

SKAGIT RIVER FLOOD FIGHT EXERCISE

1979

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, under the direction of Ernie Sabo, Corps Flood Engineer for the Skagit Basin, was held on October 17, 18, and 19, 1979.

On October 17, 1979, Ernie Sabo, Bryon Applebury and Bill Winblade (Corps of Engineers), John Ensley and I made a trip to Hamilton, Shangri-La area to determine the best method to flood fight this area. A temporary berm to protect the Town of Hamilton was constructed down Shangri-La Drive in the flood of 1975. This location displeased several residents of Shangri-La as their homes are on the river side of Shangri-La Drive. A flood easement of 40 feet is located along the right bank of the river through the plat of Shangri-La; however, this easement runs through the yards of these homes. A flood fight could not take place on this easement without considerable distruction to these yards. It was agreed that a meeting of these property owners, the Corps and Skagit County will be held as soon as possible to determine from public input the best location for the flood fight.

On the night of October 18, 1979, a flood fight meeting was held at the Skagit County Administration Building with all agencies involved in the flood fight participating. See attached minutes of that meeting.

On October 19, 1979, a debriefing was held with all Sector Chief's reporting. Their reports were as follows:

Sector "A" - Fir Island

It was noted that several access roads running over the dike were low, as well as the Game Department's access on the Mann Road. These access roads should be sand bagged as soon as possible when flooding is eminent.

Several trees are growing from the river side toe of the dike, just upstream from the Game Department access on the Mann Road. These trees should be removed.

The lock in the gate at the end of the Moore Road is corroded and needs to be freed or replaced for ready access to the dike.

The Fir Island Dike Districts have no sand bags on hand.

Sector "B" - Mouth of the South Fork up-stream along the left bank to Mount Vernon.

Dike #3 Commissioners are concerned with erosion along the left bank just south of the fork. They requested this be looked into for a flood control project.

The area of Fisher's Slough and the State Hwy on SSH 530 is the first probable area to need attention in this Sector. Otherwise, this Sector is in good shape.

Dike District #3 has 10,000 sand bags on hand.

Sector "C" - mouth of the north fork upstream along the right bank to river mile 12.5 (vicinity of Anacortes water plant)

The access at Young's Bar is quite low. It, along with other accesses, should be sand bagged as soon as flooding is eminent.

A red house located at river mile 8.7 was of concern to the Sector Chief and needs investigating.

The construction of a shed at the toe of the new dike at the end of Bradshaw Road was of concern to the Sector Chief.

Dike District #1 Commissioner Mr. Oscar Helde, phone number 424-6639, at 1446 Jungquist Road Mt. Vernon, has the keys to all dike gates in this Sector.

Dike District #1 has no sand bags on hand. It was the recommendation of Donald Nelson, Skagit County Flood Control Manager, that they keep no less than 10,000 sand bags on hand to start the flood fight.

Sector "D" - Left bank of the Skagit River from Mt. Vernon to river mile 23.5 (Sedro Woolley)

This Sector includes the Anacortes Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Sabo and Mr. Applebury, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Donald Nelson, Skagit County, met with Mr. Mike Foster, Anacortes Water Department. This plant is of high concern. They have some sand stock-piled, but not enough. They also have some sand bags on hand. It is recommended that they have 10,000 sand bags on hand. The transformer station for this plant is at ground elevation. It was recommended that this transformer station be raised to dike elevation. Mr. Foster informed us they had requested Puget Power to do this and Puget Power had informed them that it was not necessary. It was the feeling of those present that the transformer station should be raised if for no other reason than the psychological effect it has on the flood fighters. Mr. Mike Foster requested that we approach Puget Power with this suggestion. Mr. Foster also requested that we make the City Council aware of the danger this plant is in from flooding. The Sector Chief requested that the location of all pipes through the dikes and plant area be staked on the ground.

A considerable amount of brush and fences without gates were noted from river mile 16 to the Riverside Bridge. These should be removed to allow ready access along the dike.

Dike District #17 Commissioners stated they had sand bags on hand.

Sector "E" - The right bank of the Skagit River from river mile 14.6 (vicinity of the Anacortes Treatment Plant) to river mile 23.5 (Sedro Woolley)

Locks are corroded and need to be freed or replaced.

The area of the dike along Bennett Road has several fences crossing the dike without gates.

The guardrail at the south of the Pulver Road needs to be reconstructed so as to make it removable for ready access to the dike at this location.

The U.S.G.S. cable crossing just upstream from the I-5 Bridge is so located as to restrict passage along the dike.

A short stretch of the dike in the vicinity of Lawrence Boettcher's, 2010 East Rio Vista, Burlington, needs attention.

An area about 1/2 mile down stream from the LaFayette Road is being used as a salt lick. The cattle have damaged the dike in this area.

Dike District #12 has no sand bags on hand but have agreed to get 10,000 as soon as possible.

Sector "F" - Both banks upriver from Sedro Woolley.

As previously stated, a meeting with Hamilton is scheduled for this problem area.

A short stretch of dike running upstream from the Town of Lyman is in need of attention. Brush has made access along this dike difficult.

The dike running downstream from the section of dike repaired from the 1975 flood on Cockreham Island is over-grown with brush and trees. These trees should be removed.

The staff gauge at Concrete is in bad shape. Attention to this staff gauge is needed as visual reading would be necessary should the automatic reading system fail.

Conclusion:

As a whole, we would appear to be in a good flood fight condition. Most of the above items can be handled under emergency conditions with two exceptions:

1. It is crucial that the Diking Districts have an adequate supply of sand bags on hand. Close attention is needed to correct this deficiency as soon as possible.
2. A firm flood fight plan is necessary for the Town of Hamilton. As stated, action is underway to correct this situation.

A combined report from Skagit County and the Corps of Engineers will be sent to all Diking Commissioners calling attention to the items listed in their Districts.

DONALD E. NELSON

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