



News Release

Date: April 28, 2017

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Final season of work on major White River flood protection project to get underway

The Countyline Levee Setback Project enhances public safety, benefits salmon habitat along the lower reaches of the glacial-fed White River

SUMMARY

The second – and final – season of work is starting along the White River at the Countyline Levee Setback Project, a major undertaking by the King County Flood Control District that will reduce flooding by restoring the river's access to its historic floodplain.

STORY

The second year of work is beginning on the [Countyline Levee Setback Project](#) along the lower reaches of the White River in the City of Pacific, one of the most complex public safety projects in the [King County Flood Control District's](#) 10-year history.

The flood protection project, launched in May 2016, is expected to be substantially completed by October – in time for the next flood season.

The Countyline Levee Setback Project entails removing a constrictive levee along the White River, reconnecting the river to 121 acres of historic floodplain to give floodwaters more room to fan out and lose their erosive force. A new setback levee is being constructed to contain flows within the floodplain.

The project will provide flood risk reduction benefits for more than 200 residential properties. It is the first of two projects aimed at significantly reducing flood risks and the potential for flood damages to Pacific residents.

"I am pleased to see this important project nearing completion," said Flood Control District Board Chair Reagan Dunn. "It is both complex and forward-looking, a project that will provide critical flood protection while restoring vital habitat."

"Reducing flooding risk, along with preserving salmon habitat, has been a priority for neighbors along the White River, including the City of Pacific," said Flood Control

District Board Supervisor Pete von Reichbauer. "For the past two years this unique project has been coordinated through partnerships, several funding sources and construction projects providing safety for hundreds of people who live and work near the river."

Significant progress on the project was made last year. The project area was cleared and graded, numerous engineered log structures were put in place, and a portion of the setback levee was constructed.

As planned, the remaining portions of the project will be built this year. The setback levee will be completed, extending from the BNSF Railway embankment to Eighth Street East and Stewart Road; other log structures will be installed, and the existing levee will be excavated and removed.

The Countyline Levee Setback Project uses several tools to address the White River's history of flooding, including property acquisition, levee removal, setback levee construction, and floodplain restoration within the river's Countyline reach in the cities of Pacific and Sumner.

"Many of us in the City of Pacific will breathe a bit easier once this project is completed," said Pacific Mayor Leanne Guier. "I'm gratified by the hard work, foresight and cooperation that have enabled us to tackle such a complex and important project for the residents of Pacific and nearby communities."

"This project is not only complex technically but also jurisdictionally," said Josh Baldi, director of the Water and Land Resources Division in the County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks. "It took several partners and considerable multi-agency involvement to design and implement it. It is great to see our region working together so successfully to address both public safety and habitat protection."

The project is unique in its technical complexity, diverse funding partnerships, multi-jurisdictional setting and multi-agency involvement. The Flood District has successfully leveraged \$6.1 million in funding to benefit habitat recovery in addition to the significant support of \$14.7 million funding provided by the King County Flood Control District.

The total project cost is estimated at \$20.8 million with a number of funding sources:

- \$14.7 million from King County Flood Control District;
- \$4.8 million from the Thea Foss Waterway Natural Resource Damage Assessment Settlement involving the following natural resource trustees: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe;
- \$823,000 from the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant; and
- \$500,000 from Pierce County.

For more information, visit the project web page, www.kingcounty.gov/countyline-projects or contact Jeanne Stypula, PE, supervising engineer, at 206-477-4833 or at Jeanne.Stypula@kingcounty.gov.

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The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District's Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.