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## **Open House for “Inspiring Community Connections” to the Skykomish River**

*Open house on Saturday June 3, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in Sultan*

**SULTAN, Wash., May 19, 2017**—The Snohomish County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, the National Park Service (NPS), and the Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (WASLA) invite the community to provide feedback on design ideas for the historic downtowns of Sultan and Monroe as they re-imagine their community connections to public access sites and the proposed water trail along the Skykomish River.

“As the second fastest growing county in the nation, it is important to plan for sustainable use and improved stewardship of the Skykomish River, one of our country’s most beautiful waterways,” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “We must work collaboratively with our partners to keep the Skykomish and our river communities beautiful and thriving. There is more work to do to ensure these natural resources are managed appropriately to protect both salmon, a vital resource of our entire region, and those who rely on healthy rivers for their livelihood.”

The open house will feature sketches and recommendations generated by teams of local citizens, municipal staff, landscape architects, local leaders, and area habitat experts during a design workshop hosted by these two river towns. Guests can learn about considerations for natural habitat, sustainable river uses, safety issues, history and culture that informed the workshop ideas and recommendations.

“The Sky Valley area is rich with numerous recreational opportunities,” said Sam Low, Snohomish County Councilmember. “We have a duty to preserve these waterways as well as making them available for our residents to enjoy.”

“This effort supports the recent rural tourism development initiative to celebrate the vital natural processes of the Skykomish River with its wild characteristics that must be maintained.” Said Tom Teigen, Director of Snohomish County Parks, Recreation and Tourism. “As part of the initiative, a proposed water trail could help sustainably manage recreational river use. These ideas will help Sultan and Monroe identify themselves as river trail towns and support the long term vitality of the Skykomish River and the communities connected to it.”

The National Park Service has a unique nationwide partnership with the American Society of Landscape Architects. Each year, a number of projects are chosen to receive a pro bono design workshop. Over the last 18 years, the NPS/ASLA partnership has assisted more than 70 community projects across the country, 14 of them in Washington State.

“We look forward to working with the many community partners in Sultan and Monroe and are excited to share our collaborative ideas at Saturday’s open house,” said WASLA representative, Don Benson.

Guests at the open house will hear presentations that include environmental education, signage, possible pedestrian routes between the historic downtowns and the river, and enhancements for existing and future public access sites to the river.

“Water trails can help tell local stories, support local economies and inspire us to take good care of the river environment,” said Sue Abbott, an NPS planner working with the communities on the water trail planning project.

Open House details: Saturday, June 3, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Mountainview Christian Fellowship, 211 6th St, Sultan, WA 98294

**Please RSVP to [Trudy.Soriano@snoco.org](mailto:Trudy.Soriano@snoco.org)**

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