

Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies

Coalition to Save Our Trees

News Release

Contacts

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For Immediate Release

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What: News Conference to oppose clear cutting trees in the Bay Area creeks
Who: Congressman George Miller; Congressman John Garamendi; Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia; Mitch Avalon, Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies; Bruce Wolfe, Regional Water Quality Control Board; Chuck Armor, Department of Fish & Game; Witney Dotson, N. Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance; Mark Cowin, Department of Water Resources
When: **Monday, October 11, 2010, 11:00 a.m.**
Where: East Bay Regional Park District Staging Area on 2135 Richmond Parkway (mouth of Wildcat Creek)

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' NEW MANDATE PUTS LOCAL AGENCY AT ODDS WITH STATE AND FEDERAL PRESERVATION LAWS

Richmond, Calif., In an effort to save several endangered species from being killed and precious trees from being removed along Wildcat Creek in Richmond, and other creeks and rivers throughout the state, lawmakers, environmentalists, and community activities are coming together to urge the Army Corps of Engineers to revise the new policy that many believe is too extreme and could cost local governments millions of dollars.

Last April, the Army Corps of Engineers released a mandate, based on a new National Levee Safety Program, requiring all federally constructed levees along streams and rivers to be free of trees and shrubs. Many levees that have been identified are the same ones the Army Corps of Engineers had expressly designed just years earlier and permitted by federal and state agencies to integrate and support river vegetation and wildlife.

"We don't understand why the Army Corps of Engineers is doing this," said Mitch Avalon with the Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies Association. The Association represents all public works agencies in the Bay Area. "Research has shown that vegetation is a very low risk factor for levee failure and many levees, like Wildcat Creek, are safer with vegetation."

What's more, removing trees and disturbing local habitat and wildlife violates State and Federal preservation laws putting local jurisdictions at odds with the Corps new requirements. But ignoring the Corps could mean severe fines.

"We're stuck between conflicting laws," said Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, whose West County District includes Richmond. "If we do what the Corps wants, we'll get fined by the State Fish and Game and Federal fish and wildlife regulators. If we don't, we'll be in jeopardy of losing federal flood disaster assistance and residents in the area will be burdened with higher insurance rates."