

CENPS-EN-PL-PF (1105-2-10b)

18 July 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit River Flood Control Study

1. On 13 July 1989, Dwain Hogan and Steve Foster met with Ruth Wylie and Dave Rohrer, Skagit County Commissioners and Don Nelson, Skagit County Flood Engineer, and John Wiseman, Mount Vernon City Engineer to discuss the status and scope of upcoming recon study investigations on the Skagit River. Our intent was to present the history of past studies, the status of those authorized projects, and explain planning procedures prescribed by Public Law 99-662 and receive what information we could from Skagit County commissioners, the planning engineer and city engineer of Mount Vernon to help direct future studies.
2. We began by discussing the two authorized projects for the Skagit River Basin. Those included the Avon By-Pass authorized in 1936 but not constructed and the Skagit River levee and channel improvements authorized in November 1966 which provided protection to Burlington and Mount Vernon and agricultural land along 17 miles of river downstream to its mouth. Don Nelson added a number of comments relating to the background of these projects, basically explaining that the Avon By-Pass is a necessary concept for flood control without additional downstream levees because the channel downstream of Burlington did not have capacity to carry flood flows of a 100-year volume. I stated that the Water Resource Development Act of 1986 has established a project deauthorization provision which would require the Avon By-Pass project be placed in deauthorized status December 1989 unless monies were spent on it and the same was true for the levee and channel project authorized in 1966. It would be deauthorized in 1992.
3. We next discussed the procedure for conducting the recon and the follow-on feasibility studies. We used the attached handout to discuss the responsibility of the Federal government and local sponsor in the conduct of the recon and feasibility studies. We explained 50/50 cost sharing required for the feasibility study and the congressional budget process necessary to get funding for the recon and subsequent studies. We stated that the recon report would concentrate on two alternatives:
 - a. An updating of costs for the alternative recommended to the voters in 1979 and,
 - b. An alternative design to protect Mount Vernon. We recognized that such alternatives would cause opposite bank and

downstream impacts and tended to lower the effective flood control protection those opposite bank and downstream locales now enjoy. We stated that a primary emphasis on the recon study will be to develop the scope of studies for the future feasibility study. We estimated that the scope of work would cost in the neighborhood of \$300,000 to \$400,000. It would make use of information that was developed in earlier studies.

4. We next discussed handout #2 which describes the flood control capabilities of the various reservoirs on the Skagit River and demonstrates how these reservoirs are managed for flood control. This led into a discussion of the capabilities of the existing levees on the Skagit. In 1975, the last major flood on the Skagit which reached flows at the town of Mount Vernon of 130,000 cfs, levees were not overtopped but the flood stage of the river was within 6" of the top of the main levee system at Mount Vernon. Since 1975, Skagit County has improved the levees downstream from Mount Vernon protecting agricultural land. The levees are built to a height equivalent to the water surface elevation of the 50-year flood event. They have something in the neighborhood of a 25-year level protection if you consider a need for freeboard.

5. Last, we discussed the commissioners' interest in this study and their support for such a study. The commissioners are interested in the recon study finds and were concerned that any study that was concentrated solely on protecting Mount Vernon may not be in the best interest of other county residents. The commissioners did see a need for further comprehensive flood planning on Skagit River and supported conduct of a recon study and report. They did not provide support for any particular alternative nor commit themselves to participation in a feasibility study. I stated that I would contact Swift's office (Andy Anderson) and inform him of our meeting.

Enclosures
w/o End
cc: 1 Hogan/EN
Urabeck/EN-PL
/ Foster/PL-PF

Steve Babcock
f Steve Foster

P.S. On 20 July 89 I contacted Andy Anderson, Legislative Aid to Congressman Swift (Bellingham office), and advised him of the County's interest in the Recon Study effort. (Foster)

John Wiseman City of Mount Vernon City Engineer

Jeffrey M. Monsen, P.E. Skagit Co. County Engineer

Don Nelson Skagit Co Flood Eng. / Mark Spar Co. Pub Works Dir.

- County Commissioners

Bill Vaux

Ruth Wylie

Dave Rohrer