

Michele King

Subject: FW: San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks Feasibility Study 4/27 Board Item #6.3

From: Jack Lucas <jlucas1099@aol.com>

Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 3:27 PM

To: Board of Directors <board@valleywater.org>

Subject: San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks Feasibility Study 4/27 Board Item #6.3

Tony Estramera Chair
Board of Directors
Valley Water

Dear Chairman Estramera and Members of the Board,

In regards April 27 agenda, Item #6.3, would like to remind Board of San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks flood control record for the major storm event of February, 1998, in which eye of storm passed over headwaters of Saratoga and San Tomas Aquino Creeks with 9 inches of rain in 48 hours and Calabazas Creek had 75 year event flows and yet no flooding occurred at #237. Harvey marsh and Santa Clara County's bay lands park wetlands complex filled to brim with creek overflow but preserved highway and rail lines intact.

This was the storm event that flooded Stanford University and downtown City of Palo Alto, and resulted in the establishment of San Francisquito Creek Flood Authority. Due to this diversion no notice was given to San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks having handled storm flow by natural wetlands flood control measures.

The current proposal in this feasibility study to outfall these two creeks directly to Pond A-8 would short circuit your existing flood control design. Present creek connectivity to over five miles of Guadalupe Slough to outfall in San Francisco Bay provides significant buffer to river flow reflux from high water storm levels in South Bay.

This 5 miles of slough run out and upstream agricultural overflow wetlands are the same elements used by the recent and most successful Napa River flood control project. Though creeks' overflow wetlands are owned by VTA and Santa Clara County Parks, this appears to be exemplary conjunctive use and adaptive management.

Outfall of San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks' storm waters directly to Pond A-8 will conflict with Guadalupe River storm flows to Alviso Slough. The Guadalupe channel was sized by US COE in 1980's to handle 17,000 cfs and recent development puts estimate at 23,000 cfs so can't imagine how an extra 14,000 cfs can be accommodated. Pond A-8 is supposed to be Guadalupe River's overflow buffer to protect Alviso so this is a critical concern.

In regards sediment deposition in Pond A-8 which is stated reason for feasibility study would ask if sediment loads from Guadalupe River watershed, which is twice size of San Tomas Aquino/Calabazas' have not been of expected levels for marsh restoration, how do proponents expect smaller watersheds to provide larger loads?

From old maintenance records it appears majority of sediment falls out between foothills and El Camino Real in these west side streams, and as this sediment has to be removed from site to retain channel capacity there is no saving of maintenance costs to be achieved here. Study needs to make this distinction. Also due to the extensive subsidence of valley floor bay tides reach #101 and residual sediments fall out there, far from Bay.

Models of stream flow and sediment deposition must be difficult to design to compensate for land subsidence.

Horizontal levee would appear to be a more practical solution to sediment levels in Pond A-8 as fill would filter throughout pond, snowy plover habitat safely designed and bay rise flood protection to valley floor extended. As bids for horizontal levee are running too high for Salt Pond restoration budget, perhaps Valley Water staff could contribute expertise developed for extensive riparian vegetation restoration on lower Coyote Creek that they accomplished so well on pallets in house and then transferred to field when conditions were favorable.

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Pond A-8 would need a fish screen to come into compliance with FAHCE criteria for anadromous fisheries as San Tomas Aquino is too culverted and extensively channelized to provide habitat. Diversions to Pond A-8 from Guadalupe River already constitute problem with Alviso fishermen. Bay Trail alignment needs inclusion..

Thank you for consideration of these concerns in regards the proposed San Tomas Aquino and Calabazas Creeks' Pond A-8 outfall feasibility study.

Libby Lucas
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