



News for Immediate Release
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Five Levee Sites Added to DWR's Critical Erosion List for Emergency Repair

Sacramento – Following Governor Schwarzenegger's plan to restore California's failing levees; the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has added five levee sites to its critical erosion list. This brings the total number of emergency repair sites to 29. Work on some sites is expected to begin in June and conclude with repairs to all 29 levees by the end of the year.

"We are pursuing an aggressive schedule to repair these 29 critical sites to avoid what could be a catastrophic flood if these levees should fail," said DWR Director Lester Snow. "We expect to have all 29 sites repaired by the end of this year."

Of the five additional sites, four are located along the Sacramento River near Isleton, Walnut Grove, West Sacramento and Colusa, the fifth is located on Cache Slough near Ryer Island. As recently as last October, these five sites were judged to be "potentially critical" in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' study. However, after the January flood event and a recent re-evaluation of the sites by the Department and its consultants, it was found that these five sites had further deteriorated to the critical stage. This provides further evidence of the continuing erosion and deterioration along the levee system and the need to repair these sites this year.

Since the Governor declared a state of emergency on February 24, department staff has been conducting various field and environmental surveys of the affected levee sites, securing the proper permits for the repairs, and have begun repair designs for each of the sites.

Most of the erosion repairs are expected to consist of placing rock on the water side of the levee. The purpose of the repairs is to reestablish the levee slope and the supporting toe structure, bringing the levee up to its original level of flood protection.

At least four of the 29 sites will require a setback levee design – a new levee built behind the existing levee – to ensure adequate protection. Setback levees will be used to remedy three Cache Creek sites, where construction is expected to begin in June. Construction on the

remaining sites will begin shortly thereafter.

“It is important that we act swiftly to avoid a catastrophic flood incident that will put at risk the health and well being of thousands of Californians, destroy businesses and severely impact the state’s economy,” said Director Snow. “We cannot afford to wait years for these repairs to get the proper attention from the federal government.”

The Department has a current budget allocation of \$103 million to repair the sites. Earlier this month, DWR announced that it will advance up to \$30 million in emergency funding to the federal government to allow the Army Corps of Engineers to repair 10 of the now 29 critical erosion sites. The Department will repair the remaining 19 sites.

The 29 critical erosion sites are located in the counties of Colusa, Sacramento, Solano, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba.

The federal government has traditionally been a partner to states and communities in providing funding for flood control repairs and improvements. Using conventional processes and funding mechanisms, however, would have hindered the Corps’ ability to complete even a fraction of the sites during this calendar year. In return for its funding, the state is seeking federal credit for the advance payments and has requested an expedited permitting process by federal agencies to complete the repairs.

In addition to the repairs, DWR is evaluating approximately 20 other erosion sites that may require expedited repairs. These sites were requested by other various agencies and interested parties for inclusion on the list of critical repair sites. The department will work with federal, state and local agencies to evaluate the criticality of the site, determine the best way to accomplish any urgently needed repairs, the funding mechanisms available, and the agency responsible to take the lead.

For more information, visit DWR’s Web site at www.water.ca.gov.

-30-

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

[Back to Top of Page](#)

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