



Spencer Island

Spencer Island is located between Union and Steamboat Sloughs near Everett, in the Snohomish River Estuary. Historically the Snohomish River had extensive tidal freshwater wetlands, but this type of habitat has become increasingly rare as a result of human activities. Spencer Island was diked in the early 1900s and used primarily for grazing. Over the past two decades, some of the dikes around Spencer Island have been breached to restore tidal freshwater wetlands on the island. The restoration would expand on those past efforts by further breaching and lowering the dikes to allow more tidal flow to reach the interior of the island. The restoration would create rearing habitat for salmon as they move through the Snohomish River Estuary.



IMAGE: Washington State Department of Ecology (2006)

Processes Restored

- Natural formation of tidal channels in estuaries.
- Unrestricted movement of saltwater through tidal channels in estuaries.
- Unrestricted movement and migration of fish and wildlife.

Conditions Improved

- 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.
- Restored tidal freshwater wetlands, which are highly productive habitats that support biodiversity and provide connectivity between land and sea.
- Improved quality of the water flowing through the estuary.
- Improved public access to the shore and recreational opportunities.



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

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

Key Design Elements

The restoration would expand two existing breaches in the dike and add a third breach, allowing for more tidal flows to enter the interior of the island. It is expected that a tidal channel network in the interior of the island will form over time with the increase in tidal prism. Existing dikes along Steamboat and Union Sloughs would also be lowered to create a low berm adjacent to the sloughs. The berm would be planted to create a riparian woodland corridor. A bridge would be constructed across the southern breach at Union Slough to maintain the existing public access trail.

Site Summary Statistics

- Area of Restored Process: 313 acres
- Total Project Cost: \$16.9 million

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