

FloodSAFE focus

A publication of the Department of Water Resources FloodSAFE California initiative

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Voter-Approved Bond Funding Supports Unique Local Strategies to Improve Flood Protection throughout California

A variety of flood corridor grant opportunities from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) allow the state to work with a broad range of partners to support diverse types of flood risk reduction projects statewide.

Since 2000, the Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP) has successfully funded a total of \$80 million in grants to local agencies and non-profits statewide for nonstructural flood management projects that include elements to preserve agricultural land or enhance wildlife habitat. "Nonstructural" flood control projects include those which achieve flood risk reduction by protecting, restoring, and reconnecting rivers, streams, and drainage channels with their associated floodplains. This enables these systems to function more naturally (*see definitions, page 3*).

The grant program was first established when California voters passed the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Act of 2000 (Proposition 13); these funding opportunities were extended through passage of the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84).



Flood Protection Corridor Program grants helped protect agricultural land in the Elkhorn Basin, which supports production of crops such as walnuts and rice, shown above.

Revised funding guidelines for Proposition 84 and for Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 1E) grants have been released for public review. Comments are due November 1, 2010 (*see related article, page 2*). The guidelines include grants targeted for projects in the Central Valley as well as projects in other areas of the state.

Proposition 13 and 84 funds disbursed by the FPCP have already supported more than 27 projects statewide, including:

- » A \$13 million project in the community of Lakeside to remove a pinchpoint that caused the San Diego River to periodically flood a mobile home park. The San Diego River Park-Lakeside Conservancy received more than \$4 million for this project, which also lowered the adjacent floodplain, restored habitat, and removed invasive species. State involvement also helped identify opportunities for reusing gravel removed from the channel in a nearby California Department of Transportation project, saving taxpayers \$6 million.
- » A \$15 million project to maintain agricultural land uses in Yolo County. The Sacramento Valley Conservancy received a \$5 million grant toward acquisition and maintenance of 1,700 acres in the Elkhorn Basin which will be protected from development and held permanently in agricultural production through easements.

To receive notification when proposals may be submitted for new grant-funded projects, register at <http://www.water.ca.gov/bms/>. For additional information about flood corridor grants, contact Earl Nelson (enelson@water.ca.gov).

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Vision:

A sustainable integrated flood management and emergency response system throughout California that improves public safety, protects and enhances environmental and cultural resources, and supports economic growth by reducing the probability of destructive floods, promoting beneficial floodplain processes, and lowering the damages caused by flooding.

Tribal Advisory Committee Proposed for Water Plan Update 2013

On September 9, DWR's California Water Plan Update hosted a Tribal engagement scoping workshop in Sacramento. Approximately 50 people representing Tribes, Tribal organizations, and state and federal agencies attended. The workshop reviewed Tribal engagement in efforts to provide the 2009 update of the Water Plan and discussed a proposal for Tribal engagement for Update 2013. As part of this overall proposal, the group discussed the formation of a first-ever Tribal Advisory Committee which would provide a conduit for communication between the Tribal councils and the Water Plan Advisory Committee and staff. Meeting materials from the September 9 session, including the Tribal engagement proposal, can be found at <http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/materials>.

American Society of Civil Engineers Sacramento Region, Presents Awards to DWR Engineers

At its annual awards ceremony in September, the Sacramento Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers awarded Ricardo Pineda with the William H. Hall Flood Control Award and George Qualley with the Joseph W. Gross Outstanding Civil Engineer in Community Service. These awards are named after distinguished engineers who had lived and worked in the Sacramento Section service area.

Ricardo Pineda is chief of the Floodplain Management Branch in the Division of Flood Management and is the California coordinator for the National Flood Insurance Program managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. George Qualley is currently a retired annuitant with the Division of Flood Management and is helping develop the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. Before his retirement, George was the division chief for Flood Management.

Input Sought on Draft Flood Corridor Funding Guidelines

DWR now is soliciting comments on draft Flood Protection Corridor Program guidelines and the related proposal solicitation package. Three public workshops are scheduled in October to elicit comments and discussion on the draft guidelines (see "Calendar," page 3). Written comments are due to DWR by 5 p.m. on November 1, 2010.

The purpose of these draft guidelines is to establish the process and criteria that DWR will use to solicit applications, evaluate proposals, and award and administer grant and non-grant funds. For the upcoming round of grants, funding is authorized under Proposition 84 and Proposition 1E. Although the Flood Protection Corridor Program is statewide in scope, a portion of the Proposition 1E funding is designated for use within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley to reduce flood risk for areas protected by State Plan of Flood Control facilities. This component is known as the Central Valley Non-Structural Grants Program.

The Program's mission is to fund flood risk reduction projects through direct expenditures and grants to local public agencies and nonprofit organizations (see related article, page 1). Questions and all written comments on the guidelines should be directed to Earl Nelson (enelson@water.ca.gov). The draft guidelines and proposal solicitation package are available electronically at <http://www.water.ca.gov/floodmgmt/fpo/sqb/fpcp/>.



Previous Flood Protection Corridor Program grants funded a range of local efforts to reduce flood risk, including a project to reduce the community of Lakeside's risk of flooding from the San Diego River, shown above.

A **proposal (or project) solicitation package** is a document used by DWR to announce and describe grant funding opportunities; typically, they explain the grant application process, eligibility requirements, and other criteria that will be used to select projects for funding.

State Program's Record of Success Prioritizing Central Valley Levee Repairs Before Each Flood Season

Five years after DWR initiated a process to repair critically damaged Central Valley levees, problems at 264 sites—equivalent to 20 miles of levees—have successfully been addressed through the FloodSAFE Levee Repairs Program and related efforts. The Levee Repairs Program prioritizes the repair of critically damaged levees that cannot wait for system improvement projects and require repair before the next flood season. Levee repair projects are implemented through collaboration with federal and state resource agencies, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and local agencies.

In 2005, DWR began identifying a large number of sites for repair where levees were visibly eroding and a smaller number of sites with seepage problems. At the same time, DWR recognized that underseepage and other problems could only be identified through more extensive evaluations. Following Governor Schwarzenegger's declaration of a state of emergency for Central Valley levees during wet winter weather in 2006, DWR moved quickly to repair the critical erosion sites and also launched the Levee Evaluation Program to identify and expose other hidden levee problems (*see related article on page 4*).

To date, DWR has identified approximately 122 critical levee erosion sites, 222 "proactive" levee sites, and a smaller number of seepage sites. Of these sites, 264 have been repaired through the Levee Repairs Program and related work. Proactive sites are parts of the levee that may become critical sites if left untreated, but if they are addressed early, repairs will cost less and have fewer environmental impacts than critical repairs. When the Levee Evaluation Program identifies critical sites, DWR moves them to the top of list for construction that year.

For questions or to request information about the ongoing levee repair work, please email leveerepair@water.ca.gov.



In some cases, levee erosion sites were accessed by water for repairs, such as this construction at the Sacramento River next to Sacramento's "Pocket" neighborhood.

Calendar

Oct. 13 – Flood Corridor Program Funding Guidelines Workshop, 1 p.m., Sacramento

Oct. 18 – Flood Corridor Program Funding Guidelines Workshop, 1 p.m., Red Bluff

Oct. 20 – Flood Corridor Program Funding Guidelines Workshop, 1 p.m., Riverside

Nov. 3 – Preseason Flood Coordination Meeting, 1 p.m., Eureka

Nov. 9-17 – CVFPP Regional Work Group Meetings

Dec. 9 – Central Valley Flood Management Planning Program Valleywide Forum, Stockton

Dec. 16 – Interim Levee Design Criteria Public Meeting, 1 p.m., Sacramento

<http://water.ca.gov/calendar>

Structural flood improvements are intended to reduce the chance of flooding, while nonstructural flood improvements reduce the consequences and impacts of flooding.

Levee Evaluation Program Update

DWR has now completed 73 percent of its evaluations of the 470 miles of levees protecting urban areas in the Central Valley. These areas are located in the highly populated urban centers of the greater Sacramento, Stockton/Lathrop, and Marysville/Yuba City regions. Levee Evaluation Program staff have gathered a range of technical information to assess the geotechnical reliability of these levees, including historical information, topographic data collected using a helicopter-mounted light detection and ranging system, bathymetry, vintage aerial photos and maps, helicopter and land based electromagnetic surveys, soil borings, cone penetrometer soundings, soil samples, and laboratory testing. Initial seepage, stability, erosion, settlement, and seismic analyses have been performed on most of these levees using current criteria.

The program also completed the first phase of assessments on more than 1,600 miles of non-urban levees last spring, using existing and historical data as well as information obtained through interviews with local experts and landowners. The first phase of the non-urban assessments used existing data to categorize levees according to defined hazard levels.

These data provide important technical input to the forthcoming Flood Control System Status Report and the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, and they also help DWR engineers prioritize levee repair work before each flood season (*see related story, page 3*).

Additional information on the Levee Evaluation Program is available at <http://www.water.ca.gov/levees/evaluation/>.

Report Detailing State Plan of Flood Control is Nearly Final

Final preparations are underway to release the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) Descriptive Document this fall. The document is a key step in preparing the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). The SPFC Descriptive Document is the first report to provide a comprehensive inventory and description of the state-federal flood protection system along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Until now, much of the information on the SPFC has been maintained separately for each of the many projects that constitute the state-federal flood protection system along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, tributaries, and distributaries. Also included in the document is information on lands, programs, plans, conditions, and mode of operations and maintenance for the various projects in the system.

The SPFC is only a portion of the larger system that provides flood protection for the Central Valley. Although the SPFC Descriptive Document includes some information about that larger system, a more complete description will be included in the 2012 plan.

DWR is also using information collected and contained in the Descriptive Document to prepare the Flood Control System Status Report, which will review and describe how the facilities of the SPFC are functioning. The FCSSR is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2011.

When released, the SPFC Descriptive Document will be available online at <http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfmp>, and the report's full appendices will be available on DVD by request to cvfmp@water.ca.gov.

A periodic newsletter highlighting the progress to produce the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and the related FloodSAFE efforts within the California Department of Water Resources



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