

## **Media Advisory – June 30, 2008**

**Contact: Christopher Schwarzen**

Office: 425-388-3883

Email: Christopher.Schwarzen@snoco.org

### **Grant will elevate flood-prone homes**

Snohomish County will distribute federal funding to elevate homes routinely damaged during annual flood events.

Four homes are scheduled to be elevated beginning this fall through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. The FEMA funding requires a 25-percent match by the homeowner. County Council approval of the grant money is required but expected.

Snohomish County routinely applies for FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation grants and will receive \$342,890 in federal money for this project. Total elevation costs are \$457,187. The homes are located in the French Slough area of the Snohomish River.

French Slough has been identified under FEMA standards as an "area of concern" for flooding events. The four properties being elevated have filed more than \$650,000 in National Flood Insurance Program claims since 1990.

In total, county officials have identified about 115 structures, many near the French Slough area of the Snohomish River, with repetitive loss claims due to flooding.

"We know it's a hazard area, so we're targeting it with grants such as this one to help reduce potential losses," said David Brookings, the county's Surface Water Utility director. "Still, there's more work that needs to be done."

In 2006, the county joined FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) to help reduce the vulnerability of structures prone to flooding damages. Under the FEMA rating structure, nearly 1,500 county flood insurance policy holders with properties in specially designated flood hazard areas can purchase flood insurance at a 25 percent discount.

The county conducts outreach to inform the public of the opportunity to apply for federal grants to assist with elevating or relocating their homes continually damaged by floods.

Snohomish County has earned about \$2 million in FEMA disaster mitigation funds, and while this is the county's first push to elevate homes in repetitive flood zones, money has been used to purchase tracts and complete levee improvements.

"We've used the money in a variety of ways, including buyouts in the Sky View Tracts area near Sultan and Chatham Acres on the north fork of the Stillaguamish River," Brookings said.

Parts of the Skykomish River, where Sky View Tracts is located, the Stillaguamish River and the Snohomish River also are prone to flooding.

###