



King County

News Release

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Increasing flood risk in Pacific triggers emergency protection measures

**King County Flood Control District, King County, City of Pacific,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers join forces to protect people, property**

New information that sediment build-up in the White River alongside the city of Pacific is creating a higher flood risk has local governments and regional agencies responding aggressively to protect citizens and property.

The King County Flood Control District (Flood District) and King County, in cooperation with the city of Pacific and with support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), are placing additional temporary emergency flood protection measures, called HESCO barriers, along three sections of the White River in Pacific.

"The King County Flood Control District is working diligently to address this emerging situation in a proactive fashion," said Reagan Dunn, Chair of the King County Flood District Board of Supervisors. "While we are providing a temporary fix now, the King County Flood Control District will continue to move forward on constructing a more permanent solution to protect the residents and businesses in the area."

"This is an important first step to protect jobs, residential homes, and surrounding job-producing businesses from the threat of devastating floods," said Flood District Supervisor Pete von Reichbauer, who represents Pacific on the Metropolitan King County Council. "I look forward to working with my fellow Flood District Board Members, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Executives office to create a permanent solution to the threats facing this floodplain."

"Extending the barriers or raising them in places will help protect the people of Pacific in the short term," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "To reduce the flood risk long-term, we will keep moving forward with projects that set back selected levees to allow room for the White River in its historic floodplain."

The emergency action is a result of recent field observations from the Corps, the city of Pacific, Pierce County and King County, along with updated scientific modeling, that point to an increased flood risk from White River gravel and sediment accumulations through Pacific.

The White River is notorious for the high sediment load it carries from Mount Rainier. The river segment alongside Pacific is particularly vulnerable to gravel deposition and rapidly changing conditions because of the natural drop in channel gradient through this area. As the channel fills with sediment, the chance the riverbank will overtop increases.

Pacific is no stranger to serious flooding. In 2009, the community experienced major flooding into residential areas after a major storm required releases of water from Mud Mountain Dam.

Major flood-risk reduction work is planned for this stretch of the White River in the coming years. King County and the Flood District are moving forward with two levee setback projects that will reconnect more than 120 acres of floodplain to the White River channel – a more long-term and cost effective solution than dredging.

Both projects involve property acquisition, levee removal and setback, and floodplain enhancement, and will provide improved flood risk reduction. Learn more about this work at www.kingcounty.gov/rivers.

In the meantime, the Corps is providing up to 3,000 lineal feet of HESCO units at no cost to the Flood District, and the Flood District has authorized the use of up to \$425,000 to install the HESCO barriers and fill them with sand.

This emergency work, managed by the King County Water and Land Resources Division and performed by the King County Roads Division, is expected to take two to three weeks to complete. Residents can expect truck traffic to haul construction materials, large equipment and crews working within construction areas.

The city of Pacific is coordinating outreach to its citizens, and will host a public meeting Wednesday night, **Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m.** at the **Pacific Gymnasium, 205 Milwaukee Blvd. S.**

“It is important our citizens know that these protection measures will help, but do not eliminate the very real threat of flooding,” said Pacific mayor Leanne Guier. “We need to take steps now to prepare for the possibility of floodwaters.”

HESCOs were installed after the 2009 flood, but those measures are now considered insufficient for current flood risks. Floodwaters overtopping the river bank along Third Place Southeast and over the HESCO flood barrier installed around Pacific Park and White River Estates could cause serious flooding in the residential neighborhoods.

The added HESCOs will increase the length and height of the temporary flood protection barrier. The three construction areas are:

The White River bank near Third Place Southeast

Flood protection barriers will be installed along the top of the riverbank north of Pacific Park. Extending the barriers north of the park will reduce the potential for floodwaters to overtop this portion of the riverbank.

Pacific Park

An additional four feet will be added to the height of the HESCO barriers installed in 2009 to reduce the chance of floodwaters flowing beyond the park and into the adjacent residential neighborhoods along Third and Fourth avenues and White River Estates.

Eastern edge of White River Estates

Two short lengths of the existing flood barriers will be moved to higher ground to provide additional protection. One location is near the cul-de-sac; the other is at the downstream vacant lot. This lower end of flood protection barriers will tie into the existing sandbag berm to form a continuous line of flood protection for this neighborhood. The connecting portion of the existing sandbag berm is being raised by crews from the Pierce County Surface Water Management Program.

Residents can learn more about how they can personally prepare for flooding, including the use of sandbags to protect their property, by visiting www.kingcounty.gov/floodservices.

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The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District's Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at <http://www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org/>.