



# **KITITAS COUNTY**

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Josh Fredrickson, Director

### **MEMORANDUM**

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**TO: COLLEDA MONICK, CITY OF CLE ELUM**

**FROM: CAMERON CURTIS, KITITAS COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS**

**DATE: MAY 29, 2024**

**SUBJECT: CRITICAL AREAS – SEARCH AND RESCUE SITE DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Project Background**

Kittitas County is pursuing Federal Funding for a permanent Search and Rescue Facility in Upper Kittitas County. County staff and the City of Cle Elum partnered and identified the southernmost portion of the City's Municipal Airport parcel as an ideal location for Search and Rescue operations. Kittitas County Sheriff's office is also pursuing further funding of the Search and Rescue facility to build out an Emergency Operations Center, allowing first responders a command center near the Teanaway Forrest and Bluet Pass, popular tourist destinations within Kittitas County.

### **Description of Site**

The site will primarily consist of two adjoining buildings: a vehicle storage bay, and the future Emergency Operations Center. These buildings will occupy approximately 10,000 SF of the site. An additional 40,000 SF will be dedicated as paved parking and maneuvering areas. All impervious surfaces will sheet flow to a stormwater collection system, which will convey runoff to an infiltration basin, and away from the wetland.

### **Aquatics Memo Summary**

Jacobs Engineering Group identified and delineated one wetland (approximately 0.42 acre) within the project area adjacent to Airport Road. The wetland is described as a scrub shrub and forested wetland. The comprehensive plant list can be found in Appendix D of Aquatic Memo submitted as part of the SEPA. The wetland was determined to have an Ecology Rating of Category III with a Habitat Score of 4.

## **Wetland Buffer**

The City of Cle Elum offers Wetland performance standards in Section 18.01.070 of their Municipal Code. Tables 18.01-1 and 18.01-3 provide buffer distances in feet based on the wetland information provided by the Wetland Professional. In order to use Table 18.01-1, applicants must use the mitigation measures identified in Table 18.01-2.

The wetland on site is a Category III wetland with a Habitat Score of 4. The project will not produce any light sources directed at the wetland, and no intense noise will be produced as a result of the project. All parking lots, access roads, and vehicle maneuvering areas will direct runoff away from the wetland, so no runoff (toxic or otherwise) should be able to enter the wetland. Improvements will be made to the existing airport access road, reducing the amount of stormwater runoff reaching the wetland from existing facilities. The site will be used infrequently, and a chain link fence will be installed between the wetland and the Search and Rescue Facility. Mitigation measures from Table 18.01-2 will be installed or are naturally occurring where applicable. Based on the above criterion, Table 18.01-1 indicates a 60-ft buffer should be applied to the wetland.

## **Site Restrictions and Minimization Measures**

Due to the geographic location of the site, the project was originally designed assuming the underlying parcel would fall within Kittitas County's jurisdictional domain. Kittitas County Code provides an exemption to wetland buffers for Public Facilities. The project was designed with this exemption in mind. When it was clear that the project would be subject to the City of Cle Elum's regulations, the County began altering the site to meet the City's requirements. This included updating the building plans, fire access roads, and permitting procedures. However, it will not be possible to utilize the site as it is designed and meet the wetland buffers required by the City's municipal code.

This is largely due to the topographic nature of the site. The size of the site is 5 acres, and approximately half of the site is not usable. The north 1.5 acres consist of a 2(H):1(V) slope leading up to the Airport, and the wetland and associate buffer make up 1.2 acres (52,440 SF) on the southern portion of the parcel.

The project primarily impacts the northern portion of the buffer area, with a small impact on the western edge. 3,925 SF of parking surface is located within the buffer, and 822 SF of the Building is located within the buffer. The total impact is approximately 4747 SF. Some additional grading associated with raising the project site, and a chain link fence will also be required within the buffer.

The secondary access is crucial to the use of the facility. Based on the topography described earlier, the usable portion of the site is long and narrow. The equipment being stored on site is primarily stored on trailers which need to be positioned strategically so Search and Rescue crews can efficiently retrieve the necessary equipment.

The County adjusted the location of the secondary access as much as was feasible, limiting the impacts on the buffer associated with the access. However, additional changes to the site layout were disregarded to preserve as much maneuverability on site as possible. Altering the angle at which the secondary access enters the parking area was determined to be infeasible based on the turning movements which would be needed to allow standard Fire, Life, and Safety vehicles, or semi-truck and trailers access to the property. Alternatively, decreasing the radii in the access driveway would allow the access point to be pushed further west, but it would limit the ability for the design vehicles to safely access or exit the site. Based on Kittitas County Public Works' analysis, the access is located in the most ideal location on site as possible.

Alternative site plans were evaluated but were ultimately deemed infeasible due to the lack of City utilities and the natural site topography. The septic, storm, and on-site well systems compete for valuable space within the usable portion of the project. Alternative site plans included large scale retaining walls on the northern portion of the parcel, buildings which did not require pull through bays, and varying utility infrastructure locations which may have presented more efficient site layout. These alternatives were ultimately deemed infeasible due to cost, buildability, and input from the Search and Rescue management.

### **Mitigation Plan**

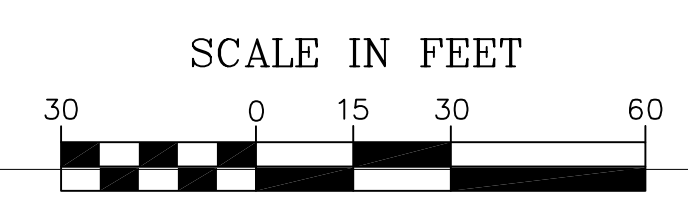
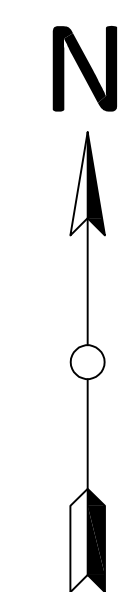
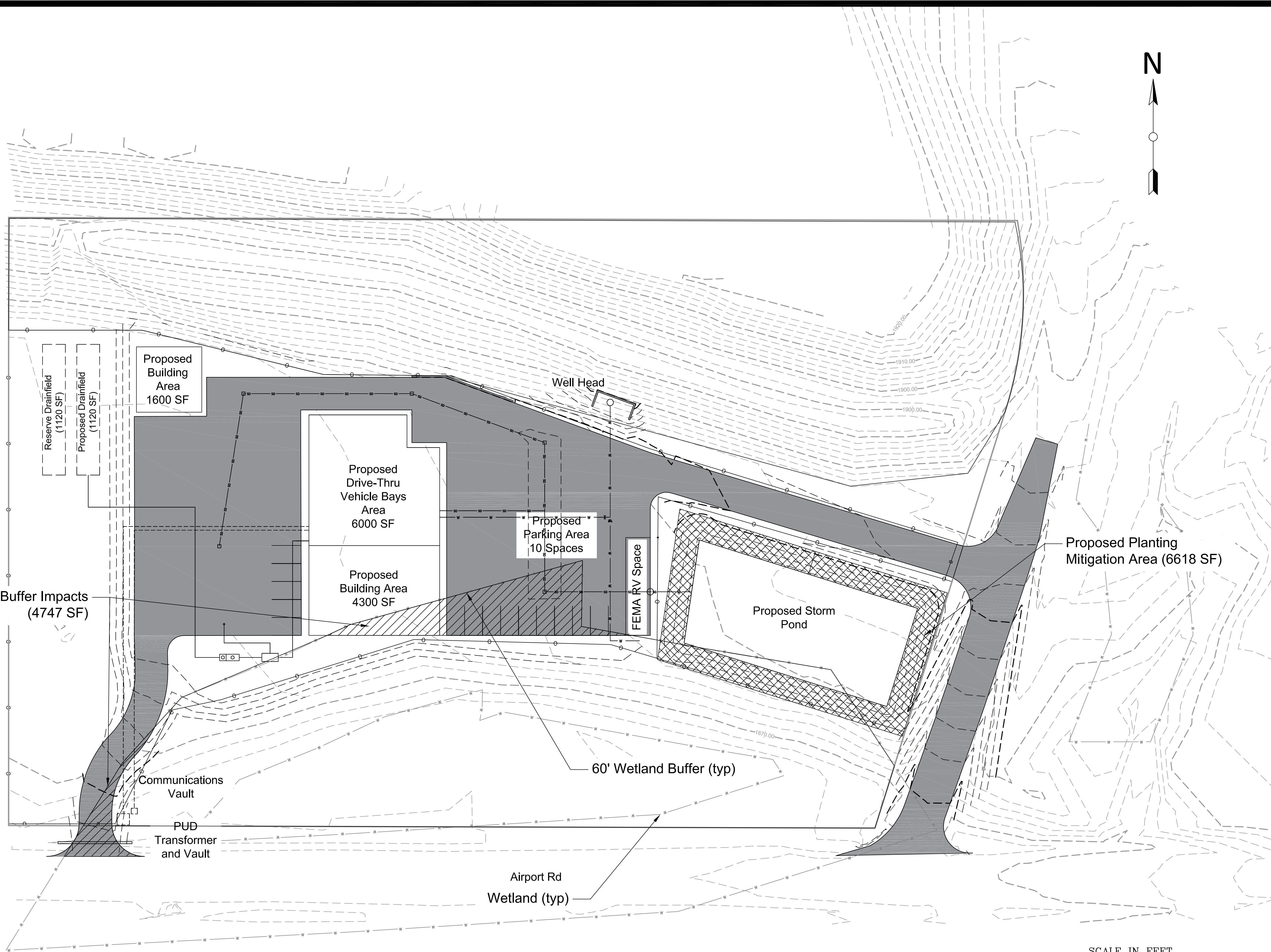
To offset the impacts the project has on the buffer, Kittitas County proposes planting the side slopes of the onsite Stormwater Pond with wetland species which are consistent with the wetland species found on site. Utilizing the entire side slope area, as seen on the attached site plan, the County proposes planting 6618 SF of pond side slope producing a net increase of 1871 SF of ecologically sensitive habitat area.

The specific species proposed for this mitigation are primarily Great Basin Wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*) and Field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). Additionally, the County proposes to plant a single row of container red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) approximately 8-10 feet off center. These are grasses, forbs and shrubs which were already found on site, or identified as wetland species which would provide good habitat and have high survivability rates.

Standard monitoring and maintenance strategies will be utilized to ensure proper growth and additional spot planting occurs. The plantings will be done in the fall, and the owner will irrigate

the planting area as necessary to ensure the plantings establish a root system within the saturated stormwater pond area or the natural groundwater table. The owner of the facility will visually inspect the mitigation area quarterly to ensure all plants are growing as intended.

The owner will monitor the mitigation area for the first three years. The owner will control non-native vegetation to ensure invasive, non-native plant species do not outcompete native species in any year. The owner will ensure 95% of the great basin wildrye and field horsetail survives the year after installation and will reseed the mitigation area as necessary. The owner shall replace any redosier dogwood that do not survive the first 3-years after planting.



Airport Rd

Upper County  
Search and Rescue

4/11/2024

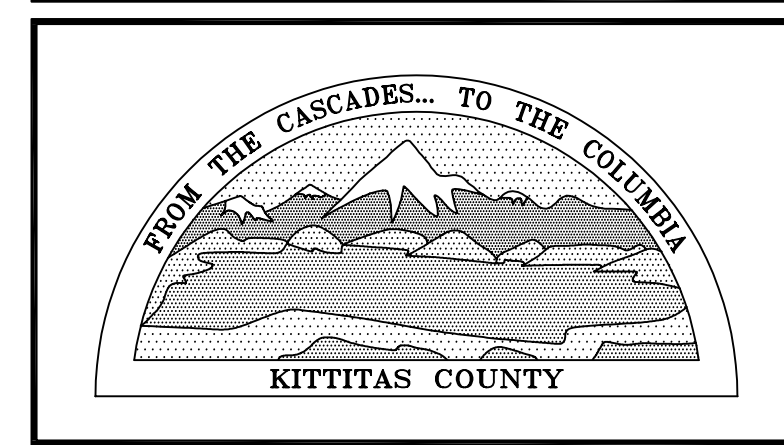
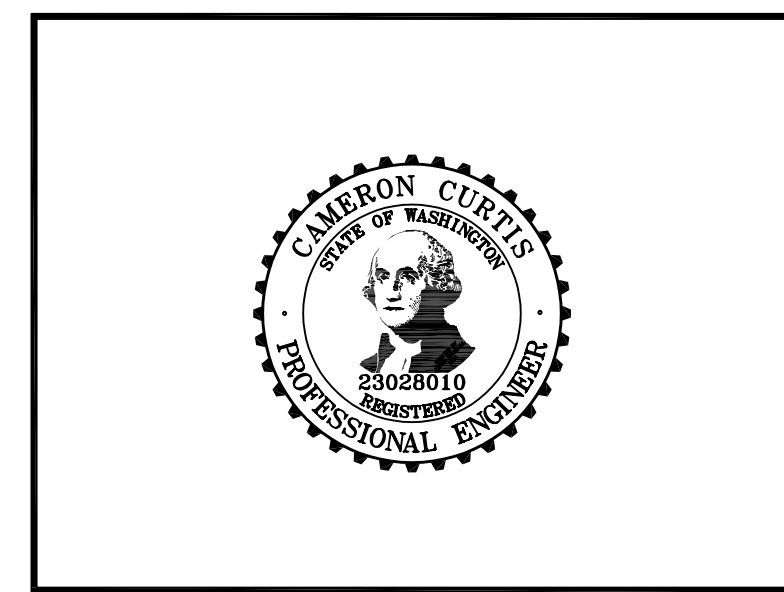
Designed By: C. Curtis

Entered By: C. Curtis

County Engineer: C. Curtis

P.W. Director: J. Fredrickson

Revision	Date	By



Federal Aid No.

C.R.P. No.

Site Plan

SP-01      05 / 22