

# Creek is flooded with kids' attention

*Students learn ways of nearby waterway*

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**N**ATIONAL CITY — Swollen Paradise Creek, which flooded out parts of 18th Street near Kimball Elementary School this week, didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the students who rededicated their commitment to their watery neighbor yesterday.

"Just like the flooding creek, we flow with nature," Kimball Principal Bill Cudog said.

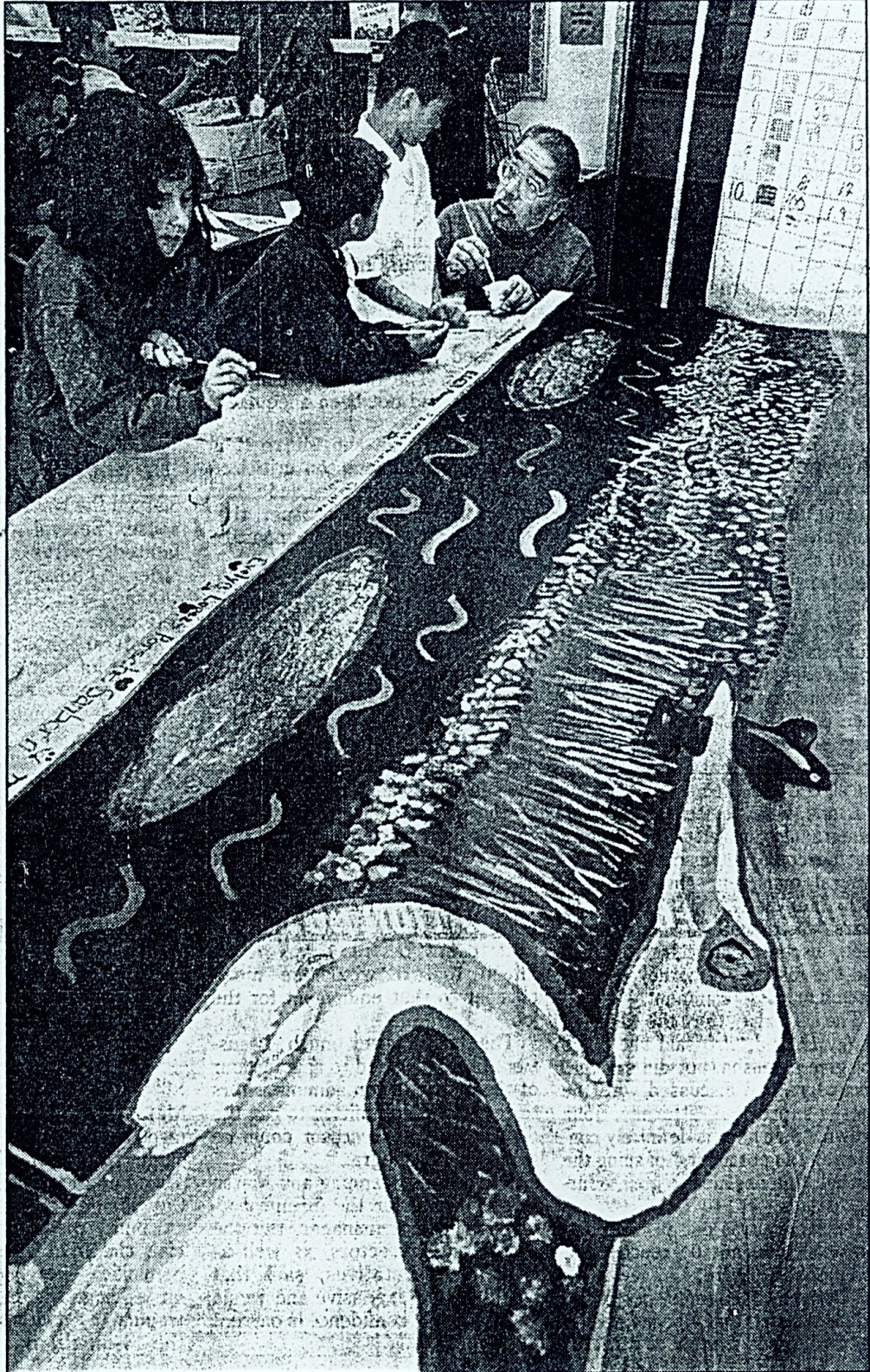
Kimball students, encouraged by tireless resident Ted Godshalk, have spent the past several months learning about the wetlands that flow past their playground.

Godshalk, who sits on the National City Planning Commission, has made the creek's preservation and restoration his personal quest.

Soliciting funds from city and federal agencies, Godshalk has obtained more than \$39,000 to protect the creek and create learning opportunities for the entire community.

The latest addition was a large, four-paneled mural painted by Kimball fifth-graders under the guiding hand of artist David Avalos. The mural, which has tropical bursts of color to depict fish, an egret and other wetland wildlife, was part of the inSITE '97 public art program.

To celebrate the mural and their environmental education, students displayed park programs they are designing to show the varied wildlife that lives in the creek. They sang "Paradise Creek Song" to the tune of "This Land is Your Land," and they encouraged the adults around them to love the creek as much as they do.



EDUARDO CONTRERAS / Union-Tribune

**Autograph time:** Artist David Avalos helps Cuauhtémoc Garcia sign a mural at Kimball Elementary School in National City. Cuauhtémoc's fellow students are Christina Hernandez and John Joshua.

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# Creek

## Planning commissioner seeks creek preservation

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"We have to save the creek because there are plenty of animals that have to live there," third-grader Jesus Renteria said. "We hope you will come to care about the creek like us."

Being stewards of the small waterway comes in little things, students said, such as not littering and not using the creek as a dumping ground.

"I have a question for you," Cuauhtémoc Garcia asked his fellow students. "Can we keep the creek clean?"

"Yes," they shouted.

Godshalk's efforts are not finished, he said.

He is still working with agencies to get a wetland delineation, a kind of wetland footprint to show which plants are the most sensitive, so students know not to trespass on those parts when doing their experiments.

He also is gathering more support for an observation deck where Roosevelt Avenue dead-ends at the creek.

"There are a lot of hoops they have had to go through," Cudog said. "But, as long as we have dreamers like the Godshalks to push the leaders, things will happen."