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Smith Island Estuary Restoration Project Wins 2020 APWA National Project of the Year Award

Recognized for re-establishing floodplain to support salmon population, local fisheries and recreational access

EVERETT, Wash., June 12, 2020 – Snohomish County’s Smith Island Estuary Restoration project was recently named a 2020 Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association (APWA). The project is the culmination of more than 20 years of collaboration and engineering achievement, earning the county its first national APWA award in the Environmental category.

“We value all of the partners who helped us complete this historic restoration project,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “For more than two decades, Snohomish County worked with dozens of organizations to conduct one of the largest estuary restoration projects in the region. Without funding from state and federal agencies, we could not have met our very ambitious goals of restoring salmon habitat and repairing one of our most crucial local ecosystems. Awards, like the APWA National Project of the Year, are a testament to the sustained commitment of all those involved.”

The Smith Island Restoration project re-established historic tidal marsh conditions to 378 acres of the Snohomish River estuary, which adds capacity to support 43,000 to 250,000 juvenile salmon reared annually. Smith Island is the second largest estuary restoration project in the Puget Sound. The project has contributed more than 30 percent of the Snohomish estuary acreage restoration target established in the federally-adopted Chinook salmon recovery plan for the Snohomish Basin.

“Benefits to salmon translate to their surrounding communities,” said Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly Snyder. “By reconnecting the tidal flow to hundreds of floodplain acres, Public Works is helping protect private and commercial fishing interests and open up more

access to water recreation, walking trails and wildlife viewing in the area. We appreciate our peers at APWA for recognizing the positive impacts we are making throughout the Puget Sound.”

“The team of staff and consultants had to address a number of daunting challenges over the course of this project,” said Snohomish County Surface Water Management Director Gregg Farris. “The Smith Island team overcame significant design, construction, funding, permit and coordination hurdles to build a project at a scale that the county had never before attempted. Our thanks go out to current and former employees who made this a reality.”

APWA also recognized construction contractors – Scarsella Brothers, Inc. and Orion Marine Contractors, Inc. – and primary design consultant, Otak, Inc., for their contributions to the Smith Island restoration effort. In addition, Snohomish County would like to acknowledge the City of Everett as a project partner and recognize Shannon and Wilson for their geo-technical contributions.

Each year, the national APWA presents the Public Works Projects of the Year awards to promote excellence in the management and administration of public works projects, recognizing the alliance between the managing agency, the contractor, the consultant, and their cooperative achievements. Project entries come from all levels of government and must be completed in the previous two years to be eligible for consideration.

Visit the [Smith Island county webpage](#) to read the more about the project.

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.

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