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Zone 7 Board Approves Stream Management Master Plan
*New Vision for Valley Flood Protection Provides Water Quality, Supply
and Recreational Benefits, and Enhances Habitat for Fish and Wildlife*

Livermore – The Livermore-Amador Valley’s Zone 7 Water Agency board has approved a stream management master plan aimed at protecting communities from floods through planned buildout in 2034, while at the same time improving water quality, wildlife habitat and public recreational/educational opportunities.

“This plan is cutting edge in its regional vision for the Valley. Not only does it protect our communities from flooding – it capitalizes on our recreational assets and protects our rich and diverse environment,” said board Vice President Bill Stevens.

Zone 7 is the water wholesaler for Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin, and provides flood protection to all of eastern Alameda County.

The Stream Management Master Plan (SMMP) identifies 45 conceptual projects on various streams and channels that could be completed over the next three decades – providing not only flood protection, but other benefits as well. A key component of the new plan calls for diverting stormwater into a series of gravel pits between Livermore and Pleasanton that, as mining operations are completed, are being turned into the Chain of Lakes. The stored water would be released downstream only after storms pass through the area – meaning arroyos can be kept in a more natural state.

Ten projects would remove or modify fish-passage barriers in Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo del Valle and Arroyo de la Laguna. Others would restore natural stream flows, replace plants with native types, stabilize stream banks, create wetlands and other habitat for sensitive species, and install trails and educational kiosks near Valley arroyos.

Meanwhile, sediment coming down from the hills during storms, which can severely plug up the arroyos, would be routinely removed to maintain creek flow capacity and improve water quality.

The overall cost is estimated at \$726 million, of which \$479 million is specifically tied to flood protection. While the flood-protection component represents a cost reduction from the 1960s plan, the agency's current fee on new development will raise only a portion of that over the life of the SMMP. Zone 7 will embark on the development of an implementation plan over the next several months to prioritize projects for completion in the next five to ten years and identify a financing plan. Projects in the SMMP that include recreation, public education and habitat opportunities will require partnerships with other agencies for implementation and funding. In adopting the plan last week, the Zone 7 board reiterated that completion of any project or portion of projects in the SMMP is contingent on adequate funding and community support. Detailed design and environmental review will be required for the implementation of any specific project.

The Stream Management Master Plan represents a new approach to flood protection that is more environmentally friendly than the existing plan adopted in the 1960s, and provides additional community benefits. Rather than focus on wide, straight channels to move water through the valley as quickly as possible, it emphasizes minimizing erosion and sedimentation and reducing peak stormwater flows.

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Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of more than 190,000. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.