

November 5, 2009

Swift Creek - Control Access

Comments regarding such include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Per the attached section entitled Control Access, various items are listed as control items.
2. These control items imply that all access that has been enjoyed by the public to Sumas Mt. at the base by Swift Creek will be eliminated.
3. Based upon my observations of the clear-cuts that have been done to date, actions appear to be excessive and unreasonable. This would appear to hold true for these control access items.
4. So what have you considered and what do you propose for the continuing enjoyment of the mountain?

Control access

Control use and access to the levees to prevent disturbance of, and exposure to, the sediment and airborne asbestos such as:

- Fencing off levees, sediment capture facilities, and storage basins.
- Placing legal restrictions on future use of the properties.
- Inspecting areas to ensure compliance.
- Purchasing additional property or easements may be required.

Background

Location

Swift Creek is in the northeastern lowlands of Whatcom County. The South Fork of Swift Creek originates from the toe (downslope end) of an ongoing, slowly moving landslide on Sumas Mountain. Swift Creek flows generally westward before joining the Sumas River near the city of Nooksack.



Swift Creek watershed map (Click image above to enlarge or [download a text explanation.](#))

Landslide, flooding, and sediment

The 225-acre landslide on Sumas Mountain has resulted in a large amount of sediment containing naturally-occurring asbestos (NOA) and metals continuously filling up the creek bed. For several decades Swift Creek has been dredged to manage sediment and limit downstream flooding. When the deposited sediment material dries, NOA in the sediment can become airborne and present a risk to human health and the environment. The main concern with the metals in the sediment is the impact to plants on land and aquatic life.