

Thomas A. Davies, Fargo, Published February 15 2014

## **Letter: F-M diversion smells like manipulation**

I have always supported the wishes of the people to the best of my ability. I like the role of the underdog and have no time for bullying, either in the world of people or politics.

The following information has been provided by individuals involved in the F-M diversion project. This thing has an odor of manipulation about it. They (political bodies opposing the Upstream Coalition) couldn't get a favorable benefit-cost ratio, so they moved the inlet three miles south of where the Army Corps of Engineers wanted it (approximately 1 mile south of Davies High School). They figured a development "benefit" of \$30,000 per acre for 14,000 acres of floodplain to boost the ratio.

I'm told that Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker told Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., (according to Cramer) at a public meeting in Wahpeton, N.D., that: "If we don't get this through – all the development will go to West Fargo." My source got the info from the state Water Commission.

Oxbow is protected above the 500-year level with a new levy – at public expense. They don't need certification because 99 percent of the houses aren't even on the floodplain and don't need flood insurance. The

\$70 million Oxbow deal is what allegedly caused Oxbow Mayor Jim Nyhoff to switch allegiances. They get six new designer golf course holes, new clubhouse, a pool and development land. The majority of residents to be encircled voted "no," but The Forum didn't think it news.

The Diversion Authority gave Oxbow \$7.5 million to buy adjoining fields (at \$25,000 per acre). Why is protecting Oxbow more pressing than protecting Fargo? Fargo puts up a clay dike in front of City Hall when we get a heavy rain.

I am told, and to some extent believe, that this thing would have been DOA if The Forum hadn't signed on to promote it.

A \$150 million savings for no Wild Rice dam is a corps figure. I didn't mention millions of additional savings if there were no ring dikes for Comstock and Wolverton – for which the corps is circulating blueprints.

I wish I'd developed most of this info myself, but a lot of the development talk and meetings took place while I was ill.

Fargo is my city. I love it. We are better than this.

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Davies is retired municipal judge.