



Date: June 27, 2022

To: SEPA File: South Fork Tolt Reservoir Debris Boom Replacement Project (C117069)

From: Hui Yang, Supervising Civil Engineer on behalf of Kyle MacDonald, Project Manager, Project Delivery and Engineering Branch

Subject: Categorical Exemption from SEPA Threshold Determination

cc: Kyle MacDonald, Project Manager, Project Delivery and Engineering Branch

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) owns and operates the South Fork Tolt River Municipal Watershed as a major asset in the City of Seattle's municipal drinking water supply system. The Watershed provides about one-third of the supply serving more than 1.5 million people in the central Puget Sound region. This 13,390-acre Watershed is on the South Fork of the Tolt River in unincorporated King County, Washington, approximately 16 miles upstream (east) from the City of Carnation and approximately 35 miles east of the City of Seattle (Figure 1).

The Municipal Watershed consists of the South Fork Tolt Reservoir and Dam, the Regulating Basin, and the West Dam and South Dam which impound the Regulating Basin, and several buildings housing staff work areas and equipment (Figure 2). In addition to these facilities, Seattle City Light owns and operates a hydropower system known as the South Fork Tolt River Hydro Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] License No. 2959) that uses water released from South Fork Tolt Reservoir. The site includes a debris boom that spans the South Fork Tolt Reservoir east of the South Fork Tolt Dam. The debris boom is intended to capture floating debris and ice that might damage or interfere with operation of the drinking water supply intake and spillway structure at the South Fork Tolt Dam.

The South Fork Tolt Reservoir debris boom is damaged and nearing the end of its design life. FERC inspected the site in 2017 and directed SPU to repair or replace the boom. In addition, SPU reports that debris clogged the Dam Instream Flow Valve (commonly referred to as Valve 11) in November 2018, presumably due to debris passing through one of the Tolt Intake gates. As a result, SPU has identified a project that would replace the existing boom with a new debris boom system comprised of stainless steel pontoons and attachment hardware with a combination of stainless steel and CSPE (chlorosulfonated polyethylene geomembrane material) debris curtains. New right and left shore anchors would also be constructed. Construction would begin July 2024 and be substantially complete by December 2024. Construction is estimated to require 4.5 months (90 working days). Once construction is complete, SPU would continue long-term inspection, operation, and maintenance of the debris boom for the lifetime of that asset (approximately 50 years).

DETERMINATION

SPU conducted a review of this proposed action for the purpose of determining compliance with SEPA and has determined the action is exempted from a threshold determination under provisions of SEPA as established under RCW 43.21C, WAC 197-11-800, and King County Code (KCC) 20.44.040. As per KCC 20.44.040.A, King County has adopted the standards and procedures specified in WAC 197-11-300 through 197-11-390 and 197-11-800 through 197-11-890 for determining categorical exemptions and making threshold determinations. Specifically, the proposal is exempt per WAC 197-11-800(23)(e) ((utilities: all developments within the confines of any existing reservoir...)) and KCC 20.44.040.A. The work is entirely within the confines of an existing reservoir and includes installation, construction, replacement, maintenance, and operation activities that would not change the action from an exempt class.

The proposed action will comply with requirements of other applicable permits and approvals. Should the proposed action change such that it is no longer considered exempt from SEPA, then the proposed action will be re-examined to determine the appropriate level of SEPA review or whether other SEPA exemption provisions apply.

SIGNATURE: SEPA Responsible Official

As the SEPA Responsible Official for Seattle Public Utilities, I have reviewed the project information presented to me and I concur that this geotechnical activity is categorically exempted from a SEPA threshold determination for the reasons described above.

Ingrid Wertz
SEPA Responsible Official

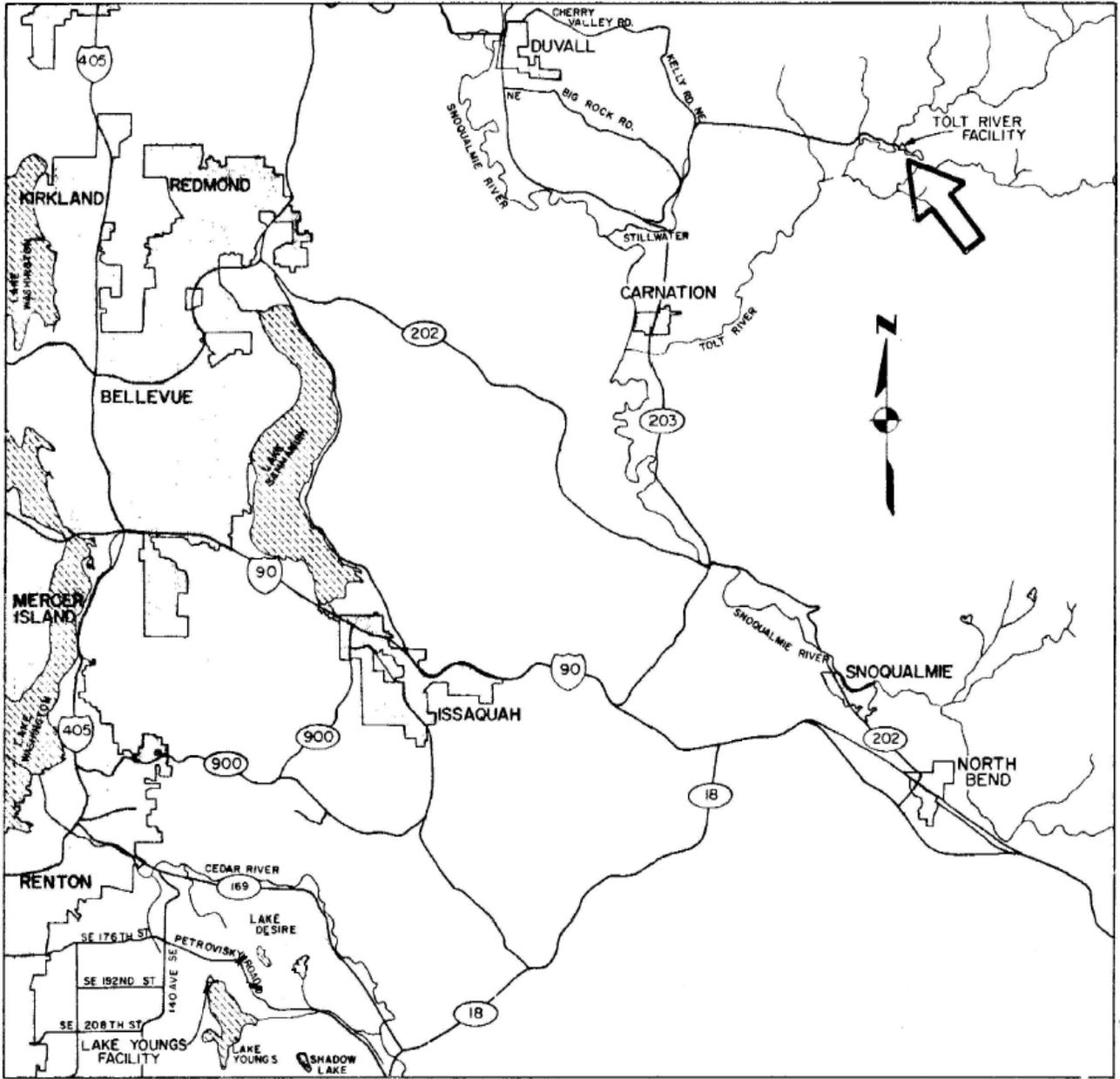


Figure 1. Vicinity map for Seattle Public Utilities' South Fork Tolt Reservoir Debris Boom Replacement Project (C117069).

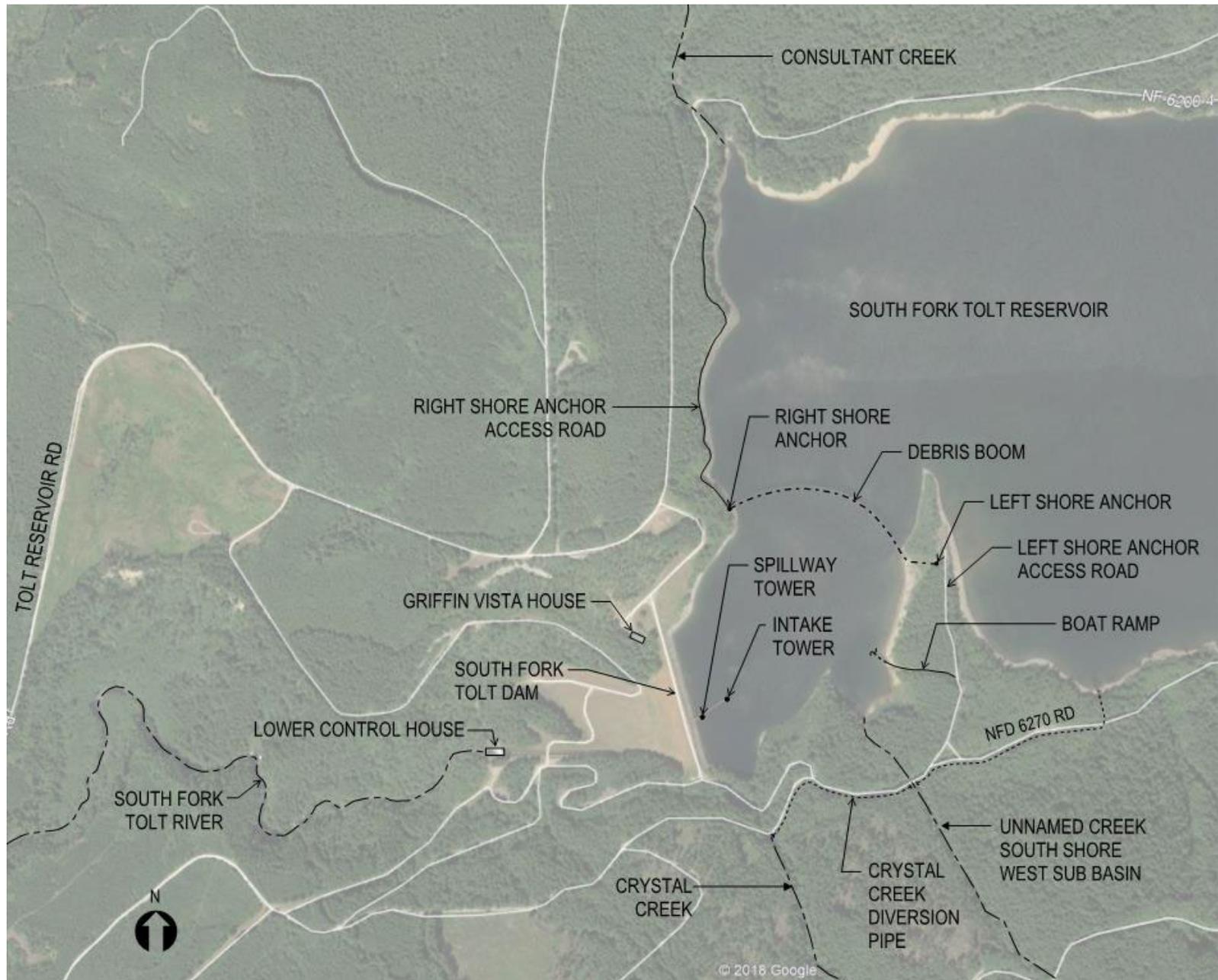


Figure 2. South Fork Tolt Reservoir site overview.