

ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - MINUTES OF MEETING
SPECIAL SESSION - FEBRUARY 7, 2001

The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on February 7, 2001 at 7:00 p.m., in the Commons Room of South Whidbey High School, 5674 S. Maxwellton Road, Langley.

County Commissioners: William F. Thorn, Chairman; Mike Shelton, Member; Wm. L. McDowell, Member

County Staff/Consultants: Larry Kwarsick, Public Works Director; Lew Legat, County Engineer; Dick Snyder, Assistant County Engineer; Paul Sachs, Nichols Consulting Engineers, Tacoma; Les Killingsworth, Datum Pacific, Coupeville

Public: Approximately 60+ attended [Attendance sheet circulated but only those desiring to make a formal presentation signed the sheet]

The purpose of the special session was to conduct a public meeting on Glendale Road and Stream Restoration, and Dick Snyder covered the following topics in his oral and slide presentation:

- Recently completed Glendale Road and Stream Restoration Project
- Road culvert replacement in canyon
- Other proposed work and road opening alternatives
- Glendale Creek and beach management

When the road was open, traffic count information taken in the mid 1990's in the Canyon between Holst Road and the upper barricade showed 197 average daily traffic. From Holst Road down to the beach is 4600', 500' is less than 2-lane width. Costs associated based on 2-lane road: welded wire wall will cost \$60,000 at that site including culvert and drains; \$3,000 for paving and \$6,000 for guardrail [Island County funds]. The culvert under contract now is \$130,000; and to put in a seal coat from Holst Road to Glendale would be about \$15,000. The wall has been designed, not ordered yet. Estimated life of the wire wall is over 100 years although there is no guarantee. Native grasses are included in the hydroseed mix used. If Glendale Road is reopened, Mr. Snyder's opinion was that there should be traffic restrictions for speed and type of vehicle, no trucks other than propane delivery, etc. and no through traffic.

A letter was submitted from Sharon Parker in support for the 2-lane reopening of Glendale Road.

Some of the comments made from audience members were:

- The Creek was there before Glendale Road
- Glendale Road used to be an old railroad bed and is on rotten cedar logs that are still there and the County is continuing to patch on top of fill that; to rebuild the road to a two-lane road is e throwing tax dollars away
- Sign held up "*If You Build It They Will Come*"
- Commissioners need to listen to the South End residents
- What about the salmon habitat
- Why build a road there; what is the reasoning other than interest by emergency responders, etc.
- There are other roads in the County that need work

- A safe walkway for pedestrians and bikers similar to what is around Greenlake takes up almost one lane. Should build a one lane road, whether emergency only or one way up the hill, with a good walkway beside, using existing real estate in a benign and safe way.

Mr. Snyder characterized the difference between a single and a two lane road and assertions of lessened impacts by a single lane road. He noted there would possibly be some savings by making the road narrower where the retaining wall goes but it has a certain length to it and it would get a little bit shorter in length and maybe two feet shorter in height by moving it in closer to the existing roadway. As far as the wall and perceived intrusion in the canyon itself, he noted it was some distance away from stream. Once leaving town the road continues along the stream side and the County is not doing anything there until reaching the culvert site. Making the road half as wide does not mean a 50% kind of change; probably 10% - 20% savings in dollars. From his perspective as far as how a two lane road would be more harmful to the fish or the stream than a one lane road, in Mr. Snyder's mind there was no difference; once you leave town the stream is not impacted anymore except at the culvert replacement.

Commissioner Shelton commented that whether the road was constructed the way it was or not was the topic of tonight's meeting so the Commissioners can hear input from the public about what should happen in Glendale canyon and what kind of a road. The ability to reconstruct the road in Glendale canyon is more realistic than trying to reconstruct Humphrey Road if there is a major slide on Humphrey Road. There are two accesses to Glendale, neither very stable and the County is not willing to abandon the road up Glendale creek because of the belief that Humphrey Road does not provide long term stability to assume that will always be a way to get to Glendale. Those who have assessed Humphrey Road have said it is not a matter of whether Humphrey Road is going to slide, it is when. Did he think the road up Glendale canyon, once the one section of wall is put in, will forever be stable, no. It is important to ensure access for the 20 - 25 houses that are serviced by either Humphrey Road or Glendale Road. For the last 100 years or longer there has been some kind of a road up and down Glendale canyon that has not destroyed the pristine value. Island County has demonstrated its commitment to restoration of a salmon stream for Glendale creek by what has been done in Glendale and what it plans to do with the additional box culvert, and up further another culvert that is an impediment to salmon passage that will be replaced as well. The County is committed to not doing anything that would destroy the habitat for salmon. The project has been expensive, but the expensive has been for the benefit of the salmon.

Chairman Thorn walked that road end to end and part of the creek and thought the creek was in as great of jeopardy from slides on the south side as it is from the road. He would expect that where there is a slide today it could be expected to continue to slide; by the time the County has completed the repair work he thought it would be more stable and more protection afforded to the creek than if nothing were done.

PRESENTATIONS:

Lorinda Kay, representing Friends of Glendale Creek, Clinton, gave a presentation on behalf of that group, and submitted into the record the following [copies on file in the Commissioners' Office and Engineer's Office]:

- Presentation of Glendale Canyon Salmon Habitat Enhancements and Road Recommendations: Introduction; Options; Goals; Requirements; Roadway Recommendations; and Benefits
- Salmon Habitat Limiting Factors Water Resource Inventory Area 6 Island County, Washington State Conservation Commission, April, 2000
- Comments From Lorinda Kay on behalf of Friends of Glendale Creek
- Letter From Angie Dixon, Clinton, reiterating the desire of the community who want only a one lane limited access road for emergency use
- Petitions with 525+ signatures desiring closing of Glendale Road through the canyon

area; desire a one-lane emergency access, gated to be used in an emergency situation only

- 3 colored-in quarter section maps of the Glendale-Humphrey Road area, showing a fairly significant amount of residents who signed the petition

Three options were provided as outlined in the submittal:

1. Limited access single lane road, the best option for the fish habitat; least infringement on the creek; minimum traffic; greater potential for public benefits and conservation easements; and less expensive
2. Single lane one-way road going out of Glendale with pedestrian walkway and bikeway
3. Create a task force of a few friends of the creek, a Commission, appropriate representatives from the County Engineer's Office, to finalize recommendations for Glendale Road.

A portion of Ms. Dixon's letter was quoted as follows: *"I have heard Glendale Road referred to as a historic road by county officials as a reason to reactivate it. I just don't see it that way. If we are going to talk about history, there was a railroad before the road which could be brought back as a tourist attraction for that matter, and before that, there was a healthy salmon stream and ecosystem intact. Which history do you want?"*

Dave Anderson, Clinton, resident of the head waters of Glendale Creek, summarized his top reasons why the County should only repair Glendale Road for emergency one-lane local access:

- 1) No logic in spending taxpayer dollars for a two-lane road when the limited county resources could be used to hire additional deputies, provide for mental health and other health needs, additional building inspector to expedite permits, or other road projects.
- 2) The bulkhead where most of the money will go will actually put more weight on the toe of the road on what is the fill.
- 3) The road is inherently unsafe. The canyon never dries out and the road is almost always wet, and it is icy in the winter. If there is to be a two-lane road or much traffic, there should be a guardrail the full length; County could incur liability. Humphrey Road has very poor shoulders, almost none at one point. Many people walk there and placing extra traffic there is not a good idea. Extra vehicles, even with load restrictions, would destabilize Glendale Road, even the good lane.
- 4) Respect wishes of the locals.

With regard to the comment about the added weight at the toe of the slope, Chairman Thorn referred back to Mr. Snyder's statement that the wall to be put in place would be solid original ground; there is no building on top of old fill. As far as spending of County dollars, he pointed out that these funds are designated road funds and are not available to be spent on health needs or additional deputies, etc.

Jeffery P. Fisher, Ph.D, asked by Friends of Glendale Creek to present an objective perspective on the existing conditions of Glendale Creek relative to the system's ability to support salmonid species, submitted material for the record which was the basis for his presentation, including: Introduction; Historical Conditions; Current Conditions – Good, Bad, the Ugly; the Vision [alternatives]; Conclusions; Overview of factors affecting fish passage; and a table on the criteria for upstream fish passage through culverts [full text on file in the Commissioners Office and County Engineer's Office]. He summarized what he reviewed: ARC Consultants' report on habitat conditions; Limiting Factors Analysis for Island County; the water quality data presented by Robert Barnes on flow and temperature and dissolved oxygen.

As to the question about what the benefits were from an engineering perspective of a two-lane road versus one lane

road, Mr. Fisher referred to research done on the rate of sediment recruitment into a stream based upon road traffic done by Kate Sullivan in 1994 showing a there is a good correlation between the amount of sediment that goes into a stream and the amount of road traffic, along with increases in the amount of runoff of petroleum, hydrocarbon compounds and oil based compounds that will come off of exhaust from vehicles. The weight bearing capacity on the slopes can be engineered to maintain that but there have been problems before and the natural instability poses some concern. He was not sure that maintenance costs of the road had been factored in relative to the double lane versus single lane. He pointed out that monies are available to help projects through the Salmon Funding Board. He proposed alternatives as far as what he thought could be done, and he briefly reviewed both of those and what each would provide: (1) Road abandonment; and (2) Single Lane Road,. Limited Access.

Where Mr. Fisher talked about more traffic resulting in greater sediment accrual in the creek, Chairman Thorn thought there had to be some distance where that ceases to be a concern, and Mr. Fisher acknowledged the report was based on forest roads in the watershed, and while he was not sure of the precise distance of the buffer, it was a gravel road in that case, but thought there would still be some impact in terms of sediment – not numerically the same recruitment from a gravel road as a paved road but still would be an increase.

As far as the culvert the County is talking about replacing where there is a mud bottom and the habitat that represents, Mr. Fisher stated it was limited in its capacity, but that did not mean there still cannot be some spawning. There is good data to show that juvenile salmonid, bulltrout, coho and chinook, especially in the winter, go into small streams like this for short periods for rearing. As far as his suggestion to change the route of the creek below the culvert but above where the County completed repairs to date, he explained that right now, there are gradients that go from about .3 to 13 % in the lower 14' of stream, and the reason to change that would be to give the stream an opportunity to sort out some of the fines. The recommendation to abandon the road is included in the Limiting Factors Analysis Report. As far as further comment on hydrocarbons based on 200 cars going through the canyon, he could not answer, but his gut feeling was that that was a much more minimal concern relative to the water quality than the potential for a major slope failure.

Dave Ward, Habitat Restoration Project Manager, Stilly Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force, a non profit organization formed in 1990 by the State Legislature with the intent of integrating community support and involvement with salmon recovery, in part funded by a surcharge on recreational and commercial fishing licenses; a mixture of public federal funds as well as private contributions and donations, and much community support in volunteer labor, made a number of comments. He advised that almost all of their projects focus on the natural processes that create and generate salmon habitat.

The organization committed \$9,000 towards the construction of a fish friendly culvert in order to make a more fish friendly project. The goal of the organization is to integrate community involvement into salmon recovery; but he is hearing tonight an entire community saying they want a different project. About a year ago he began receiving calls from citizens in the area asking about the organization's position on it and encouraging taking a second look. He committed to stay for the entire meeting, noting what he heard tonight would determine what he recommends his Board of Directors as far as how the organization proceeds.

With regard to natural processes, he incorporated everything Jeff Fisher said into his comments in terms of the status of the creek and nature of the valley. He elaborated on the geological nature of the valley, noting this valley is one where the sides of the valley are continually sliding and moving down toward the bottom of the valley; as the water flows down the bottom of the valley it carries away all that sediment, a continual process probably occurring in this location for the last 10,000 years. From an engineering perspective, it makes an extremely challenging place to build a road. From an ecological and aquatic health perspective the road has the affect of narrowing the valley at the bottom, channelizing the creek and constraining its ability to flow and meander across the valley bottom. From a fish habitat perspective, in particular, in terms of sorting of gravels, some building spawning beds, but also in terms of slowing the velocity of the water, it controls how much gravel is eroded off the sides of valley and affects how complex the habitat is. From a fish perspective going with a single lane road seems to make sense because it reduces impacts on the aquatic habitat; it also serves community needs. From a purely fish perspective the best thing would be no road at all.

Susan Berta, Orca Conservancy, Greenbank, addressed the importance of the salmon to the orca and explained about how it is all connected, that orcas and salmon are a part of our history. She relayed her experience New Years' Day with whale sightings off the west side of the Island and a pod headed south past Saratoga Passage and having caught up to them in the Glendale area, and her joy in seeing the good salmon run and watching orcas feeding on the salmon and being quite active. There were salmon up in Glendale creek using the culvert and showing that all the County's hard work paid off. She thought Glendale was the perfect opportunity and urged taking the option of least amount of impact: listen to constituents, do what is easiest on the budget and easiest on the salmon.

Don Miller, Langley, described himself as having an environmental and rural background, a degree in biology, and does nature photography. He has walked the creek and notes gravels in there, and displayed one of his photographs to depict that - can see a rock sticking and can look through the water and see aggregates in there. Walking up and down that road beside the area that is to have the retaining wall, you can see settling all along there, and more of the settling on the outside lane. Plans show that that would be repaired by filling on top of it and paving, which would add more material which eventually would settle and end up in the stream. He saw an opportunity for reasonable compromise, and asked if the Commissioners would be willing to support a single lane road limited road access through Glendale canyon.

Commissioner Shelton commented that his mind was not closed to that.

Commissioner McDowell noted that public input had not yet concluded. He would want to talk further with Public Works staff afterwards, and time to review and digest all information and testimony.

Chairman Thorn was open to it, if that is what made the most sense; he would have to be persuaded there is a significant difference between a two lane and single lane road.

On behalf of Friends of Glendale Mr. Miller was interested in a statement of intent on how to proceed toward a compromise [copy of outline provided for the Board's use if they so choose] with alternatives: (1) single lane limited access; (2) single lane with features to lessen speed and amount of traffic, and provide pedestrian walkway; and (3) form task force to review the proposal.

Lorrinda Kay clarified that as far as Glendale residents, it would not be possible to have a one way until past the last driveway; from that point up could be one way. One lane, one way would be the simplest and safest way to handle it.

The Chairman was not prepared at this point to comment on any one alternative over another. The Board came to listen tonight; there has been some amount of emotion involved and he is searching for what the real facts are in this case from the salmon's point of view, and from a road building point of view, and needs time to assimilate that information and to think about that.

Commissioner Shelton verified that whatever decision the Board made would not be without full knowledge of the citizens. Whatever that project is going to be will occur this year and whatever the process is leading up to that construction project will take place in the coming few months.

Tom Fisher, Clinton, commented that as far as safety of the road, this is not an appropriate neighborhood for an arterial. Traffic needs to be minimized on Humphrey Road and one of the best ways to do that would be to minimize traffic on Glendale. While it may be true that the south bank is more precarious than the north bank, there is no need to add to the natural erosion in a stream by creating a potential catastrophic situation on the north side adding to an already slide prone south side. As far as having a pristine area here that for 100 years has born traffic and not harmed the pristine nature of it, he pointed out that fish had only been back since the slide so human engineering, generally speaking, probably does more to harm the natural environment than it does to amend it.

A poll of the audience by Mr. Fisher showed that the vast majority favor a one lane road.

Dean Enell, speaking for the Citizens Growth Management Coalition, said that while the Engineering Department seems to feel that a two lane road is not that much more costly than a one lane road, and is not further prone to slide,

he did not see the logic of that. If it is a one lane road and not open those 200 cars will not be there. He did express appreciation for the County's concern to try to provide access to that area and complimented the County on the work it did down below for salmon restoration and habitat. For this particular issue he thought the best way to handle it would be to put a road in with no traffic, allow pedestrians access to see the canyon and enjoy the area, then should something happen to Humphrey Road, the road is there.

Chairman Thorn announced to the folks in attendance that if they had other questions or comments to send those in by e-mail, regular mail or fax and the Board would take them under consideration along with all the other materials and comments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

William F. Thorn, Chairman

Wm. L. McDowell, Member

Mike Shelton, Member

ATTEST:

Margaret Rosenkranz, Clerk of the Board