

Zoar Levee and Diversion Dam, Dam Safety Modification Study
Community Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
October 25, 2012
7:00-8:30 pm
Zoar Village School House

A regularly scheduled Zoar Levee & Diversion Dam, Dam Safety Modification Study, Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was held at the Zoar Village School House on October 25, 2012. Those present included: Mayor Larry Bell (Zoar), Scott Gordon (Zoar), Chuck Knaack (Zoar), Dave Bennett (Zoar), Hans Fischer (Zoar), Judy Meiser (Zoar), Aaron Smith (USACE), Jami Buchanan (USACE), Rodney Cremeans (USACE), Elizabeth Cooper (USACE), and Gus Drum (USACE).

Rodney Cremeans began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and requesting that everyone fill in the sign-in sheet for the meeting minutes. Everyone then introduced themselves around the table.

Aaron Smith had previously distributed the September 20, 2012 meeting minutes by email and asked if anyone had any changes, comments or additions to the minutes. There were no responses and he indicated that any changes could be emailed to him at a later date.

Aaron Smith then described the Corps' new Zoar Levee & Diversion Dam, Dam Safety Modification Study project web site and noted that the site. It will contain all publically releasable reports, CAC meeting notes, photographs and other project information being developed by the project team. The web address is:

<http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/Missions/CurrentProjects/Zoar.aspx>

Rodney Cremeans reminded the CAC that completion of the Baseline Risk Assessment was being delayed until late summer of 2013, as a new Risk Cadre from the Corp's New England District had been assigned to complete it.

Aaron Smith reminded the group that the Corps was going to take advantage of this extra time to increase review and comment time on planning baseline studies, in the hopes of making them as complete and accurate as possible.

Aaron Smith distributed a new schedule for completion of Section 106 activities during the Dam Safety Modification Study.

Aaron Smith highlighted that review time for the baseline studies had been increased to nearly 2.5 months.

Aaron Smith reminded the CAC that the Baseline Habitat Study found the presence of many high quality wetlands within the study area.

Aaron Smith further stated that the Baseline Habitat Study found no evidence of any threatened or endangered species in the study area with the possible exception of the Indiana Bat which is known to inhabit portions of Ohio including Tuscarawas County.

Aaron Smith explained that any project impacts to the Indiana Bat could be avoided or minimized by seasonal timing of tree removals within construction areas. Indiana Bat use certain tree species as daytime roosting areas due to the characteristics of the bark and that use is seasonal, so trees can be removed when the bats are unlikely to be using them to roost.

Aaron Smith indicated that a combined Section 106 Consulting Party and Community Advisory Committee meeting and a public meeting would be scheduled for sometime between February and March of 2013 to present the findings of all planning baseline studies (historic properties, community impacts, habitat, economic, HTRW) to the community and other stakeholders for review and improvement.

Scott Gordon inquired as to when the draft historic study would be available.

Aaron Smith responded that the draft would be available in January 2013 for public review.

Aaron Smith briefly discussed the Baseline Community Impacts Study and the intention to hold several small group workshop meetings in the summer of 2013 to ascertain the local views of the structural and nonstructural measures which have been brainstormed to date. During those meetings the Corps planned on asking more in-depth questions about the community and the residents' views and feelings about the community. These questions, which would be pre-approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), would provide needed information on the community cohesion that was not available from secondary sources like the US Census data.

Aaron Smith then discussed other related schedule items regarding the baseline studies and future reviews of the project alternatives by various levels of authority within the Corps leading to a draft report with a recommended plan in calendar year 2015.

Aaron Smith mentioned that all Planning Baseline Studies (with the exception of some sensitive information on locations of historic or archeological significance) that would be released for public review and be placed out on the project web site, as well as shared with the CAC members.

Aaron Smith discussed:

U.S. Senate Bill: 112-S.3580: To Require the Corps of Engineers to preserve the historical integrity of Zoar, Ohio, while carrying out any study relating to or construction of flood damage reduction measures, including levees, in Zoar, Ohio.

The bill was recently introduced and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) by Ohio's Senators Brown and Portman. Aaron Smith noted that the Corps' response to any passed federal legislation would be based upon implementation guidance from Corps headquarters in Washington, DC.

Aaron Smith commented on the new risk cadre assigned to the Zoar project and their interest in the excavations at the Bimeler House that revealed layers of sediment that likely extend beneath portions of the levee alignment. Aaron Smith briefly explained the geologic history of the region and the impact of glacial deposits may or may not be having on the performance of the Zoar Levee.

David Bennett asked whether there were any underground waterways through the area where the levee was located and commented on the regional influence of the old Teay's Valley system that extended from West Virginia into Ohio.

Aaron Smith responded that so far no paleo-channel meanders had been positively identified underneath levee alignment, but it is likely the Tuscarawas River has meandered in the past.

Gus Drum provided a brief summary of the recently completed Community Impacts Baseline Study prepared for the planning baseline studies phase of the project.

Gus Drum handed out copies of the final report to each of the residents of Zoar at the meeting for their information. The report can be downloaded via the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/Portals/38/docs/Zoar%20Village%20Community%20Impacts%20Baseline%20Study.pdf>

Gus Drum explained that Community Impacts Baseline Study included information gathered from secondary sources such as the US Census, county records and local records that are generally available to the public. The document compiles information on the demographics, economics, employment and social networks of Zoar Village and compares it to three other local communities as required in Corps regulations and planning handbooks. The comparison is meant to put in context the social, economic and community characteristics at Zoar when compared to other communities. Those three communities include Parral, Roswell, and Stone Creek; all within 30 miles of Zoar and each one are similar to Zoar in geographic size and population. For several demographic parameters the comparison process includes data from Tuscarawas County as whole.

Gus Drum further described the importance of the Other Social Effects account within the Corps' total accounting for project benefits and costs for each formulated alternative. Gus Drum briefly explained the NED, RED, EQ and OSE accounts and how they are each used to evaluate project alternatives. Gus Drum explained that the OSE account is meant to capture numbers, qualitative measurements, feelings, values, and opinions of the village residents and tries to explain some of the reasons why Zoar Village has been a successful community all of these years. The goal of this study is to help the Corps consider effects to community life during the formulation, evaluation, and comparison of alternatives during the Dam Safety Modification Study.

Aaron Smith and Gus Drum explained that the Community Impacts Baseline Study also looked into the effects of the Zoar Levee & Diversion Dam, Dam Safety Modification Study may have had on community cohesion and social networking since the study started in 2011.

Jami Buchanan provided a brief overview of the Economic Analysis studies that support baseline planning studies, including the recently completed economic structure inventory.

Jami Buchanan pointed out that the costs of project failure were also being calculated including potential loss of life due to failure and how warning times entered into that calculation.

Jami Buchanan pointed out that under normal circumstances when the Corps looks at the protection of a flood prone community, the no action plan means that no further Corps actions are taken to protect the community. However, in the case of Zoar Village, where there is an existing project that the Corps operates, the no-action plan includes a series of activities that are ongoing regardless of what additional actions the Corps may take to manage the risk created by Dam Safety problems. Those actions and their related costs would include ongoing regular maintenance, flood fighting and emergency actions, like the seepage blanket placed in 2008.

Jami Buchanan further explained that these costs will be captured under 3 categories including annual operations and maintenance costs (i.e. mowing the levee and maintaining the pump station), major maintenance (i.e. replacing a culvert under the levee, replacing pumps), and impacts associated with flood-fighting. For this study, the Corps is dividing flood-fighting impacts, into standard or major impacts. Standard impacts include those costs and actions that can be accomplished with sole use of Government personnel/equipment (e.g. monitoring and surveillance, sand-bagging boils). Major Impacts include those costs and actions that generally required contracted help (e.g. placement of a large emergency seepage blanket).

Jami Buchanan explained that all of these measures would be included in a table showing depths of impoundment behind Dover Dam (depths of water impounded on Zoar Levee) and what the potential consequences (and related costs) are at each depth of impoundment. Jami explained that the table would include all surveillance costs during high water events, emergency action costs, and any repair costs. The Corps would then annualize those costs over a 50 year period of analysis.

Mayor Bell asked whether the Corps could actually choose to “do nothing” in this case; beyond the ordinary operations and maintenance and emergency actions. He stated that he felt we had an obligation to address all dam safety problems. He also suggested that we look at no action costs for a period longer than 50 years, since the levee has now been in place and working for 70+ years already.

Aaron Smith said he understood that sentiment, but that by law and policy the Corps to consider taking no action.

Scott Gordon asked whether the rehabilitation work at Dover Dam would affect this long term analysis of the no action plan at Zoar Levee and asked whether the Corps might operate Dover differently to reduce the threat to Zoar.

Aaron Smith responded that the Corps was looking at several nonstructural measures including changes to the operation of Dover Dam that might reduce the frequency of loading on the levee and, therefore, potentially reduce the total project risk. But, the Corps will have to balance considerations of impacts downstream from any considered changes in operation at Dover Dam.

Hans Fischer asked whether the costs for doing nothing would include the costs to the Zoar Village homeowners during that 50 year period as a result of the threat that the levee presents.

Gus Drum responded that those impacts would indeed be captured through the OSE account investigations and would be documented in the study and used during the evaluation of project alternatives.

Aaron Smith went on to explain that the risk cadre would develop an array of credible and significant failure modes and the individual probabilities of each event or threat during that period of analysis. He added that we would look at these events as they would progress towards failure of the project and account for all of those costs.

Mayor Bell asked if the frequency of filling behind Dover Dam being utilized was accurate based on recent storm events.

Aaron Smith responded that Huntington District was working on new models for the entire Muskingum Basin, including the Tuscarawas River, behind Dover Dam.

Chuck Knaack asked how much the Zoar Levee & Diversion Dam, Dam Safety Modification Study has cost to date.

Rodney Cremeans responded that the Corps spent approximately \$1.5 million dollars last year.

Scott Gordon reported that during the recent trip to Germany by several residents of Zoar; many of the Zoar descendents expressed their deep concern for the potential loss of Zoar Village as an alternative to resolving the levee issues.

Scott Gordon also explained that the visiting group discovered that a university professor in Wurttemberg, Germany was teaching a university-level course on the History of the Separatists at Zoar Village.

Aaron Smith indicated that due to the upcoming holidays and need to meet with Risk Cadre; the next CAC meeting will be sometime in February or March 2013, when a joint meeting with the Section 106 coordinating parties and the CAC would be scheduled.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared By:

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