

County Flood Control District Announces \$537,000 Grant Award **Funding to Jump Start Next Phase of Lower Walnut Creek Restoration**

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The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors received good news from the Flood Control and Water Conservation District, which announced on February 14, 2017, the awarding of a \$537,000 grant for planning funds to help with the District's Lower Walnut Creek Restoration project. The money, granted by the California Department of Fish and Game, will fund half of the next phase of project development.

Project Manager Paul Detjens, District Senior Engineer from the Flood Control District, notes that the grant will support much of the behind the scenes work that is critical to getting the more visible elements of the project shovel-ready. He estimates this phase to take about two years, resulting in a project expected to be highly competitive for future grant funding for construction.

"The Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project represents a new, sustainable way of thinking and is very different than a traditional flood control project," added Detjens. "It's an opportunity to restore wetlands that have suffered large historic losses, and restore connections between the Walnut Creek channel and its floodplain."

The Walnut Creek watershed is the largest in Contra Costa County, with its boundaries including 8 cities and more than 300,000 residents. The District's long-term vision is to restore and enhance habitat in Lower Walnut Creek, and to provide sustainable flood management, while enhancing opportunities for public access and recreation. "This project will significantly restore coastal wetlands for the benefit of native and special status species and to advance sustainable flood management and public access," noted Michelle Orr, of Environmental Science Associates, and serves as the principal technical consultant.

The Flood Control District is encouraging Contra Costa residents to participate in the ongoing conversation about Lower Walnut Creek on the project's Facebook page, which can be accessed through www.lowerwalnutcreek.org. You can learn more about the project, and view a multi-episode video series produced by the District called *Lower Walnut Creek Adventures*. The video series is also available on YouTube.

The District invites residents to check out the project area in person, with tours of the Lower Walnut Creek region offered on March 11 and April 22. These tours offer a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the restoration potential of Lower Walnut Creek. To find out more and register, visit www.lowerwalnutcreek.org.