

THE COURIER-TIMES

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Soil District Favors Aid on River Erosion

Local Farmers to Ask For County Help Program Needed

The Skagit Soil District supervisors at their regular monthly meeting last Saturday approved participation by the district in the river erosion control program being developed for the Lyman-Sedro-Woolley stretch of river.

Supervisor Fred Martin, chairman of the district supervisors, insisted that "the soil district's participation hinge upon a long term agreement for continuous control of the river as new problem areas develop in the years to come and for maintenance of work done already." Mr. Martin felt that the soil conservation district should not rush into this emergency and correct the Utopia-Skiyou Slough danger spots only to have the money wasted by lack of long term maintenance.

Grover Duvall, supervisor, stated that if the river is allowed to go through the new Wiseman creek course it is now developing, down stream siltation may become an immediate serious problem to the farmers on the flats. Mr. Duvall cited from his own observations the effect of the cut through the Sterling bend some years back. First, he noticed that the river at his farm suddenly started to cut a deeper channel as the speed of the water increased. The water table on his farm dropped sharply with the result that he had to lower his well pumps six feet all over the farm. Mr. Duvall's second observation was that the river at this same time developed the present gravel and silt bar between the Great Northern and Mount Vernon-Riverside bridge. If the river up-stream is allowed to cut a new channel between the Buchanan and Reece farm down Wiseman creek the diking districts on the flats and navigation interests may be immediately affected.

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policy was set up by the supervisors to include the three points following:

1. There should be reasonable assurance that corrective work will be done if the area survey is made.
2. Provision should be made by the county to allot a certain sum annually to maintain the work now to be done, and to be done in the future.
3. Farm plans should be written on the farms involved in the work in which the farmers concerned agree to do consistently the simple preventative things they can do against bank cutting, and inform the proper persons of the beginning of new erosion areas.

The supervisors were told in regard to the financing of the project that the county commissioners will have to declare a state of emergency exist on the river and hold the necessary public hearing in order that the surplus money in the county's current expense fund can be transferred to the river improvement fund.

The supervisors were in favor of having each farmer along the bank agreed to control his own bank as far as possible, and to assist to the limit of his ability in the protective work now proposed. This assistance could take the form of bucking up trees lodged on bars along his property where these impede proper flow and encourage formation of sandbars, etc.