

Proposed Certification for a Wetland Mitigation and Conservation Bank in Cowlitz County

Interested parties are notified the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is considering the certification of the Coweeman River Mitigation Bank in Cowlitz County.

Overview

Ecology is seeking public comment regarding a proposal to construct and operate a privately-owned, 320-acre wetland mitigation and conservation bank near Kelso, Wash. A wetland bank is a site where wetlands are restored, created, enhanced or preserved before unavoidable, authorized wetland losses occur. The Coweeman River Mitigation Bank is designed to provide for sale to the general public high-quality consolidated, watershed-based compensatory mitigation. Bank credits would be available – subject to regulatory approval – for future projects with unavoidable impacts to wetlands and adverse effects on aquatic habitat, including habitat for fish. Ecology will take public comment to evaluate state certification for the proposed bank from Oct. 14, 2015, through Nov. 13, 2015.

Location

The proposed Coweeman River Mitigation Bank (Bank) is located 3 miles east of the City of Kelso along the Coweeman River. The site is located on parcels W13601001, 24125, W13602008, W13605001, W13605002, and WE3101003 within portions of Section 36, Township 8 North, Range 2 West and Section 31, Township 8 North, Range 1 West, Willamette Meridian, east of Kelso, Wash. The Bank site is located within Cowlitz County. For the exact location, **please see the attached project vicinity map.**

Applicant

Habitat Bank, LLC.
801 E 1st Street, Suite B 107
Cle Elum, WA 98922
ATTN: Victor Woodward
Phone: 425-785-8428
victorw@habitatbank.com

Coweeman River
Mitigation Bank

Public Notice Date:
October 14, 2015

**Comment Period
Ends:**
November 13, 2015

Send written comments to:

Kate Thompson
Department of Ecology
SEA Program
Post Office Box 47600
Olympia, Wash. 98504-7600
kate.thompson@ecy.wa.gov

A more detailed description of the project is available in the *Coweeman River Mitigation Bank Mitigation Banking Instrument*, dated October 2015, available at: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/mitigation/banking/public-notice

Interested parties also can review the document at:

Kelso City Hall
203 S. Pacific Ave
Kelso, WA 98626

and

Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive, SE
Lacey, WA 98504

Existing Conditions

The proposed Bank includes approximately 7 acres of the Coweeman River and 105 acres of level-to-undulating Coweeman River floodplain that has been actively used for agriculture and cattle grazing for at least three-quarters of a century. A large palustrine forested/shrub/emergent/aquatic bed wetland complex locally known as “Hart’s Lake” and three smaller wetlands are located within the floodplain of the Bank site. These aquatic areas have been accessible to cattle or have been hayed each summer which has significantly degraded their conditions.

The remaining 208 acres of land in the Bank site is relatively undisturbed lowland forest, including six tributary streams, 2 acres of associated wetlands, and 174 acres meeting priority habitat standards for Old Growth Forest, as defined by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (*Priority Habitats and Species List*, August 2008). The remaining 32 woodland acres is well-established mature second growth forest.

Proposed Improvements

The general goals of the Bank project are to restore site hydrology and floodplain connectivity to existing and created aquatic areas, increase habitat function and complexity for anadromous fish and other aquatic dependent wildlife, and re-establish wetland and riparian vegetation communities typically found in the Lower Columbia River floodplain environment.

If the Bank is approved and certified, the site would be permanently protected through a conservation easement. Implementation of the Bank project would approximately create 30 acres of new wetland area, rehabilitate and enhance 30 acres of wetland area, preserve 8 acres of wetland area, enhance 39 acres of riparian upland area and preserve 206 acres of old growth and second growth forested hillside.

Proposed Service Area

The proposed service area where wetland mitigation credits may be used includes the Lower Columbia River floodplain from the I-5 Bridge at River Mile (RM) 106 in Vancouver, Wash. to RM 56 near Stella, west of the City of Longview in Wash. This service area also includes a portion of Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 26 – Cowlitz River Watershed and its major tributaries (including the Coweeman River) below the Mayfield Dam (**Figure E-1**).

The proposed service area for Endangered Species Act-designated and proposed critical habitat, non-listed and resident fish and stream habitat impacts includes portions of the Lower Columbia River Basin, associated tributaries and portions of the Cowlitz River Watershed (WRIA-26). (**Figure E-2**). **Please see the attached proposed service area maps for the project.**

Additional Information

For more information about wetland mitigation banking in Washington:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/mitigation/banking/index.html>

To receive updates about wetland mitigation banking in Washington or sign up for Ecology's listserv:

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=wetlands-information>

Comment and Review Period

Ecology will evaluate all public comments received by 5 p.m., Nov. 13, 2015, to determine whether it would be in the public interest to certify the Bank. Comments can be made by email or convention mail to:

Kate Thompson
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, Wash. 98504-7600
kate.thompson@ecy.wa.gov

To request a public hearing on the proposed bank certification, submit your request in writing to Ecology before the end of the comment period. Any request for a public hearing must include the reason why a public hearing is warranted.

Special accommodations

If you require special accommodations or need this document in a version for the visually impaired, call the Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program at 360-407-6600.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

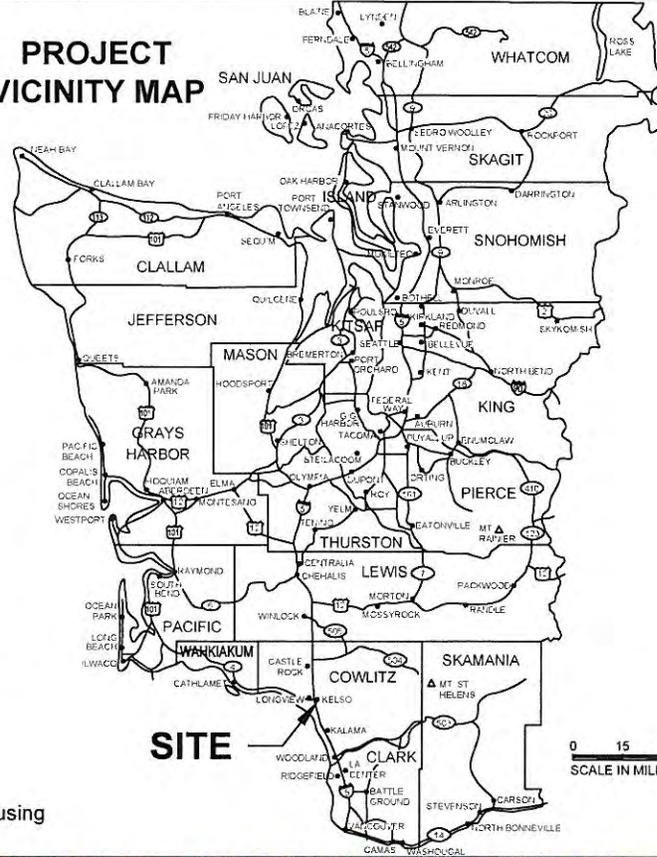
WASHINGTON



46.136060° Latitude
-122.870817° Longitude

LOCATION MAP

PROJECT VICINITY MAP

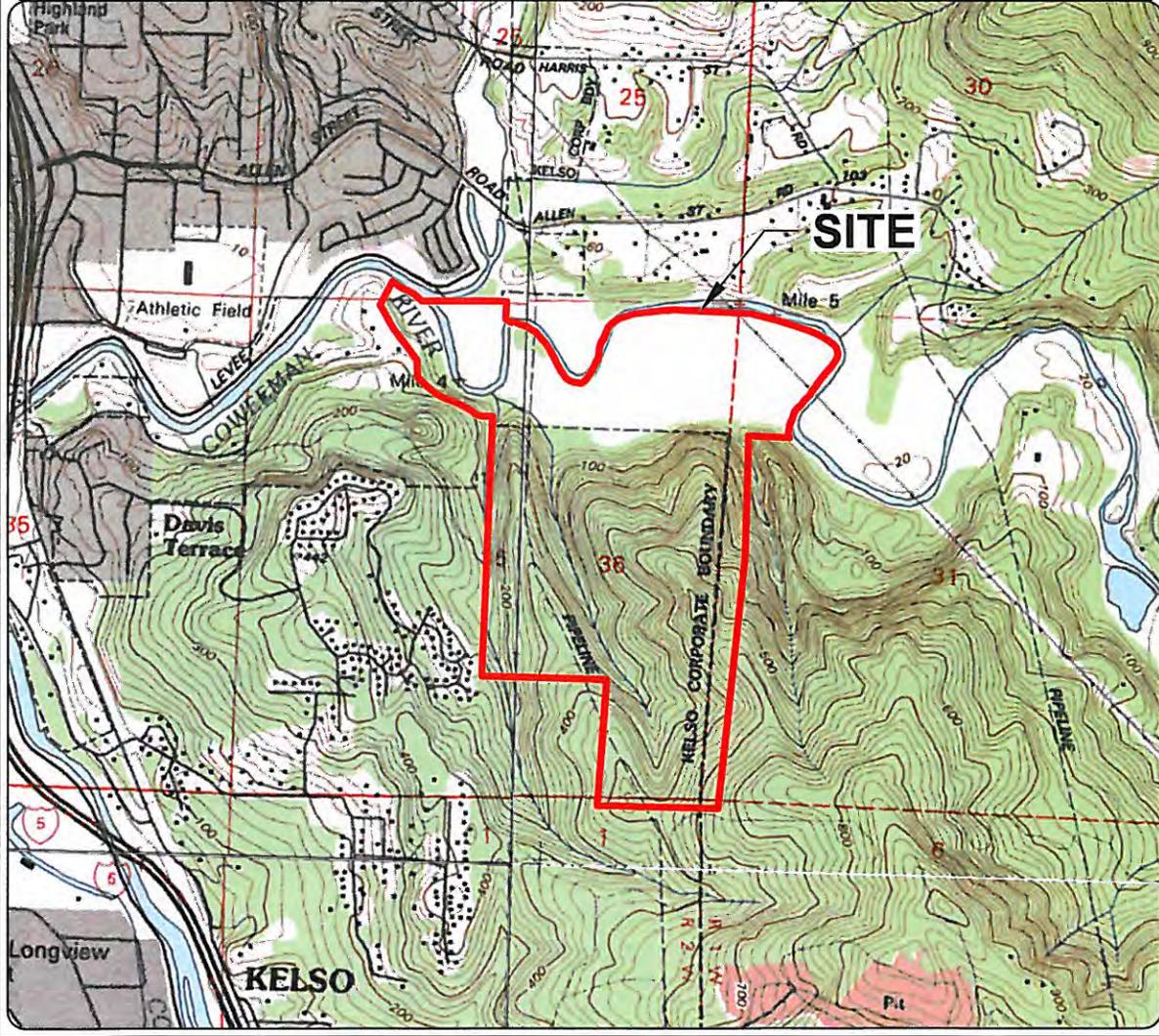


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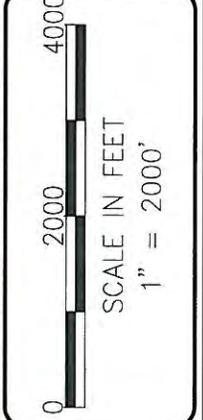
NOTE:
USGS topographic quadrangle map reproduced using MAPTECH Inc., Terrain Navigator Pro software.

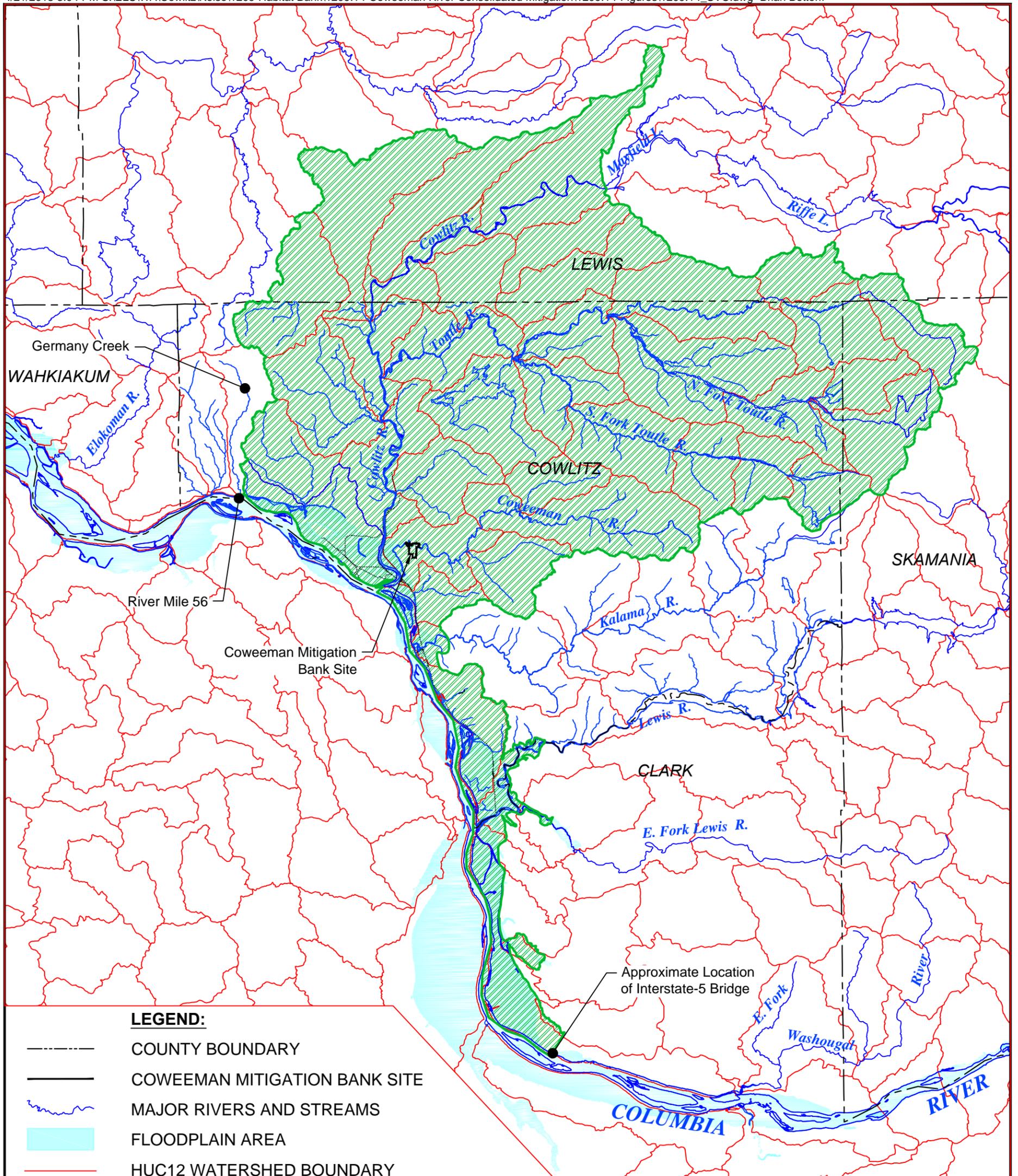
Figure A-1
VICINITY MAP
Coweeman Mitigation Bank
Habitat Bank LLC
City of Kelso, Cowlitz County, Washington
Section 31, Township 8N, Range 1W, W.M.
Section 36, Township 8N, Range 2W, W.M.

DATE: 9/22/15
DWN: BCB
REQ. BY: ST
PRJ. MGR: ST
CHK:
PROJECT NO:
1209.14



ECOLOGICAL LAND SERVICES, INC.
1157 3rd Ave., Suite 220
Longview, WA 98632
Phone: (360) 578-1371 Fax: (360) 414-9305





LEGEND:

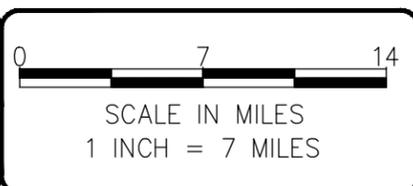
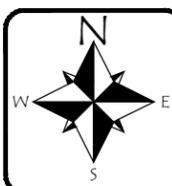
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- COWEEMAN MITIGATION BANK SITE
- MAJOR RIVERS AND STREAMS
- FLOODPLAIN AREA
- HUC12 WATERSHED BOUNDARY
- COWEEMAN MITIGATION BANK UNIVERSAL CREDIT SERVICE AREA

SERVICE AREA LIMITATIONS:

- COLUMBIA RIVER UPSTREAM LIMIT: INTERSTATE 5 BRIDGE IN VANCOUVER
- COLUMBIA RIVER DOWNSTREAM LIMIT: RIVER MILE 56 NEAR STELLA
- COWLITZ WATERSHED: ALL OF WRIA 26 BELOW MAYFIELD DAM

NOTES:

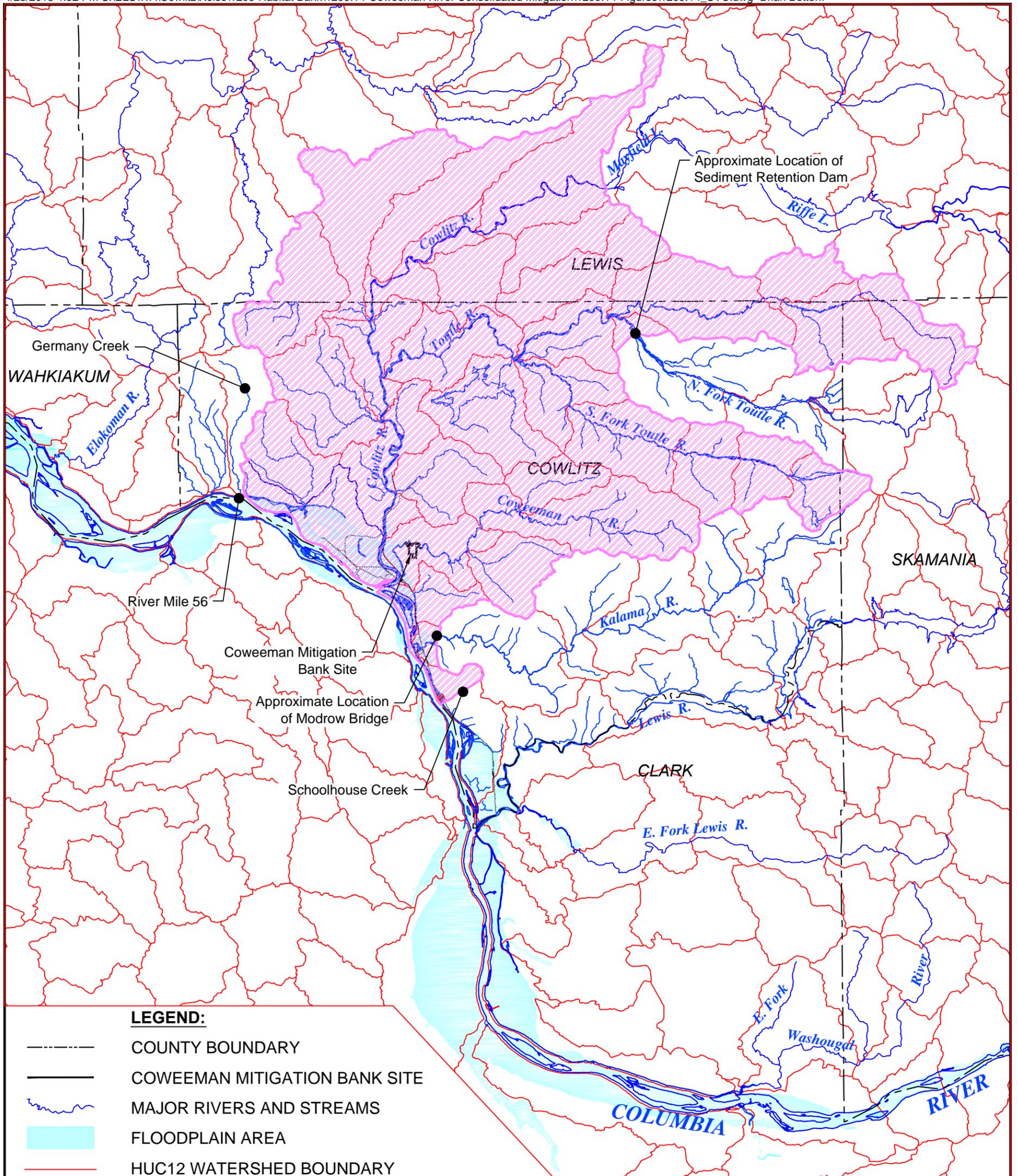
1. STATE, COUNTY, RIVERS, AND STREAM BOUNDARIES FROM ECOLOGY WEBSITE:
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/geodatacatalog/default.htm>
2. FLOODPLAIN DATA FROM J. BURKE, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.
3. HUC12 WATERSHED BOUNDARIES FROM USGS WEBSITE:
<http://www.water.usgs.gov/wsc/cat/17080001.html>.
4. BASE MAP PREPARED BY ECOLOGICAL LAND SERVICES, INC., FEBRUARY 2015.



ECOLOGICAL LAND SERVICES, INC.
1157 3rd Ave., Suite 220
Longview, WA 98632
Phone: (360) 578-1371 Fax: (360) 414-9305

DATE: 4/21/15
DWN: BCB
REQ. BY: ST
PRJ. MGR: ST
CHK:
PROJECT NO:
1209.14

Figure E-1
COWEEMAN BANK UNIVERSAL CREDIT SERVICE AREA
Coweeman Mitigation Bank
Habitat Bank LLC
City of Kelso, Cowlitz County, Washington
Section 31, Township 8N, Range 1W, W.M.
Section 36, Township 8N, Range 2W, W.M.



LEGEND:

- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- COWEEMAN MITIGATION BANK SITE
- MAJOR RIVERS AND STREAMS
- FLOODPLAIN AREA
- HUC12 WATERSHED BOUNDARY
- COWEEMAN MITIGATION BANK DSAY SERVICE AREA *

SERVICE AREA LIMITATIONS:

COLUMBIA RIVER UPSTREAM LIMIT: BETWEEN RIVER MILE 77 & 78 AT SHOOLHOUSE CREEK

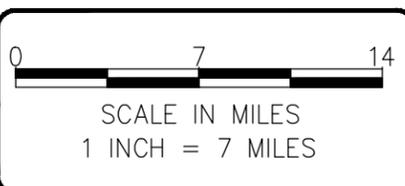
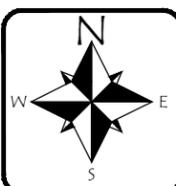
COLUMBIA RIVER DOWNSTREAM LIMIT: RIVER MILE 56 NEAR STELLA

COWLITZ WATERSHED: ALL OF WRIA 26 BELOW MAYFIELD DAM EXCEPT FOR ABOVE SEDIMENT RETENTION STRUCTURE (SRS) ON THE NORTH FORK OF THE TOUTLE RIVER

NOTES:

1. STATE, COUNTY, RIVERS, AND STREAM BOUNDARIES FROM ECOLOGY WEBSITE: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/geodatacatalog/default.htm>
2. FLOODPLAIN DATA FROM J. BURKE, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.
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4. BASE MAP PREPARED BY ECOLOGICAL LAND SERVICES, INC., FEBRUARY 2015.

*For details on DSAY use for specific fish species within the DSAY Service Area Boundary, please refer to the service area limitations and boundaries for certain species contained in section E.3 of Appendix E.



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Figure E-2
COWEEMAN BANK DSAY CREDIT SERVICE AREA
 Coweeman Mitigation Bank
 Habitat Bank LLC
 City of Kelso, Cowlitz County, Washington
 Section 31, Township 8N, Range 1W, W.M.
 Section 36, Township 8N, Range 2W, W.M.