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PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

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New Project Improves Fish Habitat and Flood Protection

Bellingham, WA, October 24, 2017—Whatcom County Public Works River and Flood Division completed the Appel Farm Fish Barrier Removal and Floodgate Replacement Project in early October. This project, located east of Ferndale, removed a fish passage barrier from the Nooksack River to Clarkson Creek, replaced a failing culvert, and improved flood protection and drainage for adjacent farmland. Project partners included the Whatcom Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Appel Farms, and Diking District #3.

Prior to project completion, Clarkson Creek ran under the Appel Levee through two stacked culverts. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife identified these culverts as a priority fish passage barrier for removal. In addition, one of the old culverts was failing and needed to be repaired in order to remain eligible in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Levee Rehabilitation and Inspection Program.

To address these issues and improve agricultural drainage, the new design includes two new side-by-side larger culverts with side-hinge floodgates. The new gates are self-regulating and remain open for fish passage until river levels reach a point where flood protection is required and the floodgates close. The larger culverts are also easier to inspect, which is another requirement of ongoing eligibility in the USACE's rehabilitation program. Construction occurred during August and September. The new culverts and floodgates worked well during the storms and high flows last week.

More information on this project is available at <http://whatcomcounty.us/2642/Appel-Farm-Fish-Barrier-Removal>.

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