

**San Francisquito Watershed Council
Steering Committee minutes
July 13, 2005**

Introductions. We will change the order of the agenda because some people who want to participate in the program planning discussion will be arriving late. Agenda approved. June 8, 2005, minutes approved. Next meeting September 14. No meeting in August.

Announcements

- Marty Laporte (Stanford Utilities): The LTMAP work group will be meeting next Tuesday 7/19/05 at 2:00 at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant. They will be reviewing the final 2004 report and the draft 2005 report. Overall, sampling has been a lot less problematic and there are fewer data gaps in 2005. The new station at the mouth of Bear Creek has a different type of probe that works better than the ones at Piers Lane. There will be a presentation by Balance Hydrologics and Brad Eggleston with the City of Palo Alto on the newest data at the September Steering Committee meeting. This is the 4th year of monitoring. Brad Eggleston is working on a webpage that will be hosted on the City of Palo Alto website that will present data from the LTMAP stations.
- Pam Sturner for Cynthia D'Agosta (SFC-JPA): The Creek JPA is looking for a finance and office administrator. The job description is in the circulating file. In addition, an important qualification is that it be someone who is comfortable working in a small office, and who is flexible and good at multi-tasking.
- Pam Sturner (SFWC): USGS is holding a lecture on the San Andreas Fault on July 21; the presentation will be in 3-D. For more information, see the flyer in the circulating file.

Pam asked if including these kinds of events (like the USGS lecture) in the important dates list at the bottom of the agenda is helpful, and the Steering Committee said it was.

Streamkeeper Report, Jim Johnson (SFWC)

Jim has been doing weed-whacking and watering this summer. He also recently did a survey of San Francisquito Creek through Webb Ranch (on Stanford land) looking for arundo (giant reed). The arundo Jim found is slated for removal this year pending approval from Stanford. Volunteers had identified some patches of arundo on Stanford land several years earlier. The Watershed Council has been working to eliminate arundo in the area downstream of Stanford. Jim hopes to get permission to survey Jasper Ridge land too.

Question: How is arundo propagated? Can it move upstream? *Response:* It is not known to spread by seed (on the wind), but Jim has seen it in some odd places in uplands areas. It must have gotten there somehow. Arundo does occasionally produce a seedhead, but the seeds are thought to be sterile. But this was also thought about Cape ivy until recently. We think the arundo clumps upstream of the University Ave bridge that were building their roots out toward the center of the creek may have been what caused the overbanking at that bridge in the 1998 floods. The Watershed Council has been working to remove arundo from the creek since then.

Jim also pointed out a recent article from the San Francisco Chronicle about the apparent decline of sea life. In a normal year, upwelling brings cold water and nutrients to the surface that

support sea life. In an El Nino year there is usually no upwelling, but this is not an El Nino year and there seems to be no upwelling. So far no one knows why. If this is going to become a continuous trend, inland habitats will become far more important to anadromous fish.

Comment: It's probably a result of climate change.

Comment: I recently learned in the documentary "Synthetic Sea" that there are 6 pounds of plastic in the ocean for every pound of plankton. This is well documented, and it's in the middle of the Pacific.

Comment: Beaches are now covered with plastic in Alaska.

Comment: On a positive note, there was a nice article written by Marion Softky about Menlo Park's recycling program in the Almanac.

Jim was recently interviewed for an article about mitten crabs in the Palo Alto Daily News. Mitten crab populations go in 11-year cycles. 1998 was a bad year (lots of mitten crabs were found), but we haven't seen as many since then. Students at Woodside School found a mitten crab in Bear Creek by the school recently. This is the farthest upstream we've seen them. Now that mitten crabs are in the steelhead spawning reaches, they could become a threat to the steelhead reproductive cycle by directly preying on eggs or by competing for insects and other food. They are omnivorous. They start to dig into the banks when the water drops as the creeks go down in the late spring and early summer.

Invasive plants and animal species keep coming. Some have called this era the "homogocene," meaning that everything is getting mixed together. Plants with short reproductive cycles have an advantage over native plants with longer reproductive cycles.

Comment: On a positive note, it seems that the ivory-billed woodpecker, which was thought to be extinct, has been positively identified and documented.

Restoration Project Manager's report, Katie Pilat (SFWC)

Katie is working on three main kinds of restoration initiatives: the streamside habitat restoration projects, fish passage improvement projects, and stormwater management demonstration projects. The Watershed Council is taking its annual summer break from its streamside habitat restoration volunteer workdays. We will begin the 05-06 workday season with Coastal Clean Up Day on Saturday, September 17th. As Jim mentioned above, site maintenance does go on year round.

The Watershed Council's fish passage consultants completed an Alternatives Analysis for four barriers in the watershed that identified a preferred alternative. Katie has sent copies of this analysis to the property owners at the Los Trancos box culverts and the Fox Hollow Road box culvert. She will seek any feedback from the property owners to pass on to the consultants to incorporate into the engineering designs. Katie also attended a meeting at the end of June with the consultants and staff from the San Mateo County Parks and Public Works departments, at which the strategies for working together and moving forward was ironed out. The Watershed Council will manage the designs; completed designs will be gifted to San Mateo County Parks, which will work with Public Works to complete permitting, environmental review, and implementation. The County hopes to finish construction by the end of Fall 2006.

A residential property in Palo Alto and a City parking lot in Menlo Park will be the Watershed Council's two stormwater management demonstration projects. The designs are complete. At this point, the next step for the residential property is to sign an agreement with the property owner and then get started on construction. The Menlo Park project will go out to bid in August. If the bid for the pervious concrete section of it (the part that will be the stormwater demonstration project) comes in below \$80,000, we'll get our project; if not, the pervious concrete will be dropped and we'll have to start from scratch. Let's hope for the best! Once the projects are built – hopefully by this fall – we'll do monitoring and outreach about the projects, including several guided tours, a web tour, and brochures and fact sheets.

Comment: The Watershed Council should make a short presentation to the Palo Alto City Council about the Palo Alto project to put our work their radar.

Comment: There was an article in the last week's Almanac written by Matt Stoecker urging the Town of Portola Valley not to miss the opportunity to daylight Sausal Creek when it rebuilds the Town Center. A part of Sausal Creek is in a culvert under the current Town Center.

Question: What is the status of the NOAA and USFWS consultation that prohibited the Watershed Council from doing invasive plant removal? *Response:* USFWS and NOAA did an interagency consultation and found that our revegetation sites would result in 4.0 acres of permanent habitat loss for red-legged frog. This shows that they didn't fully understand our projects, which are to plant native riparian vegetation in areas where there is no vegetation or which are dominated by invasives. The opinion says that we must have a USFWS-certified biologist survey each site a few days before we do any invasives (weed) removal. At our request, NOAA requested a repeal or revision of the opinion on the grounds that it is too costly and time-consuming for us. We are awaiting the outcome. *Comment:* You could put in a call to a congressperson or go to a newspaper if this document keeps you from being able to do your work.

Coordinator's report, Pam Sturner (SFWC)

The Fiscal Year 05-06 budget is done. Expenses are estimated at \$671,292, of which \$414,993 is for contractors. Estimated income is \$702,674. Our operating budget is approximately the same as it was last year at roughly \$256,000. Of this, \$84,000 is from private foundation grants, which is up from \$36,000 last year. The Watershed Council is trying to balance its funding sources with more private foundation grants and fewer government agency contracts, which tend to be reimbursable in arrears and have a greater impact on cashflow problems.

Since the June Steering Committee meeting, the Watershed Council Management Advisory Committee has had several discussions with Acterra to hammer out the details of the new fiduciary agreement. A second draft is being prepared and the new target for finalizing the agreement is October 1, 2005. It is important to take the time to do this right. Pam has begun recruitment for the new Board and has had good support from Peninsula Community Foundation on this task. She gave them a summary of the Watershed Council's needs for Board members, which they've been distributing to their circles.

Program planning for SFWC for 2006-07 and beyond, Pam Sturner (SFWC)

Pam expects this discussion today to be the first of several discussions on this topic. The outcome of today's discussion should be approval of program direction for the Watershed Council, not specific project ideas. The macro view of the Watershed Council and its future was addressed through the Vision document process; the micro view would be development of specific project ideas, as we started to do when brainstorming for the Wish List. Today we will focus on a strategy to get from the broad overview (macro) to the specific project development (micro).

Pam handed out four spreadsheets to help guide the process. The first handout was a matrix of projects and deliverables for Fiscal Year 05-06. It summarizes our current programs. We have a lot to do, especially in on-the-ground work (with lots of money going to contractors) and setting up new operations and protocols under our new status as a fiduciary.

Question: Is there any wiggle room in the due dates of the deliverables? *Response:* In a few cases, yes, if it is mentioned in the comments column for each deliverable.

The first deliverable on the handout is the strategic outreach plan. This plan will be a key part of helping the Watershed Council decide what projects to focus on from the Wish List. We can think of it as a first filter to help us choose future projects. There are 8 comments on this deliverable on the handout that are a summary of the benefits this project will help bring about.

Everyone present supported Pam's recommendation that an outreach consultant be hired to lead the strategic outreach planning process.

The second handout is a matrix of activities already committed to beyond FY05-06.

Comment: It would be good to tie all possible activities in with the jurisdictions' NPDES requirements. These requirements carry a lot of weight with the cities. *Response:* We'd like to talk with you about that; many of the activities do tie in. *Comment:* The Watershed Council should explicitly show these connections as much as possible. This would bring about more support from the local governments for our work. *Response:* We should talk to our city representatives about how to link our projects with NPDES requirements. This will also be part of our outreach plan.

The third handout is a matrix of assessment and recommendations for each program area. The Steering Committee needs to review these recommendations to confirm or revise the direction of these programs.

Comments on items from handout #3:

- Can you clarify what you mean by "work in schools" in the Outreach assessment paragraph? *Response:* The Strategic Outreach Plan will help us decide if we do or don't want to focus on creek education in schools, and if we do, it will help us develop a plan on what to do and what resources to devote to it.
- I respond positively to the idea of better using our LTMAP data for outreach. What do we do with it? *Response:* Phil Bobel would be a good person to have involved in that discussion,

since he was one of the founders of the program. *Comment:* For example, if a damaging chemical were found, we could take the data to the City Council and ask them to ban products it comes from. *Comment:* The Steering Committee or during the Strategic outreach Planning process would be good forums for that discussion – we’ve got a lot of data, what does it mean and what should we do with it? *Comment:* One of the original goals of the LTMAP program was to help support or deny the creek’s sediment TMDL impairment designation. Also, we could use our data to try to connect with some of the NPDES requirements. *Comment:* once we have a strategic outreach plan, we can see what LTMAP data can be useful for implementing some of its elements. *Comment:* The Regional Board SWAMP (Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program) program equivalent of our LTMAP program. We should invite them to come present their program and information to us at a Steering Committee meeting. *Comment:* A new section of the Palo Alto website will show a more user-friendly presentation of data than Balance’s reports do. *Comment:* There were originally seven proposed LTMAP stations. Four have been installed, and I’d like it to be a goal that the rest of the stations be installed. *Comment:* The Water District’s Aquatic Habitat and Limiting Factors Analysis (AHALFA) may help inform whether more fixed stations like our LMTAP stations or some other kind of station provides the most useful data.

- You are asking the semi-independent groups such as the Steelhead Task Force and LTMAP working group to help keep the Watershed Council informed about new and important issues in the watershed. Will you be asking the Streamkeepers to do this too? *Response:* I think we need to ask ourselves how the work of these semi-independent groups fits into our outreach goals vs. the work of the Streamkeepers, who at this point may not be as cohesive a group. We can think about this in the strategic outreach planning process.
- If the timeline is to have the strategic outreach plan done by December, we’ll have to ask these more independent groups what the important issues are and where they think these fit into our priorities and outreach efforts to inform the structure of the outreach plan. I’m concerned about the timing because it seems like the groups need input from the outreach plan and the outreach plan needs input from the groups. It may have to be a parallel iterative process.
- Should we be developing a committee to work with the consultant for the Strategic Outreach Plan?
- The Streamkeepers might be good people to articulate the messages that we develop to the target audiences that we identify in the Strategic Outreach Plan. They may even be a good bridge from the Steelhead Task Force and LTMAP issues to the outreach activities.

The Steering Committee approved the program direction as outlined in Handout #3, the Assessment and Recommendations for the Watershed Council’s programs. We should go ahead with the pieces we can do immediately (such as hiring a consultant). We should also add the comments made about the LTMAP program to the recommendations: (a) the need to clarify outreach objectives, and (b) the installation of remaining stations taking into consideration results from the AHALFA study.

Comment: Balance will be presenting the 2004 and 2005 Water Year data at the September Steering Committee meeting. We should invite people from the Regional Board to this presentation.

Continuing Business, Trish Mulvey

- SCVWD Stewardship Planning: The stakeholder meeting for response to comments, ranking, and visioning is currently planned for all day August 18. This date is still tentative, so confirm if you are interested. The scoping ideas for approaching stewardship in the San Francisquito watershed will be developed “soon,” but finishing the contracted plans for the watersheds south of here (Matadero to Guadalupe, inclusive) have priority. Contact Trish with questions.
- SCBWMI: A planning retreat for the WMI 18-month work plan development will be on August 4th. The core group meeting this month is at the San Jose Environmental Services Office (at the corner of First and Montague) on July 14. If anyone is interested in the retreat and work plan ideas, ask Trish or Phil Bobel when he gets back from vacation.
- COLLABORATIVE: The Collaborative is still wrapping up this phase (the next meeting July 28th). It is planning for next steps for the next 18 months for an August 11th signing ceremony. It is still developing Planning Department “counter tools” and materials for property owners, as well as an outreach plan for the community and for decision makers. The JPA/Portola Valley Corte Madera report has helpful ideas. The Collaborative is struggling with how best to convey bank protection and top of bank information. Contact Trish Mulvey with questions, or Joe Teresi about Guidelines & Standards.

Meeting adjourned

Attendance:

Katie Pilat – SFWC

Ginger Holt – Families for Fair Government

Julie Skelton – Stanford Management Company

Jim Johnson – SFWC

Barb Patterson – Friends of Cordilleras Creek

William Sansfield – Friends of Cordilleras Creek, guest

Marge DeStaebler – Portola Valley Conservation Committee

Marty Laporte – Stanford Utilities

Jerry Hearn – Acterra

Art Kraemer – Crescent Park neighborhood Association

Dianne Dryer – City of Menlo Park

Viv Blomenkamp – League of Women Voters Palo Alto

Leslie Lambert – Town of Portola Valley

Philippe S. Cohen – Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Pilat