



CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

7425 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, California 95472 707-823-8597

BUILDING DEPARTMENT INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT

Handout
Revised 1-4-16

FLOODING IN THE LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA IN SEBASTOPOL

During the flooding events of February 1986 and January 1995, high water elevations were recorded by the City, which can be compared with water levels in the Russian River, as an indicator of potential flooding in the future. River water levels from the USGS gauge near the Hacienda Bridge are used because this gauge is closer than the Guerneville gauge to the confluence of the Laguna with the River.

Readers should bear in mind that while backwater in the Russian River certainly results in ponding in the Laguna de Santa Rosa (and sometimes flooding in Sebastopol and elsewhere) there are other factors which can influence the impacts in Sebastopol. These include tidal action affecting the river, and the intensity and duration of precipitation in the upper portions of the Laguna watershed, soil saturation condition, and so on. For this reason, the relationship between river water levels and flooding in Sebastopol is not a direct correlation.

The data presented below compare recorded flood conditions in the river with significant flood events in Sebastopol. Both the 1986 and 1995 flood events came close to the 100-year flood elevation in the City. There have been numerous instances of local flooding of lesser magnitudes. For instance, on December 31, 2005 water covered Morris Street from Sebastopol Avenue to the Community Center, engulfing the City’s sewer pump station, and causing damage to buildings at The Barlow Company where water was approximately 18 inches to 2 feet deep.

Data from the Hacienda gauge can be obtained from the Department of Water Resources, California Data Exchange Center web site: <http://cded.water.ca.gov> .

COMPARING RUSSIAN RIVER GAUGE INFORMATION AT HACIENDA BRIDGE WITH FLOOD EVENTS IN SEBASTOPOL

Operated by USGS and DWR Gauge Elevation: 20.0 feet River Stage Definitions: Monitor Stage Elevation 31.0 feet **Flood Stage Elevation 34.0 feet**

Dates	High Water Elevation in Sebastopol*	Peak Flood Stage at Hacienda Bridge*	Peak Flood Stage at Guerneville Bridge
2/14-20/86	74.4 (76.4)	48.6	48.56
1/8-11/95	74.3 (76.3)	48	48.01
1/1/06	Approx. 70 (72)	44.6	41

*These elevations were measured on the datum that was then in use by FEMA, which established the 100- year base flood elevation (BFE) in Sebastopol at elevation 75 feet. More recent FEMA mapping uses a different benchmark which is 2 feet higher, and establishes the base flood elevation at 77 feet. Elevations in parentheses show high water measurements in Sebastopol “translated” to the new FEMA datum.