

# RIO DE SANTA FE

## The Report and Recommendations of the Santa Fe River Committee



-circa 1930's



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Mayor

CARLOS A. GALLEGOS  
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SANTA FE LAKE

"Where it all begins."



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Councilor Phillip Griego

Councilor Diego Martinez  
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#### CHAIRMAN

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**Louis R. Montañó, Mayor**



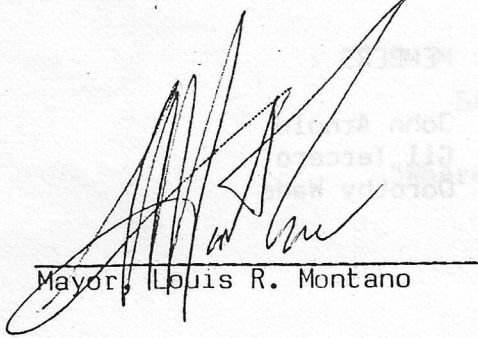
**City of Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**MAYOR'S STATEMENT  
BY MAYOR LOUIS R. MONTANO**

Since Santa Fe's founding, the Santa Fe River has been our City's lifeblood. With its water we have nourished our bodies, watered our animals, and irrigated our crops. Today, the Santa Fe River not only provides Santa Fe with life sustaining water, but its tree and grass lined banks provide a scenic and recreational resource that delights both residents and tourists alike.

But while our river is used, it is also abused. Though there are beautiful, park-like stretches, there are also litter and weed-choked reaches. The river only flows several months of the year. Concrete embankments make fishing and wading dangerous. Santa Fe must make more of its unique and underutilized river.

After nearly a year of hard work and study, the Santa Fe River Committee has finalized its initial recommendations. They are to be congratulated for their commitment of time and energy. The Santa Fe River will be more beautiful and more enjoyable for generations to come as a result of the work of this committee.

  
Mayor, Louis R. Montano



**Louis R. Montaña, Mayor**



**City of Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT  
BY CITY COUNCILOR DIEGO MARTINEZ**

In December of 1984, the Santa Fe River Committee had its first meeting. Since that time, the Committee has analyzed data, compared alternatives, and formulated recommendations. Our first and foremost objective has been the betterment of the Santa Fe River. It is to this end that we present this report to both the City Council and the citizens of Santa Fe.

The Santa Fe River Committee is both optimistic and enthusiastic about the recommendations contained in this document. Ours is a river with great potential. Yet like any living thing, the Santa Fe River is fragile and easily destroyed by too much tampering despite our good intentions. It has been the persistent goal of this committee to assure, in the course of much needed river improvements, that those things we love most about our river are not lost or sacrificed. Recreation and economic development must be balanced with the historic character and natural beauty of the Santa Fe River.

*Diego Martinez*  
Councilor Diego Martinez





The Santa Fe River above 'Ranger's Cabin'.  
-circa 1912

*[Handwritten signature]*  
 Assistant R. L. ...

*[Handwritten signature]*  
 Councilman Diego ...



THE RIVER IN SANTA FE HISTORY  
BY TOM CHAVEZ

In 1609 Luis de Velasco Marques de Salinas, Viceroy of New Spain, appointed Pedro de Peralta royal governor of the recently created royal province of New Mexico. Velasco gave the new governor instructions and sent him north where he immediately began to fulfill his royal mandate. One of Peralta's first tasks was to relocate the capital to a more central, viable location. San Gabriel, the old capital, was too far north and too far from the center of the heaviest Indian populations. Peralta consulted with veterans of New Mexico and began his search. Finally, in the winter of 1609-10, he chose the site of Santa Fe.

Peralta selected an abandoned Indian site that had been occupied by some Spanish farmers a few years earlier. A rio, or river, and a number of springs provided ample water for drink, irrigation, and pasture. Santa Fe's location also afforded easier access. All things considered, Peralta had chosen well and construction soon began on the northern outpost, making Santa Fe the third European town within the present-day United States.

Peralta was guided by certain legal constraints in selecting the site for the new capital. Aside from his immediate instructions, Peralta complied with city planning ordinances issued by King Phillip II in 1573. These ordinances regulated every aspect of conquest and settlement in the New World. They mandated orderly procedure and orderly layout, with ample provision for growth. A major consideration had to be water and its availability.



The river was an important attraction, for Peralta had to find a site that had a good and plentiful water supply for drinking and irrigation, as well as a site that had easy access to forests abundant enough to provide wood and building materials. The ordinances even stipulated that mountains should be to the east or west, so the town could take advantage of healthful north winds. In laying out the town, Peralta followed these laws by delineating a plaza, or town square, then constructing official buildings. A portion of one of these buildings, the Casas Reales, is a part of today's Palace of the Governors. Peralta had to place the town to the north of the river and see to it that "buildings that cause filth be placed on the (opposite) side of the river... below the town."

The first few decades saw slow but steady growth. The number of Spaniards grew from a few hundred to a few thousand. In 1680 progress suddenly halted when the Pueblo Indians revolted and drove all the Rio Arriba Spaniards, those who lived from La Bajada north, into Santa Fe where they fortified themselves inside the Casas Reales. The rebelling Indians occupied the villa, or town, south of the river. This district, known as San Miguel, was a residential area for mestizos and civilized Indians. The final success of the revolt involved the role of water. Even with well over a thousand refugees and additional livestock, the Spaniards could have held out except for the fact that the Indians cut off their source of water which was a spring fed ditch.

At the time of the Revolt, the river water was not only used to quench thirst, but also to divide the town's residential areas. Fields of maize and orchards flourished with the help of an elaborate system of acequias,



or ditches. In fact, as the earliest known map of Santa Fe, dated 1767, illustrates, the water system consisting of river, springs and ditches had begun to shape the plan of the town.

A Spanish merchant named Pedro Alonso O'Crowley described Santa Fe in 1774 as being situated at the "foot of a high mountain range from which flows a crystal-clear river full of small but choice trout. The river comes from a lake supplied by numerous springs and flows through the center of town." Two years later Fray Anatasio Dominguez made an inspection of all New Mexico churches and chose to include La Villa de Santa Fe in his report. He appreciated the river which he said had "the most crystalline water" that "takes its source from a mountain lake." He also noted that at times the current became so swift that it caused damage, "although not extreme." The local populace soon installed a stone embankment to avoid further harm.

The population and the amount of irrigated land had grown enough for Dominguez to express concern. "Although it carries enough water to be called a river, it is not overabundant." Dominguez added that the river water "is usually insufficient" and only in a very rainy season could everyone expect enough. Dominguez noted another advantage to settling in close proximity to the river: it could be a source of power. In the case of the Santa Fe River, its water powered three mills that ground flour. Dominguez also reiterated O'Crowley's comment by noting the stream's trout, which were a good source of food.



Dominguez' concern for insufficient water was real. Agriculture was apparently unable to expand for the next seventy-five years, for in 1850, George McCall, an officer in the United States Army, noted that not more than five thousand acres had been cultivated along the river below Santa Fe.

In the 1780's Governor Juan Baptista de Anza wanted to build a new presidio and thus reorient the town plan. Citing a need for better defenses, he suggested that the new fort be built south of the river opposite the old fort. Citizen outrage stopped the plan and Santa Fe continued to grow on the river's north side. In 1807, Santa Fe's defenseless posture conjured up the image of a "fleet of flatbottomed boats which are seen... descending the Ohio River."

After the American Army occupied Santa Fe in 1846, plans were initiated to increase water usage. Two engineers explored the river canyon to its headwaters and suggested that a dam be built. In 1847 Manuel Alvarez, former U.S Consul to Santa Fe, retraced the engineers' steps and agreed with their conclusion. He also suggested a sluice be built to control the water level in the lake and river. Apparently nothing was done, for acreage under cultivation grew little in subsequent years.

By the 1870's, wooden bridges had been constructed across the wide sandy river bed. The bridges served strictly functional rather than aesthetic purposes. They were technically wagon bridges. In August of 1872, all or part of many of the bridges washed away after an intense storm. High water and strong currents would continue to be an inconvenience to the local populace, for local newspapers reported high waters in 1886 and a



destructive flood in September of 1904. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, reports of floods and calls for harnessing wasted water continued.

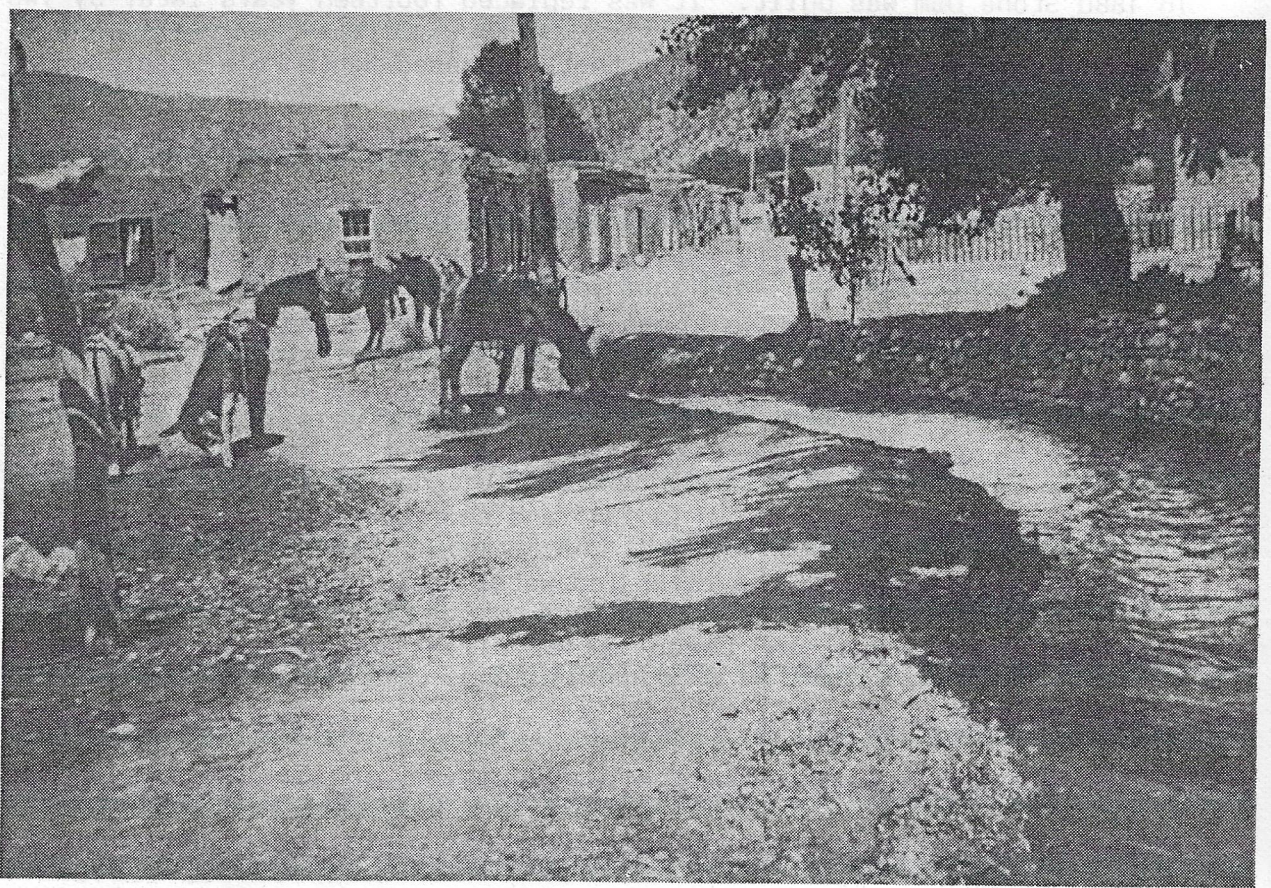
In 1880 Stone Dam was built. It was replaced fourteen years later by Two Mile Reservoir, an earth-fill dam that increased Santa Fe's water supply and, to a point, controlled the flow of the river. Because Two Mile Reservoir was constructed to store no more than 500 acre feet of water, the town fathers and experts realized that another dam was needed. Thus, in 1926, McClure Dam, also known as Granite Point Dam, was constructed and then enlarged in 1935. This second reservoir was built to hold more water, with a maximum capacity of 660 acre feet. Finally, Nichols, or Four Mile, Reservoir was built in 1943 and enlarged in 1947. Along with numerous wells that tap the river fed water table, Santa Fe's population has since depended on these reservoirs for its water needs.

The Public Works Administration played a very influential role in the Santa Fe River during the 1930's. The WPA built low-slung concrete bridges across the river and employed laborers to deepen the river bed and line it with rock. The WPA bridges and walls are still evident along the Santa Fe River today.

The narrower, deeper river bed naturally created a funnel through which water was forced to run at a quicker, more powerful rate. Combined with low, immovable concrete bridges and a larger population that left more trash in the river, man-caused floods became inevitable. The floods that



Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, reports of floods and calls for flood control were common. In 1880, the first flood control project was started. The project was to build a dam at Canyon Road, which would control the flow of water into the acequia. The dam was built in 1880 and was the first of many dams built in the area. The dam was built by the acequia community and was a great success. It controlled the flow of water into the acequia and prevented flooding. The dam was built by the acequia community and was a great success. It controlled the flow of water into the acequia and prevented flooding.



The acequia Madre at Canyon Road. The acequia Madre is the main acequia in the area. It is a long acequia that runs from the mountains to the river. It is the main source of water for the acequia community. The acequia Madre is a great success. It has controlled the flow of water into the acequia and prevented flooding. The acequia Madre is a great success. It has controlled the flow of water into the acequia and prevented flooding.

The Acequia Madre at Canyon Road

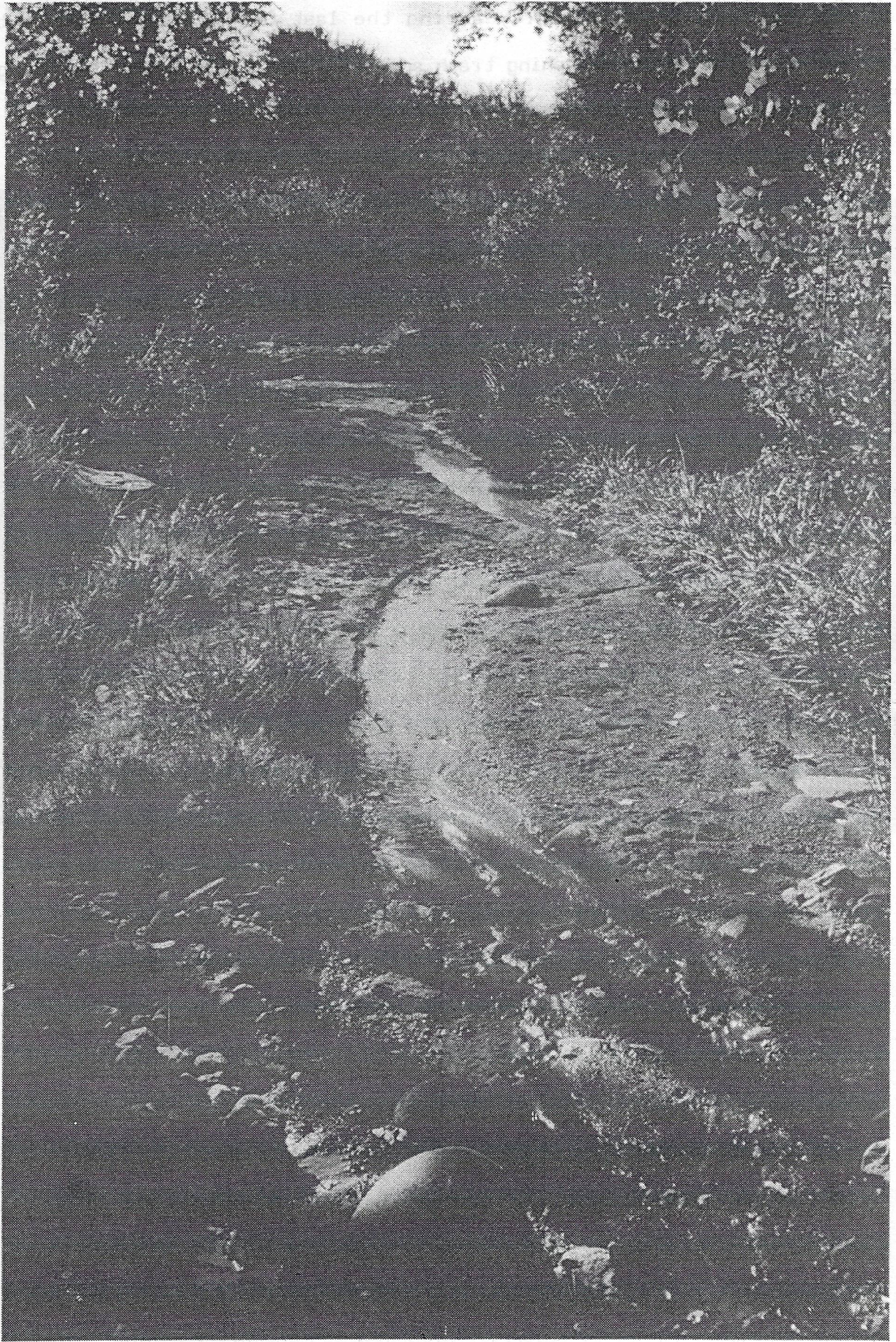
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damaged river front property during the last few decades were in part caused by heavy runoff pushing trash and debris up against the low-slung bridges, creating improvised dams.

Today trout, though stocked, still inhabit the river when it is running but the ditch system, though reflected in the city's street layout, is for the most part abandoned. The reservoirs, while they catch water and save it for the dry season, contribute to dry ditches and a dry river during the summer months. Nonetheless, the river continues to be a major scenic, functional and recreational asset to Santa Fe, 375 years after Peralta selected its banks as the site for his new City.







## THE RIVER IN SANTA FE TODAY

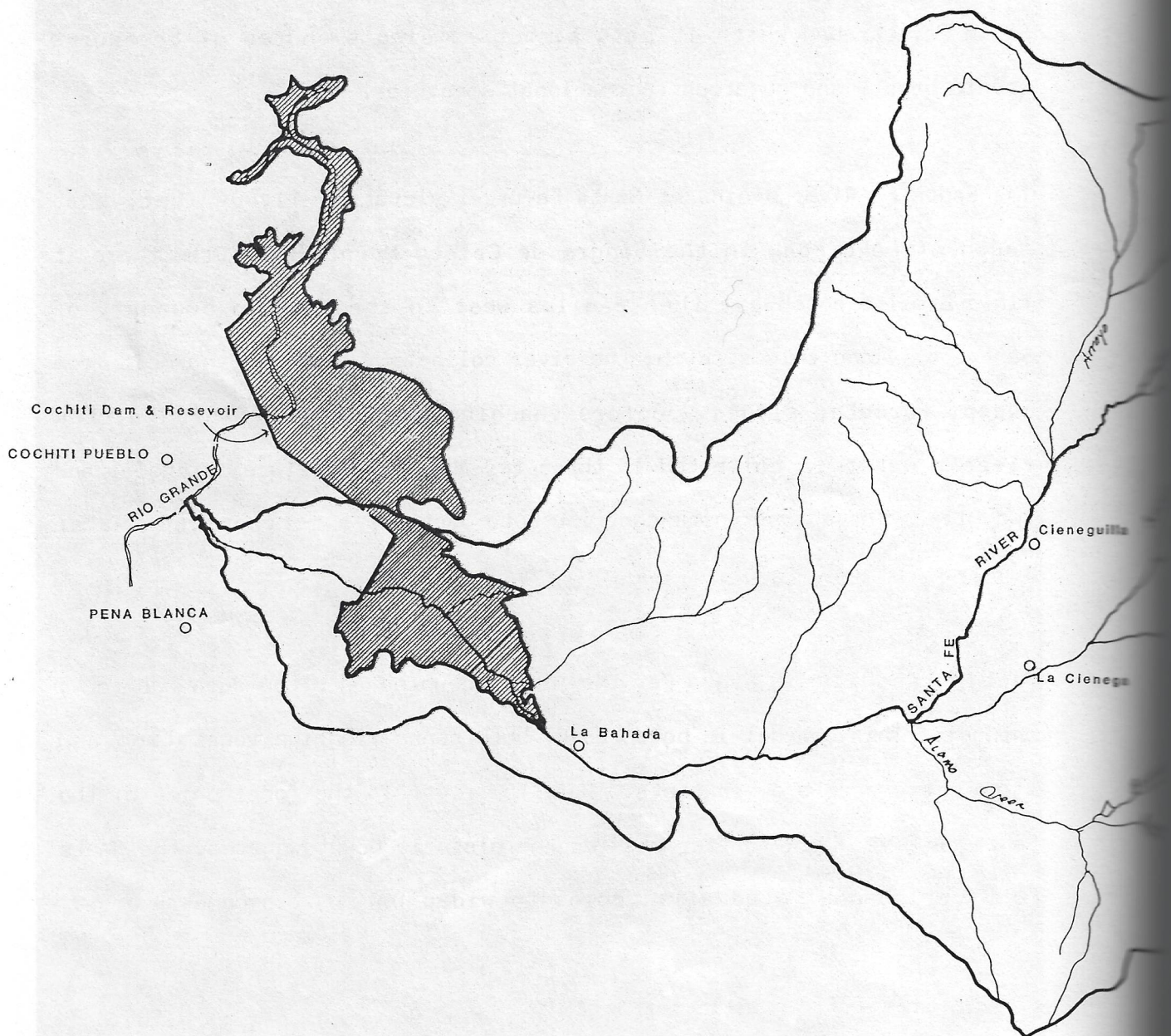
### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Santa Fe River, located in north central New Mexico, is an east bank tributary of the Rio Grande. From its origin amidst dense stands of pine and aspen high in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the river begins its 45 mile course and 6,400 foot descent to terminate as a broad, sandy arroyo near Cochiti Pueblo. The river's water is not only the lifeblood of Santa Fe, through which it passes, but is also a source of treasured scenic beauty and numerous recreational amenities.

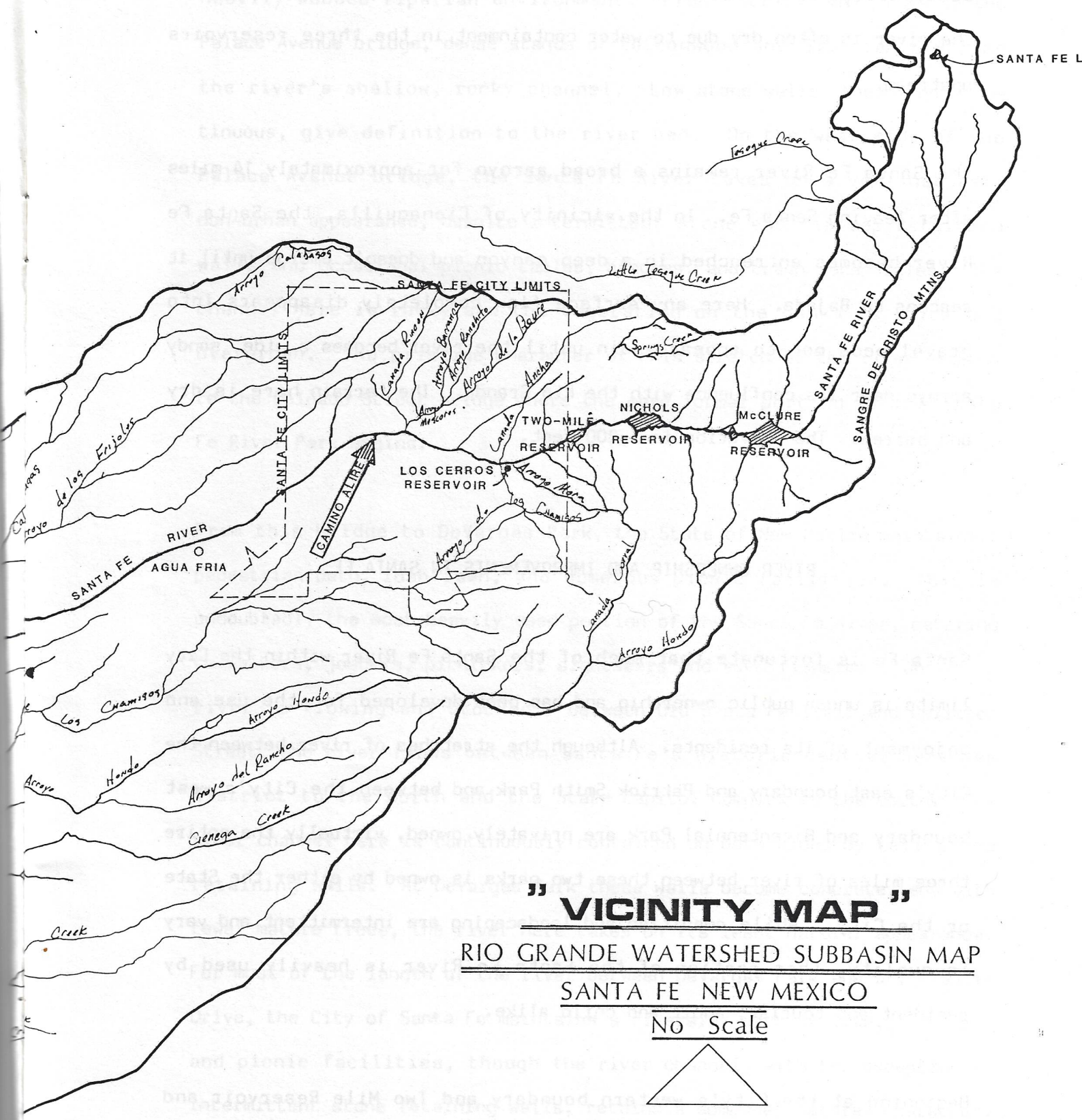
The Santa Fe River begins at Santa Fe Lake, elevation 11,600 feet, just south of Lake Peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. From there it flows 8 miles southwest then 6 miles west to the eastern boundary of Santa Fe. Along this stretch, the river collects runoff and snowmelt from steep, forested slopes. Before reaching the City of Santa Fe, the river's water is collected in three reservoirs: Mc Clure; Nichols; and Two Mile. These reservoirs contribute to Santa Fe's metropolitan water supply.

Within the City of Santa Fe, the river occupies an often deep and rocky channel. This channel is bordered by both dense riparian vegetation and stone or concrete embankments. Here the river is the focal point of the Santa Fe River Park. After passing the historic downtown area, the Santa Fe River channel gradually begins to widen until it becomes a broad,











sandy arroyo as it crosses the City's western boundary. This stretch of the river is often dry due to water containment in the three reservoirs upstream.

The Santa Fe River remains a broad arroyo for approximately 14 miles after leaving Santa Fe. In the vicinity of Cienaguilla, the Santa Fe River becomes entrenched in a deep canyon and doesn't emerge until it reaches La Bajada. Here any surface flow completely disappears into gravel beds not to appear again until the river becomes a wide, sandy arroyo near its confluence with the Rio Grande. The terrain here is dry and barren. The elevation is 5,200 feet.

#### RIVER OWNERSHIP AND IMPROVEMENTS IN SANTA FE

Santa Fe is fortunate that much of the Santa Fe River within the City limits is under public ownership and has been developed for the use and enjoyment of its residents. Although the stretches of river between the City's east boundary and Patrick Smith Park and between the City's west boundary and Bicentennial Park are privately owned, virtually the entire three miles of river between these two parks is owned by either the State or the City. While amenities and landscaping are intermittent and vary in quality, this portion of the Santa Fe River is heavily used by resident and tourist, adult and child alike.

Beginning at the City's western boundary and Two Mile Reservoir and extending west to Patrick Smith Park, the Santa Fe River and its banks are privately owned. For this reason there is no public access to this

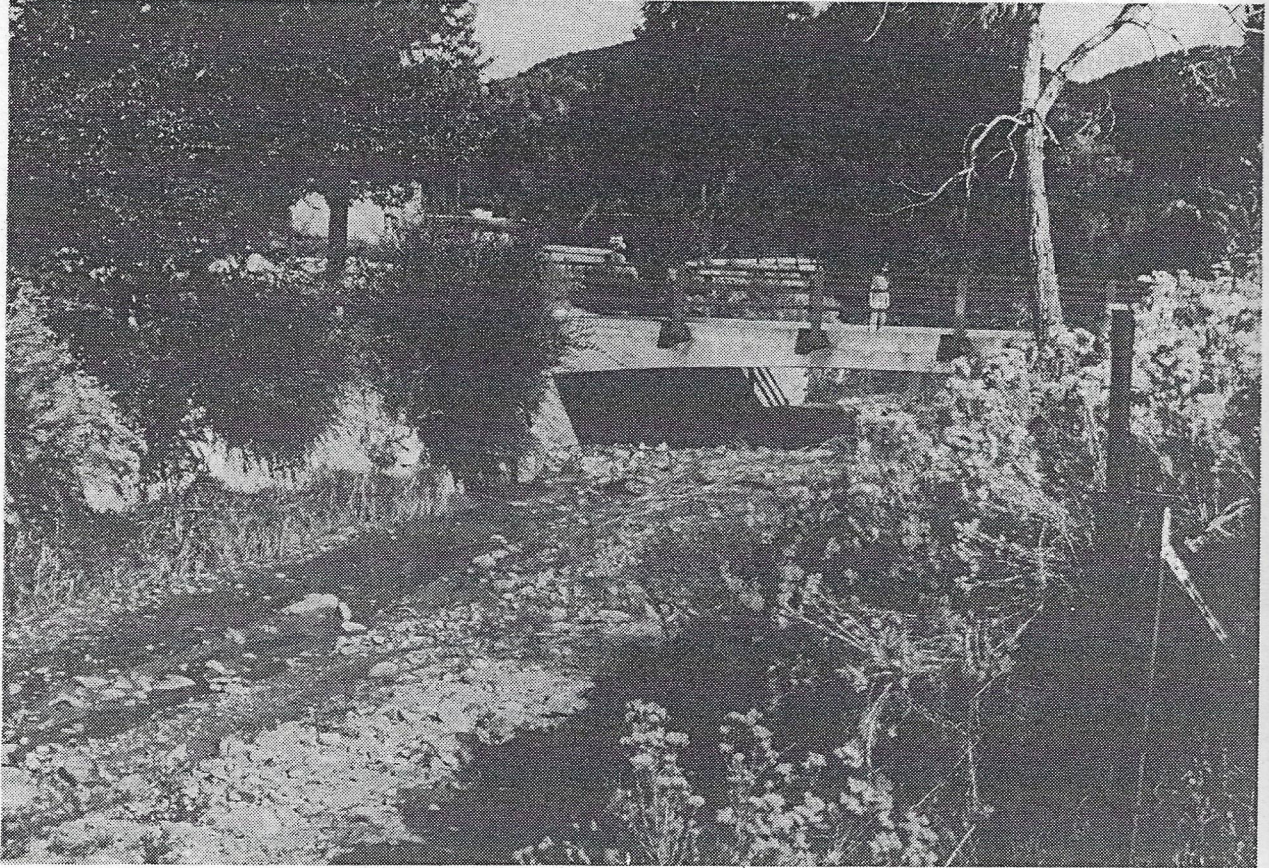


heavily wooded riparian environment. From Patrick Smith Park to the Palace Avenue bridge, dense stands of Cottonwood and Siberian Elm line the river's shallow, rocky channel. Low stone walls, though not continuous, give definition to the river bed. On the west side of the Palace Avenue bridge, the Santa Fe River takes on a very natural, non-urban appearance, despite intermittent stone and rip-rap retaining walls and occasional picnic tables, benches, and trash receptacles. The channel here is rocky and the vegetation on the banks is thick and overgrown. The pristine character of this stretch of the river extends to the Delgado Street bridge where the more formal portion of the Santa Fe River Park begins.

From this bridge to DeVargas Park, the State of New Mexico maintains a pedestrian path, lush lawn, and numerous picnic facilities. This is undoubtedly the most heavily used portion of the Santa Fe River, catering to walkers, joggers, picnickers, sightseers and even fishermen, when the river is flowing and stocked. Between Old Santa Fe Trail and Galisteo Street, the river flows between Santa Fe's historic central business district to the north and the State Capitol Complex to the south. The river channel here is continuously contained on both sides by tall stone retaining walls. At DeVargas Park these walls become concrete, and with fewer mature trees, the river here takes on its least natural appearance. For most of the length of the river between DeVargas Park and St. Francis Drive, the City of Santa Fe maintains a riverside park of lawn, benches, and picnic facilities, though the river channel, with the exception of intermittent stone retaining walls, retains a somewhat natural character.

Engineers investigate the flood problems at and in the vicinity of Santa Fe. A two part plan was prepared by the Corp of Engineers to control





Parts of the Santa Fe River today, though not maintained and unimproved, are beautiful and exemplify the theme of a "natural woody stream".



West of St. Francis Drive, the river channel is bordered by tall, unstable, nearly vertical cliffs. A wide, flat, undeveloped open area tops these cliffs both north and south of the river. Two pedestrian bridges cross the river along this stretch, one of which serves Bicentennial Park to the south. Beyond Camino Alire the sandy and rocky channel widens and courses through primarily private property to the western boundary of the City.

#### RIVER PLANNING AND PROJECTS IN SANTA FE

Since Santa Fe's founding 375 years ago, plans and projects of varying scope have been implemented along the Santa Fe River. Dams, bridges, acequias, retaining walls, and embankments have been built and rebuilt over the years to assure maximum utilization of the river's life-sustaining water and to protect the community from the ravages of flooding.

In this century, during the 1930s, bridges and retaining walls were built by the W.P.A. These improvements, while originally intended to minimize the likelihood of flooding, actually contributed to several floods during the 50s and 60s. Debris carried by heavy runoff would get clogged where the river channel was constricted by bridge buttresses and inadequate culverts, thus contributing to the already high river overflowing its banks.

Following an August 1957 flood, the City requested that the Corp of Engineers investigate the flood problems at and in the vicinity of Santa Fe. A two part plan was prepared by the Corp of Engineers to control, by



channelization, the flood flow from Arroyo Mascaras and the Santa Fe River. The City, in 1966, approved the Arroyo Mascaras part of the plan but requested a restudy of the Santa Fe River portion.

As a direct result of this restudy, the Corp of Engineers recommended in 1973 that Congress authorize construction of a rock fill dam at Granite Point, about 3000' above the existing Nichols Dam, replacement of the College Street (Old Santa Fe Trail) Bridge and Apartment Drive Bridge on the Santa Fe River, and channel modifications for a 6,300 foot reach of Arroyo Mascaras. The Congressional Water Resource Act of 1976 authorized construction of a flood control project in accordance with the Corp of Engineers report, but imposed several stipulations.

Phase 1 of advanced engineering and design was undertaken by the Corp of Engineers in 1978 as a direct result of the congressionally imposed conditions. A separate plan was proposed for the Santa Fe River segment and for Arroyo Mascaras. Several partial remedial measures were implemented for control of the Arroyo Mascaras flood threat.

The Santa Fe River portion was discussed at several public meetings with City officials and organizations having jurisdiction over lands in Santa Fe Canyon and the upper watersheds. The public at large met with the Corp of Engineers on March 8, 1979 and was asked for its advice. The Corp of Engineers then asked the City to appoint a Santa Fe River Flood Control Advisory Committee.



No committee was appointed, however, so the Corp of Engineers called together individuals who had shown interest in the project and asked them to serve on an ad hoc committee to review further Corp of Engineer reports and proposals. The recommendations and views of the State Engineers Office and the ad hoc committee were soon received. The State Engineers recommended that Two Mile Reservoir be used as a control devise for flood flows from tributaries below Nichols Dam and that Nichols Dam be raised to provide storage for the 400 A/F of municipal water impounded in Two Mile Dam. The ad hoc association, however, strongly opposed the construction of any more dams in the canyon or the raising of any existing dams.

In the Fall of 1983 the Stage 2 Document Phase 1 General Design Memorandum was discussed by the Corp of Engineers at a public meeting, but was voted down by the Santa Fe City Council. The channelization and other measures proposed were viewed as too drastic and too insensitive to the natural character of the Santa Fe River by both the City Council and the general public.

The following Spring, Mayor Louis R. Montano and a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce visited San Antonio, Texas, and toured that City's River Walk and river related development. Upon returning from that trip, the Mayor created the Santa Fe River Committee. The Santa Fe River Committee's task was to study the Santa Fe River and make recommendations to the City Council on issues relating to its use, development and management.

Appointments to the committee were approved by the City Council in the Fall of 1984.





Parts of the Santa Fe River today are not maintained and remain unimproved.



## THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SANTA FE RIVER COMMITTEE

### BACKGROUND

The Santa Fe River Committee began meeting in December, 1984. In March, 1985 four subcommittees were formed to study and make recommendations related to particular facets of the Santa Fe River and its environs. These subcommittees were as follows:

Maintenance, Safety, Aesthetics, and River Uses

Transportation Corridor

Financing (Subcommittees A and B)

Flooding and Economic Development

By early summer, each of these subcommittees had submitted preliminary recommendations to the full committee. These were discussed, evaluated, and after minor revisions, became the basis of the committee statement and specific recommendations listed below.

### COMMITTEE STATEMENT

The Santa Fe River Committee believes that the Santa Fe River is a valuable asset to the City and that its unique natural character and ambience should be preserved and enhanced through concerted maintenance, revitalization, and improvement efforts.



It is the committee's position that the unspoiled, uncommercialized natural beauty of the Santa Fe River contributes significantly to the charm and character of historic Santa Fe. The Santa Fe River does, in fact, provide one of the last, large, physical and psychological linkages between Santa Fe's built environment and the unique landscape which in so many ways has shaped our City. Among other things, it is the presence of this valuable piece of urban wilderness running through the heart of Santa Fe that makes the "City Different" different.

Furthermore, the Santa Fe River Committee recognizes that a certain amount of development and a certain number of improvements are essential to assuring that the Santa Fe River is utilized to its fullest potential by residents and tourists alike. It is the committee's position that development which is aesthetically and functionally compatible with the natural character of the river, and development which complements, rather than competes with, adjacent residential and commercial areas, will assure both short and long term economic and cultural benefit to Santa Fe. For this reason, the committee strongly advocates further development of the Santa Fe River channel as a scenic, noncommercial, highly useable, easily accessible, well maintained river park.

With the exception of several recommendations related to flood protection, the recommendations contained in this report pertain to only those stretches of the Santa Fe River within the City's boundaries. However, due to the Santa Fe River's inherent interrelatedness, from its headwaters to its confluence with the Rio Grande, the Santa Fe River Committee looks forward to opportunities to contribute to those Federal, State, and County policy decisions affecting the Santa River east and



west of the City limits. Although the Santa Fe River Committee has not dealt with the issue nor taken a position on it, the Committee is willing to offer input and expertise to those jurisdictional agencies currently studying the yet unresolved question of whether to open Santa Fe Canyon, east of the City, to some type of recreational use.

The Santa Fe River Committee recommends that the immediate, short-range objectives listed below be acted on by the City Council and implemented by the City as quickly as possible. Implementation of the ultimate, long range goals listed below, especially those not deemed feasible in the foreseeable future, should nevertheless be tenaciously pursued. Community input and participation should not cease with the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report, but should continue to be solicited on an ongoing basis. Likewise, the Santa Fe River Committee should continue to meet, at least on a bi-monthly basis, to review and make comments on river related projects and improvements.



## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Santa Fe River Committee set forth in this section are divided into the following seven categories:

River Uses

Aesthetics

Economic Development

Safety

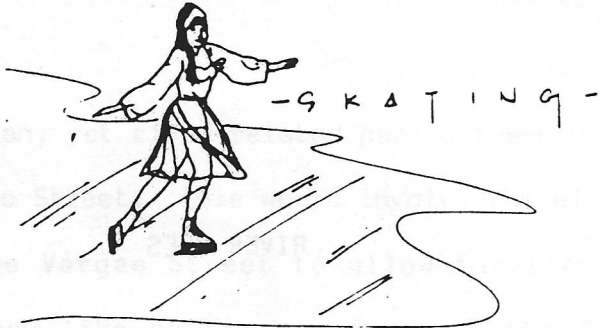
Transportation

Maintenance

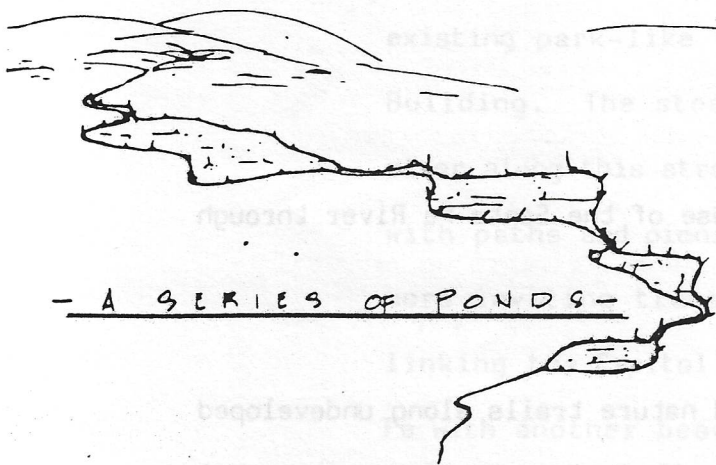
Flood Protection

Within these categories the recommendations are grouped into "ultimate goals," "immediate objectives" and recommendations for "implementation." When the goals or objectives are related to a specific section of the Santa Fe River, references to the section in question can be found under "Implementation."

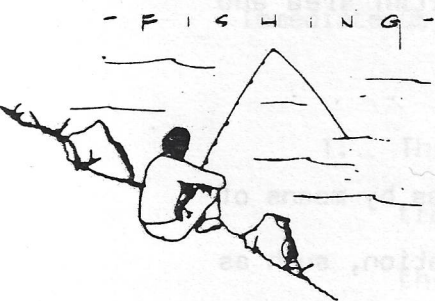




- SKATING -



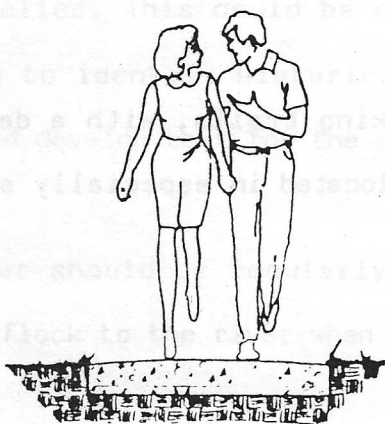
- A SERIES OF PONDS -



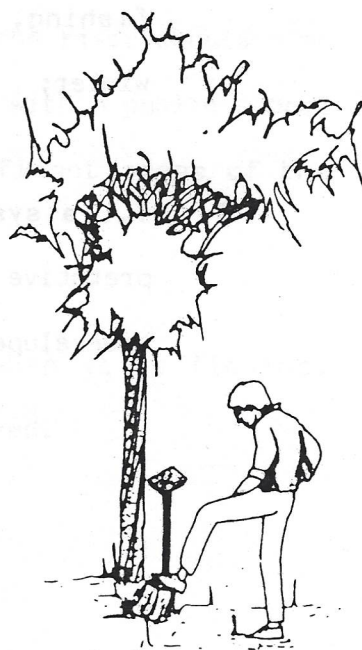
- FISHING -



- RECREATION -

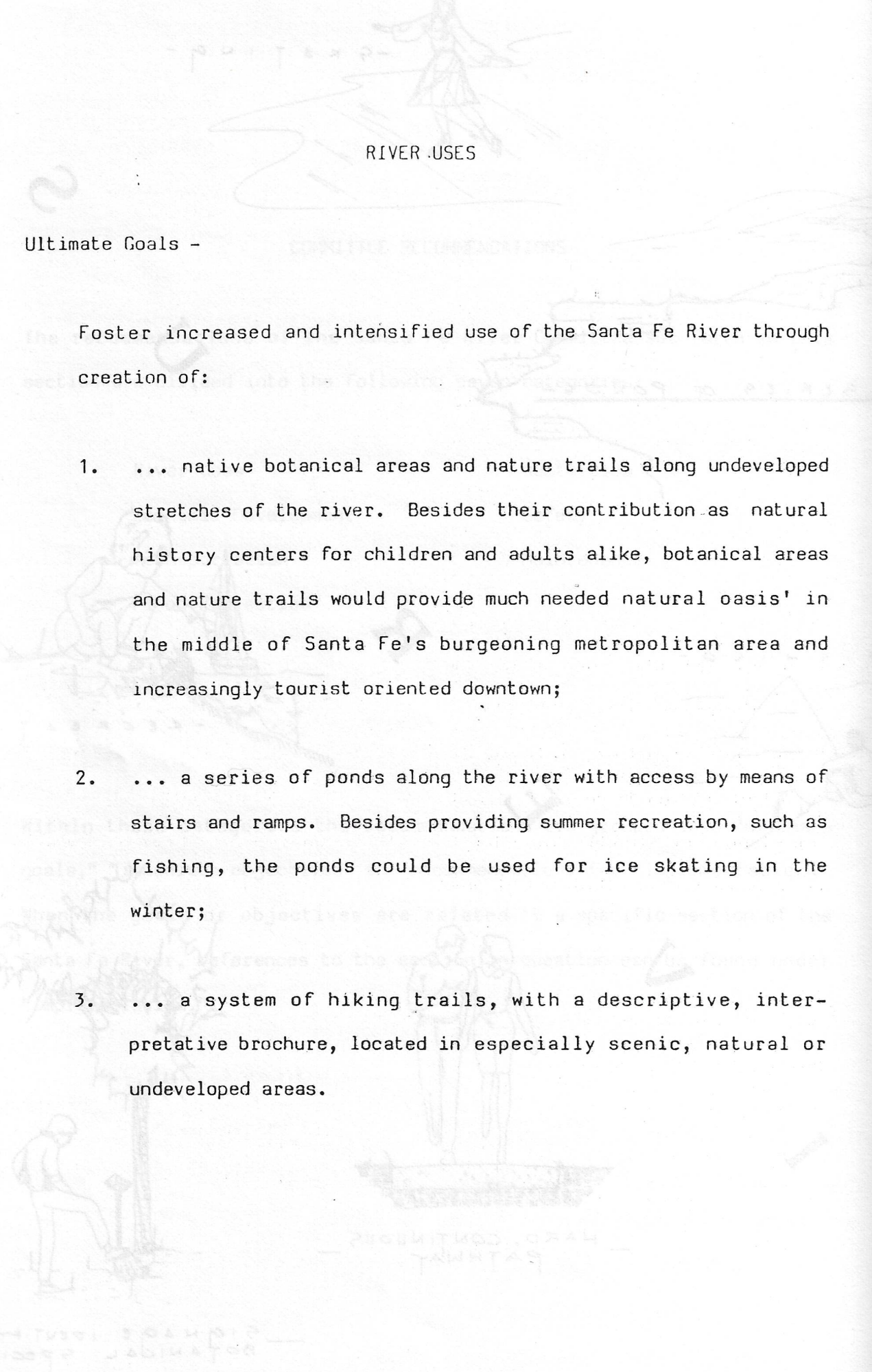


- HARD, CONTINUOUS PATHWAY -



- SIGNAGE IDENTIFYING BOTANICAL SPECIES -





## RIVER USES

### Ultimate Goals -

Foster increased and intensified use of the Santa Fe River through creation of:

1. ... native botanical areas and nature trails along undeveloped stretches of the river. Besides their contribution as natural history centers for children and adults alike, botanical areas and nature trails would provide much needed natural oasis' in the middle of Santa Fe's burgeoning metropolitan area and increasingly tourist oriented downtown;
2. ... a series of ponds along the river with access by means of stairs and ramps. Besides providing summer recreation, such as fishing, the ponds could be used for ice skating in the winter;
3. ... a system of hiking trails, with a descriptive, interpretative brochure, located in especially scenic, natural or undeveloped areas.

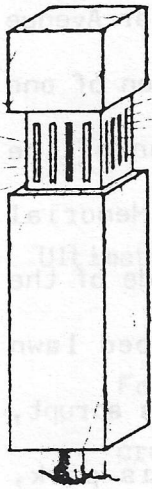


4. ... an urban, yet river-related park between Don Gaspar Avenue and Galisteo Street. This would involve the elimination of one block of De Vargas Street to allow for integration of the existing park-like setting in front of the Bataan Memorial Building. The steep concrete walls on the south side of the river along this stretch should be eliminated and sloped lawn with paths and picnic facilities should provide a less abrupt, more inviting transition to the river itself. This park, linking the Capitol Complex with downtown, would provide Santa Fe with another beautiful, enjoyable focal point and would complement and enhance De Vargas Park, located immediately to the west.

#### Immediate Objectives -

1. The Santa Fe River is an underutilized educational tool. All trees along the river should be identified with a sign bearing their common and scientific names and their native habitat. Educational signs relating the history of the river should also be installed. This could be coordinated with a public school campaign to identify historically significant areas of the river and develop text for the signs.
2. The river should be regularly stocked when it is flowing. Anglers flock to the river when it is stocked.

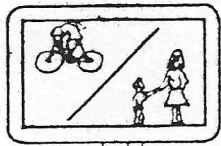




- LIGHTING -



- RECREATIONAL FACILITIES -



- SIGNAGE -

D

E

V

N

O

- PUBLIC EVENT -



C

E



## Implementation -

While the City of Santa Fe will have to take the lead in carrying out these recommendations, this work should be coordinated with other appropriate jurisdictional agencies, such as the state, and especially with local civic groups, such as garden clubs, conservation organizations and historical societies.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Ultimate Goals -

Facilitate use of the Santa Fe River for state and regional events, especially those related to nature and the outdoors, history, and the visual and performing arts, through:

1. ...construction of improvements designed to accommodate these events. Improvements such as additional restroom facilities, a small gazebo, a small sloped lawn amphitheater, additional seating and picnic facilities, and improved night lighting should be systematically incorporated in appropriate areas.

### Immediate Objectives -

1. The City should promote use of the Santa Fe River Park and DeVargas Park by scheduling more civic events there and by encouraging local clubs and organizations to do likewise. City staff should review events typically scheduled for the Plaza



and suggest to the sponsoring groups that their functions be moved to one of the river parks. This would include events like arts and crafts shows, and other public functions.

#### Implementation -

The City should begin to encourage local civic groups to hold their outdoor events along the river. Then, as additional improvements are constructed, the City and the Chamber of Commerce should publicize and promote the river's many amenities, and thus its suitability for regional outdoor events and activities. Its direct proximity to Santa Fe shops, restaurants, hotels, and other services should also be emphasized.

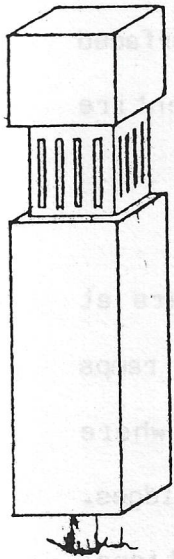
### TRANSPORTATION

#### Ultimate Goals -

Integrate safe pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular routes along the river through:

1. ...development of improvements to separate, or safely integrate, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic. Although most people experience the Santa Fe River by driving along or across it, the river can best be enjoyed and appreciated by those not in an automobile. For this reason, the river must be made more accessible to pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists and those using

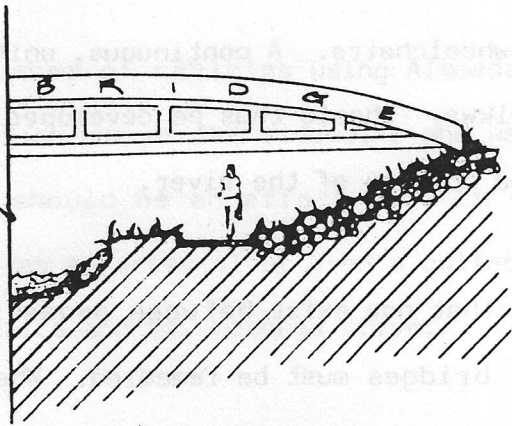




LIGHTING —

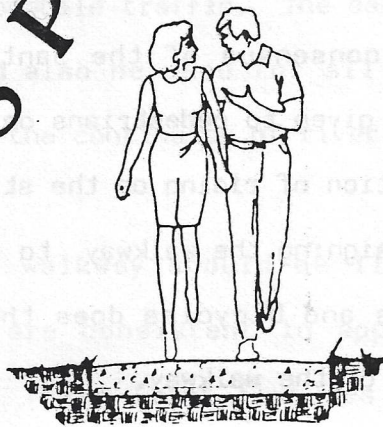


DESCRIPTIVE  
SIGNAGE —



— ALTERNATES —

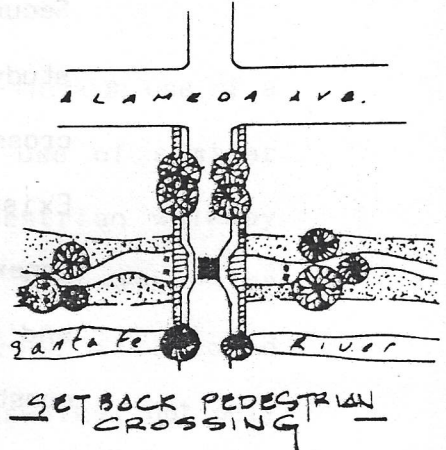
# TRANSPORTATION



— HARD, CONTINUOUS  
PATHWAY —



— HANDICAPPED —



— SETBACK PEDESTRIAN  
CROSSING —



— SHARED RIGHT OF WAY  
(CURBED SEPERATION) —



strollers or wheelchairs. A continuous, uniform, hard surfaced pedestrian walkway should thus be developed along the entire publicly owned portion of the river.

The conflicts that now exist between pedestrians and cars at cross street bridges must be remedied. Where possible, ramps and or steps should be built to allow pedestrians (and where appropriate, bicyclists) to cross under cross-street bridges. Security lighting at these underpasses is essential. Additional study is recommended for Guadalupe Street and St. Francis Drive crossings where bridge and culvert clearances are minimal. Existing bridges across the river have either inadequate or nonexistent sidewalks. If a bridge's sidewalks are inadequate and cannot be modified, then consideration should be given to construction of a pedestrian bridge to supplement the vehicular bridge.

It is the consensus of the Santa Fe River Committee that priority be given to pedestrians on the walkway as bicyclists have the option of riding on the street. Only where there is a means of designing the walkway to allow for safe separation of pedestrians and bicycles does the River Committee recommend bicycle use of the walkway.



The number of vehicles using Alameda Street is a deterrent to pedestrian use of the sidewalks and walkways along the river. There should be an effort made to discourage use of Alameda Street as an arterial or even a collector street between Paseo De Peralta and St. Francis Drive.

2. ...development of a common theme as a means of making the river's transportation arteries readily identifiable.

A common theme could probably best be achieved through use of a consistent design vocabulary and through use of similar construction materials. A continuous pedestrian walkway constructed of the same type of brick or the same color concrete is suggested. By carrying the brick or colored concrete through the cross streets as crosswalks, not only would the walkway be continuous, but it would also be highly visible to automobile traffic. The same design vocabulary and materials should also be used for all pedestrian bridges to further enhance the continuity of river development.

The pedestrian walkway should be illuminated using light fixtures that are consistent in appearance, spacing, and lighting level. These light fixtures should illuminate the walkway only, and not double as street or area lights. Street and area lights should also be consistent, however, especially along Alameda Street.



Some of the items suggested by the other subcommittees would also help in establishing visual continuity along the river. A series of ponds, proper landscaping, and identification signs are possibilities. In addition, by carrying the same walkway, landscape and lighting scheme away from the river along side streets or between buildings, the river corridor could be integrated with adjacent neighborhoods, parks and landmarks. The theme could be carried to points of interest such as the Oldest House, the Oldest Church, and the Loretto Chapel.

Pedestrian access to the water must be provided, as must handicapped access to the all park amenities, the water and points of interest. Consideration should be given to additional pedestrian bridges at certain points.

#### Immediate Objectives -

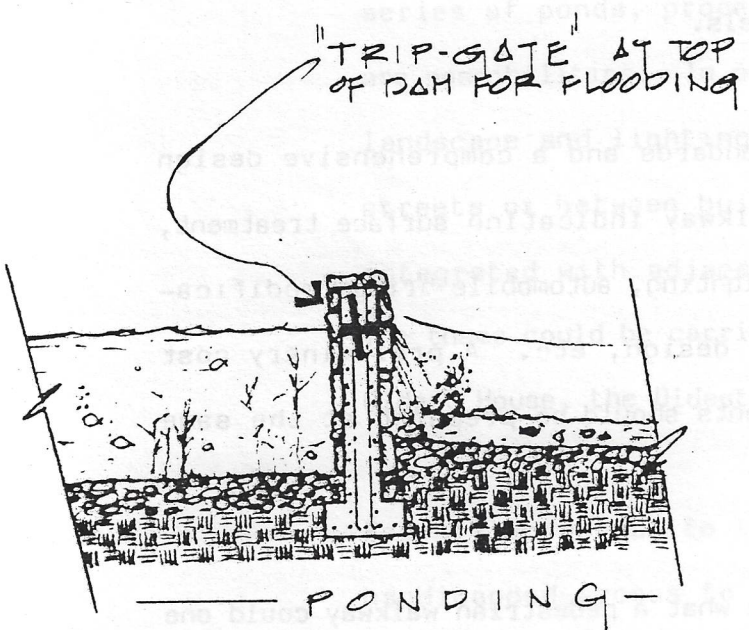
1. Inventory all sidewalks along the Santa Fe River and establish a list of areas that are in the greatest need of repair or replacement. Where major repair or complete replacement is required, work should be performed in accordance with the design standards established for a pedestrian walkway.
2. Determine land ownership along both sides of the river and prepare a property and topographic survey. This is necessary for future planning and design of a pedestrian walkway. If



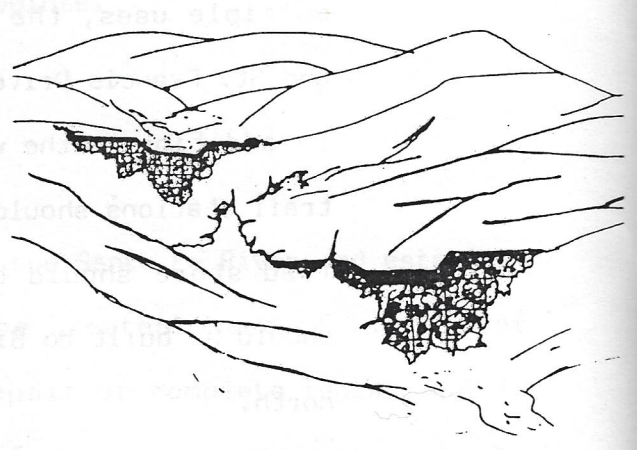
parcels of land are needed for the proper design of a pedestrian walkway, consideration must be given to the acquisition of these parcels.

3. Develop complete design standards and a comprehensive design plan for a pedestrian walkway indicating surface treatment, width, underpass design, lighting, automobile bridge modifications, pedestrian bridge design, etc. A preliminary cost estimate of these improvements should be prepared at the same time.
4. In an effort to illustrate what a pedestrian walkway could one day be like, and to emphasize the river's ability to sustain multiple uses, the section of the river between Camino Alire and St. Francis Drive should be developed as soon as possible. In addition to the walkway, lighting, and landscaping, fitness trail stations should be installed. A parking area near the feed store should be constructed, and a pedestrian bridge should be built to Bicentennial Park for easy access from the north.
5. The City should establish a Santa Fe River Overlay Zone and formulate mandatory development standards for properties located along the river within this zone. Standards should include, but not necessarily be limited to regulations stipulating minimum river front building setbacks, provisions for public access to and along the river, appropriate landscaping, building form and materials, etc.

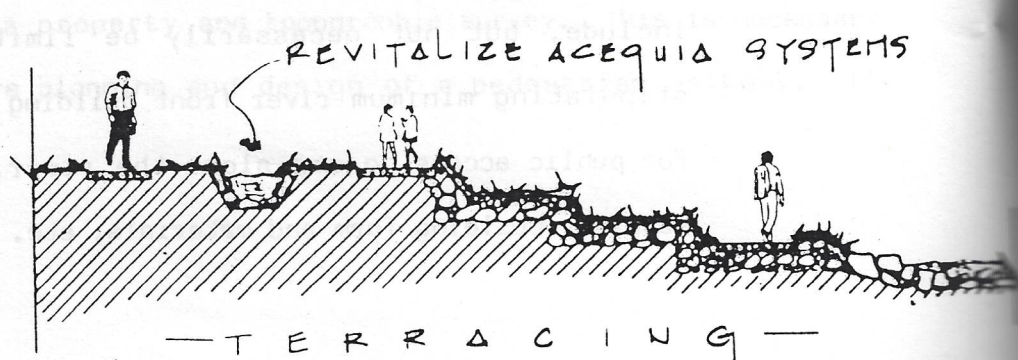




# FLOOD CONTROL



— USE OF "CHECK DAMS"  
AT TRIBUTARIES —





#### Implementation -

The City should hire a consultant to develop design standards and a comprehensive design plan for a pedestrian walkway . City Staff should inventory sidewalk conditions and continue its land ownership survey. City plans for street improvements in the area of the river need to be reviewed for compatibility with the goals and objectives of the River Committee. Any conflicts must be resolved. The State has established a body to study the parking situation in the area of the Capitol Complex. This body should meet with representatives of the River Committee and City staff to assure that the goals and objectives of the River Committee are addressed.

#### FLOOD PROTECTION

##### Ultimate Goals -

Protect the residents of Santa Fe from the destructive effects of flooding in the Santa Fe River sub-basin through utilization of primarily non-massive, non-structural methods such as:

1. ....temporary impoundment of tributary stream and arroyo flow by means of highly pourous, rock filled dams. These small, unobtrusive dams would substantially dissipate water energy and decelerate its velocity well before storm runoff could reach



the Santa Fe River. This, then, would reduce the chance of potentially destructive, high volume, high velocity flows through the City.

2. ...utilizing Two Mile, Nichols and Mc Clure Reservoirs as flood control devices by lowering their present levels slightly in order to increase their retention capacities in the event of a sudden, high volume flow. The 400 acre feet sacrificed could easily be replaced with San Juan/Chama Project water.

3. ...restoration and reactivation of Santa Fe's acequia system. Several acequias are very long and could serve several useful purposes if restored. Most important, the acequia system has the ability to divert a substantial amount of flood water and dissipate its energy, while at the same time contributing to the recharge of the basin's water table. In addition, the restored acequias could be developed as mini parks, greenbelts, urban nature trails, or neighborhood botanical gardens.

#### Immediate Objectives -

1. Develop information on ownership, water rights, physical condition, and channel capacity of select acequias.

2. Study the causes and possible remedies to reduce or eliminate the scouring of river channel.



3. Identify the causes and future acceptable limit of main channel degradation. This must be done in order to protect both the hydraulic regime of the river and any structural improvements, either in place or planned.
4. Develop ownership data for property and facilities contiguous to the river.
5. Identify water rights, both surface flow and underground flow, for land parcels on both sides of the river.
6. Initiate discussion with the State Engineers Office and the Interstate Stream Commission on legal and administrative actions required to impound river flow for ponding etc.

#### Implementation -

Implementation of the recommendations stated above could best be achieved through a three-phase effort.

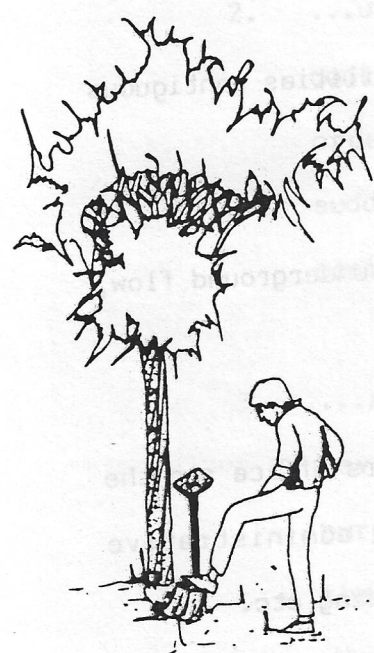
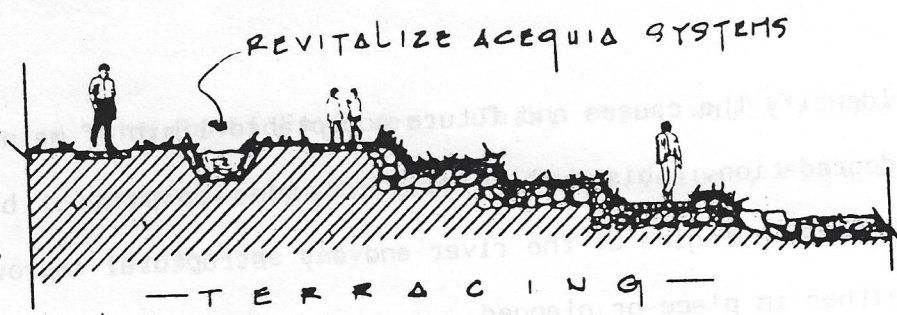
Phase 1: The City should begin meeting with all other pertinent jurisdictional agencies. Agencies should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Forest Service  
U.S. Geological Survey  
U.S. Corp of Engineers

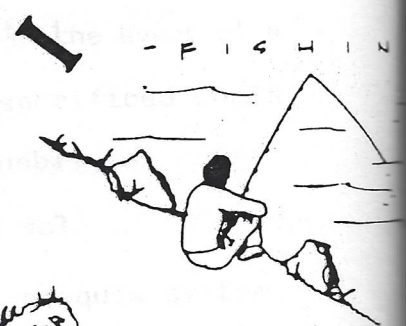


S

C



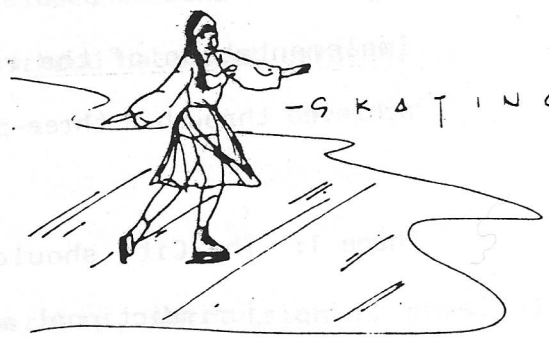
SIGNAGE IDENTIFYING BOTANICAL SPECIES



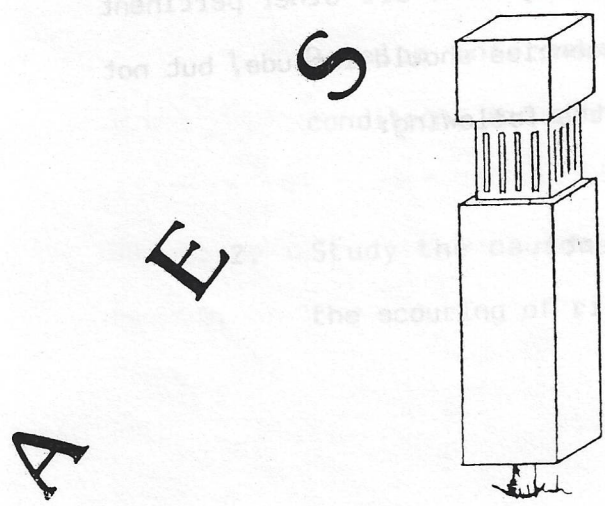
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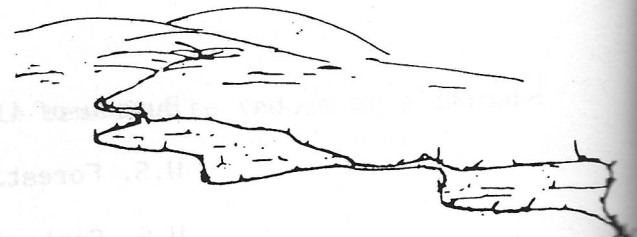
RECREATION



SKATING



LIGHTING



A SERIES OF PONDS

A  
E  
S  
T



State Engineers Office

Inter-state Stream Commission

County of Santa Fe

State Department of Parks and Recreation

Metropolitan Water Board

Phase 2: A division of labor should occur with the appropriate agencies taking responsibility for data collection, design, engineering, public input, etc.

Phase 3: Funding sources should be investigated and a comprehensive phasing and funding program should be devised.

#### AESTHETICS

##### Ultimate Goals -

Preserve and accentuate the natural mountain stream character of the Santa Fe River through:

1. ...requiring that the design vocabulary and materials used in future river park construction projects and improvements be appropriate to the "mountain stream" theme.



### Immediate Objectives -

1. Remove litter, debris, weeds and brush from the river channel and banks.
2. Begin a tree planting program along the river using native species such as aspen, redbud, pinon, cottonwood alder and willow. Priority should be given to barren and unsightly stretches such as in the vicinity of Alameda Street and St. Francis Drive.
3. Notify property owners along the Santa Fe River of the City's attempts to beautify the river, and seek their cooperation in cleaning up and maintaining their personal property.

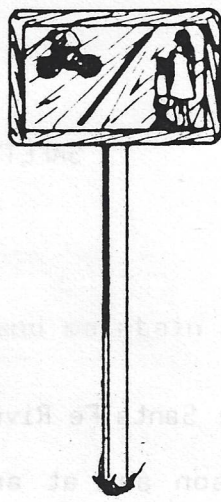
### Implementation -

The tree planting program should be coordinated with local garden clubs and design input should be solicited from local landscape architects. Refer to the "Immediate Objectives" section under "Maintenance" for recommendations as to debris and weed removal.

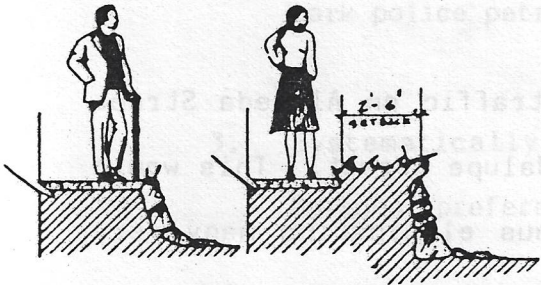




— "CHECK DAMS" AT TRIBUTARIES —

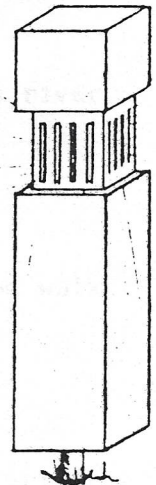


— DESCRIPTIVE SIGNAGE —



— GUARDRAIL OR SETBACK BETWEEN PATH & EMBANKMENT —

T

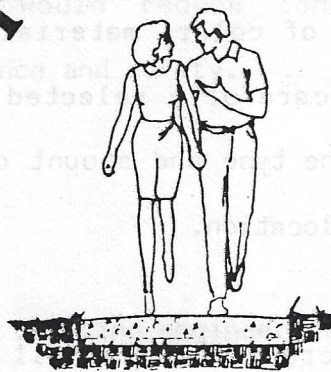


— LIGHTING —



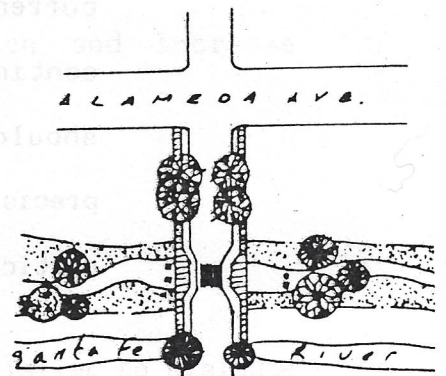
— HANDICAPPED —

F



— HARD, CONTINUOUS PATHWAYS —

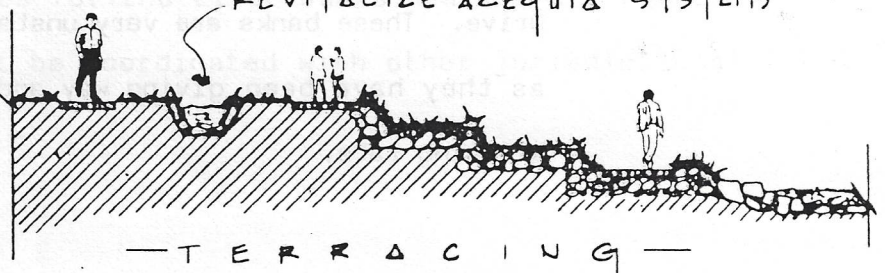
A



— SETBACK PEDESTRIAN CROSSING —

S

— REVITALIZE ACEQUIA SYSTEMS —



— TERRACING —



## Ultimate Goals -

Guarantee that the Santa Fe River is a safe and enjoyable place to be during any season and at any time of day through programs designed to work toward:

1. ...the eventual elimination of traffic on Alameda Street between Paseo de Peralta and Guadalupe Street. This would create a pedestrian parkway, thus eliminating many very hazardous situations for pedestrians and automobiles alike.
2. ...the systematic replacement of all inadequate lighting along the river and the installation of new lighting where none currently exists. All light standards should reflect a continuity of color, material, and design, and all lights should be carefully selected to assure that they provide precisely the type and amount of illumination required in a particular location.
3. ...the synchronization of all traffic lights along Alameda Street to improve the flow of traffic.
4. ...the stabilization of the river banks west of St. Francis Drive. These banks are very unstable and potentially dangerous as they have been giving way and falling into the river at an alarming rate.



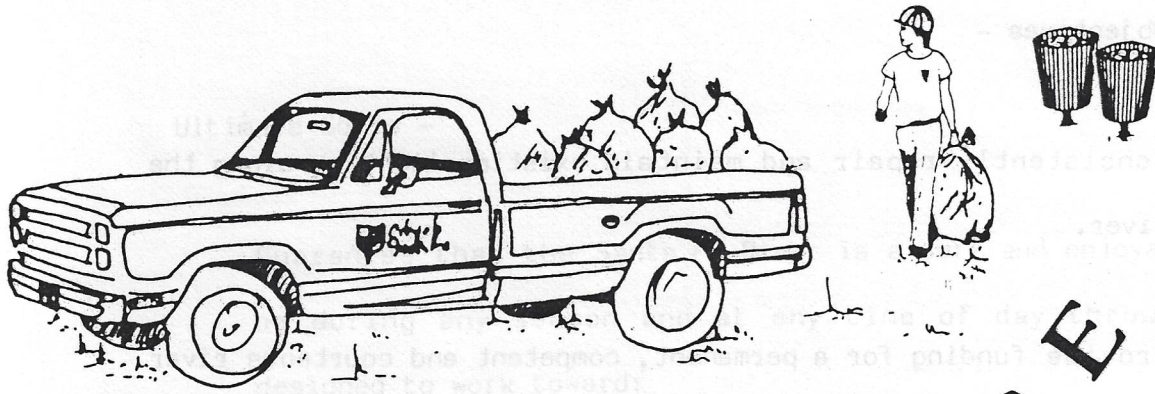
#### Immediate Objectives -

1. Consistently repair and maintain existing lighting along the river.
2. Provide funding for a permanent, competent and courteous river park police patrol.
3. Systematically check and repair street lights, including walk buttons, preferably on a daily basis.
4. Reprogram the intersection traffic lights at Guadalupe Street and Alameda and at Sandoval Street and Alameda. These lights currently impede the flow of traffic and create a potentially dangerous situation. Reprogramming them to reflect actual traffic patterns would reduce congestion and increase pedestrian convenience and safety.

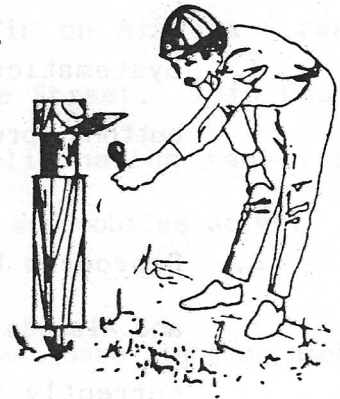
#### Implementation -

The City should hire a lighting engineer or specialist to evaluate the current lighting levels along the river and propose the type and spacing intervals of any new lighting required. Similarly a civil engineer should be retained by the City to propose and design stabilization measures for the river banks west of St. Francis Drive. This work must be coordinated with other jurisdictional

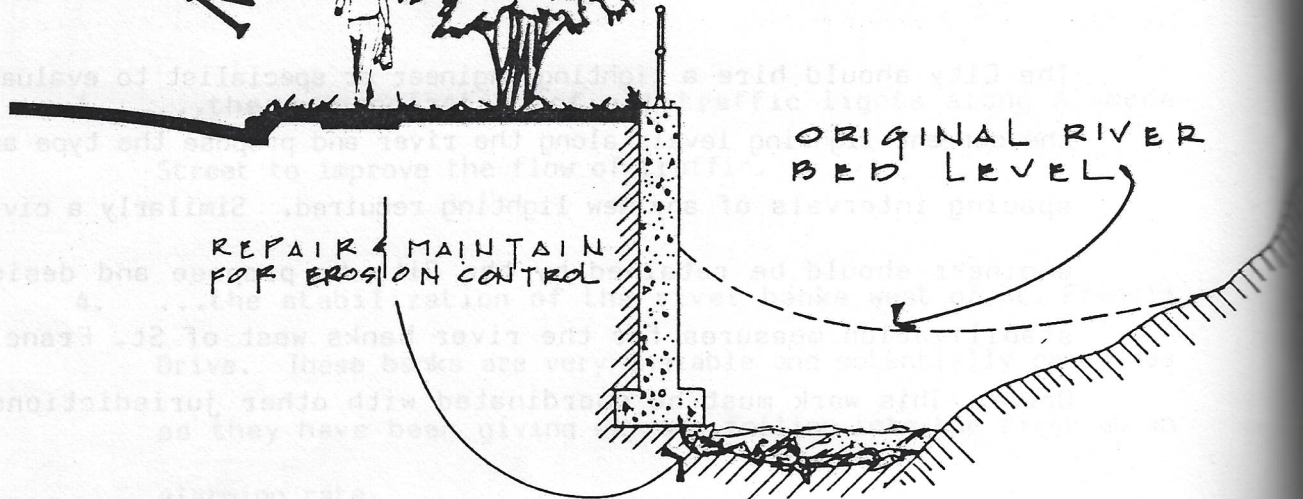




— GROUNDS MAINTENANCE —



— EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE —



— RIVERBED MAINTENANCE —



agencies responsible for improvements in the Santa Fe River channel. City staff should begin addressing "Immediate Objectives" 1-4 immediately.

## MAINTENANCE

### Ultimate Goals -

Assure a clean, attractive and well maintained park and waterway through establishment of:

1. ...a long-term, ongoing project to remove Siberian (commonly but erroneously referred to as Chinese) Elms from the river bed and adjacent areas. The City should initiate a policy whereby for every Siberian Elm removed, two new trees native to New Mexico would be planted.

### Immediate Objectives -

1. Provide funding for several new, full-time, park maintenance employees. Their sole, 12 month a year responsibility would be to keep the entire river channel and adjacent city-owned parks clean and well maintained.
2. Organize a "Celebrate the Santa Fe River Day." Coordinate the celebration with the removal of litter, debris, weeds, brush, and large obstacles from the river bed. Encourage participation by City staff, civic groups, school children, etc.

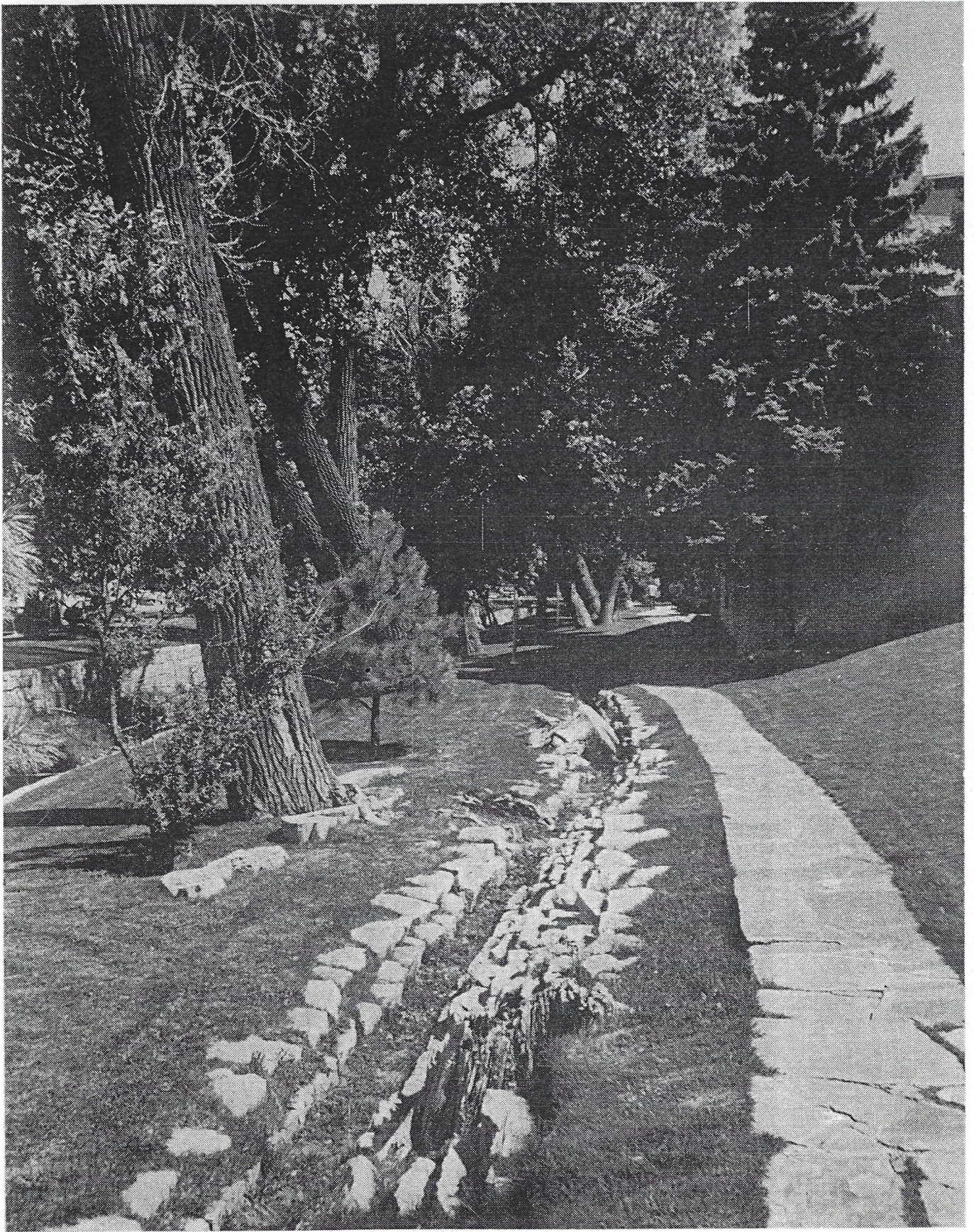


3. Begin and continue a program to prune dead branches and remove dead trees along the river.
4. Strictly enforce laws related to littering, dumping, and trash hauling. The City needs tough enforcement, not just laws on the books.
5. Install and regularly maintain additional trash receptacles along the river.

#### Implementation -

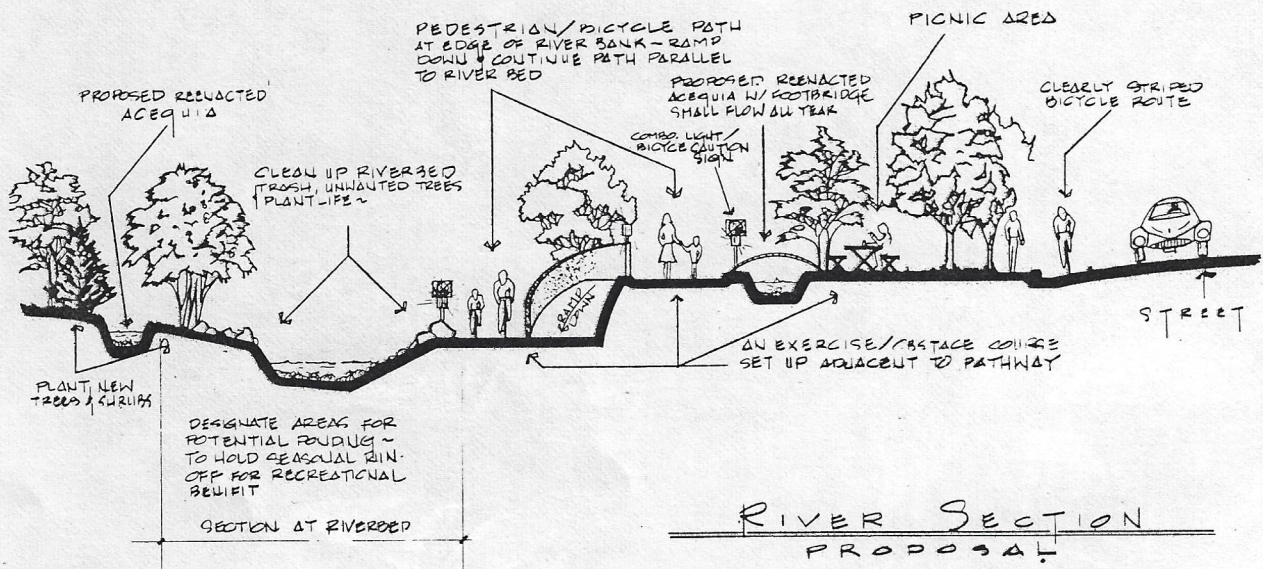
City staff should undertake the maintenance recommendations of this section as quickly as possible. All other recommendations in this report will prove futile if the Santa Fe River and its accompanying parks are not consistently and thoroughly maintained.





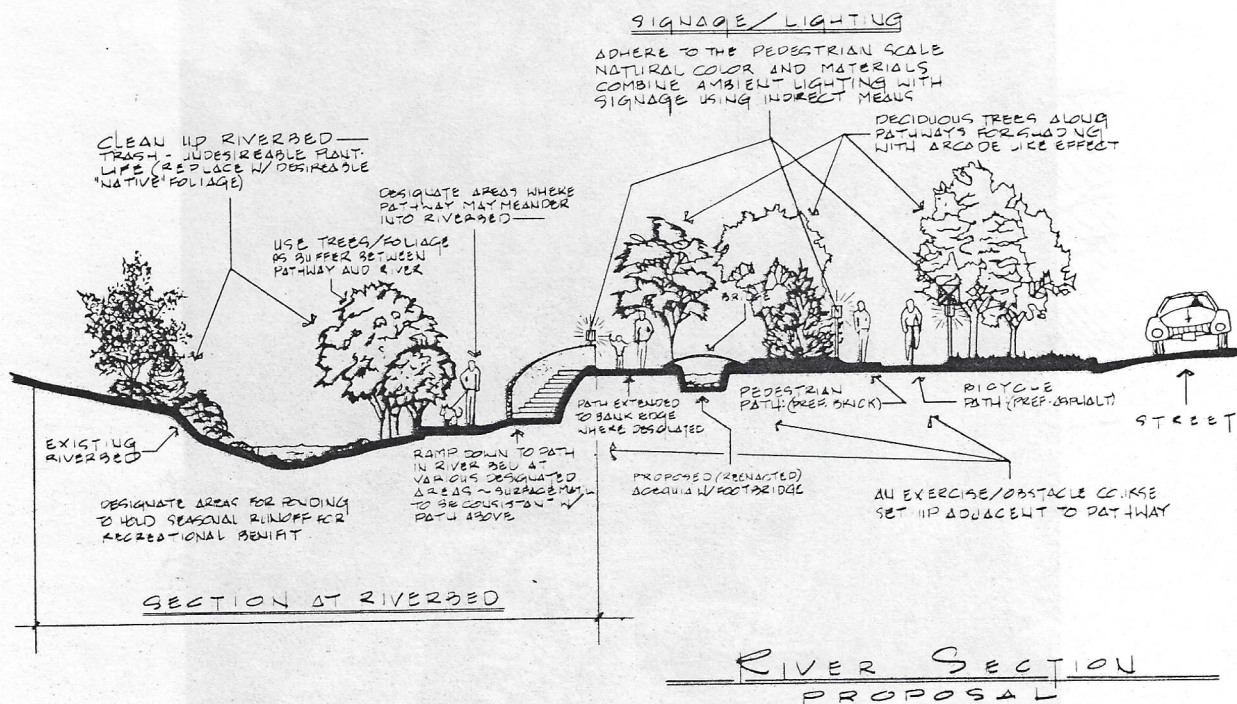


SIGNAGE / LIGHTING  
ADHERE TO PEDESTRIAN SCALE  
NATURAL COLOR & MATERIALS ~  
INDIRECT, AMBIENT LIGHTING  
IN COMBINATION WITH SIGNAGE



CONCEPTS IN SECTION





CONCEPTS IN SECTION

Revitalization of acequia systems would aid in flood control and provide aesthetically pleasing accent to the river.



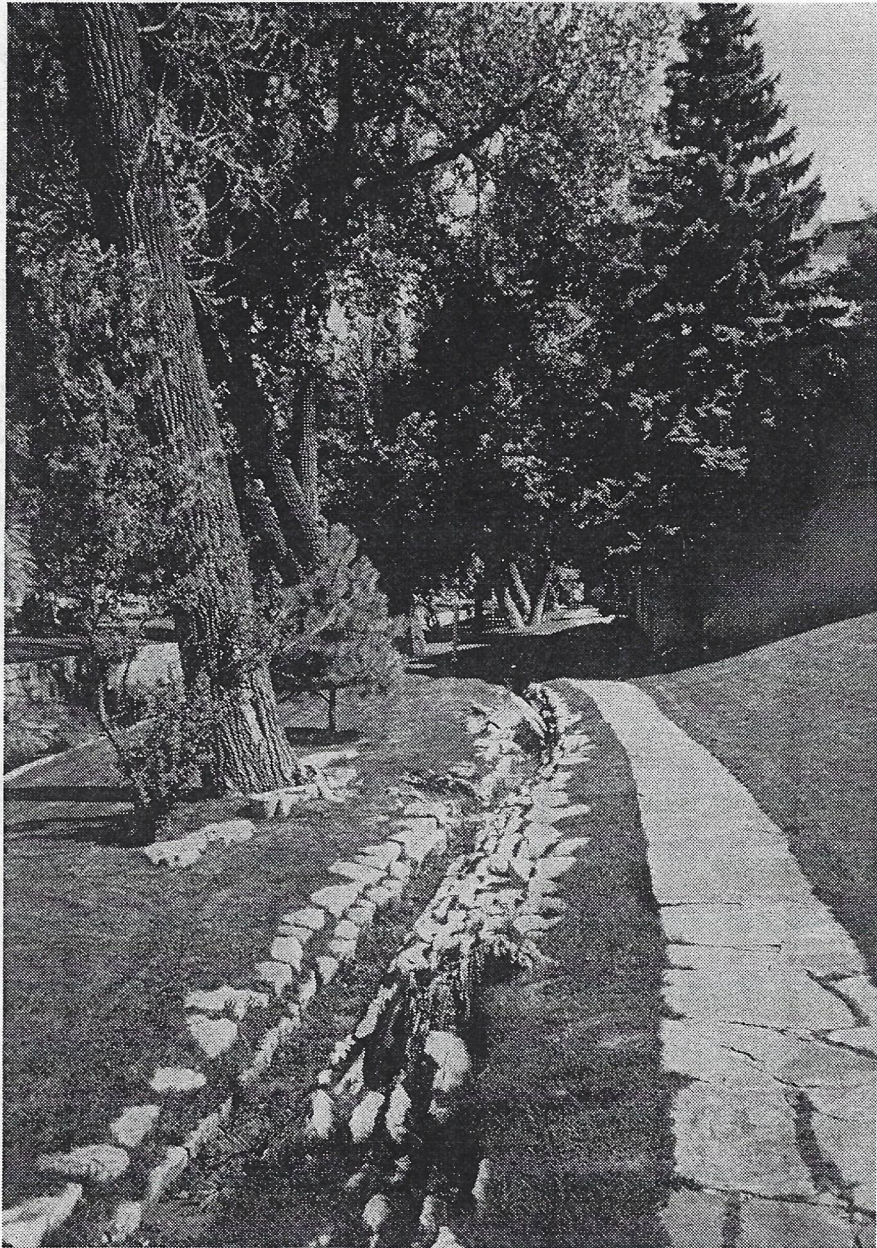
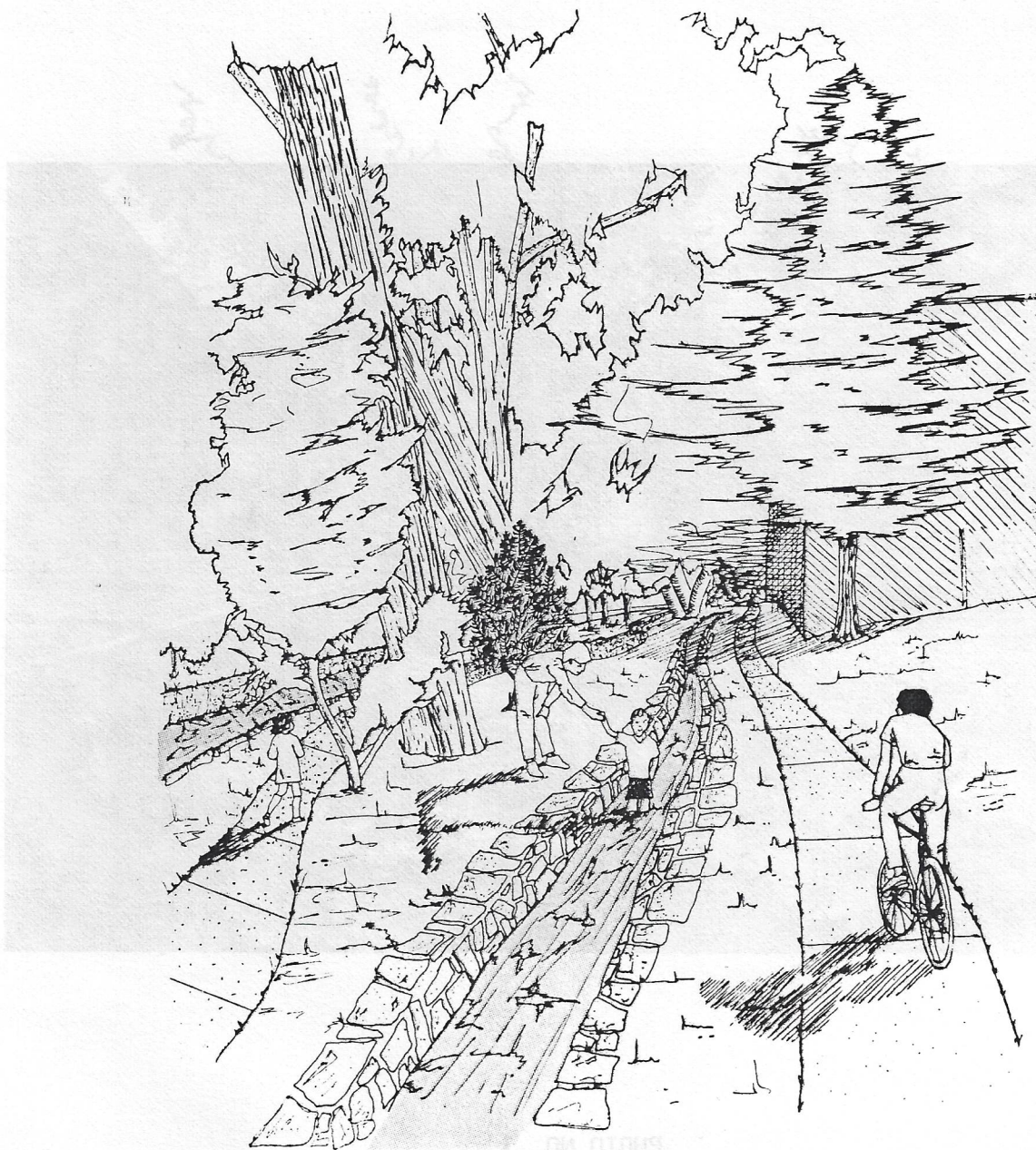


PHOTO NO. 2





Ramping can be a means of bringing people closer to the river. To move or  
trails running along the river complement the theme of a "natural water  
street".

Revitalization of acequia systems would aid in flood control and provide an  
aesthetically pleasing accent to the river.

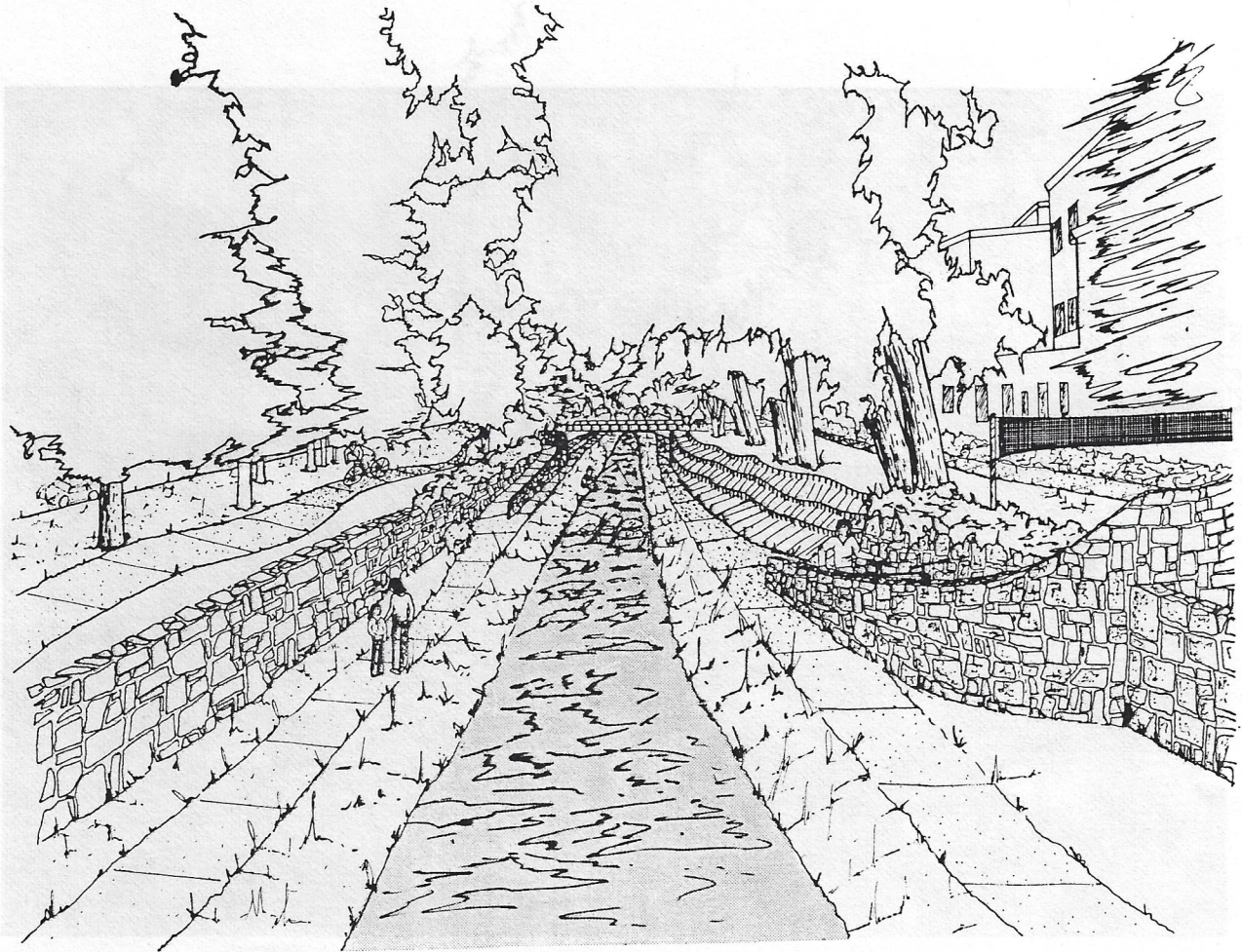




PHOTO NO. 3

the situation of the river and its control and provide an  
effectively passing water to the river.





- Ramping can be a means of bringing people closer to the river. Pathways or trails running along the river complement the theme of a "natural woodsy stream".

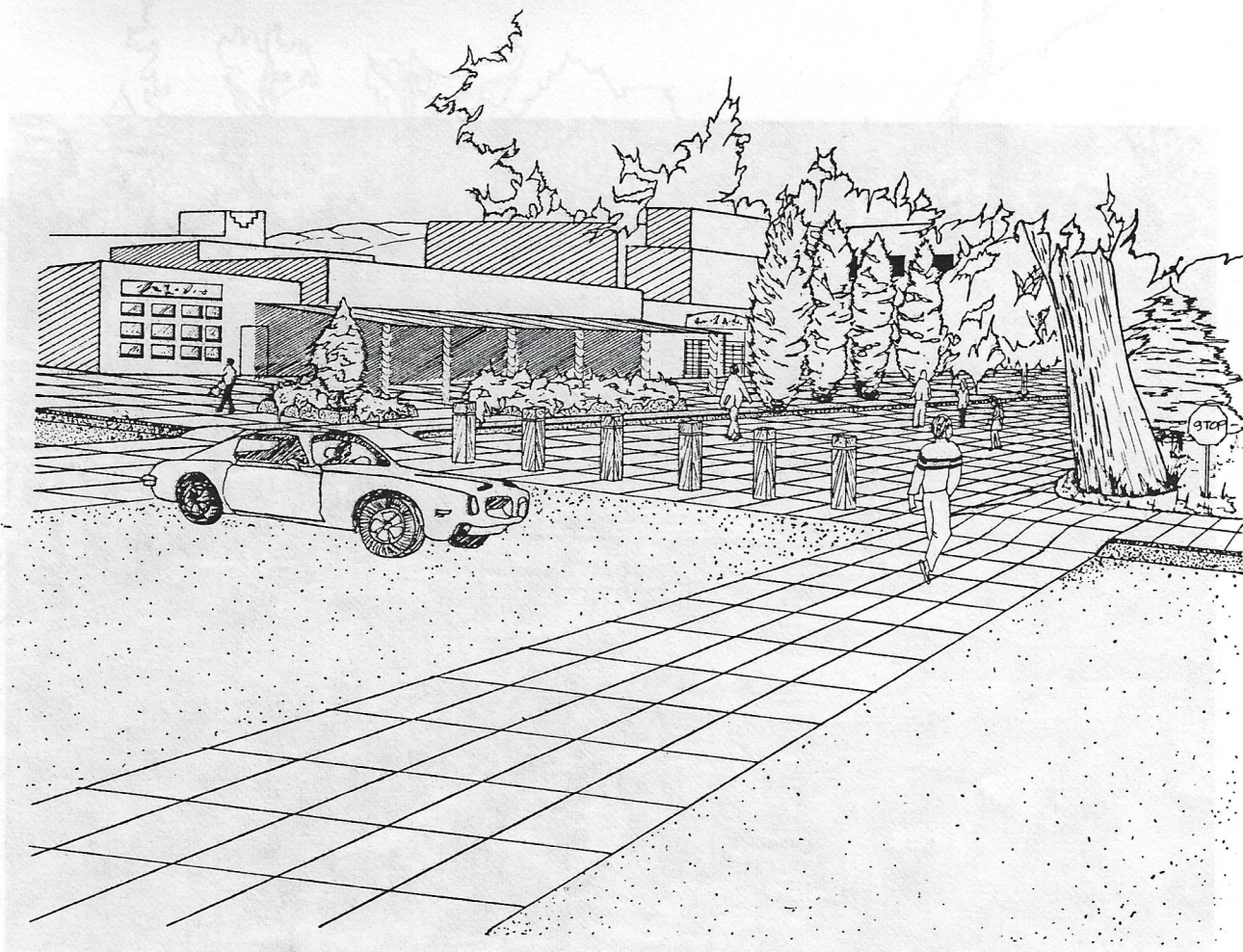




PHOTO NO. 4

camping can be a means of bringing people closer to the river. Pathways or trails running along the river complement the theme of a natural wooded stream.





The partial closing of Alameda Street to vehicular traffic would create a transitional public space between the river and downtown. Treatment of crosswalks and pedestrian ways in a different material and texture would aid in the delineation of pedestrian right-of-way.



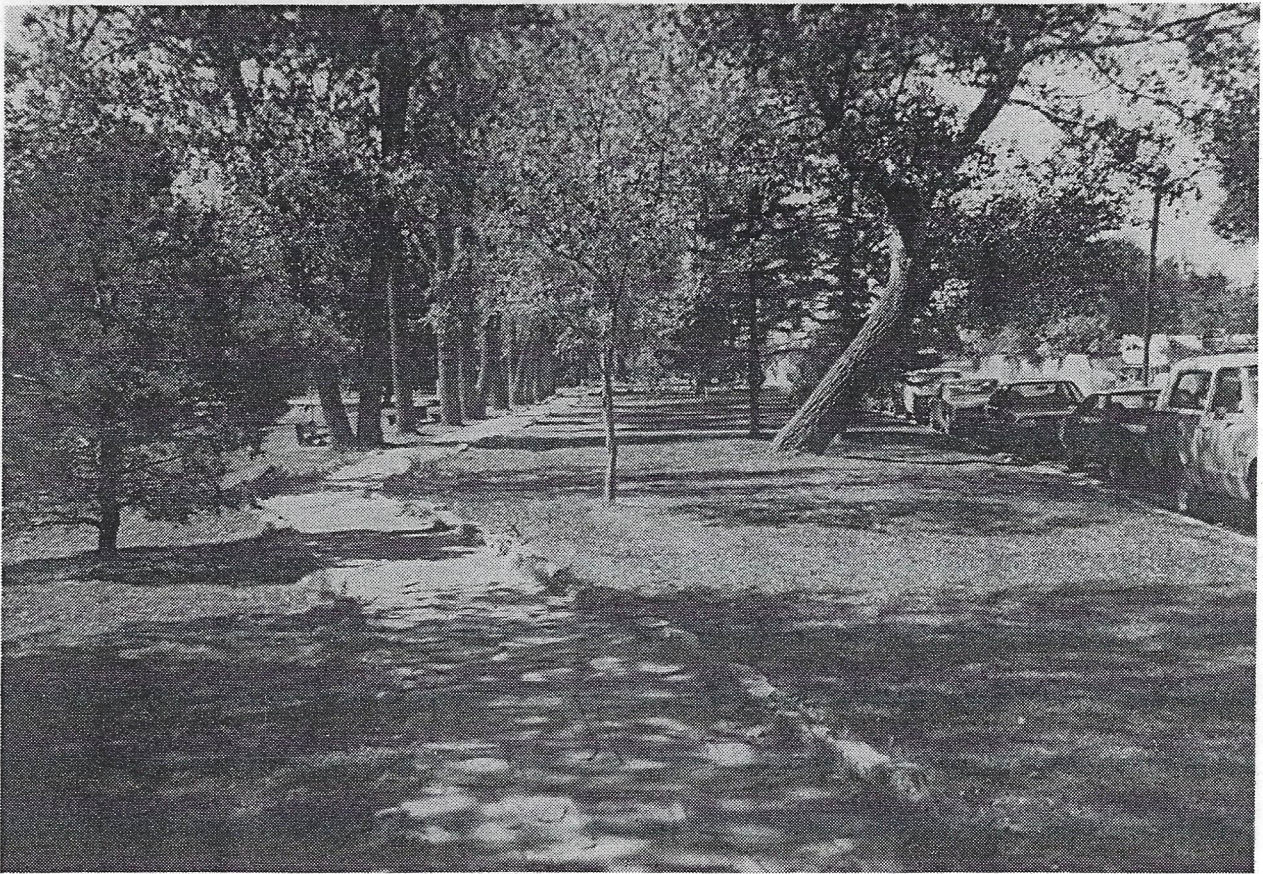
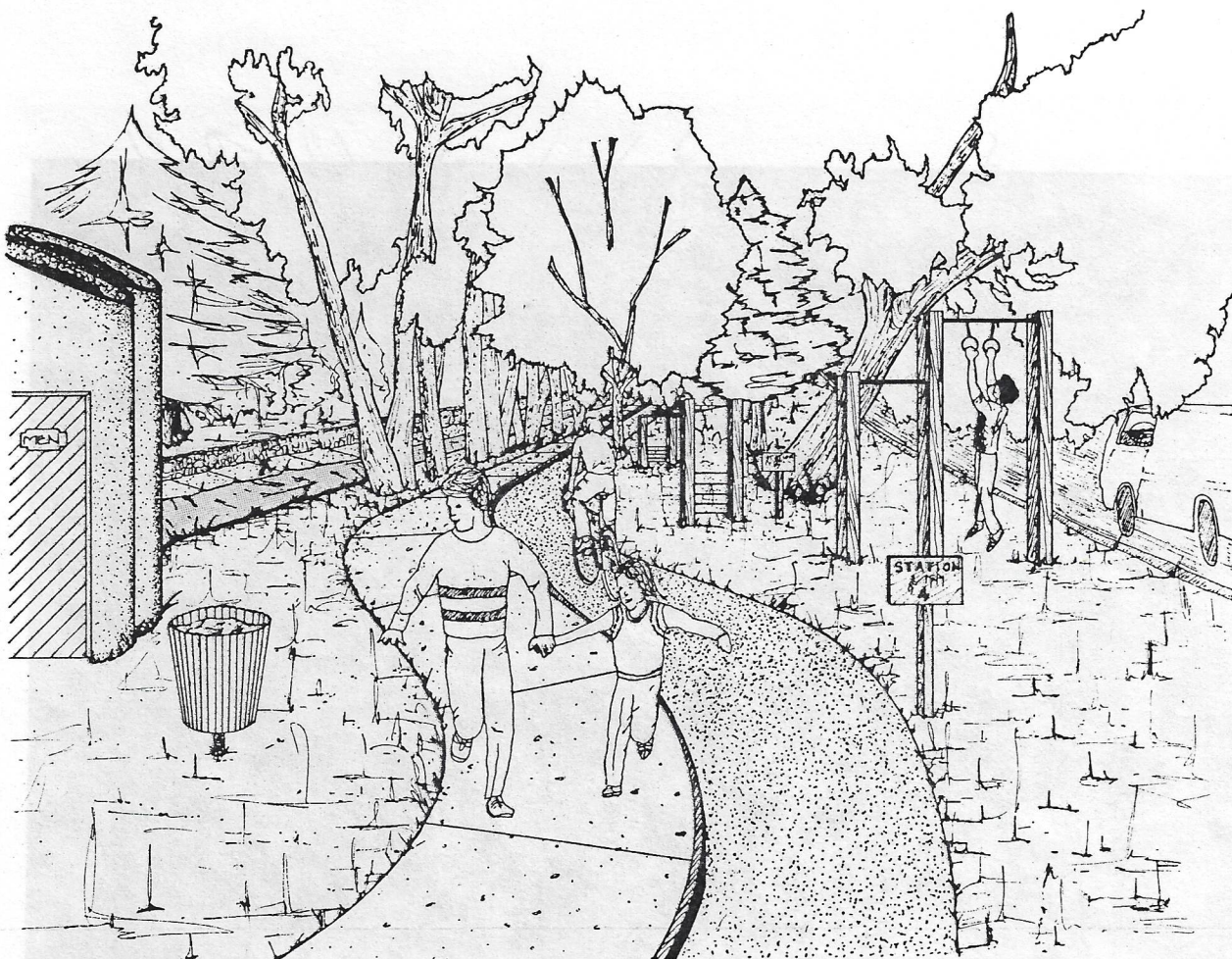


PHOTO NO. 5

The partial closing of Alameda Street to vehicular traffic would create a transitional public space between the river and downtown. Treatment of sidewalks and pedestrian ways in a different material and texture would aid in the delineation of pedestrian right-of-way.





Improved public facilities are essential. Recreational facilities such as exercise or obstacle courses, for example, have proven to be highly used and maintenance free in other park areas.

Ramps can bring people closer to the river and can be used to connect paths with pathways, bridges and crosswalks.



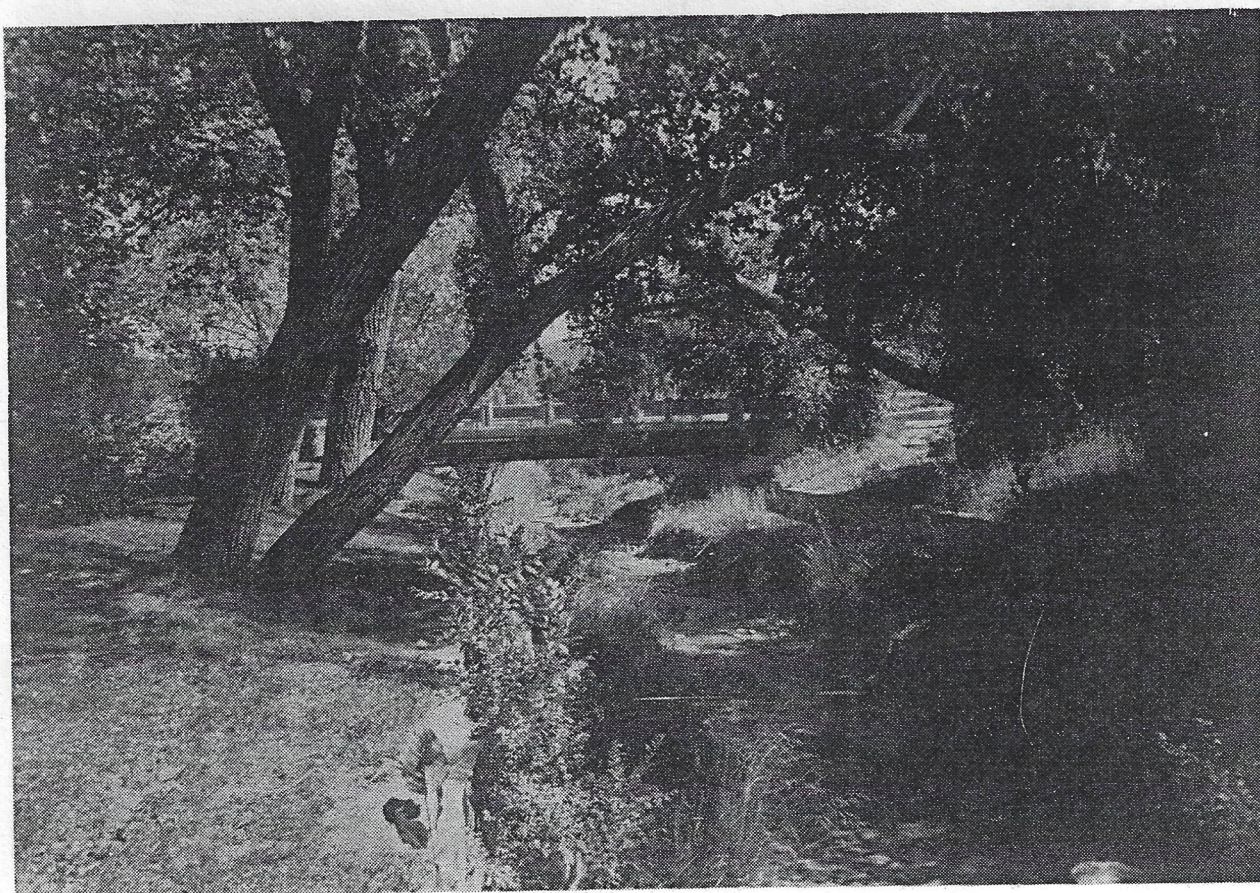


PHOTO NO. 6



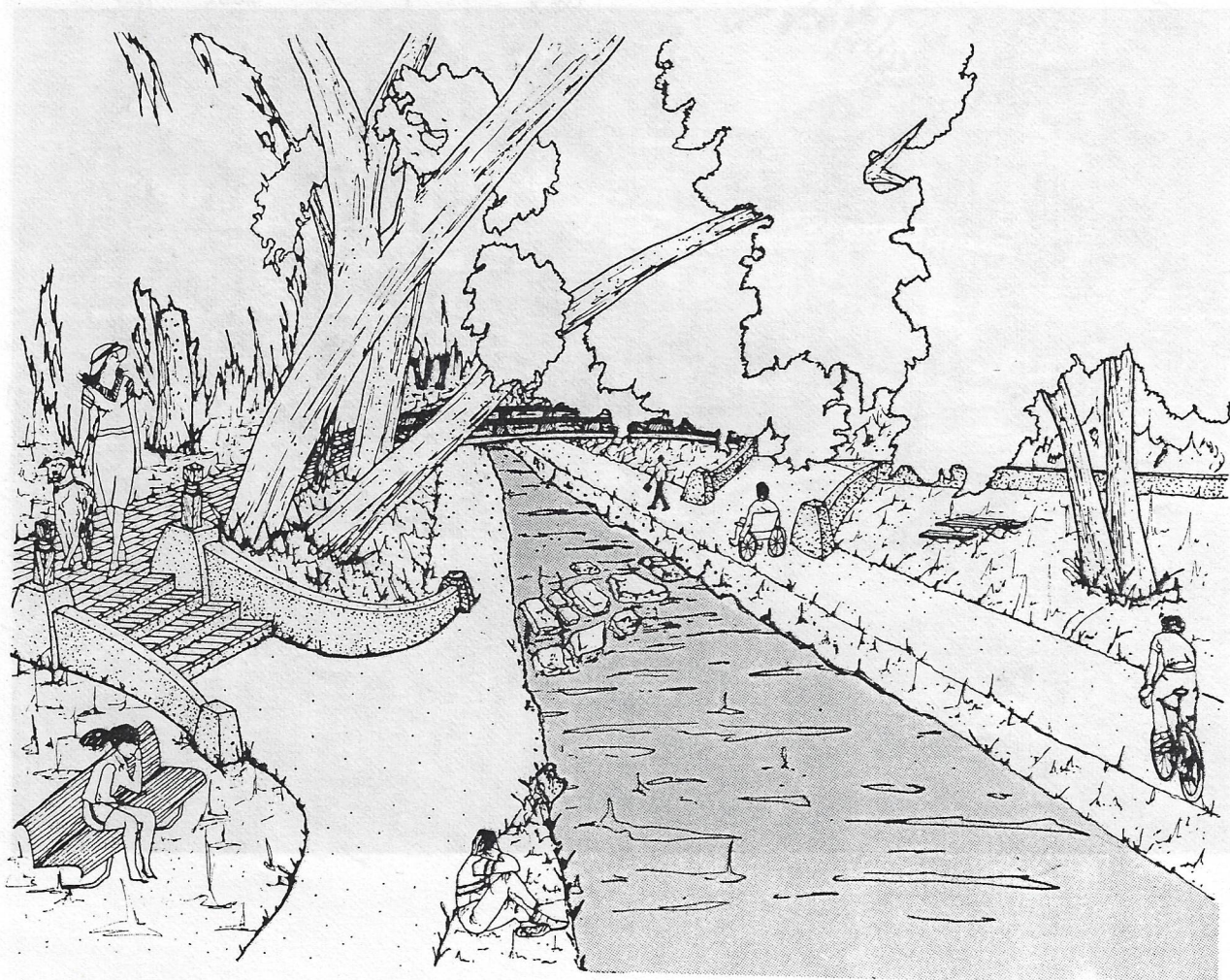


PHOTO NO. 7  
A person is sitting on a bench near the ramp. A person is riding a bicycle along a path. In the background, a bridge is visible across the river.

Ramps can bring people closer to the river and can be used in conjunction with pathways, bridges, and crosswalks.

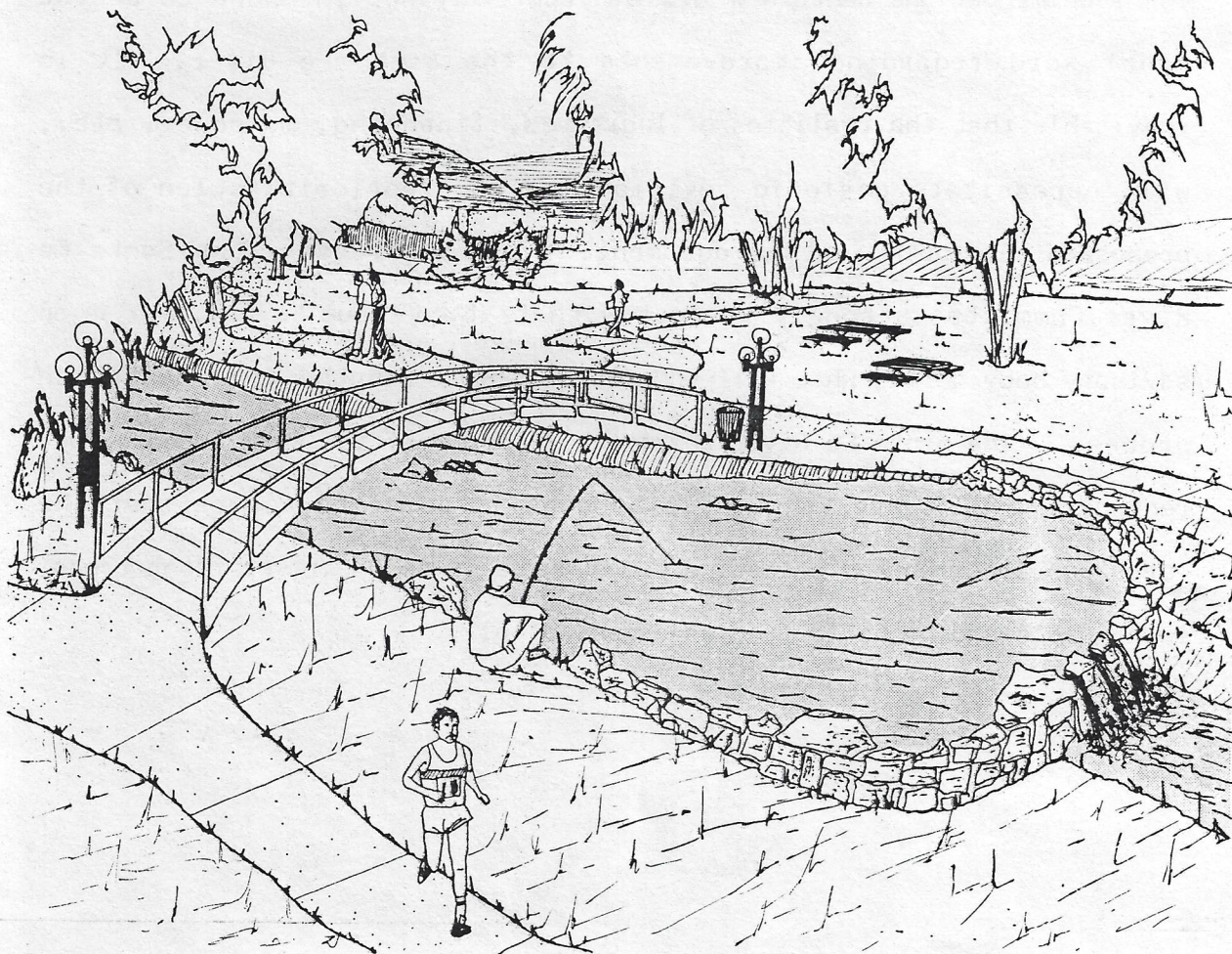




PHOTO NO. 7

PHOTO NO. 6  
Remains can bring people closer to the river and can be used in conjunction with  
pathways, bridges, and crosswalks.





Ponding can provide a superb recreational amenity and will also aid in flood control and maintain water levels the year round.



## SUMMARY STATEMENT

The recommendations contained in this report are not intended to be the final word regarding improvements to the Santa Fe River. It is inevitable that the realities of logistics, financing, manpower, etc., will necessitate periodic revisions to and reprioritization of the proposals set forth in this document. For this reason, the Santa Fe River Committee strongly advocates that it continue to function as an advisory body during what will undoubtedly be a lengthy implementation process. The Santa Fe River Committee is proud of its work to date, but recognizes that there is much to be done in order to assure that the words contained on the preceding pages actually become river front trees, lawn, pools and paths for the enjoyment of all.



PHOTO CREDITS

COVER: Postcard, circa 1930's. Carlotta Davis  
State Records Center & Archives (Neg. No. 4743)  
404 Montezuma  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Santa Fe Lake: Museum of New Mexico (Neg. No. 93491)

River above Ranger's Cabin: Museum of New Mexico  
circa 1912 (Neg. No. 61587)

Acequia Madre at Canyon Road, Museum of New Mexico

Others by Staff