



State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Sportfish Division

Nomination Form
Anadromous Waters Catalog

Region Arctic USGS Quad(s) NOME D-1, D-2, TELLER A-2, A-2
 Anadromous Waters Catalog Number of Water Body 332-00-10270
 Name of Water Body Cobblestone River USGS Name Local Name
 Addition Deletion Correction Backup Information

For Office Use

Nomination #	25-664	<i>[Signature]</i>	<u>Sep 05 / 2025</u>
		Fisheries Scientist	Date
Revision Year:	2026	<i>[Signature]</i>	<u>9/5/25</u>
		Habitat Operations Manager	Date
Revision to:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Atlas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Catalog	<i>[Signature]</i>	<u>28 Aug 2025</u>
		AWC Project Biologist	Date
Revision Code:	B-6, B-2	<i>[Signature]</i>	<u>9/25/2025</u>
		GIS Analyst	Date

OBSERVATION INFORMATION

Species	Date(s) Observed	Spawning	Rearing	Present	Anadromous
Dolly Varden	07/05/2025		✓		✓
Dolly Varden	07/05/2025		✓		✓
Dolly Varden	07/05/2025		✓		✓

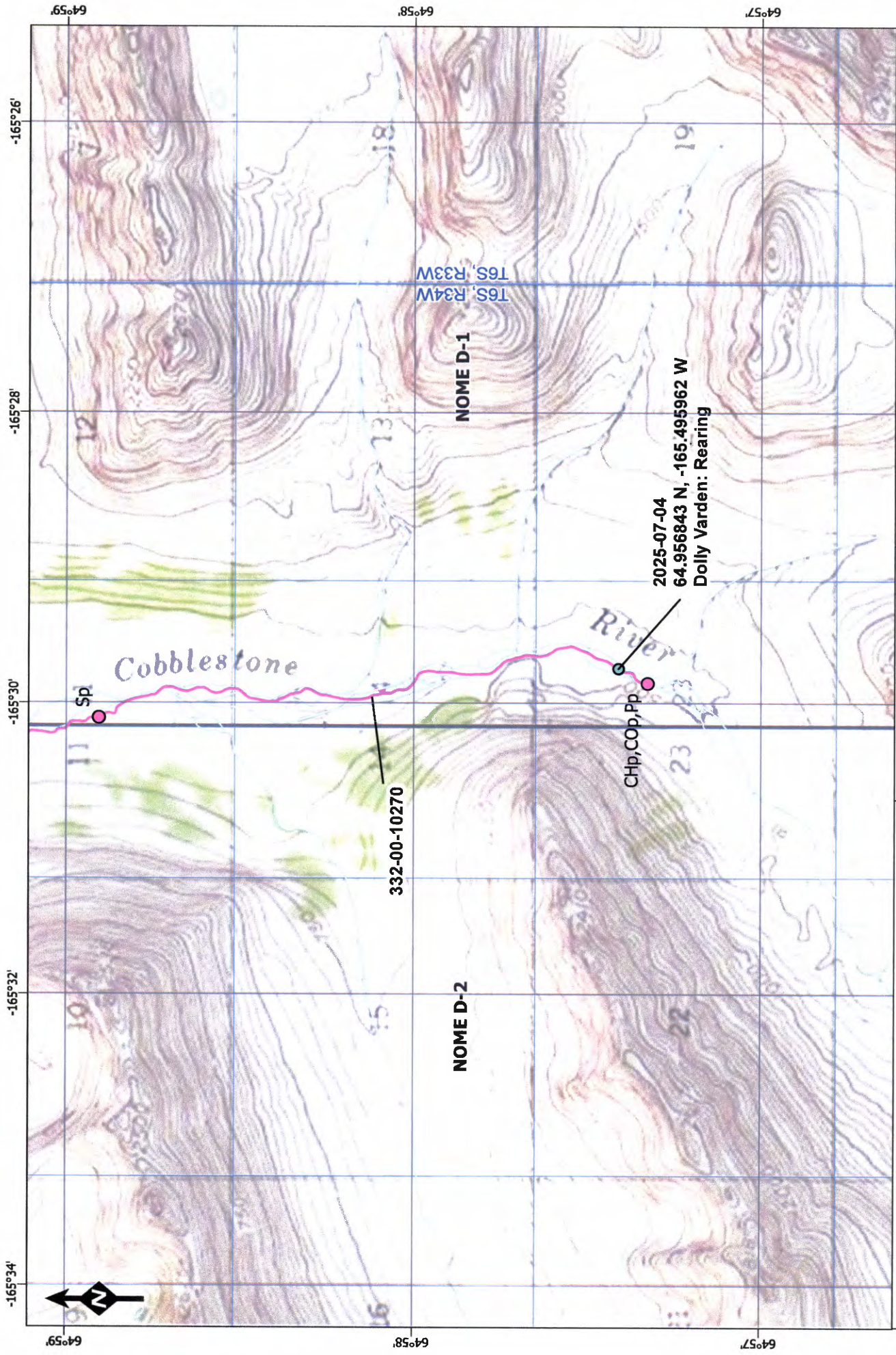
IMPORTANT: Provide all supporting documentation that this water body is important for the spawning, rearing or migration of anadromous fish, including: number of fish and life stages observed; sampling methods, sampling duration and area sampled; copies of field notes; etc. Attach a copy of a map showing location of mouth and observed upper extent of each species, as well as other information such as: specific stream reaches observed as spawning or rearing habitat; locations, types, and heights of any barriers; etc.

Comments:
 An electrofishing survey captured 3 juvenile Dolly Varden in the upper reaches of the Cobblestone River. Sampling conditions included hot and dry weather and low flow conditions in the stream.
 Coordinates (Lat,Long): (64.956843,-165.495962)

Name of Observer (please print): Molly Payne
 Signature: 10.231.39.10 (Web Nomination) Date: 08/27/2025
 Agency: _____
 Address: 4060 B Street Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99503

This certifies that in my best professional judgment and belief the above information is evidence that this waterbody should be included in or deleted from the Anadromous Waters Catalog.

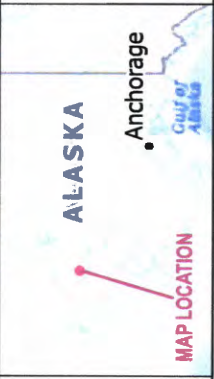
Signature of Area Biologist: _____ Date: _____ Revision 3/16
 Name of Area Biologist (please print): _____



**AWC NOMINATION
COBBLESTONE RIVER**

SCALE: 0 1 2 3 Miles
0 1 2 3 Kilometers

FIGURE: **1**



ALASKA

● Observation
● Current AWC Extent
● ADF&G Anadromous Stream

□ Township and Range
□ Section
□ USGS Quad Boundary

MERIDIAN: NAD83
USGS 1:63,360 Nome D-1

From: [Cathcart, Charles N \(DFG\)](#)
To: [Giefer, Joe \(DFG\)](#); [Green, Duncan G \(DFG\)](#)
Subject: Fw: Dolly justification for AWC
Date: Thursday, October 30, 2025 9:23:50 AM
Attachments: [DV_managers_nightmare.pdf](#)
[Jaecks et al. 2016 .pdf](#)
[Bond et al. 2015.pdf](#)
[Gallagher et al. 2019.pdf](#)
[DV_distribution_forms.png](#)

From: Joe Spencer <jrspencer2@alaska.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 7:08 PM
To: Cathcart, Charles N (DFG) <nate.cathcart@alaska.gov>
Subject: Re: Dolly justification for AWC

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hey Nate,

I had never read Nordeng's work. I'll see if Scanlon or Gryska have any of those old char symposia in their offices. I believe Fred DeCicco had many of those once-upon-a-time, and Scanlon/Gryska inherited most of his literature when he retired. I will let you know. I am, admittedly, not as familiar with the Arctic Char literature as I perhaps ought to be. The literature pool is pretty vast and they share a lot in common with DV, as far as life history.

There has been no such work that I am aware of in Alaska. I do have some information that gets to your question though, as well as a lot of my own thoughts on the subject. (get ready for too much damn information)

Christie Gleason of ADF&G Commfish here in Fairbanks did some work for Joe Buckwalter and crew (I believe?) back in the late 2000's or early 2010's, investigating the use of otolith microchemistry in the cores of otoliths from juvenile Dolly Varden captured by AFFI/AWC research to see if they could find marine maternal signatures, therefore showing anadromy in the population. I believe these fish were largely from the Seward Peninsula. Nothing was published, and I think it was a bust. Most (>75%) of my DV from the Noatak, which are almost all anadromous, have *no* marine maternal signature; this method is not well-suited to DV because of their propensity to "skip" migration during the year of spawning, hence an anadromous mother will not pass on a marine maternal signature to her offspring (or perhaps only a very weak one).

Colin Gallagher and crew with DFO have done quite a bit of research in northern Canadian DV populations. They have found that virtually all adult female DV in those populations are anadromous, but there are a lot of residual males in these populations. Resident females are only found above barriers, for the most part. Therefore virtually all DV in these populations are the progeny of at least one anadromous parent. These fish have life histories that are likely analogous to the DV of our North Slope DV; I think a key point when we consider these DV populations is that they typically *do not have access to salmon subsidies*; this is in contrast with the DV researched in Tom Quinn's lab (detailed below), which all come from Bristol Bay or AK Penn and have ample access to salmon.

Troy Jaecks, who did his Master's through UW with Tom Quinn, found that presumably anadromous Dolly Varden in the Iliamna River were *not likely* anadromous, based on his radio-telemetry. They were large-bodied and their otoliths appeared to have microchemical signatures consistent with anadromy; however, his radio-tagged adult DV evidently never made ocean migrations. They were likely able to consume enough food via salmon subsidies that they did not undergo ocean migration, and additionally, the consumption of salmon eggs and flesh was so intense that it artificially inflated their otolith Strontium levels. I have attached this paper. There is also unpublished evidence of this phenomenon in the Klutina River drainage, and I suspect Kenai River DV are this way as well.

Morgan Bond, a PhD student of Tom Quinn's, looked at anadromy in Chignik Dolly Varden quite a bit. He found that Chignik Dollies were mostly anadromous; he also found that many fish displayed a "retiree" life history, wherein a single ocean migration was made before retiring to freshwater to live the rest of their lives in a presumably semi-sedentary life waiting for sockeye spawn. Some of my fish in the Noatak appear to have done this as well. Paper attached.

Fred Decicco of ADFG and Jim Reist of DFO thought that the traditional distinction between subtypes of DV, that being "Southern form" ranging from Washington State up to the southern AK Penn, and Northern form from the north side of Alaska Peninsula up to the Canadian Arctic, inadequately described North American Dolly Varden taxonomy. Their proposed change split Northern DV into an "Arctic" DV lineage, ranging from the Imuruk Basin on the Seward Peninsula north to Arctic Canada, and a "Bering Sea" lineage encompassing southern half of Seward Peninsula, Unalakleet area, lower Yukon/Kusko, Bristol Bay, and AK Penn. (see attached distribution map) Their idea was that Arctic DV evolved in the absence of salmon, and therefore developed into populations of large-bodied adults that fed far offshore and fed little or not at all in freshwater, whereas Bering Sea DV evolved in the presence of salmon and therefore maintained a life history more analogous to that of southern-form DV (maturing at smaller <500mm size, yearly diet heavily composed of salmon subsidies). Their thesis, which I think holds water, is that DV migratory history is intricately tied to the abundance of salmon across their range. In many coastal areas of SE, SC, SW Alaska, this manifests as DV using anadromy as a "conduit" to access more coastal salmon spawning streams.

All of this boiled down: MOST large DV in Alaska are anadromous. There are possibly some exceptions in Bristol Bay or other exceptional salmon systems. I think it is highly probable that virtually *all* Alaskan DV populations with ready access to the ocean display some degree of anadromy.

I think that the resident/nonresident ratio of DV in Alaska likely *do not* adhere to the Arctic

Char observations of Nordeng, and this is why: Arctic Char live in association with lakes. They spawn and rear in lakes, almost exclusively. Lakes, even at extremely high latitudes, are productive enough to grow resident fishes fairly large. The same cannot be said for mountainous rivers and creeks, which is where Alaskan DV live for the most part. Mountainous Arctic/subarctic rivers and streams are pretty sterile and cannot produce large resident fishes, for the most part (and DV aren't really piscivores, like burbot). The exception to this is when there are vast numbers of salmon present. This is backed up by the observations of the Canadians, who have seen very very few resident adult females in their extensive sampling of DV spawning/overwintering areas in the Canadian Arctic. I think that virtually all females in Alaska display some degree of anadromy at some point in their lives, yearly, retiree, or otherwise, outside perhaps some places in Bristol Bay with exceptional availability of salmon. Some unknown proportion of males will remain precocious; I'm guessing a lot of them do. But I do not see widespread evidence of female DV living entirely in FW, if they have access to the ocean. It should also be said that this question has also not been studied extensively!

My own microchemistry thus far has shown almost all adult Noatak DV are anadromous. I have a few from the Nimiuktuk River that are not, including one male @ 613mm! So while it is possible, only 3/143 spawners I have looked at were residents. I am confident that virtually all large adults can be confidently assigned as anadromous.

Now, to your question about the little DV's: I think that it is highly likely that little 1 or 2yo DV in small streams of NW Alaska, where there is plausible access to the ocean, are the progeny of anadromous adult females (and perhaps males). As I say, I do not see widespread evidence of lifetime-resident adult female DV in Alaska. It is true that DV are theoretically able to display a wide variety of life history patterns, but I think the evidence points to most Alaska populations having *functionally obligate anadromy in female DV* (you can quote me on that!). I think the most concrete supporting evidence of this would be the Gallagher et al. paper I have attached here, documenting the rarity of adult female resident DV in northern Canada. I think it is similarly rare in AK.

How do you *prove* little DV is the progeny of anadromous mother? I don't think you can. The little ones all look the same, as indicated in Al's memo and McCart's work on the Slope in the 70's. Regardless I think that population-level anadromy is highly likely in this area of Alaska, and in most areas of Alaska. I would argue that in any coastal or near-coastal stream in northern Alaska, if there are no apparent barriers to fish migration, DV populations (if present) can be assumed to be composed of anadromous individuals.

Another interesting "debate" is anadromous DV + CT in SC and SEAK, which seemingly do not get included in the AWC when found by Habitat division in their AWC work. I think we have good reason to believe those fish are anadromous too, but that's a topic for another time!

If you start finding 170-250mm females with developing eggs, THEN you might want to re-evaluate your assumptions about anadromy.

Clear as mud?

Dollies do lots of cool stuff.

I say, nominate them!

Joe

On Mon, Feb 13, 2023 at 3:24 PM Cathcart, Charles N (DFG) <nate.cathcart@alaska.gov> wrote:

Hi Joe,

Figured you'd get a kick out of this...check out the attachment. It outlines the rationale behind calling Dollies on the Seward Peninsula area anadromous.

Joe Giefer came across this document in the AWC files.

You ever read about Hans Nordeng's work? Al Ott seems to have misspelled the name in the memo. I'd like to track down the proceedings of that symposium to see how he did that study to get the ratios. Has anybody performed any analyses of wild populations in Alaska to determine ratios of resident to anadromous individuals?

How would you feel about this applying to other western Alaskan Dollies? I think it should given the size-classes we see in summer are predominately age 1-2 individuals in systems that have documented pre-spawn adults such as the Kobuk. But it would be sweet to better define Dolly spawning habitat in western Alaska. Hoping that October 2023 flights for Coho in the Kobuk will also find Dolly spawning grounds since it seemed their spawn timing coincided on the Seward Peninsula. Just differed in habitat types (Dollies spawning in the much smaller tribes compared to coho in the larger systems).

Thanks,

Nate

Nate Cathcart

Habitat Biologist II

Alaska Freshwater Fish Inventory

Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Division of Sport Fish – Research & Technical Services

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Joe Spencer

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University of Alaska Fairbanks

Cell: 907-723-6886

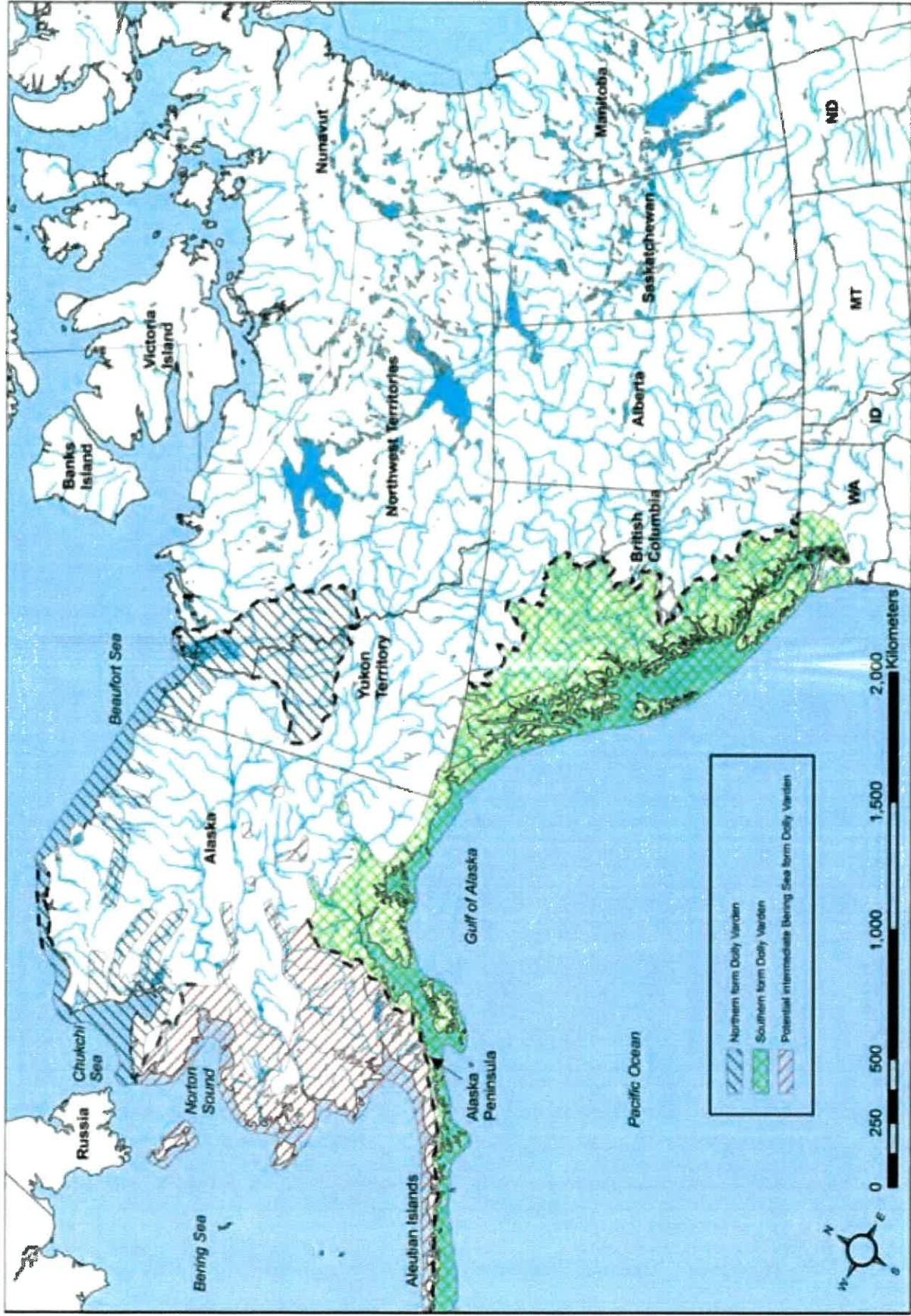


Figure 1.1 – Map showing the distribution of Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) in North

America. Green shading represents southern form Dolly Varden (*S.m.lordi*) while black and red represents northern form Dolly Varden (*S.m.malma*). The red is a proposed intermediate subspecies that is currently identified as northern form (Source: COSEWIC 2010).

Citations:

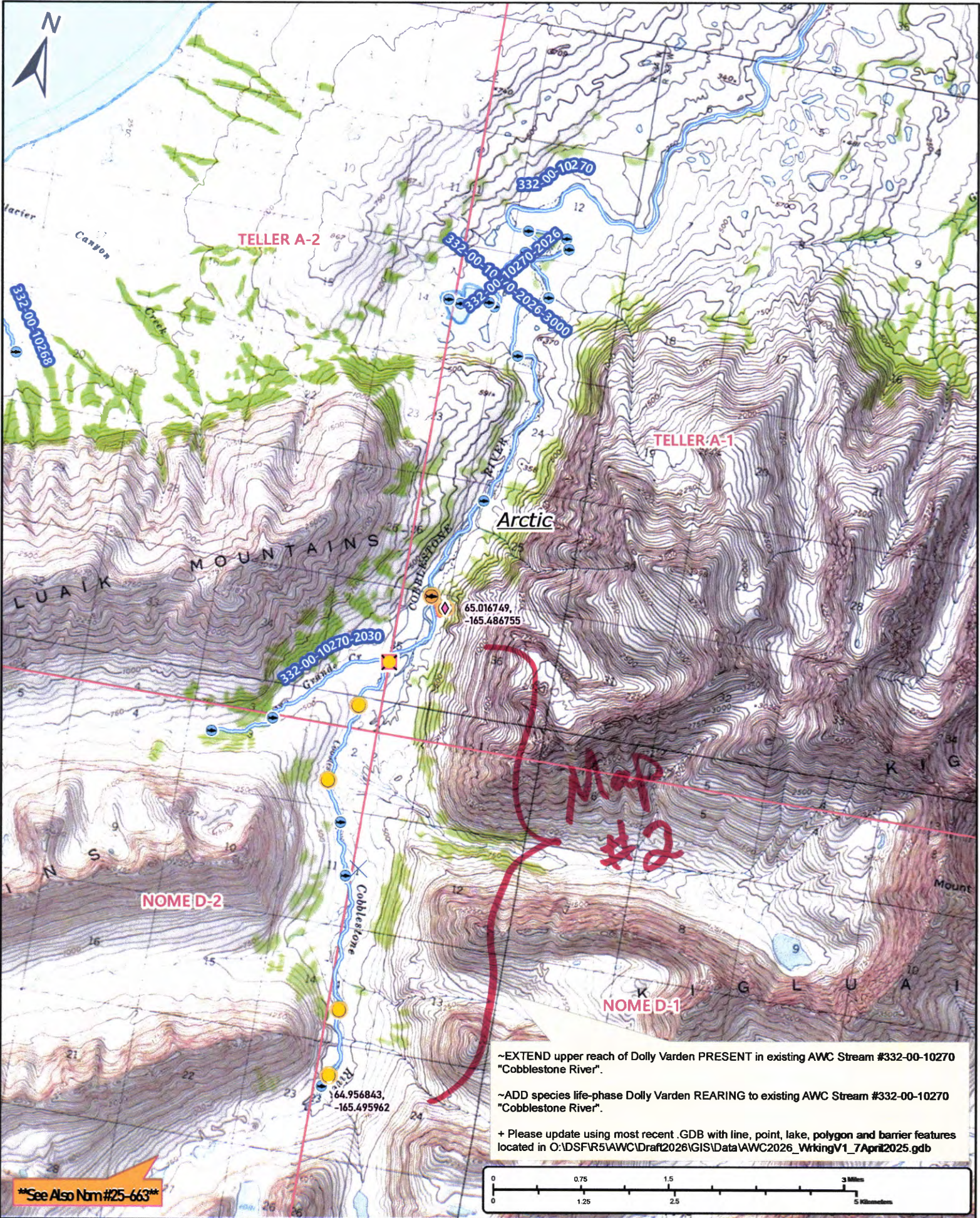
- Johnson, L., & Burns, B. (Eds.). (1984). *Biology of the Arctic Charr: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Arctic Charr. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press.*
 - Armstrong, Roberth H. Migration of Anadromous Dolly Varden Charr in South-eastern Alaska – A Manager’s Nightmare. *Pages 559 – 571*

- Jaecks et al. 2016. Can dietary reliance on Pacific salmon eggs create otolith Sr/Ca signatures that mimic anadromy in resident salmonids? *Environmental Biology of Fish, Vol. 99*

- Bond et al. 2015. Beyond dichotomous life histories in partially migrating populations: cessation of anadromy in a long-lived fish. *Ecology, Vol 96, No. 7*

- Gallagher et al. 2019. Growth & reproductive characteristics of rarely observed resident female Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma malma*) in North America. *Hydrobiologia, Vol 840.*

*Citations available on request.



TELLER A-2

TELLER A-1

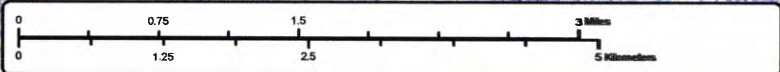
NOME D-2

NOME D-1

-EXTEND upper reach of Dolly Varden PRESENT in existing AWC Stream #332-00-10270 "Cobblestone River".

-ADD species life-phase Dolly Varden REARING to existing AWC Stream #332-00-10270 "Cobblestone River".

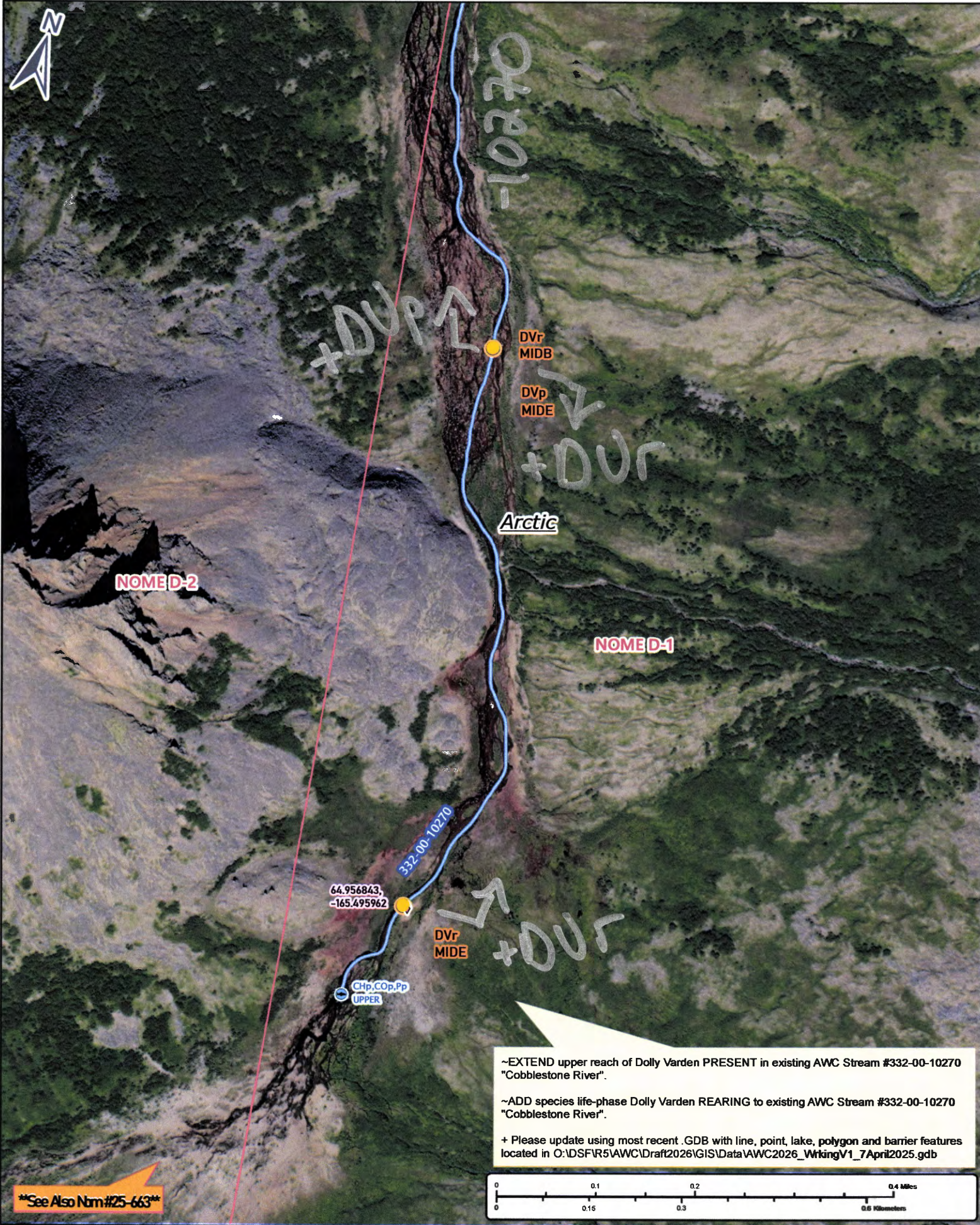
+ Please update using most recent .GDB with line, point, lake, polygon and barrier features located in O:\DSFR5\AWC\Draft2026\GIS\Data\AWC2026_WorkingV1_7April2025.gdb



See Also Nm #25-663

Nom # 25-664

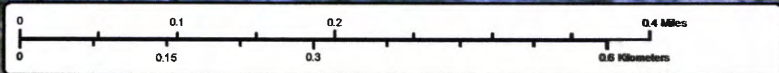
Map #1



~EXTEND upper reach of Dolly Varden PRESENT in existing AWC Stream #332-00-10270 "Cobblestone River".

~ADD species life-phase Dolly Varden REARING to existing AWC Stream #332-00-10270 "Cobblestone River".

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See Also Num #25-663