



To the Editor:

October 20, 2008

First: in a recent rebuttal of Friends of the Santa Cruz River (FOSCR) arguments against Propositions 400 and 401, Cecily Crebbs contends that adding effluent to the river from the proposed Las Mesas development would make up for habitat destruction from the bridge they intend to build. But “return flow”, the excess water that currently goes back into the river from irrigating fields close by, would dry up as the development switches from current agricultural use to residential. So at best, the effluent addition would be a wash; there’s no net gain for the river—only habitat loss.

Second, voters beware: in all the current commentary, always consider the source. The Crebbs/Larkin families, Andy Courtney, and Ross Wilson are all landowners or developers of the Las Mesas and Sopori proposals. They have heavily subsidized the re-election campaigns of the two supervisors who supported their proposals against the clear guidance of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan those same supervisors voted into law four years ago. The developers/owners’ prime motivation is profit, not betterment of our county.

FOSCR’s sole purpose, for the past 17 years of its existence, is to keep the Santa Cruz River healthy, flowing, and full of life. We have no other agenda. We are all volunteers, and stand to gain nothing personally in this grueling struggle.

Third, the widespread concern that passage of these propositions would create a precedent and effectively gut the County’s Land Use Plan is very well-founded. Threats of “takings” from any future denials of requests for major Plan amendment have sent counties in other jurisdictions running to approve to avoid expensive litigation, once the barn door has been opened. (Amazingly, Ben Crebbs has already cried “taking” in a recent letter in this paper.) This predictable crumbling of the Plan, and with it a major layer of river protection, is the ultimate reason FOSCR urges you to vote “NO” on both 400 and 401.

Lastly, the editor of this paper took a very cheap shot in titling Ms. Crebbs’ op ed piece “The River Does Not Need Enemies With Friends Like That”. Really, Mr. Coppola, such an untrue cut is beneath the standards of your publication, and insults the dedication, time, effort and expertise of FOSCR’s volunteers, which include educators, scientists, lawyers, engineers, and many others who have worked so hard and so long just to protect one of our county’s most unique and valuable natural resources.

Sincerely,

Sherry L. Sass
President, FOSCR