

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) My family has owned this property since, well, 90 years. And before limestone was built, the Navasota River would get out of its banks at least once a year, but it never got as high as it gets now. And we used to be able to maintain a bridge across the river because we own a hundred acres on the other side of the river, but we can't anymore because they released so much water at once. If the river gets too high, it'll wash any bridge away that we build. And it's just prohibitively expensive to build the bridge high enough to avoid that.

Speaker 1: [00:44](#) And so my proposal is that they release the water more gradually, which I think they can do, so that it doesn't get so high all at once and wash everything away.

Speaker 3: [01:03](#) So we've owned the property for about 30 years. We have 1100 acres off of Highway 6, just when you're heading south towards Navasota just before Navasota on that east side of the highway. We've experienced significant flooding over the past 10 years, especially one year, we lost over \$3 million, maybe \$4 million worth of manufactured homes that we rented in the oil field. The flooding was so severe that it even rose above highway level levy that we built on the ranch and all of the homes were flooded, not including all of the flooding that took place on other occasions. We lost tons of livestock.

Speaker 3: [01:54](#) I remember one occasion specifically, that I have a bunch of pictures of, we lost a bunch of birds that I put out there, a thousand birds. They were just baby birds out there in a barn and they all got flooded out. So we used to raise cows when we first bought it, for a few years, and then the flooding got so severe, we stopped doing that altogether. Even though we do have a couple of points where the cows can go to, like,

I believe Cheryl was mentioning, you have a bluff on your ranch where they can go to. We have something similar, but even still, with the amount of water that they're letting out at one time, it reaches above that. So there's no safe place on the ranch. So we basically had to stop raising cows because of it.

Speaker 3: [02:40](#) So that's our predicament with the way they laid out the water. I'm not an engineer and I don't know that any of us are, but I believe the way they manage it, I think it could be managed better. If we got an engineer, hydrologist or someone that specialized in that, that could help a lot. But from a layman's perspective, I still think that they don't have to release that much water at one time in such a... It seems like an uncontrolled fashion. They just dump it all at once.

Speaker 4: [03:20](#) ... talk about it. The land that we have has been in our family since 1918. Was given to my dad by his dad in 1954. And as a child, I remember very little flooding of the river. We've always had deer hunters on our property and during deer season, which is part of the wet season of the year, we never had flooding like we have now. Sometimes the hunters couldn't even get to their stands.

Speaker 4: [04:00](#) I have 663 acres, and of that, 300 of it can be flooded by this problem. Another issue I have is that I have Lick Creek running through me as well. And if Lick Creek, with College Station's wastewater, if it gets two inches of rain, then it will flood as well. So I have a couple of problems. And recently Brazos County sent me a letter and said that you have to get permission before you put anything in a floodplain, and your property has floodplain. And I thought, well, surely they don't think I'm going to build a

damn house in the flood. I mean, how stupid [inaudible 00:04:47].

Speaker 1: [04:53](#) All I was trying to do was fix the road in the river bottom and they sent me a letter saying I had to have a permit to do that.

Speaker 4: [05:01](#) Yeah, they'd probably send me one if they knew I was fixing a road, or if they knew I put some bridges in like [Farrel 00:05:10] did, but they don't know that.

Speaker 5: [05:20](#) One other thing is, what Mike and I, we were talking about is when we were riding around on my property a couple of weekends ago, we drove all down by the river, and the banks now, as a little girl, you could walk across. It was three feet. And now the banks are 25, 30 feet up from erosion. And I've got huge trees that have just been ruttet away and they're falling down in the river. And no one claims responsibility for coming in, cleaning out the river. And that is also another problem that will affect someone, somewhere, is the blockage and the damming of water staying in, I call them [guts 00:06:14]. I've got lots of guts that ran through my river bottom. They stay wet far longer than they ought to. So I'd like to find out is, who will be responsible.

Speaker 2: [06:25](#) Well, I wrote the BRA a letter about that and asked them, why didn't they clean the river bottom out? They said, "It's not their fault." And I said, "Well, you know what? You released that water. You changed the channel. It is your fault." They said, "No, that's probably [inaudible 00:06:38] or somebody like that." They hadn't thought about it. That's the problem. Okay. Here's [crosstalk 00:06:43]. I'm sorry. Excuse me. Go ahead.

Speaker 4: [06:46](#) Well, I was just going to say, in our river bottom, we've had, because of water being on it so much, we've either got drought or we've got water, and we've lost many, many trees that we have had to clean up, because I do have cattle, so I have to keep a fence. And if we don't plane out the trees, you won't have a fence when it floods.

Speaker 2: [07:07](#) And another thing I've noticed, as they maintain the level of the river higher, even though we're not flooded, they drive the water table up. So it stays wet from that too. Anyway, here's... Uh-huh (affirmative).

James: [07:20](#) Okay. I don't know if this has been discussed yet, but one thing we've noticed is that on our property, we have around 1500 acres or so that flood from the release.

James: [08:02](#) I want to give you all this idea. So whenever the water comes in, considering how much sediment is in the river, when it washes out, when it lets out and onto our property, it gets mud and silt and I couldn't even tell you what else, it gets to in the grass and the cows will not eat it. You want your cows eating as much as possible, for obvious reasons. And so, not just us, just imagine other people around who also have bottom land and have cows in it, because they're going to be affected just the same way we are.

James: [08:43](#) That's one thing that I would take into any consideration, when you make the case and such. A lot of people that have cows are being affected because the river sediment is essentially ruining their grass.

Speaker 2: [08:59](#) So what the river leaves for you.

- James: [09:04](#) Yeah. And believe me, the grass that we have in on our bottom land, and I could probably speak the same for everybody else that has it too, it's full of nutrients. It's really, really healthy. The cows love it. And considering that it's just grazing pasture. It's grazing grass, essentially. You're not going to use it for hay, but still, the cows will eat it. It's like they're walking into a buffet, essentially, a good buffet at that.
- James: [09:42](#) Like I was saying, that's one thing that all of us could use in our defense, in our case, and hope that's taken into consideration.
- James: [10:02](#) I don't know if this has been discussed in particular, and I don't know how this would work, but I'm thinking what if whoever is in charge of the water level for Lake Limestone, if they would keep the water level at a lower initial level, so when it does rain, it will rise, but it won't rise to the point where they're having to open the flood gates, let it go wide open. I don't know if that's possible.
- James: [10:46](#) Because you don't want the marine life to be effected obviously, but at the same time... So that's definitely something to think about for sure.
- Speaker 5: [10:55](#) Also I have the very same thing about the cattle. They're don't want to eat after it's been flooded because of the sediment. But not only is there that problem, but I have weeds that I have never had before. Terrible, noxious weeds that I can't hardly get rid of. And they're not up on my bluff because that's not flooded land, but they've been brought in and it's also costing me spray, extra herbicide, mowing. It's that problem because I really try to take care of the land and that's beyond your control. Did he have the same problem?

James: [11:45](#) [inaudible 00:11:45] cows, in bottom land, when they know it's going to flood, I can only imagine how much it is of a headache for them to have to go down there, especially in bottom land that may not be exactly open. It's growing up and having to make sure that all of your cows are out to make sure that they aren't going to drown or just float away on someone else's property. That's a massive headache, dealt with it before, and I imagine you all have too, or know people that have. I think it's a big problem and that could also be something that you add in there also.