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Snohomish County Receives a \$4.8 Million Grant from Department of Ecology’s Floodplains by Design Program

Funding to help reduce flood risks and improve restoration efforts along the Skykomish River

EVERETT, Wash., July 10, 2020 – With the award of a \$4.8 million grant from the Department of Ecology’s Floodplains by Design program, Snohomish County Public Works announces plans to make some lasting improvements within the Skykomish River system. The program, called *Community Floodplain Solutions (CFS) – Sky Valley*, is a collaborative effort to reduce flood impacts for residents, keep local farms viable, and restore habitat for endangered salmon. CFS is a partnership between Snohomish County Public Works Surface Water Management (SWM), the Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS), the Snohomish Conservation District, and others.

“Improving public safety, restoring our river systems, and ensuring our natural resources are being protected are high priorities for Snohomish County and our many partners,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “The Skykomish River is vitally important to our economy and our quality of life. We are very grateful for the strong partnerships with organizations and agencies that share our commitment to saving lives, protecting natural resources, and preserving the well-being of our community.”

SWM and partners will provide \$1.93 million in local and federal matching funds to the grant. The goals of the program are:

- Reduce flood-related risk to people and public infrastructure
- Remove three fish passage barriers and culverts, improving access to 2.6 miles of stream habitat
- Restore up to 30 acres of habitat along the Skykomish River banks
- Protect up to 200 acres of floodplain land for future restoration and long-term agriculture uses
- Model, assess, and map river conditions for future projects
- Complete design for an integrated floodway project and three agriculture resilience projects
- Educate and learn from residents about living in a dynamic floodplain to better understand river migration risks

“Community Floodplain Solutions actively engages floodplain residents and charts a new path towards more sustainable land management along the Skykomish River,” adds Sam Low, Snohomish County council member. “This comprehensive program could greatly benefit our community by incorporating alternative solutions that are more cost-effective and balanced, providing more benefits to all.”

The Department of Ecology’s Floodplains by Design grant program coordinates state and federal investments for the management of floodplains with locally driven solutions for the residents whose lives and livelihoods are connected to the floodplains. Since 2013, the Washington State Legislature has appropriated \$115 million to support large-scale, multiple-benefit projects across the state through the Floodplains by Design grants.

Partners in Action

“Putting collaboration first is key,” said Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation Executive Director. “We recognize the importance of balancing agricultural, tribal and environmental concerns with the rights of property owners and other local interests. The Conservation District and our partners have a history of working together to achieve gains for farms, fish and flood management.”

“By embracing our shared goals, this project provides immediate flood risk reduction benefits, addresses critical gaps in knowledge, and supports a suite of on-the-ground actions in the Sultan Reach of the Lower Skykomish River. Together, our collaborative actions will focus on habitat restoration and agriculture viability while allowing the Skykomish River and its tributaries to migrate naturally,” said Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes Commissioner.

“With limited dollars available for farmland conservation statewide, the Floodplains by Design program provides critical match funding and extends our ability to work with farmers and preserve viable farmland in the Skykomish Basin. The funding this grant provides will result in the permanent conservation of 100-200 acres of prime farmland for agriculture use into the future,” said Robin Fay, PCC Farmland Trust North Sound Conservation Manager.

About Snohomish Conservation District

Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) is a non-regulatory agency that engages the community in the delivery and implementation of natural resource management. SCD has been working with farmers, city residents, rural and suburban landowners on a voluntary basis since 1941. District boundaries include Camano Island (added in 1961) and most of Snohomish County. More information can be found at <https://snohomishcd.org>.

About Surface Water Management

Surface Water Management (SWM) is a division of the Snohomish County Public Works Department that partners with the community to protect and enhance our water resources for future generations. SWM provides residents and businesses with services in four core areas to address: drainage and road flooding, water quality, salmon and marine habitat, and river flooding. For more information about

Snohomish County Surface Water Management, visit 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.

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