

Skagit Flood Risk Management Working Group Draft Meeting Notes

July 24, 2001

The eighth meeting of the Skagit County Flood Risk Management Working Group (Working Group) was held Tuesday, July 24, 2001 at the Cottontree Inn in Mount Vernon at 10:30 AM and followed by a lunch at noon. An attendance list is included in Attachment 1.

Discussion of the Executive Summary

Valerie Lee, the **facilitator** from Environment International Ltd. welcomed the participants and suggested that the group begin by reviewing the Executive Summary of the Working Group proceedings that had been sent to participants prior to the meeting. She asked if there were any revisions.

Lou Ellyn Jones had several comments. First, she felt uncomfortable with the statement that the Working Group had come to agreement on the two identified alternatives mentioned in the document. **She did not believe that there had been full agreement. In particular, she believed that the implications of the alternatives for floodplain development and Executive Order 11988 had not been thoroughly discussed.** Second, **Lou Ellyn** suggested that the description of the alternatives should be broader. For example, Alternative 5 is described as having 1,000-foot setbacks along the river. She suggested that studies might show that straight 1,000 foot setbacks are not as beneficial as setbacks with bulges. For both alternatives, she said the current language creates a false impression that the alternatives are inflexible. Third, **Lou Ellyn** thought the description of the alternatives should have some option for Skagit County (County) and the Corps of Engineers (Corps) to combine two alternatives. Fourth, the Executive Summary currently does not mention serious concerns that the resource agencies have raised. If it is to be an accurate summary of the proceedings, these potential “showstoppers” should be recorded. Despite her concerns, **Lou Ellyn** did agree with the statement at the end of the Executive Summary that the two alternatives hold promise.

There was a discussion about how to accommodate **Lou Ellyn**’s concerns. Some language could be added in the section entitled “Phase 2” about the resource agencies’ concerns. **Dave Burdick** suggested that the statement should mention the environmental impact statement (EIS) process and the next steps, especially as they pertain to public involvement. Another suggestion from **Larry Kunzler** was that the summary could reference the document, developed by Mike Scuderi, that listed the agencies’ concerns.

Lou Ellyn said that she did not want to attempt to revise the document at the current time. Although she could not agree to the alternatives as written, she did not believe that

an agreement was far away. She believed that it was premature to be as specific as the Executive Summary had been.

Stephen Pierce responded that in his view, the identification of preferred alternatives would not be premature because the next step in the process would be to begin the development of an EIS, which needs to list preferred alternatives. Both the County and the Corps had identified the same two alternatives as potential preferred alternatives.

Dave Burdick responded to **Lou Ellyn's** concerns regarding development in the floodplain and stressed the existing requirement that the Corps examine all the possible alternatives in light of their impact on development in the floodplain. He agreed that the County and the Corps need to deal with the issue of development because he believed that the residents did not want the Skagit Valley to be overdeveloped. If a "showstopper" is discovered during the EIS, another alternative may be selected as preferred or another alternative may be implemented. He added that it is the responsibility of the resource agencies to ensure that the Corps is doing the evaluation necessary regarding floodplain development. Todd agreed that many of these issues would be worked out in the EIS.

Lou Ellyn agreed, but wanted the Executive Summary to accurately reflect the agreements that had been reached and allow for more flexibility in alternative design. **Dave** suggested a paragraph be added addressing the next steps of the process and acknowledging the potential for additional concerns arising.

Dave Brookings suggested that the agencies' concerns would be captured in a letter they were currently preparing for the County and the Corps regarding the Skagit flood risk management alternatives. He wanted the process to move forward and wondered if the letter and ensuing EIS process would provide sufficient input for resource agencies and others with continuing concerns. He asked if the Working Group wanted to give a presentation to the Commissioners themselves or whether they would rather have the County present the information on behalf of the group. Several members expressed willingness to meet with the Commissioners. However, the Working Group participants said they would first like to work out a summary, approved by the group, that could be circulated to garner support for the flood risk management planning process.

The **facilitator** recalled that the group had made tremendous progress. **Bob Boudinot** agreed and stressed that the Executive Summary was very important because it will shape public opinion and be used to garner public support. **Lou Ellyn** agreed that the Executive Summary should be a statement to the public memorializing the efforts of the Working Group. She stressed therefore, the importance of accuracy in the record. She liked the idea of more emphasis on the EIS process in the Executive Summary.

The **facilitator** offered to take the comments from this meeting into account and create a second draft of the Executive Summary. She asked how the participants wanted to approve it. The Working Group agreed that the new draft could be sent out over e-mail, any corrections could be suggested and then a final draft could be sent to the participants

for their approval. If there are still differing opinions, the differences could be documented.

Draft June 25 Notes

The **facilitator** asked if anyone had changes to the draft notes from Working Group meeting on June 25, 2001. **Jackie Vander Veen** commented that a date was incorrect, and **Leonard Halverson** pointed out that his name had been omitted from a vote. The corrections were noted, and the Working Group approved the notes.

Conclusion

The **facilitator** thanked the Working Group members for their participation, hard work and valuable insights throughout the entire process. **Dave Brookings** expressed his gratitude to the group and to **Valerie Lee** for her skillful facilitation. **Dave Brookings** said that he would call on the group and members of the group as needed to help with public support and the ongoing process.

Jackie Vander Veen presented **Valerie Lee** with a letter of thanks from the Skagit County Commissioners for her valuable facilitation of the Working Group.

Following the meeting, Commissioner **Ken Dahlstedt** and County Administrator **Roy Atwood** joined the Working Group for a buffet lunch.

Skagit Flood Risk Management Working Group

July 24, 2001 Attendance List

Name	Affiliation	Contact Information Changes
Bob Boudinot	Mount Vernon	
Dave Burdick	Department of Ecology	
Donald Dixon	Skagit County Public Works	
Curt Wylie	Dike District #22	
Richard Smith	Dike District #3	
Todd Harrison	WSDOT	
Leonard Halverson	Upriver	
Larry Kunzler	Citizen	
Lou Ellyn Jones	USFWS	
Dave Brookings	Skagit County	
Brendan Brokes	WDFW	
Jacqueline Vander Veen	Skagit County Public Works	
Stephen Pierce	Army Corps of Engineers	