

Hidden Valley homes to be elevated or relocated to avoid creek flooding

Plan also eases path for fish

BY JEFF DELONG
jdelong@rgi.com

A plan to elevate, move or purchase flood-prone homes in the Hidden Valley area could be added to a major Truckee River flood control strategy, giving the homes protection sooner rather than later.

Easing fish passage along the river, stabilizing riverbanks and purchase of property in the floodplain are other provisions a coalition of local officials could choose to add Friday to the \$1.5 billion "living river" flood plan.

"All of these things have been talked about. It's just taken time for these parts of the plan to evolve," said Naomi Duerr, flood project director. "They are all pretty important."

Though a detailed program has not been prepared, the Flood Project Coordinating Committee, made up of officials from Reno, Sparks, Washoe County and the University of Nevada, Reno, will consider the concept of protecting homes in Hidden Valley and the Eastside subdivision without building a costly levee.

Duerr said the proposal could save the flood project \$50 million while protecting 120 homes subject to flooding from Steamboat Creek "years earlier" than would otherwise

At the request of flood control officials, the 2009 Legislature passed a bill to make public funds available to assist with the cost of such projects.

Hidden Valley homeowner Matt Herrick, whose house was flooded on New Year's Eve 2005, is willing to try the elevation program. Herrick said he'd like to avoid a repeat of the flood that caused \$70,000 in damage and displaced his family for three months.

"At least once that's done, we can know that when the next flood comes, we can have some comfort our house won't flood again," he said.

Roger Jewett was able to keep floodwaters out of his home during the 2005 flood, but not without a battle. He doesn't think his house can be elevated but said it might be a candidate for buyout.

"I will opt in so we can figure out what to do," Jewett said.

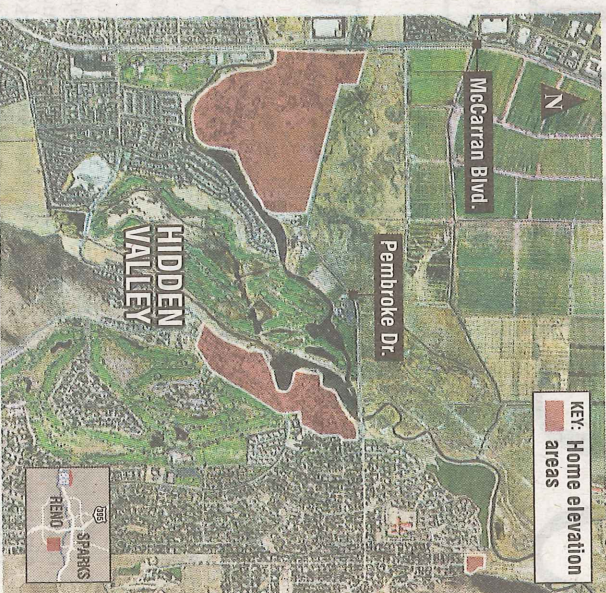
Flood plan

Other potential changes coming to the flood plan:

■ A \$200 million plan to stabilize about 25 miles of riverbank along the Truckee River. The targeted areas could be subject to erosion during floods because river flows will be altered by other components of the flood pro-

Flood protection

About 120 homes in Hidden Valley and at the Eastside subdivision in southeast Reno could be elevated, purchased or relocated under a plan to protect them from Steamboat Creek flooding.



Source: Truckee River Flood Project

STEPHEN REICHER/GJ

If you go

WHAT: Flood Project Coordinating Committee

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. - Friday

WHERE: Washoe County Commission chambers, 1001 E. Ninth St.

in the river system associated with the flood project.

■ A \$5 million plan to improve bridges downstream of Sparks to withstand floods.

The flood project also

irrigation diversions — structures that also pose safety hazards to rafters and swimmers, Duerr said.

Proposed is a \$40 million plan to remove structures that act as barriers to fish passage or build bypass channels for fish. The plan would aid long-term plans to recover the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and endangered cui-ui.

The fish passage plan is strongly in line with the nature-friendly "living river"