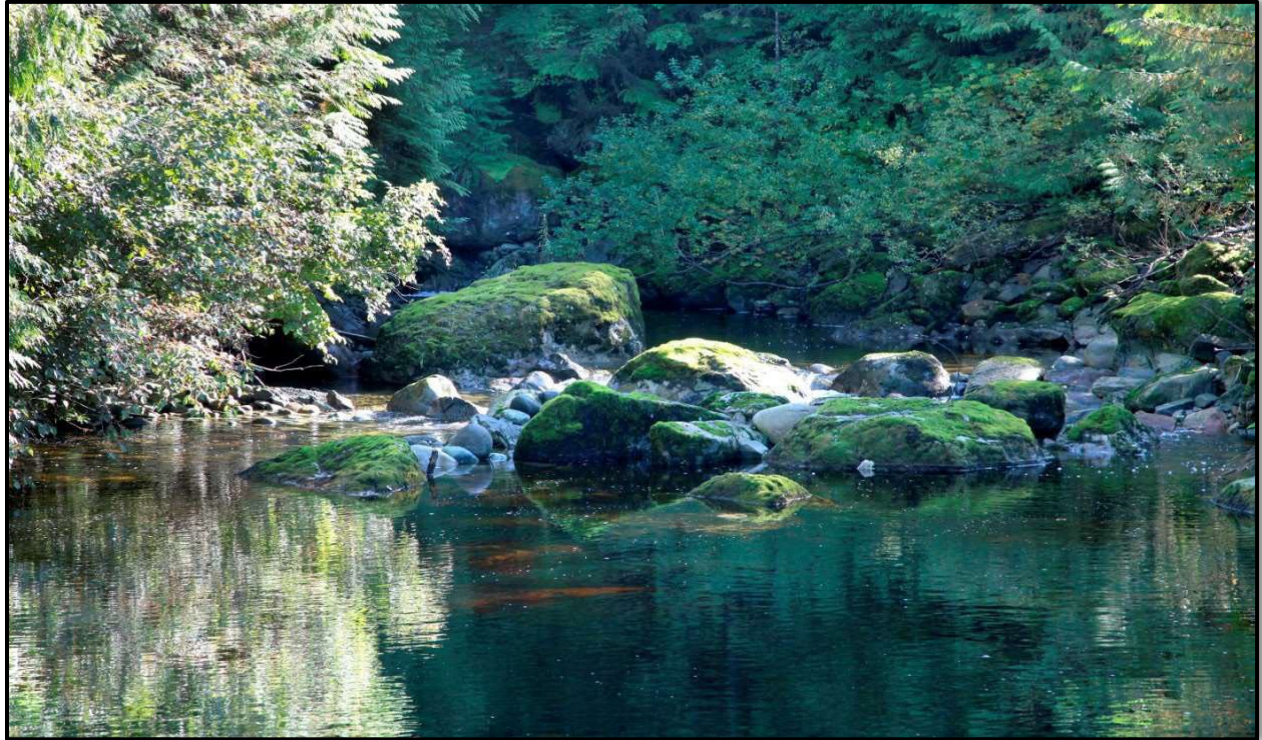


Youngs Creek Hydroelectric Project

(FERC No. 10359)



Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Plan 2025 Annual Report *License Article 403*

Submitted by:



Everett, WA

December 2025

Final – This document has been prepared for the District. It has been peer-reviewed by the District for accuracy and formatting based on information known at the time of its preparation and with that understanding is considered complete by the District. The document may be cited as:

Public Utility District No. 1 of Snohomish County (Snohomish PUD). 2025. Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Plan (License Article 403) 2025 Annual Report for the Youngs Creek Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 10359). December 2025.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPA	Critical Area Protection Area
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Project	Youngs Creek Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 10359
ROW	right-of-way
Snohomish PUD	Public Utility District No. 1 of Snohomish
County USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WHMP	Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A license was issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on May 5, 1992, for the Youngs Creek Hydroelectric Project (Project) located south of Sultan, Washington. As part of the Order Issuing License, Article 403 directed that a final wildlife habitat mitigation plan be prepared. In 2011, Public Utility District No. 1 of Snohomish County (Snohomish PUD), current owner and operator of the Project, filed for an amendment to the 1992 Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Plan (WHMP). The amendment was approved by the FERC on September 8, 2011.¹

The WHMP identifies the elements of habitat protection, revegetation, and enhancement of Project lands and addresses ongoing monitoring and reporting. Snohomish PUD is to provide a written report to the FERC every five years,² and a written summary report to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) annually. This WHMP Annual Report details activities that were conducted from December 2024 through November 2025. WDFW and USFWS are being provided a copy of the draft report for a 30-day review and comment period (Appendix A).

¹ (136 FERC ¶ 62,206)

² The next 5-year report will be filed with FERC by December 31, 2027.

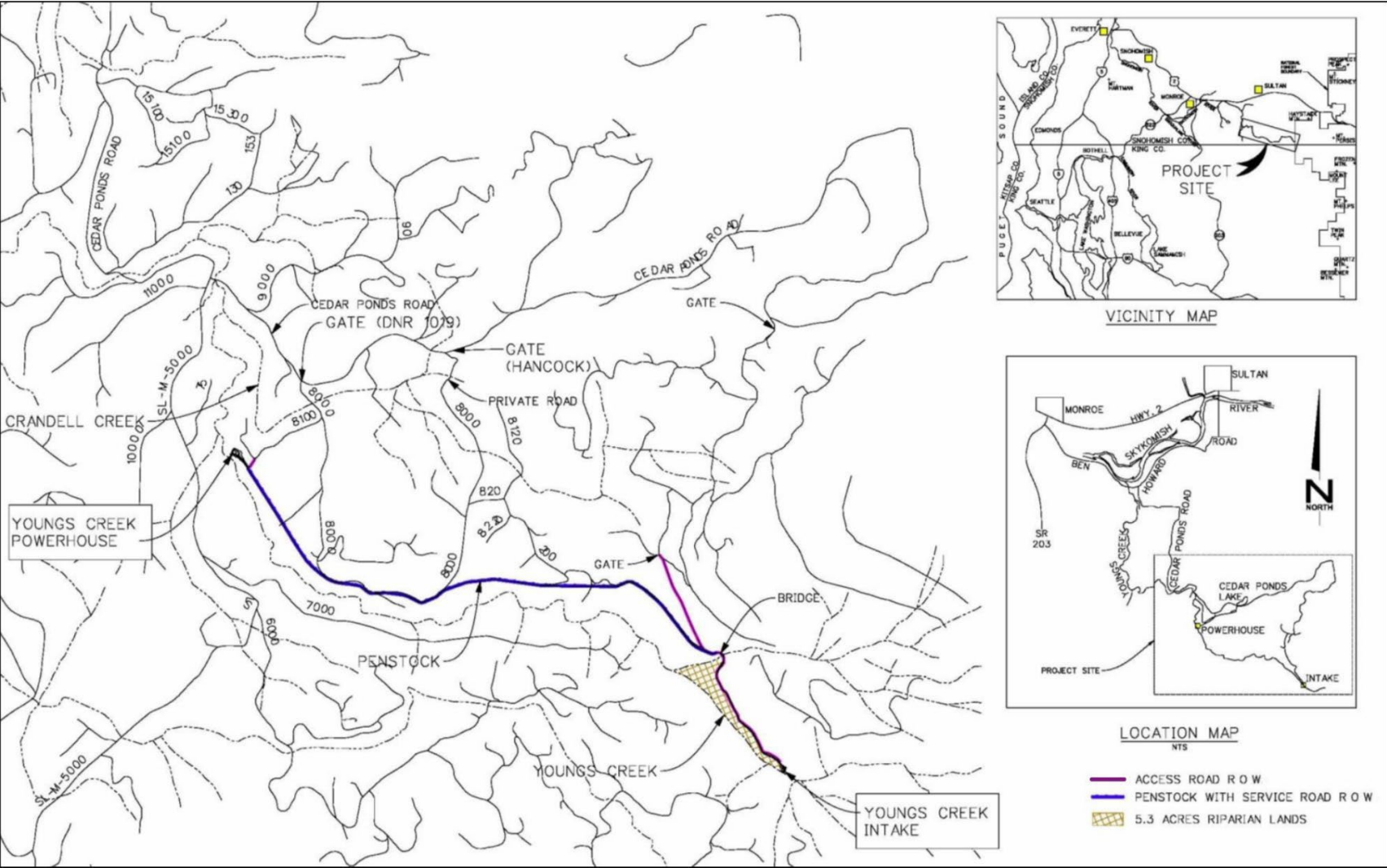


Figure 1. Map identifying penstock and access road rights-of-way.

2.0 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

As specified in the WHMP Section 3.0 (g) and (h), all mitigation areas were monitored during 2025 to ensure the objectives of the WHMP are being met. Monitoring of Project lands consisted of periodic checks on vegetative conditions and documentation or treatment of occurrences of noxious or invasive species. Revegetated and reseeded areas will continue to be monitored annually for the duration of the License. Coverage of shrubs and grasses are also visually evaluated on an annual basis. If surveys indicate that coverage by bare ground is estimated to be more than 20 percent, reseeded areas will occur with the appropriate erosion control seed mix, as noted in the WHMP. Noxious weeds will be controlled during the growing season, as necessary. Monitoring of riparian and upland forest mitigation areas will consist of periodic checks of overstory vegetation.

2.1 Penstock Right of Way Revegetation

Following completion of Project construction activities, the penstock right-of-way (ROW) (Figure 1) was seeded in the fall of 2011 and reseeded, where necessary, in the spring of 2012. Vegetation continues to meet coverage requirements, and no construction activities occurred that precipitated the need to re-seed any portion of the ROW.

2.1.1 Line of Sight Reduction/Establishment of Hiding Cover

Growth of native vegetation will continue to be allowed along the penstock ROW to the extent practical without impeding visual monitoring of pipeline integrity. Trees will be allowed to grow in the outer 10 feet on either side of the ROW. To date, native shrubs have begun to re-establish in only a few locations along the ROW margins.

2.1.2 Noxious Weed Management

Pursuant to WHMP Section 3.0(a), a Noxious Weed Management Plan was developed for the Project in 2013. Accordingly, noxious and invasive weed control was performed over 11 days during the 2025 growing season to comply with applicable noxious weed regulations. The primary weeds controlled were bull thistle, butterfly bush, and Scotch broom. Methods of control consisted of manual removal of Scotch broom and butterfly bush, and use of a non-selective, post-emergent Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) listed herbicide for all other weeds.

Monitoring of weed populations on Project lands was conducted by Snohomish PUD biologists with locations of weed infestations noted and treatment measures implemented. Spatial information was partitioned into three forms of symbology: points (discrete locations along the ROW and spur roads), intermittent lines (weeds commonly intermixed with native ROW vegetation), and polygons (weeds intermixed with native vegetation confined to specific areas beyond the ROW boundary) (Figures 2 and 3). Road and penstock ROWs were patrolled multiple times during the growing season to identify areas where weed control was required.

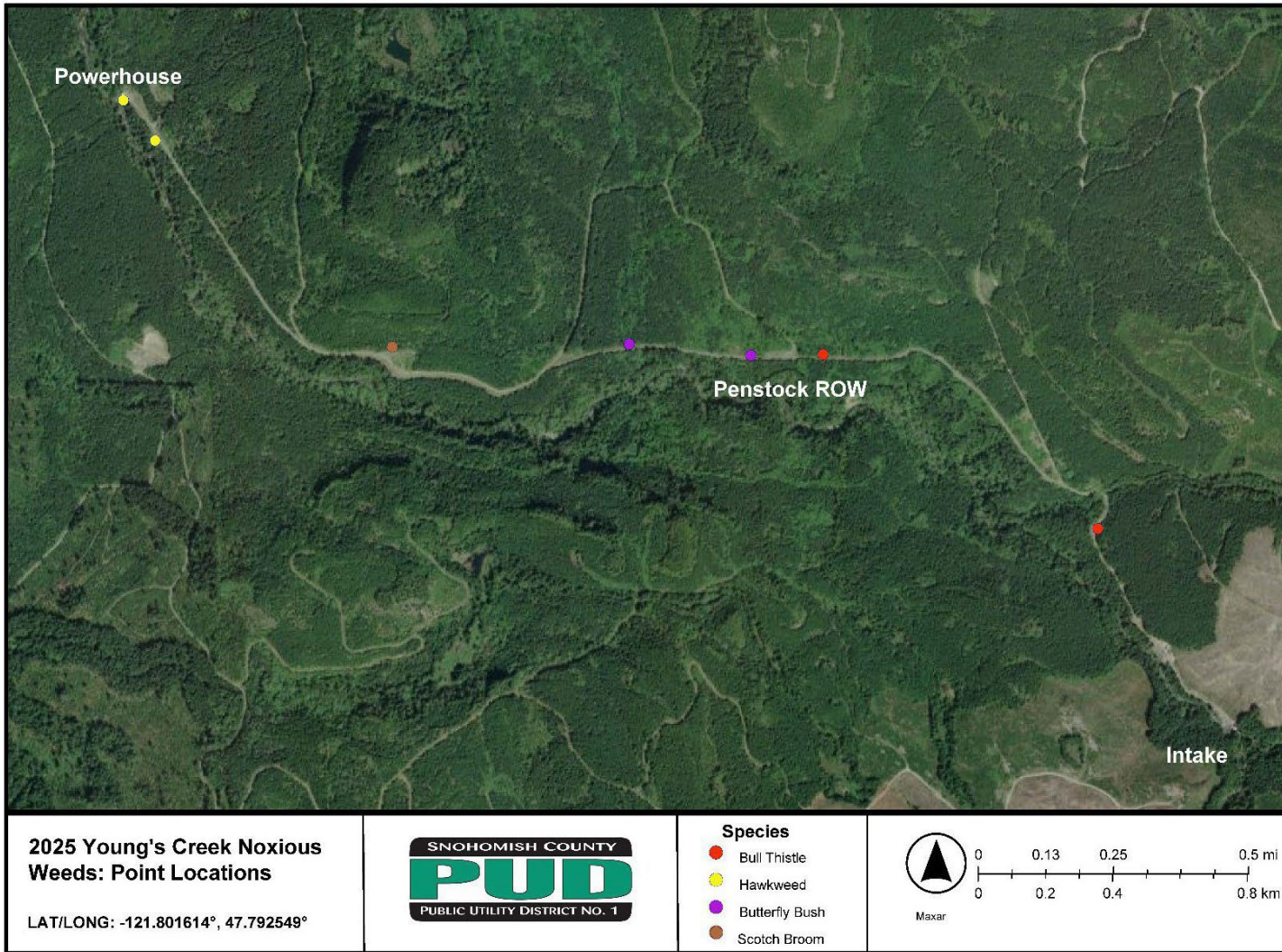


Figure 2. Map identifying discrete noxious weed locations.

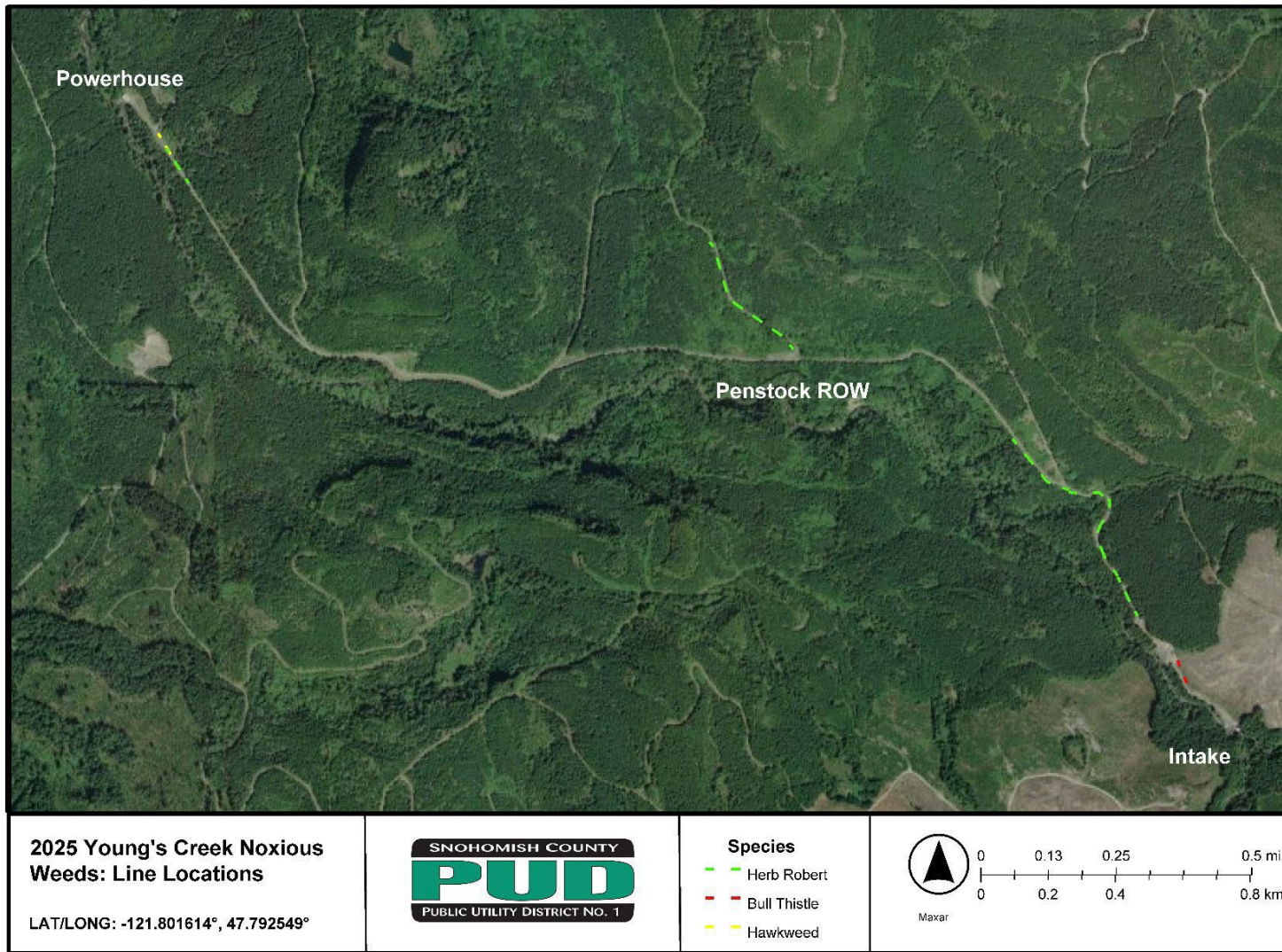


Figure 3. Map identifying noxious weed infestations in intermittent lines.

2.2 Access Right of Way Revegetation

The rights-of-way along the Project access roads (Figure 1) have been revegetated with the grass/forb mix noted in the WHMP.

3.0 GATES

As required under WHMP Section 3.0(c), gates restricting access to the powerhouse and intake areas were installed several years ago (Figure 1). Access is provided to Snohomish PUD personnel and contractors for activities tied to normal Project maintenance. Access is also provided to adjacent landowners for professional silvicultural and forest management activities. No new activities regarding gates were necessary during this past action year.

4.0 AVIAN NESTING AND PERCHING HABITAT

4.1 Nest Boxes

Prior to and following the nesting season, nest boxes were maintained by removing any debris and/or old nesting material from within the cavity of the boxes. Since the female gathers nesting materials in preparation for egg-laying, boxes are not provided with any supplemental nesting materials in advance of the nesting season. Nests were checked by the Snohomish PUD biologist as required by the WHMP schedule.

During the 2025 nesting season, tree swallows nested in five of the pole-mounted nest boxes (Figure 4). The final estimate is 15 fledged tree swallows from these five boxes.

To avoid excessive disturbance, boxes are checked with a pole camera, and eggs or chicks discovered in the nests are not moved during the counting process. As a result, numbers of eggs or fledglings are only estimates, and should be considered minimums. Monitoring associated with other nest box programs suggests that the installation of additional boxes should not be considered until a threshold of 50 to 80 percent successful usage is attained (Bellrose & Holm, 1994). No additional box installations are planned at this point.

In 2018, three owl boxes were placed in the 5.3-acre forested mitigation parcel at the request of WDFW. Target species were Northern saw-whet (*Aegolius acadicus*) and western screech (*Megascops kennicottii*) owls. Each box was placed between 10 and 15 feet above the ground on dominant trees within the densest areas of the forest. In 2025, the owl boxes had no observed use by avian species; however, squirrels routinely build moss nests inside the boxes (Appendix A). Table 1 shows nest box use during the current year, as well as over the history of the project.

Table 1. Nest Box Use Summary

2025 Summary	
Box	Result
2	No avian use
3	No avian use
4	Successful tree swallow nest
5	Successful tree swallow nest
6	Successful tree swallow nest
7	Successful tree swallow nest
8	Successful tree swallow nest
9	No avian use
10	No avian use
11	No avian use
13	Old squirrel nest
14	No avian use
Tree Swallow boxes	5 of 12 nest boxes used successfully, fledging 15+ tree swallows
Owl 1	No avian use.
Owl 2	No avian use.
Owl 3	No avian use.
Owl nest boxes	0 of 3 owl boxes used by avian species
None of the 7 raptor perches were found to have been used.	
* Only eggs visible from either peeper camera or opening box door are counted, therefore egg counts are considered minimum.	
Over the past 14 years, a minimum of 48 nests have been constructed in the 12 boxes provided, fledging a minimum estimate of 167 tree swallows.	

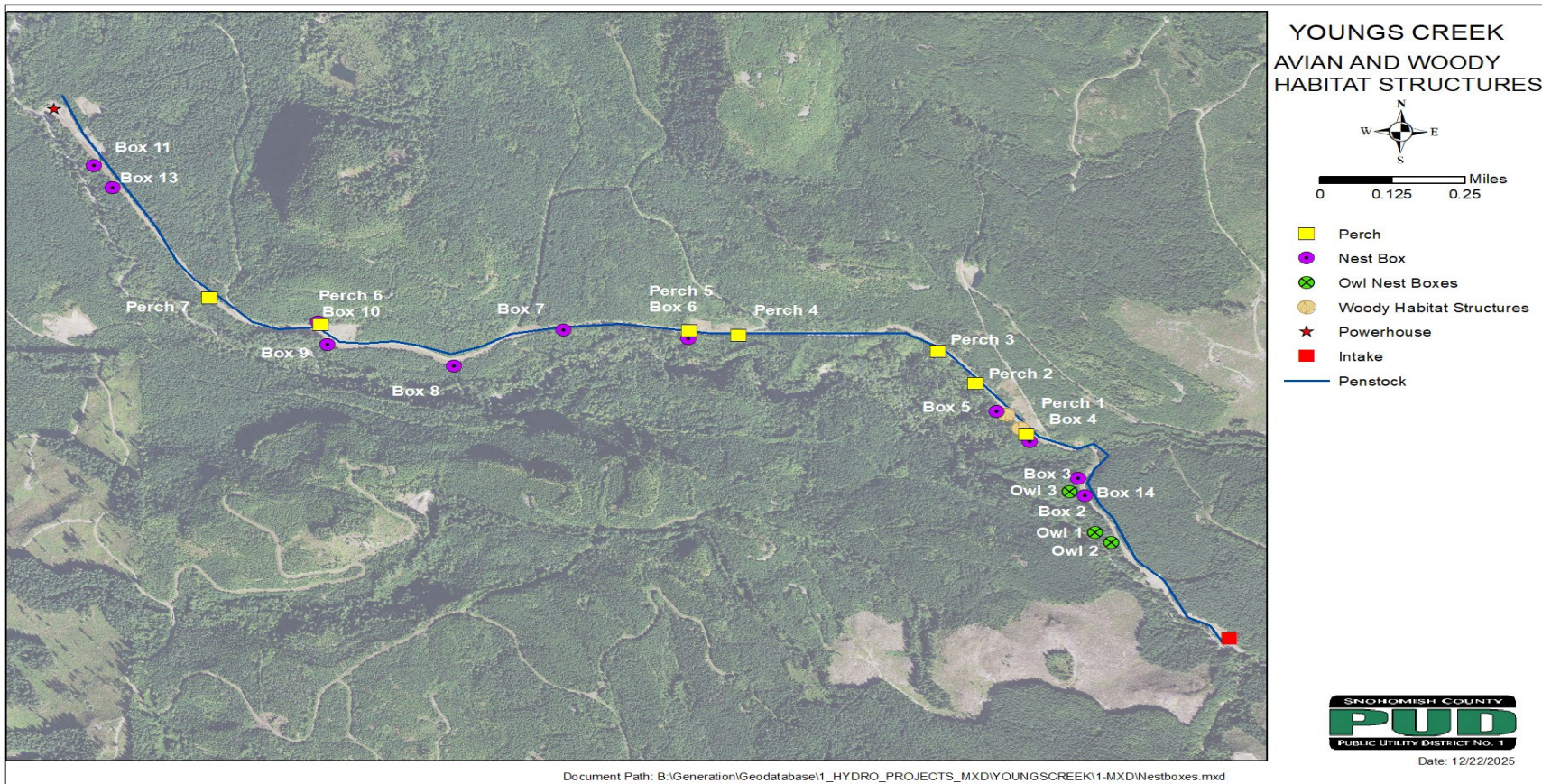


Figure 4. Map showing locations of nest boxes and perch poles; colored circles represent the year the box used.

4.2 Raptor Perch Poles

Seven raptor perch poles were erected on the penstock ROW in late 2011, based on field consultation between WDFW and Snohomish PUD biologists. Perch poles were monitored concurrent with monitoring of nest boxes. During site visits, the immediate vicinity of each perch pole was inspected for signs of raptor use, including whitewash or owl pellets. No use of the perch poles was identified in 2025.

5.0 MITIGATION LANDS

As required under WHMP Section 3.0(e), 5.3 acres of mitigation lands were put into Critical Area Protection Area (CAPA) status in fall 2009 (Figure 1)³. Visual observations of the overstory were conducted concurrent with nest box and raptor perch pole checks. The site consists of mature second growth forest, approximately 85 years old, on a steep hillside above Youngs Creek. Tree diameter ranges between approximately 15 and 27 inches. Snags and coarse woody debris are present on the site. Understory exists primarily as sword fern and local patches of Devil's club. At this point, habitat is of good quality with natural conditions allowing for development into mature forests.

6.0 LITERATURE CITED

Bellrose, F.C. and D.J. Holm (eds.) 1994. Ecology and Management of the Wood Duck. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA. 588p.

³ The 5.3 acres are recorded as CAPA under Snohomish County number 200910160192. The Snohomish County Assessor's property tax parcel/account number is 27083300100200 for this land.

APPENDIX A

Consultation Documentation

From: [Schutt, Mike](#)
To: [Applegate, Brock A \(DFW\)](#); jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov
Subject: Snohomish County PUD's Youngs Creek Terrestrial Resources Management Plan Annual Report
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 8:18:00 AM

Good morning,

We are in the process of developing our draft annual report for terrestrial mitigation measures at our Youngs Creek hydro-electric project, with plans to send that for your review by the end of next week. If you are interested, I would be happy to offer a field visit to the project during the first week of December.

Please let me know if you are interested.

thanks

Mike Schutt (he/him)
Sr. Wildlife Biologist
Terrestrial and Recreation Management
Generation Dept. – Natural Resources
Snohomish County PUD
Office) [425-783-1712](tel:425-783-1712)
Cell) [425-210-5816](tel:425-210-5816)

From: [Applegate, Brock A \(DFW\)](#)
To: [Schutt, Mike; jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov](#)
Subject: [External Sender] RE: Snohomish County PUD's Youngs Creek Terrestrial Resources Management Plan Annual Report
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 10:15:48 AM

CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER.
Do not click on links or open attachments if the sender is unknown or the email is suspect.

Hi Mike, I can make a visit December 2, Tuesday, that week. Hopefully, Jeff can reply soon. I am looking forward to having our federal associates back in the office (and field).

Thanks for Offering, Brock

From: Schutt, Mike <MSSchutt@snopud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 6, 2025 8:18 AM
To: Applegate, Brock A (DFW) <Brock.Applegate@dfw.wa.gov>; jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov
Subject: Snohomish County PUD's Youngs Creek Terrestrial Resources Management Plan Annual Report

External Email

Good morning,

We are in the process of developing our draft annual report for terrestrial mitigation measures at our Youngs Creek hydro-electric project, with plans to send that for your review by the end of next week. If you are interested, I would be happy to offer a field visit to the project during the first week of December.

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Mike Schutt (he/him)
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Generation Dept. – Natural Resources
Snohomish County PUD
Office) [425-783-1712](tel:425-783-1712)
Cell) [425-210-5816](tel:425-210-5816)

From: [Schutt, Mike](#)
To: [Applegate, Brock A \(DFW\)](#); jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov
Cc: [Tengs, Hayley](#); [Presler, Dawn](#)
Subject: for your review - Draft 2025 Annual Report for Snohomish County PUD's Youngs Creek Hydro Project
Date: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:16:00 AM
Attachments: [2025 YC WHMP AnnRpt Draft.docx](#)

Hi Brock and Jeff,

Attached for your review is the Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Plan Draft Annual Report for the Youngs Creek Project. The report includes a summary of activities and data collected during 2025. Please review and provide comments by December 15, 2025. We will respond to any comments and finalize the draft report after that date.

Brock has indicated that he can make a field visit on Tuesday, 12/2. Presuming the weather and road conditions to the site are suitable for access, we will plan for that.

Thanks,

Mike Schutt (he/him)
Sr. Wildlife Biologist
Terrestrial and Recreation Management
Generation Dept. – Natural Resources
Snohomish County PUD
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Cell) [425-210-5816](tel:425-210-5816)

Brock Applegate WDFW Site Visit Youngs Creek 12/2/2025

WDFW Questions/Comments	PUD Response
Is there discussion of breaking up line of site in WHMP?	It is allowed by the WHMP. Generally hunting isn't as much of an issue because there is no formal recreation, and the ROW is narrow so there is less visibility. Mostly to break up line-of-site we use plants because we don't generate large amounts of woody material in the area to pile onto ROW.
What weeds do we treat? Do we just cut them or do we fully treat them?	We treat all WHMP required noxious weeds with herbicide. Most years, we treat primarily herb Robert, patches of hawkweed, thistle, butterfly bush, and scotch broom.
Can we plant shrubs on the ROW?	Yes, that is the main way we can break up line of site on ROW. As long as the shrubs are shallow-rooted and not covering the entire pipeline – crews need to be able to check for leaks, perform maintenance/repairs, etc.
Do perch poles get used?	No – we have not observed any evidence of perch pole use. We have seen raptors perching on trees bordering ROW.
Do we have owl boxes out here? What kind of use do these boxes get?	Owl boxes were installed at previous request of WDFW. We have not seen any use other than squirrels and deer mice.
WDFW notes that we can leave native mammals in bird boxes, but it is also okay if we choose to evict them.	Nests are removed in late winter to ready the box for potential bird nesting in spring.
Have we ever observed any other species in our boxes besides tree swallows? How many get used?	No, we have only observed swallows. Typically around 3 boxes get used for year, and each year it is a different combination of boxes receiving use.
Could we put a swallow box above the intake?	Yes, we can try installing a swallow box at the intake.

From: [Applegate, Brock A \(DFW\)](#)
To: [Schutt, Mike](#); jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov
Cc: [Tengs, Hayley](#); [Presler, Dawn](#)
Subject: [External Sender] RE: for your review - Draft 2025 Annual Report for Snohomish County PUD's Youngs Creek Hydro Project
Date: Monday, December 15, 2025 4:55:59 PM

CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER.
Do not click on links or open attachments if the sender is unknown or the email is suspect.

Hi Mike and Hayley, I thank you for the sight visit to the Youngs Creek Hydroelectric Project (Project) on December 2nd. I made a couple of recommendations during our visit.

1. As a new or alternate bird nest box location, I recommended areas around the water impoundment behind the spillway. I would consider erecting the box in an area with exposure to the sun during the nesting season.
2. We discussed Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) preference of use by native avian species in the owl boxes. If you find squirrels in the boxes during the breeding and nesting season, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends that Snohomish Public Utility District (SnoPUD) remove the squirrels and contents. Of course, please use precautions and the latest Personal Protective Equipment when accomplishing this task.


WDFW values our collaboration and communication with SnoPUD on this Project. As always, please feel free to reach out with any concerns with our recommendations or any other issues with the SnoPUD Hydroelectric Projects.

Thanks For Your Hard Work, Brock

Brock Applegate
Northwest Washington Hydropower Coordinator
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 38
Stanwood, WA 98292

(360) 466-9245

From: Schutt, Mike <MSSchutt@snopud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:16 AM
To: Applegate, Brock A (DFW) <Brock.Applegate@dfw.wa.gov>; jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov
Cc: [Tengs, Hayley](mailto:Tengs@snopud.com) <HKTengs@Snopud.com>; [Presler, Dawn](mailto:DJPresler@SNOPUD.com) <DJPresler@SNOPUD.com>
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Brock Applegate WDFW Site Visit Youngs Creek Follow-Up 12/15/2025

WDFW Questions/Comments	PUD Response
<p>As a new or alternate bird nest box location, I recommended areas around the water impoundment behind the spillway. I would consider erecting the box in an area with exposure to the sun during the nesting season.</p>	<p>PUD will install a new, additional nest box near the intake, consistent with your recommendation.</p>
<p>We discussed Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) preference of use by native avian species in the owl boxes. If you find squirrels in the boxes during the breeding and nesting season, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends that Snohomish Public Utility District (SnoPUD) remove the squirrels and contents. Of course, please use precautions and the latest Personal Protective Equipment when accomplishing this task.</p>	<p>PUD will continue to remove non-avian species utilizing the nest boxes during the tree-swallow nesting season.</p>