

Temporary repair of J Levee underway

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Work is underway on a temporary repair of the J Levee in Hamilton City.

The Glenn County Board of Supervisors authorized \$15,000 to repair a stretch of about 1,000 feet of levee — with plastic bags and bailing twine.

District 5 Supervisor Leigh McDaniel said despite the need for more water, this year's rainy season is the strongest the area has seen in several years.

"There was quite a bit of flooding," McDaniel said. "The volume of rain was less than normal, and it still caused flooding."

McDaniel said the rain that came down in December resulted in high water along the Sacramento River in Hamilton City and even flooding in the Orland area.

McDaniel, Glenn County Sheriff Richard Warren and engineers of the Department of Water Resources inspected the levee a few weeks ago and determined immediate repairs were needed in an area south of the Highway 32 bridge.

Officials are concerned the levee, which has been in a state of disrepair for decades, could break in the next high water event, which could flood about 300 residences in Hamilton City.

"Think of this as a \$15,000 insurance policy," Warren said.

The proposed fix is temporary, but officials hope it was hold until the federal government moves forward with a planned \$14 million project.

The Hamilton City project is a multipurpose flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration project.

It consists of construction of 6.8 miles of setback levee to provide a more reliable form of flood protection to the community and agricultural areas.

The project also includes degradation of the existing "J" levee, and reconnection of approximately 1,400 acres of native habitat to the Sacramento River floodplain.

Once constructed, the new levee will provide Hamilton City with protection against a 75-year flood event, a dramatic improvement over the level of protection afforded by the existing J Levee, Grigsby-Puente said.

The J Levee was built in 1905, with 1905 engineering standards, officials said, and repairs have been made mostly during emergencies. Although a dry start to January is not ideal for an ongoing drought, Public Works staff are taking advantage of the break in weather to get the work done.

A ridge of high pressure has kept rain away the past few weeks, although some precipitation is expected this weekend, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is predicting above-average precipitation over the next few months.

Although the major reservoirs in Northern California are below historical averages, they are above levels from 2014, officials said.