

**MINUTES**  
**Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council**  
**Jan. 25, 2018**  
**10am – 12pm**

**Attendance:** Tim Jensen, Rich Walkling, Kinsey Bell, Nathan Bickart, John Steere, Juliana Gonzalez, Amanda Booth, Jonathan Owens, Peter Mangarella, Chris Lim, Ann Riley

**1. Introductions** – Tim Jensen began the meeting at 10:08am.

**2. CUSP**—Josh Bradt was not present but sent the following update to Helen. The Stream Management Program for Landowners (SMPL) proposal is moving forward with Contra Costa County Flood Control. This would be a 2 year contract to help the County respond to creekside residents' concerns by conducting visual assessments, recommendations and technical assistance as needed. This was a successful model under the former Urban Creeks Council. We hope to partner with the CCCRC and NRCS to advance potential physical projects in the future. We intend to hire a part-time staff person once the contract is official. Be on the look-out for a job announcement. Please apply and/or distribute.

CUSP and California Watershed Network are working with State Senator Tony Atkins and other state legislators to advance state legislation to support the Department of Conservation watershed coordinator program. This program is slated to return after a number of years of no program if the water bond proposition passes in Fall 2018.

Tim mentioned that Watershed Day at the Capitol is April 25, and the next Contra Costa Watershed Forum meeting will be focused on how to get involved in local government (March 14 from 9:30-11:30am).

**3. Urban Tilth**— Nathan Bickart reported that their crew graduated in December, and they are looking for more opportunities for work. Urban Tilth is redeveloping their projects in Wildcat Canyon with the East Bay Regional Park District, including planting and vegetation management. They also recently held their annual MLK Day event at the Richmond greenway in collaboration with The Watershed Project.

**4. SPAWNERS**—Helen Fitanides reported that they recently finished planting 375 plants in their new demonstration garden at the El Sobrante Library Plaza. They also have an upcoming talk by Doc Hale on Native American ethnobiology; it will be held in the El Sobrante Library meeting room on February 6 from 7-9pm. They are also gearing up for Earth Day at the library.

**5. The Watershed Project**—Juliana reported that North Richmond was selected as one of 10 priority sites around the Bay Area, and their scope of work needs to be completed in the next 3 months. They are accepting nominations for their community advisory board now, and plan to meet the first week of February. The goal is to identify multi-benefit projects that touch on transport, urban greening, and runoff solutions. Juliana shared with the team the North Richmond Shoreline Visioning Plan, as well as the County's watershed connections project. Their aim is to take current opportunities and contributing to the design process.

Riley nominated Rich Walkling to the community advisory board. John Steere, Chris Lim, Nathan Bickart also expressed interest.

Helen asked for a letter of support from the council supporting TWP's application to the CalEPA Environmental Justice Small Grants program, for TWP's creek monitoring program. Riley made a motion that the Council provide a letter of support for TWP's creek monitoring program. The motion was seconded by Rich Walkling. The motion passed.

**6. SFEP**—Josh Bradt was not present but sent the following update to Helen. We released the North Richmond Shoreline Vision document and corresponding brochure last month. These are products of a year of community outreach and stakeholder engagement by SFEP and The Watershed Project. They are accessible from the SFEP home page at [WWW.SFESTUARY.ORG](http://WWW.SFESTUARY.ORG). The Vision considers the transition zone, an area between the wetlands and uplands, where significant opportunity exists for watershed protection as well as for improving quality of life for residents. 5 strategies are put from which specific project recommendations are made. The strategies are:

- Protect and conserve open space
- Improve & increase shoreline public access and understanding
- Advance community revitalization with urban greening and compatible improvements
- Restore and enhance a diversity of habitats and living resources
- Build capacity for equity, environment, and economic development among stakeholders

The North Richmond Shoreline was selected as a project site by the Resilient by Design competition assigned to the Mithune "Home" Team. They are seeking community/stakeholder advisors in their effort to develop a realistic and fundable design and social approach to sea level rise adaptation. Please check out the RBD website: <http://www.resilientbayarea.org/> for more info.

**Community Advisory Board – please join us!**

The Home Team is reaching out broadly to invite nominations to the North Richmond Resilient by Design Community Advisory Board. We are looking for representatives from diverse organizations and perspectives to help guide the community engagement and collaborative design process. The advisory board representatives will be collaborative, interested in the success of all members of the community and have a history or interest in community service specific to North Richmond or the Richmond area and an interest in supporting the Resilient by Design principles and goals. The advisory board commitment is to attend a TBD number of two-hour long meetings (likely 3-6) from the beginning of February through May 2018; conduct some outreach and cultivate interest by additional community members. A modest stipend for community leadership may be provided to the advisory board members.

Please consider nominating yourself and/or sending this invitation to others that would be valuable contributors to this process. Each person nominated should fill out the questionnaire link below by January 29th @ 12PM. We will select a wide range of individuals from varied backgrounds and perspectives for the board, and all nominated individuals will be updated regularly with progress from the team. We look forward to working together.

Follow this link to the nomination survey: <https://goo.gl/forms/Gu9QWFq9fL4OGQI73>

Juliana also reported that included in the North Richmond Visioning exercise was a survey of 300 residents and a scientific study. Phase two of the project will be to expand on water-related initiatives regarding access and flooding, with funding through the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

**7. City of San Pablo**—Amanda Booth reported that they are moving forward on the Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Trial project. CEQA has been completed for their Rumrill Complete Streets project. They expect that a one-year design process will start in May or June. The City Hall project slowed when they lost a staff member, but is getting back on track. They are moving along with modeling and recommendations for their Storm Drain Master Plan, including the backflow issue on Wildcat Creek at Rumrill.

Jonathan Owens reported that new data shows that the Rumrill culvert was 1.5 feet deeper than in the model, which may be due to a sediment issue.

Amanda said that they are planning a creek cleanup at Wanlass Park with Earth Team, likely to be March 3. They need to finish the demonstration project, and then add pathways and lighting.

The Down Town Streets team working on the issue of homeless encampments has been on the back burner because of other issues but is moving forward again. They are looking for funding to address the many encampments on Wildcat Creek.

Amanda requested a letter of support from the Council to for their application for Measure WW funding for the Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Trail project. She also requested a letter of support for their application to SB1 funding for the Rumrill Complete Streets project. Riley made a motion that the Council provide two letters of support for the City of San Pablo's projects. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Owens. The motion passed.

**8. Plaza San Pablo**—Rich reported on the planned trail between Church and Vale. Much design went into this project over the years. A 2200 foot long, 10 foot wide trail is planned, with benches, interpretive signs, and connections to the Women Infants and Children building and City Hall. The City owns from the center of the creek to the right bank, so that is where widening will occur, with flood plains up to 15 feet wide, plus additional setback 20-40 feet from the planned top of bank. Root wads placed in the creek channel and back channel habitat will help create pools. The draft design plan is now with the City for review. Please send comments on the Plaza San Pablo plan to Amanda by 2/2. Amanda can also report on this project at the next Contra Costa Watershed Forum meeting, Wednesday March 14 from 9:30am-11:30am.

Riley recommended having a spring field trip to see the project. She also said that the Council commends Amanda's work and city of San Pablo on the Plaza San Pablo project.

Riley's concern over the pinch points of the trail and creek in the new restoration reach between church and Vale has to do with the public fearing lack of public visibility when using the trail. This can result in a potential conflict between the need for streamside vegetation for erosion control and habitat and perceptions about public safety. It is best if we address this in any way possible with the design and building layout.

Amanda reported that the City has the following grants: \$1.3M from the State Coastal Conservancy; \$700K from the California Natural Resources Agency; and \$1M from Measure J Pedestrian Bike and Trail Facilities.

**9. City of Richmond**—Patrick Phelan was not present.

Juliana reported that the next round of State Coastal Conservancy funding that the Rollingwood project would be able to apply for won't be until May. However, the project still may not be shovel-ready at that time. The City connected with Contra Costa College and potential stakeholders. They may be able to use IRWMP funds to do initial needs assessments, as well as stormwater infrastructure assessment or modeling.

Rich Walkling reported that he visited the area with Patrick in December. Starting with talking to the community, and then removing invasive species and planting shade trees, is a good way to start. Juliana also mentioned that desiltation and barrier removal at the college should be on the agenda. Tim Jensen recommended the use of goats to deal with some of the cattails in the creek.

**10. County Watershed Program**—John Steere reported that the North Richmond Watershed Connections grant was awarded in June 2017, but CEQA needs to be done on two sections, so the project will probably not get going until next year. They are also moving forward on a Green Infrastructure plan with opportunities to engage grassroots groups. They will be collaborating with the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District and TWP on an Adopt-A-Spot program in North Richmond, with a focus on trash reduction but also “sense of place” projects. They will roll it out next year.

**11. Flood Control**—Tim reported that they completed the Wildcat-San Pablo Creek levee remediation project in November, and the staging area is now open. North Richmond is now in compliance with FEMA. The Department of Water Resources funded much of the project, with \$900K from the county general funds. FEMA was not able to fund the project because construction started before they could finalize a contract.

They are working on controlling the willows along Wildcat Creek so that they can get through and address the tire jams in the creek channel. They will be cutting through some of the willows and then sending goats in to graze the blackberry bushes so their crew can make their way to the creek.

The Trails for Richmond Action Committee is working on a proposal to put a trail along downstream San Pablo Creek, and have a meeting with Supervisor Gioia and Transportation Planning soon (possibly February 1).

**12. Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder Subcommittee**—Peter Mangarella reported that in Fall 2017 Paul Detjens conducted a site visit with participants from CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, among others. Gail Seymour was the lead at the time, and was interested in putting Wildcat Creek on their priority list; she then retired, and it doesn’t look like prioritization will occur. Maintenance and monitoring may be the better way to go. They are organizing a meeting with Flood Control to possibly do a thorough study of the fish ladder to provide the basis of a grant to support maintenance or replacement of the ladder.

Rich mentioned that the Park District did a fish passage study there in 2006. Riley recommended that Trout Unlimited set up a meeting with the county, and Peter will set up a doodle. Riley, Chris, and possibly Amanda are interested in attending. Riley made a motion for the Council to identify the fish habitat and passage issues from Rumrill to the sediment basin as a priority project. The motion was seconded by Rich Walkling. The motion passed.

**13. Financial subcommittee**—The next call-in meeting of the financial subcommittee will be **February 22 at 10am**.

**14. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports**—None.

**15. NEXT MEETING: March 22 (Moving to 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays)**

**16. WCSP Council website**—Helen presented the new Council website to the group. Preview the site at [www.thewatershedproject.org/Council](http://www.thewatershedproject.org/Council).