



Levee work set for May

By [Ben van der Meer/Appeal-Democrat](#)

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Within weeks, the final major project planned for the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority should be under way.

By mid-May, crews are planned to begin work upgrading four miles of Yuba River levees between Simpson Road and the Goldfields with slurry walls and seepage berms.

About two dozen county residents attended a hearing in Marysville Wednesday evening to get a sense of both the agency's overall mission and specific details on the Upper Yuba Levee Improvement Project.

"Whenever you're building levees, you're doing some expansion work and you're going to have some impacts," said TRLIA Executive Director Paul Brunner at the hearing's outset. "We want to have as few impacts as possible."

The project's estimated price tag of between \$15 million and \$16 million may actually cost less, once formal construction bids begin coming in next week.

Brunner said a previous request for bids for the project resulted in proposals at nearly half of the projected cost, but the process had to start over when federal overseers didn't sign off on a necessary credit for construction in time.

If work begins when it's supposed to, Brunner told hearing attendees, the project should be finished by the end of October.

Less certain is TRLIA's to-do list after that. The agency is studying whether some additional flood protection is needed for the Goldfields.

Though there's no risk of a 100-year flood coming through that area, Brunner said, state law may require protection from a possible 200-year flood. Such protection would need to be in place by 2025.

Such uncertainty was a concern for Evelyn and Felix Irusta, Edgewater residents who lost a home in the 1986 flood in Linda.

"A flood is a mess," she said, after she'd asked Brunner what areas could be flooded if high water came through the Goldfields. "But I know nothing's perfect."

Supervisor Mary Jane Griego, who's also a member of the TRLIA board, said she's not concerned about getting the Upper Yuba River project done, because it's relatively short and uncomplicated.

"It's still a significant part of the system that has to be addressed, but we're up for it," she said.

But the Goldfields issue is trickier, she said. If it turns out work needs to be done, there'll be tough decisions about who does it and how it's paid for, she said.

"I'd feel good about it if it did come to us because compared to some jurisdictions, we know how to do this work," she said.

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