

Mudslide

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A message left with Snohomish County Public Works director was not immediately returned. Heidi Amrine, a spokeswoman for the Joint Information Center for the landslide, said Thursday: “We don’t have anyone who can address that right now.”

Geologic reports noted previous landslides in the area and warned of a potential disaster.

In 2004, county officials evaluated three options, including voluntarily buying out properties at the base of the hillside that collapsed nearly two weeks ago.

The county based its options in part on a report by a consultant, GeoEngineers, who wrote that the landslide posed a “significant risk to human lives and private property, since human development of the flood plain in this area has steadily increased since the 1967 event.”

GeoEngineers had warned in a 2000 draft study about “catastrophic failure,” saying the river at the base of the landslide-prone hill was actively cutting into the slope.

That study, authored by Tracy Drury, weighed five alternatives, including buying out all the properties in flood-plain area and moving the Stillaguamish River about

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2,000 feet from the slide. The cost of land purchases was estimated to be \$1.6 million.

But the consultant said the likelihood that all property owners would be willing to sell was low, and so recommended a preferred option of providing “storage areas” in the flow path of the river to trap sediment from the slide. That option included buying out some properties.

A call to Drury was not returned Thursday. A woman who answered the phone at Drury’s office Wednesday said Drury and others would not be available to comment.

Wyden

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— he did it on domestic surveillance when he was the head of the NSA, and he did it on torture when he was the CIA Director. The best way to correct this culture of misinformation is to give the American people a chance to review the facts for themselves, and I’ll be working with my colleagues and the administration to ensure that happens quickly.”

‘Udall also defended Feinstein, saying Hayden’s accusations were sexist and unfounded’

Along with Sen. Mark Udall (D-Utah), Wyden is one of the few members of Congress who have campaigned against NSA surveillance of Americans, drone strikes on American citizens abroad, and the Bush-era CIA interrogation techniques that were widely condemned as akin to torture.

Udall also defended Feinstein, saying

Hayden’s accusations were sexist and unfounded.

Relationships between the Senate Intelligence Committee and the agencies it is supposed to oversee have worsened as senators voted last week to release a summary of its report on terror interrogations and waterboarding.

The disagreements led to allegations of CIA misconduct and a Department of Justice investigation.

On March 11 Feinstein held a press conference where she accused the CIA of:

- Interfering in the Senate Intelligence Committee investigation
- Minimizing the brutality of the interrogations
- Conducting unconstitutional searches into committee members computers and removing documents
- Attempting to intimidate the committee

“Besides the constitutional implications, the CIA search may also have violated the Fourth Amendment, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, as well as Executive Order 12333, which prohibits the CIA from con-

ducting domestic searches or surveillance,” Feinstein said.

“Days after the meeting with Director Brennan, the CIA inspector general, David Buckley, learned of the CIA’s search and began an investigation into CIA’s activities. I have been informed that Mr. Buckley has referred the matter to the Department of Justice, given the possibility of a criminal violation by CIA personnel.”

The acting CIA general counsel went on to file a report with the Department of Justice claiming that intelligence committee staff broke the law.

Unlike Sens. Wyden and Udall, Feinstein has formerly been viewed as a moderate who has refused to challenge NSA spying on US citizens.

Soon after, Feinstein said, the CIA filed a complaint with the Department of Justice, claiming criminal behavior by intelligence committee staff.

“I view the acting counsel general’s referral as a potential effort to intimidate this staff,” Feinstein said.

“I should note that for most if not all of the CIA’s detention and interrogation program, the now-acting general counsel was a

lawyer in the CIA’s counterterrorism center, the unit within which the CIA managed and carried out this program. From mid-2004 until the official termination of the detention and interrogation program in January 2009, he was the unit’s chief lawyer. He is mentioned by name more than 1,600 times in our study.

“And now, this individual is sending a crimes report to the Department of Justice on the actions of Congressional staff -- the same Congressional staff who researched and drafted a report that details how CIA officers, including the acting general counsel himself, provided inaccurate information to the Department of Justice about the program.”

CIA chiefs and the White House have been reluctant to declassify the report saying they disagree with its conclusions. The report found the controversial interrogations had been no help in America’s search for Osama bin Laden or in preventing terror attacks.

Feinstein said the report should be declassified so that the brutal interrogations described in it can never again become U.S. policy.

Infants

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been averted if her parents had taken advantage of a state law that provides an alternative to abandonment that has been in effect since 2002.

In Washington State, parents can leave newborns with qualified individuals at hospitals, fire stations or federally designated rural health clinics. The Safety of Newborn Children Law allows parents to do this anonymously up to 72 hours after the birth

of a child without fear of prosecution for abandonment.

Councilmembers Dunn and Lambert are introducing a motion calling on the County Executive to create a task force to examine ways of increasing awareness of the safe surrender alternative for parents.

The task force would consist of representatives from the Executive and Council, local cities, health care institutions, public

health, the criminal justice system, human service agencies, and first responders.

The motion calls for the task force to be in place by April 30 and to provide the Council and the Executive recommendations that include:

- How the County can engage in a collaborative campaign on educating service providers and the public about safe surrender of newborns;

- Ways to work with the state to obtain useful, timely data on instances of safe surrender and newborn abandonment;
- Examining whether the program should expand through state legislation the locations where newborns can be accepted.

The proposed motion calls on the task force to present its report to the Council by October 30, 2014.

‘Old Black Guys’ Final Weekend



Passinart Theatre’s production, “Two Old Black Guys Sitting Around Talking,” stages its last shows this weekend. Playwright Gus Edwards, at left, traveled from his home in Arizona to Portland last weekend for talkbacks on the show, directed by Sandy Burgess, and starring George Hendrix, above right; the show also stars Jerry Foster. The thoughtful-yet-comic play tells the story of two arch-rivals who sit at the same park bench every day. Get tickets at www.passinart.net, call 503-235-8079 or email passinart@yahoo.com.