



FEMA

FEMA Update on Levee Issues

California Water Conference
Sacramento, CA October 2009
Doug Bellomo

Presentation Overview

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- **Levees**
 - Where We've Been
 - Where We Are
 - Where We're Headed
- **What can local leaders and professionals do?**
- **Risk MAP Vision**



Where we've been....



Levees Nationwide



- **FEMA and the USACE realized (before Katrina) that the character of our nations levees was largely “unknown”**
- **FEMA could not (in good faith or by law) “assume” levees afforded protection**
- **FEMA emphasized (in its mapping process) the need to determine if a levee could meet 1986 regulatory requirements for accreditation on NFIP maps**



Why Worry About It?

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- **People living in areas behind levees deserve to be informed about the risks**
- **“Truth in Labeling”- we could not assume levees met requirements**
- **Failing to ensure levees are capable of functioning as expected can lead to uninformed risk taking and ultimately catastrophe**
 - loss of human life
 - significant economic impact



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So “Head in Sand” was not a Good Strategy

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- **However, many levee owners and local governments were not prepared to demonstrate their levees met the 1986 accreditation regulations**
- **FEMA worked with the USACE and stakeholders and developed the “Provisionally Accredited Levee” (PAL) process**
- **Provided two years for data collection and analysis to owners and communities willing to accept some risk**
 - Was not intended to provide time for levee fixes
 - Outreach to those behind the levee critical

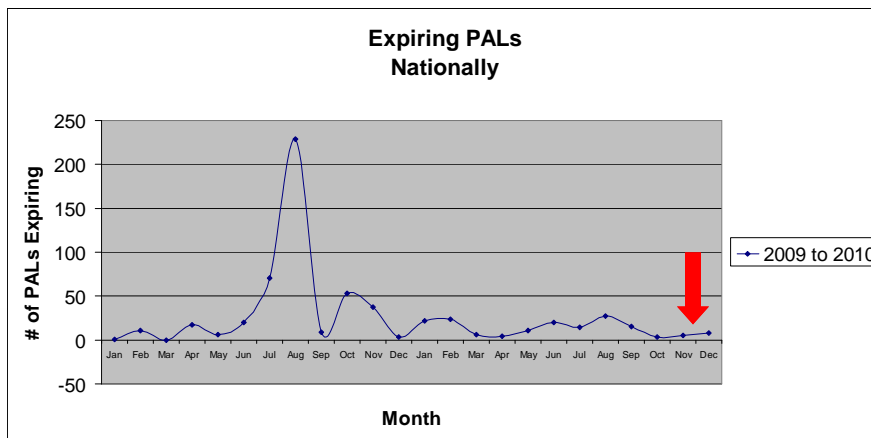


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Where we are...

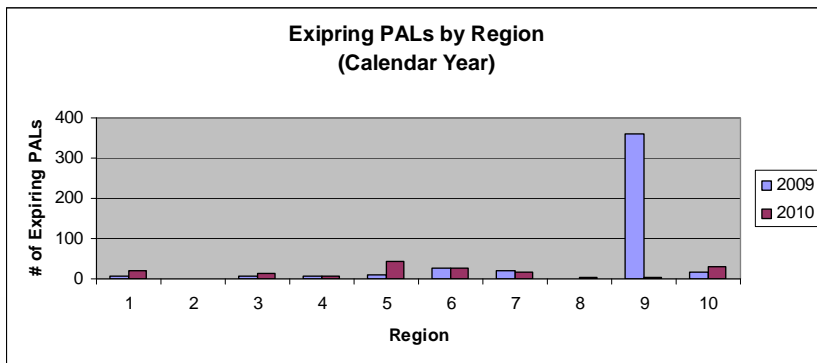


When PALs Expire



Where PALs Expire

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Some Statistics

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- About 85% of the levees we've found were determined to be PAL eligible
- About 60% of those eligible signed the PAL agreements
- That means roughly half of the levees we've encounter end up in the PAL process
- It's popular



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What's Happening With PALs

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- **Of the 1163 signed PAL agreements...**
 - About 40% are either within their 24 month period or are under review
- **Results so far for the total population of 1163...**
 - About one third will be de-accredited because the 24 months has lapsed or early data indicates they do not meet regulatory requirements
 - About one quarter will be accredited



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More Enlightening

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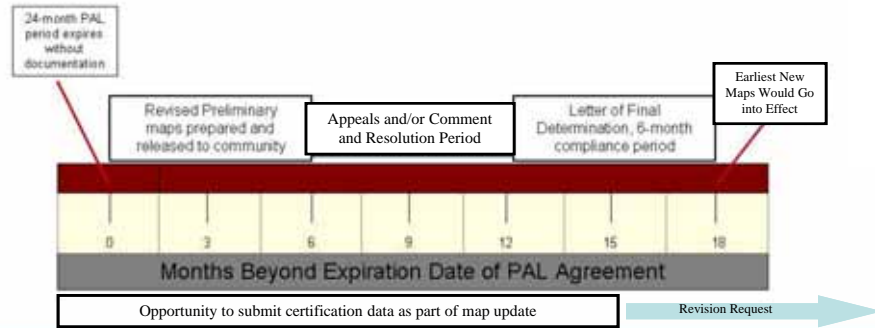
- **The 24 months has expired for about 40% of the PALs offered (477 of 1163)**
- **Of these 477 about...**
 - Three quarters will be de-accredited because the 24 months has lapsed (about half) or data indicates they don't meet regulatory requirements (about one quarter)
 - The remaining quarter will either be accredited or is pending review for accreditation
- **So either 2 years is not enough time to collect data that should be readily on hand or people are signing PALs to buy time**



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What Happens When They Expire

Mapping Process for Expired Provisionally Accredited Levees



Where we're headed...

Continued Coordination and Partnerships

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- **FEMA and USACE**
 - Coordination efforts have intensified and will continue to be important in the future.
 - Continue to align guidance and actions taken.
- **FEMA and Other Agencies**
 - FEMA also coordinates with other federal and state agencies such as BOR, NRCS, TVA, IBWC, and others with levee roles

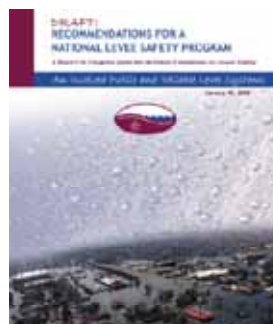


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Levee Safety Committee

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- **National Committee on Levee Safety**
 - Participates with USACE as federal representatives
 - Delivered recommendations to Congress to establish National Levee Safety Program
 - Committee is responding to questions from OMB



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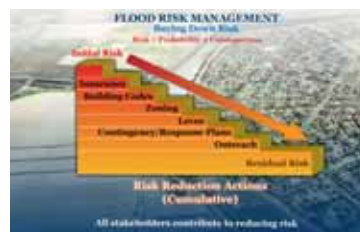
- **House bill passed in July 2009**
 - Removes requirement for use of federal funds (AR and A99)
 - Adds details for “adequate progress” (A99)
 - Removes “coastal” exclusion (AR)
 - Emphasizes communication
- **Bill with Senate**
- **FEMA would update A99 and AR regulations if passed**

What Communities and Professionals Can Do...

What Can Communities Do?

What can communities facing levee issues do?

- Help identify the risk
- Manage the risk – have a plan
- Communicate it to the public
- Work with Feds and State



Don't Assume – Ask Us



- **FEMA Regional Offices are here to help:**
 - Mapping issues
 - Outreach questions
 - Policy issues



Risk MAP Vision...



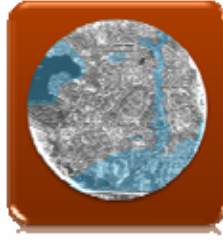
First National Map of "Need"



Risk MAP (Mapping, Assessment, Planning) Vision

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Through collaboration with State, Local, and Tribal entities, Risk MAP will deliver **quality data** that increases **public awareness** and leads to **action that reduces risk** to life and property.



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