

South Shore Road Public Meeting

Tuesday, June 03, 2008

Meeting Goals:

- To inform the community of the issues surrounding South Shore Road
- To receive input from Guemes Island residents about possible solutions

What's wrong with South Shore Road?

South Shore Road sits atop an active feeder bluff and over the course of many years, tide cycles and wave action have slowly eroded the southern shoreline of Guemes Island at a rate of approximately 2.5 inches a year. This coastal erosion has begun to encroach on South Shore Road at 4 separate locations making the roadway unsafe for two-way travel. Skagit County Public Works is requesting input from the Guemes Island residents on what long term measures the County should take to ensure the safety of users of South Shore Road.

What is a feeder bluff?

A feeder bluff is a part of a natural geomorphic process called a drift cell. Drift cells are reaches of marine shore where sediment is transported from a feeding source (feeder bluff) to an accretion terminal (such as spits, points or bars) without significant interruption. This constant movement of sediment is important to the marine ecosystem and fish rearing habitat.

What has the County done?

Public Works is considering long term solutions that will protect South Shore Road for years to come. Currently, some temporary measures are in place to maintain a safe roadway including restricting travel to single lane traffic at and near the slide plain areas, reduction in speed limit to 25-mph. Truck traffic of 12,000 lbs or more has been restricted from using the roadway without a permit.

What are the issues facing a possible solution?

Many conceptual ideas have been considered but due to a number of restraints, many of the concepts were discarded early. Some of the restraints include the lack of available grant money and environmental impacts to wetlands and the feeder bluff. Grant money will be tough to secure for a road that receives such little average daily traffic. Retaining walls were considered to maintain what's left of the shoreline but it comes with a hefty price tag, monetarily and environmentally and would also require annual mitigation for the sediment lost from the feeder bluff.

Contact us!

If there is a solution you prefer or you have further questions about the South Shore Road issue, please let us know. You can mail this handout back with a drawing and description to us or give Ann Marie Gutwein, Forrest Jones, or Torey Nelson a call at (360) 336-9400.