



SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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Meeting Summary

Skagit Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan
3rd Technical Committee Members Workshop
May 5, 2008
4:00 -7:15 p.m.

Location: Skagit County Continental Building, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA

Meeting Purpose:

Bring together Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan (CFHMP) Technical Committee members to:

1. Hear presentations from local efforts that directly involve flood hazard reduction or that relate to such efforts;
2. Improve understanding of the path forward in this CFHMP planning process;
3. Plan for the upcoming fourth Technical Committee workshop; and
4. Conduct individual Technical Committee meetings to select a Chair, a Vice Chair, and three representatives from each Committee to the Advisory Committee

Action Items:

- Next order of business will be for the Skagit County Board of Commissioners to appoint members of the District Advisory Committee. An organizational meeting of the Advisory Committee will then be scheduled for June, 2008.
- Technical Committees will be reconvened at the direction of the Advisory Committee. At present no future meetings have been scheduled.
- Possible agenda items for future Technical Committee meetings to include:
 - Army Corps of Engineers' Skagit River Feasibility (General Investigation) Measures Report
 - Cause/consequence of 2007 Lewis County flood and lessons for Skagit County
 - Relationship of the Lower Samish River and Sauk River CFHMPs to the current Skagit County CFHMP update effort
 - Other business as requested from the Advisory Committee

Welcome and Introductions:

- Tom Karsh, Skagit County Public Works, welcomed everyone to the workshop, explained purpose of the workshop and directed attendees to available handouts.
- Ric Boge, Skagit County Public Works, announced that the County has selected Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (nhc) as a technical consultant to work with County staff on the CFHMP update and the Skagit River Feasibility Study. Ric introduced Malcolm Leytham, P.E., as the Project Manager from nhc.
- Bob Wheeler, Triangle Associates, provided a brief overview of the meeting purpose and a status update on the interviews that the consultants have been conducting with technical committee members and other community leaders.

Presentations: Local efforts that directly involve flood hazard reduction or that relate to such efforts.

- Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG): James Mastin, Transportation Planner with SCOG, explained the role of SCOG in providing regional transportation planning and economic development. James emphasized the importance of collaboration and coordination when developing local projects that may require state or federal funding. Forming local partnerships and speaking with one voice is becoming an essential element when seeking grants.
- Skagit County: Ric Boge, Surface Water Manager with Skagit County Public Works, began by noting that the County has a limited role and funding available for flood hazard management. He then went on to describe the County's various activities related to flood hazard planning, its collaboration with local cities and dike/drainage districts, and its work with Emergency Management and Army Corps of Engineers to assist in flood emergency response and recovery coordination. Ric included examples of County projects supporting salmon recovery. Tom Karsh noted that the County also administers flood damage prevention, shoreline, and critical areas regulations that reduce flood risk and improve wildlife habitat.
- City of Mount Vernon (MV): Esco Bell, Public Works Director, presented MV's flood management issues. He noted how the new flood plain elevations being developed by FEMA (due out this year) could have a devastating impact on MV's ability to grow and/or redevelop. MV is currently in the process of final design and environmental review for a downtown flood wall and ring dike around the sewer treatment plant.
- City of Burlington City: Margaret Fleek, Planning Director, indicated that the City is embarking on a major project with the County, and Dike, Drainage and Irrigation District 12 that will set back and certify levees along the Skagit River. The goal being to protect the City from a 100-year flood event. The City is also working on a Gages Slough monitoring and maintenance agreement. All of these activities will improve the City's Community Rating System status.
- Town of Hamilton: Margaret Fleek, also speaking on behalf of the Hamilton Public Development Agency (PDA) explained that the goal of the agency was to relocate Hamilton out of the 100-year flood plain. The PDA is engaged in a number of activities and investigating various funding options necessary for town relocation including rezoning the area designated for the new town-site, and using FEMA grants to buyout existing houses in the floodway and relocating as many as possible in the new Hamilton town-site.
- City of Sedro Woolley (SW): Mark Freiberger, Public Works Director, shared that the major concern for SW is to protect (with ring dikes) their wastewater treatment plant. The majority of the city is outside the 100-year flood plain (according to current FEMA maps).
- City of LaConner: Dan O'Donnell, City Councilman, presented aerial photographs showing the historic dikes protecting LaConner from Skagit floods, most now in disrepair. He noted that LaConner is 17 feet lower in elevation than Mount Vernon, and is subject not only to river flooding, but also flooding resulting from high tides and low atmospheric pressure, which causes tidal surges and overtopping of the dikes along the Swinomish Channel. LaConner is hoping to convince the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to invest in dike repair/building, but if not will consider trying to finance it themselves.
- Dike Districts 17 and 12 (DD 17 and DD 12): Darryl Hamburg, representing DD 17 spoke for DD 12 and DD 17. He reminded everyone that the dike and levee systems were initially developed to provide minimal protection for the early agricultural industry. Now there is increased pressure to provide protection from the 100-year flood event for the urbanizing areas of Burlington and Mount Vernon. Darryl opined that the future of flood management will be managing risk rather than flood control. DD's 12 and 17 have been working (last 14 years) to acquire the property necessary to setback (400') levees between MV and Burlington (also known as the 3-bridge corridor area). Total costs estimated at \$60M.

When the new levees are completed and certified the existing levee could be removed and the side channel habitat in that area restored.

- Dike District 3 (DD 3): Dave Olson, District Commissioner, indicated that that DD 3 was partnering with MV on the downtown flood wall; and was partnering with DD 17 and The Nature Conservancy and others on the Fisher Slough relocation/habitat restoration project. A recent past project was the successful South Fork levee setback and habitat restoration project done in partnership with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.
- Dike District 22: Stan Nelson, District Commissioner, reminded the group that his district covers Fir Island. He urged the group to consider downstream impacts that might result from flood control projects upstream, especially those like the 3-bridge corridor now being considered. Any project that increases the conveyance of water downstream is problematic for downstream folks. Compounding the impact is that the downstream areas like Fir Island are rural and have little tax base to raise money to protect themselves.
- Britt Slough Sub Flood Control Zone (Britt Slough SFCZ): Dave Towne, Zone Advisory Board Member, explained that Britt Slough SFCZ drains much of southwest MV. Drainage infrastructure in general is an often overlooked component of an effective flood management program. Britt Slough SFCZ for example has constant maintenance challenges such as removing beaver dams blocking culverts, working with private property owners to maintain driveway culverts, and making sure the riverside pump station and floodgate are properly functioning. The zone works closely with DD 3 to coordinate work within the levee area.
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife: Brendon Brokes, managing biologist out of the LaConner Office, spoke briefly on how flood and flood control impacts are a mixed blessing for fish. Flooding in general opens up new habitat which is usually good in the long term, but it can also be devastating in the short term especially if the flood scours eggs and young fish out of their gravel beds. Similarly in-stream flood control works can impact fish habitat by either destroying existing habitat or enhancing existing and/or restoring habitat. He cited the 3-bridge corridor project as an example of a future flood control project that could benefit fish by opening up side channel habitat.
- Triangle Associates: Bob Wheeler, P.E., consultant, ended the presentations by asking if there were any questions, and advised the group that the next order of business was to have the Technical Committees elect their respective officers and representatives to the District Advisory Committee. He reviewed the voting procedures to be used in the selection process. Bob Wheeler noted that Technical Committees' Advisory Committee selections would be forwarded to the County Commissioners. The Commissioners would then select the Mayor and At-Large members, and officially take action (by resolution) to appoint the 15 members to the new District Advisory Committee. An organizational Advisory Committee meeting would take place sometime in June, 2008. No Technical Committee meetings are scheduled at this time.
- Plenary meeting adjourned 5:45 p.m. to be followed by the individual Technical Committee meetings after short break.

Committee Members and Public Present at 5/5/2008 Meeting:

Name	Representing
Bell, Esco	City of Mount Vernon
Bennett, Chuck	Dike, Drainage and Irrigation District 12
Borman, Neil	Skagit County Marine Resources Committee
Boudinot, Bob	Skagit Land Trust
Carey, Bob	The Nature Conservancy
Carlson, Todd	WSDOT
Chamberlain, Dave	Forest Advisory Committee
Easton, Jason	Washington Realtors

Flaig, Dean	Drainage District 21
Fleek, Margaret	City of Burlington
Freet, Bruce	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Freiberger, Mark	City of Sedro-Woolley
Hamburg, Daryl	Dike District 17
Kelly, Carolyn	Skagit Conservation District
Lipsey, Ed	Cockreham Island Area
Nelson, Stanley	Dike District 22
O'Donnell, Dan	LaConner Area
Olson, David	Dike District 3
Raines, Mary	Skagit Watershed Council
Shannahan, Jon-Paul	Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
Slocum, Tom	Skagit Conservation District
Towne, Dave	Britt Slough SFCZD
Watkinson, Mark	Skagit County Emergency Management

Others in Attendance:

Name	Representing
Brokes, Brendan	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Crowl, Liz McNett	Active Community Task Force
DenHerder, Rod	URS Corporation
Dixon, Sandy	Citizen
Helton, Bob	Citizen
Kunzler, Larry	Skagit River Flood History
Leytham, Malcolm	Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
Scalf, Harvey	Citizen
Scalf, Ardyth	Citizen
Schroeder, James	The Nature Conservancy
Schultz, John	Attorney for DD 1
Sibley, Tom	NMFS
Vanderheyden, Jon	USDA Forest Services
Wesen, Ron	Dike District 16