

MINUTES
Wildcat-San Pablo Creeks Watershed Council
May 20, 2021
10am – 12pm

Attendance: Tanya Eggers, Jim McGrath, Joe Neugebauer, Tim Jensen, Peter Mangarella, Rich Walkling, Anne Bremer, Amanda Booth, Anthony Falzone, Sarah Puckett, Helen Fitanides

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

2. West County Wastewater District update – Joe Neugebauer reported that they had their board meeting last night where they entered into an agreement with Mithun for the preliminary design and planning of the horizontal levee. This phase will include a 30% design for a living levee that will protect the treatment plant, as well as hopefully a conceptual design of a more extensive levee that would protect a larger section of the North Richmond shoreline. They also had a presentation about so-called “flushable wipes,” which cause clogs as well as contribute plastic to the environment. A current bill aims to require better labeling on these products, but a board member has also put together a proposal to ban the wipes in their district. They will also be doing a major social media campaign to educate the public about not flushing these wipes.

In addition, the regional board requires the wastewater district to do monitoring if there are sewer overflows, but creek access has been an issue. Does anyone know where they can get keys?

Tim Jensen said to contact him and he can provide keys.

3. CUSP report – Josh Bradt reported through Helen that they recently executed contract extension with the County to continue with Stream Management Program for Landowners (SMPL), which offers home visits by CUSP staff to evaluate creek conditions and work with residents on approaches to improve bank stability through soil bioengineering and understanding of stream dynamics.

3. Urban Tilth report – Nathan Bickart reported through Helen that Urban Tilth's Watershed Restoration crew has been hard at work this spring, trying to keep up with the weeds at Lower Wildcat, Cerrito, and Codornices Creeks. In addition to completing our annual spring mow of Albany Hill, we just installed a native plant demonstration garden at Unity Park (16th St and Ohio) on the Richmond Greenway- right underneath the mural on the East side of the plaza. All of the plants installed there were hand grown from local seed by our staff and apprentices.

We're gearing up for our Summer Apprenticeship Program for youth ages 15-18, meaning we'll have a cohort of inspiring young Richmond residents helping out in the creeks and gardens in July and August. Please say hello if you see us out in the Field!

4. SPAWNERS report – Helen Fitandides reported that they have hired the next SPAWNERS Coordinator, Lauren Iverson. She's currently enrolled in Merritt College's Landscape Architecture program and has previously worked with the SF Orchid Society. She also has an extensive background in science and technology communication and working on video campaigns to promote the work of nonprofits. We're very excited to have Lauren take on the coordinator role in June!

SPAWNERS is discussing doing a pared down nature walk series this summer, as well as small volunteer workdays.

5. The Watershed Project report – Juliana Gonzalez reported that they are finalizing the hiring process for two new employees; one for outreach and one for restoration. They hope to open the position covering more of Helen's scope of work in August.

They are the community partner on the horizontal levee project and have already started to work with Mithun; work will start in earnest in August, and they will be hiring consultants to facilitate advancing the work.

They had a very successful Earth Day, where they completed the Hope Gardens, had an Instagram Live event, and held a scavenger hunt.

6. Community Based Ecological Solutions in Rheem Watershed – Rich Walkling reported that they have received comments from the county on the 65% design plans and are now in the permitting phase. They are waiting to hear back from various funding requests for final design and implementation, including from the California Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Water Resources.

7. Brook Road Fish Passage, Restoration, and Bridge Project – Scott Stoller reported through Helen that this is a project to remove a concrete at-grade stream crossing between Lone Oak Staging area and Lake Anza, just below the Merry-go-round. The project is under contract with Restoration Design Group and preliminary studies have commenced.

Rich reported that they have completed the bioassessment and will be doing topo surveys soon.

8. Sediment Management in Jewel Lake – Scott Stoller reported through Helen that the team is refining four project concepts:

Concept 1: No action. Allow lake to transition to wet meadow.

Concept 2: Dredge lake periodically, construct fishway
Opportunity – preserve lake, provide fish passage with fishway

Concept 3: Remove dam, restore Wildcat Creek
Opportunity – riparian restoration, fish passage, sediment continuity

Concept 4: Modify dam and lake, construct bypass creek
Opportunity – fish passage, sediment continuity, preserve lake

We will be reaching out in the coming weeks to schedule outreach meetings with the stakeholders connected with the Council for mid-July.

9. SFEP report – Josh Bradt reported through Helen that SFEP is still working on updating its 5-year work plan, called the Estuary Blueprint.

10. North Richmond Horizontal Levee Working Group update – Josh reported through Helen that SFEP continues to work with West County Wastewater District and other shoreline stakeholders to move forward with preliminary planning work for a horizontal levee. Planning work will be funded through grant from the SF Bay Area Restoration Authority. WCWD issued an RFP for consultant services in March and should be done or close to final selection. Josh to schedule next meeting of the stakeholder group in June.

12. City of San Pablo report – Amanda Booth reported that the Wildcat Creek Trail is open! The project opening video has been very successful and the community loves the project. Huge thank you to the Council for the support on grant applications, Restoration Design Group for the work, and The Watershed Project for the signage. The City has an RFP out for monitoring the project over the next decade.

→ **The Council has tentative plans for a site visit on Thursday June 10 at 1pm.**

The Rumrill Complete Streets project had technical difficulties with the bidding process and had to reject all bids. They'll be moving forward with the bidding process again in the future.

They are still communicating with grantors for the Sutter Green Streets project, so opening for bids is still some time in the future.

They are working on an E76 to start the CEQA and design process for the replacement of the bridge at San Pablo Ave and 23rd St over San Pablo Creek. There are large transmission lines that will have to be dealt with, along with a lot of traffic management. Bike lanes and a roundabout are in the works, as well as some in-creek work.

Amanda will be out for the remainder of the year starting in July, and things will be tight at the City from a staffing standpoint. They will likely be sending written updates to the Council rather than attending in-person.

13. City of Richmond report – Patrick Phelan was not present.

14. County Watershed Program report – John Steere was not present, but Juliana reported that the Walkable Watersheds/first mile-last mile project will start in the next 3-4 months.

15. Flood Control report – Tim Jensen turned the floor over to Peter Mangarella, as the main Flood Control report has to do with the Wildcat Creek fish passage project.

16. Wildcat Creek Fish Passage Subcommittee report – Peter Mangarella reported that they are moving ahead with the county for a 3-year agreement starting in July. Gus Amirzehni is the project manager with the district working on the consultant selection process, which is in the final stages. The current funding from the Department of Water Resources is for planning, and they are in communication with the Water Resources Control Board regarding finding funds for the implementation phase.

17. Financial Subcommittee meeting report – Sarah Puckett reported that they have been maintaining the [grants document](#). One note is that the governor's preliminary budget includes [\\$5.1B for Water Infrastructure and Drought Response funding](#); we should keep an eye on this in the future.

Next call-in meeting of the Financial Subcommittee: Thursday August 19 at 10am.

18. New Items / Other Roundtable Reports—

Juliana suggested a field trip to the horizontal levee in the near future; the project will be entering the design phase, and the Council is an important stakeholder in the process. Mithun may be able to host as they have graphics to show; perhaps in August or September.

19. NEXT MEETING: Thursday September 16 from 10am-noon; this meeting could potentially take place in person. Reach out to the San Pablo Library one month on advance.