

# MEMO:

To: Henry Hash,  
Skagit County Public Works Director

Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt  
County Administrator Tim Holloran

From: Dan Berentson  
Natural Resources Division Manager  
Lorna Ellestad, Project Manager

Topic: Skagit GI Washington DC Trip

Date: June 6, 2011

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Dear Henry,

On June 1-3, 2011, Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt, Project Manager Lorna Ellestad and I traveled to Washington DC to meet with the Corps of Engineers Vertical Team for the Skagit River Flood Risk Pilot Study Reset Pilot Study Process.

The Vertical team is made up of the local sponsor, Corps Headquarters, Division, and Seattle District.

Also, accompanying Skagit County were:

- Burlington Mayor Ed Brunz
- Burlington Public Works Director Chal Martin
- LaConner Mayor Ramon Hayes
- LaConner Town Supervisor John Doyle
- Sedro-Woolley Mayor Mike Anderson
- Sedro-Woolley Supervisor Eron Berg
- Dike 12 Attorney John Schultz
- Dike 17 Manager Darrell Hamburg
- Mount Vernon Public Works Director Esco Bell

Also in attendance for the meeting was Adam Lemieux, Aide for Congressman Rick Larsen.

The purpose of the meeting was to better inform the Corps as to the need for the GI and what it means to our community and to discuss how to expedite the study and explore future budget needs and expectations. The meeting was called by US Army Corps of Engineers headquarters.

At the end of the meeting, the following actions were determined:

1. Use available Corps funding to complete the Feasibility Scoping Meeting Report and submit it to Corps Headquarters by October 1, 2011. Work tasks will need to stay "on schedule" in order to meet this due date and weekly Corp phone conferences will be established to track progress and any resource needs.
2. Respond to Corps "Back check" comments on the Debris loading assumptions currently in the H & H model so the existing conditions model runs more closely reflect what is

observed in regard to bridges and logjams during high flow events. Example: back water elevations and conveyance restrictions from debris on BNSF bridge.

3. Clarify flood damage benefit opportunities in the Baker River system pertaining to FERC License articles 107c and 107b. The Corps immediately began to explore issues related to Baker Storage, even between meetings. HQ now has a better understanding of why the local community has demonstrated such keen interest in this measure. Both parties need to complete their homework in order to better evaluate the full flood reduction benefits associated with the "three" separate components of Baker Storage (a, b, & c) as well as other issues that will need to be resolved in order to implement this license article to the fullest.
4. Assure by the end of FY 2011 that our study is position to move out in a very disciplined process as funding becomes available. A couple of the keys to accomplishing this will be to develop clear methodology to: 1) integrate H&H and hydraulic effectiveness to determine economic benefits of the selected measures; 2) select and size measures to develop 2 or 3 alternatives; and determine the level of detail necessary to make good informed decisions our Community and the Corps will support. The County will also need to negotiate a plan B to continue to develop the information identified above with the Corps in the review position since it is unacceptable to the community to contemplate "boxing" the study until future funding is available.

Corps funding for 2011 totals \$651,000. At this date approximately \$212,000 is available for the Corps to meet the October 1, 2011 deadline to complete the Feasibility Scoping Meeting Report. For our project, we have been appropriated for \$651,000. We brought in \$56,900 from FY10. This gives us \$707,900 for this year in Federal funds and to date we have spent \$496,000 of those funds.

It was also discussed that it is important have a sound written disciplined process in place as we move forward to completion. See 4 above.

At this juncture it is my recommendation that we expend our efforts and resources to help the Corps meet the October 1 deadline to complete the Feasibility Scoping Meeting Report as a top priority and co-author a disciplined plan to complete the study.

It is important to note that our city, town, and dike district partners are very supportive of completing the study and were very helpful and supportive during our meetings.

Sincerely,

Dan Berentson

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