

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - SB Channelkeeper

4



From: Nate Irwin <nate@sbck.org>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 9:51 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Montecito Flood Control Master Plan Item # 24-01080
Attachments: 20240501_SBC_FC_Montecito_MasterPlan_GroupSignonLetter_RWM 3.pdf

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning,

We would like to submit the attached letter in reference to agenda item # 24-01080.

Thank you and have a great week,

Nate Irwin
Policy Associate
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
714 Bond Ave
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
805-563-3377 : Ext. # 3





August 6, 2024

Re: Montecito Flood Control Master Plan

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

We represent local community groups which support increased flood protection for County residents but are concerned about the Montecito Flood Control Master Planning process. We are specifically most concerned about the planned concrete channelization and additional debris basins in Montecito Creek, Oak Creek, San Ysidro Creek, Romero Creek, and their tributaries. We believe that if we work together, we can protect property from flooding without channelizing our streams which provide so many important benefits, including clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Better coordination between resource agencies, environmental groups, and Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (SBCFCWCD) will ensure concerns are addressed before the current Phase I planning process concludes and an alternative is selected. The Montecito Flood Control Master Plan effort offers an opportunity to develop a plan that prioritizes safeguarding lives and properties, while also conserving the remarkable landscape and biodiversity that define Montecito as a unique and irreplaceable place.

We request that you direct the SBCFCWCD staff to immediately establish a Technical Review Team and initiate a series of meetings with:

- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Army Corps of Engineers
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Coastal Commission, and
- Non-governmental organizations

These meetings will serve to discuss alternatives and compliance with these agencies' requirements before the County selects an alternative for permitting and environmental review. Selecting a preferred alternative for a project of this magnitude, scope, and consequence without establishing a Technical Review Team comprising subject matter experts, regional staff from resource agencies, and community representatives risks significant delays and inefficiencies during the design phase. A thorough review and assessment by such a team, culminating in the selection of a preferred alternative by stakeholders, will allow for SBCFCWCD to implement a project that will protect communities and the environment.

The Master Plan as currently envisioned could set back the community's valuable long-term efforts to rehabilitate watersheds and wildlife habitats. Flooding and debris flows are a

paramount concern for businesses and residents that need to be addressed. We believe that the best solution will protect the community and our watersheds. With this plan, we can serve as a model for modern flood control planning by embracing solutions that restore landscapes to a more natural state while protecting our communities. We urge you to enhance coordination and communication with State and Federal resource agencies, environmental organizations, and the community.

Our watersheds are vital to the health of our community and the quality of life in the County. As the Board of Supervisors, you have a critical role to help chart a forward-thinking path of collaboration that will achieve the mutually beneficial solutions that this project requires. We look forward to working together to ensure a healthy, safe, vibrant County that continues to protect the natural beauty that makes Santa Barbara County a world-class destination.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our requests,

Nate Irwin - Policy Associate
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Russell Marlow - Senior Project Manager
California Trout

Benjamin Pitterle - Director of Advocacy and Field Operations
Los Padres Forest Watch

Ken Owen - Executive Director
Channel Islands Restoration

Nancy Black – Board President
Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species (CLAWS)

Elizabeth Burns – Project Coordinator
Southern Steelhead Coalition

Katherine Emery, Ph. D. - Executive Director
Santa Barbara Audubon Society

Anne Burdette – President
Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council

Ken Palley – Executive Committee
Surfrider Foundation Santa Barbara Chapter