Ebey Island and Snohomish Delta Planning
The Snohomish delta is significant at a Puget Sound and nation-wide scale.

- **2nd largest watershed** in Puget Sound – 1,856 square miles.

- 1 of only 2 deltas that PSNERP Strategies Report recommends as “High Priority Restore”.

- 25-50% of coho in Puget Sound come from the Snohomish.

- 1 of 7 Resilient Lands and Waters designated nationwide by Obama Administration.
The Snohomish delta is highly populated.
Ecosystem processes are degraded.
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Tidal wetlands have been lost at varying degrees by category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal Wetland</th>
<th>Historic Area (sq km)</th>
<th>Current Area (sq km)</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tidal Freshwater</td>
<td>53.07</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>Loss (-90% Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oligohaline Transition</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Loss (-100% Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuarine Mixing</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>Loss (-69% Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euryhaline Unvegetated</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Gain (14% Area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>84.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simensted et al 2011-01.
But there is hope...

...though Chinook are at less than 10% of historic populations.
Many estuary projects have been completed or designed in the last 20 years.

Note that they are in the lower delta, high salinity.
There is momentum and opportunity to keep doing estuary restoration projects:

Sustainable Lands Strategy and other watershed forums provide productive operating environment.

Public land ownership in historic river delta.

Robust monitoring program funded, in part, by ESRP (NOAA, Tulalip Tribes, Snohomish County, USGS).
But...we don’t know what the next big project will be.

No new projects are underway.
It takes 5-20 years to complete a large project from start to finish.
Snohomish County is facing budget cuts and won’t be developing projects on their own for the foreseeable future.
Project Purpose:
Queue up the next large estuary project in the Snohomish delta.
Approach: Investigate a broad area of public land where previous feasibility studies and monitoring efforts identify potential for significant ecosystem restoration.
Property will be assessed for agricultural viability as well as partial restoration. Properties will be assessed for full restoration. 2,250 acres of WDFW/County Land.
Approach: Form strategic partnerships

Landowner, project manager

Landowner, ongoing monitoring

Neighbor relationships, engineering

Neighbor relationships, engineering, ongoing monitoring
Approach:
Utilize existing information, collect new data to fill in gaps where needed.
Ebey Island

• 1,285 acres of WDFW ownership

• Recent acquisition

• 2011 Feasibility Study
Feasibility report results:
• Tidal restoration is possible technically.
• Capacity for up to 1.3 million Chinook smolts.
• Social and economic constraints.

Recommendation:
• Explore other land uses until social and economic constraints ease.
What has changed since 2011?
• Additional WDFW land acquisition
• Other projects in delta
• New dike district commissioners
• Sustainable Lands Strategy
  • Upgrades needed to continue farming
• Agriculture Resilience Planning
  • Is Ebey the right place for investing in agriculture improvements?
Opportunity:
• 450 acre forested wetland
• Don’t miss out on acquisition
• Better understand future challenges before upgrading drainage infrastructure

Needs:
• Feasibility analysis of forested wetland tidal restoration
• Prioritized acquisition plan
• Site specific ag resiliency data collection
North Tip Ebey Island

300 acres, 190 County owned
Capacity for up to 87,000 Chinook smolts
2011 Report: Dike district commissioners supportive

Needs:
• Land acquisition — OR —
• Do 190 acres of county property now?
Spencer Island

- 400+ Acres
- WDFW/County co-management
- Restoration history
- PSNERP List of 36, Conceptual Design Report
- Initial outreach completed

Need: Funding Strategy Decision
Full county ownership = 445 acres
Alternative shown = 242 acres, $5.2 million (2012)

NEEDS: Consensus to move forward with this alternative
--OR--
Cost effective strategy for utilities
Project Elements

Technical:
• Agriculture resiliency data collection on Ebey Island
• Preliminary engineering

Communication for Decision Making:
• Stakeholder/landowner information sharing and consensus building
• SLS Project Integration Team
Outcomes:

- Broad support for the next large estuary project.
- A playbook of actions approved by landowners for community partners to advance.
Questions?