

## Editorial

### LEEVE RULE A TALL ORDER

#### CORPS OF ENGINEERS SHOULDN'T JUST DECREE AND WALK AWAY

By **The Record**

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At least the Army Corps of Engineers says it won't enforce its new rules for two years.

The rules have to do with vegetation along the hundreds of miles of levees that protect Stockton and other San Joaquin County cities. The Corps wants the trees gone.

It doesn't take much travel through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to see what a huge, expensive task that may be. As with all mandates from on high, no one who is making the rules is talking about paying for the work.

The Corps already has made it clear it wants boat docks and structures removed from within the levees as well as structures too close to the outside of the levees. That's stirred many residents who've enjoyed such things as private docks and boathouses for years. Many of the structures were built with government approval. Times change, and so do the rules. But stripping vegetation from the banks of levees? That's going to be a problem.

There are many who believe such vegetation helps stabilize the levees. Others say tree roots are pathways for seepage and burrowing animals.

What is without question is that vegetation along levees is home to plants and animals. It's their environment, and when you talk about changing the environment, you must talk about mitigation. How do we maintain the environment?

There are no easy answers. There certainly are no cheap ones. Maintaining and enhancing the Delta's levees is not just the responsibility of those of us living in this region.

Water flowing through the Delta quenches the thirst of millions of Californians. As long as they want to drink, they need to help pay. Further, Delta water is essential to powering a state that represents roughly 14 percent of the nation's gross domestic product. When the Corps of Engineers does levee work along the Mississippi River, a vital waterway, even those of us thousands of miles away help pay.

If the Corps wants the trees and other vegetation removed from our levees, it shouldn't be allowed simply to write a rule and walk away.