

From: [LornaEllestad](#)
To: [Dan Berentson](#)
Cc: [Tom G. Ballard](#)
Subject: FW: FEMA Public Involvement Plan
Date: Friday, December 18, 2009 3:46:12 PM
Attachments: [NHC Skagit River Flo2D Model Review interim_r2.pdf](#)
[NHC FLO-2D adjacent levee error.pdf](#)
[NHC FLO-2D elevation compare to 2007.pdf](#)

Dan,

Here are my comments on the Public Participation plan as requested.

NHC will provide a scope of work, with justification, as follow-up to their previous work completed on the FIS for the County. A draft will be available on Monday.

It is important to note that their earlier work:

- 1) Hydrology review did not include local inflow below Concrete
- 2) FLO-2D review was focused on the areas of Burlington and Mount Vernon (see report)

I have attached information prepared by nhc that discusses their concerns with earlier versions of the FLO-2D model used to create the FIS maps as well as a "cartoon" illustration of one of their concerns and a graphic illustrating the impact this one item had on the maps.

Once nhc has had a chance to review the maps, they will be in a better position to determine if their issues were specifically addressed by FEMA and the Corps, as FEMA's contractor.

I will continue to include you on my communication with them on this matter.

Lorna

From: Dan Berentson
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 1:41 PM
To: LornaEllestad; Tom G. Ballard
Subject: FEMA Public Involvement Plan

Here's a rough draft of a public involvement plan for FEMA map release.

It's a start, but I want to get it in place so we can start organizing and moving.

Please review and comment and I will make revisions and distribute this more widely.

Thanks,

Dan

SKAGIT COUNTY D-R-A-F-T

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN RESPONDING TO FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) MAP RELEASE

DRAFT – prepared by Dan Berentson

INTRODUCTION –

FEMA has issued their preliminary maps to the county, cities, and towns in Skagit County. FEMA provided digital flood insurance maps and studies that they claim are more accurate and easier to use, and more readily available.

Initial examination of the maps suggests this may not be the case. [Samish area not updated, topo lines miss labeled, no index map to identify location of individual plates, Just to name a few.](#)

Before we release the maps to the general public and post them on our website representatives from Skagit County Public Works, Planning and Development, GIS, Commissioner's office and the Prosecutor's Office need to study the maps and submit comments for a summary of whether or not the County feels the maps are accurate enough [and ready](#) for a thorough public review.

If there are sufficient concerns about the quality of the map, a letter should be composed and signed by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners and distributed to FEMA officials, Col. Anthony Wright, USACE, our state and federal delegation, and all Skagit County elected officials stating the County's concern and position.

BACKGROUND –

Skagit County residents have a long history of public involvement on flood damage issues dating back more than 100 years. Initially, levees and dikes were constructed to reclaim productive farmland and protect it from tides and floods. As cities and towns grew and expanded in the flood plain, flood control became more critical to protect homes, businesses, and public infrastructure. More than 30,000 people live in the current 100-year flood plain in Skagit County.

GOAL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The goal of this public participation plan is to inform all interested citizens about how FEMA's new [, long awaited,](#) flood [insurance study \(FIS\)](#) maps will affect their property and provide opportunities for meaningful involvement in getting answers to their concerns.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

- Create [broad](#) public awareness about the release of the maps – their purpose, process, and schedule – and promote active public participation.
- Offer and inform the public of their opportunities to review the maps [,](#)

provide comment and have specific questions addressed .

- Allow for various levels of public involvement depending on the needs and varying interests of various stakeholders.

KEY MESSAGES

- Skagit County is dedicated to [informing the public of the potential Flood Risk to their property and](#) and participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Skagit County has more than 5,000 policies with insurance in force in excess of \$800 million.
- Skagit County has a Community Rating System rating of Class 4, putting us in the top six of communities throughout the United States. This rating earns policy holders a 30 percent discount.
- Skagit County has had serious concerns about the accuracy of the hydrology study being used by USGS, FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers to issue these new maps.
- Skagit County has commissioned studies on hydrology that have produced accurate information that has not been considered by USGS, FEMA and the Corps.
- [Skagit County has also been instrumental in providing additional technical expertise early on in the process in an effort to assist FEMA develop the most accurate hydraulic model for the study area.](#)
- [The County is currently reviewing areas of the hydraulic FLO-2D model that were identified as being inaccurate to determine if earlier concerns have been corrected.](#)
- Skagit County is committed to public safety and the protection of property.
- Skagit County expects a fair and professional process in establishing new FEMA Flood Maps.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Governments and Quasi Government Interests
- Property owners in the 100-year flood plain
- Business Interests
- Agricultural Interests
- General Public

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Skagit County Project website.** Post all maps with easy to understand instructions on how to read them.
- **News Releases.** Distribute a series of news releases announcing each County

action including: Access to website, public meetings, review and appeal process, and County findings and conclusions.

- **Meetings with Cities, Towns and Dike Districts:** Coordinate meetings immediately to share Skagit County's Public Involvement Plan and coordinate with the efforts of others.
- **Mailings:** Mail and distribute a letter explaining the FEMA process and how to find out more information about their property to everyone living in the 100-year flood plain.
- **Work Session:** Televisе a work session before the Skagit County Board of Commissioners outlining the challenges at hand in regard to the process.
- **Community Meetings:** Organize and coordinate to have three community meetings with FEMA with work stations and adequate technology to answer questions and concerns of the public.
- **Advertising:** Place large display ads in the Skagit Valley Herald and weekly newspapers promoting public meetings and web access.
- **Key Communicator Letters:** Mail to this list to keep key community communicators informed on process.
- **List Serves:** Utilize County and lists of others to distribute pertinent information.
- **Editorial Board:** Organize an editorial board meeting with the Skagit Valley Herald to address this issue.
- **Briefings:** Brief City councils and School boards on issue.
- **Flood Hotline:** Utilize flood hotline to drive public to website.