

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Regional Creeks Sub-Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, February 20, 2007, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
California State Coastal Conservancy
13th Floor Conference Room
1330 Broadway, Oakland, CA, 94612

1. Welcome and Introductions

In Attendance:

- BC Capps, Bay Area Open Space Council
- Dale Hopkins, Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Francisco Bay Region
- Juliet Lamont, San Francisco Bay Chapter, Sierra Club
- Michelle LeBeau, The Watershed Project
- Sandy Scoggin, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
- Igor Skaredoff, Friends of Alhambra Creek

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. A general round of introductions followed.

2. Round-Robin — Project Updates and Other Announcements

- Sandy reported that the JV has added several new riparian buffer resources to the Technical Assistance section of their Web site:
http://www.sfbayjv.org/tools.html#riparian_buffers_setbacks
- BC announced that the Bay Area Open Space Council's annual conference has been scheduled for June 13, 2007. The agenda and registration materials will be available soon at:
<http://OpenSpaceCouncil.org/conference>
- The Local Government Commission and the Bay Area Water Forum are hosting an all day workshop on April 23 on the new Ahwahnee Water Principles. Additional information is available from LGC at:
<http://water.lgc.org/ahwahnee-water-principles>
- Igor gave an update on the John Muir celebration taking place on April 21. The event will feature an environmental film festival, dedication of a section of Ridge Trail, and a Muir family reunion. Additionally, Access Adventures will be providing horse-drawn carriage rides for wheelchair users and other disabled park users.
<http://johnmuirearthday.com/>
- Dale Hopkins relayed news that CA Department of Water Resources will be holding a meeting on March 5 to discuss the recent IRWMP planning process and the new disbursement of funds from proposition 84. Concerns were expressed that if requirements for project funding are made increasingly tighter then local watershed groups will continue to lose out against much-larger water agencies and other institutions.
http://www.grantsloans.water.ca.gov/docs/Funding_Area_Agenda.pdf

- Michelle LeBeau spoke about the recent work accomplished by The Watershed Project at Knowland Park in the Arroyo Viejo watershed near the Oakland Zoo. This new work builds upon earlier efforts by the City of Oakland at Arroyo Viejo Park.
http://thewatershedproject.org/Arroyo%20Viejo/AV_home.html

3. Infrastructure Barriers — Updates on Current Work to Date

BC provided an overview of the last two conference calls and recent work that has been completed:

- The draft white paper has been distributed to the SFBJV Management Board for review and comment. Igor Skaredoff and Abby Fateman have submitted final comments for incorporation.
Tasks: Complete final edits to white paper; Determine how to best accomplish tasks that are identified in the paper; Identify lead partners for implementation
- Committee members have been researching the Union Pacific Railroad Crossing at Pinole Creek. Dale Hopkins, Carol Arnold, and Igor Skaredoff have all provided valuable input.
Tasks: Contact Jennifer Robinson (Friends of Pinole Creek); Contact Drew Goetting (Restoration Design Group); Contact Cece Sellgren (Contra Costa County Public Works Department) for more information on U.S. Coast Guard regulations that may cover bridges within a certain distance of the coast or Bay's edge; Write up a brief summary of our findings
- BC has been researching the statewide CalFish.org database for use in documenting existing infrastructure barriers throughout the Bay Area.
Tasks: Contact Michael Bowen (State Coastal Conservancy) regarding Bay Area efforts; Contact Paul Atwood (Water Resources Center Archive) regarding UC Berkeley's catalog of dam removal projects; Write up a brief summary of our findings
- Both U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CA Department of Transportation have been identified as key partners in helping to understand and improve the role of Operation and Maintenance Manuals (OMMs) on Bay Area riparian habitats and restoration efforts
Tasks: Contact Thomas Kendall (U.S. Army Corps) regarding meeting to discuss OMMs; Contact Sandra Finnegan (CalTrans) regarding OMMs

4. Riparian Buffers — Discussion of Proposed Fact Sheets

After an update on the last two conference calls, the committee had a detailed discussion on the creation of several fact sheets for distribution to elected officials and other key decision makers.

- The final product is expected to be a series of brief fact sheets with background information on riparian buffers and key messages targeted to different audiences. Each sheet will be reproduced on colored paper for easy reference, and will include easy-to-understand diagrams and/or selected photos, as well as web links to further resources.
- Michelle suggested that the committee develop a dissemination plan for the fact sheets and that this would help focus our outreach to specific audiences. Groups that were identified as hopeful targets (or as potential messengers) include local watershed groups, subregional watershed forums, public agencies, resource conservation districts, other non-government organizations, and non-traditional targets within the real estate business, such as contractors, developers, and realtors. Development of a flowchart showing the relationships between various agencies would be very helpful for this project, as well as many others.
- Consideration should be given keeping the language simple and avoiding jargon. Suggestions included using “neighborhood” instead of “watershed” and “polluted urban runoff” instead of “nonpoint source pollution.” Provide easy-to-understand definitions and simple explanatory diagrams.
- Although at least three fact sheets have been proposed, there was general consensus at the meeting to focus on the first introductory sheet and allow the others to become inserts to this more general backgrounder.
- Factsheet 1: Riparian Buffer Backgrounder — The Science and Benefits of Buffers
 - Ecological Processes and Science
 - Stream Function
 - Riparian Habitat
 - Flood Conveyance
 - Erosion Control
 - Benefits
 - Non-Point Source Pollution and Water Quality Benefits
 - Habitat Restoration, Wildlife Benefits, and Urban Habitats
 - Economic and Community Development Benefits

Task: Consider development of a full fact sheet on economic and community benefits

- Actions for Support
 - Daylighting on public properties, voluntary daylighting on private properties, and incentives for property owners to protect and restore creekside properties
 - Development of integrated, citywide watershed management strategies
 - Full funding of “watershed coordinator positions” to advise and help landowners, apply for grants, work with planning staff in creeks analysis, etc.
 - Creation of bay-friendly gardens and backyard wildlife habitats
 - Retain the Rain / Slow the Flow / Restore the Sponge

- Additional Resources:
 - Local Government Commission — Ahwahnee Water Principles Guidebook
<http://water.lgc.org/guidebook>
 - Riparian Habitat Joint Venture — Overview of Riparian Mapping Techniques
<http://www.prbo.org/calpif/htmldocs/rhjv/>
 - City of Berkeley— Creeks Task Force materials
<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning/landuse/creeks/>
 - RWQCB: Stream and Wetlands System Protection Policy
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/streamandwetlands.htm>
 - National Academy of Sciences — Valuing Ecosystem Services: Toward Better Environmental Decision-Making
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11139.html>
 - U.S. EPA: Economic Benefits of Nonpoint Source Pollution Control
<http://www.epa.gov/nps/runoff.html>
 - Federal Interagency Working Group — Stream Corridor Restoration: Principles, Processes, and Practices
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/stream_restoration/
 - Santa Clara Valley Water Resources Protection Collaborative — User Manual of Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams
http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/public-works/documents/WRPC_August2005.pdf

- Factsheet 2: Essential Elements of Successful Riparian Ordinances — Creating Healthy Cities Through Healthy Watersheds
 - Why Do We Need Strong Creek Protections?
 - Need for healthy natural, or “green” infrastructure, to complement and support our engineered system
 - Healthy creek corridors are essential for flood prevention/control, clean water, prevention of erosion and bank de-stabilization, protecting structures from erosion and damage, providing fisheries and wildlife habitat, and recreation and beauty
 - Healthy creeks and green infrastructure bring economic, ecological, and social benefits to cities and communities; environment is a shared community asset that we all need to protect and care for
 - Creek regulations are just like the many other regulations we have to protect and benefit our communities as a whole, as well as the environment
 - State regulations are getting stricter for urban runoff, stream and wetland protection, and flood control
 - What are the Essential Elements of a Successful Riparian Ordinance?
 - Buffer width
 - Level of enforcement
 - Type of watercourses protected
 - Breadth of application (i.e., entire city, special districts)
 - Provisions for, and frequency of, exemptions and/or variances
 - Inclusion of specific directives in General Plan
 - Riparian vegetation protection
 - Mitigation standards
 - Clarity of purpose and goals
 - Clarity of definitions
 - What are some of the Best Model Ordinances?
 - Within SF Bay Area?
 - Within CA?
 - Within U.S.?
 - Additional Resources:
 - RWQCB — Riparian Buffers report (July 2004)
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/download/bufferreport1204.pdf>
 - Stormwater Magazine — Successful Implementation of Riparian Buffer Programs
http://www.stormh2o.com/sw_0611_successful.html
 - U.S. EPA — Model Aquatic Buffer Ordinances
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/ordinance/buffers.htm>

- Factsheet 3: Riparian Buffers and Private Property — Protecting Your Land from Erosion, Flooding, and Degradation (working title only)
 - Success Stories of Working with Private Land Owners
 - Urban Example
 - Task: Investigate Contra Costa examples from Urban Creeks Council*
 - Suburban Example
 - Task: Investigate RCDs and/or Defenders of Wildlife for examples*
 - Rural Example
 - Task: Investigate Marin examples from PRBO Conservation Science*
 - Incentives for Working with Private Land Owners
 - Conservation Easements
 - Specific Legal Issues to Consider
 - Private Property Rights
 - Additional Resources:
 - Stream Setbacks and the Law — East Bay Creeks Conference (Jan. 2005)
<http://openspacecouncil.org/projects/sfbjv/creeks/buffers/resources/EBWC%20-%20Folk%20Presentation%202005.01.13.pdf/view>

Minutes submitted by BC Capps