



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps repairing 2.5 miles of damaged levees along Skagit River

SEATTLE – The Skagit River levee system is bustling with activity these days as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers repairs two and a half miles worth of levees at 27 individual sites, within five diking districts, at a cost of approximately \$8 million.

Repairs commenced on June 20 with all in-water work scheduled to be complete by Aug. 31, the end of a six week “fish window” when construction crews can work in the water with the least amount of salmon present. Above-ground work is expected to last through September.

“This is a fairly aggressive schedule given the length of repairs, about 2.5 miles, and that these are non-continuous sites spread out amongst the five dike districts,” said Amanda Ogden, the Skagit levee project manager for the Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District.

In addition to making repairs, the Corps is adding environmental features to various levee sites including: Willow and shrub plantings on riverward banks; tree plantings landward of levees; covering riprap with topsoil and hydroseed; and creating shallower slopes, a riverward bench for high water fish refuge and a fish habitat weir.

The Corps is also improving fish habitat by placing large woody debris – 20-foot logs with root wads attached – just beyond the toe of levees and anchored to boulders. There are 335 of the woody debris structures being placed at six of the repair sites.

Throughout the planning process over the past year, the Corps worked closely with Skagit County Diking Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Skagit River System Cooperative and the Swinomish Tribe to develop a plan which complies with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act for a total of 57 sites – including sites where repairs were completed in 2007 and scheduled repairs currently underway.

Under a cost-share agreement, the Corps pays for 80 percent of the project and local sponsors pay the remaining 20 percent.

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