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Arroyo Mocho Crossing Removal Exemplifies StreamWISE Vision
Project Will Restore the Mocho While Improving Granada High School Campus Safety

Removal of a concrete crossing of Arroyo Mocho behind Granada High School in Livermore is planned in order to improve campus safety and security and, at the same time, 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 removal of the crossing will help control access to and from the school's closed campus, and the Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency, which is responsible for flood protection. Removal of the crossing is identified in Zone 7's StreamWISE program as a way to improve water quality by reducing 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 allows Zone 7 to partner with local agencies on multi-benefit projects with community support.

"By reducing foot and bicycle traffic crossing the creek, we can minimize trash and illegal dumping, and by removing the silt and concrete, we can restore the creek to a more natural state and remove a barrier to potential fish migration," said Zone 7 General Manager Jill Duerig. "This is an exciting project for us in that it shows how effective

StreamWISE partnerships can be in linking our objectives, leveraging our resources and providing tangible community benefits.”

From the school district’s perspective, the crossing invites 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. Both the school and district hope that removal of the crossing will curb such problems.

“This project is good for the school and good for the community,” said school principal Chris Van Schaack. “We’re helping the environment and providing the safest place possible for our students. We have concerns about the ease with which non-students can access the campus at this location and feel as though eliminating this as an entry point will help us to provide a more secure campus.”

School district officials acknowledged that removal of the crossing will eliminate a shortcut for students and others who have become accustomed to using it to get between the school and Murrieta Boulevard. But they 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.

The district hopes to have the removal work completed before the mid-August start of the new school year. At that point, people trying to get to Murrieta Boulevard from the school campus will have to access it either from Stanley Boulevard or by taking Mocho Street to Holmes Street. The project is pending issuance of permits by regulatory agencies.

“It may be inconvenient for a while until the students get used to it, but our top priority is to provide the best education in the safest place possible and we can’t do that if people are walking through the campus and we don’t know who they are,” Van Schaack said.

A separate school project aimed at further restricting access from the back side of the campus will involve replacing the existing fencing with stronger wrought-iron fencing that can't be easily torn down. Livermore police are supportive of the new fencing to help deter entry and exit.

Removal of the crossing will remove an obstacle to potential steelhead migration and is supported by both Friends of the Arroyo and the Alameda Creek Alliance.

“The crossing has been identified as a barrier to future fish migration in Arroyo Mocho once steelhead habitat restoration within the larger Alameda Creek watershed is successful,” said creek alliance director Jeff Miller. “The barrier is an impediment to natural stream flow. Removal of the crossing will also reduce the amount of trash that gets into the arroyo, improving water quality for fish and other wildlife.”

Louann Tung, representing 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 the Murrieta Boulevard side of the creek.

“The crossing removal is the first step to restoring the ecosystem in this area of high use and visibility from Stanley (Boulevard) to the crossing,” Tung said. “It is the seed for change to transform the environment from one of neglect and abuse to a spark of new hope of restoration for the local riparian plants and critters.”

Under a partnership agreement, the school district is responsible for actual removal of the crossing and Zone 7 is responsible for obtaining permits from regulatory agencies, including Department of Fish and Game, and for doing hydroseeding along banks for erosion control. Additionally, Vulcan Materials Co., a quarry operator and aggregate producer in the area, has agreed to recycle the concrete and asphalt debris at no charge.

Zone7 said the crossing removal also will help it implement a much-needed downstream desilting project.

StreamWISE is a forward-looking suite of multi-benefit projects designed by scientists, engineers and community leaders to implement Zone 7's Stream Management Master Plan. This program will provide flood protection, benefit the environment and improve our quality of life in the Livermore-Amador Valley. For more information about StreamWISE, visit www.zone7water.com/streamwise.