

8 September 1980

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit Delta Floodway Meeting 3 September 1980 at Burlington

1. The meeting was held as a result of a request from John Sandell, Commissioner of the Port of Skagit County, (Incl 1) who is concerned about Skagit Valley flood problems and in particular Burlington's growth and filling that may prevent Skagit River overflow into the Samish River drainage. These concerns had also been communicated to FEMA by Larry Kunzler, Nookachamps area farmer, leading to a FEMA request (Incl 2) for the Seattle District to develop a floodway in the vicinity of Burlington.
2. Arrangements and invitations to the meeting were made by Skagit County Planning Director, Bob Schofield. The meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. in the Skagit County Administration Building. Attendees are shown on Incl 3.
3. Spurlock stated that the objective of the meeting is to determine the scope of the problem, and to get ideas for solutions from the various parties affected.
4. John Sandell was concerned about specific impacts on port property, but he also indicated a strong desire to keep development out of the flood-prone areas to avoid future flood problems. He referred to an article in the August 1980 National Geographic.
5. Burlington representative, Boudinot, said that Burlington does not want to be the victim of a no-growth mandate. He argued that present zoning restrictions limit the percentage of a tract that may be developed, which in effect limits the extent of filling. Spurlock said that this approach is not dependable, because even a partial fill may be greatly obstructive.
6. Larry Kunzler read a statement calling for a moratorium on filling until some kind of Corps study is done.
7. Regan discussed potential Corps studies, explaining our model for the levee project and the difficulty of applying it to the present problem. He said that our model cannot determine impacts of small, local fills, but could evaluate major fills. Boudinot interpreted this to mean that we cannot determine the specific effects of filling, and, therefore cannot control it.
8. Gardner suggested that the "Skagit Valley Flood Advisory Council" determine potential floodway areas that would be acceptable to the affected communities. This idea was generally opposed, in favor of Corps developed floodways based on equal-conveyance. Regan said that equal-conveyance floodways would probably be

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unacceptable to the communities, so he discouraged this approach. He also pointed out that 60,000 cfs Samish overflow and other overflows, would have to be carried in the equal-conveyance floodways, making them very wide. Regan offered to help the Advisory Council develop floodway boundaries, which led to better acceptance of this approach. It was then agreed that the Advisory Council will meet with Regan to see if they can define some floodway boundaries. The Corps would then analyze the floodway for compliance with the 1 foot rise criteria. It was estimated that at least one year would be required, with funds from FEMA and FPMS.

9. Gardner suggested that elevated structures with parking areas underneath, might be used in sensitive overflow areas, rather than fill. Burlington said that they don't have any restriction on fill at this time, but could revise their building code to restrict fills. Burlington feels that their growth area, south and west of the city, is already obstructed by I-5 and the railroad grade, making further filling inconsequential. The Corps and FEMA are not as concerned about this area as the Sterling Hill area, east and north of the city of Burlington. This is the area where the Corps dike project would have provided sills to maintain a 60,000 cfs overflow into the Samish. There doesn't seem to be any immediate threat to this area, which is presently in the county.

10. Edens asked for our reaction to a draft of a letter he plans to send to the District Engineer, urging a high priority study of this problem. We advised that the letter would be useful to get some priority for Regan's work.

11. The meeting was useful as a first step in trying to solve the problem. Getting some floodway proposals from the Advisory Council would be a good start. To examine the floodway proposals will be a large job, and will probably require new mapping and cross sections. FEMA will probably not be able to fund the entire effort, so we will probably fund part of it under the FPMS Technical Services program. The big problem will be getting a priority for the work. Regan was very effective in explaining the situation, and I think that with his help, the Council can generate some pretty good floodway boundaries. Burlington is not sensitive to the problems, because nobody has complained except Kunzler and Sandell, but they will probably be pressured by FEMA to take some action.

3 Incl
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GARDNER

cc MacDonald / Regan
cc Regional Planning ~~WJ~~ / Brooks / WORTHINGTON / RP file
cc Vern Cook