

Microsoft has search jobs in the Valley



Print Services: [Subscribe](#) | [Home Delivery](#)

Web: [Sign in](#) | [Register](#) | [Mobile Edition](#) | [RSS](#)

MercuryNews.com  
The Mercury News Silicon Valley

PART OF THE BAYAREA.COM NETWORK

Search bar with "SEARCH" button and "Web Search powered by YAHOO! SEARCH" text.

HOME | NEWS | BUSINESS | TECH | SPORTS | ENTERTAINMENT | LIFE & STYLE | OPINION | MY CITY | HELP | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | CLASSIFIED | SHOPPING | PLACE AD

San Jose, CA Now: 82°F | High: 92°F | Low: 65°F | 5-day forecast

Get weather for:  city or zip

Most Viewed Most Emailed

(From the last 12 hours)



1. Nadal ends Federer's reign
2. Slower winds aid fire crews
3. A green card, and a wife overseas
4. Roadshow: Don't stop on side of freeway
5. A-Rod's wife alleges infidelity in divorce papers
6. San Jose woman one of two Californians killed when SUV rolls over on...

Top Classifieds

RENTALS | JOBS | REAL ESTATE | AUTOS

Medical Assistant

[Click for Details](#)

Executive Director

[Confidential](#)

Machinist

[Click for Details](#)

Apartment

Manager/Maintenance Team

[Click for Details](#)

Summer Work

[Click for Details](#)

Auto Tire/Lube Techs

[Skips Tire](#)

Accountant

[Click for Details](#)

Activism

[Click for Details](#)

[ALL LISTINGS](#)

del.icio.us | Digg | Reddit | YahooMyWeb | Google | Facebook | What's this?

RePrint | Print | Email

## \$256 million San Jose project will reduce flooding

By Paul Rogers

Mercury News

Article Launched: 06/30/2008 11:49:28 PM PDT

Kicking off one of San Jose's largest public works projects in recent decades, the Santa Clara Valley Water District broke ground Monday on a \$256 million effort to reduce flooding on the upper Guadalupe River through the heart of the city's central neighborhoods.

The work represents the final stage of the project that created the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens in downtown San Jose three years ago. It will provide flood protection along six miles of the river from Interstate 280 near the Children's Discovery Museum south to Blossom Hill Road near Highway 85.

That stretch of river has flooded five times since 1982. In 1995, floodwaters submerged 150 homes near Alma Avenue and Virginia Street, Highway 87 near downtown and the city's light rail system. Firefighters with boats rescued residents as streets turned to rivers. Flooding was so bad that the San Jose Sharks called off a game, the only National Hockey League game ever postponed due to rain.

"I'll never forget in 1995 standing on the Virginia Street Bridge and looking at the light rail tracks under water. It was scary," said Rosemary Kamei, chairwoman of the water district's board.

The project will progress in sections, finishing in 2016.

At a ceremony Monday along Wren Drive in the Canoas Park neighborhood, political leaders including U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-Campbell, and Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, praised the project as a balance between the old concrete flood channels of the past and

environmental sensitivity of the present.

Advertisement

"We are making the effort not to control Mother Nature, but to work with her," said Honda, who noted he swam in nearby creeks as a boy more than 50 years ago.

The work will remove nine concrete barriers in the river - things like old bridge abutments - to ease passage for Chinook salmon and steelhead. Thousands of native trees and other vegetation will be planted. And there will be corridors so the city can later extend hiking and bicycle trails along the river's edge from downtown to Almaden Valley.

In addition, the Upper Guadalupe will be widened in many places to hold more water during winter storms. Levees also will be raised.

Because of past development right up to the river's banks, it's not easy to widen the channel through more established neighborhoods, including Willow Glen.

As a result, for the past 20 years as it planned the project, the water district has been buying land along the river's edges. It has purchased 135 pieces of property so far from willing sellers, with about 35 more to go. In places, it has knocked down homes it purchased to make room for a wider channel.

When finished, the project will provide 100-year flood protection, significantly reducing risk for 7,200 homes, 230 businesses and 11 schools.

Currently the area only has 25-year flood protection in many places, meaning the river is only engineered to prevent flooding from waters that have a 1-in-25 chance of occurring in any year.

"I can't wait. I think it will really beautify and improve the area," said Jay Forderer, a resident who lives on Virginia Street just south of downtown.

In 1998, the last time the Upper Guadalupe flooded, he watched nervously with neighbors as the waters rose.

"It was incredible. The river was brown and full of debris and branches. It nearly came to the bottom of the bridge," he said Monday. "I knew if it went over the banks that I'd be pumping water out of my house."

About 100 yards from his home, a newly vacant lot on the riverfront sat where a home once did. The water district bought it and tore it down last summer to widen the channel.

That kind of widening has won accolades from environmentalists. But some still have concerns.



"I applaud buying up homes to provide additional floodplain. That is innovative and deserves a lot of credit," said Mondy Lariz, a board member of the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition. "But I feel that we are going to look back on it and say, 'We should have done this, this and this.' "

Lariz said that the water district's efforts on other sections of the Guadalupe River have not increased steelhead and Chinook salmon populations due to erosion and other problems.

He also said that the current project could be improved if more bridges were replaced and widened. Last year, the district paid \$3 million to build a longer, wider bridge at Willow Glen Way.

The cost for the project is being split, with the Santa Clara County Water District paying \$119 million and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers paying \$137 million. Local funding came from Measure B, a \$39 per-home annual parcel tax approved by Santa Clara County voters in 2000.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

To learn more go to [www.valleywater.org](http://www.valleywater.org) and type "Upper Guadalupe River" in the search box.

Contact Paul Rogers at [progers@mercurynews.com](mailto:progers@mercurynews.com) or (408) 920-5045.

RePrint Print Email Return to Top

Comments

We are pleased to let readers post comments about an article. Please increase the credibility of your post by including your full name and city in the body of your comment.  
[FAQ: Article commenting how-tos and tips](#)

Recent Comments  
Be the first to post a comment.

Post Your Comment  
[Log in to forums](#) to post a comment.

Local News

[Herhold](#) [Pizarro](#) [Fisher](#) [obituaries](#)

- Fisher: Snow White story enchants prince of a guy
- Sea lion stuck in Santa Clara; rescue attempt is likely today
- Today declared a Spare the Air Day in Bay Area
- Inspiration and blessings at Campbell Buddhist Center
- S.J. woman dies in SUV rollover in Colorado
- Slower winds aid fire crews
- Purdy: Arena vote 20 years ago made San Jose a real city
- A green card, and a wife overseas

<p><b>Free Credit Report with All 3 Scores</b> Free 3-bureau Credit Report – includes Transunion, Equifax, Experian. <a href="http://FreeCreditReportsInstantly.com">FreeCreditReportsInstantly.com</a></p>	<p><b>Refinance \$300,000 for Only \$965/Month</b> \$300,000 Mortgage for only \$965/month. Save \$1,000's - No obligation. <a href="http://www.HomeLoanHelpLine.com">www.HomeLoanHelpLine.com</a></p>	<p><b>Refinance and Save \$1,000S</b> \$150,000 Mortgage for \$483/month. Compare up to 4 free quotes. <a href="http://www.pickamortgage.com">www.pickamortgage.com</a></p>
---	--	---

Ads by Yahoo!

Copyright © 2008 - San Jose Mercury News

MediaNews Group - Northern California Network

[Help/Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Privacy Policy and Terms of Use](#) | [About MediaNews Group](#) | [RSS](#) | [Ethics Policy](#) | [About Bay Area News Group](#) |

