

## Appendix A: Suiattle Road 26 History

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*This history summarizes some key events in the last century of access in the Suiattle River drainage via the Suiattle River Road 26 on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.*

### **Prehistoric and Historic**

Long before a road existed, the Suiattle River drainage was a cross-mountain range travel route for native people who used both canoe and trail on their passage up what is today known as the Suiattle River. In the late 1800s, approximately seventy-seven Indian allotments were surveyed along the Suiattle River for Indian settlement, and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian people began filing applications for patent under Section 4 of the Dawes Act of 1887. Several homesteads and at least two cemeteries were established.

**1900 – Mining claims** filed for copper on Miner’s Ridge in the Upper Suiattle (now within the Glacier Peak wilderness). Trail access up the north side of the Suiattle River to the Upper Suiattle Drainage.

**1913 – Suiattle Guard Station** constructed in the Washington National Forest.

**1932 – Road constructed to Buck Creek** - 19 miles upstream from the new government bridge over the Sauk River.

**1933 – Buck Creek campground constructed** - CCC work on Forest roads and campgrounds.

**1935 – Mt Baker National Forest Map** shows road as extending from a Sauk River crossing along the north side of the Suiattle River to terminus near Milk Creek.

**1938 – Map of Historic Recreation Use Stillaguamish-Sauk-Suiattle Recreational Areas, Mt. Baker National Forest.** The Suiattle Road (now Forest Road 26) is shown as constructed from a Sauk River crossing, along the north side of the Suiattle River to the terminus at Sulphur Creek Camp (partially improved). Other features along the Suiattle Road are Buck Creek and Downey Creek camps, the Suiattle Guard Station and trails to the Green Mountain Lookout and to Miner’s Ridge Lookout in the upper Suiattle River drainage. An extended network of trails is shown in the upper Suiattle River drainage along with trails in Sulphur Creek, Downey Creek, Huckleberry Mountain, Tenas Creek, and Big Creek.

**1949 – Road 26 construction extension from Sulphur Creek to Milk Creek.** Last mile of road used in 1969 for heavy equipment to place Milk Creek Trail Bridge. Road-to-trail segment included in 1984 Wilderness Bill additions to Glacier Peak Wilderness.

**1960 to 1964 – Timber bridges at five major stream crossings upgraded to concrete bridges.**

Buck Creek (1960) Downey Creek upgrade (1962) Tenas Creek and Big Creek (1963), Sulphur Creek (1964).

**1964 – Wilderness Act of 1964 passed.** (Upper Suiattle River drainage included in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, south side of the Suiattle River above Rivord Creek.)

**1966 – Asphalt paving initiated of the first 9.0 miles of Road 26 (then numbered Rte 435).**

**1968 – The Glacier Peak Wilderness boundary was extended** on the north side of the Suiattle River down to approximately Rivord Creek. The road ends at the Wilderness Boundary near Rivord Creek.

**1969 – Sulphur Creek Camp and work center construction upgraded to developed site.**

**1973 – Suiattle Trailhead parking upgraded– rock barrier to last mile of road to Milk Cr.**

**1974 to 2003 – Major flood damage on Road 26.** 14 floods qualified as Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) events in 1974, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, and 2003. There were a total of 39 damaged sites to Road 26 in 7 of these flood events.

**1974 to 2003 – Historical Flood Damage on Road 26** (from Appendix B, Suiattle Road Repair EA 2006).The following table displays flood history on Road 26 as recorded in the Forest’s Roads-Flood Damage Database. ERFO funded projects are to be under construction within 2 years following disasters unless suitable justification is provided to warrant retention.

Note: When comparing damage across all the flood event years to determine the failure history of a particular site, caution must be used due to the accuracy of the site location. Site location definition is limited by one-tenth of a mile in accuracy as recorded on the FHWA-ERFO Damage Site Report (DSR) form. Over this 30-year flood history on the Forest, there has been milepost odometer reading variability.

**Table 17 Historical ERFO Flood Damage Sites on the Road 26 Arterial**

Flood Year	Mile post	Damage Description	Repair Needed	Quantities Lost (cu yds)	Costs \$(M*)
1974	2.3	Cut-slope and fill slope failure	Replace road fill	1170	6.000
1974	3.0	Cut-slope and fill slope failure	Replace road fill	160	4.160
1974	2.5	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	1500	18.500
1974	6.8	Cut-slope and fill slope failure	Remove debris, Replace fill	370	2.580
1979	2.8	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	150	5.200
1979	2.85	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	2000	25.700
1979	2.92	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	500	11.110
1979	3.01	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	950	12.375
1979	10.1	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	400	3.450
1980	3.0	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	500	5.690
1980	12.7	Channel and road encroachment	Replace fill, enforce toe of slope	2500	50.230
1980	13.1	Channel and road encroachment	Replace fill, enforce toe of slope	1560	20.660
1980	22.4	Bridge approach damaged	Repair or replace approach	700	10.000

Flood Year	Mile post	Damage Description	Repair Needed	Quantities Lost (cu yds)	Costs \$(M*)
1989	1.0	Plugged culvert, ditchline failure	Clean culvert	550	6.000
1989	2.0	Plugged culvert, ditchline failure	Clean culvert	500	5.000
1989	3.5	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Clean culvert, fix ditchline	50	1.700
1989	4.2	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Clean culvert, fix ditchline	50	1.700
1989	5.0	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Clean culvert, fix ditchline	50	1.700
1990	3.0	Bridge approach damaged	Increase span length of bridge	0	321.000
1990	3.7	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	500	73.675
1990	4.1	Bridge approach damaged	Repair or replace approach	1100	171.000
1990	4.7	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace culvert w/concrete ford	800	271.540
1990	7.8	Bridge approach damaged	Repair or replace approach	200	5.152
1990	10.2	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	80	7.320
1990	12.6	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Clean culvert, fix ditchline	80	6.660
1990	13.0	Channel and road encroachment	Replace fill, enforce toe of slope	800	60.160
1996	1.3	Plugged culvert, fill failure	Clean culvert, fix ditchline	0	2.170
1996	2.7	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace culvert w/concrete ford	3000	221.827
1996	3.05	Plugged culvert, fill failure	Clean culvert	0	3.260
1996	3.37	Ditchline failure	Replace road fill	180	4.890
1996	3.94	Plugged culvert, ditchline failure	Replace w/larger culvert	1500	94.750
1996	5.5	Ditchline failure	Replace road fill	60	12.000
1996	10.2	Plugged culvert, road prism failure	Replace w/larger culvert	250	20.480
1996	12.5	Channel and road encroachment	Replace fill, enforce toe of slope	3000	66.420
1996	12.6	Plugged culvert, fill failure	Replace culvert w/fish passage culvert	0	33.000
1996	15.8	Plugged culvert, fill failure	Replace culvert w/box culvert	0	15.000
2003	21.9	Bridge approach damage	Repair / replace approach /abutment	2600	86.940
2003	22.9	Bridge approach damage	Repair / replace approach /abutment	200	14.739
2003	14.4	Channel and road encroachment	Reroute road segment	200	49.964

**Table 18: 2006 and 2007 ERFO Flood Damage Sites on the Road 26 Arterial**

Flood Year	Mile post	Damage Description	Repair Needed	Quantities Lost (cu yds)	Costs \$(M*)
2006	12.6	Channel and road encroachment	Reroute road segment	3100	1,749.804
2006	13-13.4	Channel and road encroachment	Reroute road segment	350	
2006	20.8	Channel and road encroachment	Shift road into hillslope	4500	760.904
2007	6.0	Channel and road encroachment	Reroute road segment	2688	746.669

(\* ) 1000's

**1984 – Washington Wilderness Bill passed.** Road-to-trail segment from Suiattle trailhead to Milk Creek (above Sulphur Creek) included in Glacier Peak Wilderness additions.

**1990 – Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Land Management Plan signed** – Road 26 is noted as a major arterial road with operational maintenance Level 4: *“high degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate speeds. Most roads are double lane and aggregate surfaced; however some may be single lane. Paved surfaces or dust abatement may be used.”* Road 26 is within the Skagit Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

**1990 – Flood damages the Suiattle River roads.** Road 26 is closed for two years at MP 13, and Road 25 at Circle Creek. Forest conducts three extensive public workshops on road system options in the Suiattle; there is overwhelming public support for repair of Road 26 and restoring motorized access to the only 2 campgrounds in the Suiattle, the Suiattle Guard station (later to become a rental cabin), 7 trailheads, 2 Lookouts, boat launches and gathering sites. Environment assessment considers Forest Plan direction, desired future condition of Wild and Scenic River Corridor, biological, cultural, recreational and social and economic conditions.

**1992 – Suiattle Road EA and Decision Notice signed –Repair Road 26 to terminus.** Forest strategy documented in the EAs is to maintain Road 26 to recreational sites while closing or storing Road 25 east of Circle Creek is documented in another EA for Road 25.

**1995 – Suiattle Road 26 impacted by floods.** Roads repaired under 1996 Forest-wide assessment for not only ERFO road repairs, but watershed restoration, including road decommissioning.

**2003 – A record historic flood (largest on record) impacts Forest, damages Road 26 at three sites (MP 14.4, MP 20.9 - the approach to Downey Creek Bridge and MP 22.9, Sulphur Creek bridge.** Temporary reroutes provide access to Downey Creek. Stranded hikers and vehicles removed with temporary access to Suiattle trailhead (fill at bridge removed after vehicle rescue).

**2006 – Suiattle Road Repair EA and decision Notice signed for Road 26 repairs to terminus.** The 2006 EA is appealed, but is upheld by regional review team. Contract is awarded; Repair work at MP 14.4 starts in the Fall of 2006 with tree felling in relocation right-of-way.

**2006 – Fall floods -** Work is halted on Road 26 repairs in late fall of 2006 after flood water damages Road 26 with loss of access at MP 12.6 and MP 13 to 13.4.

- 2007 – Loss of Road 26 prism at MP 6.0 to channel encroachment.** Temporary reroute provides access to state, private, tribal and forest lands to MP 12.6. Work proceeds on repair design and NEPA assessment for MP 6.0, MP 12.6, MP 13 to 13.4, MP 14.4, and MP 20.8 with Western Federal Lands Highway Division as the lead agency. Assessments cover fisheries, wildlife, survey and manage species, vegetation, wetlands, hydrology, cultural, road design elements, etc.
- 2009 – Time Extension requested for NEPA Assessment on fiscal year 2007 flood damage.** Terrestrial and aquatic consultation is more extensive than anticipated. New approved contract award dates for ERFO repair sites (9/30/2010 for MP 12.6, MP 13.4 and MP 14.4 and 9/30/11 for MP 20.8 20.9 and 22.9). Repair plans are reviewed, scoped with tribes and partners and improved to meet aquatic and fisheries concerns.
- 2009 – USFS improves temporary bypasses around damaged sites (MP 12.6 to 14.4) to provide administrative access** for assessing and designing repair work at upper sites.
- 2010 – ARRA projects** – Forest awarded funds from America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for road work on Road 26 MP 0.0 to 12.6. Work includes culvert upgrades, slope stabilization and paving repairs.
- 2010 – FHWA completes categorical exclusion for repair work and awards contract for repairs at MP 12.6 to 14.4.** Work initiated in fall of 2010 with tree felling in right-of-way of road relocation. Work suspended for winter 2010.
- 2011 – FHWA and USFS continue planning for ERFO repair at MP 6.0 and upper Suiattle sites of Rd 26 MP 20.8, 20.9 and 22.9.**
- 2011 – Notice of Intent to Sue filed against Suiattle repair project. FHWA terminates contract at MP 12.6 to 14.4 and rescinds CE.**