



SNOHOMISH COUNTY 
Smith Island Restoration Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement
June 2011



**Snohomish County
Public Works**

Aaron Reardon
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June 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Smith Island Restoration Project

Dear Interested Citizen, Agencies with Jurisdiction and Affected Tribes:

This document presents a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which addresses Snohomish County's proposal to construct the Smith Island Restoration Project.

The purpose of the proposed project is to restore estuarine wetland conditions and improve juvenile fish access to lands owned by Snohomish County and the City of Everett on Smith Island in the Snohomish River estuary system between Union Slough and Interstate-5 at the northeast corner of the City of Everett.

The key environmental concerns voiced during early public review of the proposed project centered upon the potential displacement of a horse-boarding business currently operating within the project area, potential drainage and other hydrologic impacts to adjacent properties, and the potential conversion of designated agricultural land in the project area to non-farm purposes.

This DEIS evaluates two alternatives:

- **Proposed Action Alternative:** Construction of a new setback dike, breaching of the existing dike along Union Slough, and reintroduction of natural tidal and river processes to approximately 400 acres of land eastward of the new dike. The project proposal also includes using portions of the project area for wetland compensatory mitigation purposes. In addition to restoring crucial salmon habitat, the improved dike and associated drainage structures would serve to enhance protection of approximately 105 acres of designated agricultural land that is in active use between the new setback dike and Interstate-5.

An opportunity that became available in early 2011 to partner with the City of Everett in the design and construction of the project has made possible such a clearly favorable alignment for a new setback dike that earlier alignment alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration; the preferred alignment only is presented as the Proposed Action in this document.

- **No Action Alternative:** Continuation of current conditions and uses in the project area.

A decision to not implement the project would not be neutral in its effect. Significant investments have been made to acquire properties and to fund planning and design activities for the Smith Island Restoration Project. Some land purchase agreements contain default penalties if the properties are not used for habitat restoration purposes.

The project is a major element of regional salmon recovery plans that will be significantly impacted if the project is not constructed. These and other issues associated with selection of the No Action Alternative are addressed in this document.

The Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board and the Snohomish County Farm Bureau have expressed concern over the loss of agricultural lands resulting from large-scale habitat restoration projects proposed in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish River estuaries. Much of the county's designated agricultural lands lie along the dike-protected shorelines of these two estuary systems. Unfortunately, these same shorelines provide the only possible opportunity for restoring critical estuarine rearing habitat for endangered salmon species.

To help meet federal mandates for salmon recovery, the Snohomish County Council unanimously passed Resolution 05-026 in May 2005 supporting the ten-year habitat improvement milestones identified in the Snohomish Basin Salmon Conservation Plan, including the proposal to convert a portion of the agricultural lands on Smith Island back to tidal marshlands. The same Resolution called for salmon recovery groups to "Work with the agricultural community and partners to find solutions that benefit farming and salmon."

The County acknowledges that the loss of potentially farmable land in the proposed project area is an unavoidable adverse impact. However, it is also important and relevant to point out that substantial progress is currently being made toward balancing the interests of agriculture and salmon recovery called for in the Council Resolution.

On April 12, 2011, a signed accord between agricultural interests, salmon recovery interests and tribal governments entitled the *Sustainable Lands Strategy Phase I Framework* was presented to County Executive Aaron Reardon and Council Chair Dave Somers. This non-regulatory framework marks a major step toward finding a community-supported, long-term strategy to harmonize the land resource needs of agriculture and salmon recovery in Snohomish County. The second stage of the Sustainable Lands Strategy initiative commenced in May 2011 and is focusing on developing an implementation plan to manifest the goals and guiding principles articulated in the framework document.

In the near term, however, what compensatory actions should be taken, if any, when habitat restoration is proposed on designated agricultural land remains a matter for decision-makers to agree upon and impose.

With the issuance of this DEIS, the options facing decision-makers in regard to the Smith Island Restoration Project are to approve or modify the proposed action and go forward with the project; to deny the proposed action and reject the project; or, to delay making a decision on the proposal pending further analysis and deliberation. It is hoped that the factual research and impartial analysis presented in this document will enable that decision to be made with confidence that the public's best interests have been served.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steven E. Thomsen, P.E., Director
Snohomish County Department of Public Works

Fact Sheet

PROPOSAL

The Smith Island Restoration Project proposes to restore estuarine tidal marsh processes to approximately 400 acres of Smith Island by removing large sections of the existing dike and constructing a new setback dike. Smith Island is located within the Snohomish River estuary and the project is located in the central third of the island, east of Interstate 5 (I-5) and north of the City of Everett's Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF), a wastewater treatment plant. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) presents the affected natural and built environments and analyzes impacts and mitigation associated with two alternatives: an Action Alternative and a No Action Alternative.

PROPONENTS

- Snohomish County Public Works, Surface Water Management Division
- City of Everett, Department of Public Works

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The project is currently in the preliminary design and environmental review phase. If the Snohomish County Council decides to implement the project, the final design will be completed. The permitting phase is expected to commence in late 2011. Project construction is anticipated to begin in 2012.

LEAD AGENCY AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

Steven E. Thomsen, P.E., Public Works Director
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3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 607
Everett, WA 98201

CONTACT PERSON FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

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LICENSES/PERMITS REQUIRED

Snohomish County Planning and Development Services:

- Shoreline Permit
- Flood Hazard Permit
- Land Disturbing Activity Permit

City of Everett Planning and Community Development:

- Shoreline Permit
- Flood Hazard Permit
- Grading Permit

Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation:

- Section 106 Compliance

Washington Department of Ecology:

- Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- Coastal Zone Management Certification
- NPDES/Construction Stormwater General Permit

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:

- Hydraulic Project Approval

Washington Department of Natural Resources:

- Aquatic Land Use Authorization

National Marine Fisheries Service and/or U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:

- Endangered Species Act Section 7 Compliance

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

- Section 10 Permit
- Section 404 Permit

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SEPA TIMELINE

Draft EIS Issue Date: June 6, 2011

Draft EIS Public Comment Period: June 7 to July 6, 2011

Date and Location of Public Hearing: June 22, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.
Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st FL Public Hearing Room
3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, Washington

Final EIS Issue Date (Approximate): August 8, 2011

The final governmental action is scheduled in early Fall 2011. Once the Final EIS is issued, a motion will be presented to the Snohomish County Council for a governmental decision action. The Council will decide on whether the project team will implement the Action Alternative or the No Action Alternative. A Notice of Action subsequently will be issued to document the decision.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT EIS

The general public, agencies with jurisdiction and affected tribes are invited to review the Draft EIS during the 30-day comment period following issuance. A hard copy of the Draft EIS is available at Snohomish County Public Works (Copy cost: \$20, CD-ROM \$5) or online at www.snoco.org Search “Smith Island.”

Written comments must be addressed to Mark Stamey, EIS Project Manager, and sent to:

Snohomish County Public Works
Transportation & Environmental Services
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S 607
Everett, WA 98201
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The deadline to submit written comments is **5 p.m., July 6, 2011**. Comments will be reviewed, entered into the official record and addressed in the Final EIS.

DEIS comments may also be taken by oral testimony at the public hearing on June 22, 2011.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2005 Plan	Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan of 2005	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
BA.....	Biological Assessment	NMFS.....	National Marine Fisheries Service
Board	Agricultural Advisory Board	NW Pipeline.....	NW Pipeline Corporation
BMPs.....	Best Management Practices	Parks.....	Snohomish County Parks Department
BNSF.....	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company	Parks Plan	Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan
Buse Timber	Buse Timber and Sales, Inc.	PHS	Priority Habitat and Species
City	City of Everett	PLA	ESA Priority Lands Acquisition Program
Comprehensive Plan ...	Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan	PSE.....	Puget Sound Energy
Corps.....	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	RCF	Riverway Commercial Farmland
County.....	Snohomish County	RFFD	Rural Flood Fringe District
Corp’s PL84-99	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Flood Rehabilitation Program	SCC	Snohomish County Code
DAHP	Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
DD5	Diking District 5	SEWIP	Snohomish Estuary Wetland Integration Plan
DEIS, Draft EIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
DNS	Determination of Non-Significance	SLS	Sustainable Lands Strategy
DS.....	Determination of Significance	SMA	Shoreline Management Act
EA.....	Environmental Assessment	SMMP.....	County’s Shoreline Management Master Program
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	SMP	City’s Shoreline Master Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act	SMP Update	County’s Shoreline Management Program Update
ESRP	Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program	Snohomish Forum	Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum
FEIS, Final EIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement or Final EIS	SR	State Route
FEMA.....	Federal Emergency Management Agency	SRFB	Salmon Recovery Funding Board
FLU	Future Land Use	State Register	Washington Heritage Register
GMA.....	Growth Management Act	UCF	Upland Commercial Farmland
GPP	General Policy Plan	USFWS.....	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GSRO.....	Governor’s Salmonid Recovery Office	WDOE.....	Washington State Department of Ecology
I-5.....	Interstate 5	WDFW	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
IFF	IFF Holding, LLC	WPCF.....	Water Pollution Control Facility, City’s wastewater treatment plant
ILA	Interlocal Agreement	WRIA	Water Resources Inventory Area
LCF	Local Commercial Farmland	WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
LOS.....	Level of Service		
MTCA	Model Toxics Control Act		
National Register	National Register of Historic Places		
NAVD.....	North American Vertical Datum		
NCWC.....	National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program		