

NAVIGATING THE SWINOMISH CHANNEL



Paying attention to the tides can help you estimate the time of slack water and duration of current flow in the Swinomish Channel at La Conner. Because it's dependent on the range between high and low water, and is affected by river runoff, the time of slack current can only be estimated.

These general rules will help you predict slack water and current direction in La Conner:

- Slack water occurs 2.5-4 hours after high or low tide
- The current flows north from 2.5-4 hours before high tide to 2.5-4 hours after high tide
- The current flows south from 2.5-4 hours before low tide to 2.5-4 hours after low tide

The tugboat operators base their estimate on the tide tables. Slack water at La Conner Landing occurs between 2.5 and 4 hours after high or low water. For example, if High Water at La Conner occurs at 5 a.m., slack will be sometime between 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. At periods of a minor tide change, the slack will occur closer to 2 hours after the predicted high or low. When there is a large change in tide, the current turns almost 4 hours later.

Take Care in the South End

When running during low tides in the southern part of the Swinomish Channel, boaters should favor the east side of the channel from the southernmost house in the Shelter Bay Community to the entrance of Shelter Bay itself. There is a rock wall breakwater on the east side, which should be favored. The western 2/3 side of the channel is very shallow from sediments deposited by the nearby Skagit River.

Information provided by The Port of Skagit County