



Towne Road

Project Overview and Cost Summary

ABSTRACT

An overview of a 15-year project along the Dungeness River consisting of the relocation of Towne Road and setback of the US Army Corps of Engineers levee.

Todd Mielke

County Administrator
Clallam County
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Towne Road is an historic road in eastern Clallam County that generally runs 2.8 miles north from Old Olympic Highway to the Dungeness community and 3 Crabs neighborhood. The northernmost segment (0.8 miles long) was located in the historic lower Dungeness floodplain, on the eastern edge of the Dungeness River, and was protected from flooding by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levee constructed in 1964. Since the early 2000's, the road has been listed in the County's Transportation Improvement Plan for a "rebuild" – consisting of resurfacing and potentially reconstruction – and was labeled as not meeting County standards. The rebuild of the northern segment was estimated to cost \$800,000 from the County's Road Fund. This amount was considered a "placeholder", and it was anticipated that additional funding from Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) would be needed to complete the project. The additional funding from REET was estimated at approximately \$400,000, for a total project cost of approximately \$1,200,000. Adjusted for inflation, the total amount would be approximately \$2,133,000 in 2025 dollars.

By 2008, momentum began building around a concept to realign levees and restore wetlands in the lower Dungeness floodplain. The original levee was nearing the end of its design life and provided a reduced level of protection for the community against flooding. It was built close to the Dungeness River and winter flood flows in this reach of the river could be rapid enough to result in degraded fish habitat, impacting salmon redds. Salmon were listed as "Threatened" in 1999.

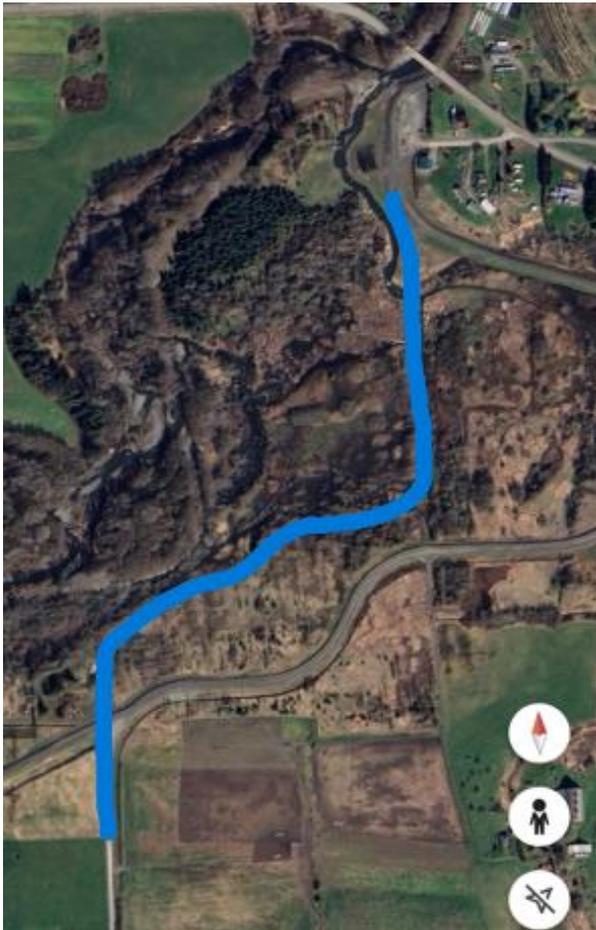
In recognition of the variability and potential for high volume winter flooding, the intent was to mitigate potential flooding consistent with regional hazard mitigation plans. The project would expand and restore wetlands to handle more winter flood flows and reduce the threat of flooding to adjacent property owners. It was to improve habitat and thereby increase bird and aquatic life. It was also intended to improve salmon runs. The project would include relocating 0.8 miles of the Corps-authorized levee and the adjacent section of Towne Road. In short, the objective of the project was to reduce flood risk and improve salmon habitat by reconnecting the river to the floodplain, and to relocate a road [Towne Road] out of the floodplain.

One Project Becomes Three

By 2009, two initial co-occurring projects began to form, with both being influenced by the other. The two projects consisted of the rebuilding of a section of Towne Road and the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration project. At this time the levee relocation did not extend further south since landowners willing to sell their property did not include the Dungeness Valley Creamery or their southern neighbors. A third project took shape later in the process, around 2018-2019 consisting of the realignment of the "upper" or southern portion of the levee known as the River's Edge Levee. Some people would say the realignment of the upper levee, the realignment of the "lower" or northern levee, and the wetlands restoration should all be considered as components of the Lower Dungeness Floodplain project. However, since the different projects had different sponsors,

sources of funding, and were subject to different permitting processes, I would resist this categorization and proceed with considering this effort as three separate projects.

The rebuild, and now relocation, of Towne Road was a county project. It was originally to be funded primarily by County funds – the Road Fund, REET, and any other available funding sources associated with road construction. The County would be the applicant for all permits and other than some components being subject to permitting by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to its proximity to wetlands and the Dungeness River, it was a typical road project. Of the three projects, this was anticipated to be the final project to be completed. The assumption for the Towne Road project cost, since it was now to be relocated due to the realignment of the Corps levee, was that it would be more expensive than originally anticipated. It was hoped that grant funding could be identified, and the original funding -- \$800,000 from the Road Fund and \$400,000 from REET – could be used as ‘matching funds’ for the grant funding. This project needed to be closely coordinated with the levee setback, and any decisions regarding the other two projects would influence the location, design, and ultimately the cost of the road project. It’s also important to note the Towne Road project was originally anticipated to be designed consistent with other county roads – without pedestrian sidewalks or pathways; and most noteworthy -- without any extraordinary environmental protection measures beyond a standard roadway.



At left is the Lower Dungeness Floodplain. The blue line represents the approximate location of the original northernmost segment of Towne Road prior to its relocation on top of the re-aligned lower

The second project was the Lower Dungeness Floodplain restoration project. It was comprised of setting back 0.8 miles of the Corps levee, adding floodplain features, and planting native vegetation. This was primarily a state priority project that was to be largely funded by the State of Washington, from a number of grants through the Department of Ecology and the Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office. The US Fish & Wildlife Service also provided funding through the Department of Ecology. Of the three projects, this project would be the most complex and most expensive. It would be the “centerpiece”, and the other two projects would be designed to complement this one. While the State was the primary funder, the project was initially managed and coordinated by the Corps of Engineers, from 2009 through 2016. This project was anticipated to have multiple phases and required coordination between federal, state, county, and tribal governments. It was considered highly complex and would cost millions to complete.



The orange dashed line represents the original location of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers “lower” levee which was to be moved further away from the Dungeness River (depicted in blue) to allow for increased Winter flows and prevent flooding of adjacent parcels. The red line shows the original location of Towne Road.

The third project was the realignment of the upper levee, or the River’s Edge Levee. This project became possible when in 2018, landowners at the upstream end of the levee chose to sell their

property. The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe took the lead on this element of the floodplain restoration. Like all funding sources, it is presumed there were deadlines for utilization of the funds. Permitting for this project was directly through the Corps of Engineers. This project was considered the “Holy Grail” by some because it would reconnect an original flood channel and critical fish habitat that had been disconnected from the floodplain and Dungeness River by the construction of the 1964 levee.



The blue line depicts the location of the original 1964 upper “River’s Edge” levee.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for this ‘consortium’ of projects was there was no ‘single’ budget for the combined projects. Not only did each of the three projects have their own funding amounts and sources, but within each project, each major phase had its own budget with dedicated funding that could only be used for specific purposes. For the Lower Dungeness Floodplain phase, it ultimately consisted of nine separate grants, with each grant having its own budget and deliverables.

The Project Officially Begins

The Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project formally began in 2009 by the Corps of Engineers. The focus initially was on the planning, pre-design, and design of the project. This work resulted in identifying three potential alternatives for the layout of the project.

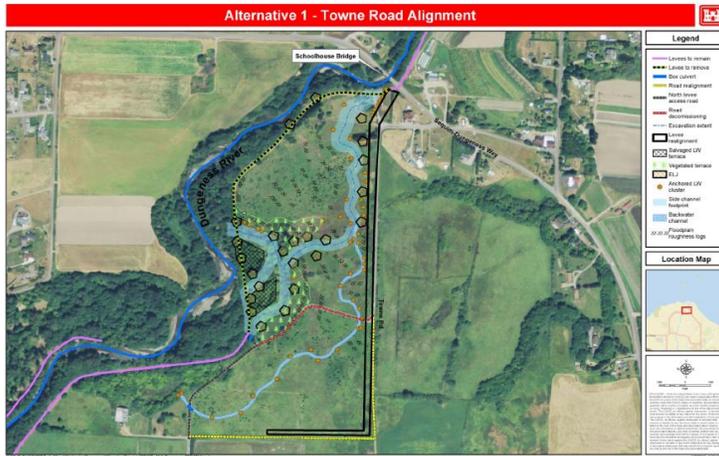


Figure 3-1. Alternative 1: Towne Road Alignment

Alternative 1 proposed a levee essentially with a north-south orientation and a 90-degree bend to the west at the southern end of the levee. Towne Road would remain on the landward side of the levee.

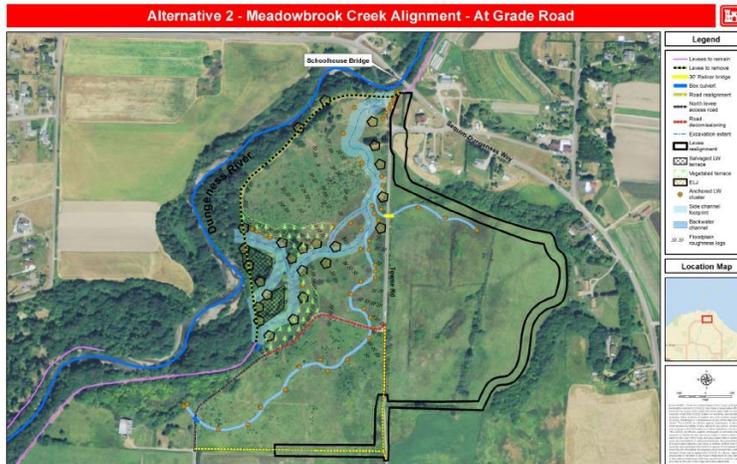


Figure 3-2. Alternative 2: Meadowbrook Creek Alignment - At-Grade Road

Alternative 2 proposed moving the alignment of the levee to the east along Meadowbrook Creek. It removed a section of Towne Road and realigned the remainder so that it was to be elevated with floodplain located on both sides. Having the road bisect the floodplain was later dismissed as an option.

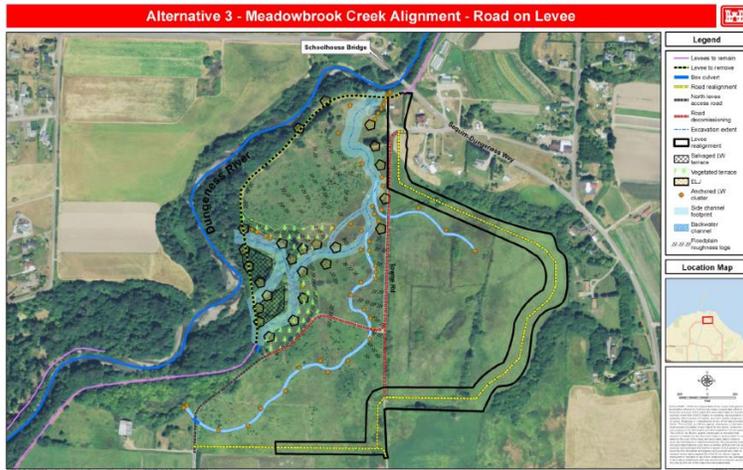


Figure 3-3. Alternative 3: Meadowbrook Creek Alignment – Road on Levee

Alternative 3 was a variation of Alternative 2. It maintained the placement of the levee along the western border of Meadowbrook Creek and placed Towne Road on top of the levee. It removed all segments of Towne Road from the floodplain. This option assumed the northern terminus of Towne Road near the Old Schoolhouse. A later version would create a connection to E. Anderson/Sequim Dungeness Way.

Funding for the early stages of this project consisted of the following grant sources in the specified amounts:

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount	Used
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Acquisition II Grant #09-1543A Purpose: land acquisition, relocation of buildings & infrastructure	\$575,000	\$472,841
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Floodplain Restoration Grant #C110084 Purpose: planning & design	\$50,000	\$47,802
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Floodplain Construction Grant #G-1600011 Purpose: planning & design	\$2,386,867.54	(all)
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Setback Levee Grant #G-1400671 Purpose: levee design	\$1,519,014	(all)
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Lower Dungeness Grant #14-1382P Purpose: design	\$1,200,000	(all)

Most of the money from these early grants reimbursed the Corps of Engineers for their staff time invested in the planning, pre-design, and design of the project. In pursuing the preferred Alternative 3, the County also applied for and received a grant from the Washington Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO grant) to purchase land necessary for pursuing the plan plus the relocation and/or demolition of buildings, utilities, and the removal of infrastructure (septic systems, etc.).

Transfer of Project Lead

In 2016, the Corps of Engineers decided to withdraw as project lead for the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration project. The lead designation transitioned to Clallam County with elements of the project now being coordinated between the Clallam County Department of Community Development, led by an elected Director, and the Clallam County Public Works Department (including the Road Division) overseen by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The County continued pursuit of the design of the project and began seeking grant funding to complete the design work and cover the cost of construction. The focus of the funding requests was with the Department of Ecology to utilize “Floodplains by Design” grant funding for the floodplain restoration and to mitigate against hazards – namely flooding. Additionally, efforts were made to pursue funding from the Washington Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) as well as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for restoration of wetlands and fish habitat.

Nothing Stays the Same

The overall project lasted more than 15 years – 2009-2024. During that time, there were numerous changes in the three individual projects which changed the design and potential cost implications for each project. Changes in scope or timing of any major element in any of the projects could impact the other projects.

For the upper (River’s Edge) levee, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe had an opportunity to purchase additional land, allowing them to move the levee further back from the Dungeness River. This created the need to revise the County’s setback levee design pertaining to where the upper levee would tie into the lower levee.

Impacting the design of the lower levee, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) purchased property in this vicinity to serve as a wetland mitigation bank to offset impacts from road projects in the region. Any design for the floodplain restoration would need to be coordinated with WSDOT so as not to interfere with the function of its wetland.

As referenced earlier, one of the original alternatives proposed Towne Road traversing an elevated pathway on the river side of the levee (see Alternative 2 on Page 6). This concept was ultimately abandoned and the design focus shifted to placing the road on top of the levee, understanding all the design elements that would need to be incorporated into the road project.

Additionally, there was a walking path and parking lot initially proposed on the riverside of the levee. Similar to the concerns of placing Towne Road on the inside of the levee, there were concerns with

placing a walking trail on the inside of the levee – from both a public safety and environmental protection perspective.

Each of these items required the input of stakeholders of all three projects, design modifications, and consultation with regulators who ultimately issued permits approving the project.

Final Preparation for Construction

By 2017, it appeared the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project was on track. The County was awarded the following grants for the project:

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (via Dept of Ecology) Purpose: 4 Side Channels	\$980,000
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Floodplain Restoration Grant #16-1372R Purpose: Construction	\$6,046,868
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains By Design Floodplain Construction Grant #OTGP-2021-ClCoCD-00066 Purpose: Floodplain/Levee Construction	\$7,114,132.46
TOTAL	\$14,141,000.46

The project design still needed to be completed, permits needed to be finalized, and any additional mitigation necessary to meet the requirements of the permits would need to be incorporated into the final cost estimates. These costs would be in addition to the actual cost of construction.

In 2018, landowners to the south of the Dungeness Valley Creamery indicated a willingness to sell, creating the basis for the River’s Edge setback levee. Clallam County did not have the funds necessary to make this purchase, but the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe in partnership with the North Olympic Land Trust were able to combine funding to move forward with the purchase. They were also able to provide the Dungeness Valley Creamery the opportunity to acquire some of that land to provide better pasture in exchange for land closer to the floodplain project. With these land purchases, the Tribe was able to proceed with designing and constructing the River’s Edge setback levee.

In 2019, the focus was on formalizing the project – completing engineering designs, updating cost estimates, and confirming funding was in place. The Lower Dungeness Floodplain Fund for Clallam County’s management of the project was formally created.

As part of discussions in 2019 regarding a preliminary schedule, it was estimated that construction of the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration project would commence in 2022, and that the current levees could be breached once the setback levees were in place. HOWEVER...this timeline was dependent upon receiving final permit approvals necessary to proceed and receiving an acceptable bid price. Both the Tribe’s project and the County’s project had their own permitting processes. For the County, the Towne Road project and the levee underneath it were permitted as part of one project.

While discussions in 2019 anticipated commencing construction in 2022 (and breaching the current levees), nothing anticipated the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the resulting impacts on virtually every aspect of the economy – and this project. Contractors and engineering firms that would normally be available to provide professional services, cost estimates, and bids on work were shut down. Many government employees necessary to process permit reviews and approvals were no longer working in agency offices.

During the COVID “shutdown”, the County was successful in applying for, and receiving, an additional grant critical to the completion of the project. In 2021, it received the following grant:

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Floodplain Construction Grant #16-1372R (added to above grant) Purpose: Construction	\$2,800,000
TOTAL OF “CONSTRUCTION” GRANTS (for engineering, permits, & construction)	\$16,941,000.46

With this grant, it appeared the finances of the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project were falling into place. The planned sequence of the 0.8-mile-long County project was to be Phase I comprised of the area east of Towne Road, followed by a separately bid Phase 2 for work west of Towne Road.

Once this funding had been identified, the County contracted with Scarsella Brothers, Inc. for Phase I work. Construction started in September of 2021 to construct certain portions of the setback levee. That work, labeled as Phase I, was anticipated to be concluded by mid-Fall of 2022. But Mother Nature had other plans... The Fall of 2021 became a LaNina year with record-setting floods throughout the region. Anticipated construction activities were delayed.

Additionally, with an Engineer’s Estimate for construction costs to complete the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project (considered Phase 2) – including connecting to the Tribe’s levee and the remaining portion of the Corps levee; excavating the flood return channel; adding floodplain

features; and relocating Towne Road – of approximately \$10.5 million (not including engineering and permitting), the County advertised for bids for the Phase 2 project early 2022.

Unfortunately, and to the disappointment of those involved in the project, bids for construction came back much higher – \$13,817,360.82 total (nearly \$3.3 million higher) – than the Engineer’s Estimate for that portion of the project. Some would point to a lower-than-expected number of bidders on the project (“1”) due to the after-effects of COVID when many contractors were still struggling to ramp back up. It was difficult to hire employees and there continued to be supply chain struggles that inflated the cost of materials. Ultimately due to County fiscal policy and the magnitude of being over the Engineer’s Estimate, the County was put in a position to reject the solo bid and instead, complete the flood protection work via change order to Phase I and then bid a separate project for road work.

Upper Levee Breached – Construction Begins

In the Spring of 2022, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe breached the upper portion of the original 1964 Corps levee following completion of the River’s Edge levee but prior to the completion of the County’s Phase 2 work. There have been repeated requests to know why this happened. Perhaps it was based on the 2019 discussion in which 2022 was identified as the target date for completion of the new setback levees – a date discussed prior to COVID and its impacts, prior to knowing the permitting process would take longer than expected, or that the single bid received for construction would be much higher than anticipated. It could be attributed to the timeline for the Tribe to meet its obligations. Or, it could be there was a breakdown in communications – the former elected Director of the Department of Community Development transitioned to spending significant time out of state during COVID and the sitting County Engineer suddenly retired. Any conclusion as to why the breach occurred would be pure speculation...

Regardless of the reasons, the breach of the levee opened up large areas of the former floodplain – including existing homes, roads, and other improvements – to substantial risk of flooding.

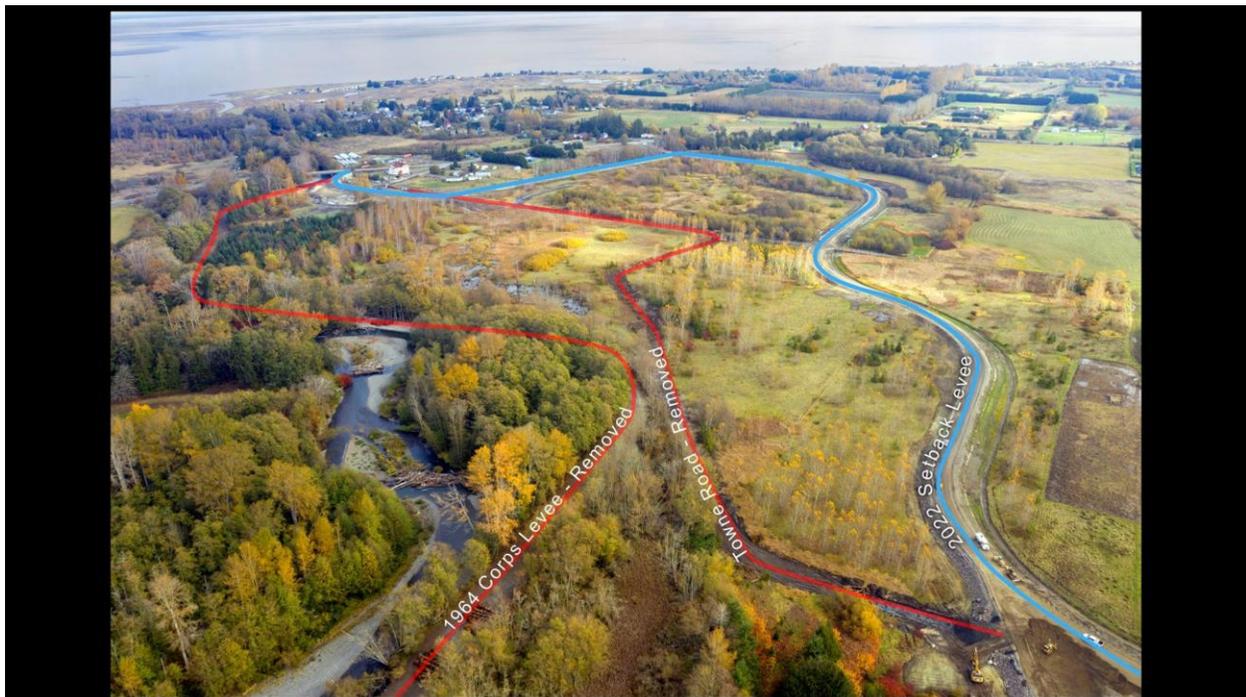
In response to the breach of the upper levee, the BOCC declared an emergency on August 2, 2022, to address the issue. The declaration recognized that action needed to commence immediately to prevent flooding in the region during peak flows of Winter 2022/Spring 2023. It also allowed the County to expedite contracts under state law. As will be discussed later in this report, it DOES NOT appear that this declaration caused the project to incur additional expense – it appears it expedited work that was already anticipated as part of the project.

As part of its response, the County chose to move project elements identified as Phase II- construction of the project to the Phase I-construction portion of the project. For example, the County already had in place a contract with Scarsella Bros. to do Phase I construction work

involving levee and channelization work in the floodplain. It exercised a “Change Order” to change that scope of the Phase I construction contract to complete the tie in of the setback levee to the River’s Edge levee and the remainder of the Corps levee, to remove old Towne Road, and to excavate the flood return channel in the amount of \$4,162,212.50. This work served to increase the capacity of the floodplain and direct water to lower the risk of flooding. It was work that was already contemplated in the construction phase of the project.

Additionally, it is important to note the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe participated in addressing the potential impacts of breaching the upper levee. They assumed the task of removing the existing lower levee, which would have been the responsibility of the County under the original proposal. This was done at no cost to the County. The value of this work is estimated at more than \$1 million.

By the end of 2022, multiple projects were underway. With the expedited timeline for certain elements, many of those elements of the project had to run concurrently rather than consecutively. The old levee was being removed; the construction of the flood return channel was near completion, the wetland restoration was well underway, the new levee was substantially completed (in December), and the old Towne Road was being decommissioned and removed.



Picture depicting the locations of the 1964 Corps of Engineers levee, the original location of Towne Road as it was being removed, and the new setback levee location.



Picture of the restored wetland and the location of the new setback levee (prior to the construction of the new Towne Road) during winter (2022/2023) high water flow.

2023 – Navigating Adversity!

The challenges of 2023 began at the end of 2022.

During the removal of the old Towne Road, more contamination than was indicated by borings was discovered in the roadbed. Many materials used in the construction of roads that have been in existence for decades have since been determined to be pollutants. The mitigation called for the removal of the contaminated material. This cost – ultimately determined to be approximately \$1.1 million – would typically be the responsibility of the Road Fund and would have significantly increased the total cost of Towne Road by the amount of the mitigation. By the Spring of 2023, there was no identified source of funding to cover this cost, except the County's Road Fund.

With the discovery of the contamination under Towne Road, the completion of surfacing the levee was put on hold until a funding source for the contamination remediation could be identified. This meant the Floodplains By Design grant for \$7,114,132.46 still had unspent funds and the deadline to use the funding was fast approaching and set to expire on June 30th. There was a significant risk that the project would be stalled further, the deadline would come, and the project would be short of funds.

Also in the Spring of 2023, there was an Engineer's Estimate of \$1.82 million to construct the new Towne Road on top of the levee. There was a desire to go out for bid in an effort to complete the road project before the end of 2023.

During this time of uncertainty, there were ongoing discussions with the Department of Ecology attempting to identify funding to address the discovered road contamination. Initially, Ecology recommended pursuing a "DOE Voluntary Clean-up Grant" in the amount of \$300,000, noting that it was not enough to cover the cost of the mitigation. But the timeline to apply for the grant and when it was to be awarded still meant the failure to meet the deadline for the larger Floodplains By Design construction grant.

With this uncertainty, the BOCC, in a unanimous 3-0 vote, decided to pause the reconstruction of Towne Road until funding could be confirmed and adequate public input was received. Since the road project was stalled and the levee had not been constructed to safely handle vehicle traffic, the levee was gated to prevent regular vehicle traffic and potential liability to the County.

As 2023 progressed, a few more issues came into play.

The Department of Ecology agreed to change the scope of its grant to Clallam County for \$7,114,132.46 (for floodplain construction) to include the road contamination mitigation as an eligible expense to be funded from this grant. This meant that approximately \$1.1 million of this grant could be used for the environmental mitigation cost associated with decommissioning the old Towne Road. If the County had not been successful in securing this change of scope from the Department of Ecology, approximately \$1.1 million of unspent grant funding under this expiring grant would have been lost, placing the burden of funding on the County's Road Fund. This change of scope in this grant meant the County's Road Department would not have to reprioritize other goals and projects in order to absorb these additional costs.

For the new Towne Road, two issues surfaced that further added complexity to this project. First, with the Lower Dungeness Floodplain on one side of the proposed road, and Meadowbrook Creek on the other side, the design for the road would need to incorporate catch basins with the ability to treat stormwater (ultimately utilizing CAVFS technology) – something no other county road incorporates. Additionally, while the project had been paused, new information mainly associated with urban watersheds was surfacing regarding 6PPD-quinone coming from tire particulates and its potential impact to coho salmon. EPA was in the process of drafting guidelines, and regulatory agencies involved in the permitting of this project were unsure how the new guidelines were to be incorporated into the permitting (or denial of permits) for the project.

During this time that financial and regulatory matters were being sorted out and the levee remained mostly gated to prevent vehicle traffic, the number of citizens who began utilizing the top of the new

levee exclusively as a recreational trail and observation point for the restored wetland in the Fall of 2022 continued to grow. Ultimately, a petition was presented to the Board of County Commissioners in the Spring of 2023 requesting the permanent closure of Towne Road and to leave it as a recreational trail. In response, advocates to re-establish Towne Road lobbied the commissioners to complete the road and re-open it.

Throughout the month of August and into September (2023), the BOCC received continuous correspondence on the issue and every week during the public comment period during Commissioner meetings, people lined up to advocate their position. Views ranged from environmental protection of fish and wetland habitat, providing a trail for recreational use, protecting adjacent agricultural uses, providing access to emergency services, limiting traffic and reducing speeds, maintaining a tsunami evacuation route, maintaining a transportation network, and simply following through on a promise to re-open the road.

By early September of 2023, the Board of County Commissioners advocated for a public process to determine a path forward.

Finding a Resolution to Towne Road

With public interest and the diversity of opinion escalating, the BOCC, Department of Community Development Director Bruce Emery, and County Engineer Joe Donisi advocated for pursuing a public meeting in the form of a “town hall” meeting to present alternatives and hear public thoughts and comments regarding those alternatives. The meeting was scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, and was held at the Guy Cole Event Center in Sequim. Meeting notices were provided to all landowners within one mile of the Old Dungeness Schoolhouse property, posted on the County’s website, and advertised in the Peninsula Daily News and the Sequim Gazette.

At the meeting, Director Emery presented four alternatives:

- Construct a two-lane (10-foot lanes, 4-foot shoulders) road to connect existing Towne Road to East Anderson Road. Engineer’s Estimated Cost = \$3.909M
- Construct a two-lane road and separate 6-foot trail surface. Given the limited 32 feet available, the road would include 10-foot-wide lanes with 1-foot shoulders, and 2-foot guard rails. Engineer’s Estimated Cost = \$3.751M
- Construct a one-lane, 16-foot road surface (southbound) and a 12-foot-wide pedestrian trail surface. Engineer’s Estimated Cost = \$3.082M
- Construct a pedestrian trail surface centered on the levee. This option would require the accommodation for a single-use driveway access to accommodate an existing landowner. Engineer’s Estimated Cost = \$0.754M

The meeting was well attended, and people were provided with an opportunity to submit their views by way of comment cards. Additionally, people were invited to submit comments through October 10th. By the end of the October 10th comment deadline, a total of 413 hand-written or e-mailed comments had been received concerning the four alternatives.

Throughout the remainder of the Fall of 2023, citizens continued to write and testify before the BOCC advocating for their personal views on the project, with many asking for either a “road only” or “trail only” outcome. With this continued lobbying by both sides, the opposing side believed the BOCC remained open to how the project would ultimately be resolved.

The Department of Community Development compiled a report (November 29, 2023) for discussion with the Commissioners during their December 4, 2023, Work Session.

The Report identified that, although the single-most supported alternative was Alternative 4 (trail only alternative, 45% support), the majority of respondents favored some kind of configuration involving a two-lane road, whether it be a road exclusively (supported by 34%) or a road and trail facility (supported by 17%). The Report recommended Alternative 2 be adopted by the Commissioners. The recommendation cited eight findings in support of the Alternative. At the end of the Work Session, the Commissioners accepted the Department’s recommendation and directed staff in the Department of Community Development and the Road Department to prepare a plan to implement the recommendation.

Alternative #2 Findings

- **Concerns regarding public safety – particularly those expressed by Fire District 3, are compelling. Deliberately ignoring these concerns increases risk to area residents.**
- **Concerns regarding Tsunami evacuation are also compelling. While Towne Road is not currently designated a formal tsunami evacuation route, it has nevertheless been suggested by Clallam County Emergency Management that any and all possible routes could expand safety of evacuees during an emergency event by providing additional egress opportunities. Liquefaction created by significant earthquake events or mere traffic congestion could render designated escape routes ineffective, making alternative routes vital.**
- **The quality recreational experience provided in the past year by the new levee surface is apparent. But exclusive recreational use is already available at the North Levee and River’s Edge Levee portions. It would be a missed opportunity not to provide a nexus between these two facilities via the Towne Road Levee portion – especially given the additional surface-expansion techniques described earlier.**

Alternative #2 Findings (con't)

- **The selection of Alternative 2 achieves the commitment for the replacement of Towne Road agreed to in 2015, while recognizing the unique recreational opportunity favored by a substantial number of constituents. In short, it strikes the right balance.**
- **Alternatives 3 and 4 create an ongoing commitment for the monitoring, enforcement, and maintenance of a gate system that restricts public vehicle access, while allowing for private driveway access and limited farm equipment access.**
- **Alternative 1 fails to recognize and reasonably accommodate non-vehicle use of the levee surface. A clear and accessible alternative exists to accommodate both interests with minimal compromise.**
- **Concerns expressed regarding impacts to fish and wildlife are addressed through the extensive stormwater treatment improvements required as part of the County's permits for the project. Deferring traffic to Ward Road, Sequim-Dungeness Way or other roads in the vicinity means additional traffic will be experienced on these road surfaces with no additional mitigation for related environmental impacts.**
- **Maintaining regional access throughout Clallam County makes sense from a future planning standpoint. While existing roads may currently provide adequate service, deferring additional traffic to other roads means the time horizon in which these roads begin to fail to provide adequate levels of service is shortened. Maintaining the existing road network is important to future levels of service and for meeting the increased demand of future development.**

In December of 2023, some citizens stated concern that the Commissioners had not taken “formal” action committing the County to a specific alternative, even though they had accepted the recommendation of the DCD Director and directed staff to come back with a plan to implement the recommendation. Before the end of the month, the BOCC unanimously passed a resolution adopting the combined “road and trail” option as the preferred alternative. At that meeting, the target date for opening the new Towne Road was set for the “end of the 2024 construction season”.

Refining the Plan for Towne Road

Based on the definition of the alternative presented to citizens that included both a road and pedestrian trail, the original design anticipated a crowned road that would allow stormwater to drain off both sides. This would mean there would need to be catch basins on both sides of the road with treatment technologies incorporated into the design. With the 6PPD-quinone issue on the minds of regulators, it was unclear which treatment technology would need to be utilized.

Before proceeding too far into the final engineering of the road and pedestrian trail, the top of the levee needed to be surveyed to see if it had a consistent width throughout its length and to determine whether settling had occurred and additional grading was needed to create the desired, consistent elevation. As a result of the survey, it was determined that some sections of the levee were wider than anticipated. County engineering staff also proposed a “mono-slope” design versus a crowned road design. This would allow all stormwater drainage to collect on only one side of the road, eliminating the need for expensive catch basins, underground piping, and expensive treatment facilities related thereto. This also meant incorporating a guardrail on only one side, meaning lane width and the width of the pedestrian trail could be optimized.

The cost implications of this change in design were substantial. Under the crowned road assumption – not including the cost of curbing to separate the road from the pedestrian trail nor the treatment technology for the catch basins (ultimately determined to be the CAVFS system – Compost-Amended Vegetated Filter Strip) – the Engineer’s Estimate was \$3.1 to \$3.2 million. By converting to the mono-slope design – again without the curbing or CAVFS – the revised Engineer’s Estimate was \$2,503,000. This produced a savings of \$600,000 - \$700,000.

As referenced above, the BOCC was interested in making the pedestrian trail as safe as possible, recognizing that vehicle traffic would be immediately adjacent to the trail. There was also recognition that most county roads do not have an area dedicated to pedestrians or bicyclists. It was concluded that the design should include a 6” curb to separate vehicle traffic from pedestrians, and that the trail would be elevated by 6” to be even with the top of the curb.

Clallam County took a risk on the construction of Towne Road. With a slight amendment to its existing permit with the Corps of Engineers to reflect the mono-grade road design, it initiated construction of the road under its old permit – which had received complete approval by the Corps. The old permit did not include final approval for the CAVFS stormwater treatment technology. Initiating construction on the road surface concurrently with resolving the selection of treatment technology greatly improved the chances of reopening Towne Road by the end of 2024. This was especially true since there was ongoing debate between stakeholders and regulators regarding which technology represented “best available science”. With that debate, there was no predictable timeframe for when the “new” permits would be issued and with that, it was highly unlikely that

construction would have been completed in 2024 had the County waited for the second permit to be issued prior to starting road and trail construction.

Ultimately, the Washington Department of Ecology provided documentation that endorsed the CAVFS system as the best available science. With that documentation, the Corps of Engineers issued the second, and final, permit for Towne Road.

Summary

Towne Road was re-opened on October 8, 2024. The three separate projects – the Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project (including the relocation of the lower levee), the River’s Edge Levee Project (the relocation of the upper levee), and the relocation of Towne Road – not only met their objectives but also provided the region with more benefits than original plans contemplated. The relocation of the levees into a continuous levee has greatly enhanced protections against high winter flows and the potential for flooding. The expansion and restoration of the floodplain, and reconnecting the river to more than 175 acres of floodplain, has improved wildlife habitat – and that presence of wildlife continues to grow. The projects have slowed the flow of the Dungeness River, resulting in better salmon and fish habitat. The local community is now using the shore of the river near the Old Schoolhouse more than ever as a recreational location to enjoy the outdoors since access to the river has improved.

Towne Road has re-opened, restoring a piece of the transportation network and an evacuation route if needed. First and foremost, it is a better road than the one it replaced. Its re-opening also provides access for first responders. But the new Towne Road is now providing more amenities than the original road, and more than the original plans included. The road includes a designated pedestrian and bicycle path, not typical of most county roads. The road includes a 6” curb for better separation of vehicular and non-vehicular uses allowing the path to be elevated flush with the top of the curb. Unlike many county roads, the road includes a full-length guardrail and stormwater treatment technology to protect a nearby stream not used anywhere else in the county.

When it comes to the budget of the project, specifically for Towne Road, claims of it “costing taxpayers an additional estimated \$10 million” or that the breaching of the old levee created an additional cost of over \$4 million are simply unfounded. As denoted in the attached Towne Road Project Budget, the relocation and construction of Towne Road utilized \$105,021.44 LESS from the County Road Fund than estimated in 2002 to simply rebuild the road at its original location. If adjusted for inflation, the savings are even higher. The ability to use a state grant to remediate the contamination under the old Towne Road saved Clallam County’s Road Fund \$1.1 million.

The County’s General Fund provided ‘working capital’ to this project in the total amount of \$5,421,118 from 2019-2025. Of this amount, \$5,287,505 was repaid to the General Fund for these working capital advances, which includes the \$311,505 reimbursement to be booked to the General Fund now that the final retainage from the RCO grant has been received. This leaves a

remaining balance of \$133,613 of unpaid working capital advances. But the County was able to bill indirect costs to the various grants amounting to 10% to 30% of salaries and benefits depending on the grant. Additionally, the County incurs “sunken” costs – costs for salaries and benefits of certain positions whether the County would have pursued this project or not. When grant reimbursement, indirect costs, and sunken costs are combined, the County’s General Fund was reimbursed for advancing working capital to this project.

Additionally, there were many features associated with design alternatives that received criticism – placing the road in the middle of the floodplain; the installation of permanent gates; incorporating a roundabout at the intersection of E. Anderson/Sequim-Dungeness Roads and Towne Road; and constructing the trail within the floodplain. These were all part of the evaluation and discussion of each design alternative. But none of these features were incorporated in the final project and the final project received the unanimous vote, and endorsement, of all three Commissioners following a more recent public process – meaning with the robust public process, public input, and consideration of many alternatives, they changed and refined their views over time and came to the same conclusion for the final product.

Any complex project lasting 15 years will face obstacles unanticipated when originally conceived. While it may be easy to look back and suggest other courses of action should have been taken, project managers must make timely decisions based on the information they have at that time. People with a variety of views shared their thoughts and input. Some people strongly disagreed with others’ views and found them to be offensive. Some people had thoughts originally about the project that transformed over time. Allowing the community to have that dialogue and hear the variety of input made this a better project. The final outcome of the project is the true measurement of whether those discussions and decisions ultimately led to a successful outcome.





Towne Road – Opening day, October 8, 2024.



Towne Road, looking south from the intersection of E. Anderson / Sequim-Dungeness Way.



A comparison of the restored floodplain at 2200 CFS on January 13, 2023, versus 210 CFS on February 2, 2023.

Resulting impacts of project on wildlife habitat...





Lessons learned...

- **If it were easy, it would already be done.**
- **Expect to encounter bumps in the road.**
- **An apparent delay or obstacle may be an opportunity to create a better project. The original floodplain restoration project - while valuable - was smaller in scope and less connected to the landscape than the project as implemented.**
- **Partners are key. Do your best to understand the constraints, pressures, and assets of your partners.**
- **Your project is embedded in multiple communities - plant, animal, neighbors, businesses, etc. Each community has wants and needs. They may conflict. It will be your and your team's job to determine which of those needs are your project's priority.**
- **Stamped, engineered drawings are only the beginning. Conditions that you encounter in the field will require your team's creativity and flexibility.**
- **Continue to expect the unexpected.**
- **Outreach and education is ongoing. People will always have questions!**
- **Keep the faith.**

Project Budget – Towne Road

2002 Estimate to “Rebuild” Towne Road

Road Fund	\$800,000
REET	\$400,000

	\$1,200,000**

**\$2,133,000 in 2025 dollars

“Likely” Revised 2002 Budget with Contamination Mitigation

Road Fund	\$ 800,000
REET	\$400,000
Contamination Mitigation	\$1,100,000

	\$2,300,000

Estimated Expenditures

Original Engineer’s Estimate (assume crowned road, no 6” curbing)	\$3,100,000 - \$3,200,000
Revised Engineer’s Estimate (assume mono-grade road, no 6” curbing)	\$2,503,000
Nordland Bid (did not include CAVFS or 6” curbing)	\$1,821,409
Nordland – Final Amount Paid (includes CAVFS and 6” curbing)	\$1,995,638.56

Final Towne Road Budget

Road Fund	\$ 694,978.56
REET	\$400,000
REET	\$211,000
DOE – Floodplains By Design Grant (Contamination)	\$696,660.00

	\$1,995,638.56

Noteworthy...

- Clallam County's Road Fund contributed **\$105,021.44 less** to Towne Road than it predicted in 2002. These savings are even higher when adjusted for inflation.
- Including the cost for mitigating contamination, Clallam County paid **\$304,361.44 less** to complete Towne Road than its 2002 budget plus contamination mitigation cost.
- Besides getting a new road, the new Towne Road has a 6'-wide (on average) raised pedestrian trail, curbing to separate pedestrians from vehicles, and a guardrail – **added features uncommon to most county roads.**
- Towne Road is the only county road that has stormwater treatment technology incorporated in the adjacent catch basins – technology that is considered best practice for any roadway near a stream or wetland.
- Salmon were observed in the constructed channels almost immediately.
- The Corps of Engineers has completed its final inspection.

Project Budget – Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project

Planning, Pre-Design, & Design

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Floodplain Restoration Grant #C110084 Purpose: planning & design	\$50,000
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Floodplain Construction Grant #G-1600011 Purpose: planning & design	\$2,386,867.54
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Setback Levee Grant #G-1400671 Purpose: levee design	\$1,519,014
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Lower Dungeness Grant #14-1382P Purpose: design	\$1,200,000
TOTAL	\$5,155,881.54

Land Acquisition, Relocation of Buildings & Infrastructure

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Acquisition II Grant #09-1543A Purpose: land acquisition, relocation of buildings & infrastructure	\$575,000

Wetland/Floodplain Restoration

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
Dept of Ecology – Floodplains by Design Floodplain Construction Grant #OTGP-2021-ClCoCD-00066 Purpose: Floodplain Construction	\$7,114,132.46**
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (via Dept of Ecology) Purpose: 4 Side Channels	\$980,000
TOTAL	\$8,094,132.46

**\$1.1 M of this was used to mitigate Towne Road contamination

Levee Construction

Grant Source/Name/Purpose	Amount
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Floodplain Restoration Grant #16-1372R Purpose: Construction	\$6,046,868
WA Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) Floodplain Construction Grant #16-1372R (added to above RCO Grant) Purpose: Construction	\$2,800,000
TOTAL OF "CONSTRUCTION" GRANTS (for engineering, permits, & construction)	\$8,846,868

TOTAL OF ALL PHASES

Lower Dungeness Floodplain Restoration Project

\$22,567,524.88

GENERAL FUND Budget Implications from Lower Dungeness Floodplain Project

General Fund Working Capital provided to project	\$5,421,118
Direct Repayments from Grants to General Fund	\$5,287,505
Ending Balance Owed to General Fund	\$ 122,613
Indirects Paid to General Fund by Project	\$ 602,092
Indirects Billed to Grants (subject to limits)	\$ 124,860
Excess Indirects to General Fund	\$ 477,232
NET EXCESS AMOUNT REMITTED TO GENERAL FUND	\$ 343,619
LESS: In-kind Staff Time Incurred	\$ 593,000
EXCESS (SHORTFALL) IN COVERING IN-KIND COSTS	\$ (249,381)**

****Positions providing in-kind staff time are salaried employees that would have been assigned to other projects, including non-grant-funded projects and are considered 'sunken' costs tied to the adopted budget.**