

11/16/2021 7:05 PM



# Whatcom County Sheriff's Office News Release

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 16, 2021

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### **WHATCOM COUNTY MOVES TO RECOVERY PHASE FOLLOWING HISTORIC FLOODING**

**WHATCOM COUNTY, WA** - As of late Tuesday, water levels are receding throughout Whatcom County. Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) deputies and search and rescue volunteers worked throughout the night and continued their efforts today. Approximately 100 rescue calls to move people due to the flooding in the north and northeast areas of Whatcom County were responded to on Tuesday. All calls were cleared by early evening. At this time, roughly 300 people are being housed in one of two shelters in the Lynden area: North County Christ and King and Sonlight Community Church.

Extensive search and rescue efforts for the missing individual from Everson continued today. WCSO search and rescue deputies, Everson Police Officers, the Customs and Border Protection helicopter, K-9, several drones and search and rescue volunteers from Summit to Sound and Whatcom County 4x4 Unit were dispatched to search specifically for Mr. Garcia, who has been missing since Monday morning. This search has been suspended for the evening and will resume in the morning.

Over 100 Ferndale residents worked for eight hours today placing over 3,000 sandbags to protect the levee. The voluntary evacuation for downtown Ferndale remains in place overnight.

The assistance from volunteers has been instrumental in this response. Search and rescue, firefighter and citizen volunteers have positively impacted this response.

### **ROAD IMPACTS CONTINUE**

Many roads remain closed tonight, including I5 south of Bellingham. Roads are closed for a variety of reasons, including flooded waterways, standing water, debris, and failed pavement. More road impacts like failed pavement and sinkholes will be discovered as flood waters recede. Whatcom County Public Works is assessing roads and bridges over the next several days as waters recede. Bridges will stay open during damage assessments.

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All roads to and from the Lummi Peninsula are currently closed with water over roadways, including the evacuation route that was published earlier today. Drivers should not attempt to use the previous evacuation route.

Temperatures are expected to fall overnight and frost is expected. Whatcom County Public Works crews will be sanding roads early Wednesday morning. Drivers should use caution during the morning commute.

Additional information:

- Do not attempt to drive across standing water.
- Please limit travel in the county to essential trips only.
- Call 911 for flood-related emergencies. Do not call 911 for non-emergencies.
- To report non-emergency flood impacts please leave a message at (360) 788-5311.
- To report non-emergency road impacts, call (360) 778-6400.
- County roads closed due to storm flooding are being posted [at this link](#).
- State highway roads and impacts are posted [at this link](#).

### **HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP**

The most effective way to support the community members affected by flooding is by donating through Whatcom Community Foundation's Resilience Fund. Currently there is a matching fund made possible by local donors and Puget Sound Energy. As a result, anyone who donates to the Whatcom Community Foundation's Resilience Fund this week will have their gift matched dollar for dollar, up to a combined total of \$115,000. As of Tuesday afternoon, over \$80,000 has been contributed to the Resilience Fund. To contribute, click [here](#).

### **NEXT STEPS**

Citizens and first responders are still in the rescue and response phase of this weather incident. Soon we will move into the damage assessment phase. Additional information on how to work with disaster recovery entities like FEMA will be published in the coming days. Anyone who experiences damage associated with this flood event should keep as much documentation as possible, including photos and receipts.

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