

Hopt  
17 July 1963

MEMO FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit River Flood Plain Information Study

1. D. L. Dillon and R. W. Edens spent the work-week of 8-12 July in the Skagit River Basin gathering data and becoming familiar with the study area. Their contacts were as follows:

2. 8 July. -

a. Lloyd Johnson, Skagit County Engineer, was our first contact in Mt. Vernon. We outlined the purpose of our visit and acquainted him with the concept and general contents of the flood plain reports. We questioned him about damages from the 1949 flood and found that the damages were relatively light compared with those of the 1951 flood. He recommended that the 1921 flood be considered for inclusion in the report and said he would send us as much information about it as he could find. He provided information on road damage, levee repairs, levee system, future county construction, subdivision regulations, building code, comprehensive planning by M. G. Pool & Associates, County Planning Commission, flood causes flood warning, flood fighting and evacuation procedures, location of gated culverts, county dikes other than Diking Districts, and Diking District dikes.

b. We attempted to contact the County Agricultural Agent and Civil Defense Director, both of whom were out of their offices. Because of the lack of time, no further attempt was made to see these persons.

c. Mr. A. F. Harms, SCS, supplied information on types of flood damage, flooded area, crop planting trends, ground protection practices and technical assistance from SCS for levee building and bank protection. He showed us a number of photos taken at the time of the flood. In the event that we need further photos, the negatives are located in Portland.

d. We stopped at the ASCS office to get information on SCS work locations and costs but were unable to acquire it. The records keeping practices of their office do not separate the type of work involved. In the event that more time is available on the next trip, Mr. Harms could probably prepare a list of projects involving flood protection. With such a list, the ASCS personnel would be able to give us the costs.

3. 9 July. -

a. We visited the Mt. Vernon City Engineer, Mr. Le Gro, who provided information on the city's building code, zoning ordinance, flood plain restrictions, comprehensive plan by John Graham, sewage disposal system, water supply arrangements with County, flood damages, flood fighting experiences, and new developments encroaching on the flood plain. He provided a city map, a copy of the comprehensive plan prepared by John Graham & Company, and copies of the subdivision and zoning ordinance.

b. Mr. Gene Hopkins, Manager of the Mt. Vernon Chamber of Commerce, provided a copy of "Standard Industrial Survey Summary Report," a brochure prepared for Area Redevelopment Grant, a short verbal summary of the present status of their proposed Padilla Bay industrial park. He gave us two references for further information (1) 1961 Directory of Washington State Manufactures and (2) Manual of Facts for Industrial Development, Skagit County, Washington by Stewart Neil, Puget Sound Power & Light Company.

c. Ben Martin, a Mt. Vernon real estate broker expressed knowledge of only limited recreational development in the upper valley and some home building in the Skagit delta area. There is an informal real estate association in the city but no close organization. He was not familiar with the flood plain zoning concept.

d. Mr. A. S. Polson, Vice President of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association, the Valley's largest lender, was not familiar with flood plain zoning. They had no hesitancy toward lending for building in the low lands. He felt that local loan agencies could not control low land building by withholding money as outside capital is available for that purpose. He gave information on local City and County utility policies which would affect flood plain building.

e. We contacted Diking District Commissioners for Districts 21, 18 and 13 to obtain information on dike breaks, maintenance practices, flood gate locations, levee costs and year of construction, and flood fighting practices. It became apparent that the commissioners did not keep records of these things and that the accuracy of their memories was doubtful.

3. 10. July. -

a. We drove down the South Fork past Milltown and returned taking pictures of the river, levees and bridges. With the exception of a meeting with the County Commissioners, we spent the day observing the lower river system, taking photographs and becoming familiar with the lower Skagit River.

b. We met the three County Commissioners and the County Engineer, and explained the purpose and background of the flood plain information studies and told them about the general contents of the forthcoming Skagit River Report. The Commissioners appeared very interested in the report as it ties in with the general problem of County zoning which they will face next year.

c. The Skagit Valley Herald and the Argus newspaper had accounts of 1921, 1949 and 1951 floods which we summarized. Neither paper had extra copies or photographic negatives which we could acquire.

4. 11 July. -

a. We inspected the Samish River from just above its mouth to the Highway 99 bridge and made photographs of the river, its levees and bridge crossings. We were unable to find evidence of storage on the river other than natural valley storage. The questions about storage originated with Water Control Section.

b. Frank Scews, the Burlington City Supervisor, provided a small-scale city map, a copy of Burlington's comprehensive plan prepared by John Graham and Company, and a copy of the city zoning ordinance. He also gave us information on the city building code, sewage disposal facilities, subdivision regulations, industrial sewage disposal, storm sewer system, city planning commission, and the County water supply PUD.

c. Ted Allen, Sedro Woolley City Supervisor had no extra city maps but promised to send us one in about a month. He gave us information about the city sewage treatment plant, storm and sanitary sewers ~~sections~~, building code, water supply from the County PUD and local industries. He also made it possible for us to get a copy of the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance from the Zoning Commission. The State Hospital is on higher ground than the town and above flood threat. There has been no building near the river for a long time and very little anywhere in town recently. The hospital has an independent water supply system.

d. We inspected the Skagit River from Burlington to Concrete using the South Skagit Highway for access. We photographed the bridges, observed channel characteristics and checked the location and condition of levees.

5. 12 July. -

a. We examined the Skagit River along the right bank from Sedro Woolley upstream to the mouth of Bacon Creek, above Marblemount. We then proceeded up the Cascade River a short distance to investigate a summer home development in the canyon of the river. A total of over 700 lots are planned for sale along both sides of the river. Many of these

front on the river and are subject to partial or complete flooding. Evidence of past channel changes is quite clear in this area and overland flood velocities may be expected to be high enough to do extensive damage to buildings and roads in the old channels.

b. We stopped in **Hamilton** and spoke to Carl McCanless, caretaker of the town water supply system. Hamilton's water supply comes from a well in town. Sewage disposal is managed by private cesspools and septic tanks. The town was completely flooded in 1951 but the town well was not contaminated. Water would run into the well if it reached a depth of over two feet outside the pumphouse. The water tower is rotten and could be badly damaged by a large flood.

c. We returned to Seattle by way of the Sauk River, taking photographs and observing the river bottom terrain. There is a summer home development on the valley floor of the Sauk River which we did not have time to investigate. An additional tract of cottage sites on the Sauk River is being developed by Pope and Talbot.

*Edens*

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