

MINUTES
Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council
June 18, 2019
10am – 12pm

Attendance: Tim Jensen, Amanda Booth, Rich Walkling, Joseph Buford, Sharon Korotkin, Jonathan Owens, Anne Bremer, Paula White, Sarah Haselton, Princess Robinson, John Steere, Ann Riley, Virginia Northrop, Anthony Falzone, Juliana Gonzalez, Helen Fitanides

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

2. CUSP—Riley reported that the Streamside Management Program for Landowners (SMPL) has done about 20 site visits, many in the Upper San Pablo Creek Watershed. Homeowners are typically grateful to have an easier and cheaper option than putting in a retaining wall on their property.

Tim Jensen said that the Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies Association is watching this program to see if it is successful, with the goal of perhaps implementing in other counties.

Riley reported that AB 933, the Watershed Coordinator legislation, has passed the assembly and is now onto the State Senate committees. They already have endorsements from The Watershed Project and American Rivers, and it would be good to have others sign on. To do so, send Riley (rileywaterways@gmail.com) your name and title, the name of the group, and the group's logo.

3. Urban Tilth—Princess Robinson reported that the North Richmond Farm has 10 crops growing at present. The CSA has a full wait-list and accepts EBT. They've had over 20 volunteer events so far this year, and are planning a talent show at the farm in the fall.

4. Wildcat Creek Visioning Project—Princess reported that the project aims to beautify Wildcat Creek with some of the amenities that nearby creeks enjoy. She spent one year collecting feedback from neighborhood residents via a survey, and recently collaborated with The Watershed Project to host a community visioning workshop. She wrote a newsletter article summarizing her findings, and the next steps are to develop an action plan to implement the vision.

5. SPAWNERS—Helen Fitanides reported that they had a very successful Earth Day event last month, including a trash assessment behind the El Sobrante Library. Bob Flasher led a creek-bug-themed nature walk in early June, and Doc Hale gave both a talk and walk on the theme of Native American ethnobotany. Volunteers continued to work on their restoration sites on Wilkie Creek and San Pablo Creek behind the El Sobrante Library.

Upcoming is a nature walk in Kennedy Grove that will focus on Forest Bathing, a Japanese walking meditation.

6. The Watershed Project—Paula White reported that they did a trash assessment for Earth Day on Wildcat Creek at Verde Elementary, removing 1500lbs of trash including a lot of tires. Upcoming trash assessments on Wildcat Creek are on June 22 downstream of the fish ladder, and June 28 upstream of Richmond Parkway.

Anne Bremer reported that they are hiring for an Americorps educator position. This is a full-time position with an 11-month term. Please spread the word.

7. Water Needs Assessment update—Anne Bremer reported that The Watershed Project's North Richmond Water Needs Assessment is in the analysis and reporting phase. They worked with 54 NR residents who were interviewed on the topic of water (including sea level rise and stormwater, habitat protection and access to recreation, water supply, and wastewater and recycled water) and were invited to participate in an educational workshop. Some takeaways from the assessment include: 1) there is a lot of concern over tap water safety; and 2) most residents were surprised and concerned to learn how the wastewater treatment plant and the nearby community will be impacted by sea level rise. However, there is reason for hope because there is a very engaged and invested community in North Richmond, and momentum to make changes. Next steps include writing a report back to the community on the assessment's findings and developing a methodology for identifying and implementing key projects.

8. Community Based Ecological Solutions in Rheem Watershed—Rich Walkling reported that this project is a collaboration between Restoration Design Group, American Rivers, The Watershed Project, and the City of Richmond (with funding from Coastal Conservancy) to work on Rheem Creek in the Fordham area as well as at Contra Costa College. A door-to-door survey on neighbors' relationship to Rheem Creek and associated flooding will begin in July.

Tim Jensen said that Supervisor Gioia would be interested in hearing about the progress of this project; perhaps City of Richmond could present at a future meeting.

9. SFEP—Josh reported via Tim Jensen on two projects:

Horizontal Levee - We are receiving a portion of remaining Resilient By Design funding to advance strategies from the North Richmond Shoreline Community Vision and the work of the Mithun design team. Josh will be facilitating a stakeholder workgroup process for developing the horizontal levee concept with the West County Wastewater District's treatment facility as the anchor partner. The WCWD Board has allocated significant staff time and resources to this effort. As this group coalesces and gains traction, I hope we can plan a tour of the site for the WCSP Watershed Council (maybe in the fall?).

Green Infrastructure – SFEP and City of Richmond staff are exploring CA Natural Resources Agency grant opportunity (due June 28!) to fund implementation of the San Pablo Ave Stormwater Spine project at San Pablo Ave/McBryde that was pulled from the project due to PGE gas pipeline relocation costs.

10. Citizens for a Greener El Sobrante report—Sharon Korotkin reported that they have been working on the Mowery Park Project, with the goal of converting an old gas station on San Pablo Creek into a community park. It is on private property that is currently on the market and would have to be purchased or a collaboration built with the new buyer. The county doesn't have funds to support maintenance, but a solar farm might provide the needed funds for maintenance. She hopes to gain advice from the Council and support for the project.

Amanda Booth said that most State Coastal Conservancy grants as well as Prop 68 funds allow property acquisition. Ann Riley said that the Environmental Mitigation Fund might be a good lead. Tim Jensen recommended that the project be put on the trails development map for the area, and/or that it is included on the area Green Infrastructure Plan.

Ann Riley moved that the Council endorse the Mowery Park Project proposed by Citizens for a Greener El Sobrante for land acquisition and development. Rich Walkling seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11. City of San Pablo—Amanda Booth reported on the city's current projects:

- Plaza San Pablo: Many buildings are now up.
- Wildcat Creek Trail: Still waiting on permits. They are aiming to start with tree removal in February 2020 to avoid nesting season, followed by work in the creek when flow levels go down.
- El Portal: Construction planned to begin early next year.
- Rumrill Complete Streets: Extended, with construction planned for early to mid 2020.

They have also applied to the DWR Prop 1 for the Sutter Street Greening Project.

They will be hiring a CivicSpark fellow to work on complying with the Water Boards' mandate for no trash in creeks by 2022. Lack of infrastructure will make it very difficult as trash capture devices cannot be installed. Their Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge is currently underway, and they are working on a blueprint for placing electric vehicle charging stations around the city.

12. City of San Pablo Prop 68 grant—Amanda reported that they are applying to Prop 68 funds to build a park on 4 acres of a 9.5 acre parcel that is currently a soccer field. The parcel borders Rheem Creek and the Rumrill neighborhood. They have many options for development as the city owns the property, including perhaps a creekside trail. They are

gathering community input on what they want in a park, including amenities, safety, and overall theme (including natural disaster preparedness due to the Hayward fault, and a cultural mural).

Jonathan Owens recommended doing modular stormwater storage underneath the park, and the Council supports the idea of a creekside trail. There may be collaboration potential with the Rheem Creek project.

13. Plaza San Pablo—Amanda gave this update already.

14. City of Richmond—Patrick Phelan was not present, but Juliana Gonzalez reported that the Rheem Creek Project is now on the City of Richmond website. Ann Bremer said that they are making an outreach flyer to the community.

15. County Watershed Program—John Steere reported that the County is wrapping up their Green Infrastructure Plan. Funding sources are being identified, including partnerships with nonprofits. Setting up a Green Benefits District may be helpful, especially in the area between San Pablo and Wildcat Creeks. They are going to the County Board of Supervisors for approval of the plan in August.

16. Flood Control—Tim Jensen reported that there is no report to give. They appreciate that Urban Tilth is on the ground in the area.

17. Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder Subcommittee—Peter Mangarella wasn't present to report.

18. Financial subcommittee—Anthony Falzone reported that they are continuing to update the grants spreadsheet. The Flood Control District is applying to the Department of Water Resources' Urban Streams Restoration Program Grant, supported by FlowWest, Trout Unlimited, and The Watershed Project for the Wildcat Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project. Important other stakeholders include the City of San Pablo. The deadline is sometime this summer, and they will be requesting a letter of support from the Council closer to the date.

The next call of the Financial Subcommittee will be on July 18, 10am.

19. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports—Rich reported that Restoration Design Group is hiring for an entry level landscape designer (info [here](#)). Tim Jensen reported that County Public Works has hired 10 students and 5 of them are in the Flood Control Division.

20. NEXT MEETING: Thursday September 26 from 10am-noon.