

Flood committee OKs control plan

MOUNT VERNON — Members of the Skagit River Flood Control Committee gave overwhelming approval Thursday night to subcommittee recommendations hashed out in the course of 11 months of work.

Committee members were appointed last October by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners. They were charged with the task of designing a flood control program and designating a floodway to meet requirements by the federal government.

With their floodway designation assignment behind them, members of the committee met Thursday night to review final subcommittee recommendations on flood control.

Their floodway proposal, which was to establish a "restricted density floodplain," was forwarded last month to the Board of Commissioners because of pressing federal deadlines.

County officials in turn forwarded the floodway proposal to city officials for their review in hopes all entities can agree to a mutual recommendation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Establishment of a floodway has been ordered by FEMA officials to meet federal eligibility requirements for subsidized flood insurance.

The restricted density floodplain proposal said, "...approximately 25 percent of the flow area (downstream from Sedro-Woolley) kept at its current elevation,

would accommodate the flood flow."

That proposal would prohibit property owners in the delta from altering 25 percent of their land in any way that would restrict the flow of floodwater.

Still top on the list of the committee's flood control recommendations is a call for a feasibility study on a containment dam on the Sauk River.

Serious obstacles to that proposal include fish enhancement concerns, Indian fishing rights and restrictions attached to establishment of the federal Wild and Scenic River System.

Despite these obstacles, the committee has consistency defended the Sauk dam proposal as the most logical approach to total flood control in Skagit County.

Other committee recommendations include:

— Constructing a floodwater bypass only as an alternative to a Sauk River dam.

— Requesting aid from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in clearing numerous logjams on the river.

— Assessing the ability of existing dikes to withstand 50-year floodwater levels and asking Skagit County commissioners to set aside \$400,000 annually for a river improvement fund to be matched on a project basis with funds from dike districts.

Committee member Arnold Hansen said the committee will spend the next month compiling reports and final recommendations before forwarding them to the Board of Commissioners.

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