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State Dept of Natural Resources Publishes New Landslide Mapping

A new map published by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources inventories landslides and alluvial fans in western Whatcom County. The inventory identified 1,911 landslides and 2,470 alluvial fans, providing a valuable resource for planners, public works departments, emergency managers, and the general public to make informed land use decisions and identify at-risk public or private infrastructure locations.

A description of the DNR's landslide inventory program can be found [here](#), and a zip file containing the *Landslide Inventory of Western Whatcom County, Washington* can be downloaded directly from [here](#). The zip files include a brief pamphlet discussing major findings, and a GIS database. Due to the size of the study area and the detailed nature of the data, no electronic or paper maps are available. Detailed maps can be printed from the Washington Geologic Information Portal at dnr.wa.gov/geologyportal.

"This new mapping is a valuable resource to help our community better understand the landslide and alluvial fan hazards that come with living in Whatcom County," said County Executive Satpal Singh Sidhu. "The maps will help our citizens make sound decisions about purchasing or developing property and will guide our County staff as they help educate our community about geologic hazards and as we continue to work to improve on how we can protect human life and the safety of our community."

The map represents a significant improvement over the existing landslide inventory currently available for the County. Accurately identifying the location of past landslides is a critical first step in assessing the risk landslides pose. An accurate inventory is also the foundation for the development of more advanced tools for forecasting landslide potential and predicting landslide run-out and volume. This can be very important as some landslides can travel long distances and cause damage many thousands of feet beyond where they start.

"We are all too aware of how landslides can negatively impact our community. These new maps will help emergency managers be better prepared and, hopefully, discourage folks from building in risky locations in the first place. Placing development in harm's way increases the risk to the community and puts our first responders in danger when a landslide or alluvial fan event happens," says John Gargett, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management Deputy Director.

Links and additional information related to emergency planning, landslides and alluvial fans will be made available in the near future via the Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management and Public Works websites once staff return to their regular duties following COVID-19 deployments.

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