



# FloodWise

WINTER 2022

PROTECTING LIVES AND PROPERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1927

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## We Never Stop Working for You

As work lives changed for so many during the pandemic, our employees continued their essential work of maintaining a levee system vital to our community's health and well-being. In the event of a major flood, the levees are the last line of defense between you and the water, which is why they're considered critical infrastructure. Still, we know that levees are one of those things people seldom think about until they break. At American River Flood Control District, it's our job to keep them off your list of worries.

### What We Do and Why it Matters

Maintaining a levee to the highest standards is simple, but it's also hard, never-ending work. Though levees look like elevated pathways, they're actually engineered structures that require careful upkeep. Damage from water erosion, roots, rodents, and humans affects their structural integrity, requiring us to constantly repeat a three-step process to keep them in flood-ready condition:



**KEEPING THE GRASS SHORT** allows us to get a clear view of the levees. That's why you often see us out mowing. We also manage invasive weeds and remove vegetation that encroaches on the levee.



**WE INSPECT EVERY LEVEE** to look for any problems that could lead to a levee failure.

To get a clear look at all parts of the levee, we must sometimes trim back vegetation, including trees that block our view.



**IF WE FIND ANY PROBLEMS, WE MAKE NECESSARY REPAIRS.** Repairs can range

from replacing soil removed by people digging into the levees to more intensive construction projects, such as the Arcade Creek erosion repair project covered in this newsletter.

The next time you see our essential workers, please give them a friendly wave to say th



## Arcade Creek Erosion Repair Project

Water running high and fast following storms can eat away at the waterside of a levee, especially in spots where the river or creek curves to push more water into the levee toe (bottom). Over time, the high-speed flow causes a problem called “toe scour,” which can eventually undermine a levee if not repaired. During inspections along Arcade Creek, we noticed signs of toe scour in a few locations and hired MBK Engineering to assess the damage. In June 2020, the engineers identified four erosion sites needing repair.

Repairing the damage and preventing the problem from developing again requires us to place 3,700 tons of riprap (loose rock) along the four sites’ combined distance of 890 feet. To preserve the area’s aesthetics, crews will minimize damage to vegetation and cover the riprap exposed above the waterline with 755 cubic yards of loose dirt.

We expect to begin work on the project next July and anticipate completion by November 2022.

# Stay Safe

## Share the Trail

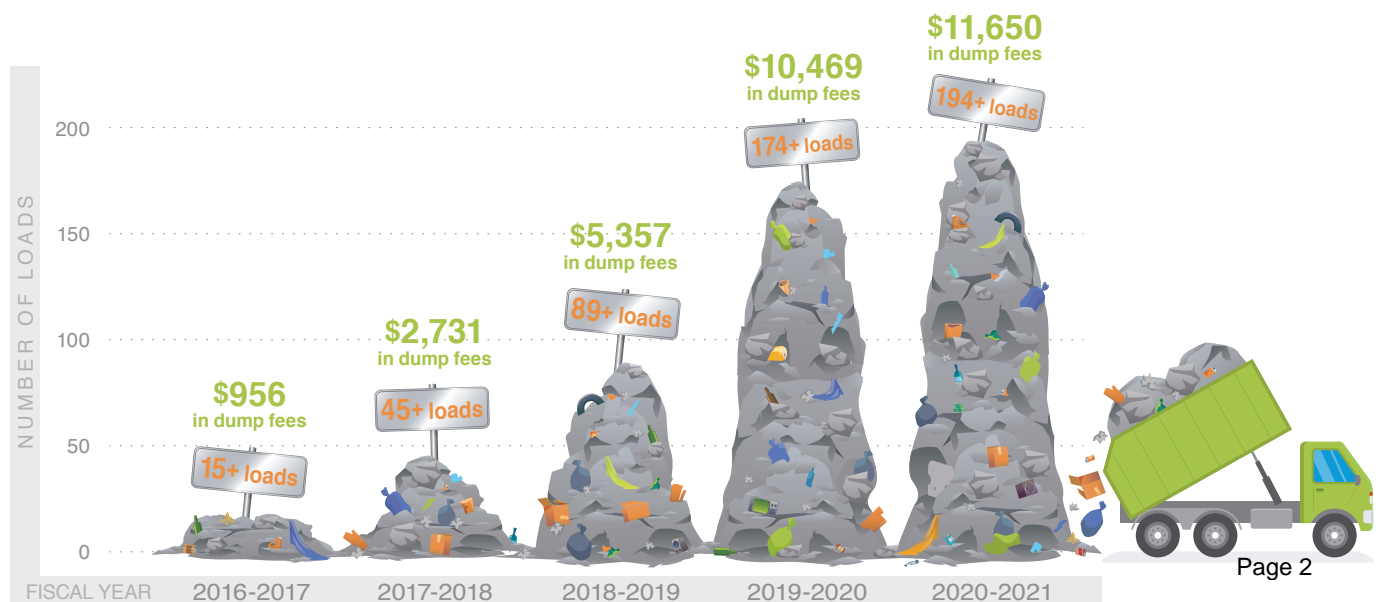
Keeping levees in flood-ready condition is a constant job. That’s why you often see us on the levees performing maintenance activities on the steep slopes and narrow roadways. Rather than inconveniencing people by closing levee sections while we work, we do our best to share the levee with people and pets.

You can help us maintain that open policy by following a few simple courtesies:

- Stay aware of your surroundings when walking or cycling on or near levees.
- Never assume an operator can see or hear you. They can seldom do either.
- Stay back of signal operators before passing near equipment.
- Never cross under the extended mower arm.
- Never sneak by when a tractor or dump truck is backing up.
- Keep pets leashed and well away from equipment.

We inspect, mow, repair and monitor the levees so that they can stand strong against floodwaters. You can help us keep the levees flood ready by staying alert to our equipment and keeping a safe distance away.

## A Growing Problem | *The amount of trash we collect and remove continues to grow.*



# Next Phase of Army Corps of Engineers Levee Upgrades Begins

## Sacramento Levee Upgrades

Floodwaters can go over, under, around, and through levees. That means our levees must be higher, stronger, and long enough to keep the water in. But it also means that levees must be protected against erosion that could cause levees to fail. Over the past 25 years, several projects have addressed the levee height, length, and strength concerns. Now the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and partner agencies are focusing on the challenge of erosion that could undermine levees along stretches of the American River.

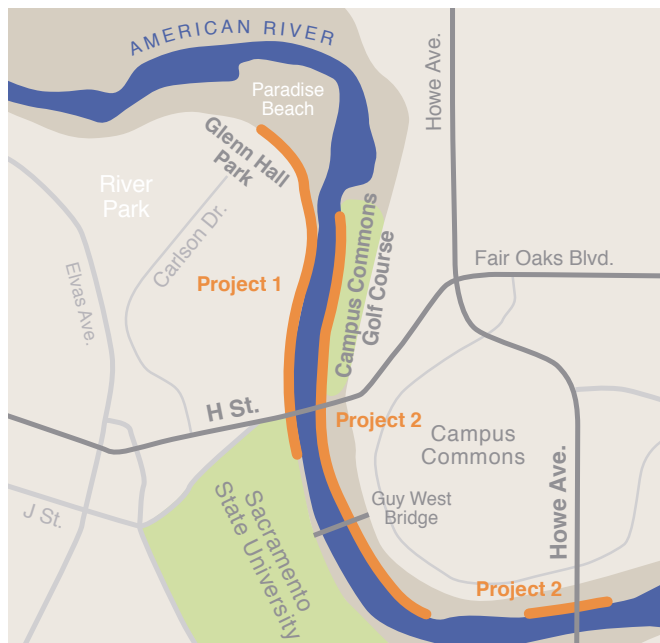
To date, work to address flood dangers along the American River has included improvements to Folsom Dam, installing 24 miles of foot-wide slurry walls down the center of existing levees, and making significant upgrades to levees along North Sacramento creeks.

In this next phase, the USACE will oversee work to add a combination of loose and soil-filled rock, anchored whole trees, and native vegetation to protect the riverbank from the force of high-velocity water flowing through after winter storms.

The first of the two projects will protect 5,500 feet of riverbank on the American River's south side from just upstream of the H Street bridge downstream to Glenn Hall Park. The second project will protect 7,800 feet of the river's north-side bank from just upstream of Howe Avenue downstream through Campus Commons Golf Course.

### A Special Thank You

Our region is fortunate to receive federal funding and the support of federal, state, and local agencies to help us combat the ever-present risk of flooding. A special thank you to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Water Resources, Central



Valley Flood Protection Board, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control District for their expertise and hard work to make these improvement projects possible.

*Detailed information about both projects is available at [SacLeveeUpgrades.com](http://SacLeveeUpgrades.com).*

*Greater Sacramento, California, is often considered to be the most at-risk region in America for catastrophic flooding, relying on an aging system of levees, weirs and bypasses and Folsom Dam to reduce its flood risk. But that system, just like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest link.*

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**FloodWise:** A publication of the American River Flood Control District.

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**BOARD OF TRUSTEES' MEETINGS**

Open to the public  
Second Friday of every month at 11:00 a.m.

185 Commerce Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95815

## Employee Spotlight

*Gilbert Gutierrez,  
Levee Maintenance Worker, Range B*



Gilbert is the kind of employee every organization dreams of hiring. He's a certified pesticide applicator with a Class A license, but in the five years he's worked with the district, Gilbert has earned the reputation of being able to do just about any job the district requires. He manages invasive

weeds, operates the tractor mower, trims, runs the weed eater, and performs maintenance service on the district's trucks and tractors. And he enjoys doing it all. In fact, when asked what he likes most about his job, Gilbert said it's the variety of what he gets to do and the people he works with every day.

Gilbert also appreciates that what he does helps keep the community safe, both from the very real danger of flooding in our region and from fast-spreading wildfires that could feed on overgrown vegetation.

## Stay Alert. Share the Trail.

Rather than close down levee sections while we work, we do our best to share our workspace. You can help us by staying alert to our equipment and keeping a safe distance away.

Whether cycling, walking, or running on the levee, please keep safe by staying several feet away from our mowers and other heavy equipment.

Help us stay flood ready!

