From: "Scuderi, Michael R NWS"

To: 'LornaEllestad' "Dillon, Jeffrey F NWS"
, Larry Wasserman
, Shane Cherry

"Babcock, Steven D NWS"

"Perkins, Ted E NWS"
Terry Stevens
, Tim D'Acci
Cc: Chuck Steele , DonDixon

Lou Ellyn Jones Mike Sato
JeffMcGowan
DerekKoellmann DaveBrookings
ChalMartin
'Tom Sibley'
, "'Christine Woodward (Samish Tribe)'"
, 'Steve Hinton'
,
'Skagit Watershed Council' , 'Roger Fuller'
"Pozarycki, Scott V NWS"

Subject: RE: Project Update

Date: Fri, 28 Feb 2003 14:04:30 -0800

Lorna,

You are starting to get the idea about the Corps process. Let me add a bit more to your understanding.

1. We develop a basic project design without mitigation features

2. We assess potential impacts of the construction and operation of the project and develop an account of environmental costs.

3. We look at possible mitigation features and analyze the incremental costs and benefits of the features.

4. Using our environmental cost account we start adding on mitigation features (starting

with the most cost effective features first) until enough mitigation is proposed to compensate for impacts. The costs of these mitigation features are covered under a separate account.

5. Beyond mitigation any features remaining might be looked at as potential ecosystem restoration options.

Now here's the fine print. Mitigation might also be required under the Endangered Species Act or the Clean Water Act. If the mitigation features are necessary to get the permit or concurrence they might be shifted into the basic project features account. The reason is that the project cannot legally be built without these features. For the three bridge corridor, our informal consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service and NMFS pointed us towards the use of the 200 foot buffer and riprap removal as measures which would most likely be required for ESA concurrence. Therefore they are pushed into he basic project features account.

Mike

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"To serve man"

-----Original Message-----
From: LornaEllestad
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2003 1:03 PM
To: Scuderi, Michael R NWS; Jeffrey Dillon; Larry Wasserman; Shane Cherry; Steven Babcock; Ted Perkins; Terry Stevens; Tim D'Acci
Cc: Chuck Steele; DonDixon; Lou Ellyn Jones; Mike Sato; JeffMcGowan; DerekKoellmann; DaveBrookings; ChalMartin
Subject: RE: Project Update

Hi Mike, I meant to send this yesterday.

There was a good turn out for the meeting last night. Will you be sending us a copy of the sign in sheet?

I thought the overheads did a great job of presenting the project background and Feasibility Study Purpose. Looking back on this particular overhead, it defines the two components of the

project, reduce flood damages and investigate features to improve ecosystem functions.

Steve Babcock has given me, what I thought, was a good understanding of the way the project is to be approached because of the way the COE budgeting process works. First, the basic flood control project will be designed, the environmental and social impact assessed and a cost estimated. This means doing this for each of the alternatives. During one of our meetings, Steve said that this is necessary to determine the basic project costs and direct impact. The process is to then take into consideration what environmental impacts from the basic flood control project can be either avoided or reduced by a design modification and what impacts need to be mitigated for. The cost associated with any these actions needs to be calculated separately and taken into consideration.

I thought I was told that "then the ecosystem restoration part of the project comes into play". When looking at the possible design modifications, this project will also take into account design features that would improve ecosystem functions and that are more cost effective by implementing them at the same time as the flood control project. This is actually two parts. One part will be the modification of the design to avoid and reduce predicted environmental impacts and assess the potential environmental benefits from the development of the flood control project and the other will be to look at what restoration can be accomplished more efficiently if implemented with the construction of the flood control project.

The cost of the ecosystem function restoration that becomes necessary due to mitigation requirements for the implementation of the flood control project becomes part of the basic project cost. Ecosystem function restoration that is identified as being cost effective to implement during the design and construction of the basic flood control project is defined as ecosystem restoration with its own budget. These additional cost effective restoration

elements are available for funding through the COE's Ecosystem Restoration program budget or through some other funding mechanism or partnership.

I would like to know if I have adequately described the flood control project budget vs the ecosystem restoration project budget in the paragraphs above.

This is an important concept to understand because it appears to me that ecosystem restoration elements continue to be confused with basic flood control project design elements and potential impact mitigation requirements. Including a 200' riparian buffer as part of the 3-Bridge Corridor as well as including it as part of the Levee Set back alternative continues to promote the confusion between the basic flood control project cost and impact mitigation and the additional ecosystem restoration opportunities and costs.

I again bring this up because it is important that the public understands that fish habitat improvements are not part of the basic flood control project design elements, they may become part of the basic project but some may still be considered to be part of the opportunistic features to improve ecosystem functions.

I would hope that the County's efforts to distinguish the difference between the "Flood Control" requirements and the mitigation and ecosystem elements are not interpreted as not wanting to include habitat elements in the Skagit River Flood control project. While this distinction is important for the COE's budgeting process, Skagit County has several important natural resources that have the potential to be impacted by this project. It is important that there is a clear understanding of how each element of the total project could impact other natural resources the County is trying to protect. An example would be the width of the

basic Diversion Channel necessary to convey the predicted flood flow to the bay. By including a low flow channel, complete with riparian buffer, there would be the additional impact of not being able to farm within the Diversion Channel and the impact of taking more farmland out of production with the additional width. If these elements are not kept separate, the project process can not assess the impact of each specific element.

I noticed that many in attendance last night were at the original meeting held at Fredonia last fall. It appeared to me that many of the questions continue to focus around design elements that are either poorly understood, haven't been answered and are being worked on or design elements that need additional studies to provide information so that they can be "worked on". There seemed to be as much concern about land use impact as anything.

This also brings up our discussion about the original basic project elements that Don and I provided comments on awhile back. Could you please review this document and we can decide if we need to reassess what is in and what is an "add on? I am assuming that as Ted continues modeling his way through the design process, we will have additional information on the actual design requirements of the basic project.

The additional storage available from the Baker River Dam seemed to generate good discussion and a lot of interest. It will be good to have this information as it relates to the estimated flow and frequency for the proposed operation of the Diversion Channel which generated the usual discussion last night.

On other issues:

Geomorph study:

1) You mentioned that you have been receiving comments on the Geomorphology Phase I which you have forwarded. I understand that the COE has also received the ITR report from West Consultants. We at the County have not received a copy of this report and would appreciate it if you could please forward it to us.

2) Did SSC give you an idea of when they might be sending us their comments on Phase I and the Phase II SOW? I am still trying to update the EIS study matrix and I didn't write any comments on when the COE would write the contract with SSC for Data Sharing and when they were going to reply on the Geomorph.

3) I have contacted John Koreny, GeoEngineers, and told him the Saltwater Intrusion Study is on hold until the EIS priorities and budget have been finalized. He has called a couple of times.

4) Shane Cherry, is also in a holding pattern and is keeping in touch with you correct? Could you please send me the documents that I provided as part of our comments on the Screening level analysis of Sediment transported by the By Pass?

I think this email has gotten long enough.

Like you say, this is an on going process.

Talk to you soon,

Lorna

-----Original Message-----
From: Scuderi, Michael R NWS

Sent: Friday, February 07, 2003 11:06 AM
To: Chuck Steele; Cygnia Rapp; DonDixon; Doug Bulthuis; Jeffrey Dillon; John Klochak; John Malek; Larry Wasserman; LornaEllestad; Lou Ellyn Jones; Lynn Childers; Mark Ziminske; Marty Miller; Michael Deering; Mike Sato; Millard Deusen; Paul Bakke; Phil Bloch; Rich Johnson; Roger Fuller; Scott Pozarycki; Shane Cherry; Steve Hinton; Steven Babcock; Ted Perkins; Terry Stevens; Tim D'Acci; Tom Sibley
Subject: Project Update

It has been a while since I last checked in with all of you but a lot has been happening on the project. Due to the lack of a budget we have been operating on continuing resolutions so we have had to be selective in expenditures. Once a budget is passed progress on the project so speed up.

Here's a list of ongoing actions:

1. The first phase of the geomorphic assessment has been completed and sent for review to agency geomorphologists. They have also been commenting on the phase two analysis Scope of Work. Once I receive all the comments, we will release the phase one document for further review and move forward with the phase two SOW. The work order for phase two will hopefully be initiated in late February/early March.

2, Battelle continues to collect background information on Skagit and Padilla Bay as a precursor to being able to make recommendations on the need for and possible types of models which might be necessary to evaluate project impacts.

3. We are working closely with SSC to have them continue to conduct sampling in Skagit Bay, Padilla Bay, and Swinomish Slough to get some background data for the flood control study.

4. We continue to develop drafts of the fish loss, baseline habitat (which might be preempted by the Big Bend Study)., and ground water salinity.

5. We have a preliminary report on tidegates which

is going through internal Corps review.

6. The Corps staff will be reevaluating probable failure points which might result in revised modeling effort.

7. Larry Kunzler has raised concerns about the validity of the hydrologic model assumptions. Corps staff is working on a response to these concerns which should be available by the next Flood Control Committee meeting on March 3.

7. A Public Meeting is scheduled for Feb. 24, 2003 at the County Courthouse Meeting Room C from 7-9. The meeting is directed towards the environmental community to hear more of their concerns.

8. Pacific International Engineering (PIE) has been hired by the county to assist them on the study.

Stay tuned for more updates as they happen.

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