

**San Francisquito Watershed Council  
Steering Committee minutes  
November 9, 2005**

Introductions. Agenda approved. October 12, 2005, minutes approved. Next meeting December 14<sup>th</sup> and will include holiday refreshments!

**Announcements**

- Marty Laporte (Stanford Utilities): Marty gave an update about the Piers Lane LTMAP stations, saying that Balance Hydrologics recently discovered that the flow meter is not working. Balance and Stanford are looking for comprehensive solutions to this and other mechanical difficulties, including malfunctioning of the dissolved oxygen and specific conductance probes, that have arisen over time at this station. Marty has been in touch with Phil Bobel of the City of Palo Alto on this issue, since Palo Alto operates the LTMAP station further downstream. The equipment may be expensive to replace and Stanford will be looking for comprehensive cost-effective long-term solutions. In the meantime they have authorized a short-term flow meter replacement. Now that various parts of the equipment are broken, it is an opportunity to reconsider whether to replace the broken parts with the same kind of equipment (Sigma) or whether to get a new system. Stanford will also be purchasing solar cells to run the monitoring equipment.
- Pam Sturner (SFWC): SFWC will hold a volunteer workday on Saturday, December 3. There is also a workshop called “How Development Affects Creeks; How Creeks Affect Development” coming up on December 7. Christopher Richard will be one of the presenters. It will be held at the Leininger Center, Kelley Park at 1300 Senter Road, San Jose from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon. A flyer in the circulating file has details.
- Kevin Murray (SFC-JPA): The JPA Board of Directors will meet to sign the feasibility cost-sharing agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers on November 17 if all member agencies have approved the agreement by that time. So far San Mateo County and the City of Menlo Park have approved it.

**Presentation: Update on proposed City of Palo Alto stormwater pump station downstream of Highway 101** (Joe Teresi, City of Palo Alto)

Pam Sturner (SFWC Project Director) introduced Joe Teresi from the City of Palo Alto Public Works Department. The City of Palo Alto is proposing to install a pump station at an existing outfall and wanted to present the current plans to get Watershed Council feedback early in the process.

Joe started by thanking Craig Benson from Schaaf & Wheeler for coming to the meeting. The City is currently working to finalize Schaaf & Wheeler’s contract for the project. Craig is a watershed scientist and restoration ecologist and was also the principal author of the biological resources section of the Searsville Lake sediment impact study. *Comment, Craig Benson:* Craig has walked the creek many times with Philippe Cohen, Alan Launer, and Jerry Smith, and is happy that biological impacts are being considered early in this project rather than as an

afterthought. His role is to make sure the timing of discharge and the pump station as a whole don't impact the ecology of the creek.

Joe's PowerPoint presentation file is available for download on the Watershed Council's website at [www.Acterra.org/watershed/private](http://www.Acterra.org/watershed/private). The storm drain in question 96 inches (8 feet) in diameter and is located downstream of Highway 101 near Ciardello's Garden Supply. The Santa Clara Valley Water District owns this land and leases it to Ciardello's. The Water District has given Palo Alto an easement to build the pump station. The pipe that leads to this outfall is fairly flat and tends to back up water into the streets during high creek levels. *Several graphics in the PowerPoint show the difference between the existing proposed situations and how street flooding could be alleviated in the proposed situation.*

This project is the downstream-most project in a series of stormdrain improvements the City wants to do. Stormdrain improvements must always start at the downstream-most end so that improvements upstream do not overwhelm downstream capacity.

The City received seven proposals for the job, which Kevin Murray of the SFC-JPA helped review. The team was selected, and the City Council will vote on awarding the contract at its 11/21/05 meeting. Construction is anticipated in summer 2007.

There are several issues that must be addressed in the design of the project. One of these is developing the operating plan to make sure that the pump doesn't induce or exacerbate creek flooding. The City thinks that a lot of water from the lower watershed can be pumped into the creek before the main pulse from the upper watershed arrives, but this will need to be studied carefully. Another improvement the City hopes to build into the project is to divert to the sanitary sewer low flows that can carry a lot of pollutants (such as those from basement pumping, over irrigation, and car washes); these flows now go to stormdrains. The benefit would be that this runoff would be treated before being discharged to the Bay. The City will look at the logistics of this idea and is looking for state grant funding to help with that aspect of the project. The City will coordinate with the SFC-JPA and SFWC on project outreach and will also get feedback from the resource agencies.

The expected peak capacity of the pump would be 300 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is pretty sizable.

#### Questions and Answers:

- *Question:* Would there be an opportunity for a storm water quality detention basin in connection with this project? *Response:* That idea is not currently on the table. It's a tight squeeze just to fit in the pump station.
- *Question:* The International School does get occasional flooding their back yard. Might it be possible for their drainage to be tied into this pump station too? *Response:* It's good to know early that there may be a need so the City can look at the possibilities.
- *Question:* How would the pump station system operate during tidal events that raise the creek level? *Response:* This would need to be part of the studies. There is currently a flow monitor at West Bayshore. Maybe another one at the pump station would be needed.

- *Question:* Could the pump station discharge go to directly to the Bay in some other location to avoid the potential for exacerbating creek flooding during a high tide? *Response:* This would be an added expense. The critical question is the timing of runoff at the pump station compared to when the flood pulse from the upper watershed would arrive. This will have to be studied.
- *Comment:* If the discharge could be moved away from the mouth of the creek, then you could pump the stormwater under any tidal situation. It's a complex system, and there may end up being only a small window when you can pump without worsening creek flooding. If this is the case, it could be hard to justify the expense of the pump station to the neighbors if you end up not being able to use it a lot of the time when you need it. *Response:* True. But sometimes the street floods even when the creek is low because of insufficient stormdrain capacity.
- *Comment:* You'll have to do good outreach and make sure the public understands that the pump may not be able to be used in certain situations.
- *Comment:* It may be that there's only a limited time that you can't pump, and with the pump the streets will drain much faster, both before and after the peak creek level passes.
- *Comment:* There is storage in the storm drains too, which will be kept empty when the pump is working, so there will be some capacity in the storm drain lines to store runoff even after the pump shuts down.
- *Question from Joe Teresi:* Are there any comments about ecological impacts on the creek? *Response:* Since the pumps will only be on in the winter and spring, I think there will be minimal impacts. Just make sure you screen for fish.
- *Comment from Craig Benson (Schaaf & Wheeler):* We are anticipating that at low tide, the outflow from the pump could stir up sediment. So we are looking at dissipators, stovepiping, and other alternatives to minimize sediment being stirred up.
- *Question:* Does the area that drains to the proposed pump station receive water from Pope-Chaucer? *Response:* Yes, but the storm drains and pump station will be sized for rain from the watershed, not for creek overflow. Even so, in 1998 for example, the pump would have drained the streets faster.
- *Question:* Can you tell us more about the improvements at Channing you mentioned? *Response:* There is a pipe up Lincoln to Alma that is currently undersized. The project would build a new trunk line to expand capacity once the pump station is built.
- *Question:* When it rains there are often puddles at curb cuts. Will this project help that at all? *Response:* Only if the puddle is caused by storm drain back up. Hopefully the pump station and future storm system improvements can be done in a way that help the two systems (storm drains and creeks) work together.

Joe asked when it would be good to come back and give another update on the project, and the group answered when the City has the project narrowed down to two or three options. The City hopes to do a mitigated negative declaration for the project's CEQA process. The consultants will do an initial study to figure out if this is appropriate. Anyone not present at today's meeting should feel free to email Joe with comments at [joe.teresi@city.palo-alto.ca.us](mailto:joe.teresi@city.palo-alto.ca.us).

### **Finalization of fiduciary agreements with Acterra (Pam Sturner, SFWC)**

Pam asked the Steering Committee for approval of the fiduciary agreement documents. The agreement states that the Watershed Council will no longer be a project of Acterra, but will now

be a “fiscally sponsored” project. This means that the organization will be programmatically independent but will still derive its 501(c)(3) status from Acterra. At the last meeting, the Steering Committee decided to delay approval of the agreement to the November meeting. Pam solicited comments on the documents (which were posted on the website) by email and received no comments.

*Question:* Has the fiduciary fee issue been clarified? *Response:* The \$5,000 per month from a previous version of the documents has been abandoned. The fee has not been finalized yet, but the agreement says the Acterra and the Watershed Council must agree on this issue before the agreement is finalized. The fee will likely be a percentage of the non pass-through revenue.

The Steering Committee gave its conditional approval to the agreement. Pam will give another update when the conditions are met and the agreement officially becomes active. The conditions are:

1. All of the assets and liabilities of the Watershed Council are identified, listed, reviewed by both organizations, and the cash assets of the Watershed Council are moved to a separate bank account.
2. The Financial Report format to be used by Acterra in reporting on Watershed Council balances are finalized.
3. The Watershed Council Treasurer is identified.
4. The fiduciary fee to be paid to Acterra by the Watershed Council is finalized.
5. The dates now shown in the Loan Agreement are revised to reflect the new timeline for implementation.

*Question:* When do you expect all conditions to be met? *Response:* We made this a conditioned agreement to try to make sure we take our time with each element and do it right. The target date is January 1, 2006, to have all conditions met.

Philippe Cohen moved to approve the conditional agreement; Bill Springer seconded.

Pam will send out a final email to all Steering Committee members setting a date on which the conditional agreement will be approved unless she hears of concerns before that time.

**New business: Brainstorming topics for future Steering Committee presentations** (Pam Sturner, SFWC)

We are almost at the end of the list of presentation topics that the Steering Committee requested over a year ago. Remaining presentations from that list include the restoration work at SLAC and the Corte Madera Creek bank stabilization guidelines that the Town of Portola Valley and the JPA have worked together to create.

Pam requested ideas for presentations in the upcoming year. Steering Committee members suggested the following ideas:

- Stormwater management at Stanford's proposed resort hotel near 280.
- New techniques for creating pervious surfaces.
- The Sand Hill Road widening project including proposed vs. actual outcomes related to water quality monitoring, planting, etc. (There were several comments that this project was very well-managed. The City of Menlo Park managed the project and the Project Manager might be the right person to ask to give the presentation. Also, Balance did some of the water quality monitoring.)
- What the various cities in the watershed are doing in response to the new C3 stormwater requirements, including projects and procedures.
- 2005 LTMAP report and 2006 sampling.
- A talk by Alan Launer of Stanford about the creek monitoring he does and changes he's seen over the years. *Comment from Philippe Cohen (Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve):* By February or March, Alan might be able to give an update about the proposed project funded by the Smart Family Foundation.
- An update on the nursery by Acterra nursery manager Peter Neal.
- The Watershed Council's stormwater demonstration projects.
- A presentation by Cal Water about how it manages Bear Gulch water. We could also have a talk about regulations on well drilling in both counties.
- A talk by David Freyburg about subsurface flows in the watershed. Lots of data has already been collected and preliminary analysis has been done.
- An update about the Army Corps project process, what is being done, what is being considered, and what the project could look like. There are a lot of misconceptions out there about what this project could look like. *Comment:* What will tidal flooding levees look like? At a recent Menlo Park City Council meeting, people were circulating pictures of levees in Antwerp and London. People are concerned about 6- to 8-foot walls lining the bay.

Kevin Murray of the JPA had points in response to the last suggestions:

- (1) He offered to give a short presentation on what is involved in entering into the feasibility cost-sharing agreement with the Corps.
- (2) Education of the public and all elected officials will be included in the community outreach plan that the JPA will be preparing early in the feasibility phase.
- (3) The Watershed Council could host a presentation and invite Steve Ritchie, the Coastal Conservancy project manager for the Salt Ponds project and who has inherited the South Bay Shoreline Study. It is appropriate to present information on what kinds of changes could occur within the project. We should get the word out about the presentation beyond our regular group. This could be a fairly informal presentation of alternatives explored to date. Steve Ritchie may have visuals or at least be able to describe the scale of the tidal component of the project. The Coastal Conservancy has been working on this for a while already and the Corps knows the types of levee systems they would likely recommend.

*Comment:* We need to tell the community what 100% protection against the 100-year flood would look like. If people feel that the scale of the design is overwhelming, maybe they will change their minds and no longer think we need that level of protection.

*Comment:* It's the JPA's job to educate the community about the project. The Watershed Council can sponsor events and be involved in better education about how watersheds function.

*Comment:* The Watershed Council shouldn't focus only on general watershed education. This is an opportunity to communicate information about the flood management project as well. The JPA should take the lead on the public education effort, but the Watershed Council can help provide educational opportunities.

*Comment from Kevin Murray (SFC-JPA):* Public education is a line item in the project budget.

Pam confirmed with Kevin that he would give a status update on the Army Corps project at the December Steering Committee meeting that will cover the anticipated timeline for the project and frequently asked questions.

*Comment:* Also, regarding outreach, it would be great to know how the Watershed Council can help. The City Council meetings at which the feasibility cost-sharing agreement is discussed will probably highlight perceptions and misconceptions and the need for education about the project.

*Question:* The Watershed Council's Streamkeeper program covers not only San Francisquito watershed but also Matadero and Adobe. Does the Watershed Council intend to broaden any of its other programs to include these other watersheds? *Response (Pam Sturner):* No.

## **Staff reports**

### Coordinator's report (Pam Sturner):

We are now moved into the new office upstairs, and would like to say a special thanks to Jerry Hearn for building us new shelves. We did a lot of organizing to fit into the new office, so we have some free stuff to give away: unfolded versions of the "San Francisquito Creek – Our Natural Resource" artistic map brochure, the artistic aerial map of the creeks of the Santa Clara Basin, and copies of the video "A Creek Runs through It." We are also looking for some free stuff: legal-format file cabinets. If anyone knows of office furniture liquidations coming up, please let Pam know.

Pam has recently become a member of the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve Coordinating Council, which is a forum for the exchange of information among Jasper Ridge's constituents.

Pam would like to write a letter of support for Kevin Kinsella, who is a teacher at Woodside Elementary School. Kevin was instrumental in the establishment of the Watershed Council's revegetation site at the school and has also done a fantastic job integrating the creek into his science curriculum. He is the coordinator of the creek and garden program at the school and has been involved in all aspects of our volunteer work: he and his classes take an active role in maintaining our revegetation site at the school, he is a Streamkeeper, and he has hosted Streamkeeper trainings at the school. He sent us word recently that the funding for the creek and garden program is at risk of being cut. It has been stayed for this year but is uncertain after that.

Pam asked the Steering Committee for approval to write a letter of support for the Creek and Garden Program to the Woodside School Board. Pam will circulate it to the Steering Committee before sending it. Philippe Cohen moved to approve; Bill Springer seconded.

Pam asked the group for important dates to include in upcoming Steering Committee meeting agendas. Philippe Cohen offered that the Society of Conservation Biologists annual meeting will be held in June 2006 in San Jose. 3000-5000 people from around the world will attend. There will be a lot of presentations that will highlight riparian and conservation issues. There will be field tours on June 24. If the Watershed Council has any ideas to submit to be part of the event, they should do it soon! The theme is something along the lines of "Conservation across boundaries." Philippe will email Pam the website link with information about the conference.

Pam also mentioned that Watershed Council volunteer workdays will be held the first Saturday of the month from September through May. The next one will be December 3<sup>rd</sup> and will be a planting day, location to be announced.

The Watershed Council has hired Sapna Singh as the new part-time outreach coordinator. She will be coordinating the volunteer workdays and Streamkeeper program. She comes to us from Child Advocates and is a board member of Sustainable San Mateo County. Her start date is November 17 and we will introduce her at the December Steering Committee meeting.

#### Restoration Project Manager's report (Katie Pilat):

The Watershed Council held a workday removing ivy from the creek bank next to Woodland Road in East Palo Alto. This was the third event in this spot since April, and we hope to stay ahead of the regrowth of ivy in this spot.

We have now signed contracts with our fish passage design consultants to have them start designs for two barrier modification projects: a culvert replacement on McGarvey Gulch in Huddart Park and installing baffles in box culverts on Los Trancos Creek. For McGarvey Gulch, the Watershed Council consultant will design the project in consultation with various County staff. The project will then be permitted and built by the County.

The construction of the two storm water demonstration projects continues! At Parking Plaza #5 in Menlo Park, the contractors are almost ready to do the pervious concrete pour for Phase 1 of the project. We will try to get some media attention for the Phase 2 pour. At the residential site, the drainage trench is complete and all the asphalt has been removed. The contractors are preparing the base layers for the unit pavers, grass pavers, and wheel tracks.

#### **Meeting adjourned.**

In attendance:

Joe Teresi – City of Palo Alto  
Craig Benson – Schaaf & Wheeler  
Ken Torke – Palo Alto Water Quality Control Plant  
Julie Skelton – Stanford Management Company

Bill Springer – Santa Clara Valley Water District  
Jerry Hearn – Acterra  
Philippe S. Cohen – Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford  
Katie Pilat – SFWC  
Art Kraemer – Crescent Park Neighborhood Association  
Kevin Murray – SFC-JPA  
Marty Laporte – Stanford Utilities  
Dianne Dryer – City of Menlo Park  
Viv Blomenkamp – League of Women Voters Palo Alto  
Pam Sturner – SFWC

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Pilat