

\$11.4 million awarded for Feather River levee work

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The Three Rivers Levee improvement Authority moved closer to being able to finish levee upgrade work on the Feather River, with the state kicking in \$11.2 million in bond money this month.

According to TRLIA officials, the amount will keep the authority on target to complete \$192 million worth of levee improvements this summer, though authority executive director Paul Brunner said he expects another round of state money to come down later this summer to ensure that timeline is met.

"We're scheduled to complete Feather River work this construction season," Brunner said, though the authority may not be able to complete a secondary project to tear down the existing levee when the new one is finished.

If that's not done before the rainy season begins, Brunner said, flood monitoring officials may not be able to determine how effective the new levees are if there is heavy rainfall and a potential flood situation this winter.

The \$11.2 million comes from Proposition 1E, a \$4 billion bond voters passed in 2006 that is intended for flood protection. Brunner said the bond money is not available to the state to solve its General Fund budget deficit.

A TRLIA press release said the state Department of Water Resources in 2008 pledged \$139 million from Proposition 1E for Yuba County levee upgrades, and has now contributed \$91 million, or about two-thirds of its commitment.

Yuba County, the Yuba County Water Agency, a landowner and Reclamation District 784 have contributed about \$53 million in necessary local money for levee upgrades, according to TRLIA.

TRLIA is still working on levee improvements to the Yuba River.

Brunner said state and local officials are crafting an agreement to pay for upgrades to Yuba River levees. That project is scheduled to be finished next year but could stretch into 2011, he said.