

Article

Flood Management in California

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Abstract: California's development and success have been shaped by its ability to manage floods. This management has varied over the history of California's economic and political development and continues in various forms today. California will always have flood problems. A range of options are available to aid in flood management problems and have been used over time. These options can be contrasted with flood management elsewhere and the types of options used to manage other types of hazards in California, such as earthquakes, wildfires, and droughts. In the future, flood management in California will require greater reliance on local funding and leadership, reflecting diminished federal and state funding, with more effective state and federal guidance. Effective flood management will also tend to integrate flood management with actions to achieve environmental and other water supply objectives, both to gain revenues from a broader range of beneficiaries as well as to make more efficient use of land and water in a state where both are often scarce.

Keywords: California; flood; floodplain; management

1. Introduction

California is a land of many extremes. One extreme is floods. From its earliest days of statehood, California has had to contend with and eventually manage frequent and extreme floods. Flood management did not come easily to California, and remains a major issue for some areas of the state. This paper reviews the array of options available for flood management, the nature of floods in California, the history and current condition of flood management in California, as well as long term problems and solutions. Flood management is contrasted with flood management elsewhere and with