

FLOOD FIGHT EXERCISE

The Skagit County Engineer's Department held a flood fight meeting at the Skagit County Administration Building on the evening of January 4, 1979. The purpose of this meeting was to gather those agencies directly involved in flood fighting together and for these agencies to become better acquainted with each other and better understand their respective functions during a flood fight. To become aware of the help available from other agencies, to establish better communications between these agencies involved and to generally improve the flood fighting ability of all the agencies.

The meeting was well attended by representatives from the Dike Districts, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Skagit County Department of Emergency Services, Fire Districts, City of Burlington, City of Lyman, the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Skagit County Engineer's Department.

The Skagit County Engineer's Department reported that upon being alerted by the U. S. Wather Bureau of a pending flooding condition, the Engineering Department will notify the local agencies of this condition. The Department will begin recording the Skagit River gauges each 1/2 hour at both the Concrete and Riverside gauges. The Department will proceed with mobilizing its forces for a pending flood fight. Department personnel have been assigned to the different sectors of the river. These sectors coincide with the sectors assigned by Army Corps of Engineers personnel. These sectors are the various Dike District boundaries. Their duties are to report conditions to the Engineer's flood fight headquarters at the Engineer's office and assist in the flood fight of their sector. Men and equipment from the Skagit County Road Department will assist the flood fight as needed. Skagit County will post the County Roads as they are overtopped and relay this information. As the Skagit County Engineer's Department will probably have the best overall information concerning the flood fight they are your best source.

It has been agreed that each agency will communicate on their own radio frequency. Communications between the various agencies will be by telephone. Should the telephones become inoperative, communications will be by use of the Emergency Flood Control frequency of Skagit County. It must be noted that should this means of communications become necessary, this frequency will have heavy traffic and messages will need to be brief.

The problem of the misuse of sandbags was addressed. In past flood fights unauthorized persons were obtaining large amounts of sandbags causing the supply to diminish to the point that none were available to continue the flood fight in those areas of high priority. A policy has been agreed upon by Skagit County and the Army Corps of Engineers to the effect that the Corps will not issue sandbags unless authorized by their sector man or the Skagit County Engineers Department.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers reported on their involvement and the extent of their ability to assist in a flood fight. The Corps cannot participate in a flood fight until the river has reached the flood stage (this is considered to be 27.6 feet on the Riverside gauge) however, upon receiving the flood alert, a small crew will start setting up the Corps Skagit County Headquarters so that assistance may begin as soon as the river reaches flood stage. As the river reaches flood stage, the Corps will advise and assist the County in the flood fight. The Corps has the ability to rent

equipment and purchase materials to assist the flood fight at no cost to Skagit County. The Corps is limited to renting construction equipment only. That is to say, such equipment as pick-ups and flat bed trucks are not acceptable rental equipment. Should the County exhaust its ability to effectively fight the flood, the Corps will take over the flood fight as their resources are virtually unlimited. At that time when the flood waters start to recede, the Corps must cease its flood fight operation. The Army Corps of Engineers has the ability to assist in the repair of those flood control structures damaged by the flood. The Corps was asked how many telephones they have available and are their numbers listed. Answer: The Corps will have 4 telephones. The Corps phone numbers will be broadcast over the local radio station (KBRC) and available from the Skagit County Engineer's office. One telephone will remain unlisted.

The Corps was asked would radios on their frequency be available to other agencies. The answer was no, as this causes a communication problem with too much congestion on the Corps frequency. Contact can be made by telephone, through the Corps sector man, or through Skagit County Engineers.

The Skagit County Department of Emergency Services reported that it has equipment, materials, and manpower available to assist in flood fighting. Emergency Services has facilities available for those persons displaced. They include housing and food. The Department also has a working relationship with the U. S. Navy for assistance in flood fighting.

Dike District No. 12 reported that this district has an agreement with the Burlington Fire Department for flood fighting. Upon receiving an alert of pending flood conditions firemen are assigned areas of the dike to patrol. Flood fighting headquarters is set up at the Burlington Fire Hall and a staging area for delivery and filling sandbags.

It has been found that the filling of sandbags at a central location and then transporting the filled bags to those areas needing protection is more effective than filling the sandbags at the site where the bags are to be placed. Dike District #12 feels organization and communication are paramount in a flood fight.

The meeting was opened to questions from the floor. The first question was who calls for an area to be evacuated and what are the procedures? The Skagit County Sheriff's office was not represented at the meeting, but it is generally felt this is a police function. (The Skagit County Engineers will substantiate this). It was stated by the Army Corps of Engineers that evacuation was not one of their primary functions. However, the Corps is authorized to help save lives and property during a flood fight.

The question of who determines when evacuation should take place. This is not a decision that is made by any one person or agency. As conditions proceed toward evacuation, all agencies involved will communicate with each other and the determination will be made from their input. As the Skagit County Engineers Department is the flood control coordinating agency, they will announce evacuation is to take place and proceed with the evacuation plan as determined by those agencies involved in the area to be evacuated.

The question of what is the availability of sand was asked. Skagit County has sand available at Butler Pit or Inman Pit. It is felt that the pit location with a loader and operator is best at one or two places rather than strung out across the County. By this means, those needing sand are assured of a source and available equipment. This information can be obtained from the Skagit County Engineer's office.

The questions of do volunteers get paid was asked. To-date no volunteers have been paid in a flood fight. It has not been the policy to pay volunteers in the past.

The question of who is liable for injury to volunteers and damage to equipment incurred in a flood fight was asked. If the party involved with an injury or damage is not covered by his own insurance, the County has liability insurance to cover these situations. Names of volunteers and the time and place of their assignment should be recorded.

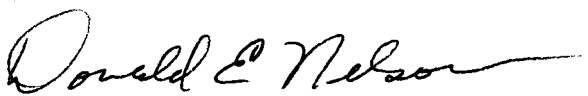
The question of what could be done concerning sightseers was asked. This is a law enforcement problem. It was stated in 1975 that Fir Island was successfully controlled, but most areas are not as easy to control.

The question of where the various Dike District staging areas are located was asked. No complete answer was available at meeting time.

This information has been obtained and is as follows:

1. Dike District #1 - McLean Road Fire Hall
2. Dike District #2 & 13 - Jerry Stuber farm on Fir Island - 1548 Moore Road
3. Dike District #12 - Dike District property east of Whitmarsh Road south of Burlington.
4. Dike District #15 - Summer's Boathouse - Fir Island - 1171 A Rawlings Road.

Very good participation and exchange of information took place between those agencies attending the meeting. The Skagit County Engineers wishes to thank all of you for attending this meeting and your very helpful participation.



Donald E. Nelson

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FLOOD FIGHT EXERCISE

| NAME | ADDRESS | ORGANIZ. |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Alfred Tellesbo | 1509 Fir Island Rd Mt Vernon | Dike #9 |
| Bennie Anderson | 1410 Moore Rd. Mt. Vernon Wa | Dike #13 |
| Frank Nelson | 1383 Fir Island | Dike Dist B |
| MIKE SWAYNE | 1313 Memorial Hwy | Fire Dist # 2 |
| LOUIE PARKER | 110 S MAIN LYMAN | TOWN OF LYMAN |
| Joe Pullin | 405 Oak Campbell rd, Anacortes | Shagit Co. |
| Jim Beckenly | 1536 Bennett Rd | SKAGIT COUNTY |
| CHET REID | 1930 LAFAYETTE RD SW | " " |
| MIKE LOD | 1209 SO - WALKER BULL. | " " |
| Jack Rafter | P.O. Box 396 Mt Vernon | B. F. D. |
| Ted Banta | 1501-Fairhaven Burlington | Dike 20 |
| Robert G. Thompson | 3608 Francis Road Mt. Vernon | City of Burlington |
| Arnold Hansen | 1511 Polson Rd. Burlington | Dike 12 Comm |
| LLOYD IVEY | 1524 Beavermarsh Rd M.V. | Dike #12 Comm |
| PETER WALKER | 1265 McLean Road | Dike #15 |
| Lawrence Hoffmann | 1197 Marjorie Rd | Dike #21 |
| Jack Lawson | 1304 Fir Island Rd. Mt. Vernon | Dike #21 |
| Alvin Bell | 2060 Fir Island Rd. Mt. Vernon | Dike #21 |
| WINTON OLSON | 1327 FIR ISLAND RD. MOUNT VERNON | Dike #21 |
| Bill Summey | 1188 Ravin Rd Mt. | Dike #15 |
| Matthew M. Paul | 160 Riverbend rd Mt Vernon | Dike 17 |
| Calvin Brown | 731 Chumok Dr Burlington | D.O.T |
| Joseph W GAIN | 2711 Comanche Dr | D.I.E.S. |
| Lo Boy Goot | 1715 Brit Rd Mt Vernon | Dike 3 |
| Long Wronsdal | CONWAY WA. BOX 618 | " 3 |
| Robert Newbill | in this Comp. | C.F.E |
| MONTE KAISER | | C.O.E. |
| Carl Hansen | | Dike 17 |
| GUNS SAMPLON | P.O. Box 396 Mt. Vernon | SKAGIT Co. |