



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-2255

OCT 15 1996

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Emergency Management Branch

Mr. Leonard Halverson
1157 Sterling Road
Sedro Woolley, Washington 98284

Dear Mr. Halverson:

Thank you for your letter of August 10, 1996, regarding Corps levee repair work in Skagit County Diking District 12.

You have raised concerns regarding strengthening of the levees, encroachment into the river and permitting requirements. Some of these I will not be able to respond to because they touch on local processes and permitting procedures. I can say that the Corps has no jurisdiction over enforcement of state and county permits. That is a local responsibility. We did receive a copy of the hydraulic permit Skagit County obtained to cover the levee repair work and it is our understanding that a shoreline exemption was also obtained. As far as Federal permits are concerned, all work is within the parameters of the Corps Nationwide Permit.

The problem may be a general misunderstanding of levee rehabilitation under Public Law (PL) 84-99. This program permits the Corps of Engineers to assist local governments, including diking districts, to make emergency repairs to damaged flood control systems consistent with established policy and procedures. We make every effort to insure every PL 84 99 project restores the facility to its pre-flood condition; i.e., same elevation (we are not authorized to raise the facility to provide a higher level of protection) and same length (we are not authorized to extend the facility). We also can provide slope protection if some was present originally. This last item may be your primary concern. If some means of slope protection existed prior to the damaging flood event, we are permitted to provide slope protection that will remain structurally sound and preclude future damage (not fail in the next flood event). The repair may include placement of a weighted toe, resloping of the levee face to insure a more stable levee prism, and/or placement of a

suitable filter and armor blanket of rock. This is done to protect the Federal investment. Neither the Corps nor the resource agencies want to continually return to the same area year after year, rebuilding and/or rehabilitating. In addition, sometimes fish habitat features are added to help mitigate for the environmental impacts of the work.

We try to minimize any impacts to the hydraulic flow condition in the river. Some of the above actions may result in some encroachment on the river, but we try to minimize its effect by sloping back the damaged bank and placing material on a steeper slope than normal. Our repairs are generally so localized in nature that they will have no impact on the pre-failure hydraulic conditions in the river. However, I also realize that for every change man makes to a river's levee system, a change in the river may result. As you know, the Corps has been involved in the Skagit River and its flooding problems for many, many years. Neither I nor my staff want to do something that will make the problem worse or result in coming back at a later date and developing a solution to redress our previous actions. As much as we would like to, we do not have the authority or funding under the PL 84-99 program to evaluate the cumulative impact of levee repair works along with all other existing and anticipated works on the Skagit River valley. If requested by Skagit County, we could accomplish this type of evaluation within the upcoming flood control feasibility study.

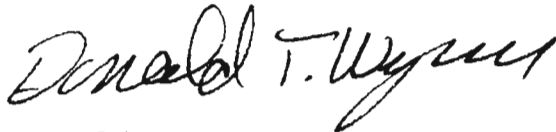
Often, gravel seepage berms are placed on the landward side of some levees for seepage control in lieu of an internal clay core. This decision is based on cost comparison. In this case, no analysis was made to evaluate the hydraulic effects of the berms. However, the volume of material placed on the backside is so small that, as compared to the overall volume of storage in the floodplain, the berms should have no impact on the pre-flood hydraulic conditions.

Personnel from the Seattle District have been working this spring and summer with the Skagit County staff and the Skagit County Flood Control Committee of which you are a member, to develop the scope of the feasibility study of flood damage

reduction measures primarily along the lower Skagit River. We will consider the issues you state in your letter in preparing the Project Study Plan. We will look to Skagit County, as the local cost-sharing sponsor, and the Skagit County Flood Control Committee to help guide that effort and identify those measures which should be considered in the study, since unlimited funding is not available to evaluate every possible alternative in detail under all conditions. We look forward to your participation in those discussions as part of the committee in the coming months.

The Seattle District will continue to insure that in future PL 84-99 repairs on the Skagit River we minimize as much as possible any effect on river encroachment. My staff is available to meet with you to discuss in detail your specific concerns. Please call Mr. Paul Komoroske, Chief, Emergency Management Branch, at (206) 764-3406 if you have any further questions about PL 84-99 work or Mr. Forest Brooks, Project Manager at (206) 764-3456 concerning the Skagit River Flood Damage Reduction Feasibility Study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald T. Wynn". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Donald T. Wynn
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer