

East Fork Fire Protection District

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Tod F. Carlini, District Fire Chief
775-782-9048
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East Fork Fire Protection District Host Spring Run Off Session With Valley Agricultural Interests

Minden – The East Fork Fire Protection District, in its final few months, representing Douglas County Emergency Management, held a Spring Run Off session focused mainly towards the agricultural community in the Carson Valley. The agricultural interests and the various Ditch Companies are an invaluable component during flood events. With snow levels setting record amounts and spring weather around the corner, the District felt it was appropriate to gather members of the agricultural community to meet with both District and County leadership ahead of what could be a challenging spring run off as the snow begins to melt. The District sponsored a similar event prior to the 2017 Flood Event.

Several long-time valley ranchers attended the meeting as well as Ditch Company members and managers. Deputy Federal Water Masters, Mike Rippee and Steve Wilcox also attended. After a very detailed presentation by Chris Smallcomb and Tim Bardsley from the National Weather Service, Brett Reed and David Hussman provided some historical perspectives on the irrigation system and historical outcomes of flood events. Long-time family rancher Fred Stodick punctuated those comments with observations of several past flood events in the valley, dating back to the 1950's.

The group viewed drone footage of the various water ways on both sides of the valley starting at their respective sources. Gary Aiazzi, Manager of the Allerman/Virginia Ditch Company started off tracing the courses of the ditches under his authority and including the Dangberg Reservoir. The Dangberg Reservoir was of great concern with the recent flood event as it is classified as a high hazard dam. Several drainages, including Pine Nut Creek (the largest) eventually drain into the reservoir by way of the Upper and Lower Allerman Cannels. Area development and independent action on the part of some residents have increased flows in this critical piece of infrastructure. Additionally, the reservoir can only hold about half of the interned capacity due to sediment build up over the years. The amount of upper elevation snow amounts in the Pine Nut Range are record setting.

Deputy Federal Water Masters Mike Rippee and Steve Wilcox both discussed their respective responsibilities and the areas of the Valley's west side systems that they are responsible for. Both made the same observation regarding residents taking independent action to alter the course of the water. In most cases, water used for irrigation purposes and the ditch systems that carry that water are protected by State Law and "tampering" with the system is illegal, according the Douglas County Sheriff, Dan Coverley, who attended the meeting. While it is understandable that someone may think that what they are doing is in the best interest of their property, the true impacts may affect several other properties both up and down stream of the individual modifications.

Douglas County Storm Water Manager, Courtney Walker provided an up date on the work she and her personnel have been doing since the flood event last month. She also discussed their future efforts with stormwater management and some of the challenges that exist.

District Chief Tod Carlini noted that he has always held the agricultural community in high regard and playing key roles in the management of flood events in Douglas County. *"We look to those representing the agricultural interests and those who manage the various irrigation and drainage systems as members of the responses team. In many cases, the historical perspectives are predictors of future challenges and help us to better prepare."*

East Fork has provided Emergency Management services in Douglas County for the past 16 years. The

Douglas County Commission opted not to renew the District's contract and hire an in-house Emergency Manager. East Fork will be working with the County on a smooth and effective transition over the next several months. *"We are committed to transitioning our responsibilities in a positive and proactive manner,"* stated Chief Carlini. Carlini also thanked Sheriff Coverley and his personnel who provided several hours of drone footage both before and during the recent flood event and Gary Aiazzi for his high level of expertise and contributions with the March Flood event.