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Snohomish County to Celebrate the Reopening of Index-Galena Road with Ribbon Cutting Event

Index-Galena Road restores local access after 17-year closure

EVERETT, Wash., November 4, 2023 – Motorists may once again enjoy an uninterrupted drive along Index-Galena Rd, following the scenic North Fork of the Skykomish River. Snohomish County Public Works is scheduled to reopen Index-Galena Road between milepost 6 and 7 for the first time since November 2006. The road will officially open to the public on November 4, 2023, at 2 p.m., providing local access and linking Snohomish County to the Wild Sky Wilderness area.

“After 17 long years and the completion of a very complicated construction project, we are honored to announce that local and recreational access to this beautiful part of the county has been restored,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “Public Works and our partners minimized disruption to the Skykomish River and the many species who call it home. The new stretch of road is as beautiful as it is functional. Many thanks to everyone who helped complete this project and provide a lifeline for first responders and the local community.”

Index-Galena Road from milepost 6.4 to 6.9 was considered a total loss when flooding damaged significant portions of pavement, roadbed, and culverts in November 2006. Due to the project location and proposed road relocation on United States Forest Service (USFS) land, the Index-Galena Road repair required extensive interagency coordination with multiple federal, tribal, state and county government agencies.

“The decision was made to relocate the road out of the North Fork Skykomish River 100-year floodplain to help reduce the risk of future flooding,” Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly Snyder said. “Given the severity of past flood events, it was important to engineer a roadway that was resilient but also enhance the river conditions for fish and other wildlife. Our teams worked closely with local tribes and environmental agencies to ensure the design and construction of this project minimized any environmental impacts and allowed for the opportunity to repurpose natural resources, including the harvesting of cedar bark.”

Construction in this area had seasonal and environmental limitations so work occurred from April through November during a three-year period (2021-2023). In that time, crews removed asphalt and manmade debris; cleared trees and excavated earth and rocks; constructed five geosynthetic slopes and structural earth walls; installed onsite mitigation features and engineered log jams; built 15 culverts and one armored concrete box

culvert; stabilized and planted roadside slopes; and constructed a new 180-foot bridge with recreational access and clearance for wildlife passage.

“Since the road was washed out, residents, emergency services, and visitors have been using a 40-mile detour over Beckler River Road (Forest Rd 65) and Jack Pass,” Public Works Deputy Director and County Engineer Doug McCormick said. “Not only is this detour closed seasonally but it diverts guest access away from the town of Index and its stunning views of the Cascade Mountains.”

“This project restores essential travel and emergency services on Index-Galena Road and reintroduces access to parts of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and Wild Sky Wilderness,” U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-08) added. “The economic benefits will be felt throughout the Sky Valley region for years to come, and I am proud to have voted for legislation that supports this emergency repair work to restore essential travel and emergency services.”

“This road is very significant to the town of Index, surrounding communities and emergency responders who depend upon it,” Snohomish County Councilmember Sam Low said. “Securing the necessary funds to bring this project to fruition required considerable coordination between multiple agencies and tribes. I’m grateful for all the work invested in this important access point.”

The budget for the construction of repairs was approximately \$20 million. Funding was provided by the Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief Funds, Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Access Program Funds, Washington State County Road Administration Board (CRAB) Rural Arterial Program Funds, and Snohomish County Road Funds. To learn more, visit snohomishcountywa.gov/624.

Ceremony Information:

An official ribbon cutting ceremony will take place prior to the reopening of Index-Galena Road with staff, project partners, elected representatives, and community members in attendance. The road will remain closed to public vehicles during the ceremony; shuttle service will be provided to and from the town of Index.

What: Index-Galena Road Flood Repair Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

When: Saturday, November 4, 2023, 10 – 11 a.m.

Please dress for colder, wet conditions. The event is weather dependent. Please check the [project web page](#) for any cancellation information.

Where: Index-Galena Rd, approximately seven miles east of the town of Index. There is no public road access or on-site parking for the event; guests must ride the shuttle.

Parking and Shuttle Location:

- Parking options in the town of Index will be limited. Please carpool to the [Bush House Inn](#), 308 5th St, Index, WA 98256.
- A shuttle service will begin taking ceremony attendees from the Bush House Inn to the project site at 8:50 a.m. The last shuttle leaves at 9:45 a.m. *Shuttle service is limited to approximately 100 guests.*

For accommodations at the event or other questions, please contact Julie Kuntz at (425) 359-7490.

About Snohomish County Public Works

Snohomish County Public Works is responsible for approximately 1,600 miles of county roads, more than 200 bridges and manages about 200 traffic control signals. The department also processes nearly 600,000 tons of garbage per year. Its mission is to focus on safety and mobility while practicing fiscal responsibility and preserving the environment. Public Works has won numerous state and national honors for its work and is the largest department within Snohomish County government with approximately 500 employees plus seasonal staff. Its main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201. Visit www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks or follow the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more information about Snohomish County Public Works.

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