

Hamilton not easily moved by floods

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HAMILTON — Opinions are mixed among residents of this riverside town on the potential of moving the Town of Hamilton to a new location, out of the Skagit River floodway.

Many older residents of the town, who have known Hamilton as their home for many years and have seen flood waters come and go a number of times, are less than enthusiastic about the moving idea.

Some of the younger residents are in favor of the move, while the mainstay of the population of some 280 is anxiously waiting to hear more information that Army Corps of Engineers officials will have to offer in a town meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday in the Hamilton Gymnasium.

The feasibility of physically moving the town is the subject of preliminary studies and inquiries by the Corps as an alternative flood protection measure. According to Corps officials, a project of this kind could take several years to coordinate and actually implement.

One man who is certain he does not want to leave Hamilton is Ted Ericsson who has been a resident of Hamilton since moving upriver with his parents in 1912. Now, at the age of 78, he has retired from his work in the woods and settled in a small house he fondly calls "home."

Following the flood of 1980, which brought some 14 inches of water into his residence, the house itself was raised up on oil barrels to a height ten inches above the last flood level as a protection measure from future high water. Though Ericsson said he is unsure whether the house is up high enough yet to completely protect his few belongings, he knows he wants to stay where he is.

"We don't know what old mother nature is going to do," Martin said. "But when you think back over the years, we have seen floods five times over 48 years and that's not enough to leave it, not to me."

Though he personally wants to stay just where he is, Martin can see that a move could benefit some town residents.

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you life for." The flood of 1980, which brought six inches of water into the elder Hodgkin's home on Maple Street, was the first time they had ever been flooded. As a result, they invested some \$6,000 into raising their foundation up some 32 inches.

Martin cited that there were no floods in Hamilton from 1951 to 1975, followed by three flooding years in a row.

within the town limits, in what is considered the "high" end of town, at an elevation of 97 feet.

They are all certain that for them, Hamilton is the place to stay, just where it is.

"All I can say is no way for me, no way do I want it," Mrs. Hodgkin said of the moving idea. "We've lived here for 48 years and we do not want to leave it. I don't see how they could force you out of something you have worked all

"I'm not sure where they would move it to anyway, up on the mountain?" he said, adding "This is my home, I have been here since 1912, you know."

The Hodgkin family shares his sentiment in wanting to stay in the town they have been a part of for some 48 years. Irene and Dee Hodgkin and their son, Martin Hodgkin, are owners of homes and some 45 acres of land