



*Almy Harrison
Gen. Ingr - Sect.
Fresno M.F.C.D.
170.25*

TO: Interested Agencies

DATE 8/2/83

SUBJECT: Draft of Canal & Water Safety Committee Report to City Council and Board of Supervisors

The Committee has asked I send you the draft report of your comment. The Committee will meet Monday, August 8, 1983, 10:00 a.m., Room 210, at City Hall.

Bob Quesada
Bob Quesada

*No
Comments
About our
Interest, practices
or other of money
for safety program.*

RECEIVED
AUG 3 1983

FRESNO METROPOLITAN
FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

Draft
8-1-83

TO: City Council & Board of Supervisors
FROM: Canal and Water Safety Committee
SUBJECT: Committee Recommendations

I. History.

The May 1982 drowning of six-year-old Michael Hardin in the Helm Canal near Eaton Elementary School led to the formation of a citizens organization for Canal and Water Safety (CAWS). This group petitioned the City and County of Fresno, Fresno Irrigation District (FID), and the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) to work jointly with CAWS on a task force basis to investigate possible improvements in existing safety efforts to minimize the hazards posed by canals in the metropolitan area of Fresno. Participation on the task force was expanded to include the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and the United States Corps of Engineers (USCE). In addition, further input was provided from local law enforcement agencies legal staffs from the City, County, and FID, the Red Cross, plus other interested agencies and irrigation districts.

This task force approach is not unprecedented. More than one such group has preceded this effort dating back to the 1950's. Since the current task force began its study in June of 1982, the Committee has successfully arranged an agreement between involved agencies to gate and fence portions of the Helm Canal as it runs from Cedar Avenue to near Fruit Avenue as a pilot project.

As all participants are aware, this pilot project was not easily accomplished. The City of Fresno provided the material costs

available to the schools. These booklets are entitled, "Splashy The

will take some time to complete because of the need to obtain landowner approval and then schedule construction.

IV. Summary.

It is hoped that the City Council and the Board of Supervisors accept these recommendations and request staff to pursue their implementation where feasible and practical.

CITY OF FRESNO

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council & Board of Supervisors

FROM: *James E. Aldredge*
James E. Aldredge, Chairperson
Canal and Water Safety Task Force

SUBJECT: Report of Task Force Recommendations

I. History.

The May 1982 drowning of six-year-old Michael Hardin in the Helm Canal near Eaton Elementary School led to the formation of a citizens organization for Canal and Water Safety (CAWS). This group petitioned the City and County of Fresno, Fresno Irrigation District (FID), and the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) to work jointly with CAWS on a task force basis to investigate possible improvements in existing safety efforts to minimize the hazards posed by canals in the metropolitan area of Fresno. Participation on the task force was expanded to include the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and the United States Corps of Engineers (USCE). In addition, further input was provided from local law enforcement agencies legal staffs from the City, County, and FID, the Red Cross, plus other interested agencies and irrigation districts.

A task force approach to this problem is not unprecedented. More than one such group has preceded this effort dating back to the 1950's. Since the current task force began its study in June of 1982, it has successfully arranged an agreement among involved agencies to gate and fence portions of the Helm Canal as it runs from Cedar Avenue to near First Street as a demonstration project.

As all participants are aware, this demonstration project was not easily accomplished. The City of Fresno provided the material costs, the CCC provided the labor, and the FID agreed to lock and maintain the facilities. It should also be noted that the City of Fresno and the FID share equally the legal responsibilities for the fence. This project, therefore, did illustrate to all that this Task Force had the capacity to be productive in its efforts. The Task Force has met regularly for over a year, and has explored possible solutions with sincerity and determination. The following recommendations in this report have received the majority endorsement of the members of the Task Force. We urge the agencies addressed by this report to enact those portions which are applicable to their jurisdictions.

II. Education and Training.

In the past, schools have proven to be the most effective channel for communicating information to children and parents. Children are the sector of our population most susceptible to mass education. These children will in turn educate their parents, and in the future, their children.

There are several effective programs currently being offered to our young people through the schools. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the County Sheriff's Department have developed an excellent presentation for elementary students. This presentation includes a slide show and discussion on the importance of water safety. Every school in Fresno County has an opportunity to be included in the water safety education program. Last year, approximately 95% of the schools participated.

The FID has made fun and informative booklets on canal safety available to the schools. These booklets are entitled, "Splashy The Frog on Canal Safety." Others, such as "Play It Safe" pamphlets, are offered at no charge to the schools to all interested classrooms, grades Kindergarten through third. In addition, several agencies provide attractive water safety posters which are displayed throughout the school system and community.

The Red Cross and YMCA also operate "learn to swim" programs in conjunction with cooperating school districts. These classes are offered throughout the community to all age groups at a nominal fee.

It is imperative that the Fresno community continue with these or similar types of educational and training programs. In addition, the media should be encouraged to increase the airing of public service announcements on television and radio. This will greatly enhance the effectiveness of the educational program on water safety. These media spots should be produced and ready for broadcast early in the spring when water safety becomes a prime concern in our community. It is hoped that the Task Force will implement this effort with the media as soon as possible and continue this effort on an on-going basis.

It is apparent that Task Force or similar entity should be maintained as a viable on-going organization within the Fresno community to provide coordination and continuity to the education and training effort. Consideration should be given to forming a water safety council such as has been done in other areas. Such an organization would continue to develop new ideas and techniques to further water safety education and training in the community.

III. Recommendations.

The Task Force formed a subcommittee to make recommendations on needed changes to existing ordinances and enforcement policy. On March 29, 1983, the subcommittee agreed to four recommendations to the City and County of Fresno. The Task Force also adopted these recommendations and hereby presents them to the City and County for appropriate action.

Recommendation No. 1. That an ordinance (or ordinances) be adopted to prohibit swimming in, wading in, or playing around any irrigation ditch or canal.

It was also felt that a "no swimming" ordinance would help prevent drownings in canals by focusing attention on the hazards of swimming or playing in canals. The public information and education programs will emphasize that it is not only dangerous, but illegal to swim in canals. Such an ordinance will provide law enforcement agencies with authority to force swimmers out of canals and ditches. A "no swimming" ordinance will provide law enforcement officers with an additional tool in dealing with vandalism, littering, and disturbing the peace in connection with canal bank parties. For illustrative purposes, drafts of the proposed ordinances are attached hereto.

Recommendation No. 2. Posting of high risk areas

Recent court cases have indicated that trespass violations have been difficult to enforce. Furthermore, prohibiting access to all canal banks would not be practical because of the widespread use of canal banks for jogging, walking, and other recreational activity. However, certain high risk areas should be declared off limits to the general public. Means of posting and enforcing no trespassing in selected high risk areas should be investigated and completed. Also, warning signs should be posted in certain areas where it would not be practical or desirable to prevent trespassing.

Recommendation No. 3. That new development requirements of the City and County of Fresno be amended to require piping of all canals and ditches where the required pipe size is 54 inches or less in diameter.

Improvements in the technique of installing cast-in-place concrete pipe makes it practical to permit the use of such pipe in lieu of reinforced rubber gasket (or equivalent) pipe which is four times as expensive. Currently, the City of Fresno requires piping only if the canal will flow in a 36-inch diameter pipe or smaller. The problems of increased pipe maintenance exist; however, it is felt that the public benefits of piping open canals far outweigh the negative aspect of using cast-in-place pipe. This recommendation should also be discussed with the Building Industry as part of the City's review of feasibility.

Recommendation No. 4. That trash racks be required on siphons, pipes, and box culverts under streets and roads.

Road crossings under full water pressure create potentially hazardous conditions to the public. The installation of trash racks; i.e., steel grates, not only would prevent trash and debris from plugging up the road crossings, but prevent persons in the canal from being sucked into a submerged siphon, pipe, or box culvert. The current budget situation for local government makes general retrofitting too costly. However, this could be required for siphons, pipes, and box culverts under streets and roads in new subdivisions and where streets are reconstructed and widened.

It should be noted that the FID currently has a program to pipeline open canals in developed urban areas, but this process is slow and will take some time to complete because of the need to obtain landowner approval and then schedule construction.

IV. Summary.

It is hoped that the City Council and the Board of Supervisors accept these recommendations and request staff to pursue their implementation where feasible and practical.

CITY OF FRESNO

ARTICLE____, Section____. PROHIBITED ACTS IN PUBLIC WATERS.

It is unlawful for any person to swim, wade, play, use or enter onto or into any reservoir, pond, or canal within the City of Fresno which is owned, operated, used or maintained by or under the jurisdiction of the City of Fresno, the County of Fresno, the Fresno Irrigation District, or the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, for any recreational purpose, without the express consent of the public agency under whose jurisdiction such reservoir, pond or canal is owned, operated or maintained.

ARTICLE____, Section____. CHILDREN PLAYING NEAR PUBLIC WATERS.

It is unlawful for any parent, guardian or other person having care or custody of any child under the age of ten years to knowingly permit such child to enter upon or play upon the bank or shoreline of any reservoir, pond or canal owned, operated, used or maintained by or under the jurisdiction of the City of Fresno, the County of Fresno, Fresno Irrigation District or the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, except in the immediate presence of an adult person who has assumed responsibility for the safety of such child.