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City Shaping Marsh State Park Plans

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general plan for the state because restoring the home quickly is essential, and the state probably would not be able to start planning for several more years. The City can complete the plan in less than two years.

EDAW is a land and community design consultancy. Its roots in California landscape architecture design go back to the 1940s. The firm now has offices worldwide as well as in San Francisco.

"It's still a slow thing and it (restoration) won't happen overnight. The General Plan will reflect what residents want: an interpretive center, recreational use, trail connections," Bronzan says.

"The City got involved during discussions of annexing the Trilogy development," he says. "Up until then, the Marsh house was outside the city limits, and we had no real ability to do much. But, when Trilogy annexed, 66 acres of the park came into the City along with the John Marsh house."

Born in 1799 in Massachusetts, John Marsh was one of the early white settlers in California, and his letters to friends, business connections and relatives back east are considered responsible for bringing many of the early East Contra Costa settlers to the region.

He attended Harvard University, later studied medicine in Boston and

then came west by way of Minnesota, arriving in Los Angeles in 1836 where he started a medical practice. Tiring of medicine, Marsh explored Northern California before buying a large rancho named Los Meganos (the sand dunes in English). He built the large stone house outside what is now Brentwood before he was murdered near Pacheco in 1856.

Over the years, the home fell into disrepair, and many efforts locally and at the state level were initiated to save the home. Late last year, the home became part of the greater 4,000-acre John Marsh/Cowell Ranch State Park.

Bronzan says nearly \$2 million in funds from the Trilogy developer, the state and City of Brentwood is available to provide stabilization of the house.

As planners were preparing an archaeological inventory of the site, they began discovering artifacts some of which date back 7,000 years.

"So what originally had been a push around John Marsh's home is now broadening into an exploration of clues that the area had been used for thousands of years before Marsh or the Spanish arrived," Bronzan says.

The City will be holding public meetings about the plan's progress to collect community ideas on the park's future use, he says.



— Photo Courtesy of the East Contra Costa Historical Society & Museum

The John Marsh home site for which the City is developing plans for future public use.