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RETURN TO:

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DOCUMENT TITLE(S) (or transactions contained herein):

Site Assessment / Notice

REFERENCE NUMBER(S) OF DOCUMENTS ASSIGNED OR RELEASED:

[ | ADDITIONAL REFERENCE NUMBERS ON PAGE \_\_\_\_  
OF DOCUMENT.

GRANTOR(S) (Last name, first name and initials):

1. Jon + Rene Morris

2.

3.

4.

[ | ADDITIONAL NAMES ON PAGE \_\_\_\_ OF DOCUMENT.

GRANTEE(S) (Last name, first name and initials):

1. Public

2.

3.

4.

[ | ADDITIONAL NAMES ON PAGE \_\_\_\_ OF DOCUMENT.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION (Abbreviated: i.e., lot, block, plat or quarter, quarter, section, township and range):

Cascade River Park Div. 1 Lot 39

[ | ADDITIONAL LEGAL(S) ON PAGE \_\_\_\_ OF DOCUMENT.

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL/TAX I.D. NUMBER:

P-63588

[ | TAX PARCEL NUMBER(S) FOR ADDITIONAL LEGAL(S) ON PAGE \_\_\_\_ OF DOCUMENT.

**FISH & WILDLIFE SITE ASSESSMENT**

**MORRIS PROPERTY  
DIVISION 1, LOT 39  
63660 WEST CASCADE ROAD  
MARBELMOUNT, WASHINGTON**

*Prepared for:*

Jon & Rene Morris  
12465 Eagle Drive  
Burlington, WA 98233

*Prepared by:*

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Earth Systems Science, Inc.  
1155 North State Street, Suite 328  
Bellingham, WA 98225

April 5, 2000



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## **Introduction**

This technical report describes a Fish & Wildlife Assessment undertaken by Earth Systems Science, Inc., (ESSI), in accordance with the requirements of the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance. The applicant, Jon Morris, is using his lot at 63660 West Cascade Road (Figure 1) in Cascade River Park for recreational purposes and is proposing to install a septic system for his recreational vehicle (RV). Due to the size of the lot (60 feet x 141 feet) this septic system will be located within the 200-foot buffer of the Cascade River, a Type 1 Water of the State. Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance requires that a critical areas site assessment be prepared of any proposed activity within 200 feet of a critical area.

## **Method**

A two-step procedure was used to assess the site. This procedure included a preliminary review of the data and an on-site investigation.

## **Review of Existing Data**

Preliminary data that would be useful in assessing the site was obtained and reviewed. Sources reviewed as part of this project included:

- Skagit County Wetland and Hydric Soils Map at a scale of 1:24,000
- Skagit County Stream Type Map at a scale of 1:24,000
- Priority Habitat and Species Data, WAF&W
- Soil Survey of Skagit County Area, Washington, USDA (Klungland 1989)

## **On-site Investigation**

Robert Knable, M.S., of ESSI, conducted the riparian assessment on March 20, 2000. The onsite investigation included documenting existing conditions of the riparian buffer, assessing the potential impacts to the riparian buffer, and determining methods to minimize construction and any long-term impacts to the buffer. Fieldwork included characterizing existing conditions, identifying the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the Cascade River, measuring the distances from the OHWM to the existing buildings and proposed development, inventorying the dominant plant communities, and determining the overall topography.

## **Project Narrative**

The tract is located at 63660 West Cascade Road, Marbelmount, Washington (Figure 1), in the SE ¼ of Section 15 of Township 35N, Range 11E, W.M. The lot is roughly 60 x 141 feet. Currently, there is a picnic table and fire pit approximately 85 feet from the OHWM. The proposed septic system will be located approximately 110 feet from the OHWM, with the tank at 110 feet and the drainfield at 120 feet (Figure 2). The proposed

building area is flat. The project will require the temporary clearing of an approximately 20 x 10 foot area for tank and roughly 30 x 15 foot area for the drainfield.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

The density in the general vicinity is characterized by lots of less than ¼ acre. Existing land use on these tracts is a mixture of residential and recreational in nature. There are cabins located on the adjacent lots. These cabins appear to be located closer to the river than the proposed septic system. The Skagit County Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Rural Reserve. Clearing, grading, and development (residential homes, yards, etc.) have altered the riparian buffer of the Cascade River within Cascade River Park. These modifications have altered the natural vegetation and habitat associated with the Cascade River.

### **Riparian Characterization**

The vegetation within the existing 200-foot riparian buffer consists of an overstory of western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), grand fir (*Abies grandis*), and red alder (*Alnus rubra*), with an understory of red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*), vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*). The overhead canopy within the buffer consists of an average diameter at best height (dbh) of approximately 20+ inches. These trees are providing shade to the river and potential large wood debris recruitment.

There is an existing driveway/RV parking, picnic table, and fire pit located at its closest point approximately 85 feet from the OHWM (Figure 2). The land use within the 200-foot buffer will remain in low impact recreational use.

### **Impact Analysis**

The intent of the Fish and Wildlife portion of the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance is to provide buffers to protect five basic riparian forest functions that influence in-stream and near-stream habitat quality. Based on the mitigation measures in this report, the proposed project is likely to have minimal significant adverse impact on the following riparian functions of the standard 200-foot buffer.

1. **Recruitment of large wood debris (LWD):** The proposed project does not involve the removal of current or future sources of LWD. Currently, there is a source of LWD from the red cedars, fir, and hemlocks along the stream. This project does not propose to remove any of these trees. Therefore, the project will have no effect on LWD recruitment.
2. **Shade:** The proposed project does not involve removal of vegetation, which is currently providing shade to the stream.



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3. **Bank integrity:** The proposed project does not involve disturbance of soil or the removal of vegetation within 100-feet of the OHWM. The bank currently appears stable and will not be affected by this proposed project.
4. **Runoff filtration:** Surface runoff is to the south towards the river. The proposed project does not involve the disturbance of soil or vegetation within 100-feet of the OHWM. The Soil Survey of Skagit County Area, Washington, identifies Pilchuck loamy sand as the soil on site. Pilchuck loamy sands have slight hazard of erosion, and runoff is slow. The proposed project will temporally disturb a small area to install the septic system. However, after the septic system is installed vegetation within this disturbed area will return naturally. As a result, this project is unlikely to significantly alter subsurface hydrology.
5. **Wildlife habitat:** The existing riparian habitat contributes leaves, twigs, and insects to the stream, thereby providing basic food and nutrients that support fish and aquatic wildlife. The proposed project will not alter the existing recreational land use or its intensity and, therefore, is not likely to degrade functional wildlife habitat below current conditions. This project will not significantly alter the usage of this habitat by species associated with the Cascade River.

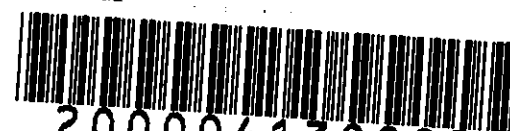
### Regulatory Analysis

The property is designated Rural Residential under the Skagit County Shoreline Management Master Program, requiring a 50-foot minimum shoreline setback. The Cascade River is a Type 1 Water, and is regulated under the Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance, requiring a 200-foot critical areas buffer.

### Mitigation Report

The following mitigation is predicated on the surrounding residential and recreational land use and ongoing and continued use of this parcel as a recreational lot. Activities that would help to mitigate fish and wildlife habitat alterations and potential impacts from the project include:

1. **Protected Critical Area:** The Skagit County Critical Areas Ordinance section 14.06.145 (2) requires that all development proposals on pre-existing lots record a Protected Critical Area (PCA) with the Skagit County Auditor. A PCA will provide long-term protection to the 200-foot critical areas buffer.
2. **Construction measures:**
  - Limit the amount of clearing, grading, and soil disturbance to only that area necessary to complete the project.
  - Keep all heavy equipment a minimum of 100 feet from the OHWM of the river.
  - Limit operations to dry periods and stable soil conditions.



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## **Management and Maintenance Practices**


Long-term management and maintenance practices for this parcel should include maintain a vegetative cover within the PCA.

## **Conclusion**

A properly designed, installed, and maintained septic system will be a benefit to water quality by treating sewage and gray water before they mix with surface or ground water. Based on the surrounding residential and recreational land use and ongoing and continued use of this parcel as a recreational, the proposed project is not likely to significantly effect fish and wildlife associated with the Cascade River. The mitigation measures discussed above would provide adequate protection to offset any project-generated impacts

## **Closure**

The findings and conclusions documented in this report have been prepared in a manner consistent with established scientific methods. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are professional opinions based on interpretation of information currently available to us and are made within the operational scope, budget, and schedule constraints of this project. OHWM and critical area buffers identified by ESSI are considered to be preliminary until the Skagit County Planning and Permit Center validates them.



Robert Knable, MS  
Ecologist  
President, ESSI



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## Figures

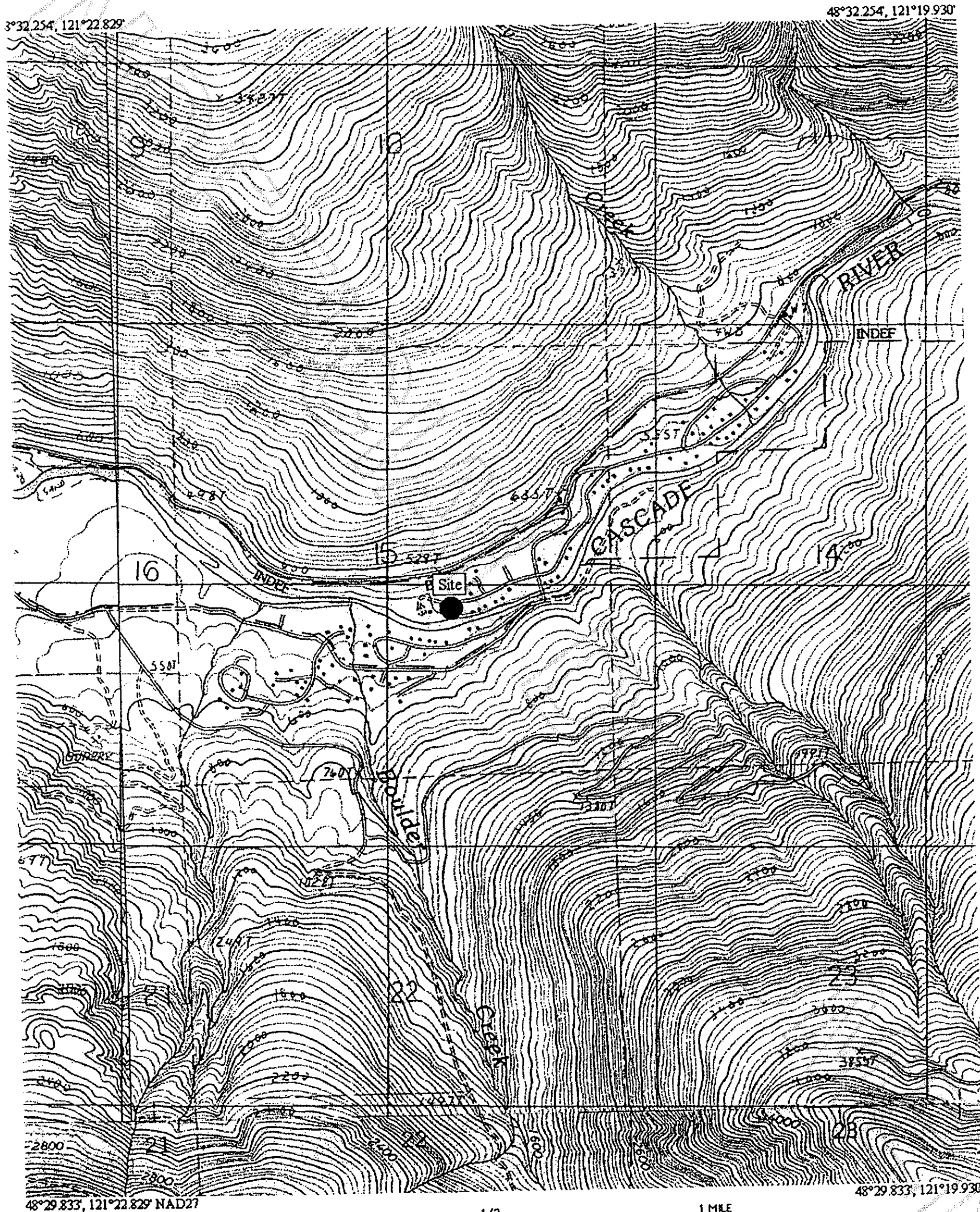


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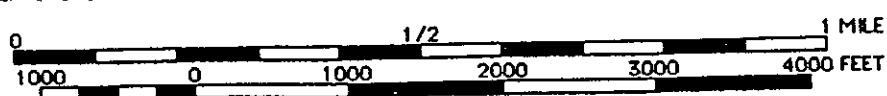


Figure 1



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WEST CASCADE ROAD

PROPOSED 120 SQ.FT DRAINFIELD

PROPOSED 120 SQ.FT. RESERVE

PROPOSED 1000 D/C SEPTIC TANK

EXISTING DRIVEWAY AND RV SITE



110' 6"

84'

100-ft  
PCA

131'

P.L. 141 FT. +

P.L. 60 FT.

ORDANARY HIGH WATER MARK



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Cascade River