



News Release

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King County Flood Control District approves effort to improve landslide mapping preparation

Advances in technology provide opportunity to develop preparation plans

The King County Flood District Board of Supervisors today gave its unanimous support to a resolution calling for an update to King County's river basin landslide hazard mapping.

"The tragedy at Oso and the recent landslide on the Cedar River illustrates the need to update our landslide mapping," said Flood Control District Chair Reagan Dunn. "By updating our obsolete 1990's era landslide mapping the Flood District will be in a better position to protect people, property and critical public infrastructure."

Earlier this year, the community of Oso was in the path of a landslide that devastated the town and the surrounding area. Portions of the Cedar River are still blocked by a landslide that occurred last month. In the wake of these two events, the Flood Control District wants to use advances in technology to dramatically improve the collection and use of landslide data.

"We have an obligation to protect the residents of King County," said Flood Control District Vice Chair Larry Gossett. "Outdated information can put lives in danger and impact property. Taking advantage of available technology is a step in the right direction."

By mapping landslide hazards in light of flood and channel migration hazards, the Flood Control District will be better prepared to act to reduce risks to people, property, and critical infrastructure.

"It is vital that we prioritize actions that minimize flooding and the damage it causes. I'm encouraged that technological advances are giving us great tools that will enable us to be better prepared for the future," said Flood Control District

Supervisor Kathy Lambert whose district includes part of the Snoqualmie River basin.

"It is imperative that we learn the lessons of Oso and prioritize the safety of our communities, especially for those living in areas prone to landslides and flooding," said Flood Control District Supervisor Pete von Reichbauer, who represents parts of the Green and White Rivers. "With these landslide preparation plans in place, we can prevent great devastation if a tragedy were to occur."

The District will provide approximately \$200,000 in 2014 for these updates, with additional funds coming through 2016. The work in 2014 includes landslide hazard characterization along major rivers and significant tributaries, as well as listing high-risk sites where landslide and floodplain hazards intersect. Preliminary maps along major rivers and significant tributaries will be available by October 2014, and potential high-risk sites will be identified by December of 2014.

"The Oso Tragedy confirms our need for continued vigilance to monitor potential landslide risks and this mapping update enhances these efforts," said Flood Control District Supervisor Jane Hague. "King County is recognized nationally for disaster prevention and preparedness as evidenced by our efforts with the potential failure of the Howard Hanson Dam."

Further mapping improvements will follow through July 2016, including identification of different landslide hazard types, public safety consequences, historically active sites, landslide run-out zones, areas of moderate and severe channel migration, and areas at risk for debris dam formation that could lead to upstream flooding.

The King County Flood Control District will fund more than \$1.4 million for the two-year project. The King County Water and Land Resources Division will conduct the mapping study, under agreement with the District.

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The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District's Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.