

12 December 1978

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: The Skagit River Levee Project - Meeting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss the Downstream Project and the Fish and Wildlife Report

1. Purpose. Copies of the downstream project plates and accompanying narrative were forwarded to the Fish and Wildlife Service the week of 27 November 1978 for their use in preparation of the fish and wildlife report for the subject project. On 7 December 1978 Mr. Bob Wunderlich, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, met with Ms. Karen Mettling at Seattle District to discuss the downstream project and some ideas for mitigation.

2. Discussion. Mr. Wunderlich had specific questions regarding the alignment, levee D, from stations 20 to 30 at Fisher Slough; plantings on riprap; and the gravel toppings shown on the plates. Ms. Mettling said she would look into these questions and get back to him on 8 December 1978.

Ms. Mettling pointed out that ways were being explored to reduce the amount of mitigation necessary by moving the levee alignments landward in certain locations to avoid encroachment on the riparian zone, and thus to lessen the impact of the project to fish and wildlife. Specific locations mentioned were: Station 1120-1060, LBSF; 314-300, 270-284, and 120-100, LBNF. She also explained that the landward levee at the end of Freshwater Slough would be improved instead of the riverward levee.

In addition to mitigation plantings in certain of the areas where riprap placement will result in removal of shoreline vegetation (for example: RBSF, stations 137-153), Ms. Mettling and Mr. Wunderlich discussed possible improvements to the Game Department levees in the Skagit wildlife recreation area as a form of mitigation. The Game Department maintains this area in cereal crops for waterfowl. Many of their dikes are in disrepair and as a result they are losing what was once productive farm land. Two areas where the Game Department has suggested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers might improve those dikes as part of fish and wildlife mitigation for the subject project

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include the riverward levee at the end of Freshwater Slough and particular levees on Milltown Island. Ms. Mettling informed Mr. Wunderlich that before these ideas could be further considered, details would be necessary regarding which dikes, costs, what type of repairs, what the repairs would do to satisfy the objective of the fish and wildlife mitigation plan, what losses to fish and wildlife (for example: productivity) are currently being incurred and in the future will be incurred should these areas not be improved, and when and if the Game Department plans to repair these dikes.

Other ideas for mitigation discussed were the establishment of a preservation area where the land is currently reverting to wetlands on the right bank of the North Fork just south of the North Fork bridge around Station 1000 and the reestablishment of a riparian vegetation zone on the left bank of the South Fork on Georgia Pacific Corporation's island (Stations 1150-1040).

Mr. Wunderlich and Ms. Mettling also discussed the due date of the fish and wildlife report. Mr. Wunderlich said that with the holidays he is going to have a difficult, if not impossible, time getting it typed and reviewed by 29 December 1978, the current due date. Ms. Mettling pointed out that she understood the situation, however, we needed the report that week or even earlier to input it to the General Design Memorandum and Environmental Impact Statement under preparation. A compromise was reached that he would get us what he had in preliminary form by 29 December with the official draft report due on 5 January 1979.

3. On 8 December 1978, Ms. Mettling talked to Design Branch and Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch regarding Mr. Wunderlich's questions and then provided Mr. Wunderlich with the following information:

a. Although we would have to look at site specifics, generally planting on the riprap could be taken down to the ten-year flood event (approximately 5 to 6 feet).

b. The use of the words "gravel toppings" as shown on the downstream plates for the subject project is misleading. Actually, the topping will be a mixture of gravel and soil capable of sustaining grass.

c. The contractors for the downstream project will be told to examine the possibility of adjusting the alignment at Stations 20-30 levee D, Fishers Slough, to avoid removal of vegetation.

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4. Other Coordination. To keep the resource agencies informed and to enable them to prepare for the January 1979 mitigation workshop that is planned by the Corps of Engineers, copies of the downstream plates and text were sent to the Washington Department of Fisheries, the Washington Department of Game, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Skagit System Cooperative. Departments of Fisheries and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service all provide input to the fish and wildlife report. Department of Fisheries and the National Marine Fisheries Service have both furnished input to the design of the box culvert for adequate fish passage at Fishers Slough. Copies of this input have been provided Hydrology and Hydraulics and Design Branch.

KAREN METTLING
Environmental Resources Section

cc:

Dice

Bush/Mettling

~~Brooks (Regional Plng)~~

Cook (Design Br)

Scudder/Jump (Design Br)

H&H (Regan/Ristau/Wagner)

ERS RP File (Skagit River Levees)

RB file OFFICE