

Short Cut Across Arroyo Has Been Removed

August 23, 2007

In time for the start of the new school year, a concrete crossing of Arroyo Mocho behind Granada High School in Livermore has been removed. This will improve campus safety and security, enhance the creek's environment and remove a potential fish barrier.

The multi-benefit project involves a partnership between the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, which hopes the crossing removal will help control access to and from Granada's closed campus, and the Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency.

Removal of the crossing is identified in Zone 7's StreamWISE (Waterway Improvements Supporting the Environment) program as a way to improve water quality. The goal is to reduce trash, facilitate future fish passage, eliminate an impediment to water flow and minimize the amount of concrete in the stream. The StreamWISE program and vision allow Zone 7 to partner with local agencies on multi-benefit projects with community support.

From the school district's perspective, the crossing had invited uncontrolled access from Murrieta Boulevard to the back side of Granada's closed campus, potential harm to students and staff from unwanted visitors, vandalism, jaywalking to and from the shopping center across Murrieta and other nuisances including fires, trash and vegetation damage. The crossing can also be extremely hazardous when water is flowing. Administrators at both Granada High and the school district hope that removal of the crossing will curb such problems.

The crossing removal will eliminate a shortcut for students and area residents who have become accustomed to using it to get between the school and Murrieta Boulevard. School district officials noted that fencing on the back side of the campus has already been installed to restrict such use and is continually being torn down by violators. People trying to walk or bike to Murrieta Boulevard from campus must now take either Wall Street to Stanley Boulevard or Mocho Street to Holmes Street. For residents living southwest of Granada, this will add a short distance, about 1,400 feet, to the trip.

The crossing removal was supported by various community groups. The Alameda Creek Alliance said it would eliminate an obstacle to potential

steelhead migration once habitat restoration within the larger Alameda Creek watershed succeeds.

Friends of the Arroyos said foot and bicycle traffic from people using the creek crossing has contributed to trash and other problems at Granada Native Gardens, which is maintained by volunteers and is located on school district property on Murrieta Boulevard side of the creek.

Under a partnership agreement, the school district was responsible for actual removal of the crossing. Zone 7 was responsible for obtaining permits from regulatory agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and for undertaking the hydroseeding along banks for erosion control. Zone 7 said the crossing removal also will help it implement a much-needed downstream desilting project. Zone 7's StreamWISE program will provide flood protection, benefit the environment and improve the quality of life in the Livermore-Amador Valley.