FEMA RECOVERY MAPPING

- March 1st – Agreement between County and FEMA
- March 13th – Planning & Development: Rebuild Guidance to Property Owners
- April 17th – Montecito Planning Commission Review Like-for-Like Ordinance amendments
- May 1st – FEMA Recovery & Rebuilding Community Meeting
- May 15th – Board of Supervisors approves zoning ordinance Like-for-Like amendment.
- June 11th – FEMA released Recovery Mapping with interactive website
- June 14th – County holds Public Meeting
- June 19th – Board of Supervisors adopt Recovery Mapping
- June 26th – Santa Barbara Realtors Association
- July 11th – FEMA Community meeting in Montecito
- July 17th – Board of Supervisors set hearing for Floodplain Management Ordinance Change
- July 18th – Montecito Planning Commission Debris Flow Recovery Maps Workshop
- July 26th – Santa Barbara Appraisers Association
- August 14th – Board of Supervisors consider recommendations regarding Floodplain Management Ordinance Change
- August 28th – Board of Supervisors approve Floodplain Management Ordinance Change
Memorandum of Agreement
Between Santa Barbara County, Public Works and Planning and Development Departments, and Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region IX

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) sets forth the terms and understanding between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Santa Barbara County to complete hazard recovery mapping for coastal watersheds impacted by the Thomas Fire.

Parties
The parties are FEMA, Region IX and Santa Barbara County, Public Works and Planning and Development Departments.

Purpose
This MOA documents the path forward to meet the community hazard management and regulatory needs in a transparent, satisfactory, and timely manner.

Responsibilities
The goal of this MOA will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

1. FEMA will develop recovery mapping in areas impacted by the Thomas Fire and the January 9, 2018, debris flow event. FEMA Region IX will expeditiously plan work to the maximum extent practicable.
2. The hydrologic analyses for the hazard mapping will reflect post-burn and existing conditions, as well as build upon work done by the RAER and WERT teams.
3. The hydrologic analysis for the flood recovery mapping will use post-disaster data collection and imaging topographic data, and assume culverts and bridges are blocked. The imagery for this mapping does not allow for field survey.
4. Santa Barbara County will use the recovery mapping to inform amendments to existing ordinances or adoption of new ordinances governing development in the study area.
5. FEMA will support public outreach meetings hosted by Santa Barbara County to communicate the results of this study to the public.
6. FEMA plans to subsequently contract to expand the hazard recovery mapping to produce modeling and mapping to revise the Flood Insurance Rate Map for Santa Barbara County.

Other Provisions
a. This MOA is not a fiscal or funds obligation document.

b. Nothing in this MOA is intended to conflict with current law or regulation or the directives of FEMA or Santa Barbara County. If a term of this agreement is inconsistent with such authority, then that term shall be invalid, but the remaining terms and conditions of this agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

c. This Agreement, upon execution, contains the entire agreement of the parties and no prior written or oral agreement, express or implied, shall be admissible to contradict the provisions of this MOA.

d. FEMA Region IX and Santa Barbara County Public Works Department will hold at least monthly conference calls to monitor progress on each of the aforementioned commitments.

Effective Date
The terms of this agreement will become effective on the date of signature of the authority representatives of both parties.

Modification
This MOA may be modified by mutual written consent of authorized officials from FEMA and Santa Barbara County.

Termination
This MOA terminates on December 31, 2020, upon the accomplishment of its purpose, or upon agreement of the parties. Either party, upon 30 days written notice to the other party, may terminate this agreement.

Points of Contact
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Approved By
The following persons are authorized to sign this MOA on behalf of their respective party.

On Behalf of FEMA:
Juliette Hayes, FEMA Region IX, Risk Analysis Branch Chief
Date

On Behalf of Santa Barbara County:
Thomas Paynter, Santa Barbara County, Deputy Public Works Director
Date

Dianne M. Black, Santa Barbara County, Assistant Planning Director
Date

2 of 2
County Guidance for Rebuilds

Guidance to Property Owners
Monteitho Debris Flow Rebuilds
March 13, 2018

County staff is working to assist property owners in the rebuild process following the January 9th debris flow in Monteitho which occurred after a very significant rainfall event in the Thomas
burn area. Unlike rebuilding after a fire, the current situation poses unique challenges. Property
owners are encouraged to meet with their Planning and Development Case Manager who is
assigned to their damaged or destroyed property. This will ensure the property owner has an
understanding of the processes and challenges unique to recovery for their specific property.

The landforms have changed significantly, including property elevations and at some locations,
the width and depths of creeks. Many survey monuments have been dislodged, and many
property boundaries cannot be verified without professional surveys. The County’s floodplain
management ordinance is based in part on the Federal Emergency Management Agency
(FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). However, the current FIRM maps are no longer
representative of on-the-ground conditions due to the land-changing debris flow. The base flood
elevations on the current FIRM maps do not reflect current topography and are of little use in the
rebuilding process where topography has changed. FEMA will be developing new FIRM maps
that will be expected to take from 3 to 5 years.

Additionally, according to the U.S. Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response Team and
the State of California Watershed Emergency Response Team, the area is subject to
ongoing threats of debris flows during significant rain events (a half inch of rain or more in an
hour) for the next two to five years. In order to prevent potential damage to rebuilt
structures and other structures in the community, any improvements that occur during this timeframe
should be done with proper attention to changes in topography and new creek profiles.

To address the information deficiency in the short term, staff is working with FEMA on a
flood hazard/recovery mapping analysis. Staff is also working with private consultants to conduct land
surveys and engineering studies to reflect the current conditions and be used for rebuilding.
These studies are expected to be complete in three months. The Recovery Mapping will be used to
make prudent technical decisions regarding rebuilding in this immediate, and two to five year
time frame. The studies will also inform any changes that may be required to Chapter 15A, the
County’s Flood Plain Management Ordinance.

Until these studies are complete, the County is advising property owners to temporarily
delay making any significant expenditure on design plans so their decisions and permit
applications can be informed by this work (expected to be complete in three months).

For those property owners who choose not to wait, the County recommends meeting with your
Planning and Development case manager and Flood Control staff upfront to determine the
submittal requirements to facilitate the permit review process. Requirements will depend on the
situation of individual properties and may include:

1. Current topographic survey of project site and adjacent parcels.
2. Property line survey.
3. Hydrologic analyses of the project site to reflect post-burn (Thomas) conditions.
   - Calculation of the current base flood elevations, inundation limits and possibly the
     floodway.
   - Key design elements include channel geomorphology, foundation considerations,
     and hydraulic capacity.
4. Preparation of plans may require utilization of experts in geotechnical, civil and hydraulic
   engineering, soil erosion, hydrology, and engineering geology.

As property owners consider the best method of rebuilding or repairing their properties, talking
with your own experts about how to incorporate the debris deposited on your property may be
very helpful. Maintaining some or all of the debris may reduce the overall costs of rebuilding by
eliminating the removal of all debris.
FEMA Recovery Mapping Released with Interactive Website – June 11th

Disaster History. The Thomas Fire burned more than 281,000 acres in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties from early December 2017 into January 2018. Afterwards, winter storms caused debris flows that resulted in a tragic loss of life and significant damage to infrastructure and changes to the ground conditions. After these events, Recovery Maps were developed so that communities and citizens make better informed decisions about rebuilding.

Changed Conditions Due to Fire/Flood. Recovery Maps do not replace the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), but the advisory flood elevations from the new Recovery Maps are based on sound science and engineering, new analyses, and are derived from post-fire flows and post-debris flow ground conditions. In many cases, the Recovery Map advisory flood elevations reflect higher elevation than the current effective FIRM.

Mapping Purpose – Recovery Maps for Safer Rebuild. Mapping hazards is vital for safe disaster recovery; it provides the data necessary for new construction and creates awareness of risk. As communities recover from the devastating effects of these recent events, it is important to recognize valuable lessons learned. Santa Barbara County plans to use the updated elevation information generated from this study to rebuild stronger, safer, and with reduced vulnerability to future disaster events. When making building elevation decisions, compare the effective FIRM to the new Recovery Map, and use the higher elevation and wider high hazard area. Property and business owners should consult their local building official to fully understand how this new data can be used to support rebuilding efforts. The Recovery Maps do not impact rating for flood Insurance.

High Hazard Areas on Recovery Maps. The
June 14th
Public Meeting
June 19th
Board of Supervisors
Adopt FEMA Recovery Mapping
Guest Editorial

by Bob Hazard

Mr. Hazard is an associate editor of this paper and a former president of Birnam Wood Golf Club.

Addressing the FEMA-Created Mess

Last week, the SB County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted unanimously to adopt the FEMA Interim Flood Map in an effort to expedite and control the rebuilding process in Montecito. As chair of the BOS, supervisor Das Williams noted, “I can’t say I’m comfortable with the option of the Interim Flood Recovery map, but the map, although seriously flawed, needs to be officially adopted by the County.”

Accelerated Adoption

The much-awaited FEMA Flood map was initially released to the public on June 11. Three days later, it was explained at a hastily called, County Office Building presentation. Even though a packed house of Montecito residents shared grave concerns and a sense of confusion, the map was officially adopted by the BOS three working days later.

Many in Montecito urged the BOS to authorize the use of the FEMA Flood Recovery Map by case managers as a useful tool in processing “Like-for-Like” rebuilds but to withhold official endorsement of the map for 60 days until the new map’s accuracy and consistency could be evaluated.

Advocates for restraint included Cori Hayman, chair of Montecito Association (MA) Land Use Committee; Jack Overall, former Montecito Planning Commission (MPC) commissioner; Susan Keller, current MPC commissioner and former MA Land Use chair; J’Amy Brown, former MPC commissioner and MA chair; and Darlene Bierig, former MA Land Use chair. Unfortunately, neither the MPC nor MA had time to call an emergency meeting to bring the issue of the unintended consequences of immediate adoption to unwary Montecito homeowners.
How to use the Recovery Map

- Water surface elevations for the post-burn 1% annual chance hazard will be used to inform rebuilding
- The Recovery Map will generally have higher water surface elevations than the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)
- Recovery Map does not impact flood insurance nor replace the current effective FIRM
- Updated FIRM will be developed in the next several years. Some of the base data from the Recovery Map project will be used as building blocks in the development of updated mapping.
THANK YOU