



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Lael Wageneck, MPA, APR
Public Information Officer
(805) 568-3425, lwageneck@countyofsb.org

CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN ON RANDALL ROAD DEBRIS BASIN

Government officials, staff, contractors and community partners broke ground Monday, May 3, 2021, at the future site of the Randall Road Debris Basin. Following the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow, a debris basin project was proposed along Randall Road in Montecito by private interests with the general support of affected property owners in the area. The project received approval by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors in August 2020 and a \$13.5 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in November 2020. Public Works Deputy Director Tom Fayram thanked the community and the various agencies at all levels of government who worked on the project. "One way of honoring those we lost and those who respond to emergencies is by doing what we can to mitigate future disasters. We look forward to constructing a basin that will improve safety for the residents and the traveling public."

Speakers at the event included Fayram, Congressman Salud Carbajal, 1st District Supervisor Das Williams, Montecito Fire Protection District Chief Kevin Taylor, and Montecito resident Curtis Skene. Carbajal said, "Climate change has exacerbated extreme weather events, so it's crucial we invest in projects like this that adapts our infrastructure to mitigate those threats. As we continue to grieve the lives we lost during the 1/9 debris flows, the least we can do is honor their memory by working to protect the community from a similar travesty. I'm so proud to have served as a federal partner to secure the resources needed to turn this project into a reality." Williams added, "Even before the first shovel is in the ground, it's a tremendous investment of time, resources and people, and it's inspirational to be here at this moment." Skene, the Montecito resident who conceived of the idea of the basin and was the driving force in the effort to develop it with the County and State, also experienced the 1969 Debris Flow. He concluded the event by thanking the community and those who worked on the project. "I'm a very lucky man. I've been able to be part of something to heal and protect my community. It's not easy, but everybody came together, everybody pulled in the same direction at the same time. It's incredible."

V Lopez Jr. & Sons will serve as the contractor on the project. The estimated project cost of \$15.5 to \$17.5 million is funded by FEMA (\$13.5 million) and local flood control money. Construction on this project will begin on May 10, 2021 and is expected to finish by the end of the year.