

# **A bureaucratic soup?**

**Stuart Leavenworth**

***Published March 28, 2004***

Sacramento's flood defenses depend on cooperation among myriad state, federal and local agencies.

## **California Department of Water Resources**

DWR owns 1,600 miles of levee that are part of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River flood projects. DWR directly maintains 152 miles of levee, and delegates the remaining upkeep to local reclamation districts. The state agency also is responsible for maintenance of upstream weirs and bypasses, such as the Fremont Weir that directs floodwater around Sacramento through the Yolo bypass. DWR's flood funding is largely dependent on general appropriations from state lawmakers.

## **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The corps constructs flood projects authorized by Congress, such as dams and levee upgrades. The corps develops flood-control guidelines that determine how much water agencies can store and release from federally funded reservoirs. When asked by the state, the corps also provides essential help in shoring up levees during a major flood.

## **The State Reclamation Board**

Created in 1911, the board consists of seven members appointed by the governor. It works with the corps in planning, building and operating flood projects. Once a project is built, the board accepts legal responsibility and then turns it over to DWR or a local district to maintain.

## **Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency**

Formed in 1989, SAFCA doesn't directly own or maintain any flood-control projects but raises money through assessments to help pay for the local "cost-share" needed to leverage state and federal money. SAFCA consists of the city of Sacramento, Sutter and Sacramento counties, the American River Flood Control District and Reclamation District 1000, which maintains levees in Natomas.

## **The Federal Emergency Management Agency**

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program and regulates the "100-year flood plain," a delineation that determines whether or not property owners must purchase flood insurance. It works with the corps on studies of the flood plain. It recently was absorbed by the new Department of Homeland Security.

## **Other agencies**

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operates Folsom Dam above Sacramento; The National Weather Service, which issues flood warnings; the state Office of Emergency Services, which helps respond to floods and their aftermath.