

WESTERN *City*

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LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

Santa Rosa Transforms an Eyesore Into a Lush Greenway

During the 1960s, the City of Santa Rosa channeled the Santa Rosa Creek for flood control using large chunks of concrete tossed together in loose piles known as riprap. While this strategy prevented flooding, it destroyed the natural beauty of the creek and the native steelhead habitat in this Northern California city. The creek area also became a haven for homeless encampments, drug use and vandalism.

In the late 1980s, a handful of interested citizens gathered together and generated enough enthusiasm to engage local, state and federal elected officials in discussing solutions to resolve these issues. The Committee for Restoring Santa Rosa Creek was subsequently formed in 1989.

The committee launched a grassroots effort to develop community awareness of the creek's presence and initiate a community-based master planning process for its restoration. The committee held several workshops that brought together hundreds of citizens to share their vision and ideas for the Santa Rosa Creek Master Plan, which was adopted by the City of Santa Rosa, the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Water Agency in 1993.

The primary task was to revamp the creek for public use and benefit. The project goals included:

- Creating a more natural creek environment;
- Maintaining flood control;
- Removing toxic materials along the creek;
- Restoring creek habitat to save endangered and threatened species of fish and wildlife;

Santa Rosa Creek has become a model of urban creek restoration that addresses social as well as environmental and educational goals.

- Creating a bicycle and pedestrian path to link downtown and Railroad Square;
- Creating environmental education opportunities; and
- Increasing tourism and revitalizing downtown and Railroad Square.

Securing Funding and Partners

Recognizing that these goals would require significant resources, the Santa Rosa Creek Committee sought partners for funding and expertise in numerous ways. With a lead gift from the Prince Family Trust, the project was "christened" the Prince Memorial Greenway. In addition to the Prince donation, major funding was provided by the Sonoma County Open Space District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the California Resources Agency, the Sonoma County Water

continued



The City of Santa Rosa won an Award for Excellence in the Public Works, Infrastructure and Transportation category of the 2004 California Cities Helen Putnam Award for Excellence. For more information about the award program, visit www.cacities.org.

Using historic building materials, including stone, black cast iron, steel and wood, the creek has been transformed into a series of terraces with lush landscaping, trails, plazas and public art.

Agency, the Santa Rosa Redevelopment Agency, California State Parks and Recreation and the California Department of Water Resources. Together these public agencies and nonprofit organizations contributed \$19 million to fund the project.

Other state and federal agencies involved in the restoration project included the California Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Demolition Reveals Surprises

Demolition of the existing channels was not an easy task. The concrete sides were removed with giant jackhammers and cranes to create a deeper, narrower channel within the larger channel for the fish to swim in. As work progressed, the city

found that the banks had been used in the past as a dumping ground for everything from underground diesel tanks to rubble from the 1906 earthquake. Cleanup of toxic waste increased the cost of the project and complicated construction activities in the creek bed, which required additional funding from local and state agencies.

To maintain the channel's hydraulics, large boulders and rocks were interspersed with native riparian plantings and root wads for the fish. Native riparian vegetation was planted along the banks offering shade for the stream and habitat for wildlife. Deep pools were created along with gravel bars and riffles to provide steel-head habitat for juvenile rearing and adult migration.



This mural is just one of many public art installations enhancing the creek.

The 0.6-mile creek restoration portion of the project stretches from Santa Rosa City Hall to Railroad Square. Late 19th- and early 20th-century vintage commercial and industrial buildings characterize the area. Using historic building materials, including stone, black cast iron, steel and wood, the creek has been transformed into a series of terraces with lush landscaping, trails, plazas and public art. The Prince Memorial Greenway features stone-lined retaining walls, curved stairs and ramps that lead to the water's edge, and benches, murals and sculptures. ArtStart, a local nonprofit that provides summer jobs for high school artists, created the murals and art benches.

Revitalizing Downtown, Increasing Tourism

Approximately \$2 million of redevelopment funds were contributed to the Prince Memorial Greenway as part of the Santa Rosa Redevelopment Agency's Downtown Linkage Program to enhance connections between the east and west sides of downtown. The greenway is adjacent to another redevelopment project that was in the planning phase, the Hyatt Hotel and Conference Center.

The upscale 156-room hotel and spa, McCormick and Schmick Brasserie Restaurant, and approximately 21,000 square feet of executive meeting space opened for business in June 2002 at an estimated value of \$30 million. The design and layout of the hotel and conference center was carefully planned to integrate with the Prince Memorial Greenway for the highest return on the agency's investment in both projects. A fine arts program valued at 1 percent of the construction cost was required by the redevelopment

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A hotel, conference center and restaurant complex help achieve the creek project's goal to improve tourism.

agency as a part of the hotel and conference center project. The installation of five sculptures, crafted by local artists, helps visually tie together the interface between the hotel and creek frontages.

Numerous Benefits for Residents And the Environment

This project on the five-mile stretch of Santa Rosa Creek, which runs through the downtown west to the Laguna de Santa Rosa, has increased the public's awareness of the entire creek system in Santa Rosa. Walkers, joggers and bicyclists of all ages are all enjoying the pleasant and peaceful walkway.

In spring 2004, biologists observed increased numbers of juvenile steelhead trout in the creek and adult steelhead spawning upstream along with increases in the river otter and other wildlife populations. The project draws public attention to the dependence of wildlife, plants and fish on clean water in Santa Rosa Creek through the Creek Stewardship Program. The program offers citizens who live, travel and recreate along Santa Rosa's creeks the opportunity to protect and enhance the creeks they enjoy. Working with City of Santa Rosa staff, volunteer creek stewards are involved with trash removal, water quality, natural habitat, recreational opportunities, trail maintenance and neighborhood safety efforts.

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Bill Cox, fishery biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game says, "This project will have major benefits in the years ahead as people become more aware of and tuned into the stream. They've taken the stream out of the back alley and put it in the front yard."

Contact: Nancy Adams, transportation planner, Department of Public Works, City of Santa Rosa; phone: (707) 543-3910; e-mail: <nadams@ci.santa-rosa.ca.us>.

J O B O P P O R T U N I T I E S

Assistant Chief / Fire Marshal Orange County Fire Authority / Irvine, CA

► **Filing deadline:** February 18, 2005 ► **Salary:** \$151,646 — \$163,020

The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) is a joint powers authority serving 1.3 million people in 22 cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County. The OCFA has a 553 square mile service area and 60 fire stations. The agency's operating budget is \$179 million and includes 1,080 full time employees.

The OCFA Fire Marshal must have good knowledge of California fire and building codes, strong communication skills, and a high level of strategic leadership both within the agency and externally. A general knowledge of information technology and experience managing a fee generating service are also highly desired. The ideal candidate must have eight or more years of progressively responsible experience in fire prevention, fire investigation, fire code enforcement, hazardous materials management and fire education.

This recruitment is open to candidates who are currently employed in either a "safety" or a "non-safety" position. A Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration or related field is required (up to 4 years job-related experience may qualify for 2 years of education; or equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties). Higher education and/or a National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Certificate are desirable.

Please e-mail your resume to lmills@themillsgroup.net by Friday, February 18, 2005. If you need additional information or would like a brochure, please call Lisa Mills at (714) 938-3878.

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CITY OF GILROY

The nationally known city of Gilroy, recognized for its famous Garlic Festival, seeks an innovative leader as their new Community Services Director.

As one of five "Super" departments within city government, Community Services is responsible for an extensive recreation program, public works operational services, environmental services, the public information office, and a golf course. The new Director will be a visionary with the ability to develop and implement services that meet the unique and growing needs of the changing demographics within their community. This must be successfully accomplished during a time of unprecedented demand and significant budget constraints.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

The ideal candidate will have five years related experience, with three or more years in a high-level management role. Prior experience managing a multi-faceted recreation program and/or experience in field operations (water, sewer, streets, and parks) is desired. A Bachelor's degree or equivalent in a related field is required. A Master's degree is highly desirable.

To apply, please submit cover letter of interest, resume, five work related references, and salary history to: Paul Kimura. Formal job announcement is available on our website or by request. Final filing date is February 28, 2005.



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