SEPA Distribution List
SEPA2022-00084
Date of Issuance: September 12, 2022

Please review this determination. If you have further comments or questions, phone the responsible official at (360) 778-5900. Please submit your response by the comment date noted on the attached notice of determination.

WA State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation via email
Stephanie Jolivette, stephanie.jolivette@dahp.wa.gov
SEPA@dahp.wa.gov

SEPA Unit, WA State Department of Ecology, Olympia via email
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Lummi Nation Natural Resources
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Nooksack Indian Tribe
George Swanaset, JR via email - george.swanasetjr@nooksack-nsn.gov
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Skagit River System Cooperative
Nora Kammer via email – nkammer@skagitcoop.org

Applicant
Whatcom County Public Works c/o Deborah Johnson via email - DJohnson@co.whatcom.wa.us
SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)

File: SEPA2022-00084

Project Description: Open up the mouth of an existing side channel along the Nooksack river to encourage greater flow in order to increase local river flow conveyance and reduce the volume and rate of flow that overtops the river's right bank during large flood events.

Proponent: Whatcom County Public Works – Rivers & Flood

Address and Parcel #: Gravel bar adjacent to Twin View Levee along Kale Road, Everson, WA / 4004310822390 & 400431014374

Lead Agency: Whatcom County Planning & Development Services

Zoning: AG  Comp Plan: Agriculture  Shoreline Jurisdiction: Conservancy

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts are likely. This proposal will also be reviewed for compliance with all applicable Whatcom County Codes (WCC) which regulates development activities, including but not limited to: WCC 15 – Buildings and Construction, WCC 16.16 – Critical Areas, WCC 17 – Flood Damage Prevention, WCC 20 – Zoning, WCC 21 - Land Division Regulations, WCC 23 – Shoreline Management Program, the Whatcom County Development Standards and/or the Washington State Stormwater Manual. Mitigation may be a requirement of Whatcom County Code. Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c), an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required. This decision was made following review of a completed SEPA environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

X Pursuant to WAC 197-11-340(2), the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issuance indicated below. Comments must be received by 4:00 p.m. on September 26, 2022, and should be sent to: Andrew Hicks via email at AHicks@co.whatcom.wa.us

Responsible Official: Mark Personius, mpersoni@co.whatcom.wa.us

Title: Director

Telephone: 360-778-5937

Address: 5280 Northwest Drive Bellingham, WA 98226

Date of Issuance: September 12, 2022

Signature: ____________________________ for Mark Personius

An aggrieved agency or person may appeal this determination to the Whatcom County Hearing Examiner. Application for appeal must be filed on a form provided by and submitted to the Whatcom County Current Planning Division located at 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226, during the ten days following the comment period, concluding October 6, 2022.

You should be prepared to make a specific factual objection. Contact Whatcom County Current Planning Division for information about the procedures for SEPA appeals.
WHATCOM COUNTY GIVES PUBLIC NOTICE THAT THE FOLLOWING SEPA THRESHOLD DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (DNS) HAS BEEN ISSUED TODAY SUBJECT TO THE 14 DAY COMMENT PERIOD CONCLUDING ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2022.

File: SEPA2022-00084

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**Comp Plan:** Agriculture

**Shoreline Jurisdiction:** Conservancy

ANY PERSON OR AGENCY MAY APPEAL THE COUNTY’S COMPLIANCE WITH WAC 197-11 BY FILING AN APPEAL WITH THE WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LOCATED AT 5280 NORTHWEST DRIVE, BELLINGHAM, WA 98226. APPEALS MUST BE MADE WITHIN 10 DAYS AFTER THE END OF THE COMMENT PERIOD.
Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [HELP]

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: Nooksack River Side Channel Enhancement Pilot Project

2. Name of applicant: Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

   Deborah Johnson  
   Whatcom County Public Works, River & Flood Division  
   322 N. Commercial St., 2nd Floor  
   Bellingham, WA  98225  
   (360) 779-6288

4. Date checklist prepared: **August 16, 2022**

5. Agency requesting checklist: **Whatcom County - Planning and Development Services**

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

   **Project construction in fall 2022**

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

   No

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

   - Field survey data was combined with recent LiDAR to create a base for design, permitting, and post-construction monitoring of project performance.
   - Reconnaissance of the site area by Steve Fox, Biologist, Whatcom County Public Works, to assess the Ordinary High Water level (OHW) of the river and potential presence of wetlands.
   - A Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) form was completed to provide the information necessary for a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) application for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

   No

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

    - HPA to be issued by WDFW  
    - Whatcom County Site Plan Review  
    - Whatcom County Shoreline Permit Exemption  
    - Whatcom County Floodplain Development Permit
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

The Nooksack River overtops its north (right) bank upstream of the Everson Road (State Route 544) Bridge in large flood events, and that flow moves north through the cities of Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas as well as adjacent agricultural areas, posing significant risks to people, infrastructure, and land uses. The effects of these overflow events are compounded in the Sumas area by drainage from Johnson Creek and the Sumas River and its tributaries. An interdisciplinary planning and design charette focused on this river “flow split” was held in April 2022 as an initial step to identify both short-term and long-term multi-benefit solutions for reducing flood impacts in the overflow corridor.

One short-term solution that emerged is encouraging a greater amount of flow into a small side channel that runs parallel to the Twin View Levee along the left (south) bank of the Nooksack River immediately upstream of the Everson Road Bridge. This side channel was perennially active a decade ago, but now only has flow conveyance during high-flow events. Preliminary analysis suggests that increased flow down this side channel could lead to a modest increase in local river flow conveyance and an associated reduction in the volume and rate of flow that overtops the river’s right bank during large flood events, thus potentially reducing the severity of flooding in the Everson overflow corridor. Increased flow down the side channel could also potentially provide increased off-channel rearing, refugia, and possibly spawning habitat area for salmonids.

This project will “open up” the upstream end of the side channel to encourage increased river flow into it. The proposed construction work includes:

- clearing vegetation (but no trees) in an access corridor.
- removal of shrubby vegetation (primarily willows) and floodborne woody material from an approximate 25-foot-wide by 25-foot-long area on the gravel bar at the inlet to the side channel above the ordinary high water (OHW) level of the river. Removed vegetation will be placed on the gravel bar riverward of the side channel.
- excavation of alluvium on the bar extending upstream and downstream (south and northward) from the cleared area, at depths up to 3 feet for a total of approximately 310 cubic yards of excavation (150 lineal feet) and onsite placement of the excavated alluvium along the sides of the channel in between and around existing vegetation.
- planting of willow live stakes in areas cleared of vegetation for access to the work area on the bar, and
- erosion and sediment control as well as spill prevention, control and countermeasures to prevent water quality impacts in the river during construction.

Construction equipment access to this side channel work area will occur via the access road on the Twin View Levee. The total area of site disturbance will be no greater than 6,000 square feet.
12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

Figure 1 shows the site vicinity and specific location. There is no street address for this location. Construction access will occur via Kale Road, which is used for access to private properties south of Twin View Levee and for the County’s levee inspections and operations work. The adjacent property owner’s address south of Kale Road is 421 Everson Road.

The site is in the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 31, Township 40, Range 4E. The geographic coordinates of this location are 48°54'47.58"N lat. / 122°20'47.29"W long.

B. Environmental Elements [HELP]

1. Earth [help]
   
a. General description of the site:

   (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____________

   b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

   The steepest slope on the site is the riverward face of the Twin View Levee, which has a slope of 5H:1V (20%) at the location of proposed construction work area access.

   c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

   The Soil Survey of Whatcom County Area, WA identifies riverwash (Unit #130) and non-hydric Pilchuck loamy fine sand (Soil Unit #119) as mapped within the project vicinity. The construction work area is entirely river alluvium.

   The Twin View Levee riverward embankment is comprised of riprap underlain by native soils. The levee landward embankment (backslope) is comprised of compacted levee select fill, topsoil, and grass.

   d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

      No
e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

To increase hydrologic connectivity of the side channel to the river, the project will require excavation of 310 cubic yards (estimated) of alluvium from the gravel bar extending downstream (northward) for a distance of approximately 150 linear feet. The depth of the excavation within the gravel to form the channel is approximately 3 feet on average. The excavated material will be placed on-site.

No imported fill is associated with the project. The excavated alluvium will be placed along the sides of the excavated channel in between and around existing vegetation.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

The project will occur in dry conditions, as the side channel will not be inundated at the time of construction. Best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to avoid potential erosion or increased surface water run-off from the project site. Temporary, minor increases in turbidity may occur when the river inundates the side channel after construction but no significant impacts to water quality are anticipated.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

Not Applicable. The project area consists of a gravel bar within a riverine system. The project is not associated with the introduction of any impervious surfaces or any built area.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Erosion is not anticipated to an extent that could cause increased turbidity in the river given the coarse soils in the project area, avoiding work close to the river bank (to remain above ordinary high water level and in dry conditions), and the short duration of site work (maximum 3 days). Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control (TESC) BMPs, such as high visibility fence placed along the construction access corridor from the levee on to the bar, and straw wattles or comparable measures placed along the riverward edge of project disturbance if needed, will help to confine the work area and prevent sediment from entering the river. Following completion of construction, if erosion occurs on the bar it will be due to natural river processes, not due to exposed soil created by this project.
2. Air [help]

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Short-term emissions from excavator operation and vehicles used to access the site during construction (not anticipated to exceed 3 days) will occur. Quantities are considered to be minimal and will not result in degradation of existing air quality conditions in the project area and vicinity.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

Not Applicable - no off-site sources of emissions or odor are present to affect the proposal.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

Not Applicable

3. Water [help]

a. Surface Water: [help]

1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

The project site’s side channel and gravel bar are situated within the Nooksack River.

2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

As shown on the site plans, the proposed construction work will occur outside of the OHW level of the river and no in-water work is proposed. The project work is within 200 feet of the Nooksack River.

3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

Not Applicable.

4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No surface water withdrawals or diversions are associated with the project. It is anticipated that a historical hydrologic connection of the side channel with the river will be restored after construction.
5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

   Yes, the entire site area is within the Nooksack River 100-year floodplain.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

   No

b. Ground Water: [help]

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

   No

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals . . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

   Not applicable

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

   Surface water runoff from the project area will occur during storm events and when flow is present in the side channel corresponding to high water events in the river. Any runoff from the site will enter the river eventually.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

   No

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

   No

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

   Not applicable
4. **Plants** [help]
   a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:
      
      - **X** deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
      - **X** evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
      - **X** shrubs
      - __ grass
      - __ pasture
      - __ crop or grain
      - ____ Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
      - ____ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
      - ____ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
      - ____ other types of vegetation

   b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?
      
      Shrubs in the side channel excavation work area may be removed. No standing trees will be felled or pruned as part of the work. Invasive knotweed will be removed or treated with herbicide in advance of the excavation work within the project limits.

   c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.
      
      **No rare or threatened plants are associated with the site.**

   d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:
      
      Willow stakes will be planted in the equipment access corridor between the levee and the side channel work area. Prior to construction, non-native invasive and noxious weeds, such as Japanese knotweed, will be removed and/or treated with herbicide to restrict potential spreading by equipment and increased infestation.

   e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.
      
      **Japanese knotweed (Class A) is present on-site. Class A weeds are of the highest priority for eradication and limiting infestation in the County. Butterfly bush (Cass B) and Himalayan blackberry (widespread Class C) are also present. Class B and Class C weeds are targeted for control or biological efforts in the County.**

5. **Animals** [help]
   a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.
      
      Examples include:
      
      - birds: hawk, heron, eagle, **songbirds**, other:
      - mammals: **deer**, bear, elk, beaver, other:
      - fish: **bass, salmon, trout**, herring, shellfish, other ________

Ath
b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

   The Nooksack River adjacent to the project site provides spawning habitat for threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead and rearing habitat for threatened bull trout. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Designated Critical Habitat for these species is applicable to the Nooksack River project reach.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

   Fish and birds use the Nooksack River and its riparian corridor for migration. If the project succeeds in increasing flow conveyance through the side channel, it could be utilized by fish in a range of flow conditions.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

   No in-water work is proposed in association with enhancement of the side channel. Any vegetated areas disturbed for construction equipment access will be re-planted with live willow stakes. Invasive Japanese knotweed will be removed from the project area prior to construction.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

   No invasive animal species are documented or are known to be on or near the site.

6. Energy and Natural Resources [help]

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

   Not applicable

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

   No

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

   Not applicable

7. Environmental Health [help]

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

   1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.
None

2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

Not applicable

3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project’s development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.

Fuel refilling for any construction equipment will occur landward of the levee or at an offsite location. Equipment operating riverward of the levee must use biodegradable, vegetable based hydraulic fluids or another WDFW approved product. Otherwise there will be no toxic chemicals used for the project.

4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

Not applicable

5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

Not applicable

b. Noise

1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

Noise in the area is associated with routine traffic, agricultural land use, and flowing water in the river. Those noises will not affect the project work.

2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

The project will require excavator operation for much of the time during up to 3 days of site work, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. The noise caused by the excavator will not be in proximity to any homes or businesses that could be inconvenienced by it.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

None necessary

8. Land and Shoreline Use [help]

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.
The project site is a natural area in the river, and therefore categorized as Washington state-owned Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land. Access will occur via Twin View Levee, which is managed by Whatcom County. Farmland is present to the south of the levee. Neither the farmland or levee will be affected by the project.

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

No

1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

No

c. Describe any structures on the site.

None other than Twin View Levee.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Resources - Agriculture

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Agriculture

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Conservancy

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

The Nookack River and its associated buffer are regulated as Critical Areas by the County.
i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

   The project is to enhance/restore a side channel of the Nooksack River. No additional persons will work or reside within the project area, which will remain as a natural riparian corridor, after construction.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

   The project will not result in the displacement of any residents or workers.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

   Not Applicable

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

   The project will enhance the Nooksack River riparian corridor for fish habitat and use. The County's provisions for critical areas protection of the river and its associated habitats will remain unchanged after project implementation.

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

   The project will not result in any impacts to agricultural or forest lands of long-term commercial significance.

9. **Housing** [help]

   a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

      Not Applicable. The project does not involve any housing elements.

   b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

      Not Applicable.

   c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

      Not Applicable.

10. **Aesthetics** [help]

    a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?
Not Applicable. No structures will be built in association with the side channel enhancement/restoration project.

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

Not Applicable. Areas where vegetation clearing occurs will be restored with native vegetation after construction.

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

Installed vegetation, comprised mostly of willow species, will be consistent with native species currently growing at the site.

11. Light and Glare [help]

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

Not Applicable – the project will not result in the introduction of any structures that could produce or change existing conditions of light or glare.

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

Not Applicable

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

Not Applicable

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

Not Applicable

12. Recreation [help]

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

The river provides opportunities for recreational fishing, boating, and swimming.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

The project will not displace any existing recreation uses. Fishing opportunities may improve due to increased hydrologic connectivity of the side channel with the river.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

Not Applicable.
13. **Historic and cultural preservation** [help]

a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.

   No

b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

   No known cultural resources are in or adjacent to the project site. The gravel bar has naturally formed via deposition of sediment transported from upstream in the river. If cultural resources were present in the river bed prior to bar formation, they are buried at depth below the extent of excavation proposed for this project. No site-specific study has been undertaken. The Nooksack Indian Tribe and Lummi Natural Resources are aware of the project plans and have been consulted to review the plans. No specific concerns for buried artifacts have been raised.

c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

   Nooksack Indian Tribe and Lummi Nation staff contributed to developing the design plans for this project.

d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

   The side channel excavation work will be overseen by County staff or a consultant working for the County. If any cultural resource is unearthed, the work will be halted to allow for characterization and preservation of the resource in consultation with the Nooksack Indian Tribe. The project team is coordinating with the Tribe to determine if an inadvertent discovery plan needs to be prepared for this project.

14. **Transportation** [help]

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

   State Route 544 (Everson Road) is located north of the site area and will serve as the access route for construction vehicles and equipment. Kale Road is used for access to a rental storage business and farmland, not as a through-route by local traffic.
b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

   No

c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

   Not Applicable.

d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

   No

e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

   No

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

   The only vehicular trips generated by the completed project will be associated with personal vehicles accessing the site for monitoring of project performance after the winter flood season. This is likely to require no more than 10 vehicular trips per year on nearby roads.

g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

   No

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

   Not Applicable.

15. Public Services [help]

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

   No

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.
Not Applicable.

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:
   electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other __________

   No Utilities are at the site

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

   The project does not include any utility construction or modifications.

C. Signature

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: __ Deborah Johnson __________________________
Name of signee __ Deborah Johnson __________________________
Position and Agency/Organization __ River & Flood Engineer Whatcom County Public Works
                  River & Flood Division __________________________
Date Submitted: __ 08/17/22 __________

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY to use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

   Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

Reviewed by Andrew Hicks - 9/7/2022

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2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

   Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

   Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

   Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

   Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

   Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.
Figure 1. Site Location Map for Nooksack River Side Channel Enhancement Pilot Project.