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**Sinkhole repair inches slowly forward**

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda reached a critical compromise agreement with the Regional Water Quality Control Board that should speed the progress of repairs to the Miner Road sinkhole.

A number of permits are still required, but that from the RWQCB is the most important and now more likely, owing to the city's agreement to increase the height of the reinforced concrete culvert by a half foot to provide better fish passage.

According to Orinda Public Works Director Larry Theis, the culvert will remain at 16-feet wide but the height will go from seven to seven-and-a-half feet. The additional half foot will be buried with channel soil, which fish reportedly prefer to concrete; the soil also reduces the water velocity through the culvert.

RWQCB wanted even more

depth, but every inch increase affects a lot of other things in the design, Theis said. This design change does not affect the culvert's flood capacity, which was a matter of concern to the neighboring homes. Theis also said that the compromise, reached March 30, took longer than Orinda wanted, as the city and RWQCB went back and forth on the issue. Based on the new final design, the city must obtain permits from all the regulatory agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Transportation.

The city is now making the necessary modifications to the engineering plans so that the final permit applications can be submitted. The design will also be reviewed by the contractor for a new cost estimate, which can then be submitted to Cal-

trans, along with the plans, for the city's official funding request.

The city continues to coordinate its work with the utilities during the construction of the sinkhole repair. EBMUD wants to turn the existing water mainline back on before April 10. That agency is expected to work with the city to either repair leaks so the mainline can be put back in service or to make other arrangements to ensure there are no service disruptions.

Contractor Chrisp Company is nearing completion of the centerline and edgeline striping along the Camino Sobrante and Manzanita Road detour routes. Theis says the remaining striping should be complete soon.

**Farmers Market**

... continued from page A1

As a nonprofit, part of the market's mission is educating people about the benefits of healthy eating. This year the focus is on families. There will be a children's activity every week at the kids' booth, which will be staffed by the market, but also by local community group volunteers. Activities will be based on the seasons, such as strawberry season, cherry season, and will also focus on obscure holidays like National Herb Day.

Michael Faircloth won't be returning to the farmers' market, having this year opened La Châtaigne bakery in Lafayette. The Bake Shop will be the new market bakery, and DeShasier raves about their wonderful bagels and unusual smears, new

breakfast sandwiches with eggs from Great Valley Poultry and amazing Mexican pastries. Other newcomers to the market include: Smit Ranch, provider of organic apples, preserves, honey and nuts; Michie's Munchies which will sell wheat free (not gluten free) bakery products and Anna's seafood selling fresh seafood.

DeShasier noted that the market has been an incubator for businesses, such as Donna Pickthall, who opened Genuine Goodness just down the street. The restaurant this year will be open on Saturday mornings, offering a modified, simpler menu featuring farmer's market produce in signature dishes.

**EBMUD's Orinda Water Treatment Plant back on line this month**

By Sora O'Doherty

The EBMUD Orinda Water Treatment Plant is on schedule to reopen between April 10-20. However, after the plant comes back on line, it will take five to 10 days before Orinda residents notice the improvement in the water, according to EBMUD Community Affairs Representative Kathryn Horn. That is because it will take that

long for the water from the plant to reach homes.

The most important work performed was the installation of a bifurcation valve. The valve, which is underground, allows EBMUD to split the plant in order to perform repairs on one side while the other side continues to operate. To do maintenance it was necessary to shut down

the entire plant, but in the future, that won't be necessary, Horn explained.

Other work on the plant included upgrading the electrical system and the chemical building. New filter underdrains replaced old ones, and EBMUD also worked on the water tank.

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