

**Swinomish Tribal Community
Submitted to:
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Tribal Landowner Incentive Program**

FY 2004

**Project: Fornsby Creek/Smokehouse Floodplain Tidal Wetland
Restoration.**

Grantee: Swinomish Tribal Community
PO Box 368
11426 Moorage Way
LaConner, WA. 98257

Contact: Steve Hinton
Program Director
360-466-7243
shinton@skagitcoop.org

Project Summary

The Fornsby Creek/Smokehouse Floodplain tidal wetland restoration project is a fish passage and habitat restoration project located along the Swinomish Channel of the Skagit River delta. The site was once an expansive estuarine emergent marsh over 900 acres in size (Collins & Sheilk, 2002). Hydraulic modifications including installation of flap-style tide gates converted this emergent marsh to arable uplands. The modern site still contains a significant network of remnant slough channels, albeit simplified by decades of agriculture. These remnant channels are presently influenced by small freshwater tributary streams and seeps but isolated from tidal influence.

The project proposes to replace existing impassible tide gates with self-regulating tide gates (SRT's). Tide gate replacement will restore tidal influence to the channels, enable fish passage, and increase the amount of available blind channel, distributary, and tributary habitat for all salmonid species. Allowing a wide range of tidal influence to interact with the remnant channels' freshwater flows on the floodplain will create estuary-type freshwater/salt water mixing zones. These mixing zones are critical rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids. The project will also implement habitat restoration actions on 1.3 miles of the re-opened channel habitat. We are also proposing to acquire over 40 acres of permanent conservation easements on lands currently in agricultural production. In total, the project will re-open more than five miles of channel to fish and improve over 70 acres of aquatic habitat.