

6.0 Description of Specific Reaches and Tributaries

Figure 17 shows the basin boundaries of the major tributary streams in the Snoqualmie River watershed. Figure 18 shows the longitudinal profile of these tributaries.

6.1. Upper Snoqualmie Basin

The upper Snoqualmie Basin includes the entire watershed above Snoqualmie Falls. This includes 367 square miles (591 square kilometers) or 53 percent of the entire Snoqualmie watershed. Property ownership in the upper basin is divided among federal, state, and private owners. With small deviations, the U.S. Forest Service owns the entire upper basin, starting in Range 10 and extending east to the Cascade Crest. To the west of Range 10, land ownership shows the familiar checkerboard pattern of state and private ownership inherited from railroad and public school land grants. Most of the upper watershed has an alpine character, but the river immediately above Snoqualmie Falls, in the vicinity of Snoqualmie and North Bend, is similar in character to the river in the lower valley.

6.1.1. North Fork Snoqualmie River

The North Fork of the Snoqualmie River has a watershed area of 104 square miles (269 square kilometers). Elevation ranges from 410 feet (126 meters) at the Three Forks confluence to 5894 feet (1814 meters) on Lennox Mountain. The upper North Fork Snoqualmie River flows generally westerly from a drainage network in the central Cascades. If the North Fork continued west from its headwaters, it would join the mainstem Snoqualmie near the city of Carnation. Instead, after emerging from the Cascade massif, the North Fork turns south, following a glacial channelway along the base of the massif until reaching the confluence with the Middle and South forks. Major tributaries to the North Fork include Philipppa Creek, Deep Creek, Lennox Creek, and Illinois Creek.






Two small areas in the upper watershed of the North Fork are located in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area. Together, these make up approximately 10 percent of the watershed area. Virtually all of the remainder of the watershed is managed for timber production. There has been extensive prospecting in the upper North Fork valley, and deposits of gold, silver, copper, and molybdenite have been identified. However, no large-scale mining operations have ever been undertaken (Bethel, 1951; Johnson, 2004).

Tertiary volcanic and sedimentary rocks underlie the foothills bounding the North Fork Snoqualmie River Basin. Alpine glaciers occupied the upper North Fork valley, as well as its major tributaries, during the last Ice Age.



SNOQUALMIE WATERSHED

Figure 17
SUBBASINS

-  Subbasin Boundary
-  Watershed Boundary
-  Stream
-  Lake/River
-  Incorporated Areas



0 2 4 Miles

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King County

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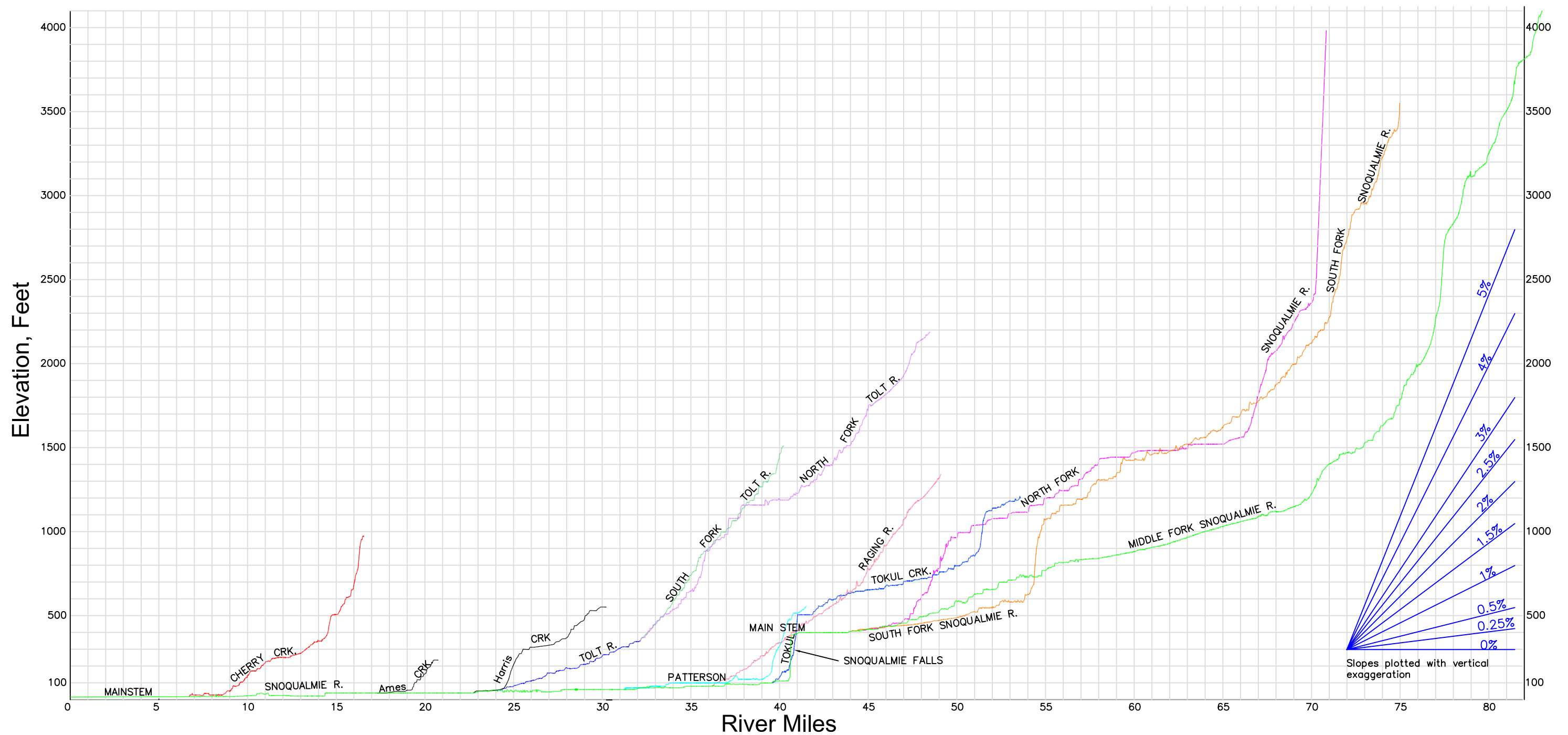


Figure 18: Longitudinal Profile of the Snoqualmie River and selected tributaries. Vertical exaggeration: 52.8:1 (1 mile horizontal = 100 feet vertical)