

Supervisors fund major brush clearing work on Cosgrove

By Nick Baptisa / The Valley Springs News / September 15, 2023

Flood-prone Cosgrove Creek will receive major attention this fall.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday decided to earmark \$115,000 in the county budget to clear vegetation from Cosgrove Creek along a 2.27 mile stretch between Gold Creek and Silver Rapids roads.

The past few years the county has set aside \$30,000 for inmates from CalFire's Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 to clear portions of the creek that flooded earlier this year and in 2006.

When not fighting fires, the incarcerated crew members from the Vallecito Conservation Camp perform conservation and community service projects such as clearing the creek.

However, CalFire has told the county the inmates will not be available this year to help in those efforts.

The county began exploring other options, and according to District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli, is looking at contracting the work out this year. The county received an estimate the extended work could be done for \$115,000 and a contract is being prepared for board approval at the Sept. 26 meeting.

The additional \$85,000 is coming from unspent Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Butte Fire Recovery funds. The money was intended for infrastructure improvements at Calaveras County Fairgrounds, the major base for emergency personnel in the event of a disaster such as the Butte Fire.

The fair received funding for the improvement from the state and recently returned \$123,000 in Butte Fire funds back to the county.

District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi questioned whether the \$115,000 would "fix" the problem or just clear brush.

While this funding would be used to clear the brush, Tofanelli said a long-term solution is being prepared.

He told The News, the county is meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to seek permission for extensive trench work to improve floodwater flows beneath the Cosgrove Creek bridges at St. Andrews Road, Vista Del Lago Drive and Silver Rapids Road.

Those approvals are necessary since Cosgrove Creek is viewed by federal officials as sensitive habitat for the endangered red-legged frog.

Tofanelli was pleased all five supervisors agreed to spend the additional funding to clear the larger portion of the creek.