

## **CHICO FLOODSAFE WORKSHOP SUMMARY JUNE 25, 2008**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) FloodSAFE California Program sponsored a series of workshops to present information on the FloodSAFE Strategic Plan and related projects and regulations. Eight meetings were held throughout the State: four within the Central Valley and four outside the Central Valley. The Chico workshop was held on June 25, 2008. The workshop agenda included:

- FloodSAFE Program Update
- Federal Flood Control Subventions Program Regulations Update
- Central Valley Flood Protection
- Local Levee Maintaining Agency Reporting Requirements
- Discussion

### **FloodSAFE PROGRAM UPDATE**

Ken Kirby, Executive Advisor to DWR, presented highlights of the FloodSAFE Program and public review draft Strategic Plan. Key elements of the Strategic Plan include: a vision statement, goals, foundational and near-term objectives, guiding principles, implementing partners and stakeholders, and an implementation framework. These key elements support the four action areas for the FloodSAFE program:

- improve emergency response
- inform and assist the public
- improve flood management systems
- improve operation and maintenance

In seeking to provide the multiple benefits outlined in the FloodSAFE vision, policy decision-makers and flood management professionals must consider and balance the outcomes identified in the FloodSAFE program goals:

- reduce the chance of flooding
- reduce the consequences of flooding
- sustain economic growth
- protect and enhance ecosystems
- promote sustainability

Twelve foundational, longer-term objectives and ten near-term objectives create an action plan for achieving those goals. To maximize the effectiveness of flood management decisions and investments, proposals must be considered in the context of the guiding principles, which promote: system-wide approaches, multiple benefits, integration with land-use and regional planning, natural processes and functions, equitable access to decision-making, informed understanding of flood risks, and adaptation to climate change.

The FloodSAFE program overview included a discussion of flood risk, defined by both the likelihood (probability) of flooding and the consequences of flooding. Through FloodSAFE program components and local actions, flood risk can be significantly reduced; however, some residual risk will always exist (no matter how small it may be). Residual risk represents the possibility of flood events that exceed the capacity of flood management systems.

The presentation also included bond funding allocations. Much of the bond funding is dedicated to the Central Valley due to legislative emphasis on the State-federal flood control system in the Central Valley and the Delta. In addition to geographic boundaries, FloodSAFE priorities are also tied to land use categories, such as urban and urbanizing areas, non-urban areas, and broad, system-wide areas that include complex land-use and/or environmental considerations. The FloodSAFE team is continuing to develop additional guidelines on investment strategies and cost-sharing approaches.

Also discussed were recent accomplishments in the FloodSAFE program including improvements in DWR's emergency response capabilities, early implementation projects, and other programs to evaluate and improve flood management systems, channel maintenance, and workshops and public outreach

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materials. Lastly, near-term future activities were discussed, including completion of the Strategic Plan. Workshop participants were invited to submit comments on the Strategic Plan through July 25, 2008.

**SUBVENTIONS**

Terri Wegener, Statewide Grants Branch Chief, recapped the Federal Flood Control Subventions Program. This program reimburses local agencies for a portion of the non-federal costs associated with federally authorized flood control projects, including watershed protection flood prevention projects administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Traditionally, the program has reimbursed for a base 50% of the non-federal costs. As a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 1147, an additional 20% (for a total of 70% of non-federal costs) can be granted for projects that increase or enhance the level of protection for:

- habitat
- open space
- recreation
- impoverished areas
- state transportation and water supply facilities

Implementing regulations for AB 1147 are currently being developed, and workshop participants were invited to submit comments on the proposed regulations by July 28, 2008.

**CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION**

During the Central Valley Flood Protection session of the workshop, the following projects and programs were discussed:

- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan
- Central Valley Floodplain Evaluation and Delineation Project
- Geotechnical Levee Evaluations Program

Steve Bradley, Chief Engineer and Project Manager for the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, outlined the key elements of Senate Bill (SB) 5 and the Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008, which set requirements for developing the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). The resulting code provides definitions for the areas comprising the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Flood Management System facilities, including the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) and other facilities as determined by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB).

The Act requires that identified flood management actions be taken by jurisdictions in the Central Valley in order to enter into development agreements for areas located in a flood hazard zone. Jurisdictions are required to incorporate CVFPP findings into their General Plans and zoning ordinances. Additional requirements in the Act are established for:

- State flood protection planning
- building standards
- local flood protection planning
- development of the CVFPP

The Act also details specific elements regarding content and development of the CVFPP. As with the FloodSAFE Strategic Plan, specific objectives and approaches that will guide the development of the plan have been identified.

A key element in developing the CVFPP is floodplain evaluation and delineation, which is being delivered under the Central Valley Floodplain Evaluation and Delineation Project. This technical effort is underway, with data being collected using LiDAR and bathymetry. The data will be used to support mapping outcomes, as identified in SB 5. Technical community meetings will be scheduled to review and refine information on topography, stream hydraulics, geotechnical data, and floodplain mapping.

Hamid Bonakdar, Supervising Engineer for the Levee Repairs and Floodplain Management Office,

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described the levee evaluations program, which assesses the geotechnical integrity of Central Valley levees. The effort will identify geotechnical deficiencies within levee structures, as well as remedies and cost estimates associated with addressing those identified deficiencies. The Urban Levee Evaluations Program will assess both project and non-project urban levees; the Non-Urban Levee Evaluations Program will assess primarily project levees in non-urban settings. A phased work plan, including a general technical approach, has been developed for the evaluations and surveys, and is overseen by an independent consulting board.

At the time of the workshop, urban evaluations were 40% complete, and non-urban evaluations were being initiated.

**LOCAL LEVEE MAINTAINING AGENCY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Jon Ericson, Senior Engineer, outlined key elements of AB 156, which requires that specific, levee-related information be submitted to DWR, including the condition and performance of project levees, a summary of maintenance activities performed during the previous year, and estimated operation and maintenance costs for the current fiscal year. Local agencies who maintain either project levees or non-project levees that provide flood protection benefits to areas within a boundary benefited by a project levee must submit the information to DWR by September 30 each year. At the time of the workshop, DWR was developing a template for data collection that included an option for electronic submissions via the California Data Exchange Center website. DWR will summarize levee information from local agencies and submit an annual report to the CVFPB by December 31 each year.

Additionally, the team is seeking input to prevent duplication of reporting efforts associated with levee mile reports and integrity inspection grants.

**DISCUSSION**

**Scope of Strategic Plan**

Q: Will you recognize land use? That is where it all starts.

A: Yes, that will be discussed more. People are recognizing that needs to be addressed early.

Comment: A proposal tied to the California Water Plan was that we would not be importers of agricultural products as food sources; however, it does not seem that is possible here.

Response: Tough choices will need to be balanced against each other – FloodSAFE is silent on that. There are urban and agricultural communities that do not have adequate flood protection.

Comment: DWR is not taking agriculture seriously; it does not show up in print. You mean well, but it should be in there now, as the process is going on. DWR is not going to address agriculture – this is the answer to your problem for flooding further out.

Response: Agriculture will be called out more clearly.

Q: Will FloodSAFE be coordinated with the California Water Plan? Storage solves the problem.

A: Storage helps address the problem, but it does not solve it. Efforts are underway to better integrate flood planning with the Water Plan.

Comment: There needs to be a very clear definition about what must have 200-year flood protection.

Response: This will be looked at thoroughly for the CVFPP.

Comment: What we have seen since Paterno is that economic liability falls to the city and/or county. The problem is there is not enough money at the local level to do what needs to be done.

Response: The State-federal system is here to stay; therefore, the State will aim to prevent the increase of liability where it does not already exist. There is inadequate funding to fix everything; the Strategic Plan looks at how to use funding that is available now and how to develop funding streams for the future.

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Q: There is much attention on the Delta and secure water supply; the Corps is looking to reassess flood curves. What is the connection and timing with FloodSAFE?

A: DWR is required to look at reservoir operations. Flood reservation rulemaking will be a public process. The Corps needs an act of Congress to change flood curves, which will take years. Delta Vision is underway right now and working to develop recommendations. The goal is to coordinate efforts, so that the FloodSAFE program supports Delta Vision recommendations.

A: The Delta Vision report will come out first, then the CVFPP, and then the flood curves. Delta Vision and FloodSAFE decisions will affect each other. Where it makes sense to do so, the processes will be brought together and closely coordinated.

Q: What is the description of the Central Valley?

A: The watersheds of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, excluding Tulare Basin.

Comment: Basically, it really is a good plan, and it is exciting to see it. The biggest concern is change criteria – will vegetation standards change?

Response: That will be addressed in the CVFPP.

### **Mapping**

Comment: The 100-year boundaries sometimes differ from FEMA floodplain boundaries; also FEMA does not have 200-year maps.

Response: The agencies are working toward bringing together the boundaries for 100-year floodplains. DWR is developing maps to aid agencies making land-use and flood management decisions. These maps are for informational purposes only, whereas FEMA maps will continue to be used to administer the National Flood Insurance Program.

Q: If areas are protected by levees, will they be mapped for the 200-year floodplain?

A: The 200-year mapping is based on the Comp [Comprehensive] study, which focused on the State-federal system or 'project' levees.

### **Subventions**

Q: What can be the source of the matching funds?

A: Matching funds must come from a local source, usually a county, city, or other local sponsor.

Q: Does the Federal cost-share rule apply to Bureau of Reclamation projects?

A: The Bureau is not involved in flood control projects.

### **CVFPP**

Q: What does collaborative participation mean?

A: Public outreach meetings, email, etc. as part of a robust public and stakeholder outreach plan.

Comment: Stakeholders should be listened to.

Response: Agreed, and collaboration is planned on a number of levels – working with partners, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the CVFPB, as well as the establishment of working teams to identify problems and solutions.

Q: Could additional development be allowed in the north part of Natomas basin? Could a permit to build be issued?

A: A permit could be approved, but construction could not begin until adequate flood protection is in place.

Comment: FEMA and the Corps have different standards, and there is no 200-year standard right now. Local entities are left hoping they will meet it.

Response: That will be an initial topic of conversation when convening the CVFPP advisory group(s).

Comment: Communities need to know what the 200-year level of protection is.

Response: That will be developed.

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Q: What happens if construction standards are not followed?

A: No penalties are defined. Construction standards are required for those areas where more than 3 feet of flooding could occur during a 200-year event, but currently there is no legislation that requires adoption of those standards. The standards are designed to make buildings safer.

Q: When would codes become effective?

A: That is not yet clear. The standards must be submitted in January 2009.

Q: Is part of the planning focused on providing early guidance for local governments to deal with the Central Valley Flood Protection Act?

A: Yes.

Comment: We want to know sooner rather than later.

Response: Local jurisdictions are asked to get involved in the Central Valley flood planning process.

Q: Were all County Boards of Supervisors notified?

A: They will be, through a separate project for local flood protection plan requirements.

Q: How will sea-level rise and impacts to the Delta and the system overall be dealt with?

A: The capacity of the flood protection system needs to expand.

Q: How will you do that?

A: Through different approaches: bypasses, raising levees, building levee setbacks, etc. The CVFPP will look at all the options and develop a list of recommendations. The Plan is to be submitted to the CVFPB, who will make the final determination. The Plan will also include an investment strategy.

Q: Who will prioritize and fund the recommendations?

A: Federal, State, and local entities are the only authorizers of funding for infrastructure. Reservoir operations also require congressional legislation. To date, most FloodSAFE funding has been directed toward local projects.

Q: Are you looking at the impacts of riparian areas (habitat) on agriculture?

A: There are technical, environmental, and public outreach pieces to the CVFPP. This would fall under the environmental piece. Several models are being used in this process.

Q: Will modeling be fine-grained enough to include climate change and allow local landowners to consider options?

A: The process will be looking at new modeling capability, although it will not include that level of resolution.

**LLMA**

Q: How can we close the gap? Locals need to submit data, but the template has not been developed yet.

A: The data requests are for information that you already have, including cost estimates for additional maintenance and repairs. DWR is working on a template that should be completed soon.