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TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 2015-2016

- c) staff met with local water conveyors (e.g. irrigation districts, water conservation districts) and experts
2. Tulare County RMA Flood Control Activities consists of:
 - a) channel clearing
 - b) basin and stationary pump maintenance
 - c) purchase and rental of additional portable pumps if needed
 3. Tulare County reported it has established a flooding response protocol. A contact list for fire, police, and other related agencies was also prepared.
 4. The County has inspected the tributaries and, if necessary, will clear the brush and debris in the foothill areas.
 5. During storm events, Tulare County crews will monitor and inspect conditions in foothill areas for storm related damages and flooding. Tulare County crews will actively monitor snowfall and, when necessary, provide road plowing services in various parts of the foothill and mountain areas.
 6. Tulare County has an action flood control plan for the valley area.

Of the eight (8) cities within Tulare County, four (4) responded to the request from the Grand Jury on their Flood Control preparedness measures:

7. City of Woodlake flood control action plan –
 - a) drainage ditch running along Naranjo Blvd next to Bravo Lake was maintained for handling storm water
 - b) maintenance performed on permanent lift pumps and arrange to have chainsaws and portable trash pumps available
8. City of Tulare flood control action plan –
 - a) repair and/or clean storm drain inlets and storm drain lines
 - b) perform maintenance on drain pump stations
 - c) clean leaves out of gutters and storm drains
 - d) place portable emergency generators at pump stations
 - e) clean bottom of ponding basins to improve percolation and groundwater recharge
 - f) cleaned debris out of the Kaweah crosstown culvert
9. City of Porterville flood control action plan –
 - a) clean dirt, leaves and debris from drain inlets
 - b) identify and allocate funds for problematic areas
 - c) general drainage infrastructure improvements to handle potential emergencies
 - d) training of personnel to handle storm weather emergencies
 - e) mobilize portable pumps in preparation for flooding
 - f) provide sandbags in corporation yards for citizen's use
 - g) broadcast public preparedness information on a local radio station and the city's website

TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 2015-2016

10. City of Visalia flood control action plan –
 - a) Downtown Stormwater Flood Control - Expand the existing basin near Douglas Ave east of Santa Fe St and install a new pipeline flowing into the basin. Construction started November 2015 with completion slated for April 2016
 - b) East Side Regional Park - Combination regional park and groundwater recharge facility on a 248 acre site in eastern Visalia. Not in construction yet
 - c) Lower Kaweah River Flood Control Basins - Flood control project to construct three (3) basins in the Visalia area. Two of the basins to function as relief for flows from Terminus Dam. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall of 2016.

FINDINGS:

- F1. Various county and city agencies have been proactive in anticipation of an El Nino event.
- F2. RMA “Hot Spot” (historically flood prone areas) identification will aid in:
 - a) timely, adequate placement of personnel and equipment
 - b) identify which water conveyors will be impacted by flood waters and to use their system as pressure relief valves
- F3. Tulare County has placed emphasis on the valley floor (Western region), but did not have any major flood control projects or management plan in the foothill area (Central region).
- F4. Clearing of bridges and channels will help the movement of water, in turn reducing flooding events.
- F5. Preplanning of flood protection of county facilities has the potential to reduce flood damage and increase cost savings for taxpayers.
- F6. Goal statements from various agencies show a greater emphasis on capturing and percolating rainfall and runoff into groundwater than in previous years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Applicable agencies should increase emphasis in water storage projects when the opportunities for water retention are higher.
- R2. Applicable agencies should not ignore the importance of flood control projects due to drought conditions.
- R3. Applicable agencies continue their progress on existing flood control projects.
- R4. Tulare County adopt a foothill region flood management plan.
- R5. When rehabilitating public parks, adding water retention and percolation capabilities should be considered.

TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 2015-2016

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

1. Tulare County Resource Management Agency
2. City of Woodlake
3. City of Porterville
4. City of Tulare
5. City of Visalia
6. City of Lindsay
7. City of Exeter
8. City of Dinuba
9. City of Farmersville
10. Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Section 924.2 and 929).

TULARE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 2015-2016

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