Culverts are large pipes beneath roads that allow water to flow, however they do not always provide conditions that allow fish to swim through. Snohomish County is actively working to identify and replace culverts under county roads that act as barriers for fish to swim through and reach upstream habitat.

About the Program

Snohomish County’s Fish Passage Culvert Program is a coordinated effort between Surface Water Management (SWM) and Public Works. The goals of the program are to:

• Inventory county-owned culverts to determine fish barrier status
  – County is partnering with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to complete inventory by the end of 2021
• Prioritize fish-barrier culverts for replacement, in collaboration with local tribes
• Replace barriers with fish passable culverts through SWM standalone culvert projects and Public Works capital improvement projects

By the Numbers (as of 8/12/2021)

• County-owned stream-crossing culverts: 1,731
• Inventory completed to date: 792
  – Partial Barriers: 327   – Passable Culverts: 256
  – Total Barriers: 209   – To Be Inventoried (Unknown Status): 939

Successes Since 2015

• Inventoried 45 percent of county-owned stream-crossing culverts
• 34 barriers were replaced with new fish-passage culverts
• Four fish-passage culverts are being constructed in 2021

Increasing Program Efforts

• 29 projects are currently being designed that will replace 41 fish-barrier culverts over the next three to four years
• Opportunities to increase the funding and replacement of fish barriers in the coming years are being explored

Cost to Replace

The cost to replace each fish-barrier culvert typically ranges from $300,000 - $1,000,000.

For more information, visit: snohomishcountywa.gov/3987

There are over 23,000 culverts within Snohomish County’s right of way, including stormwater drainage culverts. This document is referring to culverts that cross streams, which are generally required to accommodate fish passage.