



# Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program PROPOSED PROJECT - MEMORIAL PARK DUAL-USE FACILITY

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) | APRIL 2015



### Q: What is the Ross Valley Flood Protection & Watershed Program?

A: After the devastating flood of 2005, the Ross Valley communities came together and agreed that something had to be done to prevent flooding. Elected leaders from throughout the Valley asked the County to study the problem and propose solutions. Engineers with expertise in hydrology, water resources, and flood protection created a digital model of the Ross Valley watershed, examined numerous combinations of solutions, and ultimately recommended a regional, watershed-based approach comprised of many projects – removing constriction points, maximizing capacity in the creek channel, and holding back waters in detention basins. In combination, these measures would contain a flood like that experienced in 2005.

### Q: Who is involved in this program?

A: The program is a regional effort led by the County of Marin Department of Public Works and Marin County Flood Control District Zone 9 in partnership with the City of Larkspur, the Towns of Fairfax, Ross, and San Anselmo and the unincorporated communities of Sleepy Hollow, Oak Manor, Kentfield, and Greenbrae. Others involved include environmental, business, and community groups.

### Q: What are the Program's Goals?

The Program Goals include reducing the risk of flooding and associated damage in the Ross Valley, integrating environmental enhancement/restoration with the flood mitigation efforts, and leveraging funds obtained through the Ross Valley Storm Drainage Fee to obtain additional state and federal funding for the program.

### Q: Why is Memorial Park involved?

A: Even with reasonable creek improvements, a flood such as the one in 2005 cannot be contained in the creek. Therefore, a significant portion of the creek flow must be diverted and held back until the storm passes. This is typically done by temporarily storing water in what are called “dual-use facilities,” such as public parks, ball fields, golf courses and open spaces. There are a total of 5 locations on publicly owned lands in the Ross Valley that together could meet the flood storage volume requirement. Memorial Park is one of them.

### Q: Won't this destroy the park?

A: Actually, it will provide an opportunity to rebuild and revitalize the park. When the detention basin concept was first proposed for Memorial Park, Town staff recognized an opportunity to repair and rebuild Memorial Park. Staff knows that conditions in the park are deteriorating due to age.

### Q: Will the new park be as good as the old one?

A: The new park will be a much-improved version of the existing park. In addition to the flood protection aspect, the Memorial Park Detention Basin Project proposes to add a new drainage system below the field to improve the play-ability of the fields throughout the year. The layout of the fields, tennis and basketball courts, and the look and feel of the park, the Elders Garden, and the Children's Playground will be discussed by the San Anselmo community. The project also is proposed to restore a portion of Sorich Creek that now flows through a buried culvert under the park so that it can flow along its natural course at the park's eastern edge.



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**Q: Who will make the decisions as to what the new park will look like?**

A: The San Anselmo community through the Town Council will make those decisions. Despite grant funds awarded to the project, Memorial Park is in the early discussion phase. Over the next 2 years, this proposed flood project will be discussed extensively. Options will be reviewed, as well as impacts to the community and the natural environment. Alternatives to using Memorial Park and details of how the flood control function would work will also be discussed. More than just adding a detention basin function, this is an opportunity to reshape a beloved community resource.

**Q: How much is it going to cost the Town?**

A: Town & County staff along with their professional engineering consultants proposed a comprehensive project that is estimated to cost \$17.4 million. Funding partners include the CA Department of Water Resources, Flood Zone 9, other grant sources and the Town of San Anselmo. Exact portions have yet to be determined, but the expectation is that the Town's contribution will be through in-kind/staff resources. Town & County leadership and staff are committed to keeping local costs as low as possible.

**Q: Why has the cost gone up so much from the original estimate?**

A: The project as first conceived contained only the structures needed to divert and release floodwater, excavating the field and restoring the park to what exists now. The estimate for that project was \$7 million. In order to be eligible for grant funding, the project was expanded to include improvements to recreation features, water quality, water supply (by reducing required watering times through a more efficient field), and environmental improvements, as required by State and Federal grant programs. The cost of this expanded project is estimated to be \$17.4 million.

**Q: How long will the construction take and what will the impacts be?**

A: Construction is estimated to take 1 to 1 ½ years. There would be impacts to neighbors, as with any construction project, but they would be mitigated as much as possible. The field would be closed for that period, but a transition plan for utilizing other playing fields for games would be formulated.

**Q: How long would the park be closed after a flood?**

A: Depending on the extent of flood damage, the park could be closed approximately 1 to 3 weeks.

**Q: Who will pay for maintaining the park in the future and restoring it after it's used for storing floodwater?**

A: The Town of San Anselmo would be responsible for the everyday maintenance of the park, as it is now. Should the park be utilized as a detention basin, the costs to return the field to full use would be borne by the Town and County, although details are not yet worked out, they would be mitigated as much as possible. The field would be closed for that period, but a transition plan for using other playing fields would be formulated.

**Q: Why not hold the water somewhere other than Memorial Park?**

A: There are 5 "dual-use" facilities proposed for the Ross Valley. Working together, they can temporarily store the volume of water that cannot be held in the creek. The 5 locations were chosen because they best match the required criteria: adjacent to a creek, few or no structures in the field, ability to hold a large volume of water, and publicly owned. They represent the largest areas that could hold the necessary amount of water.

**Q: The Memorial Park project seemed to come out of nowhere. How long has this been in the works?**

A: The basics of the project have been in discussion among town and county staffs, participating community members, and elected community leaders since early 2011. In public meetings of the Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board and annual community meetings, the basic concept of the plan was discussed and initial estimates of costs presented.

**Q: What's happening now & how can I stay involved?**

A: Currently, a high level review of a range of alternative flood control measures in addition to those currently included in the Ross Valley Watershed Program is underway and due for completion in June 2015. This review will provide valuable input for future required CEQA alternatives analysis. In addition, it gives the current Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board and the community multiple opportunities to review alternative options under a more comprehensive set of criteria. Recommendations for any changes to the program based on the alternatives analysis will be made at the FZ9 meeting on June 16, 2015.

You can visit [www.rossvalleywatershed.org](http://www.rossvalleywatershed.org) to review documents, submit input, get information about the program, and subscribe to receive email notifications of upcoming public meetings and updates. You can also sign up for weekly e-news from your Town Manager at [www.townofsananselmo.org/list.aspx](http://www.townofsananselmo.org/list.aspx).