

Statement of Agreement of the Skagit Flood Risk Management Working Group

In July of 2000, over 20 people came together at the first meeting of the Skagit County Flood Risk Management Working Group (Working Group). The participants represented dike districts, local towns, farmers, Skagit County (County), Tribes, environmental groups, federal and state agencies and the Corps of Engineers (Corps). Our goal was to examine the potential alternatives for flood risk management along the Skagit River and identify our preferred alternative. Our input and other public comments would assist the County in its decision-making process.

During the process, we moved through the three phases: first, we established a common basis of information; second, we discussed viable alternatives of interest to the working group; and third, we identified the preferred alternatives from the perspective of those in the Working Group. During the first phase, we brainstormed 22 flood risk management techniques to learn about. The topics that we focused on were: overtopping levees, storage, levee setbacks, dredging, dams, bypasses, and the effects of these approaches on the environment including potential effects on federally listed species and their habitat. We learned about the history, biology and hydrology of the river from local experts. We examined flood events and discussed the potential pros and cons of various flood risk management options.

Several members of the group worked with the County and the Corps to identify specific Alternatives for which the Working Group would like more information. These seven Alternatives included: a large Swinomish diversion; a smaller Swinomish diversion combined with levee setbacks; overtopping; selected overtopping with ring dikes; levee setbacks; a Samish diversion; and a northern Swinomish diversion along Highway 20.

From the perspective of those in the Working Group, the two most interesting Alternatives are:

- **Levee Setbacks.** By setting back the levees along the Skagit 1,000 feet, the river channel could hold a 100-year flood. Old riprap would be removed and the new levees would be protected by riprap and toe rock.
- **Swinomish Diversion.** This Alternative consists of a diversion channel that is 2,000 feet wide and can hold 80,000 cfs. The diversion will be either along Highway 20 or within a mile south of the Highway. The best location for a Swinomish diversion will be determined through additional studies, modeling and discussions with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

We understand that you will continue to consult the public and consider information from resource agencies. Nonetheless, the consensus in the Working Group is that these two Alternatives hold promise and we suggest that the County consider identifying them as

“Preferred Alternatives” for the purpose of the EIS analysis. We wish to thank the County for taking our input into account as it moves ahead with planning and further public consultation.