

**COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS  
FLOOD PROTECTION CORRIDOR PROGRAM  
FLOOD CONTROL, HABITAT, RESTORATION AND RECHARGE  
ON THE SAN DIEGO RIVER  
Riverview Water District, Lakeside, California  
August 28, 2003**

**Attendees: 62 and State Hearing Officer Earl Nelson, Flood Protection Corridor Program Manager, State Department of Water Resources**

Project overview given by Deborah Jones, Executive Director, San Diego River Park - Lakeside Conservancy.

Michael Beck, SDRPLC Board Chair, offered acknowledgements for those who helped the Conservancy successfully acquire grant funds and spoke of naturally functioning ecosystems. He stated this restoration project would become the focal point of regional redevelopment.

Earl Nelson, gave an overview of the purpose of the FPCP, the criteria for project selection, and clarified that grant funds used for property rights acquisitions under this program is restricted to properties with willing sellers. Mr. Nelson state that the FPCP Project Evaluation Team found this project to be one of the best of the 45 projects submitted for competitive evaluation. The Conservancy requested and the Project Evaluation Team recommended a grant in the amount of \$4,139,040. Mr. Nelson explained the purpose of the hearing was to determine whether DWR should move forward and execute a funding agreement with the Conservancy, and if so, should there be conditions attached to the funding approval.

Jim Bartel, Santee Resident, City Council, SD River Conservancy explained that Santee has similar river related project opportunities and is implementing riverfront improvements within that jurisdiction.

Doug Isbill, County Public Works & Flood Protection Engineer commented that local concerns about San Diego River flooding will be helped by Project, which is expected to reduce flood risks along this stretch of the river.

Billie Sangster, Chair of Riverview Water District, supports efforts of Conservancy.

JoAnn Anderson, San Diego River Park Foundation and SDR Coalition of 50 local groups stated she expects the Project will spur many additional efforts in area.

Larry Campbell commented that San Diego River access is in short supply, and has a high public demand.

Richard Hensle: Project will be good for children, providing opportunity to build childhood memories.

Connie Monell: Funding for maintenance, long term management are concerns. What is the Plan?  
Response: The FPCP will provide a \$120,000 trust fund for long term maintenance. This fund will be managed by the SDRPLC and used along with other sources of funding for monitoring and necessary maintenance.

Dominic Otelli, Santee Resident and President of the Trails Council: Mental Health related to open space and recreational opportunities is also very important to the community, making the project all the more important.

Mary Allison: 18 years of planning and private investment have led us to this stage (today). Private landowners have spent \$70 million over the years maintaining this area. I question the need for this project. I would like to see the HEC 2 studies.

Response: What has been spent previously by private individuals is not connected with this project. This hearing is related to a new grant for additional funds to accomplish present and future objectives. Past expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement. There will be hydraulic studies as part of the required Plan to Minimize Impacts to Adjacent Landowners, required under Section 79041 of the State Water Code.

Suzanne Michael: Lakeside has been perceived as a place to grow up in and leave for better opportunities, but this is no longer true. Project will increase groundwater supply. Upstream land uses are a source of concern. Groundwater storage will provide water supply benefits that would make this project fit the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, because it may offset the need for other supplies.

Devore Smith, Sierra Club: We have been meeting with residents, local government officials and Senator Boxer's Office toward creating legislation to create a wilderness area and designation under the Wild and Scenic River Act for an eight-mile stretch of the San Diego River.

C. Ayers: One property in the planning area closed escrow 3 days ago. Who will Administer grant money? How will costs cover the supervision of the project?

Response: The grant money will be administered by the SDRPL Conservancy. There will be a trust fund for ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

Unknown speaker: A paper copy of the grant proposal ought to be made available to the local library.

Response: The grant proposal can be viewed on the FPCP Internet Web Page at [www.dfm.water.ca.gov/fpcp](http://www.dfm.water.ca.gov/fpcp) .

Jane Higgenson, lifelong Lakeside resident: I am thrilled about this project, and the benefits of the planned groundwater recharge. I do have concerns about proposals for golf course development upstream.

Anton Botter Kids are using the river today. Project will provide an attractive nuisance for kids, homeless. Need to ensure public access.

Debbie Rodwold: Parks are not safe places for children and families. Will Rangers or other security measures be provided? Without security, the homeless will want to sleep there.

Response: Ongoing monitoring and patrols will be provided as needed.

Bill White: Cultural Resources should be taken in to consideration. Rural atmosphere provides unique identity.

Chad Ennis: River no longer flowing. Natural function is a false assumption, because the river is now controlled by a dam upstream. River improvements in the past have been made and paid for by property owners. I have a concern about engineering needs and costs of (this) multimillion-dollar project. You may spend up to \$100 million before this project is through.

Response: Although the river is controlled by a dam, there are still potential flood problems at this location that will be reduced because of this project. The amount of the expenditures are limited to the amount of funds the Conservancy is able to acquire for this project.

Janice Shackelford: Sand mining has been ongoing in this area for years. The channelized river is a product of State Reclamation Projects that have not been in the best interests of the river (impacted habitat, natural river processes, etc.). This project will correct much of the harm that has been done.

Pat Bixby: Where would the homeless go?

Response: Patrols will limit the problem at this project site.

Laurel Dinnell: Concerned about Property Owners Rights. I am glad the State is only dealing with willing sellers. This project brings hope that we can change Lakeside's image as a "dumping ground."

Bess Herzog: What kind of fill removal process will occur?

Response: Studies will be done to answer this question. The public will have the ability to participate in the environmental review (California Environmental Quality Act) process that should answer many resource-related questions.

Joe Gonzales: Desperate need for planned activities for children in the area.

D. Rodwold: Park completion date?

Response: Park development is a long-term process, building momentum. Amenities will begin with construction in 2-3 years at the 27-acre Hanson site.

Suzanne Michael: Santee Lakes lost 2 days ago. Sale proposed. Source of pride to community.

Amy Miller: River Park and opportunity for local youth.

Julie Bugbee: Nobody opposed to River Park, but community needs to attract and support Business. Linear park that only affects a small strip along the river bank is a reasonable alternative.

Response: Narrow linear river park would not provide the anticipated benefits from this project in the areas of groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and filtration of surface water runoff. These all take relatively large land areas to be effective.

**Meeting continued until Wednesday, September 3 at 2:00PM in the same location.**

**September 3, 2003 Hearing Continuation  
Riverview Water District. Lakeside, California  
2PM**

M. Allison: Has the impact of raising San Vicente Dam been considered in the grant proposal

Response: No, the raising of San Vicente Dam is related to increasing water storage capacity, not related to flood control

What happens when wildlife migrate into people's back yard?

Response: At this point, the project does not abut anyone's backyard.

Mike Uhrhammer (Padre Dam Municipal Water District): Supports Lakeside Conservancy efforts to protect water resources in the area and supports regional tourism destination, the Lakeside Conservancy's Mission and economic benefits of the Lakeside River Park.

Julia Bugbee: Can you have both wildlife protection and recreation?

Response: Yes, that is done all the time. Mast Park in Santee along the San Diego River is a good example of how the two needs are blended.

Joan Burnett: Is there pollution in the wells now?

Response: The wells are high in total dissolved solids and nitrates. The water must be blended with imported water to meet drinking water standards.

How will the River Park improve water?

Response: One of the natural functions of a river system, particularly the wetlands associated is to cleanse water through a process known as phyto remediation.

Betty McMillen: (Lakeside Historical Society) Supports the river park. Good for the whole community.

Diane York: Supports the project merits, especially for downstream benefits, reduced pollution

Chad Ennis: Dam has overflowed but it didn't cause damage in town. It was Lose Coches Creek and the vegetation that caused damage. Improvement to San Vicente Dam will increase its capacity 3 times; Grant language says reasonable flood projects. 30 foot constriction of Hanson's flows into a 160 foot channel. Who should pay for this? Natural Rivers and runoff from urbanization/restoration is questionable, Applicants don't know how much it will cost, especially removing the sand.

Pat Bixby: (Lakeside Gazette) where is water going to come from (Lagunas to Pacific Ocean)

Response: The San Diego River is not a flowing river as conceived in the traditional manner. Its water comes from seasonal runoff but its function as a native western river are still very important to water quality, flood control and native wildlife.

M. Allison: The river has 200 acres and Lakeside land has 40 acres of wildlife habitat. Hanson needs to improve the river; County also needs to make improvements; Runoff is contained now; East County needs jobs.

Shirley Phillips: Long time Lakeside resident and is excited by the river park project. Is this grant at risk?

Response: No this hearing is a way for the community to give input.

J. Herzog: Project provides enormous opportunity for community; maintain rural character and economic benefits. Like that the project is good to the land.

M. Allison: Why wasn't review presented to the USDRIC or the planning group

Response: The grant requires that applicant notify adjacent landowners. That was completed.

M. Ennis: Where did the grant money come from?

Response: The money comes from the Flood Protection Corridor Program part of the Prop 13 Bond Act.

C. Ennis: Money should be spend on Los Coches and put the habitat somewhere else.

M. Kennedy (Lakeside Land Co.): Is there a flood control problem now? Hec 2 doesn't support flood risk argument; Urbanization is going down in East County.

Response: The constriction at the eastern end of the project poses a serious flood hazard to up and down stream properties.

M. Ennis: What sources were used in the proposal?

Response: There is a bibliography in the back of the grant proposal

C. Ayers: Will studies be available to public, including formulas? Will potential climate risks or perceived problems be incorporated into studies?

Response: As a part of the permitting and CEQA process, all studies will be made available to the public. Those studies will be broad and appropriate to the permitting and CEQA process.

M. Uhrhammer: Lakeside is not alone on the river. Lakeside Conservancy is working to leverage river park efforts, will attract more funding.

C. Ennis: "River Thread" of State chartered Conservancy will it be restrictive

Response: The State Chartered Conservancy will not be involved in a meaningful manner.

J. Burnet: Important project for Lakeside

L. Parker: Lives in Santee and enjoys their river walk. Wants a river park for her grandkids in Lakeside.

C. Ennis: Lost industrial land – Where will it be recovered elsewhere? (2020 General Plan Update)

Response: The County of San Diego and its boards and organizations will make those decisions.