



**SEPA Determination of Significance  
and Request for Comments on Scope of  
Supplemental EIS for the Swift Creek Sediment Management Action Plan  
Phase 3 Implementation: Sediment Repository**

**File:** SEP2011-00023

**Description of Proposal:** Whatcom County Public Works is proposing to develop a repository on 65 acres of a 215-acre Whatcom County-owned parcel for the purpose of storing Swift Creek sediment. The proposal is part of phased implementation of the Swift Creek Sediment Management Action Plan (SCSMAP). The SCSMAP was adopted Whatcom County Council on July 23, 2013 after completion of the Swift Creek Sediment Management Action Plan (SCSMAP) and SCSMAP Phase 1 Projects Draft EIS, issued on February 15, 2013, with Final EIS issuance on June 12, 2013. The repository proposal will be reviewed in a supplement to the 2013 EIS.

The SCSMAP addresses flooding and asbestos- and metals-contaminated sediment movement in the Swift Creek watershed and the Sumas River through active and passive management strategies. The proposed repository, an active sediment management strategy under the SCSMAP, includes an estimated capacity to store 2.3 million cubic yards of Swift Creek sediment. Repository construction is proposed to begin in 2024, utilizing sediment from SCSMAP Phase 1 project maintenance and creek maintenance dredging in a series of primary construction stages over approximately 22 years. Repository closure is projected to occur in 2046.

**Proponent:** Whatcom County Public Works Department

**Location of Proposal:** Sumas Mountain (Swift Creek watershed), Whatcom County, Washington

**Lead Agency:** Whatcom County Public Works Department

**EIS Required:** The lead agency has determined that the proposal is likely to result in significant adverse impacts to the environment and, pursuant to Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21C (SEPA), an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required.

**The SEPA lead agency has preliminarily identified the following for discussion in the EIS:** Under SEPA, the EIS will examine the environmental impacts of SCSMAP Phase 3 implementation within the Swift Creek watershed. Elements of the environment (WAC 197-11-444) that have been identified for discussion are listed below:

**Natural Environment**

Earth

- Geology
- Soils
- Topography
- Unique physical features
- Erosion/enlargement of land area (accretion)

Air

- Air quality

Water

- Surface water movement/quantity/quality
- Runoff/absorption
- Groundwater movement/quantity/quality

Plants and animals

- Habitat for and numbers or diversity of species of plants, fish, or other wildlife
- Unique species

**Built Environment**

Environmental health

- Releases or potential releases to the environment affecting public health, such as toxic or hazardous materials

Land and shoreline use

- Relationship to existing land use plans
- Aesthetics

Transportation

- Transportation systems
- Movement/circulation of people or goods

Public services and utilities

- Fire
- Police

**Alternatives:** Alternatives to the SCSMAP Phase 3 Implementation: Sediment Repository proposal will be determined through the scoping process according to WAC 197-11-440(5)(b). Reasonable alternatives shall include actions that could feasibly attain or approximate the proposal’s objectives, but at a lower environmental cost or decreased level of environmental degradation. The No Action Alternative will also be evaluated.

**Scoping:** Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS within a 21-day scoping comment period per WAC 197-11-408 beginning on February 24, 2021 and closing March 19, 2021. You may comment on alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, mitigation measures, and licenses or other approvals that may be required.

**Written Comments:** Provide comments to the Lead Agency SEPA Official (see below) no later than March 19, 2021. Notifications about the Draft Supplemental EIS publication will be made in accordance with adopted County procedures. Interested parties who sign up on mailing lists or contact the County with a request to receive notices will also receive notices.

**Documents Available:** Swift Creek background information at: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3067/Swift-Creek-Background-Documents>.

**Responsible Official:** Roland Middleton

**Position/Title:** Designated SEPA Official

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**Date:** 2/22, 2021      **Signature:** 