

**MINUTES**  
**Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council**  
**March 25, 2021**  
**10am – 12pm**

**Attendance:** Ann Riley, Jim McGrath, Peter Mangarella, Tim Jensen, Juliana Gonzalez, Joe Sullivan, Nathan Bickart, Scott Stoller, Jonathan Owens, Rich Walking, Anthony Falzone, Joe Neugebauer, Patrick Phelan, Jessie Alberto, Adele Ho, Amanda Booth, Matt Graul, Jeanine Strickland, Sarah Puckett, John Steere, and Helen Fitanides

**1. Introductions** –Tim Jensen began the meeting at 10:07 am.

**2. CUSP report** – Ann Riley reported that the Streamside Management Program for Landowners is up and running as normal. They do private property visits throughout the county, including city and unincorporated areas, so please refer people to them! Most of CUSP has relocated to Sebastopol and are working on an infrastructure bill requesting railroads to meet local standards when building.

**3. Urban Tilth report** – Nathan Bickart reported that their field crew is continuing as usual. The Lower Wildcat Creek mitigation project is finishing up with the county, so they're looking into ways to continue funding that work. They're starting to partner with the City of Albany on Codornices Creek next month and hope to partner on an Earth Day event in North Richmond. They are looking forward to collaborating with Balance Hydrologics and Resource Design Group on getting some public feedback on the Wildcat Creek fish ladder redesign.

Adele Ho reported that the Fred Jackson Way Rain Gardens project is awaiting final review from Contra Costa County. The North Richmond Farm Watershed Center is working on construction documents now, which include a greenhouse for the farm and a shade house that includes an area for soil sterilization for plant propagation. In addition, the developer for the vacant lot between the farm and Wildcat Creek (Center Point, a large warehouse development) recently submitted updated development plans to the county, which includes an asphalt path with trees.

Juliana Gonzalez mentioned the need to have a point person for contacts at the county so these things don't fall through the cracks, as it can be hard for the public to comment on plans such as these.

**4. SPAWNERS report** – Helen Fitanides reported that she and her husband have relocated to Nevada City, where she is now managing the Water Quality Monitoring Lab for Sierra Streams Institute. They are starting a family this year and needed a more affordable place to do that. Helen will be staying on with SPAWNERS and The Watershed Project through June to ensure the best transition for all her programs.

SPAWNERS has been interviewing candidates for the SPAWNERS Watershed Coordinator position and is making an offer this week to their top candidate. They also have their last virtual talk of the season coming up on April 15; Doc Hale will be talking about mountain lions in the East Bay. You can sign up for the talk here: <http://www.spawners.org/event/virtual-talk-mountain-lion-ecology/>

**5. The Watershed Project report** – Juliana Gonzalez reported that they are hiring for two positions currently (<https://thewatershedproject.org/green-careers/>). They are hiring for a Restoration Coordinator as well as an Outreach Coordinator, who will be helping facilitate the North Richmond Water Needs Assessment, which will be working on a tap water study.

They are partnering with County Flood Control, Trout Unlimited and Flow West on the Wildcat Fish Ladder project and will be submitting a statement of qualifications to the county soon. Their Earth Day event in North Richmond will focus on installing several Hope Gardens, and they will also be doing a big virtual event for households to explore their watersheds and learn about the natural history of the area.

**6. Community Based Ecological Solutions in Rheem Watershed** – Rich Walkling reported that they are seeking funding for subsequent phases of the project. Patrick Phelan reported that the City of Richmond’s Natural Resources Agency grant is in the second round and they have a virtual site visit next week.

**7. Brook Road Fish Passage, Restoration, and Bridge Project** – Scott Stoller reported that he is the project manager for both the Brook Road and Jewel Lake project and will be reporting back on their progress at subsequent meetings. The Brook Road project is kicking off next week and going straight into the design phase for the removal of a ford over Wildcat Creek downstream of Lake Anza. The plan will include improvements to the staging area and restoration of some stretch of the creek, as well as removing the fish passage barrier.

**8. Sediment Management in Jewel Lake** – Scott Stoller reported that Flow West led a 2017 study looking at sediment sources in the watershed and what to do about built-up sediment in Jewel Lake, and they came up with several potential options to address the issue. The Park District is now doing a feasibility study on the three different options for Jewel Lake – dredging the lake; creating a bypass around lake (potentially in conjunction with dredging); or restoring the creek entirely and removing the dam. The study should be complete toward the end of this year. The study also has a public outreach component, including outreach to stakeholder groups such as those on the Council, which will be initiated in the next several months.

**9. SFEP report** – Josh Bradt was not present.

**10. North Richmond Horizontal Levee Working Group update** – Joe Neugebauer reported that the Request for Proposals for horizontal levee designs is out and closes on March 31; they are expecting at least four proposals to be submitted and already have a review panel in place. They are asking for 30% designs for a living horizontal levee, with two options – a collaborative with landowners and stakeholders all along the shoreline, and a standalone project protecting the wastewater treatment plant and immediately adjacent shoreline. They are also finishing a charter for all stakeholders and landowners, and it's almost ready to be signed. They're excited to see this project move forward.

**11. West County Wastewater District update** – Joe Neugebauer reported that they are embarking on a plant beautification project to make the area around the treatment plant more inviting and attractive. Eventually they'd also like to put together a team to clean up dumping (and some more natural accumulation of trash) that occurs in the adjacent area of Wildcat Marsh.

**12. City of San Pablo report** – Amanda Booth reported that the Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Project is almost done! The city will wait to officially open it until their cameras are up and running, so they plan to open to the public on May 1. A virtual opening will include a video that was made in collaboration with The Watershed Project. A socially distanced celebration may also be included, depending on how things go with reopening.

The El Portal Greening Project is now complete. The Rumrill Complete Streets is out to bid, and bids are due back March 31. After much negotiation with PG&E and the East Bay Municipal Utility District, they are out and moving utility lines in advance of this project.

They were awarded a Prop 1 grant through the state for their Sutter Street Greening Project in the amount of 1.56 million. They have also been invited to the second round of CA Natural Resources Agency funding, which would fully fund the Sutter project. One caveat: there is concern from the City about their ability to accept the Prop 1 funds; if the project is designated as regulated rather than voluntary, they may not be able to accept the funding. Either way, they are looking at a 3-4 year timeline for the project.

They submitted an application to Prop 68 state funds for the Spark project near Rheem Creek, and included in the application was assistance for partner projects on Rheem Creek to help address flooding issues.

San Pablo will not be having an Earth Day event, but will be supporting nearby events, including through promotion. Please send your nearby events to Amanda at [AmandaB@sanpabloca.gov](mailto:AmandaB@sanpabloca.gov).

They are moving forward with their illegal dumping and litter programs after a hiatus and have recently pulled close to 400 tires from the creek. They will be working on an

enforcement campaign over the next 12 months. The problem has been even greater than usual this past year.

Lastly, AB 617 is an air quality program that now has great live data for Richmond and San Pablo, which can be used in grant applications.

Live Air Monitoring: <https://insights.aclima.io/richmond-san-pablo>

Air Monitoring Report/Program Information:

<https://www.baaqmd.gov/community-health/community-health-protection-program/richmond-area-community-health-protection-program>

[https://www.baaqmd.gov/~media/files/ab617-community-health/richmond/richmondsanpabloairmonitoringplanjuly2020-pdf.pdf?la=en](https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/files/ab617-community-health/richmond/richmondsanpabloairmonitoringplanjuly2020-pdf.pdf?la=en)

**13. City of Richmond report** – Patrick Phelan reported updates on their capital projects. Two of their underfunded projects have been nominated for the Quick Strike program from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The 13<sup>th</sup> St Project is connected and similar to the City of San Pablo's Rumrill Project, although currently it is just active transportation and not green infrastructure. Phase two of the San Pablo Ave Complete Streets project is the other project that was nominated.

This is a big year for projects in Richmond! The Yellow Brick Road and Richmond Wellness Trail both go to construction this year and include both green infrastructure and active transportation components. They also just broke ground on another full trash capture device on Cutting Blvd. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> hydrodynamic separator they are installing.

Also on Cutting and S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St they have a long bioswale which is about 5 years old and in need of some maintenance. The Watershed Nursery was on board to refresh the swale when COVID hit, and so now as things open up more the city is looking for more interest in refreshing it.

The city also applied for the Transportation Development Act fund, which has funds for maintenance and bike safety education. They received funds to hire SOS Richmond to do maintenance work, to the tune of 30 thousand.

**14. County Watershed Program report** – John Steere reported that the North Richmond Watershed Connections project has been underway for the last nine months. Contracts have been taking a while, but contracts with both Urban Tilth and The Watershed Project are almost in place. The first component will be urban greening on Fred Jackson Way, adding trees and filtration. They are looking forward to construction starting later this year.

The CORE Creeks team has been working with those experiencing homelessness in North Richmond, having them help collect trash in exchange for services. So far they have removed 20,000 gallons of trash on San Pablo and Wildcat Creeks. They are not

currently working with SOS Richmond, but the group is on their radar.

**15. Flood Control report** – Tim Jensen reported that they have been looking for opportunities to partner with CalTrans to reduce trash in the North Richmond area, and they've identified several sites for full trash capture devices. They have 4 million from CalTrans and hope to go to construction late next year.

An update on the development at 500 Pittsburg adjacent to Wildcat Creek: the trees along the trail, which were planted for mitigation, are suffering. The trees were surveyed, and it was recommended that many of the trees be removed and replaced.

Bids for the Lower Wildcat Creek project came in low, and they have awarded a contract to 4M Contracting. They will be kicking off in a month or so. Paul Detjens will be a part time construction manager for the project. More updates to come!

The Three Creeks project is making good progress. The landscape phase is complete or almost complete; Triangle Properties planted in Jan-Mar, and they are ready to reopen the trail to the public. There will not be a public ribbon cutting, but they've made a video and will be posting on social media.

**16. Wildcat Creek Fish Passage Subcommittee report** – Peter Mangarella reported that they have now been approved for full funding from the Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program for the fish ladder redesign and outreach effort. A request for Statements of Qualification has been released for a fish passage and storm drain design consultant, and also for a community outreach consultant. The goal is to have a shovel ready plan for the fish passage redesign. Permitting will have to be approved by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Water Boards have also been in touch about potential mitigation funds, but they may face the same issues as the City of San Pablo regarding accepting mitigation funds. At any rate, they are now fully funded but looking for design funds in a few years. Design elements include the sediment basin, fish ladder, upstream portion, and community engagement.

**17. Financial Subcommittee meeting report** – Anthony Falzone reported that they have been maintaining the [grants document](#).

**Next call-in meeting of the Financial Subcommittee: Thursday April 22 at 10am**

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

**19. NEXT MEETING: Thursday May 20 at 10am**