

Friends of Five Mile Creek

News About the Creek

June 12, 2002

The Steering Committee for the Clean up and Maintenance of Five Mile Creek has been anxiously waiting for the vote by the members of the San Joaquin County Flood Control Agency (SJAF-CA) about funding the clean up of Five Mile Creek. The committee voted today to fund the clean up project and future maintenance.

In late March the committee was formed to try and assess where we were in regard to help from the city and county. People from different areas of the creek, both city and county, were asked to serve on the committee. Tim Cox, who has been so involved over the past years in clean up efforts agreed to meet with us and share his extensive files and help us explore our options. Our committee composed of Mary Lou and Ron Monroe, Bernice P. Nickols, Rollie Jordan, Ron Stein, Doug Eberhart II and Kathy Crump met on April 18. We were joined by Ron Scatena.

Also in late March an effort to clean up the water hyacinth and algae was spearheaded by the Monroes. Ron Monroe got a proposal from Aquatic Environments, Inc to do the work which a group of homeowners from the Monty Court bridge west decided to contract and pay for.

Our committee outlined the four major problem areas with the creek as: lack of water coming into the creek from storm drain overflow because of the Hammer Lane project which took the water north and west; the culverts under Alexandria Place that are plugged with sand and the mound of built-up sand coming from the storm drain outlet west of Alexandria, the weir at 14-mile Slough which is not allowing enough tidal water to flow east and of course the aquatic vegetation of a number of varieties that is choking the creek.

It was agreed that we needed to find a way to get either the city or county to become the lead agency. A letter was composed and sent to Mayor Gary Podesto and copies sent to all the councilmembers and supervisors as well as heads of departments and agencies involved in the creek. The large number of agencies involved has enormously complicated our task.

We attended a city council meeting on April 16 where propertyowner Joe Donati gave a 5 minute presentation about the inability to solve even one of our problems. The Mayor agreed then that the city would be the lead agency. He was given a copy of the proposal of Aquatic Environments Inc.

and he asked if Ron Monroe would contact AEI to make a revised proposal to include the entire creek to 14-mile slough which was submitted to the city on May 7.

Many more meetings with representatives from the city and county and creek property owners have taken place in the past months with on-site visits by Councilmember Gary Giovanetti, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Victor Mow and Mayor Podesto. The issue of funding for the project has been studied extensively by the city and county with several options being considered.

The creek clean up project is going forward and presently we are much further along than ever before. Another very positive issue is that we are now in a good position to keep the creek in future good health because maintenance is part of the long range plan.

We have been collecting documents to help our position, including detailed maps showing property ownership. We are collecting temporary entry permits from each property owner so that work may progress. If you have not yet been contacted, you will be very soon. Our research has included ways the project could be funded and planning for the future health of the creek through learning how we property owners can participate.

Although much of the property along the creek is in private hands, the wealth of greenery on the old oaks and other landscape trees cleans the air we all breathe and provides temperature relief far beyond property boundaries.

If you have any questions about the project or if you want to receive future newsletters, will you please send your email address to Kathy Crump or if you do not have email please call 477-0602.

<kcrump2paper@earthlink.net>

Nature Note: The Swallows have nested again under some of the bridges. Soon you will see up to five fledglings, their backs clothed in iridescent blueish-black-purple plumage contrasting with peach colored chest feathers. They usually perch on overhanging branches for a few days until they get the hang of sustained flight and learn how to swoop in high speed dives accented with barrel rolls. They eat a huge amount of insects so aside from enjoying their beauty and acrobatics, we do need them very much!