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## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**Presented by Lucy V. Pedregon**

**April 15, 2019**

### **DUCK FARM RIVER PARK**

Do you remember driving on the 605 freeway, either heading North or South, when there became a distinct smell in the air? That odor indicated one was in the Duck Farm area. It was an 80 acres landmark where ducks populated along the San Gabriel River for many years. On the other side of the chain linked fence the river flowed south delicately or furiously depending on the winter rain.

In 2001, an Environmental Engineer, HHIA Board Member and longtime Sierra Club leader named Jeff Yann envisioned a River Park for surrounding communities in the San Gabriel Valley to enjoy! The project composed of the Trust for Public Land, Rivers & Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Watershed Conservancy Authority (WCA) acquired the Woodland Duck Farm in the year 2003. The cost was 4 million in State Proposition 13 & 40 grand funds. The Rivers & Mountains Conservancy provided \$490,000 to fund the development of the Duck Farm's Master Plan and Environmental documents.

When the planning stages began 19 years ago, I can recall attending public meetings the RMC held at the duck farm premise. By that time the ducks and odors had ceased. The Public Input meetings attracted many residents from the surrounding communities. We walked the premise from end to end, listened to presentations from various authorities then divided into groups to brainstorm exactly what our ideas of a park we envisioned. I became furious when hearing from others to make it a park for opened concerts! The noise level would have risen to disturb the nearby neighborhood and the area would have been covered with debris. Others wanted an equestrian area, not a bad idea. Most people wanted a park with playgrounds, basketball & baseball fields. We had that already at our local parks! Why duplicate? I suggested a sanctuary park for birds and natural vegetation planted with a stream for children to frolic to see nature at its best. Walking trails zig zagging with an occasional educational post to read. All to enjoy with the scenic view of the river flowing. Nineteen years have passed and I am thrilled to see the outcome of it all!

On March 21, 2019 dignitaries gathered such as Hilda Solis, Supervisor District 1 & WCA Governing Board Member, Mark Stanley, MC. - & RMC/WCA Executive Officer, Mark Pestrella - Los Angeles County Department of Public Works & WCA Board of Officio Member, Dan Arrighi – WCA Governing Board Member, Sam Pedroza – City of Industry & friend of Jeff

**Yann, and our very own former HHIA Board Member and active Sierra Club member named Joan Licari was present at the Duck Farm Park dedication! Joan did a beautiful Tribute to Jeff Yann, "The Man with a Vision for a River Park". The Yann family, wife, son and grandchildren were present on this occasion. Supervisor Hilda Solis presented a Los Angeles County Scroll to Jeff Yann for his environmental dedication of which was received by his wife posthumously. When all speeches ended, the team of dignitaries gathered along the side of the river (separated by the chain linked fence) to do the ground breaking with golden shovels indicating construction beginning. The park project will take seven months with an additional 9 – 12 months for plant establishment. In the meantime, The Duck Farm River Park will be seeking a new name for the ribbon cutting! Do you have any suggestions?**

**Time has surely passed quickly and HHIA is anxious to see you at the "Ribbon cutting" of the new park! See you there!**