

Critical Period Due In This Afternoon

Lowland areas in the Skagit County will face their most critical period during the present flood threat this afternoon and evening, according to the county engineer's office.

With the Skagit River due to crest at 25.5 feet in Mount Vernon shortly after noon today there was still no immediate relief in sight. Associate County Engineer W. R. Whitnall figures that the crest will be of long duration, further weakening the already water-saturated dikes.

There were, however, two bright aspects to the flood picture:

Hard-toiling sandbaggers were holding their own in their desperate efforts to support the dikes holding back the angry waters.

Re-figure Crest

And the weather bureau's electronic brain in Portland had re-figured the expected Skagit crest and lowered its forecast from the 27 feet at Mount Vernon which it originally had predicted for this morning.

However, both Seattle City Light's Ross Dam and Puget Sound Power and Light's Baker River Dam were holding back enough water to cut the crest 1.5 feet.

Ross Dam was purchasing power from the Bonneville Power Administration to supply its lines. Stream flow at the dam was reported to be something on the order of a small creek.

While the Skagit was rolling through the valley today, hundreds of volunteer workers piled sandbags along the dikes to keep the lowlands from flooding.

The most critical point was at Ted Lundeen's Fresh Water Slough dike, which broke during the flood last week. Some 12,000 sandbags had been placed on top of the dirt fill to keep the rising waters back.

Volunteer workers from as far away as Seattle joined the gigantic effort. Skagit Valley Junior College suspended classes today and many high school students were busy filling and carrying bags at Conway. Mount Vernon Jaycees worked until 4 a.m. today at the Lundeen place.

Sailors Help

Weary workers in the Conway-Fir Island area were cheered by the sight of 250 sailors from Whidbey Island Naval Air Station this morning. Part of the Navy men were dispatched to aid in filling and carrying bags at Lundeens and others were bound for Conway and Fisher's Slough.

Emergency workers from the 13th Coast Guard District in Seattle were on hand with mobile radio equipment and a large duck. Six flood punts with outboard motors were due to arrive in the area from Oregon this afternoon along with more Coast Guardsmen.

Sandwiches, doughnuts, and hot coffee were being served to volunteer workers in Conway by the American Legion and the Red Cross.

Elsewhere in the county the water threatened to come through the dike behind the fire hall in Conway, but was plugged quickly with sand bags by volunteer workers.

Earlier this morning there was a break through at Fisher's Slough, two miles south of Conway. Crews from the county engineer's department and volunteers stopped the break in time.

Remove Stock

Farm families in the Nookachamps Valley took their stock out yesterday morning and afternoon as the waters crept upwards. The Nookachamps road was closed this morning as was the old Mount Vernon - Clear Lake road.

Upriver there were water troubles too yesterday and last night.

Highway 17A was inundated at several points.

River water was reported in the Hamilton School yard after that community had been isolated when a culvert on the last access road was washed out.

Sedro-Woolley Police Officers Ted Jackson and Maurice Davis used a row boat to rescue one couple stranded in their home on Clear Lake Road southwest of that city.