

**San Francisquito Watershed Council
Steering Committee minutes
September 14, 2005**

Introductions, agenda, and minutes

Introductions were made. Pam noted that the agenda had been revised to include the item now listed at 3:25, "Consideration for approval: Letter to Menlo Park City Council to support installation of 'No Parking' signs in the 800 block of Creek Drive" and asked the group for approval. The group made no additional amendments and gave approval of the agenda as revised. The draft minutes from July 13 were approved.

Announcements

- Trish Mulvey is now the chair of the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) Core Group. The San Mateo County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SM-STOPPP) is participating in a grant to develop English as a second language materials about proper handling of used oil; the creek and watershed map will be used in conjunction, as will two additional maps of the Peninsula to be produced and published by the Oakland Museum in 2006. The Watershed Council will have an interest in tracking that program. On behalf of the WMI and SCVURPPP, the City of San Jose's Youth Watershed Education Team (Y-WET) has put in an application for a science outreach project through Teaching Science Literacy for a Sustainable Society, a class offered by the Stanford University graduate program in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The creek and watershed map series for the Santa Clara Basin is proposed to be used to develop a high school (grades 9-12) activity guide and curriculum model. If the proposal is accepted, the Watershed Council may find the product useful for community meetings and possibly for "fairs and festivals" outreach opportunities. More information will be available in January 2006 when the Stanford class convenes and the students select their projects.
- Kevin Murray announced that on Wednesday, October 5, there will be a joint meeting of the city councils of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto to discuss the project management plan for the flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration project under consideration by the San Francisquito Creek JPA and the Army Corps of Engineers. The meeting location is the East Palo Alto City Council chambers.
- Susan Fizzell, the former outreach coordinator for the San Francisquito Watershed Council, is consulting with the Santa Clara Valley Water District on watershed assessment.
- Pam noted that in October she will present the fiduciary agreements with Acterra for the group to discuss and consider for approval.

Presentation: Update on San Francisquito water data and presentation of City of Palo Alto creek data web site (Jonathan Owens, Chris White, and Brad Eggleston)

The Steering Committee heard the presentation on water year 2004 data from LTMAP and discussed it with the presenters in depth. The full discussion, along with the accompanying slide presentations, will be posted on the Watershed Council's website.

Consideration for approval: Letter to Menlo Park City Council to support installation of "No Parking" signs in the 800 block of Creek Drive

This item came to Pam's attention in August when a Streamkeeper on Creek Drive wrote to ask for a support letter. He and his neighbors have petitioned the Menlo Park City Council to install "No Parking" signs along the creek in their block of Creek Drive. Other blocks on the road have the signs, and the neighbors have a number of concerns about the use of the top of bank for parking. One is that drivers run over the revegetation site created and paid for by the petitioners and possibly the Watershed Council's site at University Drive as well. Another is that heavy use may contribute to erosion. There is also concern that cars parked along the bank significantly narrow the road.

Pam spoke with Dianne Dryer about the status of this item, and Dianne said it would be helpful to have the support letter. The project has been approved by the Menlo Park Transportation Commission and is on the City Council agenda for September 27. Pam added this item to today's agenda because this is the last Steering Committee meeting before then. She suggested that she read the letter aloud and ask the group for discussion and/or approval, and the group agreed.

The letter read as follows: "Honorable Mayor and Council Members: We are delighted to see the interest of the local community in protecting the resources of San Francisquito Creek in Menlo Park. We concur with the concerns expressed by residents of Creek Drive in their petition to the City requesting installation of "No Parking" signs along the creek in the 800 block of their street. As an organization devoted to watershed stewardship, we, too, are concerned that parking on top of the creek bank may contribute to erosion and damage vegetation there. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance in this matter, and thank you for your consideration."

The group approved the letter, and Pam signed it and gave it to Dianne for inclusion in the Council packet.

Celebration of Jim Johnson's retirement

Pam then introduced the last item of the day, a celebration of Jim Johnson's retirement from the Watershed Council as its Streamkeeper. He has devoted more than 18 years of service to the San Francisquito watershed, first as volunteer and later as a staff member of the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Process and the San Francisquito Watershed Council. It would be difficult to name an effort that the Watershed Council has undertaken that Jim hasn't been deeply involved in and played a central role in shaping. He organized the first creek cleanup, with Friends of San Francisquito Creek, in the late 1980s; he created the Watershed Council's nine revegetation sites and the volunteer workday program; and he was the originator of its invasive removal work and a founding member of the Steelhead Task Force. He has also led the way as a historian in connecting past and present to help define the meaning of San

Francisquito Creek as both a natural and a cultural resource. Pam suggested that perhaps his most important legacy is in the people here today, who all have a connection to the creek and Jim's work. She thanked him for all he has done and taught us, and assured him that what he has started to ensure the preservation of the watershed will continue through the people here.

She and Phil Bobel, a member of the Steering Committee and the Management Advisory Committee, presented Jim with a small plaque in honor of his service to the Watershed Council.

Pam noted that two former coordinators, Debbie Mytels and Pat Showalter, were in attendance and would like to say a few words, and that Phil Chang had also sent comments that she would read aloud.

Debbie Mytels, the first coordinator of the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning process (the organizational predecessor of the Watershed Council), recalled the first time she met Jim. She had received a phone message from him about the centennial of El Palo Alto; it led to a long and interesting conversation in which she learned a lot about the tree and was struck by Jim's many good ideas. They later worked together in the environmental focus group of the Palo Alto Centennial planning committee, where Jim brought a focus on the creek and the watershed. Debbie described Jim as a visionary and a wonderful person and friend with a wealth of skills as a photographer, naturalist, and educator. She also noted his vast knowledge of local history, especially of Stanford University and the Stanford family. So much has happened because of Jim - the Watershed Council, the educational panels in El Palo Alto Park, and the native plant nursery, to name a few. The completion of the panels speaks to Jim's perseverance, delayed as they were nine years in the "Palo Alto process" for design review. She ended by thanking Jim for all he has given to the community.

Pat Showalter spoke about Jim's ability to bring people together even as they struggled with difficult issues involving the creek. She took over the coordinator position right before the flood of record in 1998, which, when it hit, was completely overwhelming. Jim knew all the players and problems, and he had an incredible ability to go into meetings and calm everyone down. He did this by weaving together a story that included good things about the creek as well as the bad things. Pat remembered a public meeting about the flood in Menlo Park, where Jim spent at least half the time talking about positive things, and people listened. Her three most important memories of working with Jim are his passion for the creek; the many skills she found he possessed, especially as a writer (she plans to buy 25 copies of Jim's first novel); and his ability to talk to people from all walks of life, from some of the biggest CEOs in the Valley to the homeless. He finds a way to connect to everyone and somehow always relates things to a creek or a tree.

Pam read the following comments from Phil Chang, who now works in Oregon and could not attend the celebration: "One of the most remarkable things about Jim Johnson is his ability to empathize deeply with the natural world -- with the fauna, the flora, even with the sediment transport processes of the San Francisquito watershed. Jim's encyclopedic knowledge of natural history and his hard-working dedication are part of the reason that he has had such a great impact on the watershed. But I cannot help but think that it is his incredible ability to empathize with the watershed, and to inspire others to care for a small amphibian or a humble shrub, that will

lead to the greatest long term benefits for the watershed community. May we all continue to draw inspiration from Jim's example as we continue our watershed work and may Jim provide inspiration to others in new and wonderful ways as he continues his spiritual journey."

Dianne Dryer, on behalf of the City of Menlo Park, presented Jim with a certificate of appreciation to honor his eighteen years of work to "preserve and enhance the San Francisquito Watershed through stewardship and leadership."

Cynthia D'Agosta, the executive director of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, offered her personal thanks to Jim for his work. She noted that his passion helped to create the JPA and that his commentary in the video "A Creek Runs through It" helped her decide to accept her position with the JPA. She then gave him an umbrella with the JPA's logo as protection from the rain and a reminder of the watershed.

Jim added that the Flood and Erosion Control Task Force had completed its report, which included the recommendation to form a JPA, before the flood. One of its goals was to make sure that environmental considerations are taken into account in the flood control process.

Bill Springer, on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Water District, read a letter from Director Greg Zlotnick thanking Jim for the restoration work he had led and the leadership and vision he had provided for the watershed community.

Jim thanked the group for their many kind thoughts and for joining with him to preserve the watershed. Like the mote of dust around which a snowflake forms, he sees himself a catalyst getting others involved. He urged those in attendance to continue the work that has begun here.

At that point, refreshments were served, and the meeting adjourned.

In attendance:

Barb Patterson, Friends of Cordilleras Creek
Paul Randall, SCVURRRP
Phil Bobel, City of Palo Alto
Brad Eggleston, City of Palo Alto
Zan Rubin, Balance Hydrologics
John Gartner, Balance Hydrologics
Jonathan Owens, Balance Hydrologics
Chris White, Balance Hydrologics
Marge DeStaebler, Portola Valley Conservation Committee
Claire Elliot, Stevens and Permanente Creeks Watershed Council
Bill Springer, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Susan Fizzell, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Art Kraemer, Crescent Park Neighborhood Association
Margaret Paul, California Department of Fish and Game
Cynthia D'Agosta, San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority
Kevin Murray, San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority

Marty Laporte, Stanford Utilities
Philippe Cohen, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve
Trish Mulvey, San Francisquito Watershed Council
Dianne Dryer, City of Menlo Park
Ted Bache, creekside resident
Johanna Putnoi, creekside resident
Jim McCarthy, Streamkeeper
Meg Beeler, Streamkeeper
Pat Showalter, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Debbie Mytels, Acterra
Janet Davis, creekside resident
Brianna Richardson, Acterra
Sam Herzberg, San Mateo County Parks Department

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Pilat.