



**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS  
DEPARTMENT**

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**PRESS RELEASE  
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**COUNTY MOVES FORWARD WITH MONTECITO FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS**

*Public Works plans include improved flood control structures, debris nets, and a new basin.*

The Santa Barbara County Public Works Department (Public Works) is moving forward with multiple projects to improve flood control in Montecito. The projects include improving three debris basins, facilitating debris control net installation, and constructing a new debris basin near Randall Road.

On August 27, 2019, the Board of Supervisors authorized Public Works to contract with WRECO to provide analysis and design for the Cold Springs, San Ysidro, and Romero Creek Debris Basin Improvement Project. Public Works proposes installing outlet control structures similar to the one installed at Gobernador Basin in 2008. These outlet control structures will be designed to withstand large debris loads, to help move sediment downstream, and to restore steelhead trout habitat.

The Board of Supervisors also approved an item that authorizes Public Works to help the Partnership for Resilient Communities to free up funding to finish the installation of debris nets. First District Supervisor Das Williams said, "I brought this issue to the County Executive Office and the Public Works Department because of the protection this project will provide to the community and infrastructure below the mountains. These efforts are the beginning of a large effort by the County, working with local non-profits, to improve safety and flood control capacity." Debris nets have been installed in San Ysidro, Cold Springs, and Buena Vista creeks. The remaining two nets will be installed in San Ysidro and Buena Vista Creeks.

A new debris basin that could help protect property in Montecito also recently took a huge step forward in the planning process. The Randall Road Debris Basin project was envisioned and has been championed by Montecito resident Curtis Skene since early in 2018, after he narrowly escaped the 1/9 Debris Flow. The project is supported by the Santa Barbara County Flood

Control District (District) with additional support from Montecito property owners and community members. Skene – who is also the Executive Director of the nonprofit Partners in Community Renewal (PCR) – said, “This project will dramatically improve mitigation of events like the 1/9 Debris Flow and help to protect our community on a permanent basis in the future. “

On July 16, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Padre Associates, Inc. for \$170,000 to prepare the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the basin. Padre Associates, Inc. will conduct the environmental analysis in concurrence with the design process. The basin would be constructed on 10 acres of property severely impacted by the 1/9 Debris Flow. The basin would be located immediately upstream of State Highway 192 and east of Randall Road in San Ysidro Creek. This area is three-quarters of a mile downstream from the San Ysidro Basin and would enhance the existing flood protection on the San Ysidro Creek system.

On August 28, 2019, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Oakland, Ca. met with Skene and District staff members and approved a request for advanced funding to purchase parcels for the proposed Randall Road Debris Basin. The basin would be able to withstand the forces of large debris loads, facilitate sediment recovery downstream, and enable fish passage. The location is ideal because the property is available for acquisition, the watershed in the area levels out naturally, and it is located high enough to protect any property downstream. Current plans proposed by PCR and supported by the County include a walking trail, an enhanced wildlife habitat with native vegetation, and an open space area. Skene said, “PCR will continue to work to study our watershed and to look for opportunities to work with the County to help mitigate the effects of flooding events in our community.” This project is estimated to cost \$21 million and is currently in the planning and design stage. In addition to applying for funding through FEMA grant applications, PCR is seeking support and contributions from the community as well.

Public Works Deputy Director Tom Fayram said, “We want to thank California Office of Emergency Services Director Mark Ghilarducci for his support in our efforts. Mark was vital to the response and recovery phases following the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow, and he continues to provide key support on the Randall Road project.” For more information on Santa Barbara County Flood Control, visit [www.countyofsb.org/pwd/water.sbc](http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/water.sbc).