



## Letter to the Editor, March 10, 2011

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by Contributed

### Responsible flood control

Back in 1990 my parents' farm on Fir Island was inundated by a flood. From 1991 to 1995, I worked on flood-damage reduction issues in the state Legislature. From 1996 to 2005, I served as a disaster reservist with FEMA in flood-damage mitigation. I have personally seen the destruction here and around the country from over 20 major floods.

While I believe that all of the local people concerned about flood damage have sincere motives in the public interest, I must say that there is too much discussion about potentially building large "flood control" projects with money that will supposedly materialize from a federal government that doesn't have any to spare.

What I learned in all of the floods I observed is that there is no substitute for personal responsibility to not build in the flood plain in a manner that invites damage. Rather than arguing about what constitutes a "100-year" flood, minimum elevation levels for new construction should be much higher than they now are and probably even higher than so-called new FEMA flood maps might try to require. I have never been to a flooded area where the flood victims complained that they were required to elevate their structures "too much."

Mother Nature doesn't care what a 100-year flood is, only developers, bureaucrats and politicians. When high water comes, no public-built structure will hold all of it back. Either don't build in the flood plain or build high enough to avoid damage. Taxpayers shouldn't have to bear the cost of expensive "flood control structures" that probably won't work in a big flood.

*Rob Johnson*

*Mount Vernon*