

FloodSAFE focus

A publication of the Department of Water Resources FloodSAFE California initiative

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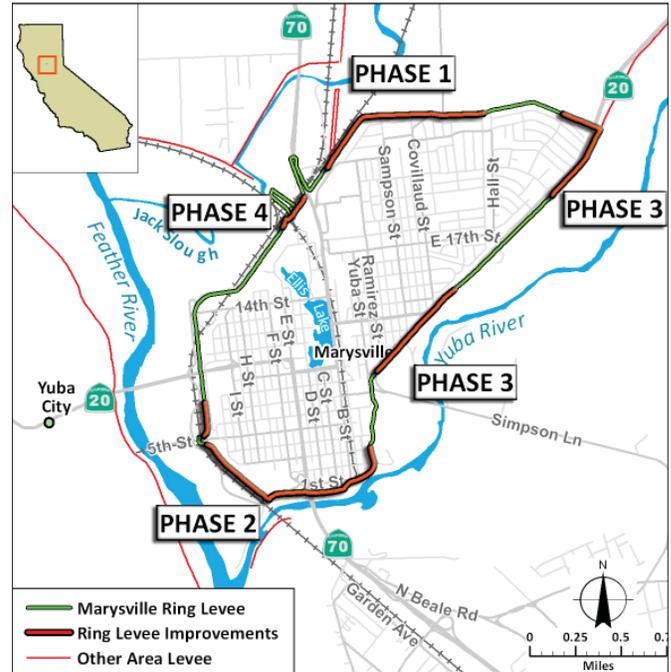
December 2010

First Phase of Construction Begins on Project to Improve Marysville Levees

On a sunny day in September 2010, standing atop a weak levee on the northeast side of Marysville where the first construction phase will begin, U.S. Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA), California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Mark Cowin, Marysville Mayor Bill Harris and Yuba County Supervisor John Nicoletti celebrated breaking ground on a project to improve 7.6 miles of levees that encircle the city of Marysville.

The Marysville Ring Levee Project is a partnership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), DWR, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and the Marysville Levee Commission. The project reflects a remarkable effort by local, state and federal agencies that coordinated swiftly to capture available stimulus funding authorized by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, thus helping accelerate construction on the project years before it would have been otherwise achievable. Stimulus funds of \$10.8 million will cover the bulk of Phase 1 repairs, which include a nearly one-mile-long “slurry wall”—a vertical, concrete cutoff wall built inside a levee to prevent water from seeping through the levee. Three subsequent phases of the project are scheduled to be finished by the end of 2013 (see map).

When this project is complete, Marysville will be one of the few cities in California’s Central Valley with more than a 250-year level of flood protection. This project is expected to provide Marysville’s 12,000 residents with protection against a flood event that has a 0.4 percent chance of occurring in any given year. Combined with the Three River Levee Improvement Authority’s recent work strengthening levees on the Yuba, Feather, and Bear rivers south of Marysville, Yuba County residents will soon have an extraordinary system to protect against a flood catastrophe such as those they experienced in 1986, 1997, and, most infamously, in 1955.



Phases of the Marysville Ring Levee Project.

The Marysville Ring Levee is an element of the Yuba River Basin Project in Yuba County. After the 1986 flood, the state, USACE and Yuba County Water Agency began the Yuba Basin flood damage reduction project to strengthen deficient levees. Congress authorized the project in 1999 and then reauthorized it in 2007.

A video of the groundbreaking is available on the USACE Sacramento District’s YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/SacramentoDistrict>.

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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.

Interim Levee Design Criteria Version 4 Released

A document containing DWR's Interim Levee Design Criteria (ILDC) Version 4 was released for public review on December 20. The document provides interim analytical and procedural guidance for civil engineers, cities, and counties to follow in meeting the requirements of state law enacted in 2007 through the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 5. SB 5 called for urban and urbanizing areas in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley to have a minimum level of 200-year flood protection, as evaluated by criteria used or developed by DWR. The interim criteria fulfill this need until they are revised again or adopted as final regulations.

DWR will conduct a public workshop on ILDC Version 4 on Thursday, January 6, 2011, to describe how the criteria were developed and how this version expands upon guidance presented in ILDC Draft 3 (May 2009), and to obtain feedback that will inform further development of the interim criteria. The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at MWH, 3321 Power Inn Road, Suite 300, in Sacramento. Please RSVP by January 4, 2011, to vmaxwell@water.ca.gov.

ILDC Version 4 is now available for download at http://www.water.ca.gov/floodsafe/docs/ILDC_Version_4_12-15-10_FINAL.pdf. Written comments on the document are due by 5 p.m. on February 4, 2011, to Rodney Mayer, 3310 El Camino Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95821.



Levee break near Arboga, 1997. The CVFPP climate change threshold analysis will help identify how our changing climate could exacerbate existing flood management problems and affect the state-federal flood management system in the Central Valley.

Unique Climate Change Approach Proposed for Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

Led by State Climatologist Mike Anderson, DWR has been working extensively with a group of top climate researchers to develop a preliminary approach for incorporating considerations of climate change into the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). Most existing climate change approaches focus on water supply by analyzing changes in average conditions and applying a top-down risk management approach. However, these approaches are not applicable to the extreme events considered in flood management. The CVFPP will incorporate climate change considerations using a threshold analysis approach. It uses a systematic analytical framework to identify critical thresholds and their associated consequences, which may warrant changing the state's investment strategy and priorities for improving flood management in the Central Valley. A draft of the Climate Change Threshold Analysis Work Plan is available at <http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfpp/documents.cfm>.

DWR Advocates for Flood Management Investments to its Federal Partners and Congress

In October 2010, a FloodSAFE Federal Advocacy Team travelled to Washington, D. C., to meet with staff from the Executive Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and various congressional offices to discuss Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012 federal funding for flood management projects whose costs are shared among federal, state, and local governments; DWR's proposed legislation for flood project investment crediting and reimbursement; and the department's challenges related to enforcing the USACE's policy about vegetation on levees. This trip was part of ongoing efforts to support federal appropriations to the USACE and advocate for reforms that would permit non-federal interests in the Central Valley to be reimbursed or credited when they fund critical flood management projects ahead of the federal government.

Implementing California Flood Legislation into Local Land Use Planning: A Handbook for Local Communities – this guidance document is now final and available as a PDF for download at <http://www.water.ca.gov/localfloordriskplanning>.

FloodSAFE Office Integrates Environmental Sustainability and Ecological Enhancements in Delta and Flood Management Efforts

The FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO) began operations in July 2009 to provide a focus for integrating environmental stewardship into DWR's FloodSAFE California initiative and related programs. FESSRO includes three branches: Delta Levees and Environmental Engineering, Environmental Restoration and Enhancement, and Floodway Ecosystem Sustainability.

The Delta Levees and Environmental Engineering branch is responsible for providing engineering assistance and funding to Delta reclamation districts to improve levees and other flood protection facilities in a way that avoids environmental damages and enhances habitat. This work is accomplished through the Delta Levees Maintenance Subventions and Delta Special Flood Control Projects components of DWR's Delta Levees Program. The branch coordinates with Delta agencies to improve and support levee stability and maintenance and flood emergency preparedness. Its programs also support research into on-island subsidence reversal and carbon sequestration, and their effects on Delta flood protection, water conveyance, and environmental systems.

The Environmental Restoration and Enhancement branch oversees a range of programs and funding activities to improve Delta ecosystem restoration and enhancement, watershed management improvements, urban streams restoration, and native anadromous fish passage improvement. It also works with resource agencies to plan river migratory corridor priorities for restoration and fish passage improvements. The branch's programs also direct funding toward restoration, enhancement, and mitigation related to Delta levee systems to improve high-value Delta habitat sustainability while protecting land uses and water supplies.

The Floodway Ecosystem Sustainability branch oversees integration of environmental stewardship into flood system planning, operation, and maintenance. The branch provides support on environmental issues to the development of the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). The branch is developing the Central Valley Flood System Conservation Strategy, a long-term effort to create a systemwide conservation plan supporting CVFPP implementation. The branch also coordinates regional advance mitigation planning, a comprehensive statewide effort promoting more meaningful, large-scale, and cost-effective conservation by establishing mitigation banks before flood projects are implemented.

2010 Calendar

Dec. 9 – Central Valley Flood Management Planning Program Valleywide Forum, 1 p.m., West Sacramento

Dec. 15 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Proposal Solicitation Package Released

2011 Calendar

Jan. 6 – Interim Levee Design Criteria Version 4 Public Workshop, 9 a.m., Sacramento

Jan. 12 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Workshop, 1 p.m., Fresno

Jan. 13 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Workshop, 1 p.m., Riverside

Jan. 14 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Workshop, 1 p.m., San Diego

Jan. 18 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Workshop, 1 p.m., Sacramento

Jan. 21 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Workshop, 1 p.m., Red Bluff

Feb. 8 – DWR Bulletin 120 "Water Conditions in California" Released

Feb. 25 – Flood Corridor Program Grant Application Deadline, 5 p.m.

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

Three new documents are now available as PDFs for download at <http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfpp/documents.cfm>:
Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Interim Progress Summary 2
Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Management Actions Report
State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document

CEQA Public Scoping Conducted for 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

Public scoping meetings for the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Program (CVFPP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) were held on November 15 in Chico, on November 16 in Sacramento, and on November 18 in Modesto. Meeting objectives were to share information about the CVFPP and the associated California Environmental Quality Act process and to seek public and agency input on the content and scope of the proposed Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Attendees at the three scoping meetings included members of the public and representatives from federal and state agencies. Input obtained during the mandatory 30-day CEQA public review period will be summarized in a scoping report to be released in early 2011. DWR anticipates that the 2012 CVFPP Program EIR will focus on policy-level implications and include a broad analysis of alternatives and mitigation measures.

The Notice of Preparation for the CVFPP Program EIR can be found at <http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfmp/documents.cfm>. If you have questions about the Program EIR development process, please contact Crystal Spurr at (916) 653-0992 or cscurr@water.ca.gov.

Valleywide Forum Webcast Now Available Online

On December 9, 2010, DWR welcomed more than 200 in-person and “virtual” participants to a public forum in West Sacramento designed to highlight recent progress to develop the 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP). Hosted at West Sacramento’s City Hall Galleria, the Central Valley Flood Management Planning Program Valleywide Forum drew a broad range of public agency representatives, officials from all levels of government, representatives from interest-based organizations, and individuals from throughout the State. DWR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Central Valley Flood Protection Board representatives provided updates on state and federal efforts to reduce flood risk in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley and engaged in a spirited question-and-answer session with forum participants on issues such as funding and future CVFPP updates. The recorded webcast of the live forum proceedings is available for viewing at <http://cawater.rm.xpres.com/webcast/datacvfmp12092010/>.



Alicia Kirchner (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District), Jay Punia (Central Valley Flood Protection Board), Jeremy Arrich (DWR), and Ken Kirby (Kirby Consulting) field questions about development of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan during the December 9 Valleywide Forum.

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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