

# Smith Island Restoration Project

April 2009



*Above Photo: The proposed project site is located on the northeast portion of Smith Island within the Snohomish River estuary near the City of Everett. It is bounded by Union Slough to the east and north, Interstate 5 to the west, and Everett's wastewater treatment plant to the south. The site consists of approximately 486 acres of publicly and privately owned land.*

*Please join us*

## Smith Island Restoration Project Open House

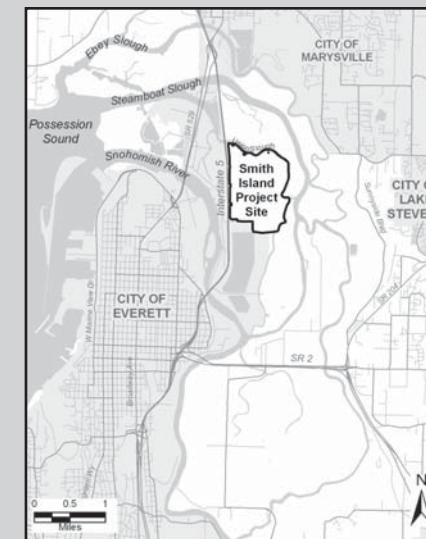
Thursday, April 30  
7-9 p.m.

Robert J. Drewel Bldg.  
3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett

A short presentation on the project will begin at 7 p.m. followed by an opportunity to visit various project display stations and speak with County staff about the different elements of the project. Comment forms will be provided for those who wish to submit written comments.

### For additional information

Contact Craig Garric, Project Manager,  
425-388-3464.



## Restoring historic tidal marsh conditions to help salmon recovery will involve constructing a new dike further west on the site and breaching the existing dike along Union Slough.

The fundamental purpose of the Smith Island Restoration Project is to restore estuarine tidal marshlands that provide critical habitat for Chinook and other salmon species in the Snohomish River basin. By constructing a new setback dike further to the west and removing large sections of the existing dike along Union Slough, the restoration project will contribute significantly toward achieving salmon recovery benchmarks identified in the Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan.

Additionally, the restoration of several hundred acres of natural tidal marshlands will provide compensatory mitigation for wetland impacts associated with a state highway project, a railroad project, and possibly other construction activities taking place in the Snohomish River estuary.

### History of the Proposed Project Site

As with most of the Snohomish River estuary, Smith Island was logged, diked and drained for agricultural purposes near the end of the 1800's and early 1900's. Previously, the area had consisted of estuarine tidal marshlands subject to daily tidal inundation and seasonal river flooding.

While a large portion of Smith Island has since been developed for industrial and commercial purposes, most of the proposed project site today remains agricultural land, primarily fallow pasture. Other current uses include an inactive commercial tree nursery, a horse boarding operation, and the City of Everett's wastewater treatment plant and poplar tree plantation. Significant wetlands remain on the site although the original diking system prevents daily tidal inundation and seasonal flooding.

Snohomish County began acquiring lands on Smith Island in 2001 because of the high suitability of the project site for restoring prime tidal marsh in the Snohomish River estuary, critical habitat for threatened Chinook salmon and bull trout.

The first phase consists of formally introducing the proposed project alternatives to the public and interested stakeholders. Please join us for an introductory Open House public meeting on Thursday, April 30, from 7-9 p.m., in the Robert J. Drewel Bldg. on the County's main campus at 3000 Rockefeller Ave. in Everett.

### For additional information

Contact Craig Garric, Project Manager, 425-388-3464.




## Public Involvement Opportunities

The County is conducting a phased, expanded checklist approach for this project to comply with State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) requirements. The phased approach allows for multiple opportunities for the public and interested stakeholders to communicate their interests and concerns to the County related to any particular component or element of the project, including the different proposed project alternatives.

## Inside:

Learn more about Snohomish County's proposed *Smith Island Restoration Project*

PRSR STD  
U.S.  
POSTAGE PAID  
Everett, WA  
Permit Number 593

 **Snohomish County**  
Public Works  
Surface Water Management  
3000 Rockefeller Ave., MS 607  
Everett, WA 98201



During the past three decades, in cooperation with federal, state, local and tribal agencies, the County has acquired large parcels of land in the Snohomish estuary for the purposes of preservation, flood hazard reduction, recreation, habitat restoration and mitigation.

### Compensatory Mitigation Opportunities

Up to 100 acres of County-owned land within the proposed project site are available for compensatory mitigation associated with other private or public infrastructure projects in the estuary. This provides an opportunity for a unique partnership with agencies such as the Washington Department of Transportation and others by providing mitigation for impacts from their nearby projects. This not only secures funds for building the project, but also supports agricultural activities by offering mitigation opportunities to diking districts in the valley that provide essential flood protection services.

Competition with existing private mitigation banks in Snohomish County will not be a factor since the County's mitigation program would only provide estuarine-related mitigation opportunities. Existing private mitigation banks' service areas are located outside the estuary.

### Increased Flood Protection

The proposed new setback dike will be designed and built to meet federal standards and will provide greater flood protection to farmlands and other commercial and public facilities behind the dike. The new dike will qualify for federal assistance to repair major flood damage if needed in the future.

The increased flood storage provided by the restored Smith Island tidal marsh will help decrease flood pressure on other agricultural lands and diking districts in the estuary. In addition to the direct benefits of increased flood protection and flood storage, the project will also provide valuable mitigation opportunities for the agricultural community in the estuary.

The alignment selected for the new setback dike could also allow for preservation of some existing agricultural land on the project site. The advice and support of the farming community will be sought for determining the best alignment of the new setback dike.

## Three alternative alignments for the proposed new setback dike are under review.

### Alternative A:

Proposes a setback dike that is farthest to the west of all three alternatives (see map opposite). The dike would be built adjacent and roughly parallel to the east side of Interstate 5. At its north end, the setback dike would connect to the existing dike near the I-5 bridge over Union Slough. At its south end, the setback dike would connect to Everett's setback dike at the northeast corner of the city's wastewater treatment lagoon.

Of the three alternatives, this alignment provides the greatest land area for restoration and mitigation, but retains a relatively small amount of area behind the setback dike for agricultural or other purposes. This alternative is dependent on inclusion of adjacent properties currently not under County ownership.

### Alternative B:

Proposes a setback dike that would be situated roughly between Alternatives A and C. The setback dike would follow along the west side of the remnant tidal channel on the east boundary of the Harden Tree Nursery property. At its north end, the setback dike would connect to the existing Diking District No. 5 dike just east of Buse Timber Company's property boundary. At its south end, the setback dike would connect to the City of Everett's setback dike roughly halfway between the wastewater treatment plant and Union Slough.

This alignment provides the same protection to public infrastructure as Alternative A, preserves more land area for agricultural and other uses, but yields less area for restoration and mitigation. This alternative is dependent on inclusion of adjacent properties currently not under County ownership.

### Alternative C:

Proposes a setback dike that is farthest to the east of all three alternatives. The dike would start at Union Slough, then run south-east between the two remnant tidal channels until it terminates at the junction of 12th Street and the existing dike by Union Slough.

This alignment provides the least land area for restoration and mitigation uses of the three alternatives, but retains the largest area available for agriculture. This alternative is dependent on inclusion of an adjacent property currently not under County ownership.

All three dike alignments are designed to provide continued flood protection to I-5, Everett's wastewater treatment plant and the remaining private lands located west of the new dike.

