

MINUTES
Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council
November 21, 2019
10am – 12pm

Attendance: Anthony Falzone, Amanda Booth, Joe Neugebauer, Emanuel Peterson, Juliana Gonzalez, Anne Bremer, Peter Mangarella, Tim Jensen, John Steere, Josh Bradt, Nathan Bickart, Rich Walkling, Sarah Puckett, Ann Riley, Sherry Stanley, Natradee Quek, Anu Gi, Solwazi Allah, Luis Rodriguez, Melinda Harris, Vinneka Redondo, Marlow Ray, Paola Casillas, Helen Fitanides

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

2. CUSP—Emanuel Peterson reported that they have done a compilation of their findings for their Streamside Management Program for Landowners (SMPL); they have done 32 site visits in the last year and the biggest problem they find is erosion, especially in the Lafayette and Walnut Creek area. They are starting to work on the more serious cases of erosion, using solutions like brush layering and brush matting.

Ann Riley said that they have a SMPL workshop coming up on Feb. 8. They will also be holding a workshop at the Salmonid Restoration Federation focusing on homeless management and restoration along creeks (April 2-3 in Santa Cruz). They have decided to wait a year to try to push forward with the fight for AB933. In the meantime, there are 3 bond acts (put forward by Senators Mullen, Garcia, and Allen) for water bond acts.

3. Urban Tilth— Nathan Bickart reported that Princess’ visioning process is still ongoing, and they are meeting with the county and East Bay Regional Park District to share the results of the survey.

Solwazi Allah reported that they have been working at the North Richmond Farm, removing ivy and blackberry (2300 square feet), then mulching and planting natives. The high winds have been felling trees, so they have been dealing with that too.

Alu Gi reported that at Alvarado, stormwater management, cobblestone walkway to divert stormwater to the creek. Also invasives removal (broom). Tilden: rerouting trails due to erosion, removing ivy and poison oak to clear trail.

4. SPAWNERS—Helen Fitanides reported that the El Sobrante Library is reopening this Saturday, and SPAWNERS’ 3rd Saturday Work Party on December 21 will be at that location. They have also been working with Sheldon Elementary students to do both in-class lessons and field trips/service learning to their Wilkie Creek Park restoration site.

5. The Watershed Project— Juliana Gonzalez reported that they recently completed their Block Ambassador program and will be creating a report on the benefits of the program. This project had some overlap with the Cal Fire tree planting project, which is also wrapping up soon. They are looking forward to starting the Watershed Connections grant with the county, with the hope that by the end of the process this community will have as many trees as they have room for. A database will house all records and help track...?

They have hired an education lead, and their education team is gearing up for a busy season in the new year in many San Pablo and Richmond schools.

They are also under contract with SFEP to continue the Water Needs Assessment and will be moving into the second phase of the project, which will match potential projects with the needs that the community has specified.

6. Community Based Ecological Solutions in Rheem Watershed— Rich Walkling reported that the topo clearing for sight lines was completed, and the partners had a community workday on site at Contra Costa College, which was the first time that they were able to see the site. Several community members were present, along with partners.

Anne Bremer reported that she and Sarah Puckett will be doing a joint presentation on the Rheem Creek and Three Creeks projects, focusing on how community restoration projects get underway.

7. SFEP—Josh Bradt reported that they are now the administrators for the Integrated Regional Water Management Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program. They have 11 partners under contract around the bay, with needs assessments wrapping up by the end of January, after which they will be moving on to finding projects that fit the needs of the communities. Partners (including The Watershed Project) will be presenting their findings on December 2. Drinking water is one of the issues of concern that is emerging from all of the needs assessments, and they will be trying to get a drinking water quality testing program going.

8. North Richmond Horizontal Levee Working Group update—Josh reported that they are having their 3rd meeting this afternoon with many stakeholders and property owners along the North Richmond shoreline to discuss planning the levee. They had a field trip to Oro Loma this week. They will be applying to the Wetland Restoration/Measure AA grant, due December 13. They would like to request a letter of support from the Council for the planning of a horizontal levee on the North Richmond Shoreline.

Amanda Booth moved that the Council support the North Richmond horizontal levee planning project for the upcoming grant application. Nathan Bickart seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ann Riley raised a concern that we may have so much sediment accumulation in this area that we should not build a horizontal levee, specifically in Castro Cove, where sediment is removed periodically.

Riley will be meeting with Phil William on Dec 13 to get his feedback on good and bad locations for a horizontal levee.

9. West County Wastewater District update—Joe Neugebauer reported that they are very involved in the horizontal levee planning group. They are hoping to build an interpretive center at their facility, which would be open for many environmental groups to use. Their pollution prevention program recently designed a tabletop model of a wastewater treatment plant that can be used in educational settings. One of their biggest issues is flushable wipes causing problems farther down the line; starting next year there will be regulations about what is actually “flushable.” Currently 80-90% of treated water goes back for recycling, including through the East Bay Municipal Utility District. They are currently hiring for a Health and Safety Officer.

Sherry Stanley reported that their plant is at sea level, and they would rather build a horizontal levee than a wall, in expectation of 10 feet of sea level rise. One issue to consider will be how to plant the levee so that it can transition from dry land to aquatic over time. She also said that they will be making the educational facility very accessible to the community.

10. City of San Pablo— Amanda Booth reported that they have selected a construction firm for the El Portal greening project between Church and Fordham, and the project is expected to start in early 2020, expected to finish in spring.

Construction on Rumrill won't begin construction until late 2020.

For the Wildcat Creek Trail project, they are working on getting some of the large eucalyptus trees and other trees taken down before nesting season next year. They have all the necessary permits and the request for proposals is out.

For the site adjacent to Rheem Creek, they have applied for Prop 68 funding and had a good site visit in October.

The City is developing a Litter and Illegal Dumping Task Force consisting of participants from different city departments; this issue has been identified as the community's number one concern. They will be going to council for approval of a plan to fund the program, which would cost \$750,000 annually. If received, there will be a big outreach campaign. They are also considering an excess litter fee for businesses that are contributing most to the issue.

They are also looking for grants for greening and flood reduction on Sutter Street, and for bridge replacement and creek restoration on San Pablo Ave.

11. Plaza San Pablo— Covered previously

12. City of Richmond—No report

13. County Watershed Program— John Steere reported that they are rolling out public outreach about their current projects, including to the local Advisory Committees in North Richmond and El Sobrante. They are talking about their multi-benefit priority projects, including Parr Blvd. They also presented with Juliana at the CA Stormwater Quality Association.

Their partners at CORE Creeks Team do outreach to homeless and give them access to services, as well as give them trash bags. Over 70,000 pounds of garbage has been picked up by the homeless so far. The team recently received an award.

They are interested in looking into creating a Green Benefits District for Richmond.

14. Flood Control— Tim Jensen reported that the Contra Costa Watershed Symposium is on December 5 at Saint Mary's College, with field trips following the next day.

The Three Creeks Project is moving along; permits and funding are in place and the project will be going out to bid soon, likely starting construction in May 2020.

15. Wildcat Creek Fish Passage Subcommittee— Peter Mangarella reported that they are interested in opening Wildcat Creek to anadromous fish, and in that vein, they have applied for funding to the Department of Water Resources' Riverine Stewardship Program. However, there are other impediments to fish accessing Wildcat Creek, including the CalTrans underpass/I-80.

Ann Riley said that the culvert at the former Big Lots is another issue for fish movement.

Sherry said that they will soon be renegotiating their contract with East Bay Municipal Utility District, and if there is a need for more water, to let her know.

16. Financial subcommittee— Anthony Falzone reported that the grants spreadsheet has been updated with Sarah Puckett's help. Trout Unlimited applied to the Riverine Stewardship Program for the Wildcat Creek Fish Ladder project.

The next call-in meeting of the Financial Subcommittee will be **Thursday February 13** at 10am.

17. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports—Emanuel said that they need willows for their Streamside Management Program for Landowners. Tim said that there are several projects in Danville that has excess willows; contact Michelle Cordis.

Helen reported that the Contra Costa Water Quality Database, housing The Watershed Project's data as well as data from other sources, will be online by the end of the year.

Amanda said that Census 2020 will be underway soon, and outreach is critical to getting people to fill out the census, and it helps the city get money. San Pablo and surrounding areas are traditionally undercounted.

Sherry mentioned that it is possible to take the census online and on paper, in addition to verbally.

18. NEXT MEETING: Thursday January 23 at 10am.