

WDFW schedules public meeting on Ebey Island salmon habitat restoration study

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has scheduled a public meeting March 15 at its Mill Creek office to discuss a draft study that evaluates the feasibility of restoring salmon habitat on the Ebey Island portion of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. During the meeting, area residents and other members of the public will have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft feasibility study. WDFW also will accept written public comments on the study through March 31. The draft study, along with additional information on the project, is available on WDFW's website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/restoration_study.php. Ebey Island is located near Everett and is part of the Snohomish River delta. Chinook salmon populations in Puget Sound, including those in the Snohomish River, are listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The draft study includes an evaluation of potential projects, including a preferred approach, designed to restore access for juvenile chinook and other salmon to important rearing habitat that was blocked when a dike was built around Ebey Island in the early 1900s. "Restoring habitat is an important step in rebuilding chinook salmon populations in Puget Sound," said Richard Tveten, restoration ecologist for WDFW. "This study provides an initial look at what restoration projects might be possible at Ebey Island." The study was developed by WDFW in consultation with an advisory committee that met several times last year. The advisory committee includes representatives from the agricultural industry, citizen groups and federal, local and tribal governments. "As we developed the study, we discussed with the committee ways to restore salmon habitat while preserving the island's farmland and minimizing impacts to residences, small business and infrastructure," Tveten said. "The upcoming meeting is a good opportunity to continue that discussion with the public." Comments on the draft study, titled Ebey Island Habitat Restoration Feasibility Study, can be submitted by email to richard.tveten@dfw.wa.gov or by U.S. Mail to: Richard Tveten, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA, 98501. People also can submit comments and discuss the program with WDFW staff during the March 15 public meeting at WDFW's Mill Creek Office, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd. WDFW staff will host an informational open house from 6-6:30 p.m., followed by the meeting from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The draft feasibility study is funded by a grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the Natural Environmental Resource Damage Assessment Fund.