

# **2006-2007 GRAND JURY REPORT**

## **Elsinore Valley Cemetery District**

### **Flood Control**

#### **Background**

The Elsinore Valley Cemetery was originally founded in 1896. The Elsinore Valley Cemetery District was formed on March 8, 1926. The District Office is located at 18170 Collier Avenue, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530, where it maintains the 26.5-acre cemetery. Currently, the cemetery includes a 160-vault columbarium and space for approximately 2000 graves. The cemetery averages 100 interments a year.

The Cemetery District serves an area of 96 square miles including all or part of the cities of Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Perris and unincorporated areas in northern Wildomar, Sedco Hills, Lakeland Village, Meadowbrook, and Quail Valley (See Exhibit #1). The District is located within Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 3 (Zone 3) (Exhibit #2).

The budget of the Elsinore Valley Cemetery District for FY 2006-2007 is \$668,000. General Reserve totals \$666,100. Cemetery revenue sources include interment fees and income from Zone 3 property tax receipts.

The voters of Zone 3 approved Proposition F in 1986, authorizing the sale of 8 million dollars in bonds to finance flood mitigation improvements in the Lake Elsinore area. Planning documents called for eleven specific priority projects, including the Arroyo del Toro Channel, which is in an area including the cemetery and subject to uncontrolled flooding.

Heavy rainfall in January 2005, coupled with a series of factors, (e.g., previous filling of a retention basin, paving of previously permeable soil, and California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) lack of culvert maintenance and debris clearance) resulted in flooding of the cemetery.

After floodwaters subsided, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), unlike municipal and county agencies, provided substantial financial assistance to repair flood damage to cemetery property.

## Findings

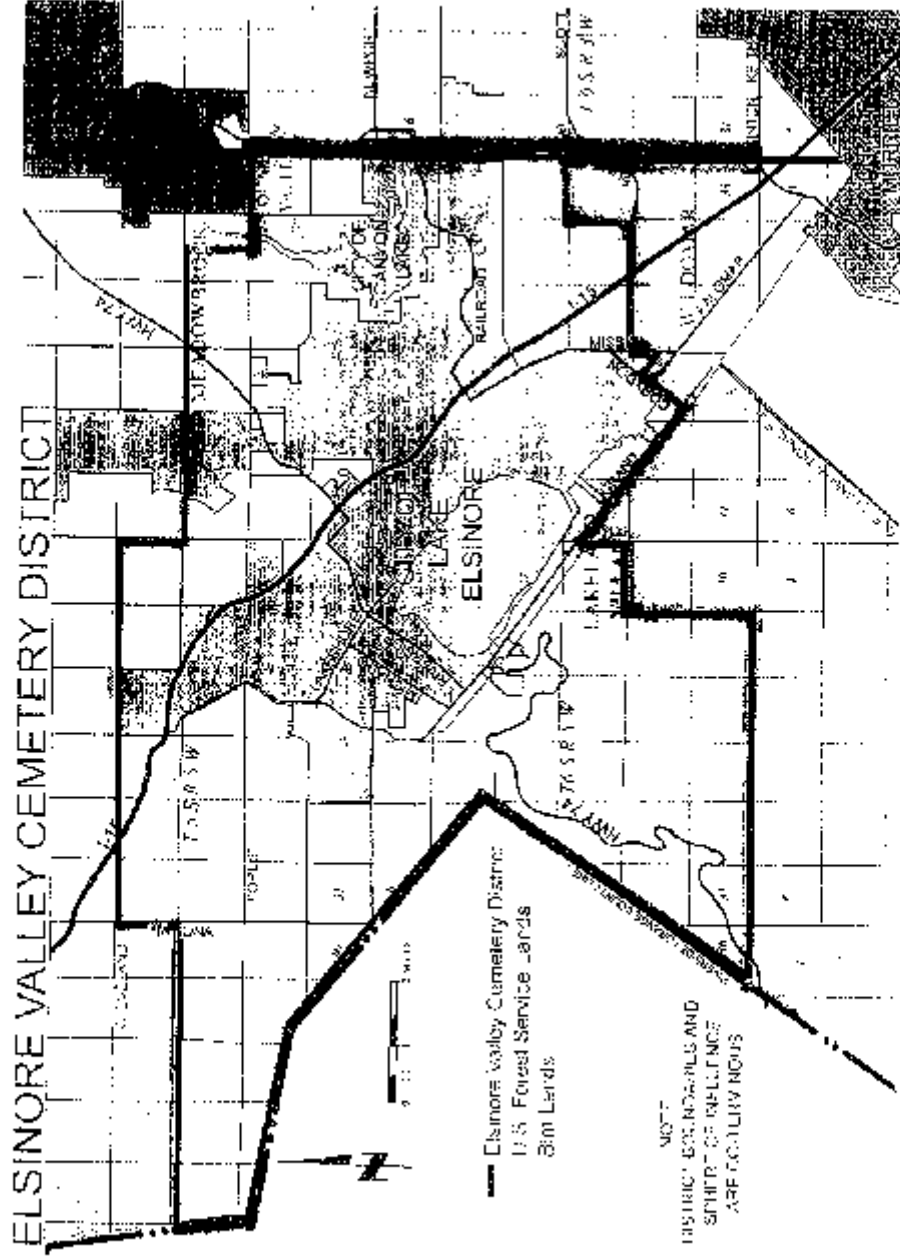
1. Elsinore Valley Cemetery District board members began an ongoing correspondence with their County Supervisor in August 2004, stating concerns regarding the failure of City and County authorities to address flood control issues in the cemetery area of the city. Copies of these letters were sent to the Lake Elsinore City Council. City and County officials took no documented responsive action to address the concerns of the cemetery district.
2. Municipal, county, and state agencies (City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County Flood Control District, and Caltrans) exhibited lack of interagency communication, lack of coordination of responsibilities, and a lack of cooperative corrective action concerning flood mitigation in the Arroyo del Toro area.
3. Proposition F contained an allocation of monies for flood control mitigation in the Arroyo del Toro Channel area immediately adjacent to the Elsinore Valley Cemetery District. During our investigation witnesses stated that the planners of the 1986 Lake Elsinore Flood Control Bond Issue, by deliberately disregarding inflation, substantially underestimated the cost of completing the project. Of the eleven projects authorized, only four were completed at twice the initial estimates for the entire bond issue. Consequently, 18 years later, the taxpayers in Zone 3 are still paying for undelivered flood control improvements.

## Recommendations

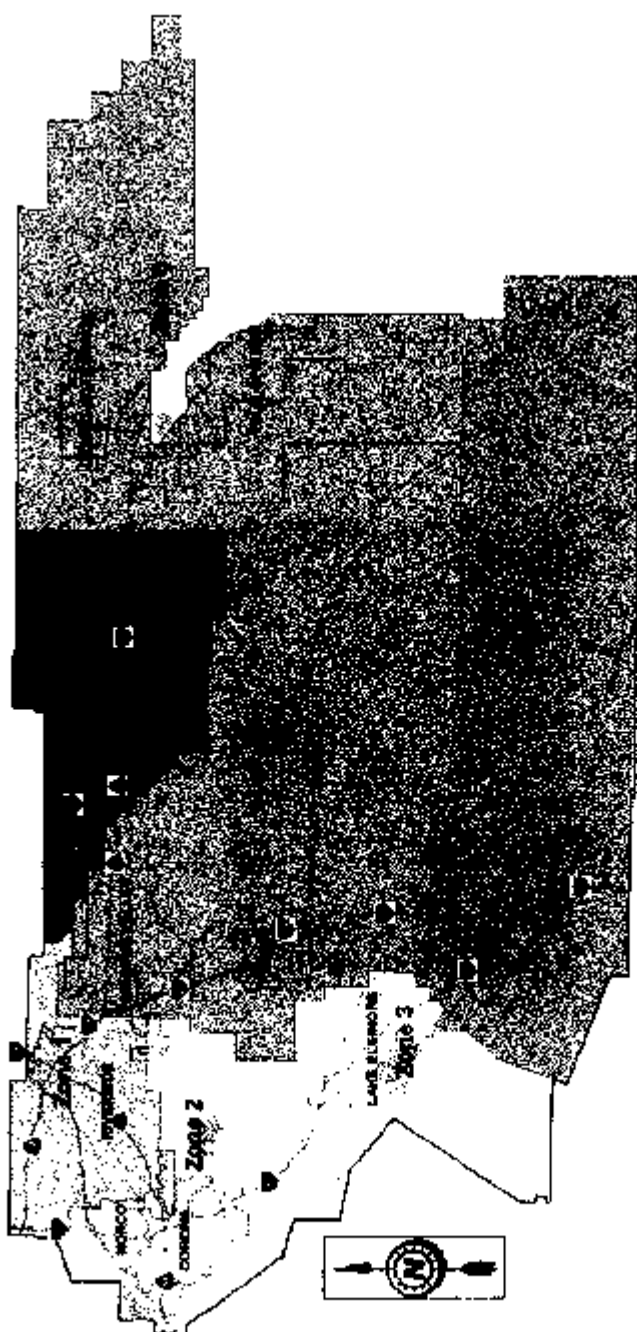
Riverside County Board of Supervisors  
Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
City of Lake Elsinore -  
City Manager, City Council, City Planner & City Engineer

1. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the City of Lake Elsinore initiate procedures to ensure that complaints are answered in writing in a timely manner by the appropriate agency or official having direct responsibility.
2. County and municipal elected officials develop and enforce policy requiring all agencies/departments subject to their control to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate in areas of mutual concern.
3. BOS both identify and commit sufficient funds now, or present Zone 3 voters with a bond issue initiative for their consideration, to finish Arroyo Del Toro Channel Flood Control Project. Any action must factor in inflation estimates.

**Report Issued: 06/11/07**  
**Report Public: 06/13/07**  
**Response Due: 09/10/07**



**Exhibit #1: Elsinore Valley Cemetery District**



**Exhibit #2: Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zones**

(Found Online at: <http://www.floodcontrol.ca.riverside.ca.us/districts/de/ai/La.asp>)