

Minutes of Informal Meeting  
Channel Work on Jordan River  
10:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m., Monday, December 13, 1971  
Governor's Boardroom, State Capitol Building

Present: Hubert Lambert, State Engineer  
Donald Norseth, Division of Water Rights  
Margie Tempest, Division of Water Rights  
Stanley Green, Division of Water Rights  
Bill Burton, Division of Water Rights  
Paul Maucher, Division of Water Rights  
James Harvey, Utah State Soil Conservation Commission  
David C. Raskin, Sierra Club  
Marga Raskin, Sierra Club  
Ted Packard, Sierra Club  
Bob Morgan, Division of Water Resources  
T.E. Green, Jr., Outdoor Recreation Agency  
Jim McIntosh, Salt Lake County Flood Control (Attorney)  
Ben M. Brown, Salt Lake County Flood Control  
J.W. Delbrook, Salt Lake County Flood Control  
Max S. Banks, Salt Lake County Intergovernment Relations  
Douglas H. Brammer, Chief Deputy, County Surveyor, Salt Lake County  
Albert L. Christensen, Architect (Jordan River Parkway)  
Ford G. Scalley, Assistant Attorney General  
George McLaughlin, Division of Wildlife Resources  
Blaine Dabb, Division of Wildlife Resources  
Dan Dufphey, Division of Wildlife Resources  
Gordon Tenney, Division of Parks and Recreation  
Duane Erickson, Viking Explorer Canoe Corporation  
W. Vee Call, Salt Lake County Recreation and Parks Department  
Charles Baugh, Salt Lake County Recreation and Parks Department  
Jurate Hayes, Salt Lake County Recreation and Parks Department  
Carl R. Nelson, Jr., Salt Lake County Recreation and Parks Department  
Harold B. Lamb, Chairman, Millcreek & Cottonwood Citizens Committee  
on Flood Control  
H. John Kikkert, Biologist  
John R. Call, Urban Technology Associates (Environmental Engineers  
and Scientists)  
Hartt Wixom, Deseret News  
Gae Kenney, Land Owner  
W.E. Butterfield, Land Owner  
Dennis Geertsen, Institute for Social Science Research, Utah State  
University  
Craig Colton, Utah State University  
Alton H. Sorensen, Jr., Caldwell, Richards & Sorensen (Engineers)  
Lorna Lee, Chairman, Model Cities Physical Environment T. F.

Hubert Lambert: This is an informal meeting concerning the channel work being done on the Jordan River in the southern part of the valley. Last March the Legislature passed House Bill 79 regulating stream channel changes which comes under our division. We are as yet administering it on a crash basis as we were not allocated funds for this program.

Donald C. Norseth has been charged with the administration of this bill, and he has visited the area in preparation for this meeting.

Donald Norseth: I have taken slides of the area to orient you as to the work being done.

- Slide 1: Type of area the work is moving into.
- Slide 2: Material to be cleared out.
- Slide 3: Area where active work is located. Sandy gravel being removed.
- Slide 4: Active working area.
- Slide 5: Finished product.
- Slide 6: Area above working area. East bank is not being touched.
- Slide 7: East bank showing work done in past and west bank showing recent work.
- Slide 8: Work area.
- Slide 9: Further down where first inquiries were concerned.
- Slide 10: Area being worked and diking being built up. Old culvert.
- Slide 11: Finished product. Example of old riprap.
- Slide 12: Diking being worked on at present time.
- Slide 13: Road

Question: How high is the bank prior to diking?

Answer: About 4 to 5 feet above water level.

Hubert Lambert: Flood control is presently under the jurisdiction of the counties. There is not state program. The state only becomes involved when a safety factor is present. The effect of House Bill 79 on flood control has not been worked out. The Salt Lake County Flood Control has not filed an application to accomplish this work. Their attorney, Mr. Jim McIntosh, will present their views regarding this.

Jim McIntosh: The county's position on the bill is that it specifically exempted flood control work. It states, "It shall be unlawful for any state agency, county, city, corporation or person in any manner to relocate any natural stream channel or to alter or change the beds and banks of any natural stream for any purpose other than to divert, conserve and store water for beneficial uses or to prevent erosion or flooding without first obtaining the written approval of the state engineer. Provided, however, that in an emergency involving immediate, potential or actual injury or damage to person or property, nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the taking of steps reasonably necessary to alleviate or mitigate any injury or damage to person or property." Here are copies of the state law and county ordinance implementing the state statute regarding flood control work. Salt Lake County has adopted a master plan for flood control in March of 1966 by the Salt Lake Board of Commissioners. It would be an impossible burden to file applications on each small change under this project. It would be necessary to have a full-time man in to the state office filing applications.

Jim Delbrook (Flood Control): We are taking the silt and overburden out of the bottom of the river. We started bailing out the silt from the river at

14800 South. The material is coming off the farmers' banks. We take the material out and build a surface road. We took 5½ to 7 feet out of the bottom, rounded the bottom, and directed the head to the middle of the stream. We are going to riprap it.

Question: Are there ways to prevent the erosion?

Answer: We are trying to slope the banks. The farmers have donated 30 feet of ground for this purpose.

Question: What is the cost?

Answer: About \$100 a day. This is not a project but a maintenance job. The cost has been about \$5000 so far. We have one dragline, one caterpillar, and one operator. We hope to be finished by the first of February.

Question: Has there been a change in the channel?

Answer: No, we are trying to build it up.

Question: What will happen if this work is not done?

Answer: We don't believe the channel could handle the flow.

Question: Is the flood program coordinated from year to year?

Answer: Problems come up from one year to the next. We can't predict exactly what will be necessary.

Alton Sorensen (Engineer): The flow in the river is 500 sec.-ft. when Utah Lake is at compromise. It is 1400 sec.-ft. when the lake is 3½ feet above compromise. This goes up with snow melt.

Questions regarding control of erosion by work on the banks (to Mr. Delbrook).

Concrete banks would do the job. Vegetation doesn't hold the material that is undercut by the flow. The ownership of the banks has to be established as to the meanderline of 1896. The exact location is unknown, but it is different than the present stream location. The farms are right down to the banks except where the farmers have moved them back this year to facilitate the flood control maintenance work. I don't think the flood plan concept would work because the ground cannot be held.

Question: Do you have a biologist as a consultant?

Answer: No, we have engineers as consultants.

Question: What will be the effect of the dam in the narrows?

Answer: It will reduce the flow and the flood problem.

Questions: Are natural streambeds more stable than dredged ones, and have problems arisen due to previous disturbances?

Answer: I don't think so.

Question: Are the farmers contributing in checking the bank erosion?

Answer: They are allowing us to go over their ground and have contributed ground for slope work. They are also contributing pipe to be placed in the material to get the water out of the banks.

Question: Have you received any objections from the property owners as to your work?

Answer: No, they are waiting for us to come up.

Question, Lorna Lee: Under the flood control program, will channelization also be done in exemption to the legislation?

Answer, Jim McIntosh: Yes.

Albert Christensen: It seems ineffective in the bill to have one of the major agencies changing the streams be exempt. The dredging project itself seems to accelerate the silting problem. Rechannelization in response to shallow depth of the stream has been done in the Chesterfield area and here in this area under discussion, and the effects are not satisfactory. The best plan is to buy the land (least expensive in the long run) and create a flood plain. I think this channelization program does come under House Bill 79, as it is presently being accomplished under flood control through changing the stream environment.

Hartt Wixom, Environmental Editor, Deseret News: I think that this work does come under House Bill 79.

H. John Kikkert: House Bill 79 was created to protect streams. Referring to high-water years as a frame of reference rather than to the usual years of flow eliminates the value of the bill. Also, the rounded bottom left by the dredging operation does not advance the brown trout. I fail to see why the banks have to be higher than 5 to 7 feet above water level. The water didn't seem higher in February and March than in December in the times I have walked over the channel area.

John Call: Reference has been made to the study for the Jordan River Parkway. The method of opening up the stream to let more water through is not the only way. Opening the upstream area may make the amount reaching the

downstream area to much to handle. Such work can make more problems than it solves. More studies need to be done in this area where such work is being done to find other ways to handle the problem. The dams will definitely take the silt and gravel out of the river. The County is handling immediate problems and thinking these other considerations are for the future. Some areas do come under the emergency activities exemption of the bill, but others may not. Further study is needed.

James Harvey: The Utah State Soil Conservation Commission designates areas to be watersheds. The Soil Conservation Service is filing applications on their projects. We are in favor of all works of this type being handled under applications.

Ford Scalley: If the bill is read literally, the flood control attorney is correct. However, in the interest of fairness to the spirit of the bill, I think that they should file an application. They can proceed without written permission, but their intent would be communicated to the State Engineer. At least, the information on the project should be available.

Albert Christensen: I think that they have to justify that their project is emergency work which is exempt from filing an application.

Ford Scalley: Unfortunately, this would be after the fact. I have a question for Mr. McIntosh. Are federal funds being used in the maintenance and channelization of the stream?

Jim McIntosh: No.

Tharold Green: In studying the area for federal funding for recreational purposes, I find that the recreational value of the Jordan River is great. I think that the flood control problem should come under this bill so that review of the stream and lands involved can be made by other parties and agencies.

Jim McIntosh: It is not up to us to substitute our judgment for that of the legislature. The county has incurred substantial liability due to the implementation of the state ordinance on flood control. If the legislature meant the state to take over this problem, the county will be very happy to hand it over.

David Raskin, Sierra Club: It seems to me that the intent of the bill was to protect scenic, recreational, and ecological values. Agencies would be remiss if they did not file an application for formal review.

Blaine Dabb, Wildlife Resources: We are experiencing damage on this section of the river in which we have stocked brown and rainbow trout. Moving and changing the bottom structure of the stream has obliterated the hatching areas for the fish. (See attached statement.)

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William E. Butterfield: I'm of the opinion that the fishing would be better with deeper water--what little fishing there is. The smelter and pollution eliminates fishing lower down.

Hubert Lambert: Does the County have any intention of filing an application?

Jim McIntosh: Under this project, we do not.

Hubert Lambert: The State Engineer will address a letter to the Attorney General relative to this particular position, and he is bound by law to accept the opinion of the Attorney General. We will await his official written answer.

Max Banks; Intergovernment Relations, Salt Lake County: I requested an opinion when the law was first passed and was advised to consult our county attorney. It was stated by the State Engineer at that time that the opinion of the assistant Attorney General was that we should file, but that was prior to the finalization of the procedure for handling this bill. Our attorney advised us that filing was not necessary. We also would like this matter settled by interpretation of the law by the Attorney General.

Hubert Lambert: This meeting is now adjourned.