

RANCHO CUCAMONGA FLOODSAFE WORKSHOP SUMMARY

JULY 11, 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 Rancho Cucamonga workshop was held on July 11, 2008. The workshop agenda included:

- FloodSAFE Program Update
- Federal Flood Control Subventions Program Regulations Update
- 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.

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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.

DISCUSSION

Scope of Strategic Plan

Q: What will the environmental mitigation program involve?

A: The mitigation program is expected to help address mitigation requirements associated with structural projects with a focus on establishing large contiguous areas dedicated for environmental benefits.

Q: Does the concept of regional mitigation focus on the Central Valley only?

A: DWR would like to establish regional mitigation banks for use in other parts of the State as well. As part of the FloodSAFE program, DWR will conduct a statewide flood protection needs assessment; opportunities for mitigation may become apparent through this effort.

Q: When will guidelines be complete for the IRWM [integrated regional water management] grants?

A: Fall 2008 is the target timeframe.

Q: Does improvement to Central Valley levees include certification?

A: Some of the data collected as part of the improvements and evaluations may be used to help support the certification process, but the program does not include the certification process. Per the National Flood Insurance Program, a Registered Professional Engineer or a federal agency with responsibility for levee design (e.g., the Corps) can certify levees.

Q: How does the program assist impoverished areas or disadvantaged communities?

A: DWR is looking at options to help disadvantaged and under-represented communities participate in the FloodSAFE program.

Subventions

Q: How will the level of additional subventions funding be determined?

A: The additional 20% will be granted as part of the state authorization. Following federal authorization, an eligible project must obtain state authorization. As part of the state authorization process, DWR would submit a report to the State legislature recommending how much of the additional 20% should be awarded for the project.