

MINUTES
Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council
November 15, 2018
10am – 12pm

Attendance: Peter Mangarella, Amanda Booth, Sarah Puckett, Michelle Cordis, Dana d’Angelo, Josh Bradt, John Steere, Tim Jensen, Rich Walkling, Nathan Bickart, Jennifer Rippert, Jonathan Torres, Joey Baker, Suzanne Hartman, Juliana Gonzalez, Ann Riley, Jonah Landor-Yamagata, Luis Rodriguez, Alu Gi, Marlow Ray, and Erica Nunez.

1. Introductions –Tim Jensen began the meeting at 10:05am.

2. CUSP—Josh Bradt reported that they have hired a part time staff person, Emmanuel Peterson, for their Stream Management Program for Landowners. He will be responsible for neighborhood workshops and Council workshops, along with site visits. Helen will distribute the flyer to the Council once it’s completed. Emmanuel will also lead the community outreach element of a small restoration project on Codornices Creek. Ann Riley reported that while Prop 3 did not pass, they are working with State Senator Toni Atkins to try to get a legislated bond act.

3. Urban Tilth—Nathan Bickart reported that their field crew has been working in the Wildcat and San Pablo Creek Watersheds, as well as the Cerrito Creek Watershed, with Friends of Five Creeks. It is thanks to the partnerships and collaborations in this room that has allowed the field crew to work year round rather than just seasonally, due to the diversity of projects that they now work on. Also, their scheduled event for this Saturday is canceled due to poor air quality.

Jonah Landor-Yamagata from the field crew reported that on Cerrito Creek west of San Pablo, they’ve been doing thornless blackberry removal with Restoration Design Group. On lower Wildcat Creek by Fred Jackson, they’ve been doing removal of ivy, sheet mulching, and planting native plants at 4 sites. They have also removed tire and log jams on the creek. The crew also works above Alvarado Park and in Tilden Park.

Adele Horeported through Helen Fitanides that the CEQA document (IS/MND) for the farm and the Fred Jackson Way rain gardens has been tentatively approved and the 10-day appeal period is underway. So, they expect a final CEQA document (in this case a Notice of Determination from the County) by the end of the month.

4. SPAWNERS—Helen Fitanides reported that their volunteer cleanup on November 17 is canceled due to poor air quality, and their Black Friday walk on November 23 is canceled due to lack of rain (and therefore lack of mushrooms). They tabled at the North Richmond Shoreline Festival in October, and are planning a volunteer appreciation workday for December 15.

5.The Watershed Project—Juliana Gonzales reported on their IRWM project in North Richmond and Rollingwood. They’ve been doing broad community engagement and data collection on a variety of water-related projects, working with their Green Collar Corps (local youth) on outreach; one-on-one interviews with stakeholders; and working toward an urban greening master plan for North Richmond, incorporating regional stormwater plans. Resilient by Design’s Mithun firm will continue to assist with this project. They are also looking for community members to use test strips to test their tap water, and participants will get a water bottle as a reward.

They are also beginning their adopt-a-tree program; installing drought-tolerant gardens; continuing their block ambassadors program; piloting a Kids in Creeks, Watershed-based curriculum at Verde Elementary; and they have taken walks in Rollingwood to identify sites for trees.

They have also been working on an update to the Living with Creeks brochure for the County, and are looking for input on the right approach to bank management. Amanda said that San Pablo has a brochure that she will send to Helen.

They are having an oyster monitoring event on the evening of Nov. 25 to finish up their monitoring for the fall; the good news is that oysters are returning to the reef after the large die-off that came as a result of low salinity in the bay during the Winter 2017 rains.

Helen reported that they have been working with students at Diablo Valley College on monitoring Grayson Creek, which runs through their campus. They are also looking for volunteers to test stormwater from first flush, using the same strips that they’re using to test drinking water. They also have been approved for \$25K from Rose Foundation to expand the water quality dashboard that is currently funded by CalEPA and will be housed on TWP’s website.

6.SFEP—Josh Bradt reported that they are closing IRWM round 1 grants for Urban Tilth, TWP, and SFEP (from 2012). They will be seeking Metropolitan Transportation Commission funds to supplement some grant funds lost in the process, and will be doing four GI retrofits including the San Pablo stormwater spine project. They have also been working with MTC admin to better incorporate green infrastructure in the Bay Area.

7.City of San Pablo—Amanda Booth introduced Jonathan Torres and Joey Baker from Salesian High, who are looking into restoring their side of Wildcat Creek bank, across the creek from the Wildcat Creek Trail project.

Amanda asked for a letter of support for the City of San Pablo’s application to the EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund, to create an alternative compliance or mitigation banking/trading system. This has potential to create funding for Council projects.

Amanda has been working to gain support for this idea for several years, and it is finally getting traction. The grant application will include funding for a pilot project. Rich Walkling made a motion for the Council to provide a letter of support for The City of San Pablo's application to the EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund for their mitigation bank and trade system project. John Steere seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The City will also be applying for Prop 1 funding through IRWM to match the EPA funds (a 50:50 match is required) to design the pilot project. The project is on Sutter, where there are a lot of flooding issues as there are no storm drains; they would add green infrastructure to act as storm drains from 23rd to Rumrill.

They will also be applying for Prop 68 (State Parks) funding for their project on the section of Rheem Creek adjacent to the soccer field, for which they will also be seeking funding from CNRA.

The El Portal Greening project is going out to RFP soon, and work starts in early 2019. The Rumrill Complete Streets project is slightly delayed but they expect to complete on time with the RFP going out next fall. The City is looking into doing some storm drain art for this project as well; Helen will send TWP's contacts to Amanda.

Earth Team will be doing a tree planting at Wanlass Park at 10am on Saturday December 15.

They just received the contract for the Cleaner Contra Costa project. They will be creating an online portal for things you can do to reduce greenhouse gas use. There will be a prize for the group that reduces their use the most.

8. Plaza San Pablo—Rich Walkling reported that they've completed the 90% review with the City with no significant design changes, and it should be done by the end of the month. They do have to wait for permit comments to come in from the Water Boards and Fish and Wildlife. The Army corps of Engineers has completed their review and that should be in by mid-December. They are on track for 2019 construction for both the trail and creek restoration parts of the project.

9. City of Richmond—Patrick Phelan was not present but sent an update to Helen.

American Rivers has been fielding CEQA questions from the Coastal Conservancy for the Rheem Creek grant, as part of the final approval from the board.

Richmond continues to work with Caltrans to plan the installation of a hydrodynamic separator at the head of Meeker Ditch.

Tim Higaes, our Director of the Dept of Infrastructure and Maintenance Operations (DIMO – part of the former Public Works Dept) gave a presentation at last week's APWA Public Works conference that outlined the enormous challenges Richmond is facing with

illegal dumping and homeless encampments. Staff from San Pablo and Contra Costa County were in the audience and added to the discussion.

Richmond Engineering Dept continues to plan a mitigation project which will rehabilitate 1000 feet of Cerrito Creek near Central Ave and/or Rheem Creek.

10. County Watershed Program—John Steere showed a map of the county showing potential high priority green infrastructure projects. GI planning has begun, building on a blueprint to be completed next month. Several potential projects have been proposed in North Richmond, including an extension of San Pablo Ave to Crockett, where there are several other GI projects occurring; Parr Blvd from Fred Jackson to Bay Trail at West County transit station; and connecting North Richmond to San Pablo via Market (between Fred Jackson to Parr), which would be an ideal location for GI.

The Watershed Calendar is out, and it may be the last one that the county does.

The North Richmond Watershed Connections Project is coming along, and they are initiating 2 of the 3 components: Urban Tilth rain gardens in the spring, and TWP's adopt a tree program. They are waiting for CEQA for both components, which is scheduled to be submitted in January.

11. Flood Control—Tim Jensen thanked Urban Tilth for their assistance with the Wildcat Creek levee project, and their work on the Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder.

Michelle Cordis reported that they've been working downstream of the Richmond parkway on Wildcat Creek, doing some maintenance work and cleaning up what goats didn't eat. East Bay Regional Park District will be replacing the chain link fence/bollard near Verde Elementary, and reported that the area will not be closing to the public. Juliana said that Princess has been surveying residents on what they would like to see on that section of trail, including possibly connecting the trail to Market, or just making it a more appealing community space.

12. Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder Subcommittee—Peter Mangarella reported that with the help of the Council and Flood Control District, they cleaned out the fish ladder and it's ready for winter. They were hoping to do some additional trash pickup upstream of the ladder this Saturday, but are canceling due to the poor air conditions. They will be monitoring the ladder through the winter.

Amanda pointed out that there is a fairly large encampment between the San Pablo boundary and the fish ladder (downstream of Rumrill). A precedent was recently decided in court: removal of homeless encampments can violate their 8th amendment rights if there are not enough shelter beds in the area.

John Steere stated that over 100K pounds of trash has been picked up so far by homeless in the county's CORE program. Folks go out to clean up 3x a week.

13. Financial subcommittee—Sarah Puckett reported that CDFW Prop 1 (cross-border urban creeks and watersheds) and Prop 68 (fish passage and improved habitat) are due on Dec. 8. An application workshop will be held on Nov. 28. Prop 68 grant guideline reviews are in progress; CA state parks, State Coastal Conservancy, and CDFW are releasing those funds. RFPs are scheduled to be released next year.

Helen asked whether we should put the grants spreadsheet on the Council web page in view-only mode (folks wishing to edit the document would contact Helen to receive editing access). The Council approved the idea.

The next call-in meeting of the Financial Subcommittee is Dec. 20 at 10am.

14. EBRPD Trail Standards—Tim signed a letter of support for Adele Ho's original letter to EBRPD regarding trail standards. Helen will invite a Parks representative to the Council's January meeting.

15. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports—

Adele Ho reported through Helen that the Contra Costa Stormwater Resource Plan and GIS Project Viewing Tool are being finalized; they should be completed in January. Thanks to all Watershed Council participants who shared projects and project ideas last year!

Helen requested approval for a letter of support for the application submitted by American Rivers to State Coastal Conservancy for work on Rheem Creek. This letter has already been sent in support of the project.

Amanda made a motion for the Council to confirm approval of the letter of support for American Rivers to State Coastal Conservancy for work on Rheem Creek. Juliana seconded the motion. The motion passed.

16. NEXT MEETING: Thursday January 24 from 10am-noon.