

Agenda Item: 7.

Memorandum

To: PPO Subcommittee
From: Amanda Grint, Water Resources Engineer
Date: September 6, 2011
Re: Feasibility Study for New Levee Construction in Burt and Washington County along the Missouri River

District staff was notified via email on August 24, 2011, by Director Japp to provide a staff recommendation to fund a study and design of a levee system in Burt and Washington counties along the Missouri River. Subsequent email communication indicates that the details of the project as proposed and stated by Director Japp are:

- The proposed levee should be at a minimum along all of Burt and Washington Counties but Thurston and Dakota Counties should be considered. The work could be phased starting with Washington County because it has the highest damage potential.
- The levee should be constructed to a 500 year level of design.
- Bond dollars should be used to for the study, design and construction with other funding coming from federal dollars. The District should work with Burt County Drainage District to reduce costs to a proposed levee.
- There is currently a levee on the Iowa side so there should not be impacts to that side of the river.
- Washington County will coordinate with the residents that could potentially be placed on the river side of a levee north of Blair.
- Washington County Supervisors are noted as the most affected governmental agency and are supportive of a study.
- Estimated costs for such project would be approximately \$50 million dollars for the District's share and could be less if the District worked with the Drainage Districts in Burt and Washington Counties. Total project costs estimated to be \$250-350 million.

The magnitude of this project, as determined by staff, is one that would best be coordinated with the US Army Corps of Engineers, County Boards, Drainage Districts, Region 5/6 Emergency Management, FEMA, City of Blair, impacted landowners and other stakeholders. Staff does not agree that a feasibility study should be conducted until all parties have been contacted and the support of such a study determined. This summer's flood event is still being analyzed and it seems premature to recommend a vote on such a large expenditure without gathering more data. Staff recommends that prior to attempting to enter in to an agreement with the USACE for a feasibility study that some more time should be spent gathering data. Such data should include facts on the amount of damage, the need of the proposed project, the availability of federal funds and analysis on the critical facilities in Blair. Additionally, alternative options such as permanent easements of flooded land could be researched through programs sponsored by the USACE and NRCS.

Staff recommends that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board that the General Manager not pursue a feasibility study at this time for the construction of new levees along the Missouri River in Burt and Washington Counties until flooding has subsided and consultation and coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers and other federal, state and local agencies has occurred.