

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Elizabeth Kosa  
Director**





**NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Satpal Singh Sidhu, County Executive, and the Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

**THROUGH:** Elizabeth Kosa, Public Works Director

**FROM:** Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager   
John N. Thompson, Senior Salmon Recovery Planner 

**DATE:** November 13, 2024

**RE:** Presentation of the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association South Fork River Stewards 2024 Report

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**Requested Action:**

This is an informational presentation by Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) staff regarding what was learned from the 2024 South Fork River Stewards program.

**Background and Purpose:**

The Whatcom County Council passed amendments to *WCC 11.20.025* in 2023 to institute a seasonal closure of the South Fork Nooksack River to reduce recreational impacts on ESA-listed early Chinook salmon. The closure is timed for when summer warm river temperatures and degraded habitat create significant stresses on early Chinook and when recreational disturbances can magnify the stress and further contribute to mortality before the fish are able to spawn.

The WRIA 1 Salmon Staff Team and NSEA collaborated on an outreach program centered on recreational users during the seasonal closure. NSEA representatives provided river users with information on salmon in the river, recommendations on how to recreate responsibly, and awareness of the closure and the reasons behind it. This program was patterned after a long-running NSEA program in the North Fork Nooksack River and was implemented in the summers of 2023 and 2024. Public Works, the WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Lead Entity, and NSEA each contributed towards the expense of the program.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide Council with the results of the 2024 outreach effort, answer any questions Council may have, and receive input on possible continuation, or revision, of the program in 2025.

Please contact Gary Stoyka at extension 6218, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.

Encl.

Last edited 06/23/2023