

Alameda Creek Watershed Council Meeting Summary of March 26, 2009

The Alameda Creek Watershed Council (Council) met on March 26, 2009 from 1:00-3:30 pm at the Alameda County Public Works Agency's Offices at 951 Turner Court, Hayward. Attendees: Sharon Gosselin, Alameda County Public Works Agency; Patti Cole, Friends of Springtown Preserve; Cindy Angers, Friends of the Arroyos; Elke Rank, Zone 7 Water Agency; Pamela Lung, City of Livermore; Dale Hopkins, Leslie Perry, and Jan O'Hara, Regional Water Quality Control Board; Leslie Koenig and Amy Evans, Alameda County Resource Conservation District; Terence Huff and Katie Bergmann, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Sharon Peterson, Livermore Area Recreation and Park District; Evan Buckland, Alameda County Water District; Michelle LeBeau, LeBeau Consulting; and Ralph Johnson, Jim Browne, and Manny da Costa, Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (ACFC&WCD); and Fred Jarvis, ACFC&WCD consultant.

Note: name in italics/parenthesis indicates who is following up on this item

I. Summary of Actions Taken

1. Leslie Perry and Ralph Johnson agreed to participate on a work group to provide Jan O'Hara with suggestions for updating the list of waterbodies and beneficial uses to the San Francisco Bay Basin Water Quality Control Plan.
2. The following three people were nominated to serve as chair for the next year: Mary Lim from Zone 7 Water Agency; and Manny da Costa and Ralph Johnson from ACFC&WCD. Following the Alameda Creek Watershed Council meeting other interested people have time to express their interest in being chair or nominate candidates to serve as chair.
3. Agreed it would be useful having an interactive map on the Council's website with a simple way to update past, current, and future projects. An update on this topic will be provided at a future meeting.
4. The issue of who owns the graphic design for the watershed signs needs to be resolved.
5. ACWC Planning/Coordinating workgroup plans to hold a conference call in May to provide guidance to Leslie Koenig and Amy Evans in carrying out coordination tasks and ACWC projects.

II. Follow Up Items from Meeting

Leslie Koenig will talk with Elke Rank or Carol Mahoney at Zone 7 Water Agency about identifying a Council restoration site in the eastern part of the county.

III. Other Items Discussed

1. **Recent Meetings and Conferences.** The Alameda County Watershed Forum's last meeting included a presentation about *Arundo donax*, the giant reed. There are patches of *Arundo* in Niles Canyon, and at Sycamore Grove Park in Livermore where it is being controlled by LARPD staff. The location of *Arundo* has not been mapped in Alameda County. This invasive plant is still at a manageable stage, and one method of control is hydromechanical obliteration (HMO).

California Stormwater Quality Association will hold its next statewide quarterly meeting in Oakland at Jack London Square on May 15. The focus of the meeting will be rainwater harvesting. (CASQA.org.)

The Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies Association has nine active member agencies. At its last meeting on March 19, the group heard an update on the California Water Plan and the revised municipal regional stormwater permit that the Water Board staff has proposed to better control trash and other pollutants from municipalities.

The Northern California Chapter of the American Fisheries Society will meet on April 3 in Santa Rosa. Information from the Alameda Creek Fisheries Work Group will be presented.

2. **San Francisco Bay Basin Water Quality Control Plan.** Jan O'Hara from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) reported that the Water Board is in the process of updating its Basin Plan for the portions of nine counties that drain to San Francisco Bay. Part of this update includes adding the names of waterbodies and wetlands that were previously missed and to add the types of beneficial uses these waterbodies support. Through the month of April, the Water Board staff is in an informal information gathering stage, and there will be another opportunity to provide information during the formal public comment stage for the Basin Plan update. The formal comment period will occur in late May or June.
3. **Hearing on Proposed Additional Water Quality Impairment Listings for Alameda Creek.** Dale Hopkins noted that the Water Board approved in February the listing of Old Alameda Creek as impaired by trash. In addition, Arroyo Mocho was listed as impaired because its temperature does not support cold water habitat, and Arroyo Las Positas was found to be impaired because of nutrient/eutrophication biological indicators.
4. **Update on Fisheries Work Group and Sediment Forum.** The work group heard a presentation on the status of designing the vertical slot fish ladder. The impressive design team consists of Winzler & Kelly staff and Michael Love. Construction of the fish ladder will be completed in 2010. The fish ladder design will cost about one-half million dollars and the construction is expected to cost between \$4 and 6 million. The flows subcommittee of the Fisheries Work Group is developing a phase 2 work plan to fill in data gaps, and some data on flows is being collected in specific reaches. Additional funds are needed to fully implement the phase 2 work plan and the phase 3 implementation work plan.

The San Francisco Estuary Institute recently received a new Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District contract to assist with the spring and fall sediment or watershed forums. Suggestions on forum topics should be forwarded to Manny da Costa.

5. **Discussion about Organizing Fisheries and Sediment Work Groups Under the Council.** The current iteration of the Integrated Regional Water Resources Management (IRWM) efforts for obtaining Proposition 84 grant funds from the Department of Water Resources is to combine Alameda and Contra Costa Counties into one funding subregion. DWR has allocated up to \$138 million for the Bay Areawide IRWM grant funding, and a percent of the grant funds would be allocated to each of the funding subregions. In order to be eligible to receive grant funds, there needs to be functioning integrated regions.

A future iteration to make IRWM planning work better could be to make Alameda Creek an IRWMP unit. Having the efforts of the Alameda Creek Watershed Council better coordinated with the sediment forum/work group and the Fisheries Work Group would help with the integration of projects. The Alameda Creek Watershed Council agreed last summer that the sediment forum/work group would operate as a Council project. The Fisheries Work Group is more autonomous with its own memorandum of understanding and funding from a number of agencies, some of whom, such as P.G.&E., are not represented on the Alameda Creek Watershed Council.

The IRWM grant funds could possibly be used for a watershed coordinator position. In addition, there may be opportunities for some Bay Areawide planning projects, such as rainwater harvesting.

6. **Alameda Creek Historical Ecology Study.** A kick off meeting was held between San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Resource Conservation District. The project will be completed by the end of 2010. Ortho photos from the 1930s and 1940s are currently being reviewed and rectified, then converted to a GIS layer. Alameda Creek was a destination site and locations in the watershed were used for making movies. A brochure explaining the

project is being developed. There should be a presentation of the status of the project and assistance needed at a future Alameda Creek Watershed Council meeting.

7. **Council Webpage.** The new Council webpage looks awesome (www.acrcd.org/watershed-council.aspx). Leslie Koenig will work on adding an interactive map to create a log in site and post information about past, current, and future projects. It was suggested that using Google Maps may make a nice and easily accessible way of keeping track of projects in the watershed. Another suggestion was to combine efforts with SFEI's use of wetlandtracker.org that has all Water Board's Clean Water Act section 401-permitted projects.
8. **Watershed Signage.** A proposal to fund the signage project was submitted to the San Francisco Estuary Project for possible funding as a supplemental environmental project. Staff from the City of Union City are enthusiastic about making and installing signs, provided the graphics are available from Curry Graphics who created the original sign.
9. **Update on Council Restoration Sites.** There will be a clean up event on April 18 from the BART Bridge overcrossing of Alameda Creek upstream to Niles Community Park, which has been adopted by the Council. A birding and planting project was held at William Cann Park in Union City. The high school students like the birding. Birding and improving riparian areas fits together. There still needs to be adopt a spot/restoration sites identified for the east county area.
10. **Photo Contest.** It was proposed to sponsor a photo contest with a prize. The photos submitted would be available for use on the webpage and possibly for a future calendar.
11. **Activities of Alameda Creek Watershed Creek Groups.**
 - Friends of Springtown Reserve

Patti Cole described the mission of the Friends of Springtown Reserve. It is to educate and engage the community in the management of this alkaline sink ecosystem. The reserve is being devastated by off road vehicles. Amy Evans suggested that this area could be visited during a future Council pre-meeting field trip. To find out more about this unique area, visit: www.springtownpreserve.org
 - Friends of the Arroyos

Cindy Angers announced that the Friends have joined the Council. She described the Friends' primary project, the Granada Native Gardens located adjacent to the Arroyo Mocho across from the high school. The gardens were in line to get SEP funding for an expansion, but that funding has been delayed.
 - Alameda Creek Alliance

Amy Evans reported that Bill LaCommare, a member of the Alliance, was instrumental in the process of identifying the reach of Alameda Creek bank in Niles near the BART weir, which is a notorious depositional area for trash (esp. water bottles) because of the inflatable dam and the weir. The approx. 1500' foot length of bank was adopted by the Council in March after Amy was alerted to the problem by Bill, Sharon Gosselin and other Flood Control District staff. An Earth Day trash clean up, sponsored by the Council, will be held there on April 18th.
12. **Arroyo de la Laguna Streambank Restoration Project** Katie Bergmann, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service engineer who works with the RCD in Livermore, described that they had received a special allocation of \$1.3 million via the FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Act sponsored by Congressman Jerry McNerney for demonstration of bioengineered stream restoration practices focusing on the Arroyo de La Laguna. She will keep the Council informed of partnerships formed and progress in development of the projects. The Council's May 28 tour will include a stop at a bioengineered bank restoration site at the Arroyo in Sunol that was completed in 2006 by NRCS and other local partners.
13. **Sharon Peterson of LARPD suggested** that the Council could encourage creek setbacks and policies to encourage housefronts facing creek corridors and roads with one side open to the creek ("single loaded street"), instead of backyards which back up to the creek. This enhances creek trails access and awareness/observation of creek conditions.

14. **Other.** Pamela Lung described opportunities to organize an Alameda Creek watershed bus tour for participants at the annual Flood Plain Management Conference that will be held in San Jose from September 8 through 11.

IV. Next Meeting

The Council agreed to meet next on May 28 at 11:00 am in Fremont. Most of the meeting will be used as a field trip to visit the site of the proposed fish ladder at the BART weir in Fremont, the Sunol Agricultural Park and creekside hedgerow, and Arroyo de Laguna's restored and unrestored channel sites. The brief meeting portion of the field trip will be held at the SFPUC Sunol headquarters adjacent to the Ag Park. The Council will provide beverages and dessert at the lunch stop- participants will provide their own lunch.

