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Zone 7 Launches Stream Management Implementation Plan
Consultant Team to Help Develop Priorities, Funding and Partnerships

With its newly adopted, more environmentally friendly approach to flood control in hand, the Livermore-Amador Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency board on Wednesday selected West Yost & Associates to head up a team of consultants to develop implementation strategies.

Zone 7's Stream Management Master Plan, adopted in 2006, is aimed at protecting valley communities from floods through planned buildout in 2034, while at the same time improving water quality, wildlife habitat and public recreational/educational opportunities. The old flood-control strategy had been to convert natural arroyos into trapezoidal channels to convey stormwater out of the Valley as quickly as possible. The new approach in the SMMP is to divert stormwater into a series of detention ponds between Livermore and Pleasanton and to shore up existing arroyos. This approach allows stormwater to be released only after storms pass through the area, resulting in minimal impact on the downstream arroyos.

The upcoming implementation planning process, to last through Spring 2008, will include extensive input from the public to help determine which projects should be prioritized for completion in the next five to 10 years and how they should be funded. The current estimated cost of the entire plan, which covers a period of about 35 years, is \$727 million – about the same as the cost of Zone 7's old plan that would have provided nothing more than flood protection.

While the SMMP strategy broadens community benefits, it requires partnerships with other agencies and necessitates expanded and diversified funding sources. Zone 7's vision is for

the SMMP to provide a framework within which community partners, with support from the agency, will be able to fund and implement recreational and public-education projects not directly associated with flood protection and restoration. Funding sources for the flood-protection projects and associated environmental mitigation could include changes in currently assessed flood-protection fees on new development, along with public and private grants, state and federal earmarks, bonds and ballot initiatives.

The implementation-plan contract with West Yost and six subcontractors, specializing in everything from engineering and environmental services to public outreach and financial planning and analysis, was approved in an amount not to exceed \$2.5 million. Most of that will be paid for with fees that are charged to new development to mitigate its effects on flooding, while 30 percent will come from local property tax revenue.

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The 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.