

Experts: Calif. ripe for massive flooding

By Tim Craig, Washington Post

Even living on the West Coast, Marion Townsend decided to act as floods ravaged Texas and hurricanes pounded the Caribbean in recent weeks.

Her Sacramento neighborhood slopes downward from a levee that separates it from the American River, in an area that officials concede never should have been settled but is home to 100,000 residents.

After seeing images of boat rescues in Houston and frantic evacuations in Miami, Townsend began repositioning important documents, photographs, jewelry and her sentimental quilts up onto shelves.

Townsend needs to be reaching even higher.

Models show a levee failure could submerge parts of this inland metropolis under as much as 20 feet of water. As Northern Californians are recovering from wildfires and sifting through homes reduced to ash, officials in the state's capital are struggling to prevent another type of natural disaster.

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