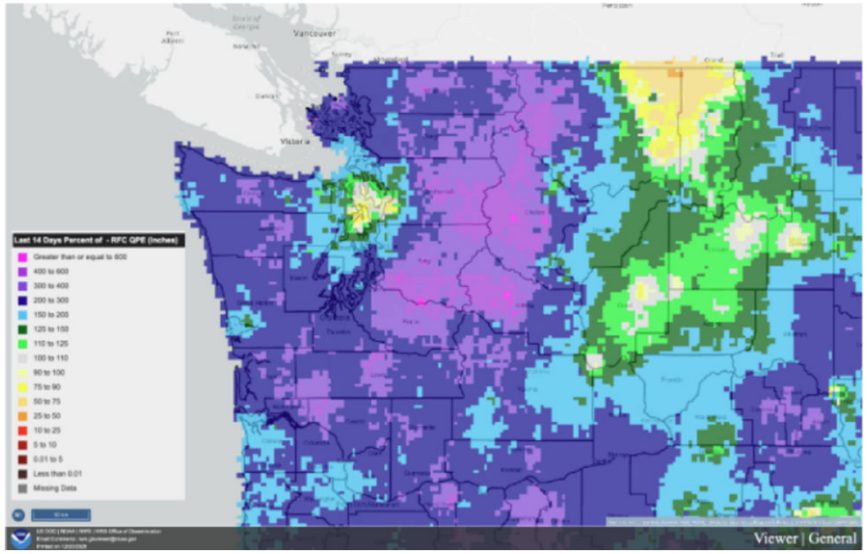
December 2025 Flooding Response

House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans Committee

Incident Overview: December 5 - December 22

- Back-to-back atmospheric rivers dropped 20-40 inches of rain in Western WA river basins
  - 300% to 600% of normal rainfall for this period
- 33 rivers flooded with 18 exceeding major flood stage
  - 3 rivers exceeded record flood levels
- Widespread landslides and mudslides caused significant infrastructure damage
- A strong system brought extremely high winds statewide
  - 114mph winds were measured at White Pass with many locations statewide seeing peak winds of 50-80mph
  - Widespread tree and power infrastructure damage
  - More than 378,000 customers were without power at peak



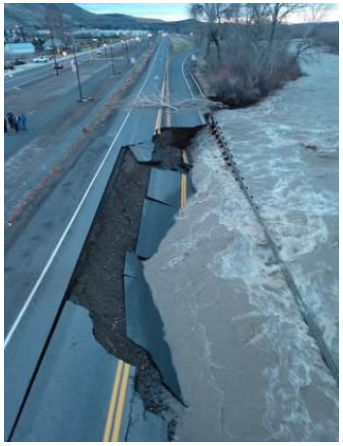
Percent of normal precipitation for the 14-day period of December 6-19 (Source: National Weather Service)

Summary of Impacts

- Nearly 4,000 homes were affected
  - At least 440 homes were destroyed or had major damage
- More than 100,000 residents were evacuated
- One fatality occurred and more than 380 successful rescues were conducted
- Transportation system impacts isolated communities and complicated response efforts
  - Damage to 34 state highways and countless local roadways
- Flood control infrastructure was significantly damaged
- Widespread impacts to drinking water and wastewater treatment systems
- Widespread agriculture impacts
  - Flooded cropland, damaged dairy and livestock facilities, disrupted feed and milk supply chains



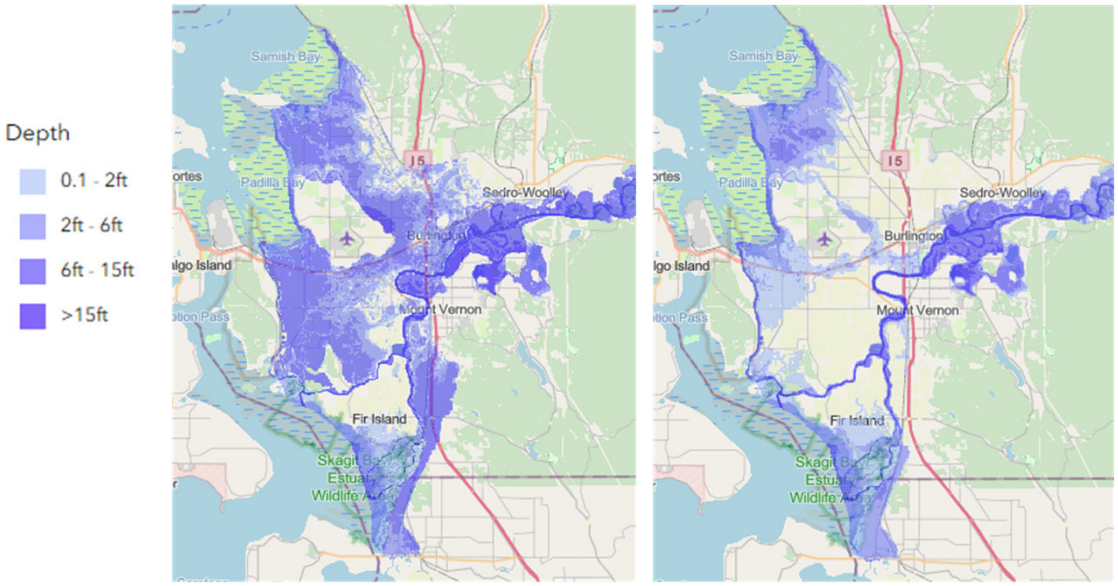






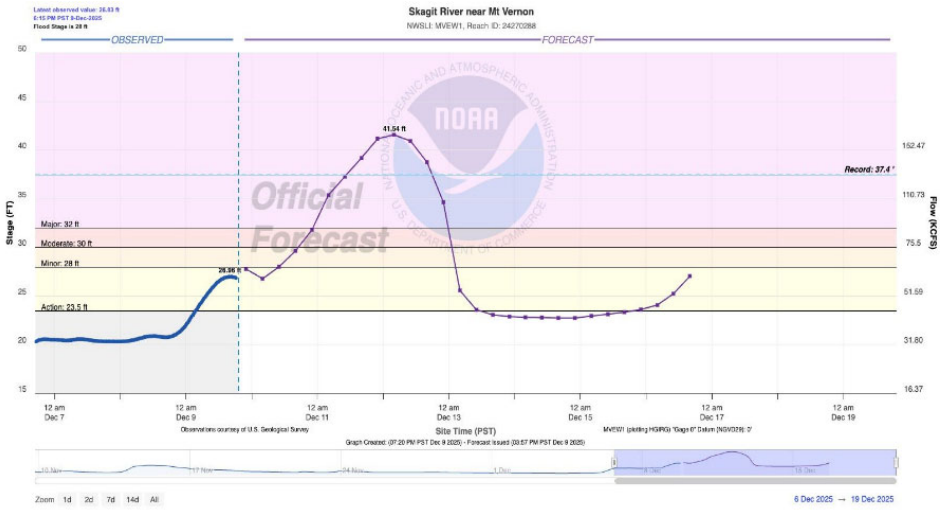
What Almost Happened

US Army Corps of Engineers Inundation Modeling



12/9 Forecast

Actual observed flows



Modeling indicates this scenario would likely have impacted an additional:

- Over 11,000 residential addresses, 1,200 commercial properties, and 800 agriculture parcels
- Two hospitals and more than 150 government facilities, 100 schools and daycares

The Effects of Mitigation and Preparedness

- Impacts of this disaster would have been much more severe if not for a combination of:
  - Effective mitigation efforts including:
    - Land use regulations and building codes implemented over time
    - Concerted efforts by local communities to restore floodplain where possible and protect critical infrastructure
    - State and local communities exceeding minimum NFIP standards
  - Significant improvements to response readiness:
    - State investment in limited full time State EOC staff in the 2023 legislative session
    - Strong state agency partnerships and effective pre-disaster planning and coordination



Sumner Wastewater Treatment Plant with a floodwall at the confluence of the White and Puyallup Rivers

Mitigation Success Stories









- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funded the Acquisition of >500 flood prone properties in impacted counties
- Since 2013, Ecology's Floodplains by Design has funded:
  - Property acquisitions
  - Levee setbacks
  - Home elevations, and
  - Other projects to reduce flood risk for 12,829 homes across 19 counties

State Response Overview

- Gov. Ferguson proclaimed an emergency statewide on December 10
  - Mobilized the Washington National Guard
  - Waived hours of service limitations for drivers hauling livestock feed and dairy farm products
- The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was fully activated for 14 days, during which time it:
  - Coordinated 15 Emergency Support Functions, led and supported by dozens of state agencies
  - Led coordination with USACE, NWS, FEMA, and other federal agencies
  - Provided direct support to local and tribal governments to assure their mission success
- A Presidential Emergency Declaration on December 12th opened limited access to direct federal assistance
  - FEMA provided incident management assistance, urban search and rescue teams, and logistical support at the request of the State EOC







Alerts, Warnings, and Evacuations

English | Spanish

SENT 12/10/2025 03:26:06
EXPIRES 12/10/2025 04:26:05

HEADLINE EN
Emergency Alert

AREA
Skagit County (WA)

SENDER
200166,EMD (WA) - Emergency Management Division (WMD),Washington Emergency Management Division

WEA 360CH EN
The following message is sent on behalf of Skagit County Emerg Mgmt. Skagit Ready Alert: Upriver Communities GET SET for Imminent Evacuation. Historic flooding expected on Skagit and Sauk Rivers. Pack your go bag, prepare your property, and BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE. Roads may be closed due to high water, plan your route to high ground away from the river.

English | Spanish

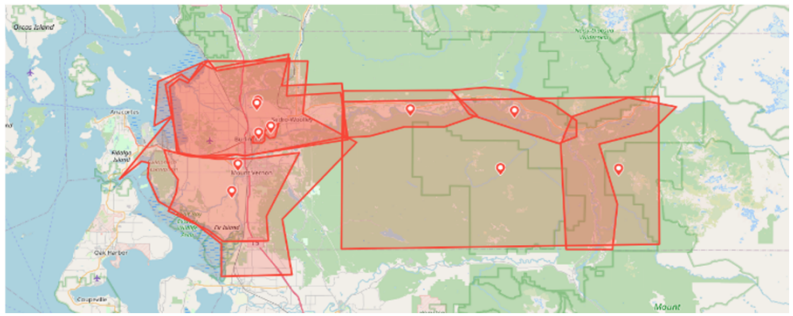
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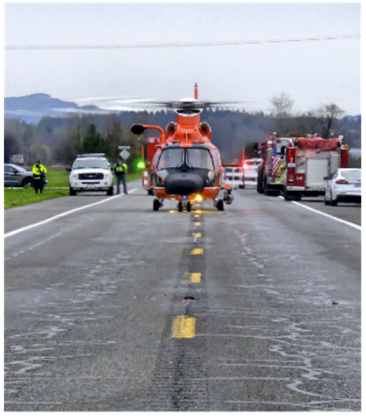
WEA 360CH ES
Alerta Listos Skagit: Las comunidades del río arriba PREPAREN para una evacuación inminente. Se esperan inundaciones históricas en los ríos Skagit y Sauk. Empaca tu bolsa de emergencia, prepara tu propiedad y ESTÉ LISTO PARA EVACUAR. Las carreteras pueden estar cerradas debido a aguas altas, planifica tu ruta hacia terrenos más altos alejados del río.



- More than 100,000 Washingtonians were instructed to evacuate
- In December, EMD's 24/7 Alert and Warning Center (AWC) issued more than 30% of all alerts sent in 2025:
  - 19 Wireless Emergency Alerts
    - Including all evacuation warnings for Skagit Co due to a vendor outage impacting their alert origination software
  - 641 critical weather alerts
    - Each sent to hundreds to thousands of state, tribal, and local emergency managers and responders
- Interjurisdictional alert and warning coordination was challenging:
  - Lack of shared statewide alert, warning, and evacuation software required much coordination via phone and email
  - Lack of common statewide evacuation levels increased risk of confusion, especially for residents near jurisdictional boundaries
- Multilingual alert and warning was also challenging:
  - Federal alert and warning systems do not support languages other than English and Spanish
  - Local jurisdictions lack resources for just-in-time translation of warning messages

Search and Rescue

- EMD activated the state's Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)
  - 383 rescues, 1,000 assisted evacuations, and 1 recovery were conducted
- Significant aviation response involving:
  - 27 helicopters, 12 fixed-wing planes, and 11 unmanned aerial systems
- Whatcom and Snohomish counties each performed more than 50 rescues without state assistance
- Extensive in-state mutual aid was deployed
  - 13 swift water rescue teams were mobilized through interlocal mutual and by state agencies
  - WA National Guard personnel, vehicles, and aircraft supported SAR missions
  - Active-duty military resources were also heavily utilized
- Interstate and FEMA support were required when in-state resources were depleted
  - 2 swift water rescue teams from CA and OR, and 2 urban search and rescue teams from FEMA were needed









Successful State Agency Partnerships

- Dozens of agencies conducted state missions and supported local and tribal missions
- Over 150 tribal and local requests for assistance were answered by state agencies through the State EOC, for example:
  - DNR and WSDOT drained trapped floodwaters from Sumas by removing a large blocked culvert when others could not
  - The State Fire Marshal's Office (WSP) partnered with EMD to leverage the All-Hazards Mobilization System to deploy water rescue teams for the first time
  - National Guard teams joined up with state and local SAR teams, combining resources to facilitate rapid evacuations and rescues
  - National Guard worked with USACE and King County to patrol levees and place sandbags to prevent additional levee failures
  - DNR used aircraft usually used for firefighting to fly aerial imagery and LiDAR missions to assess damages and landslide risk
  - DNR and Department of Corrections deployed incident management teams to support county emergency operations centers
  - Department of Commerce leveraged grant programs to provide generators to tribes, protecting elders reliant on home medical equipment





Individual and Public Assistance Update

- Federal Individual Assistance (IA)
  - Request for IA declaration submitted on January 21
  - Under review by FEMA and White House
  - Approval is at the discretion of the President
  - No clear timeline for a decision
- State Individual Assistance
  - Gov. Ferguson provided $2.5mil to fund State IA delivery and $1mil to fund DSHS Disaster Cash Assistance Program
  - Household Needs Grant Program delivery currently underway
  - Rental Assistance Program and Temporary Sheltering Program are being activated
- Federal Public Assistance (PA)
  - Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments remain underway with FEMA
  - PA declaration request to be submitted before February 18



Challenges and Capability Gaps

- Search and Rescue
  - Lack of a statewide coordinated system for urban and technical rescue
    - Capacity is unevenly distributed across the state
    - Limited access to nearby interstate mutual aid
  - Misalignment between operational capabilities and statutory responsibilities
  - Cost burden for SAR aviation is disproportionately assumed by 4 counties which routinely support statewide missions
  - Inconsistent funding for volunteer SAR teams, limiting capacity
  - State-level staffing capacity concerns
- Alert, Warning, and Evacuation
  - Washington needs shared, statewide systems to improve effectiveness and reach, by:
    - Coordinating effectively across jurisdictional boundaries
    - Meeting linguistic and disability accessibility needs of all Washingtonians
    - Streamlining alerting on behalf of other jurisdictions when required
  - Washington should consider legislation to implement uniform evacuation levels and terminology throughout the state

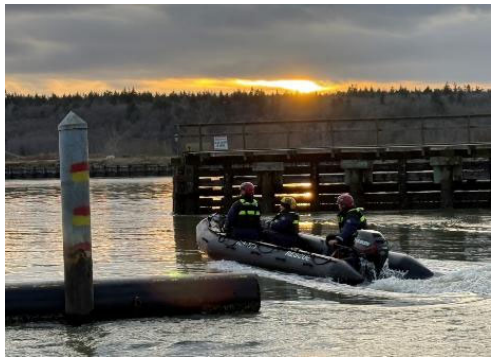
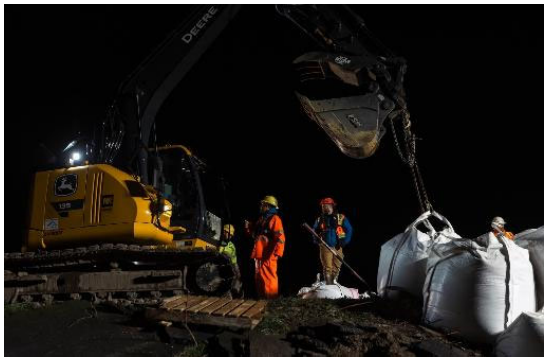
Challenges and Capability Gaps

- State Emergency Operations Center
  - The State EOC's technology and capabilities to leverage data remain inadequate
    - Systems are antiquated due to insufficient funding and technical capacity
    - Systems are not integrated, delaying availability of essential data for decision making
      - Extremely limited capability to share information with other agencies
- Incident Management Assistance
  - Local jurisdictions rely heavily on external incident management resources
    - EMD lacks necessary capacity to provide resource assistance
    - Lack of funding for regional all-hazards incident management teams
- State Individual Assistance and Public Assistance Programs
  - Programs are currently unfunded, relying on disaster-specific allocations
    - Prevents necessary work to develop programs and build necessary systems and technology to quickly provide aid to individuals and households
    - Without sustained investment, timely relief to disaster affected households
- Mitigation Programs
  - Need sustained investment for mitigation work to continue reducing impacts of disasters

Washington Military Department

Emergency Management Division



Questions



