ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

Date: 10 MARCH 79

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)	Initials	Date
1. Forest Brooks		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

	Action		File		Note and Return
	Approval		For Clearance		Per Conversation
	As Requested		For Correction		Prepare Reply
	Circulate		For Your Information		See Me
	Comment		Investigate		Signature
	Coordination		Justify		

REMARKS

- Attached is paragraph 7. for your use in SPAC Report for SKAgit.
- Also, TBA should be taken out of cost comparison tables for fish + wildlife mitigation and $230,000 put in (includes cost + 25% contingency).
- Remainder of SPAC report input will be forthcoming (Tuesday).

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)

Karen Northup

Room No.—Bldg. ERS

Phone No. 3624

5041-102

OPTIONAL FORM 41 (Rev. 7-76)
Prescribed by GSA
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.206

☆U.S. GPO: 1978—261-647/3310

7. Elimination of Channel Improvements. The authorized project recommended channel improvements (excavation and widening) to increase the hydraulic capacity of the Skagit River below Mount Vernon. The locations identified for improvement were from river mile (R.M.) 3.8 to 4.7 and 7.0 to 8.1 on the North Fork, and from R.M. 3.7 to 4.5 on Freshwater Slough on the South Fork. Total proposed excavation was 1,466,600 cubic yards over a total length of 2.5 miles. Disposal of the excavated material was planned at each location on the landward side of the newly constructed levee.

The channelization features of the authorized project met with opposition from resource agencies and members of the public at the onset of postauthorization studies. Environmental concerns were expressed for all aspects of channelization, including initial construction activities, periodic

maintenance dredging, and the disposal of excavated material. Major environmental impacts associated with these activities include long-term impacts to fisheries due to the loss of shallow, vegetated shore zone habitat, critical rearing area for juvenile anadromous fish during their outmigration to Skagit Bay; localized loss of benthic communities and periodic disturbance during maintenance dredging; short-term, periodic impacts to water quality from increased turbidity levels caused by construction and maintenance activities; wildlife habitat losses associated with the disposal of excavated material; and potential impacts to Skagit Estuary wetlands from alteration of sediment deposition patterns as a result of channelization.

Because the lower Skagit River is a transportation route for anadromous species which spawn in the upper reaches of the river, any significant impacts to fisheries as a result of the proposed channel improvements

cared also result in impacts to the fish resource in the upper Skagit River. Such impacts cared cause conflicts with the recent designation of the upper Skagit River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as well as adversely impact the endangered bald eagle which winters in the upper reaches and depends on spawned-out salmon as a source of food.

Socially, channel improvements were unacceptable due to adverse impacts on set net fishing areas used by the Suiwamish Indian tribes on the North Fork and due to impacts on landowners from required relocations and loss of property, including prime farmland. Additionally, channel improvements would incur a high maintenance cost associated with periodic dredging required to maintain channeled reaches.

On view of the environmental and social concerns relating to channel improvements, in postauthorization studies, consideration was given to the elimination of channel improvements in project design. It was found that elimination was hydrologically feasible and, in fact, preferable because, when examined under current project conditions, the channel improvements as proposed in 1965 provided minimal contribution to flood flow reduction.