

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF PM, ATTN: Forest Brooks

SUBJECT: Skagit River Levee Repairs

1) Because of the unique characteristics of the Skagit River Delta, conventional floodways were not adopted for the entire delta downstream of Sedro Wooley. In this area, for the Skagit River proper, the levees confining the channel and adjacent areas have been designated as floodways. In the vicinity of Whitmarsh Road and old the U.S. Highway 99 bridge, the most landward levees were used to establish the floodway. These are not the conventional one foot rise floodways normally used by FEMA. The purpose of these floodways is simply to preclude any encroachment which would reduce the capacity of the river channel or jeopardize the integrity of the levee system.

2) Elsewhere throughout the delta, it was recommended that all communities assume a responsibility to maintain flowpaths for floodwaters to minimize backwater effects which may increase future flood levels. Suggested measures include designing new roads to be at grade, preservation of swale areas and existing drainage channels, and minimization of development in zoned agricultural areas.

3) Kunzler is pressing that we adhere to the following National Flood Insurance Program standard:

"Require until a regulatory floodway is designated, that no new construction, substantial improvement, or other development (including fill) shall be permitted within Zones A1-30 and AE on the community's FIRM, unless it is demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the proposed development, when combined with all other existing and anticipated development, will not increase the water surface elevation of the base (100-year) flood more than one foot at any point in the community."

4) As long as any repairs we make to the Skagit River levees replace them in kind, we comply with the standard. If we raise the levees or add material to their riverbank or landward sides, then in my opinion, we must conduct an analysis to comply with the standard. I think we could reasonably argue that the analysis be limited to the cumulative effects of all anticipated levee improvements, since our work only concerns levees.

Joseph T. Weber, Jr.  
Program Manager, Flood Plain  
Management Services

cc: HARVEY/EN-HH-HY  
FOSTER/EN-PL  
SOULE/EN-PL-CP  
SCUDERI/EN-PL-ER  
KOMOROSKE/OP-EM

MFR: Self-explanatory. (WEBER)

HARVEY/EN-HH-HY

WEBER/EN-HH-HY/s/

EN File: Skagit River  
Skagit County, WA

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