

SOLANO COUNTY WATER AGENCY



September 9, 2004

Peter B. Foor, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Judge Foor:

This letter constitutes the response of the Solano County Water Agency to the 2003 – 2004 Solano Grand Jury Report regarding “Solano County Flood Control (Sweeney Creek)”. The Solano County Water Agency Board of Directors authorized this letter at their September 9, 2004 meeting.

FINDING NO. 1:

Flooding continues to be a problem in Solano County.

Response:

SCWA agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:

Solano County Board of Supervisors, SCWA Board of Directors and other affected agencies must continue to work to alleviate the problem of flooding throughout the County for the health, safety and welfare of county residents.

Response:

SCWA agrees with this recommendation and continues to implement the Flood Control Master Plan approved by the Board of Directors. SCWA also coordinates with Solano County on flood related matters on a regular basis. Some areas of coordination have been identified for improvement and Solano County and SCWA are working to improve coordination. SCWA is working on a supplemental response to the 2002 – 2003 Grand Jury who made a recommendation that flood control responsibility be assigned to the Solano County Department of Environmental Management. SCWA is developing a Strategic Plan which will be addressing

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our future role in flood control and we plan to respond to the Grand Jury in more detail after that plan has been completed.

FINDING NO. 2:

Work accomplished on this portion of Sweeney Creek greatly reduced flooding in the area of Allendale and I-505.

Response:

SCWA partially agrees with this finding. The work accomplished in Sweeney Creek was maintenance type work which did reduce flooding in recent storms. However, our studies show this type of maintenance work has a minimal impact on larger floods such as those that occurred in December of 2002.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:

Work that was not accomplished between Sweeney Creek and I-505 to the Weir must be completed. SCWA should meet with local landowners to discuss problem areas and reevaluate this area yearly to ensure that the creek is maintained and flooding is reduced to a minimum.

Response:

SCWA assumes that the “Weir” reference in the recommendation is the wing-wall structure just downstream of Leisure Town Road. SCWA has an agreement with the landowner to perform maintenance in this area and continues to maintain this part of the creek on an annual basis. Work to remove blockages and some dredging in this reach of Sweeney Creek was done last year. We are now in our second year of maintenance. As part of our Sweeney Creek Watershed Study, we are also looking at longer term improvements which should improve the flood carrying capacity of this part of Sweeney Creek.

FINDING NO. 3:

Elderberry Bush in the creek may support an endangered insect species. This plant should be removed in accordance with environmental rules, as it impedes the flow of water in the creek.

Response:

SCWA agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:

Cal Trans and SCWA partner with the Resource Conservation District to develop a plan to grow endangered plant species for mitigation of removed plants.

Response:

The Elderberry Bush is in the right-of-way of Cal Trans. SCWA and Cal Trans have entered into an agreement for maintenance of this portion of Sweeney Creek, where SCWA performs the work and Cal Trans reimburses SCWA for the cost. We plan on removing the Elderberry Bush and mitigating its impacts either in an approved mitigation bank or through other measures approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

FINDING NO. 4:

Arundo, a false bamboo weed that is extremely invasive and can create a natural dam causing flooding.

Response:

SCWA agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

Cal Trans and SCWA partner with the Resource Conservation District to develop an eradication plan.

Response:

SCWA includes Arundo eradication as a part of its annual maintenance program for Sweeney Creek.

FINDING NO. 5:

The culvert installed south of Putah Canal has a “backwash” when Sweeney Creek is full, causing slight flooding. A flap-gate was not placed on culvert when installed.

Response:

SCWA agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:

Install a flap-gate.

Response:

A flap-gate has been installed.

If you have any questions please contact the SCWA General Manager, David Okita, at 451-2094.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duane Kromm". The signature is written in a cursive style and extends to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Duane Kromm
Chairman, Solano County Water Agency