
**Friends of the Santa Clara River Comment on NOP;
dated August 25, 2008**



Friends of the Santa Clara River

660 Randy Drive, Newbury Park, California 91320-3036 • (805) 498-4323

August 25, 2008

Mr. Mitch Glaser, Supervising Regional Planner
Los Angeles County Dept. of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street Room 1354
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Re: One Valley One Vision Notice of Preparation

Dear Mr. Glaser,

Friends of the Santa Clara River submit the following comments on the subject project.

The Santa Clarita area has seen vast development over the last two decades and continues to develop at a very rapid pace. Much of this development has encroached on the floodplain of the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. Yet, no agency - state, federal or other - has adequately analyzed the cumulative impacts of this massive floodplain development that continues unabated and is a part of many projects now on the drawing board or in some phase of approval.

The One Valley One Vision EIR must remedy this situation and finally provide a substantive analysis of these impacts to the river ecosystem.

Moreover, all of this floodplain development has placed thousands of homes within the path of potential flooding. The flooding problems associated with surging rivers and creeks, brought on by the 2005 rains in southern California, are well described in the Ventura County Star article of February 6, 2005 – "Rain-swollen rivers not easy to repair". Flood damage occurred in Santa Clarita during these floods.

Southern California rivers are among the "flashiest" in the world. Flows during the worst flood events tend to be very high compared to average flows. The Ventura River and Santa Clara Rivers, for example, show peak discharges over 30 times the mean annual flow for floods having a recurrence interval of 25 years. A major lesson to be learned from these facts is that these rivers, as well as many of their tributaries, are dangerous by nature and very difficult to tame.

Efforts to control flooding through extensive channelization do not have a promising history. A prime example of the failure of such projects is that of the San Lorenzo River, which runs through downtown Santa Cruz. The

channel was straightened, deepened and widened in response to public demand for extensive flood control measures after 1955 flood damage. All vegetation was removed from the banks to reduce roughness and channel walls were lined with rock and concrete. In less than 10 years the channel had filled with 12 million cubic feet of sediment, and could only handle a 25-year flood (4% chance of occurring in a given year). Millions of dollars had not only destroyed the river but failed to do much for flood protection.

There is a new floodplain management philosophy that is being increasingly adopted by communities across the country that works with nature, not against it. Wetlands are being protected and allowed to serve as natural flood basins. Such measures are of particular importance in southern California, which has lost over 90% of its wetlands. **OVOV**, since it is a "vision" of what the valley should become, should include such measures.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Bottorff".

Ron Bottorff, Chair