



NEWS RELEASE



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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CORPS, COUNTY ANNOUNCE SANTA CLARA RIVER LEVEE PUBLIC MEETING

LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District and Ventura County Watershed Protection District will host a public meeting Oct. 12 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Rio Vista School, 3050 Thames River Drive, Oxnard, CA 93036, to inform residents about the ongoing work to inspect and repair the Santa Clara River Levee System 1, a 4.72-mile stretch along the southeast bank of the river, from Highway 101 to Saticoy, in the City of Oxnard, Ventura County, Calif.

At the meeting, the Corps and the County will discuss the levee problems, flood risk and next steps to improving the levee so that deficiencies noted in the County's certification inspection of March 2009 and the Corps' periodic inspection of March 2010 can be corrected.

A County-sponsored assessment of the levee in March 2009 determined it was not certifiable under the National Flood Insurance Program. The conclusion is supported by a Corps evaluation that rated the system "unacceptable" due to deficiencies that include insufficient slope protection and channel erosion that threaten the levee.

"Levee safety is a shared responsibility and we are committed to working with our partners to improve levees and reduce flood risk," said Los Angeles District Commander Col. Mark Toy. "We can only do that if we have a shared understanding of levee deficiencies and the risks they present, and keep an open, honest dialogue about what needs to be done to fix them."

"The Corps of Engineers has been an active partner in addressing the levee's shortcomings and the Corps has now completed the first step in their process of pursuing a levee improvement and safety project," said Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett. "We will be working together on making levee improvements and seeking federal funding."

Levees are screened and classified by the Corps nationwide to help prioritize limited resources and urgency for action to better make flood risk management decisions. The Corps and the County are collaborating to effectively leverage each other's expertise, capabilities and authorities to rehabilitate the levee and to drive down the risk to people, property and the environment.

The Corps Levee Safety Program, developed in 2006, assesses the integrity and viability of levees and recommends courses of action to ensure that levee systems do not present unacceptable risks to the public, property and environment. The Levee Safety Program includes levee systems operated and maintained by the Corps; levee systems constructed by the Corps, but operated and maintained by a local sponsor; and levee systems constructed, operated and maintained by non-federal agencies and accepted into the Corps' Rehabilitation and Inspection Program. The program also assists with and evaluates emergency action and evacuation plans, which are an integral part of every properly maintained levee system.

Representatives from Ventura County Watershed Protection District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District will be available for media interviews immediately following the public meeting.

For additional information about the Levee Safety Program, visit <http://www.usace.army.mil/leveesafety>.