CLOVIS FLOODSAFE WORKSHOP SUMMARY
JUNE 19, 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 Clovis workshop was held on June 19, 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

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,

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

Comment: The topics of reducing consequences and economic growth look at economic value; because agriculture has low dollar value and is not an ecosystem, it routinely receives very low ratings. And agriculture appears to be rated very low in terms of FloodSAFE goals. In Goals #2 and #3 (safety, infrastructure, cultural), the value of agriculture is not called out.
Response: The Strategic Plan will specifically state the importance of agriculture.

Q: What is the geographical extent of a population of 10,000 people that would constitute ‘urban’?
A: According to California code, ‘urban area’ means a developed area in which there are 10,000 residents or more, and ‘developed area’ has the same meaning as that set forth in Section 59.1 of Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Q: What do the State flood protection facilities consist of?
A: Part of the legislative charge is to define the State-federal system.

Q: What is the thinking about mitigation?
A: The objective is an inter-agency banking program that collects activities into a broader, contiguous region. We are attempting to identify properties in the floodplain in order to pre-purchase land with high ecological value to support healthy ecosystem function.
Comment: Stakeholders would like to be kept informed of developments, in order to provide feedback.

Comment: We tried to get funding for invasive species and were turned down – FloodSAFE should think about a connection to this.
Response: Specific guidance was provided by the legislature for FloodSAFE, with emphasis in the bond law on structural facilities; we are working to obtain funding for non-structural efforts, such as those funded under the Flood Protection Corridor Program.

Comment: We understand that non-project levee areas will not be high on the list for flood protection funding; only evaluation funding is available. The State should consider providing smaller grants to assess what steps can be taken locally.
Response: FloodSAFE is looking into funding to help the locals work with us. Additionally, the Flood Control Subventions Program and the Local Levee Assistance Program provide grant funds for non-project levees.

Q: Is buying flood insurance a feasible or appropriate mitigation measure under the California Environmental Quality Act to address flooding?
A: Discussions about insurance as mitigation come from a pragmatic standpoint. It makes sense: occurrences of theft and fire may be lower risks than flooding, yet many people do not carry flood insurance.

Q: What is the level of support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [Corps]?
A: The Corps has funding for Folsom Dam improvements, participation on CVFPP, and cost-sharing for some capital improvements. Historically, 65% of federally authorized project costs were paid by the federal government. The State may now pay more, since federal appropriations are not at the level they once were.

Q: What are the options for State assistance in reimbursement of County of Merced flood control projects ($2.3 million)? Haystack was moved off-track, and then flooded in 1997, 1998, and 2006. There must be other communities in this situation.
A: These very types of discussions are on the table for the CVFPP. FloodSAFE is trying to help projects along, like the Merced County Streams project. There will be a lot of tough choices. This is a partnership effort. In many cases, there are untenable situations without any simple solutions.

Q: Some areas do not even have 100-year flood protection, while other areas already have 100-year protection are moving to 200-year protection. There are large projects that the Corps will not fund.
A: Local entities are being asked to participate in the assessment stage, perhaps to help jump-start federal feasibility studies. If these do not work, other options will be explored. The State is committed to try and make this real.

Q: We are also looking at a smaller, local storage project. We would want to move forward, outside of the Corps timeline. Will there be any funds for local projects?
A: The Corps must be a partner on State-federal projects. However, some efforts may not make sense from the federal perspective, and those will be considered differently.

Comment: The Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) update workshop discussed some regional flood planning that might be coming down soon; but it was not clear why that funding is coming in through IRWM.
Response: IRWM and FloodSAFE are both DWR programs. The goal is to improve coordination among all aspects of water resources planning. DWR is looking to supplement IRWM to become more effective at incorporating flood considerations. It is not clear how much funding will be made available for regional flood management planning. FloodSAFE will work closely with IRWM to make funding available for regional flood planning.

Mapping

Q: Will DWR mapping efforts change requirements for local agencies?
A: The DWR maps are designed to provide local entities with the best available information for decision-making and planning; they are advisory in nature, not regulatory.

Q: The preliminary DWR maps could differ from Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] maps. Which one represents best available data?
A: The new maps are not regulatory maps. Local entities will need to determine if and how the maps will figure into their decision-making. Another DWR mapping effort will show the boundaries of flood protection areas for levees associated with the State-federal system.

Levee Integrity

Comment: Any levee that is not certified is assumed to fail.
Response: That is the assumption under FEMA's map modernization effort. The levee flood protection zone map does not consider FEMA standards; the maps do not presume that a levee will or will not hold; any feature that provides protection before overtopping is shown. The levee flood protection zone is not a floodplain map. These are for very different purposes, and DWR will need to clearly communicate that.

Comment: Goose Lake has tenuous connectivity to the flood control project: it is miniscule compared to what comes out of the Kings River. It's not clear how Kings River can be excluded.
Response: Kings River does get considered in terms of the hydrology. If it is important to look at changes on the Kings River for the overall system, then that can be considered.

Comment: San Joaquin levees offer protection for about a 50- or 60-year event.

Subventions

Q: How do you define impoverished communities? Those definitions need to be made clear. In the Chowchilla River system, the census tracts are very large. How do those get figured out? It is something to consider.
A: DWR is still developing applicable definitions for the FloodSAFE program and will seek stakeholder input to make determinations. (For reference, FEMA, for administering their grants programs, defines a Small and Impoverished Community as a community that must meet all of the following criteria: it must be a community of 3,000 or fewer individuals that is identified by the State as a rural community, and is not a remote area within the corporate boundaries of a larger city; it must be economically disadvantaged, with residents having an average per capita annual income not exceeding 80 percent of national per capita income, based on best available data; it must have a local unemployment rate that exceeds, by one percentage point or more, the most recently reported, average yearly national unemployment rate; and it must meet any other factors identified in the State Plan in which the community is located.)

CVFPP

Q: When you say you are assessing local systems – when will that start?
A: That effort will begin in July and August, and input will be collected during the stakeholder process.
Comment: Stakeholders could help you identify problems.
Response: Absolutely. In addition, the pending statewide flood management planning program has done some initial work to gather stakeholder input.

Floodplain Delineation

Q: Will 200-year modeling be available for updating general plans?
A: 200-year floodplains are based on Comp [Comprehensive] Study results. The program is trying to determine where 200-year floodplains need to be delineated and how often they will need to be updated. The effort will develop a template for delineating the floodplain, and all the information will be

made available. Part of the CVFPP is determining the mapping priorities, and a methodology will be developed for mapping floodplains. According to legislation, mapping must be done by 2014, although DWR aims to complete it by 2012. The first step will be to develop the stakeholder interaction process; circulating ideas and learning how we can best interact with you.

Levee Evaluations

Q: Is the Corps also doing levee evaluations?
A: Yes, they are doing some levee evaluations. However, they are focusing on maintenance programs.

Q: Will that effort be conducted in the Delta only or throughout the State, and will results be cataloged?
A: Yes, a map will show the area of levee evaluations. Current evaluations include Marysville, West Sacramento, and the Delta area.

Q: What about non-project urban levees? The shipping canal was never incorporated into the system (20 miles of levee).
A: The southern extent of the urban, project levees occurs around Stockton. Non-urban, non-project levees are not shown. Non-project urban levees are defined as non-project levees that protect more than 10,000 people. These levees are being considered as part of the Urban Levees Evaluation Program.

Q: Will the results of evaluation be released in a public geotechnical report? Will this certify levee protection?
A: The results will be made available in a planning document, but the evaluation process will not certify levees. The document will indicate whether or not a levee meets geotechnical standards, which could support FEMA certification. (The evaluations observe Corps standards.)

Q: What is the timing for levee evaluations in non-urban areas?
A: The non-urban program will be completed by July 1, 2011. There will be some difficult decisions about the extent of the evaluations and a phased approach for completion.

Local Levee Maintaining Agency (LLMA) Reporting Requirements

Q: What about information that is submitted as part of integrity inspection grants applications?
A: We will be looking at data submissions – we do not want to duplicate efforts. Ultimately, information will roll up into an annual report to the CVFPB.

Q: Will there be two reporting forms—one for project levees and one for non-project?
A: Information on project and non-project levees could be submitted in one report.

Q: Will the summer inspection qualify?
A: Where inspections can be combined, we would want to do that.