

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Jon Hutchings
Director



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IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

December 9, 2016

The Whatcom County Public Works Department wishes to inform the public that Oat-Coles Road will be closed at the Swift Creek Bridge beginning Wednesday, December 14, 2016 and will remain closed indefinitely. Detour routes will be signed.

Recent high-intensity and long duration rainfall have caused sediment in Swift Creek to rise to the bottom elevation of the Oat-Coles Bridge. It is expected that the next significant rainfall will cause this creek to be impeded by the bridge and escape its channel. Public Works will be removing the bridge deck in order to allow Swift Creek to flow unimpeded.

Removing the bridge deck will likely cause Oat-Coles Road to be closed for two years or more pending a decision on a long-term sediment management and/or new bridge.

Attached is a Memorandum provided to the County Council during their December 6th, 2016 meeting providing additional information.

Questions regarding the road closure and bridge deck removal should be directed to James Lee at 360-778-6210.

Questions regarding Swift Creek management should be directed to Roland Middleton, 360-778-6212.

Below is a link to the **Notify Me**® page of the new County website.
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<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/List.aspx>

**WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC
WORKS DEPARTMENT**

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive and
Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

FROM: Jon Hutchings, Director

RE: Actions to mitigate flooding of Swift Creek at Oat-Coles Bridge

DATE: December 6, 2016

Problem. Recent high-intensity and long-duration rainfall has caused (1) water to pond on Oat-Coles Road and (2) sediment in the lower reaches of Swift Creek to aggrade very quickly. The sediment will soon rise above the lower chord of the Oat-Coles Bridge and block the creek, spilling the asbestos-containing bedload into the roadway, filling roadside ditches, and inundating adjacent properties. Public Works must prevent release of the sediment from the stream channel.

Actions.

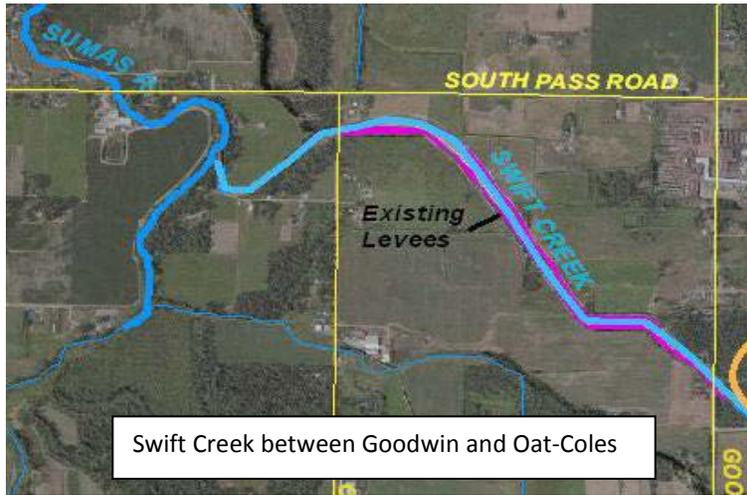
- ✓ Sign the road for high water.
- ✓ Relieve the immediate overflow problem by dredging below the bridge.
- Meet with the Flood Control Subzone during the next two weeks to prepare for likely blockage of the bridge.
- Prepare press release and other public notification.
- At the next high water over the road – close it for the duration of high water.
- At the next high water and likely creek overtop – close the bridge and place traffic/containment barriers.
- When the creek overtop is imminent, pull the deck.

Implications. Removing the bridge deck will likely cause Oat-Coles Road to be closed for two years or more pending a decision on long-term sediment management and/or a new bridge.

Next Steps. An update on the long-term management decision is presently intended for the February, 2017 Surface Water Work Session.

Please contact Roland Middleton at extension 6212 if you have further questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Enclosure (Photos, Expenditures)



Photos taken November 30, 2016