

## SOUTH YUBA COUNTY PROPERTY OWNERS APPROVE LEEVE MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT

In May, property owners in South Yuba County approved a benefit assessment to pay for long-term maintenance and operations on 29 miles of improved levees. The assessment was favored with 62 percent of the weighted vote. On June 2, the TRLIA Board took official action to form the Benefit Assessment District based upon the outcome of the vote-by-mail balloting process.

The assessment is expected to raise approximately \$800,000 in the first year, the cost for Reclamation District 784 (RD 784) to maintain levees to strict state and federal standards.

Per state law, each property's assessment is proportional to the special benefit it receives from better, stronger flood protection. Annual rates for single family residential properties range between \$11 and \$148. For more information, visit [www.trlia.org](http://www.trlia.org) and click on the Assessment District link.

### WHO MAINTAINS THE LEEVES?

Reclamation District 784 is responsible for maintaining approximately 37 miles of levees in South Yuba County. It also takes care of pumping stations and coordinates flood fighting and levee patrols during high water events. Each home within the district pays an annual assessment to cover costs associated with these responsibilities. A five-member elected Board manages the organization. For more information, visit [www.rd784.org](http://www.rd784.org).

## FEMA MAPPING AND FLOOD INSURANCE

Yuba County continues to work closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on including levee improvement projects in ongoing Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) revisions. Although not required, Yuba County strongly recommends that all property owners living behind or near levees purchase flood insurance. Because the County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), property owners have access to very low-cost flood insurance that will cover the structure and its contents in the event of flooding. For more information, contact any insurance agent, or visit the NFIP Web site at [www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/](http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/).



## LAND ACQUISITION AND EMINENT DOMAIN

Believed to be the largest levee improvement project west of New Orleans, the Feather River Setback Levee Improvements required the purchase of nearly 1,700 acres of property from 28 South Yuba County property owners. In each case, TRLIA worked hard to reach agreement with property owners on the value of their land and individual damages. To date, TRLIA has reached agreement with 16 of the 28 property owners. TRLIA is engaged in Eminent Domain proceedings in the 12 cases where an agreement has not yet been reached. The Eminent Domain process provides opportunities for TRLIA to continue to negotiate with landowners to reach agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached, the value of the property is then decided by a jury. Although these cases are advancing through the legal process – to include jury trials – TRLIA continues to make every effort to negotiate agreements.

It is important to note that property owners are not challenging the need for the project, but disagree with TRLIA's offer of compensation. As a public Agency, TRLIA must safeguard the public interest and ensure expenditures on property are justifiable.

## COULD THE 1950'S GOLD FIELDS FLOOD HAPPEN TODAY?

Northeast of Marysville, the Yuba River flows through a large area called the Gold Fields. For more than 100 years, this area has been mined for gold and aggregate. Historical and legal records show that on November 20, 1950, mining operations caused the Yuba River to break through its south bank during a storm event. The resulting flood impacted South Yuba County.

In 1950, the Yuba River flowed through two channels (a north channel and a south channel) near the point of the break. Mining operations blocked the North Channel, forcing all water flow to the South Channel. In addition, dredging operations weakened the south bank in the South Channel. The combination of manmade circumstances directly led to the break and flood.

In 2009, the circumstances are dramatically different. Photo comparisons of 1950 and today show that the Yuba River has moved substantially north into a new channel. Its current location is much further away from the southern boundary of the Gold Fields. In addition, the old South and North Channels have been filled with dredger tailings and are no longer in use.

Today's river would have to erode dredger tailings equal in length to three football fields in order to breakout as it did in 1950. This is supported by the fact that four large Yuba River water flows – near or greater than the 1950 flow – have passed through the Gold Fields area since that time without a breakout occurring. Given current circumstances, a repeat of the 1950 break and flood is improbable today.

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Visit our website at [www.trlia.org](http://www.trlia.org) to register for project updates and news! Also, check out our weekly postings of construction progress and photos.



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