

Chronology: Willapa Estuarine Restoration Project

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- 1912                      Dike constructed along Willapa River fronting current project site.
- 1932                      US 101 constructed across current project site.
- December 1998           Local landowner contacts Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) about converting 400 acres of pastureland into a restored estuary environment through the Wetlands Protection Reserve program (WPR).
- March 1999                NRCS receives WPR application from landowner.
- June 1999                 NRCS receives WPR application from another local landowner to restore a neighboring 450 acres of pastureland.
- July 1999                 NRCS and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) host community meeting for seven neighboring landowners to explain WPR program. Six landowners submit applications. Concept of larger-scale estuary restoration project begins to take shape.
- August 1999              U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) contacted about by NRCS about potential project. FWS agrees to provide technical assistance and cost share funding through the National Coastal Program for estuarine wetlands restoration. FWS survey of the project area identifies the need to raise Highway 101 to protect it from flooding.
- November 1999           FWS and the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) discuss the potential for raising US 101 to protect it from flooding if the dikes are removed as part of this potential project.

April 2000	Five landowners accept NRCS offer to buy property for restoration efforts.
August 2000	WDFW secures property ownership (Fee Title) and NRCS secures wetland easements with willing sellers on five properties in project site.
August 2000	WDOT agrees to raise US 101 in project area as mitigation for other work in Pacific County. Ducks Unlimited agrees to assist NRCS on project.
Late 2000	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers becomes a partner in the development of the project through 1135 funding, which authorizes the Corps to restore historic fish and wildlife resources impacted by Corps projects. Dredging operations took place in the vicinity of the project site. .
Late 2000	NRCS provides information on the proposed project to Pacific County Commissioners.
April 2001	NRCS and WDFW hold a public informational meeting in South Bend to explain the proposed project. Meeting generates comments to elected officials from portions of the community.
May 2001	NRCS meets with representative from Congressman Baird to address community concerns.
Spring 2002	WDFW hires local consultant to provide community outreach, identify local issues and concerns. Consultant holds a series of local meetings in South Bend/Raymond area.
October 2002	After consideration of public comments Corps releases draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on proposed project for 90-day public comment period.

January 2003	Public comment period on draft EA closes.
January 2003	Formal Public Hearing in South Bend regarding Corps permit proposal related to proposed project. Public comment taken for the record.
March 2003	Project sponsors (NRCS,WDFW, FWS, WDOT, Corps, Ducks Unlimited) meet with elected officials (Cong. Baird, Sen. Hatfield, Sen. Doumit, Rep. Blake, Pacific County Commissioners) to discuss proposed project. Sponsors agree to modify the project to limit tidal access to below Highway 101.
August 2003	Sponsors meet with same elected officials (Sen. Doumit unable to attend) to explain revisions that address community concerns. Officials recognize sponsor's efforts to address community concerns.
November 2003	Sponsors hold informational public meeting in South Bend to explain modified project proposal.
June 2004	Sponsors submit Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) on revised project to Pacific County, State and Federal agencies to initiate process of acquiring local, state and Federal permits required to begin on the ground restoration work..