

PUBLIC COMMENTOR 235 - MARTIN GRIFFIN, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

222

I'm Martin Griffin, and I'm co-chair of the Russian River task force, which is a group of wineries on Westside Road which are located in the middle reach aquifer just above the Wohler Bridge where the Sonoma County water agency takes out the drinking water for a half million people, and right there at that same spot is where the sanitary district of Santa Rosa dumps its wastewater and storm water. And we can't separate wastewater and storm water because they both contain pollutants to different degrees. I have last year -- or this year, we had a talk before our Russian River environmental forum by the people who are from the state office of emergency services, and the woman who was in charge said that the Russian River now has the highest rate of repetitive flooding of any river west of the Mississippi.

Well, that statement astounded me, and she also said that the flooding is getting worse, it's getting more extensive, and that it cost 90 to 100 million dollars for the tax payer public in the floods of '95 alone. I was able to get a hold of a flood control map that was developed before the two dams were built on the Russian River, the warm springs dam and the coyote dam. And that's a 100-year flood plain of the Russian River that you see right there. And since then, actually, the flooding has gotten worse, since the two dams were built, and the victims of this flooding are the people who live from Monte Rio all the way up to Healdsburg, and they're the victims of the policies of the county and of Santa Rosa sanitary district and other districts who channelize their creeks all the way from Healdsburg down to Cotati. That speeds the flood waters from those waters, saves them from flooding, but dumps that flood water on the people who live from Forestville on down to Monte Rio. In the floods of '95 the floods backed all the way back up to Healdsburg, flooded our ranch and all the ranches along the Russian River in that area and first burst through the wastewater ponds of Healdsburg, dumped 800 million gallons of partly treated sewage wastewater into the Russian River. So I think that this is the main thing that's been overlooked in the EIR/EIS, and I've given copies of the flood areas to the members of the board.

When you look at this very carefully, you'll see that the cities along the 101 corridor are exploiting the Russian River to the fullest. They're taking its gravel, they're dumping their wastewater, they're dumping their storm water, they're channelizing every creek and tributary, so that they're benefiting, but it's at the expense of the people who live along the river.

223

Now just today, the Sonoma County water agency has released its EIR on its attempt to increase its diversions from the Russian River by 40 percent, and that should be carefully coordinated with this EIR that's now being done. I also want to call your attention to something that I received in the mail, that I wish it had come from Santa Rosa Sanitary District, or from the Sonoma County water agency, or anybody in Sonoma County.

224

It's a report -- the community coalition for a Napa River Flood Management Plan. The Napa River is a living river flowing without end supporting all life in the Napa River

Valley. Now, an unprecedented valley-wide coalition of community interests has come together to create a plan that protects and enhances the long-term health of our most vital resources, and the people who are involved in this include the Army Corps of Engineers, and I'm happy to see Colonel Thompson here today.

It says a living river runs through it. After five months intensive work, an historic valley-wide community coalition effort completed a Draft flood management plan by its June 27th deadline. Working with the corps of engineers and consultants, the coalition's design team has turned a rejected project into a national model of both flood control and river restoration embracing the entire watershed. So that's what this county needs, is a comprehensive river management plan for the Russian River. It's our most vital resource. Thank you.

Mayor Wright:

Thank you, Dr. Griffin. Jack Macy.