

CALIFORNIA

Preserve Flood Plain

L.A. Times Archives

Sept. 20, 1987 12 AM PT

We thank The Times and reporter Anthony Perry for covering the San Diego Planning Commission meeting of Sept. 10. However, we would like to point out some inaccuracies and misconceptions in the article of Sept. 11, "Battle of the San Dieguito River Valley Heats Up."

The article stated that environmentalists wish to preserve the western San Dieguito River Valley (between Interstate 5 and old El Camino Real) in "open space, bean fields or horse ranches." The article repeats landowners' statements that they are being somehow threatened with "inverse condemnation" and having their land rendered "undevelopable through zoning."

These statements, unbalanced by the reporter, are very misleading. They ignore the testimony at the Planning Commission hearing and the planning study. Simply put, some landowners, like the La Jolla residents of the San Dieguito Trust, are angry because the city would not *upzone* the valley for them to allow for "a beautiful industrial park" (Bruce Henderson's vision for the valley in 1985), or a science-business park with a huge additional freeway interchange (the current Revelle-Munk proposal). These things are not allowed under the existing zoning. There is no "inverse condemnation."

The San Dieguito River Valley land has always been flood plain and has always been

zoned agricultural--it was when the landowners bought it. More importantly, the 1979 General Plan designated this portion as open space, followed by nine more years of studies and resolutions, (including the River Regional Plan, Local Coastal Plan), and direction from the San Diego City Council to keep it open space.

There are two other inaccuracies:

- The Planning Commission's recommendation was to allow 105 dwelling units, not along Via de la Valle, but clustered mostly in the southeast, between old El Camino Real and new El Camino Real.
- Our organization did not recommend aligning the proposed east-west Route 728 along Via de la Valle, as the article states. We pointed out that the route now goes along San Dieguito Road (from Fairbanks) and then south to new El Camino Real (graded for four lanes) toward the expanded intersection of I-5 and Del Mar Heights Road. We believe that, at all costs, we must avoid a new road cutting west through the valley to a new I-5 interchange. This would cut up the valley, would leave as "open space" only a channelized river, and would spur development of the proposed "science-business" parks and cause more gridlock on Via del la Valle and I-5.

River valleys are a threatened species. The San Dieguito is the city's last one. It is also the entry to San Diego, a sight for sore eyes to I-5 commuters in 152,000 cars per day. The public has loudly proclaimed that it wants this valley to survive.

Let us hope that the new City Council will not let lobbying by landowners--no matter what prominent names they carry--erase the 10 years of protection of this western San Dieguito River Valley--our last river valley.

ALICE GOODKIND

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