

# Agencies get kudos for river cleanup

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Local officials are breathing a sigh of relief that a recent project to clear the Walker River channel reduces the threat of flooding.

Statewide officials are congratulating them for working together to get it done.

During a presentation to the Lyon County Commission on Dec. 17, Mason Valley Conservation District manager Ed Ryan said 260,000 cubic yards and 357,500 tons of sediment were removed from the river channel. The project was taken to clear sediment from the river channel from the Yerington weir upstream. Crews got near the Mason Road bridge before funds ran out.

The agencies got together to clear the river channel of debris and sediment in the hopes of reducing the risk of flooding in the event of high flows next spring.

In an unusual step, the county declared a state of emergency in order to open up channels for funding, and county manager Jeff Page said the commissioners will be presented with a resolution in January to stay the state of emergency.

Page praised the cooperation of the agencies involved, including Desert Engineering, which performed most of the actual work.

“I think this is another example of what we can do as a community when there is a crisis,” Page said.

The project was funded by the Walker River Irrigation District and the city of Yerington, both using grant funds from the national Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Lyon County contributed \$25,000 plus the use of county equipment and labor. The county’s role was clearing the area under the three bridges at Goldfield Avenue, Bridge Street and Mason Road, Page said. Not since 1922, Page said, had the Walker River been completely dry, but since it was, the agencies involved decided to get in the river and clean it up while it was empty of water.

Ryan said the Conservation District is applying for about \$30,000 in funds from the state to cover outstanding costs.

Yerington city manager Dan Newell, at the Dec. 14 meeting of the Yerington City Council, praised the project.

“It definitely reduces our potential for flooding 100 percent,” he said. “You can already look at the water in the river and see the difference.”

Rick Martin, the recovery/grants section manager for the Nevada Division of Emergency Management congratulated the agencies involved for working together to get the project done.

“In my estimation, this is a truly great definition of a mitigation project,” Martin said. “It’s very rare that when you identify a project, you put your money where your mouth is to make it happen. We’re going to showcase this statewide and let our FEMA partners know what you’ve done for this community.

Commissioner Don Alt asked what is being done with the sediment that was removed, saying it looks like marketable sand, but Ryan said most of it was removed in the area of private property owned by the Snyder and Circle Bar N ranches.

“The Snyder and Circle Bar N are looking for uses for that material,” Ryan said.