

RIVER'S EDGE People Power at El Rio

By Sean McDonald

The mobile society stops moving at El Rio Mobile Home Park.

Founded in the 1920s as a car campground, El Rio snoozed undisturbed while buildings went up, roads were widened, population doubled and the decades passed.

Some people at El Rio have lived here for 30 years, or 40 years or 50 years depending on who you ask.

names have faded into history.

By the office a bulletin board announces community events and the minutes from the latest residents association meeting. Someone has posted a handwritten warning entitled, "My Bad Experience" with a certain mobile home dealer.

The coaches themselves are mobile-home history. There is a tan-and-white Paramount, vintage 1956; a



Last summer residents heard rumblings from the River Task Force, the advisory committee responsible for San Lorenzo River development plans, about widening the river near El Rio and establishing benchmarks to bring back natural vegetation and wildlife. Residents would have to be relocated.

The plan, which has since been modified to leave El Rio intact, was

"From the town clock to the freeway will be an area of major change in the next decade because it's a major entry to the city and it's not up to its potential economically," says Bruce Van Allen of the River Task Force.

The latest plan for the river leaves El Rio land basically untouched, but El Rio residents are not calmed. In fact, they're more vigilant than ever.

El Rio.

"We didn't know anything about River Street West [condominiums, which overshadow the park and cause noise, according to some residents] until after the building started. Now the planning department informs tenants, not just owners, about building plans in the area," says Marcus. Currently, residents own their homes but rather rent the land under

35-year El Rio resident Earl Galt