potential salmonid predator habitat (minimized by WDFW design standards), shading and reductions in littoral productivity (minimized by WDFW design standards), increased boating activity, and alterations to water flow (minimized by WDFW design standards). Although cumulative impacts are inevitable with ongoing practices such as boating**

and dock installation that allow for reasonable shoreline recreational uses, the proposed construction of a residential dock, with mitigating measures as conditioned herein, appears to meet all applicable standards. The contribution of this project to cumulative adverse effects to the shoreline is off-set by those mitigation measures, especially the in-kind compensatory mitigation as proposed to enhance shoreline wildlife functions with the creation of the pocket beach.

3. Rectification of impacts from the new structure in water – see WCC 16.16.760 – Mitigation Standards HCAs. **These potential impacts are addressed by following WDFW design standards. With the condition that mitigation must be completed, it is our opinion that there will be no net loss of ecological functions and values as a result of this project.**

4. Rectification of temporary impacts. **The Corps of Engineers list the following potential temporary impacts associated with dock and pier construction: noise (construction noise will be very temporary and in a place where boat traffic is already fairly noisy), water quality (the project is designed to prevent water quality effects), and riparian vegetation removal (the project will have very little effect on the lawn where the small landing will be placed).**

5. Protection of the Site. **It is our opinion that a Notice on Title of the presence of the HCA would be an appropriate (if required by Skagit County) measure for ongoing protection of the 100' HCA buffer and aquatic habitat per 16.16.265.**

The following analysis is based on typical general standards for construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of docks and public or private launching ramps.

1. Dock and ramps should be located, oriented and constructed in a manner that minimizes adverse effects on navigation, wave action, water quality, movement of aquatic and terrestrial life, ecological processes, eelgrass beds, shellfish beds, spawning habitat, and wetlands. **The proposed ramp and dock will be situated perpendicular to the OHWM of the shoreline. We did not observe any native plant habit along the shoreline or any aquatic bed habitat in the vicinity. The proposed dock orientation does not appear to present obstacles to the movement of terrestrial or aquatic wildlife. The new dock is to be situated similarly to existing dock structures in the vicinity.**

2. Docks or ramps on shorelines of the state shall comply with WCC Title 23 and state hydraulic project approval requirements. **The project will be compliant with the requirements of the HPA and determined in consultation with WDFW and consistent with recently approved similar dock projects.**

3. Natural shoreline processes will be maintained to the maximum extent practicable. The activity will not result in increased erosion and will not alter the size or distribution of shoreline or stream substrate or eliminate or reduce sediment supply from feeder bluffs. **The removal of shoreline hardening and exposure of the natural shoreline slope is expected to locally restore historic shoreline processes.**

4. No alteration of juvenile fish migration corridors will occur. **The project has a minimum underwater footprint and does not appear to constitute a significant impediment to fish migration.**
5. No Net Loss of intertidal or riparian habitat function will occur. **It is our opinion that there will be No Net Loss of riparian habitat function. The dock will not require incursion into native plant dominated habitat and will connect directly to existing lawn. No aquatic vegetation will be affected.**
6. **Construction will be from the water side so no temporary buffer impacts will result from the dock installation.**
7. As a measure to provide compensation for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts associated with the dock project that have not been mitigated by WDFW design measures we are proposing to provide in-kind mitigation **to provide ecological lift to the nearshore habitat, in the form of restoration of the shoreline to its native gentle slope. The narrow corridor available at the shoreline precludes a planting strategy. It is our opinion that the beach environment provides more ecological lift in this case.**

Conclusions

Based on our analysis, we conclude that with the mitigation measures discussed herein, no adverse impacts to critical areas, aquatic or shoreline habitat, wildlife species or shoreline functions will occur as a result of the proposed dock installation project.

Disclaimer

This critical area study is based upon physical circumstances that are described in manuals and publications utilized by Federal, State, and Local agencies. No guarantees are given that the delineation will concur exactly with those performed by agencies with jurisdiction or by other qualified professionals. This report is provided for the use of the named recipient only and is not intended for use by other parties for any other purpose.

Qualifications

The work produced in this study was conducted by William G. Cantrell, M.S. Senior Ecologist at Cantrell & Associates, Inc. The following information provides his qualifications.

EDUCATION

M.S.: Environmental Science. Vegetation Ecology. Western Washington University, 1990.

B.S.: Biochemistry. Western Washington University, 1987.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Ecologist. William G. Cantrell, M.S. 2024-2026

Principal and Senior Ecologist, Cantrell & Associates, Inc., Bellingham, Washington, 1991– 2024.

Wetland Ecologist/Project Manager, W. D. Purnell & Associates, Inc., Bellingham, Washington, 11/90 - 12/91.

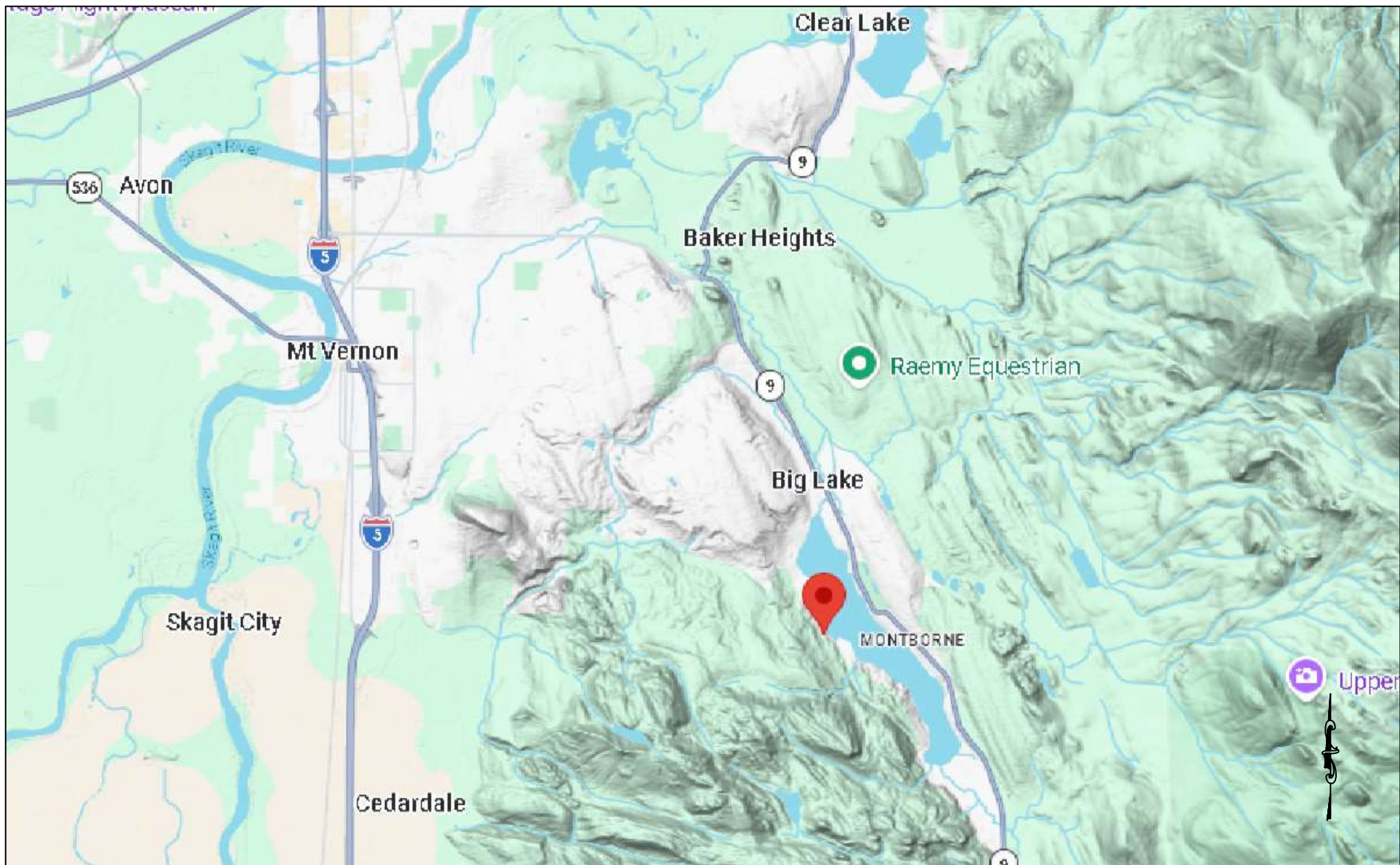
GS-9 Natural Resource Specialist, North Cascades National Park, Sedro Woolley, 6/90 -11/90.

Air Sampling Specialist, Northwest Air Pollution Authority, Mount Vernon, Washington, 11/89 - 3/90.

Research Assistant IV, Vegetation Ecologist, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, 9/87-9/89.

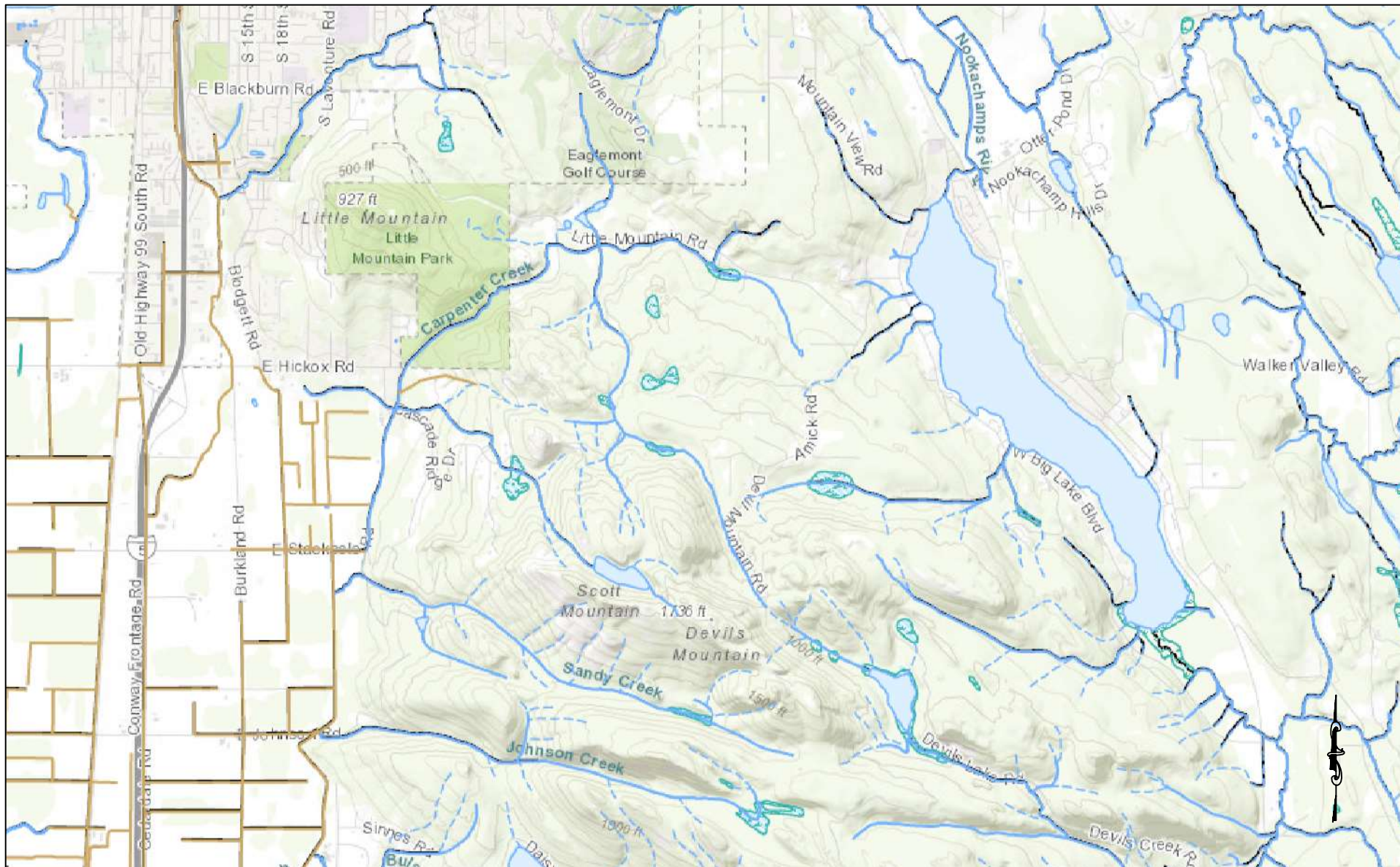
Environmental Chemist, Georgia Pacific Corporation, Bellingham, Washington, 6/86 - 9/86.

Senior Lab Technician, Battelle Pacific Northwest Labs, Richland, Washington, 12/83 - 8/85.



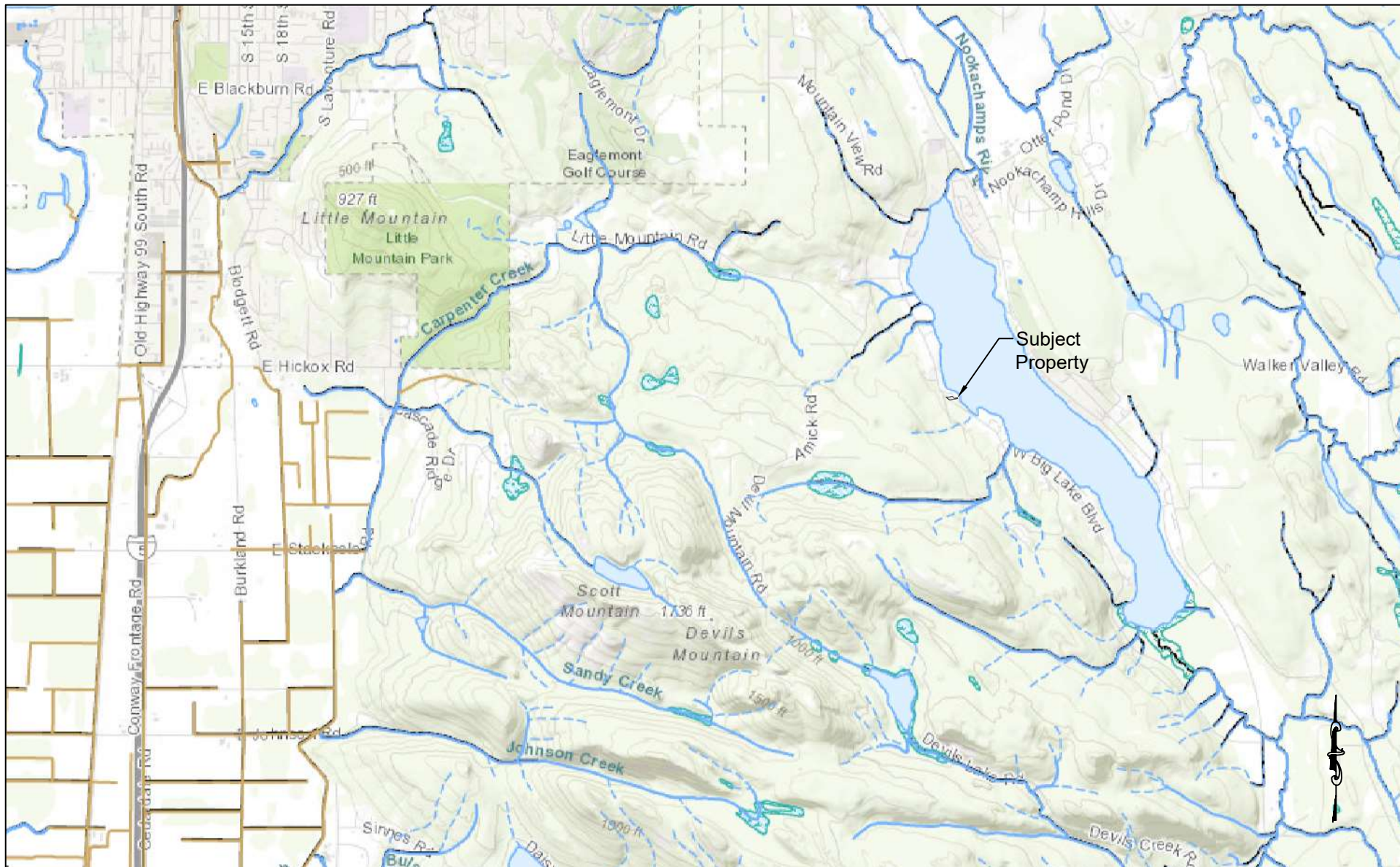
**Figure 1. Vicinity map
18141 West Big lake Boulevard**

Not to Scale



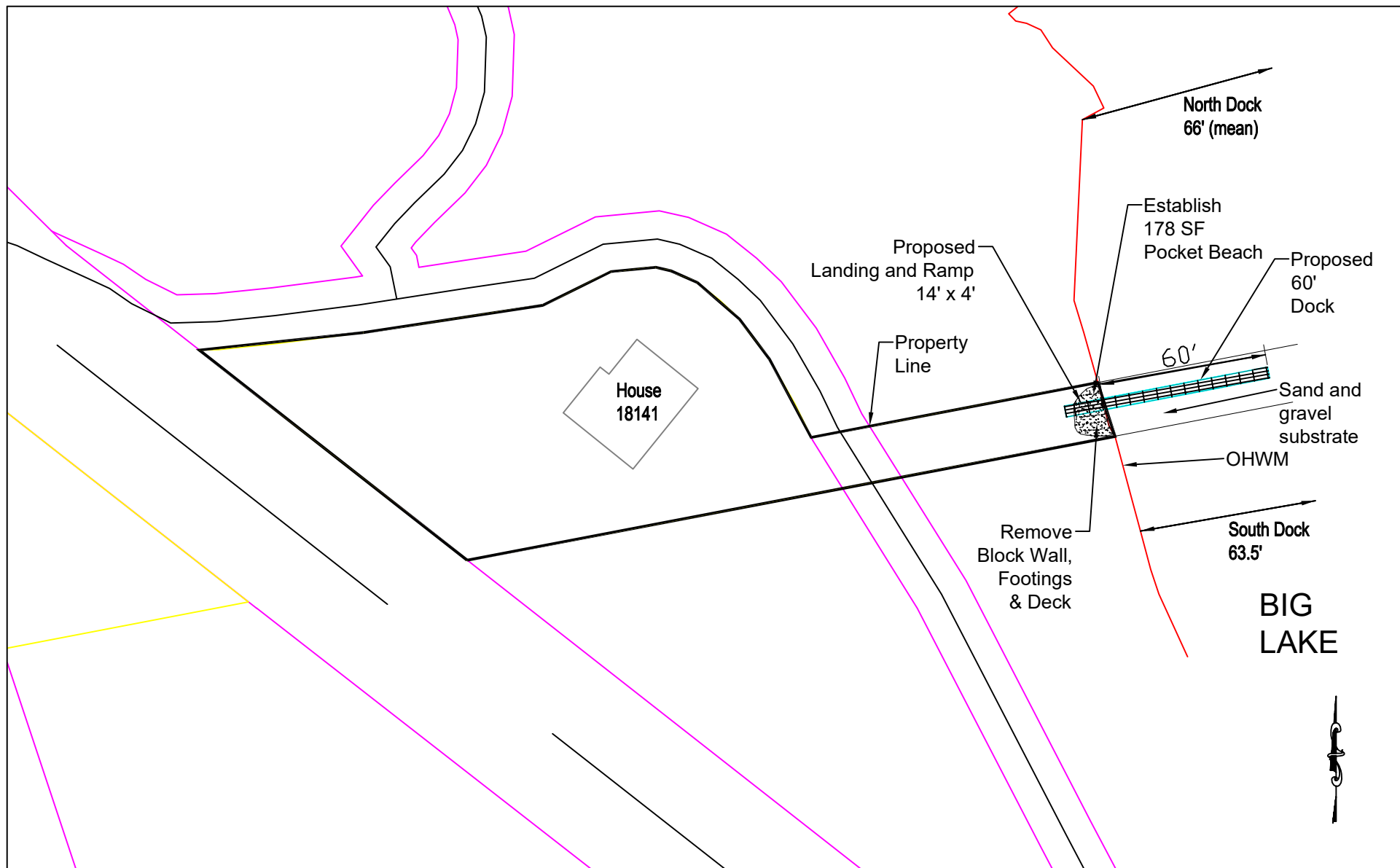
**Figure 2. WDFW Hydrography Map
18141 West Big lake Boulevard**

0 4,000'

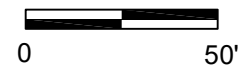


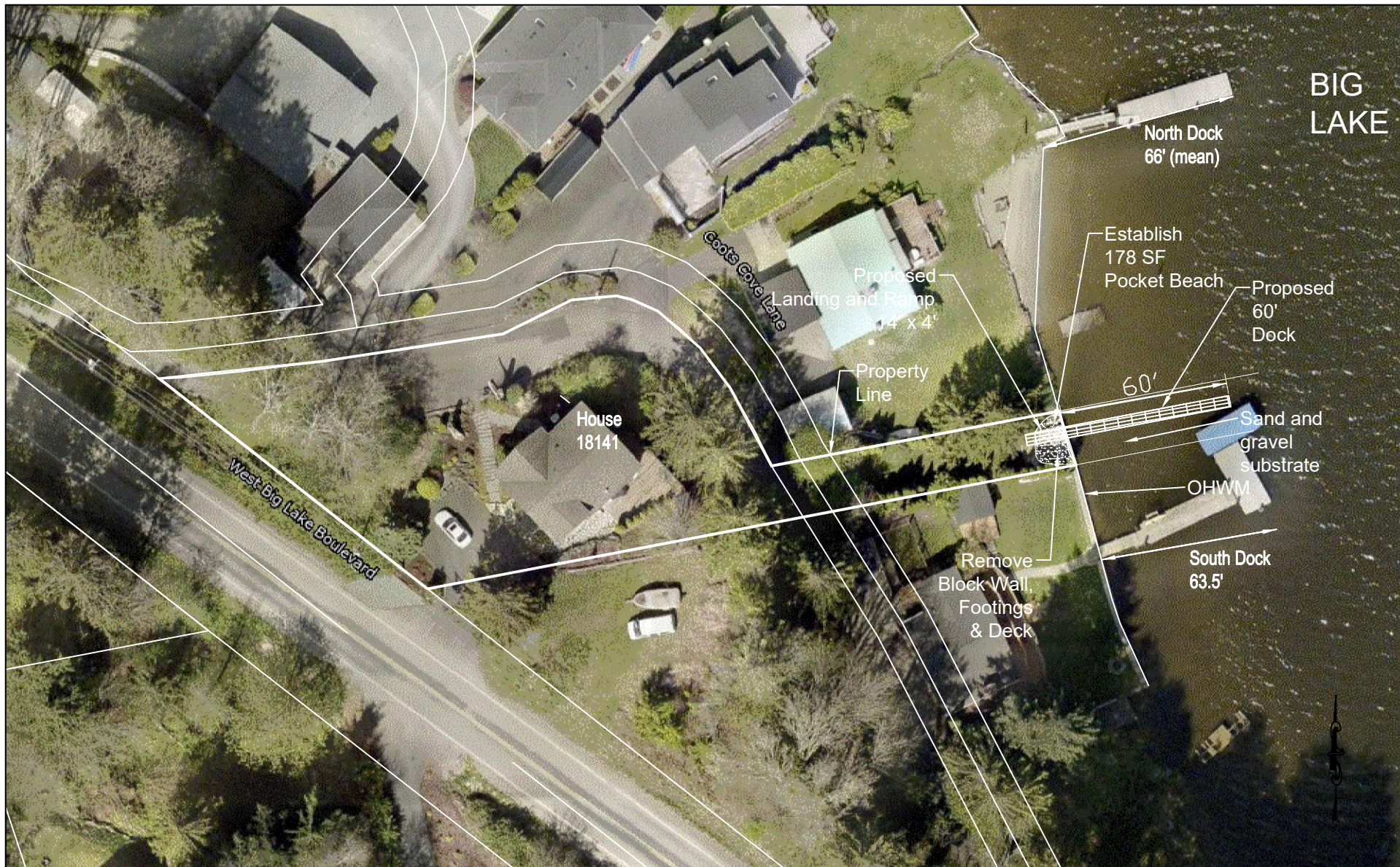
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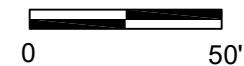


**Figure 3. Dock Site Plan & Mitigation Map
18141 West Big lake Boulevard**





**Figure 4. Site Plan with Aerial Photograph
18141 West Big lake Boulevard**



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

INSTALL NEW 240 SF RESIDENTIAL DOCK ON BIG LAKE. DOCK (4' x 60') TO BE PREFABRICATED ALUMINUM WITH EIGHT 8" DIAMETER STEEL PILES FOR SUPPORT. DECKING TO BE 100% SUNWALK GRATED PANELS.

PROPERTY OWNER:

Gennadiy Darakhovskiy
18141 West Big Lake Blvd.
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

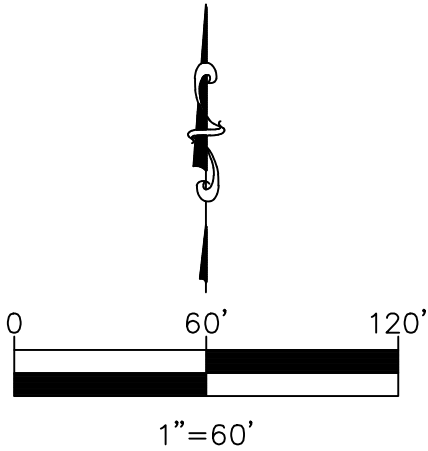
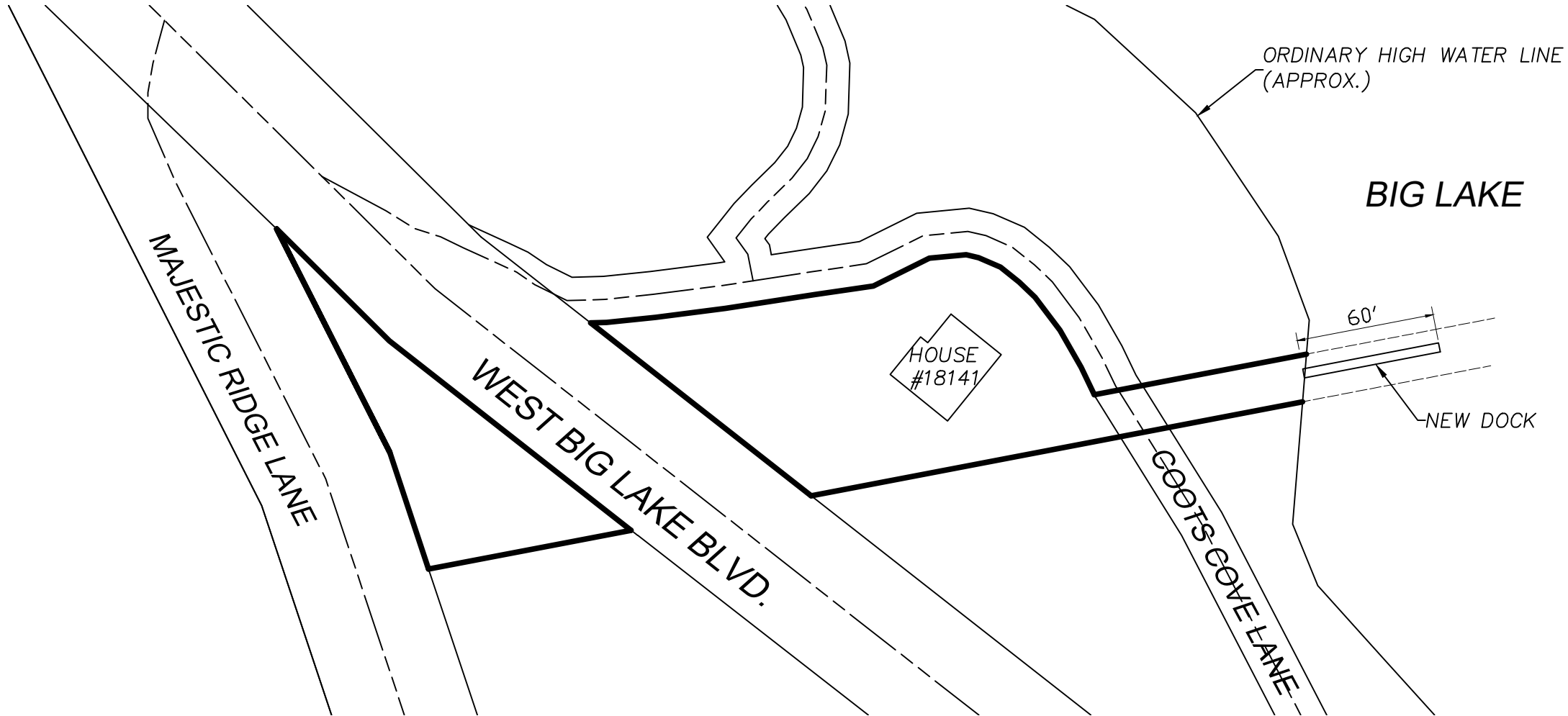
CONTACT:

IRWIN LAND USE CONSULTING, LLC
P.O. BOX 1715
BELLINGHAM, WA 98227
(360) 410-6745
irwinlanduse@gmail.com



LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

(0.4200 ac) THAT PORTION OF THE SOUTH 1/2 OF TRACT 36 AND ALL OF TRACT 37, LYING WESTERLY OF HC PETERS ROAD NO. 263, EXTENSION AS CONVEYED TO SKAGIT COUNTY BY DEED RECORDED UNDER AF#405657, ALL IN 'BIG LAKE WATER FRONT TRACTS, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON', AS PER PLAT RECORDED IN VOLUME 4 OF PLATS, PAGE 12, RECORDS OF SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON. TOGETHER WITH THAT PORTION OF TRACT 37, 'BIG LAKE WATER FRONT TRACTS, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON', LYING NORTHEASTERLY OF HC PETERS ROAD NO. 263 EXTENSION, AS CONVEYED TO SKAGIT COUNTY BY DEED RECORDED UNDER AF#405657 AND LYING SOUTHERLY AND WESTERLY OF THAT CERTAIN 40 FOOT STRIP OF LAND CONVEYED TO SKAGIT COUNTY FOR ROAD PURPOSES RECORDED UNDER AF#145101. TOGETHER WITH THE SOUTHERLY 20 FEET OF THAT PORTION OF TRACT 37, 'BIG LAKE WATER FRONT TRACTS, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON', LYING EASTERLY OF THAT CERTAIN 40 FOOT STRIP CONVEYED TO SKAGIT COUNTY FOR ROAD PURPOSES BY DEED RECORDED UNDER AF#145101. ALSO TOGETHER WITH THAT PORTION OF UNOPENED COUNTY RIGHT OF WAY KNOWN AS COOTS COVE LANE, GRANTED TO NORMA ANDERSON BY ORDER OF VACATION RECORDED UNDER AF#200401080101.



LOT BOUNDARIES AND BUILDING LOCATIONS PER DEED AFN 202506130031 AND SKAGIT COUNTY ASSESSOR'S GIS DATA. DOCK DIMENSIONS, PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WATER DEPTHS PER VIKING MARINE CONSTRUCTION.

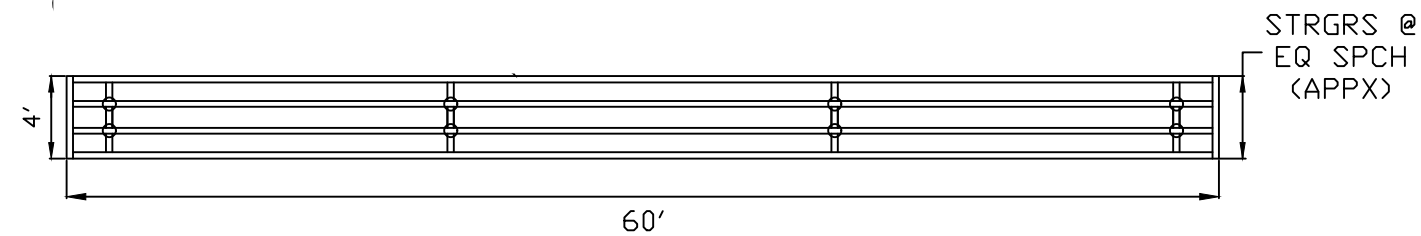


VIKING MARINE
CONSTRUCTION
801 HARRIS AVE.
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225
(360) 441-0757
dan@lakesidemarine.net

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION

DARAKHOVSKIY
DOCK INSTALL
18141 WEST BIG LAKE BLVD.
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98274

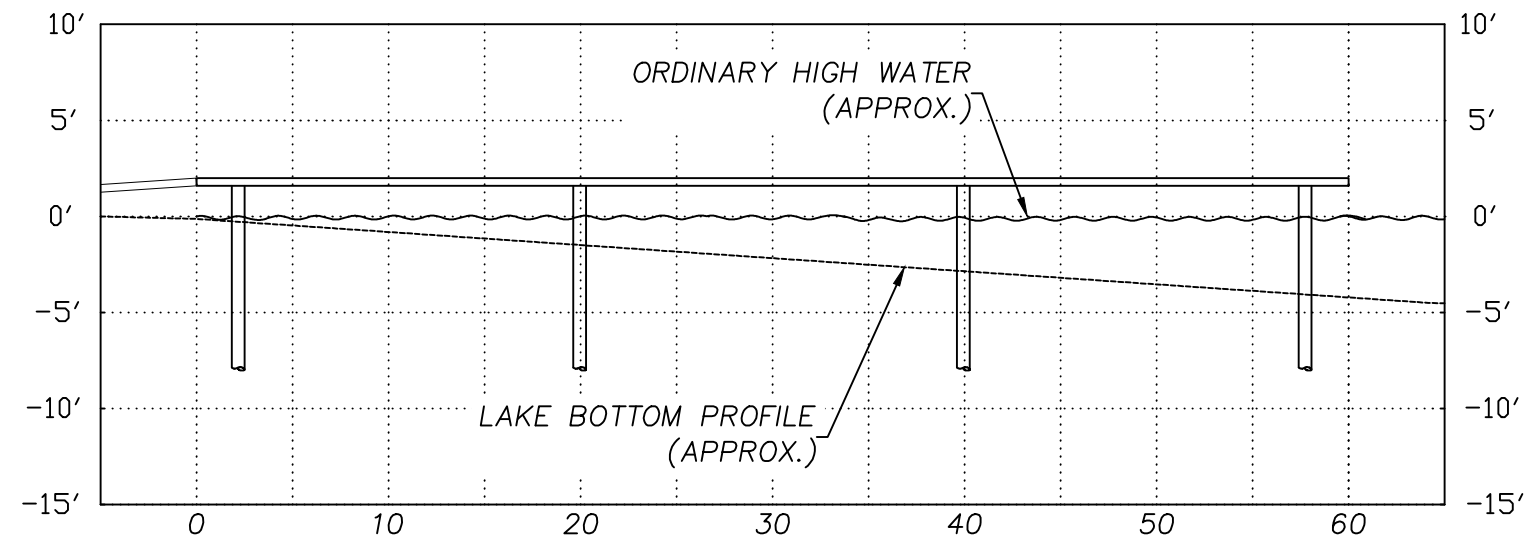
PROJECT NUMBER:	
PARCEL NUMBER:	P62014
ISSUE DATE:	4/27/2026



APPROX. PILE AND PILE CAP SPACING

DOCK LAYOUT

SCALE: 1"=10'



DOCK PROFILE

SCALE: 1"=10'



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