



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

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Little Squalicum Estuary Project Earns APWA 2024 Project of the Year Award



Aerial photo showing the estuary basin in September 2023. (Photo Credit: BTV – City of Bellingham)

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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Bellingham, WA – September 2024 – The American Public Works Association (APWA) is proud to announce that the City of Bellingham’s Little Squalicum Estuary Project won APWA’s 2024 Public Works Project of the Year Award. Award winners publicly developed, owned, and maintained infrastructure projects that promote excellence in construction management and administration. These awards recognize the alliance between the managing agency, the contractor, the consultant, and their cooperative achievements.



*Aerial photo showing an overview taken immediately after inlet opening, and initial flooding of the site with saltwater from Bellingham Bay.
(Photo Credit: BTV – City of Bellingham)*

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The Little Squalicum Estuary Project earned the APWA’s 2024 Public Works Project of the Year Award in the Environment category, in the \$5-25 million division. Funded by federal, state, local and non-profit organizations, the overall, \$6.1M project restored 4.85 total acres of coastal habitat, including the estuary, and removed a fish passage barrier at the mouth of Little Squalicum Creek east of the Nooksack River Delta. The project team excavated the estuary, re-aligned the existing creek and park trails, installed native plants, constructed two new pedestrian bridges and multiple new park trails, and upgraded some park facilities.



Principal Coastal Geologist Jim Johannessen
(Photo Credit: Lisa Remlinger; NSD + CGS)

The project was managed by Principal Coastal Geologist, Jim Johannessen, Natural Systems Design + Coastal Geologic Services (NSD + CGS). Jim and his team worked with the City of Bellingham Public Works Department, leading design of the project, and performing coastal engineering, coastal geological analysis and design and design team coordination. The firm also helped the city put the funding for the project together, managed the consultant team, completed technical aspects of construction documents, and assisted with construction oversight.

“Recognizing the 2024 APWA Projects of the Year award winners is an honor. This year’s award recipients have shown what happens when you fulfill your commitment to making your community a better place,” said APWA President Gary Losier, PE. “Public works professionals do so many things to advance the quality of life for all, and they don’t always receive the recognition they deserve. That’s what makes our Project of the Year celebrations at PWX in Atlanta so exciting and rewarding.”

APWA recognized this year’s Project of the Year Award winners recently on September 11.

“Each year APWA receives hundreds of entries for our Project of the Year Awards. The most amazing part of the selection process is getting to see all of the great projects taking place in North America. These projects, whether

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selected or not, are all directed at improving the quality of life for all our communities. I wish to congratulate each of this year's honorees!" said APWA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Scott D. Grayson, CAE.

About APWA

The American Public Works Association (www.apwa.org) is a not-for-profit, international organization of more than 32,000 members involved in the field of public works. APWA serves its members by promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy, and the exchange of knowledge. APWA is headquartered in Kansas City, MO, with an office in Washington, DC, 62 chapters, and 97 branches throughout North America.

About NSD + CGS (Coastal Team)

NSD + CGS specializes in providing comprehensive coastal geology and engineering/nearshore services in the Salish Sea region. The coastal team's work is largely focused on the northern Puget Sound region, with extensive experience and knowledge of the San Juan County nearshore ecosystem since 1991. They are highly regarded as experts on both the issues and the science specific to this region's coastal environment.

They have mapped nearshore features and processes around all of San Juan County and (throughout the region) including drift cell mapping and analyses, feeder bluff mapping, sea level rise analysis, identification of potential nearshore restoration sites, and design and oversight of many coastal restoration projects in the islands. Completed coastal restoration projects include Driftwood Beach restoration (NE Blakely Is.), Shoal Bay tide gate removal and lagoon restoration, MacKaye Harbor armor removal, Family Tides armor removal (Orcas Is.), Turn Pt. coastal wetland armor removal, and E. Brown Is. armor removal.



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