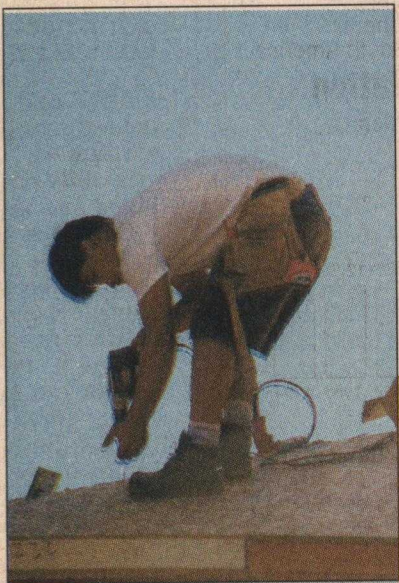


Restoring old park to former glory



Gustavo Arroyo, a carpenter, works on the roof of the structure going up at Junction Park.



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Workers are building a structure that will hold barbecue pits; the path in foreground leads to the San Lorenzo River.

Grounds around the Junction Park swimming hole are being spruced up

Boulder Creek

Boulder Creek site getting face lift

BY TERRI MORGAN
Special to the Mercury News

The grounds around Boulder Creek's old swimming hole are getting a face lift. Junction Park — the one-time center of summer recreation in the northern end of the San Lorenzo Valley — is undergoing a \$170,000 upgrade to

help restore it to its former glory.

Construction crews are building new walkways, retaining walls, picnic tables, barbecue pits and a bandstand and preparing to install a sod lawn on the slope leading down to the water. Work at the park, which is approximately one acre, is expected to be

finished in late August. The Boulder Creek Recreation and Park District, which owns the site, is planning a Labor Day bash at the park to celebrate completion of the project.

"We'll be really happy to have this completed," said Barbara Day, director of the recreation

district. "We're inviting people to come down to help us open up the park."

Located off Middleton Avenue, about two blocks east of Hwy. 9, the Junction Park overlooks the confluence of Boulder Creek and

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Boulder Creek park being restored

■ **PARK**
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The San Lorenzo River. The park's origins are unknown, but Day suspects it donated to the community long before the recreation district was established in 1958. Historically, the river was dammed at the Junction during the summer, creating a swimming hole where people could cool off on hot days.

Swimmers sunned themselves on the sandy beach along the side of the river and daredevils dove off the rocks into the pool. Young children dropped fishing lines into the water, while teen-agers flirted with one another on the banks. Families picnicked in the grounds above the swimming hole, and volunteers at the local fire department periodically drove trucks down a cement ramp to the river to pump water into their tankers.

Over the years, the park gradually fell into decay and disuse. About 10 years ago, the board of directors for the recreation district voted to upgrade the site and began setting aside park dedication fees to pay for the improvements. Site work began last summer, but was halted when the original contractor went bank-

rupt. Work resumed in May, after a new contracting firm, Peck and Abood, was hired.

Time has taken its toll on the old swimming hole.

Today, the dam is history, the pool is much smaller, and swimming is discouraged. The park's boundary runs through the middle of the river, and the opposite bank is privately owned and off limits to the public. There are no lifeguards on duty, and the water quality is poor, particularly in the late summer when the water level drops, concentrating pollutants from leaky septic systems in the river.

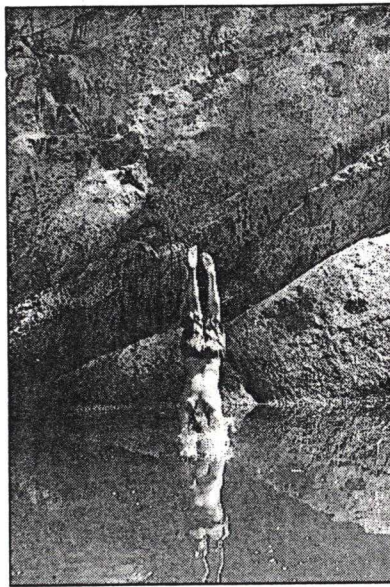
It's usually unsafe for swimming in late July and August, said Day. Health department workers post signs to that affect regularly, she added.

Despite the "no swimming" policy and the fact the park has been officially closed while work is under way, area residents are still drawn to the water.

"We have not been able to keep the locals out," said John Peck, the general contractor for the project. "They just come down and swim."

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

A free grand opening party to celebrate the Junction Park improvements is set for Sept. 4 from noon to



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The park leads to the San Lorenzo River where Steve White, 12, displays his diving form.

4 p.m. at the Middleton Avenue site. For more information, call the Boulder Creek Recreation and Park District at (408) 338-4144.