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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sutter County Declares Local Emergency Due to March 2011 Storms

The Sutter County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution March 22 declaring a local emergency in response to a 240-foot crack in a levee in southern Sutter County, localized flooding due to power failures at pumping stations, and a need to find volunteers to assist in housing homeless who have fled the river bottoms because of rising rivers.

A California Conservation Corps crew and farmers in the Nicolaus basin placed sheets of visqueen, a thick plastic covering over a crack on the landside of the northern Natomas Cross Canal levee about 1 ¼ mile east of Garden Highway in the Verona area on Tuesday, March 22. The plastic covering will prevent additional rain water from entering the crack and further compromising the levee, a portion of which has slumped several inches.

Representatives from Reclamation District 1001, which maintains the levee, Sutter County, the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were examining the crack and slippage that was discovered Monday by a Reclamation District levee patrol. The Reclamation District began patrols on Thursday, March 17, and discovered the crack soon after it occurred.

There are approximately 100 homes and dozens of agricultural buildings in the Verona and Nicolaus basin that would be threatened by a levee failure on the northern Natomas Cross Canal. The canal carries flood waters from development in Placer County through Sutter County into the Sacramento River.

Reclamation District 1001 General Manager Diane Fales said the condition of the levee poses only a small threat at this time. RD 1001, and officials from Sutter County, the Department of Water Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers will continue to monitor the levee and report on any changes in its condition. Residents in the area are advised to be prepared to evacuate, if necessary.

In addition to the levee issue, the local declaration of emergency addresses the need of Red Cross for volunteers to assist at a shelter established for dozens of homeless who have been evacuated from the Feather River bottoms due to high water, and concerns about localized flooding caused by power outages over the weekend that crippled some pumps at Department of Water Resources pumping stations and caused water to back up onto roads.

Red Cross is in need of volunteers to assist with the shelter, and with its ongoing mission of providing assistance to residents during disasters. To volunteer, contact Debra VanSickle, at 530-673-1460, ext. 13.

All Sutter County residents are advised that a large snow pack, saturated soils, and a forecast for more rains pose the potential for additional high water. During this time, it is advisable to maintain at least a half tank of gas in your car and enough food for three days. View the Sutter County/Red Cross video production on how to be prepared for an emergency.