



FEBRUARY 2008
BACKGROUND AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES
FOR DEVELOPING AN UPDATE TO THE
SKAGIT RIVER COMPREHENSIVE FLOOD HAZARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Skagit County Flood Control Zone District is now structured to build community-wide consensus and recommend local, state and federal funding for a Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan, including projects that benefit salmon recovery.

A committee structure comprised of three technical committees, each choosing three Advisory Committee members in addition to three mayors, and three at-large members forming the Advisory Committee is responsible for bringing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

A broad-based approach is the best way to identify viable solutions to flood damage prevention and public safety in Skagit County, by considering the needs of:

- The cities, towns, and urban growth areas
- Environmental issues, habitat enhancement
- Preservation of farmland
- Transportation corridors of local, state, national, and international significance
- Preservation of public infrastructure.

It is intended that this inclusive, grassroots approach will minimize the politics in this planning process by allowing all stakeholders to be heard and involved in the process. It is hoped by the time the Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the Board that community consensus will have been established, making it easy for the Board and other local decision makers to move forward on decisions with strong community backing.

The Board recognizes that the only way to successfully accomplish these objectives is to allow this project to work from the ground up. Therefore, the Board will refrain from promoting or advocating any specific solution, project, or action until the Advisory Committee recommends an updated Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan.

The most beneficial community role the County can perform in County-wide flood damage prevention is to coordinate with our dike districts, cities and towns, local tribes, plus our state and federal government to find long-term solutions with multiple benefits.

Skagit County is currently:

1. Working diligently with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local interests to assure that the new flood maps are as accurate as possible.
2. Committed to working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to complete the General Investigation process evaluating flood control measures including Baker River storage and ecosystem restoration opportunities.
3. Completing an update to the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan as required by the State of Washington Department of Ecology.

4. Committed to working closely with the environmental community, tribes, and sports fishers to assure that flood control projects are mutually beneficial to fish and wildlife.
5. Working with responsible jurisdictions and other communities near or adjacent to rivers subject to extreme flood and/or erosion risk where appropriate land use measures may be necessary to minimize that risk.

The Board appreciates the involvement and dedication of time and resources by all those participating in this planning process and looks forward to viable, broadly supported solutions resulting from this process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The community remains vulnerable to significant harm from flooding.
2. It makes sense for jurisdictions with responsibility for flood control to pursue a coordinated approach for solutions rather than acting individually.
3. Habitat protection and enhancement in the Skagit River system is critical to success of salmon recovery efforts in the Puget Sound region.
4. Local jurisdictions such as the Dike Districts, Cities and Skagit County have varied responsibilities for flood planning, protection and response. With the support of the Advisory Committee Skagit County is willing to lead this significant and comprehensive approach to flood hazard management planning to identify solutions that meet the needs of all jurisdictions.
5. This effort is intended to not duplicate, but to help accomplish work on flood control and ecosystem restoration planning being undertaken through the Skagit River General Investigation with the US Army Corps of Engineers.
6. Skagit County expects that community-wide support on these solutions will enable local jurisdictions access to significant state and federal monies to implement them.