United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
North Cascades National Park Service Complex
810 State Route 20
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1.A.2 (9470)

Allyson Brooks, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 48343
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Dr. Brooks:

North Cascades National Park Service Complex (NOCA, NPS) plans several emergency actions to address expected fall flooding along Company Creek Road in Stehekin, Chelan County, that were impacted by the record setting December 2025 floods (DAHP Project # 2026-08-05616; Figure 1). The NPS plans to grant Chelan County's request for a special use permit to construct the second half of the temporary Company Creek Road within NPS boundaries to provide access to the residents cut off when the road washed out in December. The NPS also plans to strengthen or replace the existing temporary water barrier along the first half of the temporary road constructed in spring 2026. These actions are federal undertakings as defined by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR § 800.3(a)) and are necessary to prevent a threat to life and property expected during seasonal fall flooding. Therefore, the NPS is providing notification under the emergency provisions of the NPS's 2008 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Stipulation VII. Emergency Actions).

Background and Basis for Immediate Action
In December 2025, an atmospheric river event hit Washington State, causing significant flood damage and triggering evacuations in several counties. The flooding in Stehekin destroyed a 400-foot NPS levee and approximately 1,000 feet of the Company Creek Road. As a result of the high floodwaters and failed levee, the Stehekin River redirected into a historic channel, causing damage to private property and severing vehicle access to homes above the washout.

The NPS and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) built part of an emergency temporary road in late March/early April on federal land (Figure 2) to provide access to the houses in advance of expected spring floods (see previous correspondence under DAHP Project 2026-03-01871). The remaining portion of the road had private property conflicts and was not under federal jurisdiction to construct which left a gap in the protection of private property from the river. Additionally, due to the changes in the depth of the river bottom and the current alignment, flooding occurs at lower volumetric flow rates than before; the temporary road constructed in the spring is likely to be overtopped during seasonal fall floods.

The NPS, as well as other federal and local agencies, have been seeking a solution to the gap in the temporary road since late spring. On August 17, 2026, Chelan County submitted a special use permit application to the NPS to build the remaining road segment. This segment will largely be constructed on federal lands in the footprint of the destroyed road, which is now within the active river channel. This segment constructed by the county will reduce conflicts with private property and will close the current gap in the temporary road, reducing flooding risk (see Attachment A). The construction must start by mid-September in order to be completed before seasonal fall flooding begins; the target completion date is October 9. The NPS has determined that this is an emergency project designed to prevent imminent threats to life and property, as the fall flood season approaches, and the highest flood on record occurred in the month of October.

The NPS, in coordination with USACE, is also considering the need to improve the existing temporary water barrier along the northern emergency road shoulder. The existing water barrier consists of hundreds of Supersacks filled with gravel and stacked approximately 5 feet high. This water barrier is needed to provide a construction envelope largely free of water intrusion and will be needed for the current emergency work and to support the eventual permanent road construction (Attachment B is a general overview of the relationship between the project elements.) The temporary water barriers are not part of the county's proposed action but are for the same purpose of temporarily ensuring access and protecting the area from floods and erosion and also need to be installed before October flood waters.

Planning for a long-term solution began shortly after the flood and will be a complex, multi-year project with many stakeholders and agencies. Full consultation will occur for the permanent solution once designs are proposed.

Description of the Undertaking

Chelan County proposes a road prism that will include an approximately 12-foot-wide driving surface, with 1-foot shoulders to either side, and a 1.5:1 slope. The approximately 500-linear foot alignment will tie into the existing temporary road on the east and connect with the undamaged portion of Company Creek Road on the west (Figures 3 and 4). The precise alignment may be field fit during construction due to the time-sensitive nature of the work and on-the-ground conditions. There is one proposed equipment staging area just east of the existing temporary road and four proposed materials staging areas along the existing Company Creek Road to the southeast (Attachment C).

The NPS and USACE are determining whether to augment the existing temporary water barrier made of Supersacks (plastic bags filled with soil/debris, Figure 5) or to install HESCO barriers (rigid baskets filled with soil/debris, Figure 6). The Supersacks would require some additional clearing of vegetation east of the existing barrier. Installing the HESCO barriers or other erosion control measures would require removing approximately 10 additional trees, clearing of accumulated woody debris down to a soil substrate, and constructing a flat base platform approximately 10 feet wide and 2 feet deep of compacted crushed rock for the full length of the HESCO system, approximately 800 feet. The barrier would line the north side of the newly constructed road and connect to the water diversion barrier for the in-water work, creating a continuous flood protection layer extending the length of the temporary road construction project

to the higher land on the eastern remaining road, as illustrated on Attachment B. More permanent flood control measures may be considered as part long-term planning effort.

Construction activities will include the import of rock and aggregates; clearing of trees and vegetation; installation of temporary water diversion barriers in the river and erosion and sediment controls; and excavation, material placement, and grading as necessary to construct the proposed road prism. If additional materials are needed beyond that which has been stockpiled, gravel may be taken from the existing NPS Company Creek Gravel Pit. Work may begin as early as August 31 and will continue in daylight hours until the road is complete, which is expected to be 4-5 weeks.

The NPS is currently awaiting additional details from the County on the method for temporary water exclusion on the north side of the construction area within the river and the proposed height of the road and width of its base. As the NPS receives this information, we will share it with you.

The area of potential effects (APE) includes a roughly 500-foot road alignment (with about one-third of that being a realignment of the temporary road), encompassing all areas within which physical construction activities, including staging, access and water exclusion activities may occur. The APE begins in the west where the intact, 30-ft wide Company Creek Road remains surrounded by private property, heads east into the river where the road alignment existed prior to flooding, then curves to the south to gradually connect with the new temporary emergency road. The APE includes this area of new construction, as well as a 100-foot buffer in both directions of the proposed and existing Company Creek Road from its washout in the west heading east/southeast for a distance of approximately 0.5 miles (Figures 7 and 8). The APE also accounts for areas from which the improvements may be visible. Lastly, the APE includes the existing extent of the Company Creek gravel pit plus a 300-foot buffer.

Expected Effects

The project is not expected to affect any historic properties. There are no recorded archeological sites in the project area, and the highest probability landform is located outside of the project area, several hundred feet south of Company Creek Road. The NPS conducted limited emergency survey of this landform, a series of elevated, flat river terraces within the Stehekin River and Battalion Creek floodplains, in the spring. Three shovel probes were excavated, and no cultural materials were found. The portion of the APE where the road segment will be constructed lies either within the current river channel or along the river's flooded banks which have experienced a high degree of scouring and deposition. These areas have very limited potential for in-situ archeological deposits. The portion of the road the county proposed to build will be built between the existing temporary road and the river is on landforms that are less likely to have resources, due to their lower elevation and susceptibility to past floods and river migration. The NPS surveyed the proposed staging areas in the spring and found no resources. Monitoring of the spring construction resulted in two historic-era artifacts (a bottle and an automobile part) in flood debris and one cedar tree with signs of girdling; monitoring reports will be sent to your office when finalized. The temporary road will be in a similar location and style as the destroyed road and should not cause any visual effects to properties within the viewshed.

Although no resources are known in the APE, and likelihood of discovery is low, an archeological monitor will be onsite for ground disturbing activities in the land-based portion of the construction as necessary. The monitor will use available opportunities to view exposed ground surfaces, sift excavated materials when possible, and document construction with detailed notes and photos. Standard archeological work stoppages will occur if an archeological site is uncovered. **However, if emergency circumstances occur, and if the Superintendent determines a work stoppage due to an inadvertent discovery may cause imminent threat to life or property, emergency archeological documentation will take place for a period of no more than 4 hours at which time construction will proceed as planned.** NOCA will make a reasonable attempt to notify affected Tribes, the SHPO and the ACHP within 48 hours of the discovery (36 CFR 800.13 (b)(3)), although the remote project location and expedited schedule may delay the notification. Upon conclusion of the project, a report documenting the parks actions will be completed and distributed to consulting parties.

We recognize this project will occur within the traditional territories of several indigenous nations. The thoughtful stewardship of these areas is essential for cultural resource protection and the place-based connections of past, present, and future generations of indigenous peoples. We invite any comments that you may have regarding any historic properties that may be affected as soon as possible. The NPS plans to issue the special use permit by August 28, 2026.

If you have further questions please contact Jason J. Taylor, NOCA Superintendent, at Jason_J_Taylor@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Jason J. Taylor, PhD
Superintendent

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Rob Whitlam
State Archeologist
Department of Archeology
and Historic Preservation

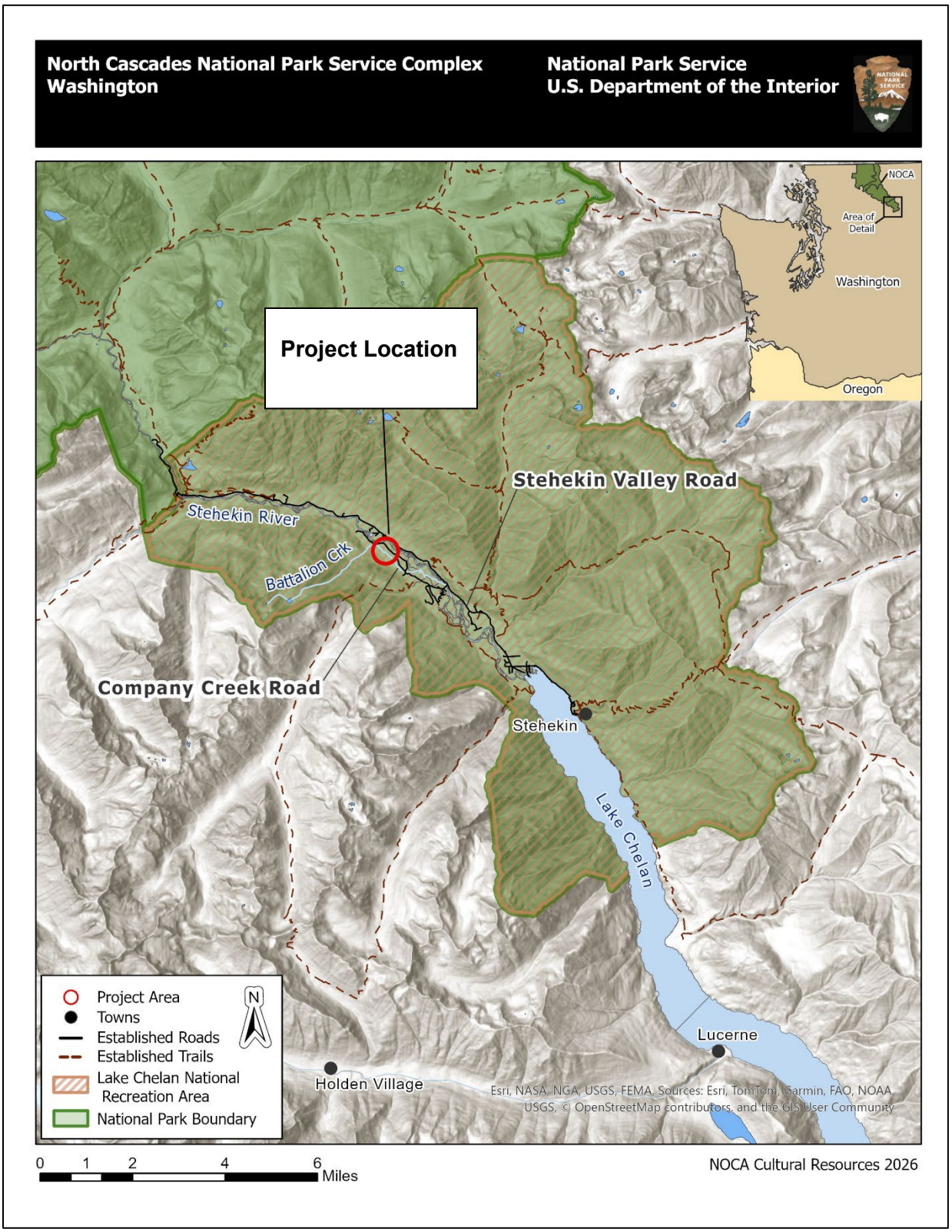

Figure 1. Map showing location of the road construction project proposed by Chelan County within Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

Figure 2. Existing NPS temporary road constructed in spring 2026 to provide emergency access to private property owners above washout on Company Creek Road, view west.

Figure 3. View east from the western washout of Company Creek Road on 3/9/2026 prior to emergency road construction. Chelan County Road segment will be constructed from this point forward (east) into river then curving right.

Figure 4. Approximate location where proposed Chelan County segment will, from the west, join NPS temporary road (looking east). Note Supersacks.

Figure 5. Existing temporary water barrier in front of NPS emergency road during the Stehekin River spring runoff that may be replaced with an improved barrier.

Figure 6. Example of HESCO barriers

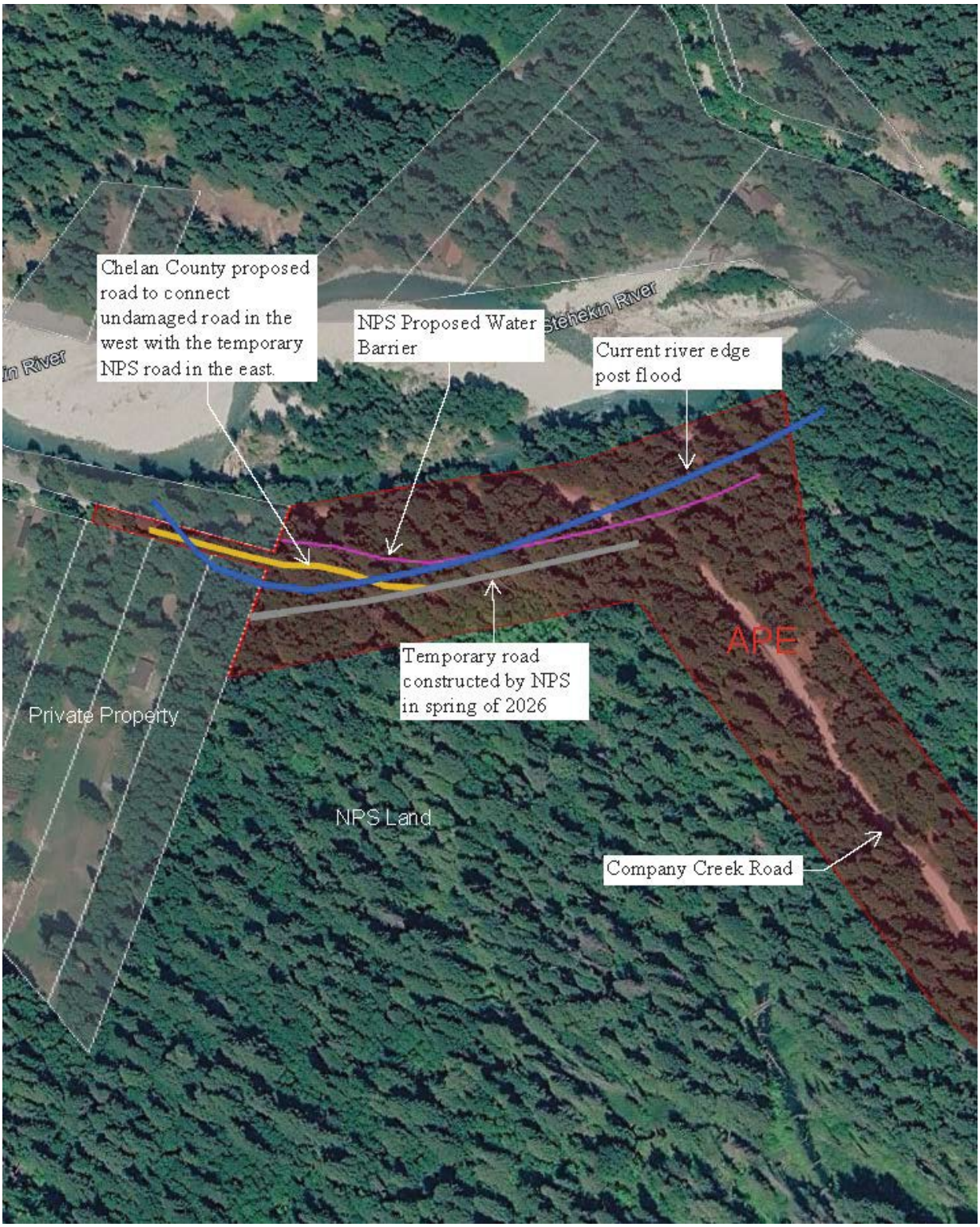

Figure 7. Detailed map of the Area of Potential Effect in the vicinity of the proposed Chelan County Road segment and NPS water barriers.

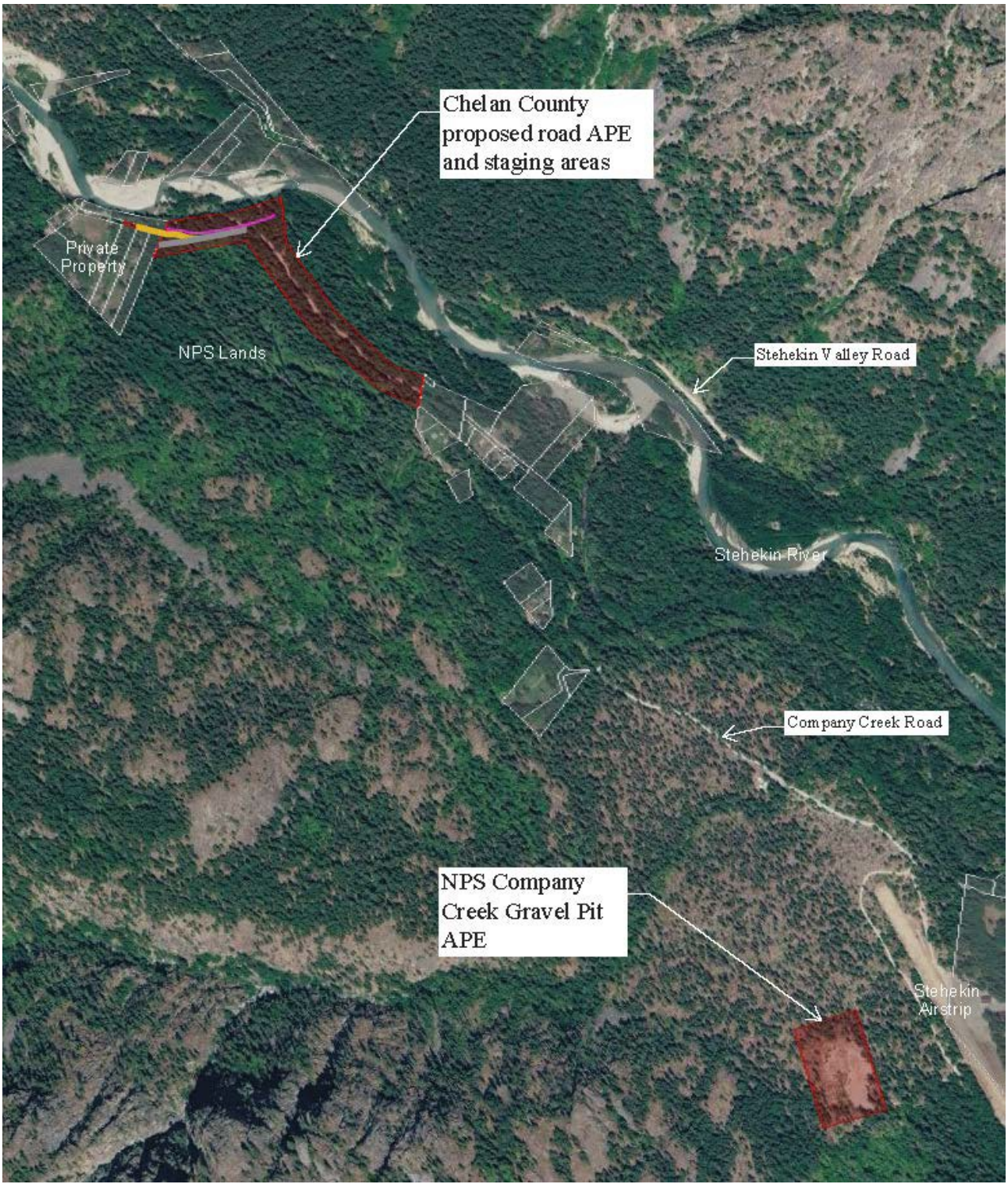

Figure 8. Full project Area of Potential Effect including Company Creek Gravel Pit, staging areas along Company Creek Road, NPS temporary water barrier and Chelan County Road segment.