

Flood warning system extension installed for coastside



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OneShoreline — San Mateo County’s flood and sea-level rise resilience district — has installed an extension of its flood early warning system along State Route 92 to deliver services on the coastside.

The existing flood early warning system collects data during storm events and publishes the data in real time so emergency responders and residents can make informed decisions around whether to evacuate, OneShoreline CEO Len Materman said.

“There’s a lot of factors that are involved, but basically, what we’re trying to do is consolidate in one place, in real time, information for people throughout the county that are in flood-prone areas,” he said.

Work began on the flood early warning system since OneShoreline’s establishment five years ago, and substantial storms in both 2022 and 2023 underscored a need to expand the system, Materman said. An early warning facility was installed earlier this year on San Bruno Mountain, and a stream gauge was put in place at the Green Hills Country Club in Millbrae.

The infrastructure recently installed at the Skylawn Memorial Park on State Route 92 will soon be followed by a stream gauge at Pilarcitos Creek.

“It takes a while, and we’re just trying to get this system expanded as quickly as possible,” Materman said. “The timing, again, is such that we’re now adding the coastside in a substantial way.”

The importance of a multifaceted approach to flood warning — which incorporates data from stream, precipitation and tide gauges to alert the public to flood risk — has been underscored by deadly flash floods in Texas Hill Country over the past week, a July 11 press release from OneShoreline said.

“Given what we’ve seen in Texas this past week and throughout our county in recent years, it makes perfect sense to expand the capacity of this system to notify our emergency response personnel and the public during major storms, especially in Coastside communities,” Debbie Ruddock, vice mayor of Half Moon Bay and chair of the OneShoreline board of directors, said in the press release.

The current flood warning system includes the locations of many of the 32 gauges that are used to calculate flood risk throughout the county, the press release said. It also includes dashboards of information on four flood-prone waterways including the Atherton Channel, Belmont Creek, San Bruno Creek and Colma Creek.

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