

OVERVIEW

The City of Bellingham (City), American Rivers (AR), and supporting partners are implementing a multi-benefit project on the Middle Fork Nooksack River. The project aims to improve fish passage for three ESA-listed Puget Sound threatened anadromous fish species by removing the diversion dam while maintaining water supply diversion at the site. The project is now in the construction phase, with the Notice to Proceed issued on January 2, 2020. In-water work began June 1, 2020 and is scheduled for completion on September 30, 2020.

THIS MONTH

- **Construction Activities**
 - 22 O. mykiss were relocated during dewatering of the fish bypass outfall work area. A total of 58 O. mykiss were relocated during fish salvage efforts associated with dewatering of the four in-river construction areas.
 - Approximately 95 percent of channel restoration was completed, including channel regrading and construction of six boulder jams. Water was reintroduced to portions of the restored channel in phases. Fish can now volitionally migrate through the project reach.
 - Fish bypass outfall work area isolation, water lowering, and defishing was completed. Fish bypass outfall construction commenced.
 - In-water and upland work continues for the municipal diversion facility. Concrete placement at the intake foundation work occurred on August 24, with the initial segment of water supply pipe placed on August 31.
 - A small area of sediment contaminated with petroleum compounds was discovered buried beneath river grade upstream of the removed dam during channel restoration work. The source of the aged petroleum is assumed to be from construction of the original dam and tunnel in the late 1950's. The contaminated substrate was excavated from the river subgrade and hauled to a regulated soil disposal facility. Whatcom Environmental Services performed sampling and testing to document the complete removal of the contaminated sediment. The City is continuing to work with Whatcom Environmental and the Department of Ecology on reporting of this issue in accordance with applicable regulations.
- **Outreach**
 - The project received ample media coverage highlighting dam demolition. A list of links to news articles is available [here](#).
- **Funding –**
 - The City was notified of a pending grant award related to [Pacific Salmon Treaty \(PST\) funding](#) of ~\$2M awarded by NOAA through RCO. This key funding completes the anticipated external funding for the project, and we thank the project partners that provided support and assistance in securing this funding.

- **Monitoring**
 - The City awarded a contract to NHC for initial physical effectiveness monitoring. Initial physical effectiveness monitoring includes as-built surveys, model development, and surveys to be conducted next year after high flows this fall and winter. This monitoring is primarily funded by the City, with funding assistance from NOAA's Restoration Center through the Community-Based Restoration Program.

SEPTEMBER 2020

- A small amount of left bank channel restoration will be completed with removal of the fish bypass outfall work area cofferdam. Completion of this work represents completion of channel restoration and the majority of work in the wetted channel.
- All river flow will be allowed into the fully restored channel.
- Fish bypass outfall construction will be completed in September.
- Work on the municipal diversion system Intake, water supply pipeline, and fish screen structure will continue throughout September.

Additional project information, including all project monthly updates and construction photographs, can be found at the project [webpage](#).