

**Salinas Californian**  
**Soapbox Editorial**  
**By: Steve McShane**  
**12-1-13**  
**Word Count: 336**

It is with great urgency that the Salinas Valley needs to coordinate efforts to better manage the Salinas River. For more than ten years the river has been allowed to become overgrown and ultimately present the greatest flooding hazard the valley has seen in decades.

The Salinas River has the unique title of being known as one of the largest subterranean channels in the United States. Annually, it moves hundreds of thousands of gallons of water from great distances to the Monterey Bay.

The river's unique geomorphology sets it up for what geologists and historians know as hundred year floods on a epic scale. These floods can do hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to private, public and environmental interests. Additional costs include loss of viable farm ground, impaired highways and suspended work.

At present, the river has seen little attention from any of the partners that have an immediate interest in it. While a coalition exists for its stewardship, lack of funding for planning and maintenance has resulted in a dire situation. Some hydrologists estimate the river is at less than ten percent of its healthy carrying capacity.

Recently, the City of Salinas entertained a presentation by the Salinas River Channel Coalition on the subject. As a resident and business owner in the floodplain, I know well the grave danger the river presents should it go unchecked. I invite you to join me and the City of Salinas in an effort to draw regional, state and federal attention to this important matter.

One immediate action you can take is to contact the Monterey County Farm Bureau and pledge your assistance to the Salinas River Channel Coalition at 831-751-3100. You can also contact the offices of your County and State Elected Officials with your interest in better managing the Salinas River. Many remember the floods of the 1990's and millions of dollars in damages. It behooves us to be prepared.

*Steve McShane is Salinas City Councilman and can be reached at:*  
[steve@mcshanesnursery.com](mailto:steve@mcshanesnursery.com) or (831) 970-4141