



Deepwater Slough

Deepwater Slough is a major distributary channel of the Skagit River system, the largest estuary in Puget Sound, and is well-known for supporting all five native salmon species, a large wintering bald eagle population, and critical winter habitat for geese and swans. The slough is flanked by two islands that support approximately 450 acres of diked farmland and managed wetland. Freshwater and estuarine wetlands in this area experienced extensive ditching, diking, and filling associated with agricultural development in the late 1800s through the early 1900s. Previous restoration efforts have restored 200 acres of the historic estuary and the proposed restoration would lower portions of the perimeter dike and create a series of dike breaches to connect distributary and blind channels to existing sloughs. This restoration would allow unrestricted tidal freshwater flows and would create rearing habitat for salmon as they move through the Skagit River Estuary.



IMAGE: Google Earth (2011)

Processes Restored

- Natural formation of tidal channels in estuaries.
- Unrestricted movement of saltwater through tidal channels in estuaries.
- Accumulation and retention of organic material from plants and aquatic animals.
- Unrestricted movement and migration of fish and wildlife.

Conditions Improved

- Restored tidal wetlands, which are highly productive habitats that support biodiversity and provide connectivity between the land and sea.
- Restored large river delta that provides valuable nursery habitat for threatened species of juvenile salmon such as Chinook, increasing their survival and supporting population recovery in Puget Sound.
- Improved quality of the water flowing through the estuary.
- Improved resiliency of the shoreline to respond to changes in the environment such as rising sea levels and increasing frequency of storm events.

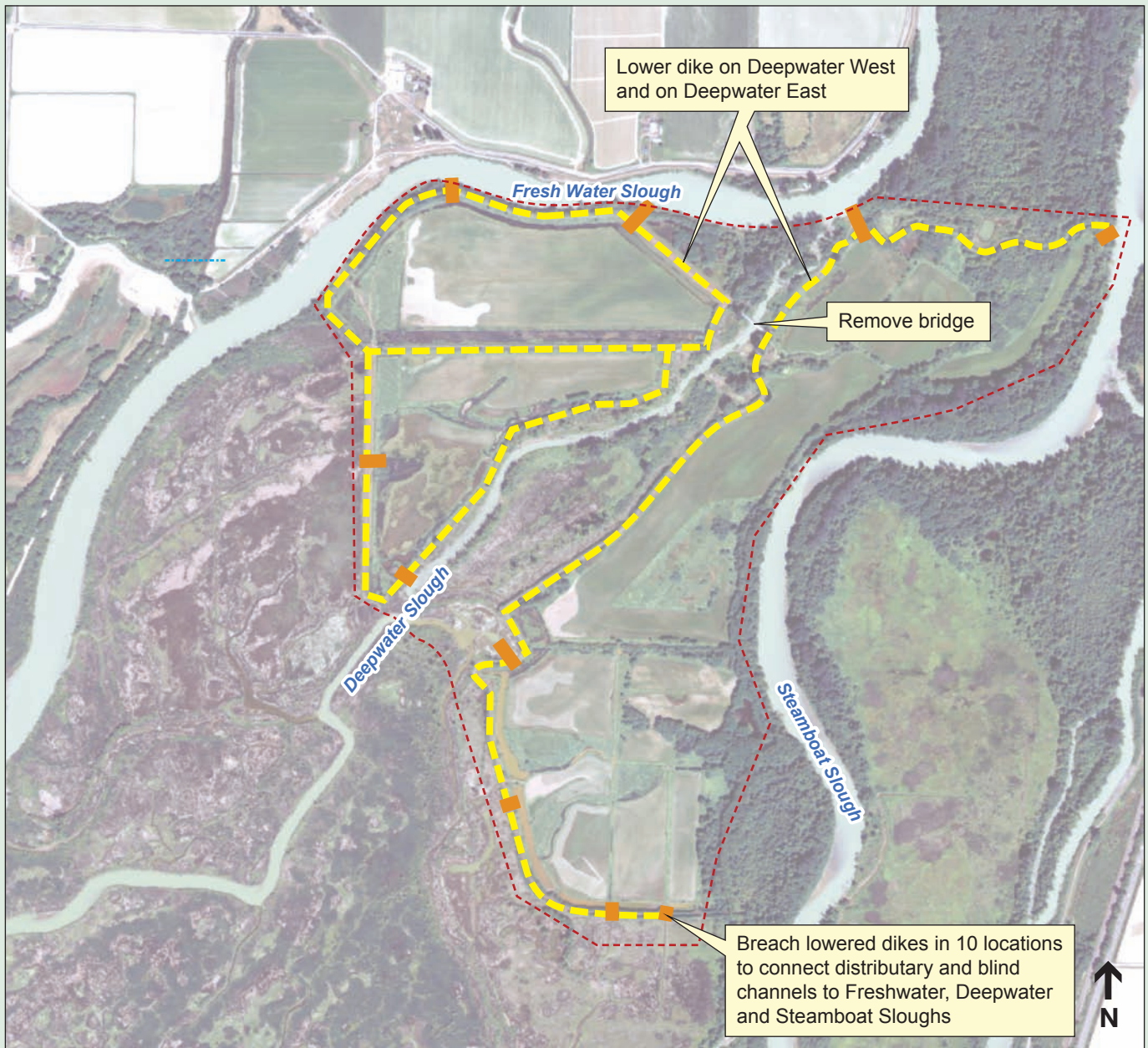


Image above depicts major project features. See design report for additional details.

SOURCE: ESA (2011); USDA-NAIP (2009)

Key Design Elements

The restoration would include a combination of dike lowering and dike breaching around both of the islands (Deepwater West and East). Riparian vegetation would be planted on the lowered dikes and new channels to expand the riparian woodland corridor. A pedestrian bridge that extends between the two islands would be removed after dike lowering.

Site Summary Statistics

- Area of Restored Process: 270 acres
- Total Project Cost: \$6.7 million

For more detailed information regarding this conceptual design, please visit our website at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org/cdr.html.