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## **County Seeks Input on Salmon Habitat Restoration in Snohomish River Confluence Area**

Snohomish County will hold a public meeting August 17 to seek community opinion on a group of projects under consideration to restore salmon habitat and natural river processes in the Snohomish River Confluence Reach Area.

The meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Snohomish Library, 311 Maple Avenue, Snohomish.

The County's proposal is supported by a \$690,000 grant received from the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board for salmon habitat restoration work in the Snohomish River Confluence Reach area.

The Confluence Reach project area is a 3.5-mile stretch of river beginning at the convergence of the Skykomish, Snoqualmie and Snohomish Rivers, south of the city of Snohomish and west of Monroe. It includes Twin Rivers Channel, Lord Hill Regional Park, Lake Beecher and the Bob Heirman Wildlife Preserve.

The Reach is a strategic location for salmon habitat restoration activities, since all species of local salmon spend at least a portion of their life cycle in this area. Habitat quantity and quality, especially rearing habitat, affects the numbers of salmon throughout their life cycle. The area is designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon and bull trout, which are classified as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

In the Confluence Area, dikes and levees have isolated the river from its floodplain in many locations. This has resulted in the disconnection of tributaries and reduction of main channel habitat within the Reach. Because the project area includes salmon habitat surrounded mostly by public lands, restoration efforts can be accomplished without disrupting existing infrastructure or land uses.

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The County is proposing a range of projects to improve floodplain connectivity and restore salmon rearing habitat. The potential projects fall into three categories: engineering analysis, construction and planting projects. They will be completed in three phases, beginning in January 2005 and completed in December 2006.

The restoration projects are designed to:

- Restore processes that affect the long-term survival of salmon;
- Reduce damage to public and private lands from flooding and erosion; and
- Protect and support natural features present on the site, including waterfowl and wildlife habitat.

Public comment will be summarized and taken into account as the County makes a decision regarding specific projects to pursue.

A summary of public comment from the August 17 meeting, and the resulting project priorities, will be presented at a follow-up meeting, scheduled for September 22 at the same time and location.

For more information on either of the meetings, please contact Mary Hurner, Public Involvement Specialist, at 425-388-6430. For more information on the project, please contact Bob Aldrich, Project Manager, at 425-388-6424.

Project information is also available online at <http://www.surfacewater.info> , then click on "Snohomish River Confluence Reach Analysis ".

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