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## **Snohomish County's Smith Island Estuary Project Garners 2019 Engineering Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers**

*Recognition Places Project in the Running for the National OCEA Awards*

**EVERETT, Wash., Thursday, June 13, 2019** – Snohomish County Surface Water Management Utility's Smith Island Estuary Restoration Project was honored by the Seattle Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers during a banquet in Seattle on Wednesday, June 12. The project was recognized as the 2019 Local Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement (OCEA) and will compete for the 2019 National OCEA award.

The Smith Island project re-established tidal influences from Union Slough to 378 acres of critical salmon-rearing habitat. To date, tidal inundation has been restored to more than 1,200 acres of historic marshland in the Snohomish estuary by Snohomish County Surface Water Management and other salmon recovery partners, more than anywhere else in the Puget Sound.

"This project was challenging but it is already benefitting threatened salmon species in the Snohomish estuary," Snohomish County Public Works Director Steve Thomsen said. "Hundreds of juvenile chum, coho, and Chinook salmon have been documented at the Smith Island restoration site this spring, demonstrating the need for this critical habitat."

Consulting engineering firm Otak was honored for its work on the project by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Washington with the Best in State Bronze Award in March. Members of the Otak team were also recognized as part of the OCEA award along with the City of Everett, Shannon and Wilson, ICF, and Puget Sound Energy.

This project was led by Snohomish County Surface Water Management and involved multi-agency cooperation and funding. More than \$20.7 million in state and federal grants from Washington State

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) were contributed to the project. Snohomish County Surface Water Management contributed \$5.9 million and the City of Everett contributed more than \$421,000. An additional \$2.5 million in compensatory mitigation was provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and BNSF Railroad.

After construction of the new setback dike was completed in August 2018, large sections of the existing dike were removed and the ebb and flow of tidal waters returned to the historic marshlands for the first time in 85 years. The Smith Island project is regionally significant, creating essential habitat for priority salmon species in the Snohomish River basin, including threatened Chinook salmon, which are tightly linked to the health of endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales.

To learn more about the project, visit: [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1150/](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1150/)

Surface Water Management is a division of the Snohomish County Public Works Department, and works in partnership with the community to protect and enhance water quality and aquatic habitat, to minimize damage from flooding and erosion, and to preserve resources for future generations. For more information about Snohomish County Surface Water Management, visit [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/208/Surface-Water-Management](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/208/Surface-Water-Management).

#### **About Snohomish County Public Works**

The Snohomish County Public Works Department constructs and maintains county roads; controls and manages surface water quantity, quality, and fish habitats; and oversees the recycling and disposal of solid waste. The department's main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201. For more information about Snohomish County Public Works, visit [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks).

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