

From: [Amy Trainer](#)
To: [Brokes, Brendan J \(DFW\)](#); [SEPADesk2 \(DFW\)](#); [Windrope, Amy \(DFW\)](#)
Cc: [Eric Beamer](#); [Greg Hood](#); [Amy Trainer](#); [Lorraine Loomis](#)
Subject: Swinomish Tribe comments re SEPA DNS 20-021 - N. Leque Island Restoration
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 8:21:08 AM
Attachments: [SRSC_WDFW_NorthLeque_juvChinookAnalysis2016memo.pdf](#)

Dear Brendan, Amy and WDFW Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SEPA DNS 20-021, the North Leque Island Restoration proposal. Senior scientists at the Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC) are familiar with this site, please see attached 2016 memo to WDFW. After reviewing the proposal, we offer the following comments and questions.

While we generally support this type of restoration project, we believe that it is essential to monitor this site, both pre-project and post-project, to understand juvenile salmon use, yet that is not part of the current proposal.

SRSC Science Director Eric Beamer just submitted a Letter of Intent for an ESRP learning grant to test the effect of increasing landscape channel network connectivity on site-scale fish density. One site is a natural experiment formed by the new avulsion in the Skagit North Fork delta; the other is proposed restoration by TNC and the Stillaguamish Tribe and the mouth of Hat Slough. The North Leque Island restoration project, had we known about it, could have been included in this LOI, and we would be glad to add it to the grant. Please let us know if you support SRSC modifying its final proposal to include the North Leque Island site to ensure this critical pre- and post-project monitoring occurs.

Other comments and questions about the SEPA materials include the following:

1. The engineering drawings are unclear.
 - * It is not clear if the entire northern dike will be removed or if only limited breaches will occur were channel reconnections will be made?
 - * If there will only be breaches, it is not clear how wide the breaches will be?
 - * The cross-sections of the channel reconnections are not specified in any way, not even in a general way, can WDFW clarify?
 - 1. It is unclear how necessary or desirable the channel plugs are. There should be a clear rationale for these plugs, what is it?
 - 1. In general, we are supportive of the proposed addition of 8 outlets, which would match nicely with allometric predictions.
 - 1. Again, we think pre- and post-project monitoring of juvenile salmon use should be a component of this restoration. WDFW would be performing an important connectivity experiment by increasing channel connectivity from one breach to nine breaches. This site already is accessible to juvenile salmon via the single large breach in the NE corner of the site. Will the additional breaches have any effect on juvenile salmon access to the site? Will they increase juvenile salmon density within the site?. Monitoring is essential to know whether the additional breaches had any benefit or not. The outcome of the monitoring will inform not only this project, but similar projects that might be proposed in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and please let us know when you might be available for a follow-up conversation.

Stay healthy,
Amy

Amy Trainer
Environmental Policy Director
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
360.399.5804