

Wednesday Oct 13 2004

To all concerned:

Have finally finished my comments related to the Revised section of 4.1 of the Environmental Impact Report for the Transmission Project State Clearinghouse #2000022106 Amador Water Agency to Jim Abercrombie General Manager.

I find this report disturbing and yet a relief. It disturbs me because as I read and reread it I find it falls dangerously short of any real attempt to seriously understand the areas that either project might affect. There has been neither real attempt nor evidence of records of a true stream assessment and no attempt to study the habitat of either the Amador Canal or the three branches and the many tributaries of Jackson Creek. I also find this document falls far short of any attempt to fulfill the direction of the Amador County Superior Court in which the AWA was to take the actions necessary to bring the water resources section of the EIR Chapter 4.1 into compliance with the California Environmental Act. (CEQA)

I am, however, relieved that we all can now clearly see proof of this intent so obviously presented in this document. Showing no records, having installed no instruments of measure, and having conducted no true documented analysis of scientific facts so critical to understanding either region; it is quite evident they had no desire to investigate and discover what they may dangerously impact. Others have tried this: "If you don't see it, it's not there so don't look!" attitude and method and gotten away with it when not questioned. I think there will be lots of questions on this one.

We all, once again, have spent a great deal of time reviewing this newest document. I, however, will sleep quite well now knowing this latest phase is once more finished. We have all again relieved ourselves of much frustration and some doubt. This time, however, because this report so obviously shows such lack of respect for habitat, CEQA law, the courts directive, and the best interest of our county's water, we all, this time, enter into a new frame of assurance. We now, without doubt, all share a confidence and are definitely on the right track. We are not "civil disobedient" but those who truly care for justice for our county.

I thank you all, my good friends and neighbors, for your input, encouragement and faith. One thing that calms and feeds my desires more these days is knowing that we all speak out for something that cannot publicly speak for itself, something that was not the intention of those who first created the *GRAND OLD AMADOR CANAL*, but through the years something she has so wonderfully created herself, *an environment of her own*. She in a short time long ago gave new birth not only to her own 23 mile habitat, but also to three branches of Jackson Creek with numerous tributaries, ponds and wetlands and who knows how many springs. She adds to our groundwater and our atmosphere so that numerous large oaks, maples, alders and various conifers can guard her banks and streams. She may also contribute to countless wells near and far.

Bright red Toyon berries that rim her corridor feed Robins, Band-tailed Pigeons and others. Mountain Quail call in many nearby canyons. Other birds, nearly one hundred varieties make their homes in these habitats. The Western Grey Squirrel and even the rarely seen Northern Flying Squirrel inhabit these forest, Raccoons and Ringtailed Cats and dozens of other animals prowl the ditch bank. One cannot probably see many of them during the day but learning to read the soft fine dust or mud patches along the ditch will open secrets to what used this trail during the night.

Yes, we speak for them and numerous others as we fight this battle.

Although I have always respected her, this ill attempt and threat of almost losing *The Old Amador* has now opened my eyes much wider to appreciate her even more. We only have to walk her to have her return her thanks for what we are doing for her now. My favorite time is in the Spring when she is decorated with several varieties of wildflowers and the early morning dew, a gift of drink from the moist air of the canal waters, hangs on countless petals and leaves and sparkles in the suns rays filtering through the trees. Or now is it maybe those crisp fall mornings when the Black Oak leaves turn a yellow rust, the Toyon are just

to the orange phase of what soon will be red and the mist rises from her waters into the fresh air. The Band Tails are in and the clatter of their wings breaks the stillness, however, if you walk slowly and quietly numerous other birds and animals will carry on their daily duties not just for your pleasure, but as they must to prepare for winter. The Amador has provided for them for over 130 years.

Below to the south and southwest her leaks and seeps rattle and clatter as they give birth to the South of the South Fork, Barker Creek, Spinetta Creek all and more feed the main South Fork of Jackson Creek, the locals called it Clinton Creek as it follows or leads Clinton Road most of the way to town. (*Jackson*) Here this stream is high and healthy due to the Old Amador. And as the Old Amador Canal cross the ridges like a wrinkled snake on her way to New York Ranch Reservoir she gives birth to many tributaries on the Middle Fork adding to that little jewel that flows into town at the east side of Highway 88. New York Ranch Gultch, Coopers Gultch and others fed again by the Amador adds to the flow of the Middle fork to form a green corridor where ducks and large schools of Squawfish delight passers-by under the old iron and wooden bridge at the entrance to town. Just a few hundred yards downstream under a bridge or two the Middle Fork will join the South Fork and both will then join the North Fork also a dependant of the Amador Canal to the north of Jackson.

Were these creeks the intent of those who designed the Old Amador over a century ago, or just lucky children of the Amador? Not many seem to care. Oh yes, they have seen them, probably enjoyed there sparkle in the sunlight, their ducks and their fish amusingly swimming in the cool flowing waters. But do they really know them for what they bring to this area, what they really are or what they have been? I doubt it! They're probably too busy to bother and although they have heard something about a pipeline they probably don't know what choices will be made for them if no one notices. They probably don't know about the connection these three creeks have to the Old Amador, the Old Girl's glorious and amazing history, or that they may loose all of them if nothing is said. And when the creeks turn from a green sparkling flow to blond, brown and dark dried mossy rocks they might be surprised where the water went after so many years. "An what say happened to those nice ducks?" Some will say, "It doesn't bother me, I just work here." or "I'm too old to get involved in this here political stuff and as long as my water ain't rusty it's ok!"

Well it should bother you, it's your town and Amador County's water and you're never too old or for that matter too young. The Old Amador carries her age well and she still does her job, and with just a little mending she would probably be as fit as ever. And rusty water comes from rusty pipes and is not the fault of the Amador and neither are most of the other things she is being blamed for. Those who should have been giving her the honored care she deserves have been neglecting her lately. While blaming her they hope to convince most of you she is cannot support the growing needs of Amador County. By the looks of things, and just tuning in to what's been happening lately, maybe the word "Growing" is some of the problem. But, whatever happens, grow or not, with a little loving care and not all that much money, she could supply you even then, for a long time to come. But, like my dad use to say, when I was young and foolish and just learning to drive, "*Let's take her slow and easy and get there in one piece!*"

I'd better hold on here as my purpose is to let you know that there are a lot more questions to be answered before this Old Canal just becomes a dry trail. And for those of you who are aware and do appreciate your town, your streams and maybe even the Old Girl herself. Keep your ears to the ground and listen to the questions and answers being given. The creek is still filled with good water even late in the fall, but if something smells fishy it probably isn't coming from the creek. Listen and ask and think about it and then make up your own minds. Jackson is growing, maybe too fast for most of you, but fast growth and fast decisions don't make for the best results and often costs what can't be replaced. "Let's take her slow and easy." as my dad used to say, "and get there in one piece." Lets find out why they say the Old Girl has to go and *where her water may go* if not in *your streams, your springs* and *your wells*. And how much will it really *cost* you for the *water* that's *left?*

Gary G. Cranfill