

# Visionary sees water in every creek bed

By ERIN COHN  
Staff writer

Down the back roads of Buckeye, near Georgetown, a visionary resides.

•Ellsworth Rose heads a one-man campaign to build earthen dams on dry creeks. "I know it'll work," Rose said

Ellsworth Rose, a former electrical engineer for the State of California, has an idea that he cannot put aside.

He has written numerous letters to Vice President Al Gore, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Forest Service officials, the Bureau of Reclamation, the State Department of Water Resources, and even the El Dorado Irrigation District.

Rose's mission: to get someone to listen.

"You send your ideas upstream, through all the various bureaucracies, and hope it doesn't fall through the cracks," Rose said.

Rose's idea, essentially, is to build earthen dams on dry creeks in the mountains. Rain-water would run down the creeks slower, rather than flash flooding in the rainy season and drying up in the summer. Water from the creeks will then run into reservoirs at a slower rate over a longer period of time.

According to Rose, this will save run-off water for use year-round.

Rose, who worked for the state for 40 years, put his idea together after witnessing the massive rush of waters down the dry creeks in the George-



*I WAS A  
FORMER ELEC.  
ENGINEERING  
TECH.!*

Democrat photo by Bill Sullivan

**ROSE WATER** — Ellsworth Rose is convinced that earthen dams could change dry creek beds into year-round streams.

town area, creeks which in summer had been completely dry.

"Dry creek dams is simply a system of buying time during high water flows," Rose said. "Instead of water being lost to the ocean, it becomes stirred water for agricultural and domestic use."

In a letter to Gore, Rose writes, "(Dry creeks would) no longer stampede flood water through the area to lower elevations, thus it would have automatic control over flash floods. When coming into summer, instead of dry creek beds, you would have fish-supporting, all-season streams and lakes supplying irrigation water for lower elevations

through mid- and late summer and into fall."

Rose discovered that his idea was actually put into practice in the Emigrant Wilderness north of the Yosemite Valley by Fred Leighton between 1920 and 1940.

"Today this once barren area supports many all-season trout streams and lakes, nearly as popular as Yosemite National Park," said Rose.

But Rose's idea of damming the dry creeks goes beyond a new water source and flood control.

His vision encompasses a dry creek work program providing jobs for troubled youths, hydroelectric generators on the creeks producing

energy, preservation of a natural habitat for fish in year-round creeks, and increased timber in the forests.

"If this actually gets going, you'll see it cropping up all over the world," Rose said.

But Rose said the only hope he has of seeing his idea become a reality is if someone "like Senator Feinstein" could get the ball rolling. Rose has asked Feinstein to carry his proposal to Congress.

"I'm ready right now to go to Washington and aid in any way I can," Rose said.

But meanwhile, Rose, 60, a veteran of the Korean War, will continue his campaign of letter writing and research, and hope that someone is listening.

*NOT WHAT I SAID. I SAID HYDROELECTRIC  
COULD BE INCREASED IN HYDRO PLANTS DUE  
TO FULLER RESERVOIRS SUCH AS FOLSOM.*