

# Swift Creek Project



*Swift Creek facing east towards Sumas Mountain, April 2019*

## Comments accepted:

October 7 – November 5, 2019

## Submit comments:

### Online at

[bit.ly/Ecology-SwiftCreek-Comments](http://bit.ly/Ecology-SwiftCreek-Comments)

### Or by mail to:

Cris Matthews, Project Manager  
Department of Ecology  
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Phone: 360-255-4379  
Email: [Cris.Matthews@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Cris.Matthews@ecy.wa.gov)

## Project info:

[www.whatcomcounty.us/513/Swift-Creek](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/513/Swift-Creek)

[www.ecology.wa.gov/SwiftCreek](http://www.ecology.wa.gov/SwiftCreek)

## Document review locations:

Whatcom County Library  
104 Kirsch Drive  
Everson, WA 98247  
Phone: 360-966-5100

Ecology-Bellingham Office  
913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
By appointment, call 360-255-4400

## Flood control and sediment management project documents ready for public review and comment

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and Whatcom County Public Works Department (Whatcom County) are collaborating on the Swift Creek flood control and sediment management project (project) located east of Everson near Sumas Mountain.

We invite you to review and comment on the following documents for the Swift Creek Project:

- **Swift Creek Action Plan:** this plan describes flood control and sediment management actions to take place in the Swift Creek watershed.
- **Consent Decree:** this is a legal agreement between the State of Washington, Ecology, Whatcom County, and other parties that requires Whatcom County to:
  - Develop detailed design documents.
  - Construct and operate the project.
  - Manage deposited sediment.
  - Perform regular maintenance and monitoring.
  - Control future use and access.
  - Purchase additional property or easements, as may be required.
- **Public Participation Plan:** this document explains how people can become involved in the project.

## Public meeting

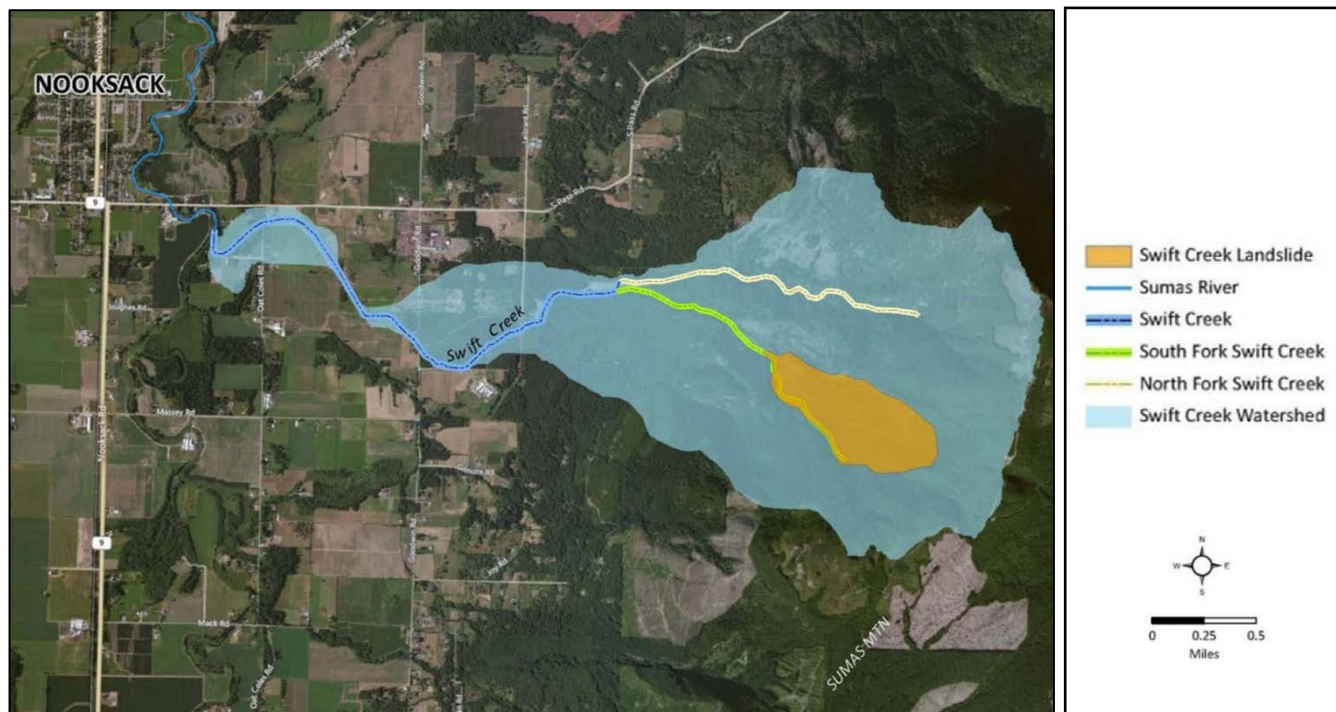
Ecology and Whatcom County are hosting a public meeting to provide information, answer questions, and collect comments. The meeting will begin with a presentation and end with an open house.

**Wednesday, October 9, 2019**

**6 - 8 p.m.**

**Nooksack Valley Middle School**

**404 West Columbia Street, Nooksack, WA 98276**



*Swift Creek location and watershed map*

## Background

### Location

Swift Creek is located in the northeastern lowlands of Whatcom County. The South Fork of Swift Creek originates from the toe (downslope end) of an ongoing, slowly moving landslide on Sumas Mountain. Swift Creek flows generally westward before joining the Sumas River near the city of Nooksack.

### Landslide, flooding, and sediment



*Sumas Mountain landslide  
facing east*



*Landslide material in Swift Creek containing  
naturally-occurring asbestos and metals*

The 225 acre landslide on Sumas Mountain has resulted in a large amount of sediment containing naturally-occurring asbestos (NOA) and naturally-occurring metals (chromium, cobalt, and nickel) continuously filling up the creek bed. For several decades, Swift Creek has been dredged to manage sediment and limit downstream flooding. When the deposited sediment material dries, NOA in the sediment can become airborne and present a risk to human health and the environment. The main concern with the metals in the sediment is the impact to plants on land and aquatic life.

## Swift Creek Action Plan

The Swift Creek Action Plan creates a flood control and sediment management system that is designed to reduce risk from naturally-occurring asbestos and metals in Swift Creek sediment that harm, or could potentially harm, humans and the environment.

See page 4 for a map overview of the Swift Creek Action Plan's engineered controls.

### Summary of Action Plan Components

#### **Dredge sediment**

- Dredge Swift Creek as necessary before remedy starts.

#### **Construct and repair levees**

- Stabilize sediment piles.
- Use current sediment piles and deposits to construct new levees.
- Deposit any extra sediment not used in new construction in a repository and cover with clean soil.
- Repair, stabilize, and cap current levees with rock and clean soil.

#### **Construct sedimentation basins and traps**

- Capture new sediment in a series of traps and sedimentation basins.

#### **Monitor, manage, and maintain**

- Monitor air and surface water during construction and active sediment management.
- Monitor groundwater after stabilization.
- Manage new sediment in traps and basins by periodically removing and placing in the repository\*.
  - \*More sediment storage repositories will be needed. Repository site locations may change depending on property availability. We will amend the plan and prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for future repositories.
- Inspect and repair facilities regularly.
- Dredge Swift Creek periodically as needed and place this sediment in the repository.

#### **Control access**

- Control use and access to the levees to prevent disturbance of, and exposure to, the sediment and airborne asbestos such as:
  - Fencing off levees, sediment capture facilities, and storage basins.
  - Placing legal restrictions on future use of the properties.
  - Inspecting areas to ensure compliance.
  - Purchasing additional property or easements may be required.

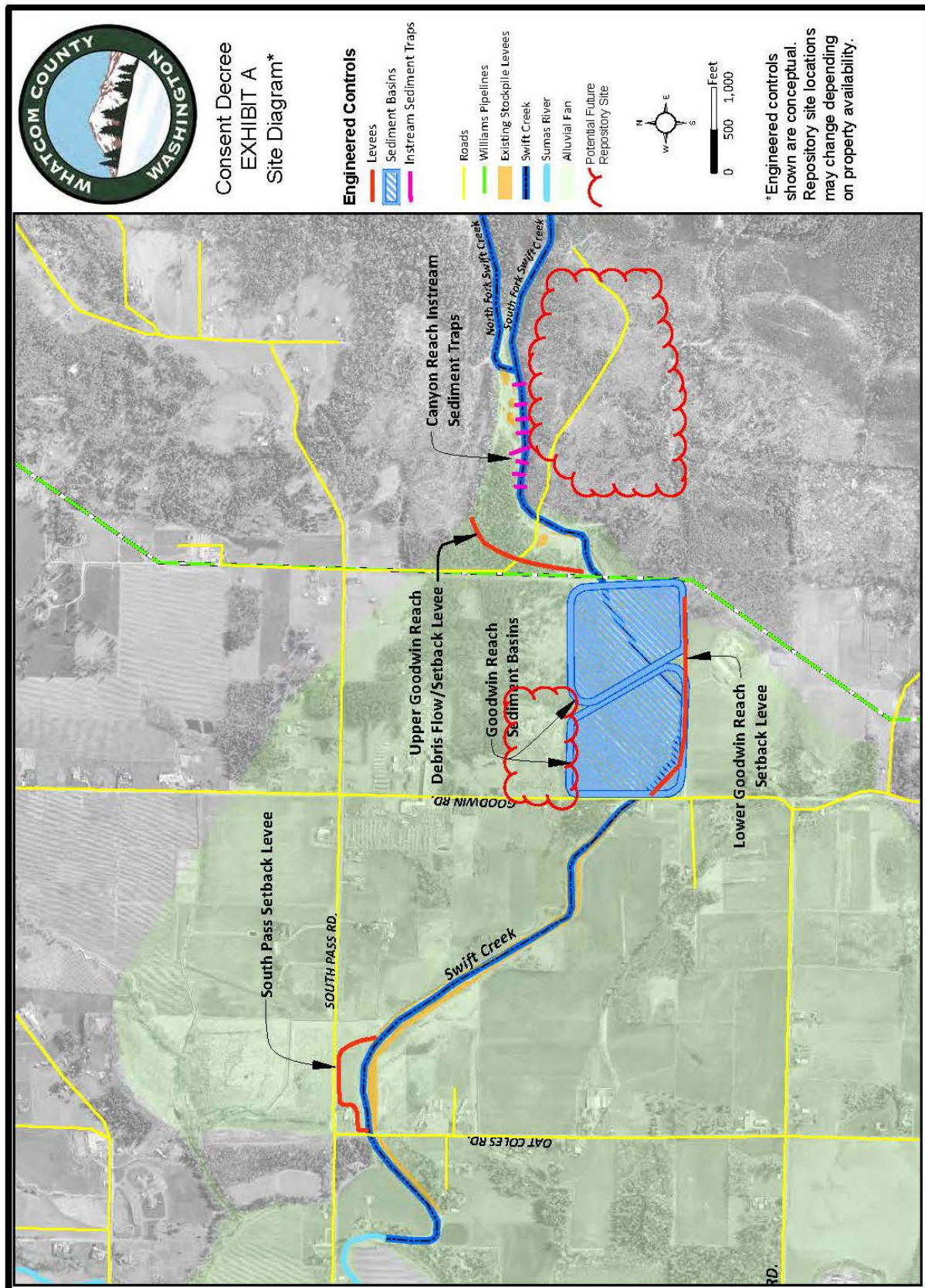
## Other planning documents

To view digital copies of Whatcom County's 2012 Swift Creek Sediment Management Action Plan (SCSMAP) and their 2013 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), visit the webpages listed under "Project info" on the page 1 sidebar.





## Swift Creek Action Plan





*Swift Creek and dredged sediment pile*

## Cost and funding

The selected flooding and sediment management plan is estimated to cost approximately \$16 million to complete. Washington State Legislature budgeted \$4 million to Ecology to enable Whatcom County to begin the Swift Creek project in 2019.

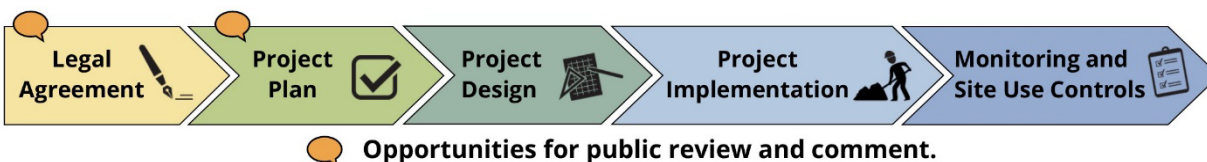
## Public participation

Whatcom County and Ecology are committed to providing the public with timely information and meaningful opportunities to participate in the Swift Creek project. As part of this commitment, Whatcom County and Ecology have developed a public participation plan for this project. The plan outlines how interested parties can learn about the project and provide input.

Your comments and ideas are needed to help inform management activities. The public participation plan explains how Whatcom County and Ecology will:

- Notify the public when and where documents are available for review and comment.
- Notify the public about how they can become involved.
- Provide public participation opportunities.
- Respond to public comments.
- Consider public comments in management decisions.

## What happens next?



- **October 7 – November 5, 2019:** 30-day public comment period.
- **October 9, 2019:** Public meeting.
- **2019 (ongoing):** Begin project design and implementation.
- **Summer 2020:** Whatcom County will hold a public comment period on a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for sediment storage repositories.
- **2019 – 2021:** Seek additional funding from Washington State Legislature during 2019-2021 budget planning for project completion.

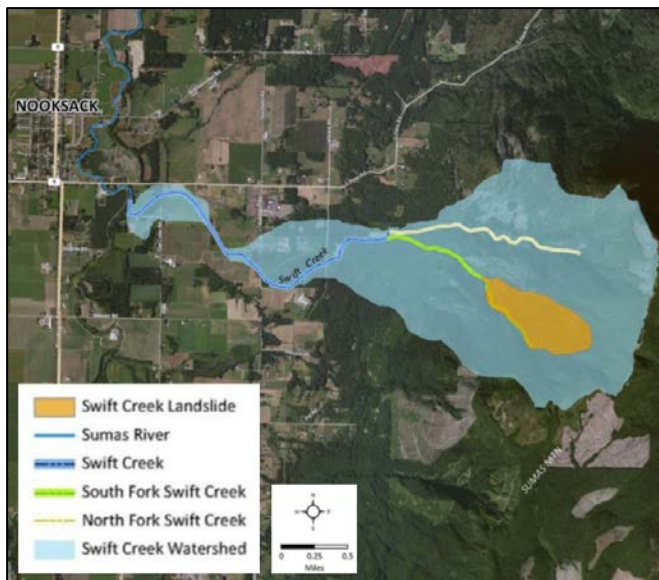




913 Squalicum Way, Unit 101  
Bellingham, WA 98225



## Swift Creek Flood Control and Sediment Management Project



*Swift Creek Project location*

### Public comment period

October 7 – November 5, 2019

[bit.ly/Ecology-SwiftCreek-Comments](https://bit.ly/Ecology-SwiftCreek-Comments)

### Public meeting

**Wednesday, October 9, 2019; 6-8 p.m.**  
**Nooksack Valley Middle School**  
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The Washington State Department of Ecology and Whatcom County are collaborating on the Swift Creek flood control and sediment management project located east of Everson near Sumas Mountain. We invite you to review and comment on a management plan, an associated legal document, and a public participation plan for the Swift Creek project.

### Información en español incluida

**Accommodation Requests:** To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-255-4382 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.