



NEWS RELEASE

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Levee upgrades will reduce flood risk for Marysville

MARYSVILLE, Calif. – Senior officials from the city of Marysville, Yuba County Water Agency, Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today announced the start of construction to strengthen the 7.6-mile long Marysville Ring Levee.

Standing atop a weak levee on the northeast side of Marysville where the first construction phase will occur, Congressman Wally Herger, Marysville Mayor Bill Harris and Yuba County Supervisor John Nicoletti praised the Corps of Engineers, Department of Water Resources and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board for their unwavering commitment to begin this levee strengthening project, initiated in the wake of the tragic 1986 Yuba County flood.

When this four-phase project is complete, Marysville will be one of the few cities in California's Central Valley with more than a 250-year level of protection, meaning there is a one-in-250 chance for flooding in any given year. This is expected to greatly reduce the risk of flooding to Marysville's 12,700 residents.

"This groundbreaking begins to mark the fulfillment of a process that began over twenty years ago. We are here today entirely because of the dedication and unprecedented efforts of the local citizens and local agencies who have worked so hard for so long to make this project a reality," Herger said. "During that period, Marysville was again struck by flooding in 1997 that served as a tragic reminder of the urgent need to improve flood control in the Yuba-Sutter area. Despite the many challenges, this community and its leaders never gave up the cause; they just rolled up their sleeves and continued working to improve the safety of this area."

"We still have a long way to go, but this ground breaking represents an important step forward in providing Marysville one of the highest levels of flood protection in the entire Central Valley. This project will play a major role in continuing to make Northern California such a great place to live. I look forward to continuing to work to see the full completion of this historic project," Herger added.

The project reflects a remarkable level of collaboration by local, state and federal agencies, who overcame a number of obstacles to accelerate construction on the project. \$10.8 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds will provide the bulk of funding for Phase 1.

"Reducing this storied city's flood risk is a priority mission for the Corps of Engineers," said Col. William Leady, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District. "It's important to understand, though, that while we will have significantly reduced the risk when this work is done, it's not a guarantee of safety. Living behind levees comes with inherent risk and we all have a shared responsibility in reducing that risk as much as possible."

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Leady also emphasized that the Recovery Act funding that helped to push this into construction is doing exactly what the legislation was meant to do – creating jobs, infusing money into the economy, and improving our nation’s infrastructure.

In recent years, the Corps has completed extensive planning, design and engineering studies of the Marysville Ring Levee. Based on these analyses, the Corps multi-year construction plan includes significant modifications to fortify deficient segments of the ring levee. For the entire project, more than 2 million square feet of engineered material will be installed to strengthen the Marysville Ring Levee and help reduce the risk of flooding to the city of Marysville. Total project costs for all four construction phases are roughly \$75 million dollars.

“The Marysville Ring Levee project is a true example of how local, state and federal efforts can combine to create lasting benefits and protection for local communities at risk of flooding in California,” Department of Water Resources Director Mark Cowin said. “DWR is proud to be a partner in reducing the flood risk for Marysville, and is committed to seeing this project through to completion. It is a priority for the Department and we’re pleased construction has begun.”

Phase 1 construction will focus on a fragile stretch of levee along the northeast side of the city. The top eight feet of the levee will be removed before a 105-foot deep seepage cutoff wall is installed in the center of the levee. The cutoff wall will help prevent water from seeping through the levee. After rebuilding the top of the levee, additional material will be placed on the sides of the levee to create a more robust levee structure. More than 4,000 feet of levee will be fortified during Phase 1, which is scheduled for completion in 2011.

“This is a great day for the people of Marysville,” Harris said. “Stronger levees will ensure this city can begin to fulfill its promise as one of California’s great cities with a much lower flood risk.”

As a “separable element” of the larger Yuba River Basin Project, the Corps’ repairs to Marysville are authorized under the 1999 Water Resources Development Act (Public Law 106-53; Section 101(a)(10)) and the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (Public Law 110-114; Section 3041).

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