



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Flood Control/Public Works  
**Department No.:** 054  
**For Agenda Of:** 08/19/08  
**Placement:** Set Hearing  
**Estimated Tme:** 1 hour on 09/02/08  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

---

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
Board of Directors, Flood Control and Water Conservation District

**FROM:** Department Scott McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010  
Director(s) Michael Harris, Emergency Operations Chief, County Executive Office  
Contact Info: Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

**SUBJECT:** Emergency Watershed Response Plan in Response to the Gap Fire

---

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** N/A

As to form: No

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: No

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Directors:

- a) Approve the Emergency Watershed Response Plan in response to the Gap Fire;
- b) Adopt the attached Resolution entitled "In the Matter of the Existence of Local Emergency Due to the Gap Fire Burn Damages";
- c) Authorize the Public Works Director or his designee to apply for and to execute any and all agreements, subsequent amendments, and documents with State and Federal agencies to receive funding from various programs for work in response to the Gap Fire;
- d) Approve plans and specifications for the Debris Racks that will be installed on Las Vegas, San Pedro, Carneros, Ellwood, and Glenn Annie Creeks;
- e) Approve plans and specification for the Fremont Creek Culvert Improvement Project; and

- f) Set a public hearing for September 2, 2008 departmental agenda (ESTIMATED TIME: 1 HOUR) to receive a presentation and updates on the projects and work identified in the Emergency Watershed Response Plan.

**Summary Text:**

The Gap Fire burned almost 10,000 acres of watershed above the Goleta Valley area. As experienced with previous fires, a burned watershed exhibits a drastically enhanced response the following winter including a dramatic increase in runoff volumes and correspondingly dramatic increases in debris production. Following the Zaca Fire in 2007, these conditions did occur.

In the case of the Gap Fire, a very serious condition exists downstream. Several locations downstream have experienced flooding in years past. The risk for flooding following the fire is extreme because much higher rates of sedimentation and woody debris is expected. The woody debris can clog bridges and culverts and induce flooding that would otherwise not occur. Sedimentation fills in channels and reduces flood flow capacity, thus aggressive desilting operations will be needed to provide maximum capacity.

Staff has completed an Emergency Watershed Response Plan for areas generally downstream of the Gap Fire. The affected watersheds that are addressed in the plan include (from West to East) Tecolote, Winchester/Ellwood, Tecolotito, Carneros, San Pedro, Las Vegas, and San Jose/Fremont.

The plan will be discussed in detail at the September 2, 2008 Board meeting. The plan includes a variety of emergency actions in response to the fire including:

- channel clearing,
- vegetation hazard reduction/clearing,
- installation of debris racks,
- aerial mulching of non-federal lands within the fire perimeter as applicable, subject to and if federal funding is approved for the project along with funding cooperation from the Cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara.
- pre-winter excavation of existing sediment basins, and
- emergency protective measures (currently planned at 3 locations).

The attached map identifies the locations of these activities. Changes to the plan may result based on information received and additional assessments of concerned areas. As such, additional work than discussed above may be identified or additional projects may be considered.

Following the preparation work, the plan would provide for the following winter operations:

- on-going desilting of sediment basins at the Airport
- monitoring and removal of vegetation from the installed debris racks
- removal of debris plugs and accumulated sediment deposits within stream channels within the urban area, and
- emergency disposal of excavated sediments at Goleta Beach.

Other activities will include the installation of an emergency sandbag distribution center located at Fire Station 14 on Los Carneros Road. This center will provide free sand and bags to the public in areas

affected by the fire. This station will be set up and run throughout the winter in cooperation with the City of Goleta. Public outreach meetings are being organized. Written materials, including the Flood Control Districts pamphlet “*Homeowners Guide for Flood Prevention and Response*” will be available in hard copy and online at the Public Works Department’s website at:

<http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/>

Adoption of a Proclamation of a State of Emergency by the Board, and forwarded to the Governor, is necessary to address the serious threat to life and property downstream of the Gap Fire. The risk to downstream property and public infrastructure is extreme, necessitating the implementation of various work elements by the County and the Cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara. Implementation of such work is needed prior to the onset of winter rains.

Staff is also coordinating collaborate efforts with the City of Goleta, City of Santa Barbara, Caltrans, and affected property owners.

**Background:**

The Gap Fire started on July 1, 2008 in the West Camino Cielo area late in the afternoon approximately four miles west of HWY 154 and 3.5 miles north of Goleta in the Los Padres National Forest. The fire burned in seven major watersheds in the City of Goleta and the unincorporated Goleta area.

There is emergency watershed response work identified in all of the seven burned watersheds: Winchester Canyon, Los Carneros, Las Vegas, San Pedro, San Jose, Tecolote, and Tecolotito. While all the downstream risks associated with the burned area of the Gap Fire cannot be eliminated, staff believes that prompt implementation of the Emergency Watershed Response Plan is needed prior to the onset of the coming rains.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: No

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<b><u>Funding Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Current FY Cost:</u></b>	<b><u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u></b>	<b><u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u></b>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

**Narrative:**

Costs for the Annual Maintenance Plan work located in the burned watershed area was included in the Adopted 2008-09 Budget under the Maintenance cost center of the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department as shown on page D-336 in the budget book. However, costs for the additional watershed response work caused by the Gap Fire were not included in the Adopted Budget for this Fiscal Year. Flood Control will be returning to the Board to approve a budget revision to allocate costs from designations once estimated costs of the work are known.

Because the Gap Fire was State Declared Emergency some of these project costs may be reimbursable through the State Office of Emergency Services. Additionally, a funding request from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been made and federal funding may become available for the initial work. Cost sharing for the local share of the costs of the aerial mulching would be shared with the Cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara.

Additional funds for ongoing emergency winter desilting and disposal operations will also be no doubt required. Reimbursement for these costs would only be eligible if a future state or federal disaster declaration occurs.

**Staffing Impacts:**

**Legal Positions:**

**FTEs:**

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send copies of the resolution and minute order of these actions to County OES, Attn: Michael Harris and the Flood Control District office, attn: Christina Lopez.

**Attachments:**

Emergency Watershed Response Plan  
Resolution

**Authored by:** Tom Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

**cc:**