

MINUTES
Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council
September 27, 2018
10am – 12pm

Attendance: Chris Lim, Peter Mangarella, Elizabeth O’Shea, Anthony Falzone, Lana Roderick, Amanda Booth, Rich Walking, Josh Bradt, Ann Riley, Jonathan Owens, John Steere, Patrick Phelan, Tim Jensen, Jonah Landor-Yamagata, Danad’Angelo, Sarah Puckett, Suzanne Hartman, Nathan Bickart, and Virginia Northrop, Adele Ho.

1. Introductions –Tim Jensen began the meeting at 10:09am.

2. CUSP—Josh Bradt reported that they have offered their part time program manager position to Emmanuel Petersen, formerly with The Watershed Project’s Green Collar Corps. The position manages the Streamside Management Program for Landowners, serving property owners and residents with stream bank erosion and flooding issues in Contra Costa County. Those interested in the program can contact custreams@gmail.com.

3. Urban Tilth—Nathan Bickart reported that they have finished their summer apprentice program with middle and high schoolers. They have also begun a visioning and community feedback process for Wildcat Trail in North Richmond; Princess is leading the engagement process in an effort to make the trail more inviting to residents.

Nathan introduced Jonah Landor-Yamagata, who will be leading a year-round field work crew of college-aged youth, in partnership with the East Bay Regional Park District and the Contra Costa County Flood Control District. Starting on October 8th, they will be working above Alvarado Park as well as in Tilden Park, doing streamside stabilization and native plantings.

Nathan noted that one of their restoration sites on lower Wildcat Creek was recently grazed by the Flood Control District; some 100 plants were lost.

Adele Ho reported that the CEQA document for the North Richmond Farm and Fred Jackson Way Raingardens is nearing completion. A 30-day public review period will likely begin in October, and they hope to finalize it by the end of the year. The process has been complicated by a discovered archaeological site on the property; the rain garden design had to be altered to be shallower in the areas where they found archaeological items.

4. SPAWNERS—Helen Fitanides reported that they have a talk coming up on Tuesday October 8 at the San Pablo Library; Glen Schneider will be speaking about his Skyline Gardens project, where he led a hike over the summer. They recently adopted a section

of Castro Ranch Road and will be conducting their first cleanup there on Saturday November 17. They will also be holding a special Mushroom Nature Walk on the morning of Black Friday (November 23), led by Debbie Viess of the Bay Area Mycological Society. (That is, if we get enough rain in the weeks prior!) They will also be holding educational events with classes from Valley View Elementary School.

5. The Watershed Project—Helen Fitanides reported that the Coastal Cleanup Day event at Shimada Friendship Park drew 350 volunteers, who picked up 1,700 pounds of trash. The Creek Monitoring program received \$50,000 from the CalEPA’s Environmental Justice Small Grants program for their work in West Contra Costa County, and they are currently applying to the Rose Foundation’s Watershed Protection Fund to complete the data visualization dashboard that the CalEPA grant partially funds.

Ann Riley made a motion for the Council to provide a letter of support for The Watershed Project’s grant proposal to the Rose Foundation’s Watershed Protection Fund for their water quality dashboard. Virginia Northrop seconded the motion. The motion passed.

6. SFEP—Josh Bradt reported that they are partnering with The Watershed Project to conduct a needs assessment on water-related issues in the North Richmond community. The work is funded through the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, with the goal of identifying important projects to move forward to the grant proposal stage. This project comes on the heels of the North Richmond Shoreline Visioning Plan, and they have continued surveying key stakeholders and community members. SFEP and TWP will be surveying people on water needs at the North Richmond Shoreline Festival on October 6.

Josh is also planning a Bay Area Watershed Network meeting for early in the New Year, focusing on an in-depth dialogue on issue of homeless encampments in creeks. If anyone has effective programs in this area, please contact him and attend the meeting.

7. City of San Pablo—Amanda Booth introduced Suzanne Hartman, who is a Civic Spark Fellow. She will be looking into a possible plastic straw ban as an extension of the plastic bag ban.

Amanda reported that they will be partnering again with Kids for the Bay to do cleanups in Davis Park. The Plaza San Pablo road project should be completing this week (roads and bioswales); they have started new grading for the City Hall building, and are tentatively scheduled to be done by next summer. The West County Health Center has submitted plans through the state process, and there are only two lots left to be developed. They’ve started demolishing DMC and they have submitted early concept designs. The El Portal Greening Project on El Portal from Church to Fordham is at 90% designs, and is expected to go to construction in early 2019 (this was the location of the Council’s last site visit).

They are submitting a concept proposal for the Urban Parkways grant, which is in conjunction with Prop 68 grant funding coming out in the future. State Parks is planning to do a workshop about the Prop 68 guidelines at San Pablo Library tentatively scheduled for October 9th. They will also be doing a full proposal for the Prop 68 grant in the future; there will be a lot of public outreach in advance of the proposal. Contact Amanda if you're interested in being involved and she can send the invite directly when those public outreach events are scheduled.

They hope to redevelop a 9-acre parcel on Moraga Road into a soccer field and park which can also be used to hold stormwater during high rainfall events. The field abuts Rheem Creek in Rollingwood, which has recurring flooding issues.

They are starting their Green Infrastructure plan and there will be a public outreach meeting for that as well. They will start their Direct Discharge plan for trash reduction in creeks; please tell Amanda about any trash cleanups folks are doing so the City can make sure they are included in the City's efforts.

They will be going for an EPA grant in the future, but it will be focused on policy rather than restoration.

They finished their Storm Drain Master Plan, it's on their website; they will be presenting to council later in the year, and then deciding on priority projects. A probable priority will be a discharge pipe on Rumrill that gets filled up with sediment.

San Pablo, along with several other cities, has an Air Quality Management District grant for a Cleaner Contra Costa website where teams and cities can compete for prizes for greenhouse gas reduction. The Cities of San Pablo, Antioch, and Walnut Creek will be doing specific outreach around this. The website will be similar to the Fremont Green Challenge website (<https://www.fremontgreenchallenge.org/>).

8. Plaza San Pablo—Rich Walkling reported that the project is in the 90% review phase, and they are going over comments with the City of San Pablo next week. They are on schedule for construction next summer, but that will depend on permitting agencies. There have been some minor grading changes since the last Council meeting, but no major changes.

Amanda also reported that Salesian High School is still pursuing grants for restoration on their side of creek.

9. City of Richmond—Patrick Phelan reported that they are working on the Mira Flores Project, which includes the daylighting of Baxter Creek. The senior housing project and park are complete, and grading has started for the creek restoration project. They held the 2nd annual Coastal Cleanup Day event at Hilltop Lake on Garrity Creek, where they

installed their first trash capture device. The Via Verde project on San Pablo Creek is going to construction in Spring 2019; included in the project is extending a culvert due to erosion damage after a prior culvert's collapse. Lastly, a proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy for planning and design in the Rollingwood area has been recommended to the Coastal Conservancy Board. American Rivers was the lead on the project, with partnership from the City of Richmond and The Watershed Project.

10. County Watershed Program—John Steere reported on their direct discharge plan, which uses an innovative program to engage homeless on creeks. Running for a year now, the program exchanges homeless services for help cleaning the creeks. They have collected 58,000 pounds of trash so far.

They are also working with TWP and UC Berkeley students to write a white paper on the green benefits district. The North Richmond Watershed Connections project has \$900K to implement urban greening infrastructure, wayfinding, tree-planting, and a bioretention basin on Urban Tilth's farm. The project has so far received awards from Sustainable Contra Costa, the Board of Supervisors, and the California legislature.

11. Flood Control— Tim Jensen reported on an ongoing issue happening at the East Bay Regional Parks trail on Wildcat Creek east from Verde Elementary. Where the trail dead ends, a fence was torn out, and there are ongoing problems with homeless activity and people driving motorcycles in that area. The Railroad put in another fence, but the Regional Parks bollard has now been removed and cars have ended up in creek. There is a push from East Bay Parks and Supervisor John Gioia to close this section of trail permanently. They note that it would be a temporary solution until a \$6M structure is built over railroad tracks (which would lengthen the trail and connect it over the tracks), but the project is not funded and has no timeline. In the meantime, a concrete barrier has been requested to close the trail east of Verde Elementary.

Tim said that they have a trash cleanup tomorrow, September 28, partnering with Friends of San Ramon Creek, Save Mount Diablo, and the Walnut Creek Watershed Council. On October 4 they are having an invasive plant education and recruitment workshop at Diablo Valley College. The goal is to map and remove Arundo in the San Ramon Creek Watershed. The first Arundo removal event will be held on October 20 in Danville. The Flood Control District will also be holding a willow and cottonwood bioengineering workshop in early 2019 on the Upper Sand Creek Basin project.

Tim also reported on an illegal dumping task force that has been put together by the county. The District Attorney's office is at the table, and they have plans to reach out to cities as well. The goal is to collaborate to determine the issues and identify the best responses, including cameras and enforcement protocols such as fine increases. They will produce a report to the Board of Supervisors in October.

Virginia Northrop said that this has also been a big issue for the East Bay Municipal Utility District, especially in the vicinity of drinking water and steelhead-supporting creeks. They are adding cameras in important places such as the Pinole Y.

Tim responded that so far the Sheriff, Public Works, and East Bay MUD have been planning toad cameras at this location, which underlines the need to coordinate.

John mentioned they he recently discovered a Cal Resource Agency grant to the county which allows free tire recycling, of which TWP is now taking advantage.

Jonathan Owens mentioned that county maintenance on Lower Wildcat Creek will be producing willow stakes – if anyone needs some, please contact him or Tim. Nathan Bickart of Urban Tilth expressed interest.

12. Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder Subcommittee—Peter Mangarella reported that they cleaned out 80% of the Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder on Coastal Cleanup Day. They cleared 3,000 pounds of trash, debris and sediment with the help of volunteers and county staff. TWP and Chevron had already done a trash-focused cleanup the week prior, so it was mainly sediment and debris that remained. They will be holding another cleanup to finish the job on Saturday September 29. They will then install staff gauges along the low flow channel to monitor flows and sediment accumulation. The monitoring plan includes monitoring water levels remotely during storms, and measuring sediment depth in the ladder after large storms. The goal is to determine how sediment accumulates, along with tracking flow and depth. The plan has been submitted to Flood Control for comments.

13. Financial subcommittee—Sarah Puckett reported that the main upcoming grant opportunities include USEPA (request for proposals expected in October), SF Bay Restoration Authority (proposals due 11/26), and State Coastal Conservancy (request for proposals should be out in Winter 2018-19). These and more are listed in the grant document prepared by Sarah for the Council; for access to the document, please email helen@thewatershedproject.org. The next call-in meeting will be Thursday October 25 from 10-11am.

14. Prop 3/Water Bond update—Ann Riley reported that Assemblymembers Nancy Skinner and Tony Thurmund have endorsed Prop 3, which would provide funding for water groups, including \$170M for urban stream restoration, \$300M for fish habitat restoration, and \$400M for green infrastructure/stormwater. It would also make Resource Conservation Districts eligible to receive funding, and it would be continually appropriated, meaning it would not be necessary to wait for the budget each July.

15. EBRPD Trail Standards—Adele Ho reported that she visited the Wildcat Creek Trail in June, and noticed that it had been widened and covered in gravel. The East Bay Regional Park District said it was a fire road and must be that wide, but she was unable to get an answer on the standard width for trails that double as emergency access

roads. In other places, the standard width is 12; she measured 18-19 feet in places on the Wildcat Creek Trail. She submitted a letter to the Park District, which they responded to, but she has still not received an answer on standard width.

Riley said that she called the Park District regarding this topic, but her call wasn't returned.

Adele asked for a letter from the Council supporting her letter. Ann Riley made a motion for Adele to draft a letter on the Council's behalf to the East Bay Regional Park District regarding this issue, and invite a representative to attend the Council's next meeting. Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed.

16. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports—

Josh mentioned that one of the issues that The Watershed Project has been discovering is that many community members choose bottled water over tap water, which brings up the issue of home testing for drinking water, specifically for lead.

Amanda said that it might make a good grant-funded project.

Virginia recommended reaching out to EBMUD, and said she can help if necessary. They have a Drink from the Sink program currently underway.

Chris Lim said that they are doing something similar in Pittsburg/Antioch/Bay Point, and that they should coordinate.

Tim said that the county is moving forward with a polystyrene ban. They will have a public hearing early in the New Year, and are going for implementation in June 2019.

Peter said that Trout Unlimited is starting a Bay Area Youth Flyfishers program, and they have an event on November 4th. www.youthflyfishers.org.

John mentioned that there has been poor coordination between the Air Quality Management Board and the Water Board. He feels that it is a missed connection, and funding opportunities are being missed.

Riley replied that thus far the funding requirements (specifically AB32) have been very inflexible in that projects had to demonstrate a reduction of carbon, which can be complicated for tree-planting projects, for example. Recent developments have made the funding more flexible, so coordination between the agencies will now be important.

Chris said that the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District is working with vector control on a restoration plan for the Sacramento Perch (a native, endangered fish) to replace the Mosquitofish (not native). They have been doing site visits to ponds that can grow out fish, including one at Point Pinole. There may be an opportunity here for kids to grow out the fish in their classrooms and release them into the ponds (similar to Trout in the Classroom).

Sarah said that the Public Review draft is available for the Contra Costa Watersheds Stormwater Resource Control Plan. It includes 18K projects, most of which were generated by a GIS program, but also include projects from the Council and other local groups. Comments are due October 1; visit the Contra Costa Clean Water Program website(<https://www.ccleanwater.org/>) to submit comments. A list of projects is available in Appendix F of the Plan, but a map won't be available until perhaps January. In the future, projects can be added to list, and therefore eligible for grant funding.

17. NEXT MEETING: Thursday November 15 from 10am-noon.