THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

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Wild River? No, Say Soil Supervisors

The Skagit Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors late last week took a strong stand in opposition to the proposal to declare the Skagit river a "wild river," with resulting severe limitations on stream developments and uses.

The supervisors in a letter asked Harold Chriswell, Mount Baker national forest supervisor, to consider alternatives that would not restrict the lower river and at the same time protect the natural stream and its recreational values in its upper reaches. As pointed out in a recent Mount Vernon Argus editorial, the U. S. department of agriculture, under which the forest service operates, has been assigned to study the Skagit and six other streams to recommend whether or not they fit the "wild river" concept. The studies are to be completed between September, 1970, and December, 1973.

Among key points in the Skagit supervisors' letter are:

"We question whether the segments of the Skagit river and its tributaries as proposed for study . . . meet the requirements as specified in the act. The main stem of the Skagit from Bacon creek to Mount Vernon is not a free-flowing river since its flow is affected by the existing Skagit river dams. The Skagit from above Concrete to Mount Vernon flows through alluvial soils which to a large degree have been cleared and are being used for agriculture or have been or are being developed for recreational homesites.

"More than 100 miles of the Skagit and its tributaries . . . are adjoined by private or non-federal lands lying within the SWCD (soil and water district). The act provides that up to 100 acres per mile, adjacent to the river, could be acquired to effectuate the purposes of the act. It would appear that the

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