

## SKOOKUM EDFRO PHASE 3 SITE TOUR#2: SUMMARY NOTES

**The SF Nooksack River Skookum Edfro Phase 3 Tour** was conducted on September 11, 2024, from 9:00am – 12:00pm. Staff from Triangle Associates facilitated the tour alongside Project Team members from Lummi Nation and Herrera Environmental Consultants.

**The goal** of the site tour was to familiarize key stakeholders who were unable to join the site visit in May with changes to the design plan that could impact their land, answer questions, and build relationships.

### **Project team members and staff support titles and affiliations:**

- Alex Levell, *Project Manager/Geomorphologist*, Lummi Nation
- Kelley Turner, *Watershed Restoration Program Manager*, Lummi Nation
- Brian Scott, *Herrera Team Project Manager*, Herrera Environmental Consultants
- Melanie del Rosario, *Community Outreach Lead*, Triangle Associates
- Madeline Brooks, *Community Outreach Support*, Triangle Associates

### **10 individuals attended the site tour:**

1. Alexander Harris (Whatcom Co. CEP)
2. Valerie Lloyd (Acme Van Zandt Subzone Chair)
3. Deb Johnson (Whatcom Co. River & Flood)
4. Ross Zimmerman (DNR Aquatics)
5. Jenn Mackey (WLT)
6. Becky Roberts (Landowner)
7. Grace Spann (Whatcom Co. River & Flood)
8. Michelle Stiles (DNR State Uplands)
9. Corey McDonald (DNR State Uplands)
10. Lauren Tempelton (Whatcom Co. CEP)

## **Project Overview**

*Lummi Nation staff, Alex Levell, reviewed project goals and updates. Highlights include:*

- Reviewing previous phases of the project, including the pause due to the FEMA no rise requirement and the emphasis on more robust landowner engagement moving forward.
- Reviewing CLOMR/LOMR process
  - Within the month JARPA (Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application) will be submitted for Phase I construction.
  - Alex will then send JARPA and design plans to Army Corp. Of Engineers, NOAA, and WDFW.
  - CLOMR submittal will happen this fall, then hopefully CLOMR approval will happen this spring and can continue with project progress as expected. LNR will receive the Whatcom County Floodplain Development permit following approval of the CLOMR.

*Outreach consultant, Melanie del Rosario reviewed outreach efforts to date. Highlights include:*

- Early outreach to nearby landowners to share information about the project
- A presentation to the Acme Van Zandt Subzone in January of 2022, an initial community workshop hosted by Lummi Nation on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and a project alternatives selection community workshop hosted by Lummi Nation on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Made updates to the project webpage and hosted one-on-one conversations with stakeholders in

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2023, with an additional workshop in 2024.

## Tour and Q&A

*The project team led the group downstream of the South Fork Nooksack River. Highlights of the tour include:*

- Description of previous design elements such as log jams and how those have been adapted in current plans (ex. Changing the number of large and small log jams)
- Identifying how down river from the Saxon Bridge, the addition of smaller log jams would provide shade and protection for salmon. When flooding occurs, this will hopefully activate smaller creeks when the river floods.
- Further upriver from Saxon Bridge, the plan is to pull out riprap and place logjams using wood from upland along the left reach. This will protect important salmon holding areas, spawning grounds, and decrease water temperature by adding shade. Excavating material from the river will deepen and widen the channel and create deeper pools.
- Further north along Saxon Rd. closest to Heidi Nelson's property, the project team is looking to excavate the bank across from the road on Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) property and create a side channel for future flooding while adding salmon rearing habitat. There is a naturally formed lateral gravel bar across the river from a ~1,400 ft length of rip rap. In this area (the gravel bar) the vegetation is less mature-and can be removed easily. This construction would expand the river channel (which is unnaturally narrow) from 125 ft to 210 ft and allow for log jams and excavated lateral bar material to be built on the existing riprap bank creating more shade and scour pools. This construction would occur in summer 2026.
- Between river mile marker 13.1 and 13.5, the project team is looking to add log jams on the left dry stream bed, pulling juvenile trees and saplings. They are looking to excavate 50-60ft. This will hopefully encourage passive restoration and allow the channel to widen and carry more sediment. Log jams will also be placed on the opposite bank and midway through the channel. The large trees on WLT property, including root structures, will not be removed.

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**Q & A**

- **Q: What is the difference between a floodplain and a floodway?**
  - A: A floodplain is the boundary created by the wetted extent of a 100-year flood. If you constrain that floodplain to change the elevation by 1 foot, that would be the floodway.
  - A: A floodway is a federally recognized designation for development purposes that corresponds with the fastest and deepest flowing water.
  
- **Q: Did you consider moving Saxon Rd?**
  - A: Yes, the landowner adjacent to the road expressed concern so the project team is not exploring this option further.
  
- **Q: Three years ago, was there an obstruction in the river? Did this contribute to salmon dying off?**
  - A: Yes, the water was too hot and there was not enough flow and available habitat leading to better conditions for the Ichthyophthirius multifiliis (Ich, pronounced "Ick"), which is a parasite that infects salmon and higher rates of salmon die off.
  
- **Q: What is the ideal temperature for salmon?**
  - A: Ideal temperature for salmon is under 17°C but in this area, it can get as warm as 22°C.
  
- **Q: Where would materials for log jams be sourced from?**
  - A: Materials would be locally sourced from multiple farms the project team has worked with in the past.
  
- **Q: The equipment you've used on past projects was huge, where will the equipment be staged? How will you get the funding to get this done?**
  - A: We are working with adjacent landowners to identify the best staging locations. Currently, there are plans to stage at the Skookum Fish Hatchery and possibly on the newly acquired Whatcom Parks & Recreation parcel. LNR will reach out to other adjacent parcels if more space is needed.
  - A: We have recently received nearly 2/3 of the needed funding from SRFB and the BIA Transformational Habitat Recovery grants and will continue seeking grant funding for complete implementation by 2026.
  
- **Q: Do you have buy in from landowners?**
  - A: Yes, we have support from landowners in this area, including Russ and Cindy Pfeiffer-Hoyt, Heidi Nelson, Paula and Michael Miller, Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, Bakke farms, DNR Statelands, and Whatcom County Public Works. We are in the process of complete buy-in from WLT and DNR Aquatics.
  
- **Q: What do land agreements look like for landowners? Is there compensation?**

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- A: Most people have signed the JARPA and have positive feelings about the project, but further conversation about land agreements have not occurred.
  - A land agreement could include access easements/flood control easements that allow for repair.
  - Compensation could include a transaction between LNR, WLT, and DNR Aquatics due to excavations removing property landward of the Ordinary High-Water Mark (OHWM) of the river channel. LNR and those parties continue to hold conversations for more details.
  - This would be the first time this has been done: a long-term process (restoration) that occurs via short term action (loss of real estate).
- **Q: Could Lummi shut down fishing in this area? How will this construction affect fishing?**
  - A: WDFW could shut down fishing in this area. In the short-term, this section will experience heavy construction work. In the long term it will improve conditions for salmon and increase diversity of habitat. We might want to increase outreach/education in Oct. on why construction is happening and what will change.

### **How to Stay Informed**

- The best way is to sign up for the listserv to receive updates via email. Email [outreach@triangleassociates.com](mailto:outreach@triangleassociates.com) to be added to the listserv.
- Visit/bookmark the project webpage – <https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/s/skookum>
- Contact us! We welcome feedback and dialogue from the community. Contact information: [outreach@triangleassociates.com](mailto:outreach@triangleassociates.com)