

DRAFT



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, SEATTLE
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1519 ALASKAN WAY SOUTH
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98134

IN REPLY REFER TO
NPSEN-BP

SUBJECT: Skagit River, Washington, Bridge Regulations

TO: Division Engineer
North Pacific Division

1. On 20 June 1961, Seattle District Public Notice No. P-61-73 (Incl. 1) was issued advising of owner's requests for revision of Federal bridge regulations to permit the locking of the movable spans of Skagit River bridges. However, except for the South Fork bridge at Fir, which was subsequently closed, action on the notice was deferred pending completion of the review of reports for navigation on Skagit River, Washington. The unfavorable report on this review was forwarded to your office on 30 July 1965.

2. By letter dated 20 September 1965, (Incl. 2), the Great Northern Railway Company renewed its application to have its bridge No. 36 declared a fixed span. This bridge is adjacent to the U. S. Highway 99 bridge near Mile 17 of Skagit River, north of Mount Vernon, as shown on the report drawing (Incl. 3). As indicated in the letter, the bridge has not been opened since 1959 although maintenance of the movable features is expensive.

3. There is a possibility that future improvement of flood control facilities may reduce flooding in the Skagit Valley to the point where an expansion of industry in the area below Sedro Woolley would result in a significant water-borne tonnage potential. If this should occur, there would probably be a revival of commercial navigation on the lower Skagit River below Sedro Woolley. The closed bridges would impose some restriction on tug operations during high river stages, as indicated by the following tabulation:

mid 3

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Bridge	Owner	River Mile	Vertical Clearances in feet	
			At Mean Low Water	At High Water
At Mount Vernon	Washington State Highway Department	12.25	30.0	11
Near Mount Vernon	Washington State Highway Department	17.0	34.4	10
Near Mount Vernon	Great Northern Railway	17.75	34.0	5.3
Near Sedro Woolley	Northern Pacific Railway	23.0	35.5	10.4

However, tugs could be developed for low clearance navigation which could operate at all river stages except during floods.

4. In view of the report findings to the effect that commercial navigation of the Skagit River has virtually ceased; and that existing bridge clearances with closed drawspans are adequate for recreational navigation; and considering the negative recommendation for channel improvements, further maintenance of the drawspans appears unwarranted. However, the report has not yet been reviewed in OCE or by the River and Harbor Board, nor have replies been received to the Division Engineer's notice of report completion. Therefore, your suggestion as to the nature and timing of our reply to the Great Northern Railway Company is requested. Your suggestion would also form a basis for our replies to requests from other Skagit River drawbridge owners.

3 Incl (trip)
as

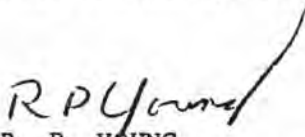
Vertical clearances provided by the three existing fixed bridges at and downstream from Sedro Woolley are as follows:

New State Highway bridge at Sedro Woolley, Mile 24.96 - 36.6 feet at extreme low water. 

New State Highway (U.S. 99) bridge north of Mount Vernon, Mile 16.8 - 47.1 feet at extreme low water.

New Skagit County bridge across the North Fork, Mile 3.1 - 61.5 feet at low water.

Interested parties are invited to submit in writing any objections that they may have to the proposed revision of regulations. Objections should be forwarded so as to reach this office not later than 20 July 1961.


R. P. YOUNG
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer