

Burlington Planning Department
833 South Spruce Street
Burlington, WA. 98233
Attn: Margaret Fleek

3/10/09

Rick Major
20814 W. Jordan Rd.
Burlington, WA. 98233

Dear Margaret,

In trying to imagine how water might surge through the Skagit Valley during a flood, I hope you will consider a couple of points regarding Gages Slough.

By including in your plan some animal access culverts at highway crossings, you would be providing a safe alternative for small animals to cross under the roadways and another way to control flood movement through the corridor.

In a flood event, these animal crossing culverts could be closed in sequence or left open from the upstream end on down, as needed, to control the fill rate of the reservoir behind each one. After the crest, they could be opened to expedite release of water and thereby improve our chances of dealing with a second flood surge.

The flow through each highway crossing could be controlled by the number of culverts, the elevation of the culverts, or by the diameter. This added flow and the control of it could be just enough to save the day by adding options at crest time that don't exist now.

In recent years, I've noted with interest the beaver dam at Burlington Boulevard and Gages Slough and the efforts to clear it. It's amazing to think of the chaos of tens of thousands of cars passing each day along with the constant breaching of their dam and yet those beavers persist. Well, I'm rooting for the beaver on that one and I hope that you can see how crossing under Burlington Boulevard and SR20 would help the beavers, possums, muskrats, raccoons, and other small animals have access to each end of the Gages Slough corridor.

If part of your plan is to restore a healthy natural buffer along Gages Slough, I hope you will think about the salmon studies that show how eagles, bears, and other predators feeding on the fish deposit vital nutrients in the watershed. This proven connection between plants, animals, water, soil, etc. is what makes the system work. I hope you will consider the animal portion of the equation when planning your buffer.

These animal crossings under the highways have a dual purpose when combined with flood control that seems to make this idea a do-able win-win situation.

Respectfully,
Rick Major.



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