

27 October 1978

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit Levee and Channel Improvement Project - Fifth Bi-Weekly Meeting

1. The subject meeting was held on 13 October 1978 in the large Engineering Division Conference Room. The following were in attendance:

Bill McKinley	Regional Planning Section
Frank Weidenbener	Regional Planning Section
Walter Robinson	Regional Planning Section
Walt Farrar	Ch, Regional Planning Section
Forest Brooks	Regional Planning Section
Vern Cook	Design Branch
Larry Scudder	Civil Design Section
Clyde Jump	Civil Design Section
Bob Newbill	F&M Br
Ernie Sabo	F&M Br
Jim Smith	Econ and Social Evaluation Sec
Bob Vogler	Econ and Social Evaluation Sec
Dwain Detamore	Program Development
Dick Regan	Hydrology Section
Larry Merkle	Hydrology Section
Ron Bush	ERS

2. The meeting was begun with a review of the **status of the Appropriations Bill and the Omnibus Bill**. The original FY 79 Appropriations Bill was vetoed by President Carter and a substitute Bill was being prepared by Congress and was to be sent to the President the next weekend. It was expected that he would sign the substitute Appropriations Bill. **The Omnibus Bill appeared to be dead for the session of Congress**. Consequently, some of the assumptions used in the formulation of the Skagit project were reviewed to see if they still applied. **We have studied the whole delta-flooding problem as a unit from Sedro Woolley downstream to the mouth**. Past correspondence from higher authority has indicated that, if the levee system were to be extended upstream of the railroad bridge between Mount Vernon and Burlington, a significant post-authorization change (SPAC) report would be necessary (this would require submission of the report to Congress). Several alternative actions available to use at the present time were discussed. **First**, we could write the General Design Memorandum (GDM) and recommend the project as a whole including the upstream levees as if the bill had passed. This method would pose problems with our public involvement and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) coordination. **Second**, we could prepare the GDM and then stop and wait in February for the Omnibus Bill to be passed before we go public with the draft EIS and GDM. This would delay the report and project construction indefinitely. Also, NPD-OCE personnel may be reluctant to testify to Congress

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for construction funds in FY 1980 without previously having the authority from Congress to construct. **Third**, we could continue as we presently are and in February rewrite the report to recommend two increments; one upstream and one downstream. At that time we would change the report to a SPAC. This would cause a minimum delay of two-years in the construction of the project. The fourth alternative would be to, beginning now, write two drafts of GDM based on different assumptions; one with and one without an Omnibus Bill. This could greatly confuse the coordination for the project and probably slow it down. Mr. Cook said that he had chatted briefly with Messrs. Hogan, Sellevold and Colonel Poteat, and that we should do everything we could to not compromise our ability to start construction in FY 1980. The staff in attendance came to a consensus that they felt that we should recommend a complete plan and not piece-meal the project into upstream and downstream parts (requiring the preparation of a SPAC) and we should not go ahead with the downstream project without the upstream project. Subsequent to the subject meeting, further meetings were held including one with the District Engineer on 20 October (Memo For Record was prepared - it was decided to proceed as we have been but take the position that we have only a PAC and not a SPAC).

3. Mr. Brooks then said that Karen Mettling of ERS Section had reported that her Wetlands contractor had received adverse comments concerning the Corps while acquiring data. **She was told that Corps personnel or their contractors were trespassing on private land without permission.** Mr. Brooks reiterated to all those present that anyone who has an A/E working for them should make sure that the A/E understands that even though we may have rights-of-entry for studying the levee system, that we should be courteous enough to inform those people whose property we must cross, or work on, if at all possible, before we intrude.

4. A brief explanation was then given by Mr. Brooks concerning the meetings which had been previously held (Memo for Record prepared) concerning railroad crossings. Generally speaking, an emergency closure sandbagging or dirt would be used if there was less than two feet of water over the railroad tracks at the design water surface elevation. If more than two feet of water would cover the tracks, then a concrete or steel closure structure would be built.

5. The meeting continued with a review of the study schedule by work element with the bulk of the discussion on the areas which follow:

a. Design Branch - Mr. Jump gave an explanation of where Design Branch stood in their work. The landscape architects met with Regional Planning Section last Friday to discuss types of landscape treatment for the levee system. Since that meeting they have been developing more detailed landscaping concepts **for the Lions' Park**, the parking lot area, and along the levees in general. They had completed their inventory of recreation sites and needed input from Regional Planning Section on which sites should be considered further. Mr. Robinson said that input would be provided to them within a week or so. Mr. Jump explained the notice to proceed on the second phase of the A/E contract had been issued on the 20th of September. The contractor was designing to Phase II level detail and was on schedule. His survey work would be done the following week, and he would be providing his preliminary input on 20 November,

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including draft (1" = 400') plates and write-up. Mr. Jump then explained that Design Branch was evaluating alternative measures at Carpenter Creek for solving the interior drainage problem and overflow to Stanwood. Further meetings would be held to discuss their conclusions.

b. Hydrologics and Hydraulics Branch - Mr. Regan explained that Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch was currently preparing 100-year with-project water surface profiles, design water surface, and levee top elevations which should be ready early next week. Water surface profiles for the downstream project had been provided to Mr. Jump yesterday. He questioned whether the cross-sections which the contractor was obtaining on the downstream project were taken at typical locations. **Mr. Regan also stated that farmers cattle grazing on the levee would cause a problem with the operation and maintenance of the levee system.** There are ways to reduce the impact: fencing could be provided on the landward side of the levee, fencing could be provided on the riverward side, fencing could prevent the cattle from grazing on the levee and allow the cattle to cross only at limited locations. The levee could be constructed with much flatter side slopes (6:1), or a higher than normal operation and maintenance cost could be incurred by the project. After some discussion, it was decided that the most feasible alternative appeared to be to provide for a higher O&M cost because of the problems associated with each of the other alternatives. This will be discussed with the local sponsor, Skagit County.

c. Environmental Resources Section - Mr. Bush said that a letter providing more information to the Fish and Wildlife Service in regards to rare and endangered species had been sent. He said that ERS's onboard contractor would write chapter 3 of the EIS, but that the veto of the appropriations will delay the NTP. We also discussed review of the cultural resources report.

d. Economic and Social Evaluation Section - Mr. Smith said that they were essentially complete with their flood damage appraisal and were working on their final benefit computations. They still have some field work remaining to determine residual and/or induced damages to the Nookachamps area and the Samish Valley.

e. F&M Branch. Mr. Newbill said that F&M Branch was proceeding with preparing the draft of the GDM and was currently on schedule.

*Brooks*

BROOKS

cc:

Attendees

Ch, ERS

Ch, E&SE

Ch, FPM

Ch, Plng

CH, F&M

Ch, H&H

Ch, Des

Ch, Civ Des

Ch, Prog Dev

Farrar/RP file

*SB Jesse - file - F&M*