

Planning Branch

February 29, 1996

Mr. Lawrence Wasserman
Environmental Services Director
Skagit System Cooperative
P O Box 368
1729 Reservation Road
La Conner, Washington 98257-0368

Dear Mr. Wasserman:

It was good to meet with you and members of your staff yesterday regarding our Skagit River Studies. As you requested, enclosed are two copies of the draft Reconnaissance (Recon) Report and two copies of the draft Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA).

I am taking over the Skagit work from Noel Gilbrough, who was the study manager for the Skagit Reconnaissance Study in 1992-1994. I was not directly involved that recent study, but I was the study manager for the 1978-1979 General Design Memorandum. That work was terminated when Skagit County voters turned down a bond issue that would have funded the local share of project construction costs. A political consensus on project features among all the governmental entities in the area, the county, the cities, the diking districts, and the Indian Tribes, is essential, if we are to successfully build a project. I look forward to working with you on the Skagit study. We have an opportunity to not only address the flood control needs of the Skagit delta but also resolve some of the long term environmental problems.

The first part of our work will involve completing the unfinished Recon Report and FCSA. We previously met with Mr. David Brookings of Skagit County on February 1, 1996, to discuss the County's request for the Corps to resume the Skagit Flood Control Study. Past study efforts have failed because of the high cost of desired project features and/or studies. We asked Mr. Brookings that, prior to the Corps getting the study going again, the county take the lead in reviewing the project recommended in the Recon Report and the studies identified in the FCSA to identify what could be pared in the plan to reduce the overall costs. Also, as we discussed with you, it may be appropriate at this time to combine the flood control and ecosystem restoration studies. I understand that Mr. Brookings is now putting together a group representative of significant interests in the delta to do the review. Please contact him regarding details. I consider input from the Indian Tribes essential in this effort. We have tentatively set April 11, 1996 as the date for our next meeting with Mr. Brookings and members of his review group to discuss the

groups ideas regarding possible changes in project features and the necessary scope of studies.

The initial funding for the Corps we discussed at our meeting would provide us the necessary means to work this spring and summer with the County, the Tribes, and all the other interested groups in the area to develop a Feasibility Study Plan that all can support. The funding of the local share of the Feasibility Study could be entirely by the county, or include contributions from the Tribes, the State, cities, or diking districts. We would start the Feasibility Study as soon as Federal and local funding could be provided, hopefully in Fiscal Year 1997.

Messers. Soule and Foster are handling separately the other concerns you raised at the meeting regarding the levee restoration projects currently underway and the general Corps criteria regarding vegetation on levees. If you have any questions on the Skagit Study, please contact me at telephone (206) 764-3456. If you wish to discuss the levee restoration work, please contact Mr. Lester Soule at telephone (206) 764-3699.

Sincerely,

Forest Brooks
Project Manager

Enclosures
as stated

CF: without enclosures

Mr. David Brookings
Division Manager of Surface Water Management
Skagit County Public Works Department
1111 Cleveland Avenue
Mount Vernon, Wa 98273-4215

CC: without enclosures
CENPS-EN-PL(Soule/Foster)
CENPS-EN-PL-CP(Brooks)
CENPS-EN-PL-CP(Gilbrough)
CENPS-EN-PL-ER(Scuderi)
EN-PL File
C:\winword\data\SK022996.doc