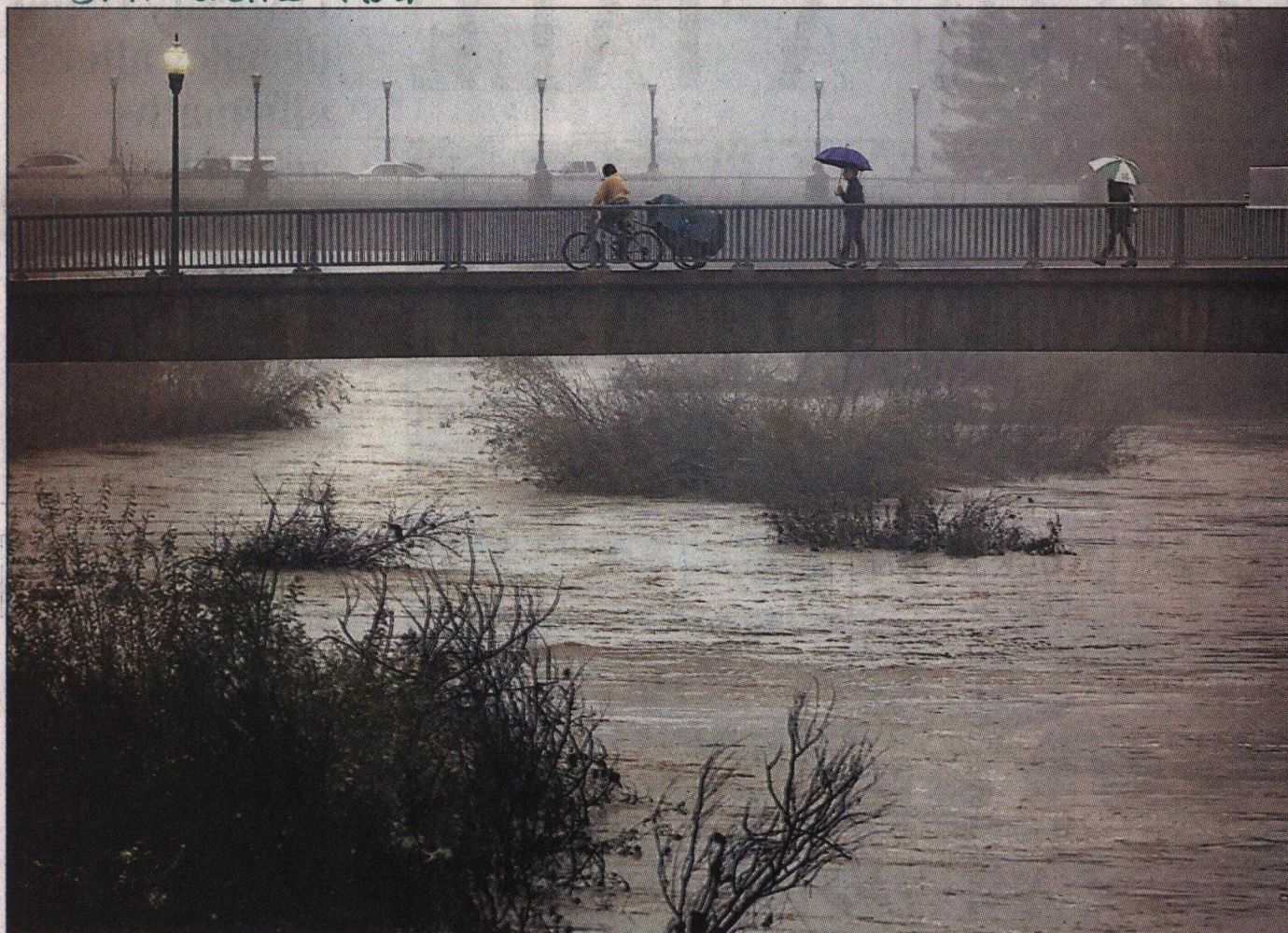


# SAN LORENZO RIVER PROJECT ADVANCES

San Lorenzo River

8-9-17



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

The rain-swollen San Lorenzo River flows through downtown Santa Cruz after winter storms in January.

## Mark Stone's bill assists Santa Cruz river flood control effort

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**SANTA CRUZ »** New state legislation signed Monday will clear the path for the final stage of a stalled decades-old Santa Cruz river flood control project.

The San Lorenzo River Flood Control project, designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, would create a "channel within a channel," allowing wa-

ter flowing down a narrow canal to move more swiftly and carrying sediment out to the ocean.

The project requires a final estimated \$7 million, of which the city of Santa Cruz is responsible for 30 percent, according to a bill analysis.

Joe Hall, city Economic Development Office project manager called the bill, introduced by Assemblyman Mark Stone, a "ray of sunshine."

"We're just about through

with the project now, and the corps has simply run out of money — the budget cuts have reached the point where they're shedding projects, and ours was one of them," said. "We're very happy with this. I think people understood: We have a corps project, with the last phase, and it's sitting literally stopped and it will stay stopped. The state will help us to finally finish it off."

While the legislation does not

guarantee the funding or timing, on either the state or city level, it allows the two bodies to work together without the involvement of the federal government. The Army Corps last invested in Santa Cruz's river flood control efforts in 2006 and called a formal halt to the Santa Cruz project's funding in the fall, Hall said. That was when Santa Cruz officials turned to Stone for help, he said.

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DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

Stormwatchers keep an eye on the rain-swollen San Lorenzo Rivermouth during a storm last January.

## River

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Before the last project can become a reality, Hall said there are still numerous steps remaining, such as planning, design, permitting and environmental review. Monday's signing of Assembly Bill 436 by Gov. Jerry Brown, however, "is the final piece of the puzzle," he said.

The canal would carry sediment to the ocean, pre-

venting build-up and flooding, Hall said. When sediment builds up, the San Lorenzo approaches the top of the levee during heavy rains, such as during the 18,000 cubic feet per second of riverflow during this winter's peak Feb. 7 storm.

"The city of Santa Cruz has worked on the San Lorenzo River flood control project for many years, and this bill provides the necessary authorizations so that the final critical improvements can be made,"

Stone said in a statement. "In combination with the other infrastructure updates, the last phase of this project will help protect against flooding that occurs during severe weather events."

"The timing on this was pretty amazing," Hall said. "We've been in six years of drought. They come say goodbye, they basically say 'no more,' and we start having these phenomenal rains again. I think the timing on it was good to explain why you don't just

stop on these projects."

The river canal project will be the latest in a series of flood-control efforts that have included new bridges, raised levees, cleared vegetation, streambank protection, levee storm drain pump improvement and a widened river bend that were initially triggered by significant rainfall in 1982. The federal, state and city government jointly have invested at least an estimated \$65 million in "today's dollars" in at least the last 25 years, Hall said.