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NPSEN-PL-RP

SUBJECT

Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvements -
Plan of Study

TO

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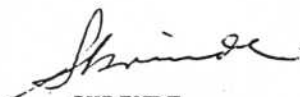
Ch, Reg Plng Sec
THRU:Ch, Plng Br
Ch, Engr Div

DATE

8 June 1977
Brooks/ds/3621

CMT 1

1. An SOP meeting on the subject Plan of Study has been scheduled for the large engineering conference room on Monday, 13 June 1977 at 9:30 am. **The purpose of the meeting is to agree on the plan of study.**
2. You are requested to review the attached Plan of Study (inclosure 1) and provide comments at or prior to the meeting. For your information a work-flow diagram has been attached (inclosure 2) and a breakdown by fiscal years and work items for inclosure 3 of the Plan of Study (inclosure 3). Study cost estimates are direct costs and coincide with the study cost estimates that have been previously provided to Regional Planning Section.
3. **After the meeting work requests will be issued for the work items identified for funding in fiscal year 1977 on inclosure 3.**


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SKAGIT RIVER, WASHINGTON, LEVEE AND CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS

PHASE I AE&D PLAN OF STUDY

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Incllosures

1. Copy of Current AE&D Project Justification Sheet
2. Issues Identified in Coordination of Project Document
(Survey Report)
3. Estimated Phase I AE&D Work Effort Summary
4. Discussion and Justification of Phase I AE&D Work
5. Public Involvement Program
6. Time/Cost Schedule (PB-2a, including identification of
Phase I AE&D Milestones)

SKAGIT RIVER, WASHINGTON, LEVEE AND CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS

1. Project Authorization Data

- a. The Skagit River, Washington, Levee and Channel Improvements project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1966 - Public Law 89-789, approved 7 November 1966. The authorized project is covered in a survey report (House Document No. 483, 89th Congress, 2nd Session).
- b. An Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared and submitted with the General Design Memorandum.
- c. OCE approved the reclassification of the Levee and Channel Improvements Project from "active" to "deferred" by DAEN-CWP-D 1st Indorsement, dated 24 March 1972, subject: Reclassification of Authorized Projects. Also, OCE approved the reclassification of the project from "deferred" to "active" by DAEN-CWP-W 2nd Indorsement, dated 16 December 1975, subject: Reclassification of Authorized Skagit River, Washington, Levee and Channel Improvement Project. Approval has been received to combine Phases I and II into one CGM document by NPDPL-PF 1st Indorsement, dated 8 October 1976 to NPSN-DB basic letter dated 30 September 1976, subject: Skagit River, Washington Levee and Channel Improvements.

2. Statement of Contraversial Issues and Areas of Concern

- a. In general, no significant problems are known at this time. The recently completed Wild and Scenic Rivers study by the U.S. Forest Service recommends classification of the Skagit River upstream from Sedro Woolley as "recreational" and portions of the Sauk, Cascade, and Suiattle Rivers as "scenic". Submission of their report to congress has been delayed while the Forest Service evaluated the effects of the proposed Puget Sound Power and Light Company twin nuclear power plants near Sedro Woolley. In the power plant environmental report the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has said that the nuclear plants would not adversely affect the values of the river under the scenic classification. President Carter in his 23 May 1977 environmental message to Congress recommended that Congress designate 158 miles of the Skagit, Cascade, Sauk, and Suiattle Rivers as part of the nation's wild and scenic river system. However, the designation of the Skagit River upstream from Sedro Woolley as "recreational" should not affect our present studies. Coordination has been started with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for additional studies of fish and wildlife resources in the Skagit basin associated with the proposed plan. Recent correspondence with the FWS indicates concerns regarding the grazing of cattle on levee slopes revegetation to enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and a general clean-up of debris to facilitate passage of flood water. Concerns of the FWS and other agencies and groups will be addressed during preparation of the General Design Memorandum.

- b. One of the major factors affecting this project, as originally formulated, was that the Avon Bypass Project, authorized by the 1936 Flood Control Act, would be constructed as a part of an overall Skagit Valley flood control plan. Because of marginal economic justification and little public support for the construction of the bypass, it is unlikely that construction will occur in the near future. The Seattle District is currently considering the Deauthorization of the Avon Bypass Project. Based on present information, it appears that the Avon Bypass should remain authorized at this time pending the completion of the levee and Channel Improvement Project. The scope and design for the Levees and Channel Improvement Project must be partially reformulated. Under current criteria and guidance, higher level protection should be provided to the urban areas of Mt. Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro Woolley than is contained in the authorized plan. Protection for agricultural lands provided by the authorized plan in the lower reaches of the Skagit River is probably adequate.
- c. At the time the authorized Levee and Channel Improvement Project was formulated in the mid-1960's. Increased flood protection for urban areas did not appear feasible. However, during the last decade, urbanization has increased considerably and the scope and level of flood damage reduction should be reevaluated for the urban areas. Local interests have expressed a strong desire for higher level flood protection for the urban areas of Mount Vernon and Burlington. Current guidance suggests up to standard project flood protection be considered for urban and suburban areas. In order to accommodate this need for considering a higher level of flood protection for urban areas, more extensive surveys, foundation investigations, hydrology, hydraulic and economic studies will be required than were previously anticipated.

3. Classification of Phase I Study and Discussion of Completion Time Objective.

At the present time, I expect that the General Design Memorandum will provide a reaffirmation of the lower portion of the project in the agricultural areas, and a reformulation of the upstream reaches to provide greater protection to the urban areas of Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro Woolley. The General Design Memorandum may be divided into two sections. For the downstream section Phase I and Phase II studies will be carried out concurrently. For the upstream section Phase I studies will be undertaken. Open approval of the General Design Memorandum, Plans and Specifications will be prepared for the downstream section, with this portion of the project under construction within one year of GDM submittal. Concurrently a Phase II Feature Design Memorandum would be prepared for the upstream portion of the project to establish the optimum levee height and alignment prior to the preparation of plans and specifications. This procedure will not unnecessarily delay the downstream work, and will allow time for greater study of the more complex Mount Vernon and Burlington areas.

4. Recommendation

I recommend approval of the Plan of Study.