

1 November 1978

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit Levee and Channel Improvements - Meeting with Skagit  
County Officials

1. On 27 October 1978, a meeting was held with officials from Skagit County to discuss progress on the Skagit Levee and Channel Improvements project. Those in attendance were:

Gene Sampley	Skagit County Engineer
Don Nelson	Skagit County Assistant Construction Engineer.
Ray Skrinde	Skagit County Consultant
Vern Cook	Corps of Engineers, Design Branch
Forest Brooks	Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch
Dennis Feten (part time)	Corps of Engineers, Design Branch
Pam Langfeldt (part time)	Corps of Engineers, Design Branch
Walt Robinson (part time)	Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch
Jim Newman (part time)	Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch

2. We discussed the FY 1979 Appropriations Bill and the 1978 Omnibus Bill. President Carter signed the substitute FY 1979 Appropriations Bill and this will cause no impact on the Skagit project. The Omnibus Bill, which contained additional legislation for the Skagit project, did not pass Congress this session. Therefore, we have reviewed our assumptions for this project and considered five different ways to proceed:

- a. Prepare the general design memorandum (GDM) as we have been and wait early next year for the legislation to be passed.
- b. Proceed with the GDM and submit it as a postauthorization change (PAC).
- c. Activate the Avon Bypass project and then use the combined authorities to proceed with the GDM.
- d. Proceed with the GDM and submit a significant postauthorization change (S-PAC).
- e. Divide the project into two separate GDMs, one involving a PAC and one involving a S-PAC. We told the county officials that we had discussed these options within our office and with the District Engineer

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and we are proceeding to prepare the GDM and environmental impact statement (EIS) based on the determination that we have a post-authorization change. This will permit us to maintain our schedules as previously discussed and will maintain a construction start in FY 1980.

3. Mr. Feten and Ms. Langfeldt gave a presentation outlining possible landscaping treatments for this project. In general, landscaping would be confined to specific areas where there is public access and a need to alleviate the impact of the levee or floodwall: such as the Lions' Park and the parking lot on the left bank, the west Mount Vernon area on the right bank, public access points, and areas where the levee parallels the existing arterial roads. **At Lions Park we are evaluating several alternative measures including an embankment levee with overbuilt sections, a normal floodwall on the riverside of the park, a floodwall near the parking lot, and a flop-up floodwall such as built by Vicksburg District.** In the parking lot area, the main landscaping techniques could include texturing the wall and providing planting areas adjacent to the levee itself. The possibility of bike trails was discussed. However, it appears that only limited use can be made of the bike trails at this time - probably from downtown Mount Vernon through the Lions' Park area. The plantings throughout the rest of the levee system would be confined to areas of public access, either along or across the levee system itself. However, if the county did not wish landscape areas they can be removed from our plans. Mr. Nelson provided maps showing land ownerships at public access sites for our use in evaluating whether any measures are feasible at those sites.

4. We then discussed how the county would fund the project and whether they intended to work out agreements with the other legal jurisdictions. The county said that they would like to get agreements with the cities; however, they foresaw some problems but would work on it. We gave them a list of questions which Economic and Social Evaluation Section desired answered for input to the GDM. These questions dealt with how the county was going to raise cash for their part of the project and, if bonds are issued, details concerning the county's bonding limit and other bonds currently outstanding. The county inquired concerning the 50-year repayment provisions which they had heard the Corps had instituted for some projects. We then discussed the Wenatchee Canyons 1 and 2 project and problems involved with the 50-year repayment. Mr. Skrinde will provide the county officials copies of information which outlines the Corps position on the use of HUD or HEW money as part of the local share on flood control projects.



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5. We then discussed the problems associated with cattle grazing on the levee itself and outlined options available to reduce the impact. These could include: fencing to prevent the cattle from grazing in the levee and permit access across only at small areas, use flatter sideslopes on the levee such as 5 or 6 to 1, or using a higher than normal operation and maintenance cost. In general, the county seemed to be in agreement that the higher operation and maintenance cost was probably most preferable. However, they wanted to discuss the situation and see which options would be most beneficial at specific locations.

6. We then discussed the analysis of interior drainage on the project and explained that we were trying to insure the protection provided by the river levees would not be negated by interior runoff that would flood the same land without a levee break. Our analysis may show that some ponding areas may be required as part of the project and the county may have to provide the land for the ponding areas. We have not completed our analysis and we will provide the county the information on this when we have developed it. We also discussed whether we would require the county to obtain flowage easements for all the lands outside of the levee where some floods may be increased by the project. In general, easements of this type probably will not be required.

7. We then discussed upcoming meetings on the Skagit project. Mr. Sampley asked if we could attend the next meeting of the Skagit Flood Control Council on the evening of 1 November in Mount Vernon. We told them that we could attend. (Subsequent to the meeting, Mr. Nelson requested that we brief the county commissioners prior to the meeting with the flood control council.) We discussed the planned trip of General Wells to the Skagit area on 8 November and arranged with the county to meet for lunch at Lighthouse restaurant in LaConner. If the county officials can find the time, they are welcome to come along on our tour of the area. Mr. Sampley said that things were beginning to happen quite fast on this project and he would like to have a meeting next Friday, 3 November, to provide us some input to some of the questions which we had raised. They will discuss with the county commissioners and other local interests some of the concepts we were developing.

cc:

McKinley Ch, Des Br/Cook  
Jump Ch, Hydraulics  
Ch, Plng Br Ch, H&H Br BROOKS  
Ch, Eng Div Ch, Hydrology  
Ch, ERS Ch, Real Est Div  
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