



News for Immediate Release

January 25, 2012

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Central Valley Flood Protection Board Celebrates First Century of Service

SACRAMENTO -- California's Central Valley Flood Protection Board is celebrating its first century of flood protection. On Friday, January 27, a centennial ceremony is scheduled at the California State History Museum, 1020 O Street, Sacramento, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Flood experts from various agencies will speak at this historic event and share their perspectives about the accomplishments and challenges of flood management in the Central Valley.

Created by the Legislature in 1911 as the State Reclamation Board, the Board administers State flood policy along California's two longest rivers, the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and their tributaries. The Board's initial 100 years were an era of dramatic growth, transforming the Central Valley from sparsely populated swampland to one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world as well as a populous and urbanized heartland.

"We celebrate the Board's past achievements but also focus on our current and future challenges," said Board President Ben Carter. "We seek to protect a vital region with about one million people, nearly \$70 billion in assets and infrastructure, countless farms and more than 500 species of native plants and wildlife in the Central Valley."

In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and in coordination with other federal, State and local agencies, the Board has approved and funded the construction, modification, improvement and maintenance of Central Valley flood control systems in its vast area of jurisdiction. This includes the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers systems, the Tulare and Buena Vista basins,

1,600 miles of levees, 1.7 million acres of land and 1,300 miles of designated floodways.

Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

A top current Board task is reviewing the draft Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. Mandated by flood safety legislation passed in 2007 and enacted in 2008 and developed by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in consultation with a broad range of experts, the plan utilizes a system-wide approach to Central Valley flood protection and seeks to provide 200-year flood protection for urban areas in the Central Valley.

The Board is scheduled to receive a briefing by DWR on the plan at its January 27 meeting in the first-floor auditorium of the Resources Building, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, starting at 8:30 a.m.

Over the next five months, Board members and staff will analyze the plan and receive input from experts and the public, with the goal of adopting it by July 1.

Board Modernization

To keep pace with flood challenges, the Board in recent years was modernized and its responsibilities and authorities expanded. This was done primarily through the 2007 legislation. Pursuant to that legislation, the Board name was changed in 2008 from the Reclamation Board to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. The legislation also expanded the Board's independent authority to regulate encroachments on levees and to require compliance with standards assuring public safety.

Through its mission, the Board strives to ensure that the flood management systems within its jurisdiction protect the people, property and natural habitat in the Central Valley. The Board's top priorities focus on four strategic areas: preserving the integrity of existing facilities; enhancing flood protection; integrating environmental enhancement into flood management, and improving stakeholder understanding of flood risk.

The Board is composed of seven members appointed by the Governor and two ex-officio members. Key staff leaders for the Board include Executive Officer Jay Punia, an engineer with extensive DWR flood experience, and Chief Engineer Len Marino, also a veteran DWR flood and water resources professional.

"The Board's monthly meetings are open to the public providing a forum where all interested persons and groups can express their views on flood management," said Punia. He noted that Board members bring a diverse background and a wide perspective to their discussions and debates on the

merits of the projects that come before the Board. This results in a well-balanced decision-making process.

The Board coordinates with the Corps in reviewing applications for construction or modification of projects within Board jurisdiction. In its project reviews, the Board considers aquatic and land species and habitat and seeks to preserve or enhance them in ways that do not reduce public safety. The Board works closely on flood activities and levee policy with DWR's Division of Flood Management, as well as with the Corps and local levee maintaining agencies.

“Even though there will always be risk, we believe that the Board, working with its partners, helps the Central Valley's residents stay flood-safe,” said Carter.

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