

SKAGIT RIVER IMPACT PARTNERSHIP – STEERING COMMITTEE  
Minutes from April 12, 2007

Present: Mike Anderson, Eron Berg, Chal Martin, Jana Hanson, John Smith, Chuck Bennett, Daryl Hamburg, Gary Jones, Bud Norris, Dave Olson, Ken Dahlstedt, Esco Bell, Kevin Rogerson, Kate Moser (SVH), Jon Aarstad, Bob Jungquist, and Judy Sheahan

**Call to order:**

**Jon Aarstad** called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. in the Burlington City Hall Conference Room.

1.0 Updates:

1.1 NHC Report: Comparison with the PIE Conclusions

**Martin** presented a review of the NHC Report in relation to studies done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Pacific International Engineering (PIE). He noted that the December 2005 final report by PIE suggested that 246,300 cfs is the historic unregulated peak flow at Concrete. The NHC report suggested 240,000 – 250,000 cfs. The two reports are very close in the end result of the studies. He made the point that the U.S. COE hydrology is too conservative when compared to these studies which results in much higher 100 year flood elevation predictions.

He also noted that the COE modeling suggests that a 100-year storm event would produce 9,000 cfs in the Nookachamps for a 24 hour period. He doubts the likelihood of this happening as the study is based on five (5) inches of rain within that 24 hour period, in the lower valley. That rate of rainfall often happens in the upper valley and mountain areas, but has never been reported in the lower valley areas.

**Dalhstedt** encouraged the SRIP members to continue to work in a positive manner with COE as they move forward with the GI study. He indicated that if we argue against the COE hydrology that it could affect future funding for the PL99 program. He suggested that we continue to gather data that will support arguments for lower flood elevation levels so that if challenges to the final elevations are necessary, we will have important data to support the challenge.

**Norris** referred to recent articles in the Daily Journal of Commerce regarding the draft FEMA floodplain maps. He commented on a quote by Congressman Rick Larsen that he is hopeful that COE will hold off on final flood maps so that the most accurate data will be used in determining

flood elevation levels. **Norris** sees it as a hopeful sign that the NHC and PIE reports will be considered by COE in their GI study.

- 1.2 Concrete Shoreline Substantial Development Permit for PSE  
**Shultz** gave a review of the meeting this past Monday evening at Concrete. The Concrete City Council heard arguments from attorneys representing dike districts and other cities. Concrete approved the permit with a unanimous vote of the council. He noted that the council didn't seem at all interested in looking through the documents presented or the public comments submitted. A court hearing is scheduled for May 4, 2007 to hear arguments regarding the original process in which the County ceded any jurisdiction in this matter to Concrete.
- 1.3 Hamilton Smith House Investigation  
**Martin** stated that next Thursday (April 19, 2007) he will return to the Smith house in Hamilton to begin forensic studies of flood history evidence. He also has plans for some hydraulic modeling of the Hamilton reach.
- 1.4 PSE Litigation  
This was discussed under 1.2 above.
- 1.5 FEMA Schedule to Release Maps  
**Martin** stated that he expects the release of the preliminary maps to occur in June. If there are no appeals the maps would go into effect in December 2007. If appeals are made, then following that process, final maps would probably be issued and put into place in 2008. **Anderson** asked if any of the recent maps sent out by COE included areas east of Highway 9. **Martin** said he would check with COE about such maps. (Note: this check was made. Upriver maps are not available and there is no schedule to produce them.)
- 1.6 BNSF Bridge Debris Study  
**Martin** stated that there is no information at this time.
- 1.7 City/Dike District Project Updates  
**Hamburg** stated that DD#17 has nothing new to report. They are checking the status of the Larsen Earmark.  
**Norris** stated that the City of Mount Vernon continues to move forward with redevelopment of downtown with adequate flood protection. They are looking at the possible purchase of riverfront area (Main Street) properties. The proposed flood wall would then be placed on Main Street rather than around the west side of the river front buildings, as in the past. The City continues to look for other funding sources for flood prevention.  
**Martin** noted that the State of Washington has the biggest interest of any single party because of I-5 proximity to the Skagit River. **Jones** noted that

I-5 is not mentioned in the COE studies. He suggested that DOT needs to be involved in the resulting FEMA maps.

**DD1 Bob Jungquist** stated that his biggest concern is West Mount Vernon and that a dike setback is a better idea than a by-pass.

**DD3 Dave Olson** will be working near the sewer treatment plant as well as widening the dikes and slope of the dikes.

1.8 Report from Dr. Hromadka

**Martin** stated that he and Rick Balir spoke with Dr. Hromadka last week, Dr. Hromadka is looking at the issue from a purely statistical point of view. **Martin** noted that his approach seems fine – his strength is statistics. Dr. Hromadka has not yet completed the draft report. **Martin** stated that he expects a draft report in a couple of weeks that will focus on historic flood information using data from the NHC and PIE reports.

2.0 Issues:

2.1 How Should the SRIP Follow Up on the NHC Report?

2.1.1 Should County continue with the GI Study using flawed hydrology?

2.1.2 Can “discussions” be initiated with USGS, COE in accordance with NHC recommendations?

2.1.3 Is more technical analysis needed or should it be recommended to the County that we all embrace the PIE H&H which has been validated by NHC?

2.1.4 What letters should go out to highlight the NHC results and to whom?

**Hamburg** stated that it is important to “hang together” and to not back off from our position. SRIP has credibility and validity. The NHC and PIE studies have been very helpful. He noted that these reports along with information relating to the Smith house in Hamilton will be very important if we have to go through an appeal process.

**Rogerson** stated that the FEMA process is one in which each jurisdiction has an opportunity to submit requests, appeals, etc. He noted SRIP is not recognized by FEMA; so the individual groups (county, cities, tribes, etc.) must continue to move forward.

**Martin** discussed the river gage location at Hamilton. He noted that Albert Liou said the gage location was wrong, this has since been validated and when corrected we would remove 20,000 cfs from the study results.

No one wants FEMA to rush to a decision that will result in time and expense.

**Martin** stated that he is drafting a report comparing NHC, PIE and Dr. Hromadka’s reports which he hopes will be helpful.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.