

SKAGIT VALLEY HERALD

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Avon Bypass is crux

The Avon Bypass is the focal point in the Corps of Engineers \$30 million flood control plan for the Skagit River.

The official attitude of the engineers is that improvements to the levees of the lower Skagit River would not be worth the estimated \$7 million cost unless the \$23 million bypass is built.

Locally, there is almost no opposition to the levee straightening and improvements proposed by the Corps. A substantial number of Skagit County residents prefer, in fact, that the flood control program be restricted to levee improvements.

On the other hand, the Avon Bypass is highly charged with controversy. It is an 8-mile lake that would run from Burlington to Padilla Bay at Bay View and would require extensive bridging where it cuts through state and county roads and highways.

The Corps of Engineers is strongly convinced that the proposed bypass is essential and, yet, the officials recognize that it is strongly opposed by many local residents. In an effort to make the bypass more appealing, recent efforts have been made to attach recreational—boating and fishing—benefits to the bypass lake. This move has been praised and criticized.

Skagit County residents have been given an opportunity to register opinions on the total flood control plan at hearings and there is sufficient time to discuss and study this project before any final decision will be asked of Skagit County voters. No one is attempting to cram this flood control plan down the throats of Skagit County people. All that is being done now is to proceed with engineering studies and public discussion.

When engineering is sufficiently advanced that costs can be reasonably ascertained, the Skagit County Commissioners will be faced with attempting to raise an estimated \$4 million that represents the portion of the costs of construction at this time thought to be Skagit County's share. Eventually a bond election will be placed before some or all Skagit County residents. This is when residents will have their chance to register their final judgment.

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Every man for himself is one thing—with the modern girl it's every man for herself.

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