
**San Francisquito Watershed Council
Steering Committee Minutes**

January 10, 2007

Introductions. Agenda approved. The next Watershed Council workday is February 3rd at the Georgia Lane site. The November 8, 2006, and December 13, 2006, minutes were approved.

Question about December 13 minutes: Why was a question asked about whether the SCVWD knew of the vulnerable tree survey project?

Response: The speaker thought that the project could serve as a model for similar projects in other locations.

The next meeting is February 14th.

Announcements

- The Santa Clara Valley Water District is holding a workshop on the escalation of capital project costs this Friday, January 12, at the Water District headquarters at 9:00 a.m.
- San Mateo County has extended the public comment period for the Huddart and Wunderlich Parks Master Plan to January 13th. Information about how to participate is in the circulating file.
- We'll be audio-taping Chris Sommers' presentation today.

Presentation: Framework and methods of the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program watershed monitoring & assessment program (Chris Sommers, EOA)

Pam told the group that Chris's presentation is a follow-up to the discussion we had at our November Steering Committee meeting at which we said we wanted to learn more about different monitoring regimes in the Bay Area as we consider future directions of LTMAP.

Chris started by passing out copies of a few educational materials that the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) has produced, including a water quality monitoring and assessment fact sheet from last year and an updated version from this year; fact sheets for sediment impacts and management impacts assessment, one from last year and an update from this year; another on trash management and what SCVURPPP is doing for trash; and one the dioxin control program. These fact sheets are on SCVURPPP's website.

SCVURPPP is made up of co-permittees or municipalities within Santa Clara County, including the County itself and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. They joined together within the first NPDES permit that was issued in the early 1990s for municipal stormwater discharges. It was issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to reduce the impacts of stormwater or urban runoff coming off the land areas that they manage -- in other words, the cities and the creeks in the case of the District. There is a comparable program in San Mateo County called the San Mateo County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (STOPPP), and all these cities are

also under a single permit. The permits say that the cities will do A through Z in terms of techniques and best management practices (BMPs) to reduce urban runoff, and there are also associated monitoring requirements, which is what Chris will focus on today.

To give a little bit of history, SCVURPPP and the comparable program in Los Angeles were the first in the nation to be issued Phase 1 NPDES permits. Even before these permits were issued in 1990 or 1991, the District and the cities went through an urban runoff characterization for their NPDES permit. There were wet weather monitoring stations put in creeks and outfalls, and they characterized the types of contaminants that were in urban runoff. Other large municipalities throughout the nation were doing this type of monitoring, too. The idea was to understand the range and variability of the types of contaminants in urban runoff -- for example, how much cadmium and copper were coming off an industrial land use vs. what was coming off a commercial use. The goal was to determine where BMPs should be focused and what degree of implementation should be required by the permits. This occurred up to 1995.

From 1996 through the present came the integration of watershed management, which melded the focus on urban runoff with overall watershed management. This is also when the Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) came into being. There was a change in the monitoring design and they started looking at characterizations and watershed assessments through the WMI. This continues to this day because we have a watershed management element within our permit, so we're not only looking at contaminants, but also at the status of beneficial uses in the receiving waters. A grant was awarded to SCVURPPP to look at a variety of programmatic and environmental indicators of stormwater effectiveness. This met SCVURPPP's monitoring requirements under their permit, and most of it occurred in the Coyote Creek watershed.

With the issuance of the current NPDES permit in 2001, we refined the SCVURPPP monitoring program again. The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), which is a statewide program, was also being designed at that time and gave the regions a small bit of their funding to design monitoring programs for 305b and 303d reporting. SWAMP came up with a design to do a rotating watershed approach to reach every watershed in a five-year time frame throughout the Bay Area region, and from this there should be enough data to say something about the status of these waters and whether they are impacted or not. They created a rotating watershed approach and a set of indicators. At the same time, SCVURPPP was getting their NPDES permit reissued, and the Regional Board requested that they mimic the SWAMP approach to have comparable objectives and data as the SWAMP program.

SCVURPPP's current multiyear monitoring plan was to respond to NPDES requirements. It was concentrated on receiving waters, which was in contrast with what was done before with trying to characterize urban runoff. Now SCVURPPP is concentrating on streams, and there's also a regional monitoring program for the Bay. Chris is focusing on creeks in his talk today.

While the monitoring program is county-wide, there are two watersheds in the county, San Francisquito being one, that were not included in the rotating watershed approach. The reason this happened was that this group (the Watershed Council) was moving forward with their own monitoring design with the Long-term Monitoring and Assessment Program. The resources that would have been used for it were used for other watersheds throughout the county.

The current permit covers 2002 through 2010, with the idea being that even if you're getting your permit reissued, you still need to do the monitoring.

The approach is systematic and is designed to prioritize studies. It is consistent with five core management questions that were developed by the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition. It is an iterative process, where we're supposed to learn from our monitoring, adjust our process, identify issues, and inform management decisions.

San Francisquito and Guadalupe are the two watersheds SCVURPPP decided not to include in the monitoring program. There was already a lot of information being collected for Guadalupe by the Water District and for the TMDL focused on mercury. SCVURPPP felt that the data they collected would be minimal compared to what was being collected through other programs.

Chris started with general description of process and moved to the more specific. The goal was to understand what we know now, formulate hypotheses, test the hypotheses, and then use this and other information to look at all the impacts to the receiving waters and determine which were the most important, and which management decisions to look at. There are many impacts that could be looked at for a receiving water, of which urban runoff is just one piece. There are also upstream land uses outside of the urban area, impoundments, and other impacts that are not part of the urban runoff NPDES permit. Then you have to decide what is causing the impact and put in context how urban influences are affecting the creeks vs. other types of influences.

This then leads to investigative monitoring to focus on these impacts with more targeted studies. And this leads to BMP implementation which you can then do trends monitoring, although trends monitoring is something that SCVURPPP hasn't even yet designed how they will look at. With the variability of stormwater and receiving waters, the time frame and level of implementation of monitoring would have to be very great to see any change.

These are the five core management questions. These are very important because anyone who is interested in monitoring or in using monitoring data should understand why that data was collected and what questions it was trying to answer. And this, along with resources available, dictates what kind of indicators you have, what kind of time frame, etc.

The questions to start with that are linked to screening level monitoring are: are conditions likely to be protective of beneficial uses? For example, conditions are totally different for drinking water uses than aquatic life uses, or you might take a different sampling approach for warm water fisheries vs. cold water fisheries. The second question is: how large is the problem? The third is to put urban runoff issues in context with other issues. The fourth is a source identification approach. The fifth is: are things getting better or worse?

Question: Were these five questions developed by the Regional Board?

Response: They were originally developed in Southern California in a model monitoring program for stormwater. They had input from Regional Board staff, NGOs, municipal staff, and universities. The real question is: is the state doing equivalent monitoring? The state is most focused on the first question for their 305b report on the status of waters of the state as well as

what's impacting those waters. The state has to put out a 305b report every two years on status as well as the 303d list which says which water bodies are impacts that TMDLs must be developed for. 305b and 303d are references to sections of the Clean Water Act.

Step #1: Watershed characterization: Before SCVURPPP monitoring starts, our goal is to ask what uses are or aren't designated there, what previous monitoring data and background information we already have, what hypotheses have been proposed, what indicators we want to look at, etc. For example, if there are no likely recreational uses in a water body, why sample indicator bacteria? You have to use your best professional judgment about what uses are there and what to monitor for.

Watershed Characterization Methods: SCVURPPP recently started using a protocol developed by the Center for Watershed Protection called the unified stream assessment, which comes down to a stream walk. You walk the creek and have forms you use to fill out impact and reach assessments. SCVURPPP look at empirical data as well as land-based GIS data including coverages listed on slide. You record impacts as you walk upstream -- things like channel modifications, severe erosion points, utility crossings, recreational uses, trails, trash, outfalls, etc. This helps in developing a monitoring plan but also just gets eyes in the field that might lead to a management action if enough data can be collected.

Step #2: Screening-Level Monitoring: Once this is done, SCVURPPP develops a plan, including indicators, monitoring locations, and timeframe. The multiyear plan looks at ten watersheds with monitoring in two consecutive years, which was determined in the monitoring plan, mostly from a resource standpoint. SCVURPPP basically does grab sampling during the winter season (October to April) or dry season. SCVURPPP does not do storm sampling. They are focused on screening level monitoring to say something about the baseline conditions in the receiving waters. Stormwater sampling would require a completely different sampling design and be more expensive than the approach that the multi-plan is based on.

SCVURPPP does a series of watersheds based on budget and how many they can do at once. They are doing ten watersheds with two consecutive years each over a five-year period. There are multiple locations on each creek (for example, there are ten sites on Coyote). If resources are limited, the indicators selected must be different and more holistic than if you have more resources and can study more individual impacts.

Monitoring Types and Frequencies: In Coyote Creek, SCVURPPP has moved away from water quality grab samples and has moved toward sediment assessments. The first reason for this is that most pollutants of interest are associated with sediment, including both organics and inorganics. The second reason is that grab samples are not representative of the whole stream for the whole year, whereas bed sediments collect over time and are more representative of the whole system. The third reason is that sediment sampling is not as resource-intensive. Organophosphates including diazinon were rampant in the South Bay in the 1990s and caused acute toxicity in the water column. But in the last three to four years this impact has decreased, and the replacement pesticides that are being used now such as pyrethroids attach to sediments and cause toxicity to arthropods in the sediment rather than fish in the water column. Other than

universities, SCVURPPP is the only group doing this kind of testing of sediment toxicity, so the methods are not as well developed as for aquatic toxicity.

Step #3: Water Body Assessment: Once data is collected about upstream runoff, receiving water quality, and toxicity, the question is how to interpret it to influence management decisions. Once you make sense of the contaminant, habitat, landscape, and GIS data from the perspectives of fish, flooding, human health, etc., you need to figure out how to get people to focus on the right things. This question encompasses more than just urban runoff. If your goal is to protect and improve the environment and you only focus on one piece of the problem, you may not be able to tell what the whole puzzle looks like. Historical ecology can also be very useful in helping to determine the potential to get back a function that has been lost or impaired. The questions to ask are what factors impact these functions, what management actions cause these factors, and what the data gaps are. It is very important to take a holistic look at the impacts on a stream function. If you don't, you could miss the boat and take the wrong management path.

Water Body Assessment Methodology: The methodology used in the Stream Ecosystem Functional Assessment consists of an HGM (hydrogeomorphic) assessment and indices of biological integrity. This methodology evaluates the existing condition relative to reference standard conditions, the future condition including possible impacts of future projects, and the potential condition including unplanned and strategic management actions.

Step #4: Investigative Studies and Source Identification: In this step, studies from within or from outside the process are collected, from which the problem and hypotheses are identified. For example, with pesticide, you would seek to answer what causes pesticide toxicity.

Step #5: BMP Implementation and Evaluation: In this step you ask if control measures are meeting desired outcomes. It is difficult to evaluate BMP effectiveness using a water quality monitoring approach. The BMPs have a limited effect and there is too much noise. CASQA is helping to develop guidance to look at the overall aggregate effect on water bodies rather than the specific BMP.

Step #6: Assessing Trends: To be able to evaluate trends, you need to know what monitoring it takes to detect changes over time, which impacts the timeframe and frequency of monitoring. If change is detected, it's another step to determine why. Is it because of the implementation of control measures? In the past, benefits of BMP could not usually be quantified; you just assumed that if you used them, the results would be good. The effects of BMPs need to be evaluated, but this is difficult to do. The Decreasing Aquatic Toxicity in Santa Clara Valley Creeks slide shows a significant drop in toxicity between 1988-1994 and 2002-2005, which is likely due to the phase out of diazinon. In this case, the 1988-94 data was taken from storm samples and the 2002-05 data from non-storm samples, but the equivalent acute toxicity results showed the same thing. On the other hand, it is much harder to determine the cause of chronic toxicity.

Movement Towards Regional Scale Monitoring: In the future, county permits will not be used and all of Regional Board Region 2 will be covered under a single permit. This will be 76 agencies, and there are big differences from Los Altos Hills to Richmond to San Jose. There are

development differences, pollutant differences, community support differences, and others. The goal is to have the second draft plan, of monitoring indicators rather than monitoring design, done by late January. This regional permit idea has been in the works for three years now.

While there are big concepts that everyone can agree on, the devil is in the details. Currently, the permit language is somewhat vague on certain things, and then each city develops its specific regulations and standards to implement the permit objectives. So those who want to do a good job do, and those who do the lowest common denominator don't, unless they are sued by environmental or community groups or get an enforcement action from the Regional Board.

The new permit will be more specific, and the same requirements will apply to all cities whether there is a need or not in an individual city. This way the quality assurance programs can be uniform for all permittees, rather than having to be custom-made for each.

Movement to sediment: Monitoring programs are also moving toward sediment monitoring. When you're doing water quality monitoring, you want more than one line of evidence. Screening level assessments don't tell you what the stressor on the system is, but there are ways to do that with the sediment quality triad of bedded sediment chemistry, sediment toxicity, and BMI assessments. Through interpretation of this data, you then decide what sites deserve more investment, and which show leading indicators of impact vs. those that require a longer time-frame between samples.

Question: What do it mean on your slide where it says, "Sediment impacts outweigh water quality"?

Response: BMI organisms are exposed to sediment over a longer time than just a storm event. There are also greater chances of detecting contaminants in sediment than trying to catch them in the water column just during storms. And finally, there is probably a bigger impact of sediment on habitat indicators than the impacts of sediment from a contaminant standpoint.

Question: You said this monitoring program was developed for decision-makers. How has the data you've collected been used so far?

Response: There are some very broad conclusions that have been drawn, such as the fact that BMI scores decrease the farther downstream you are; which makes sense because the more impervious surface area you have, the more habitat has been degraded. There are also some investigative studies going on such as limiting factors analysis that could come up with specific recommendations, such as barrier removal. But the biggest challenge is to get information to the right agency, then to the right person with the resources to implement recommendations – this is very difficult. SCVURPPP is still in the early phases of this program, which has been running since 2002, but there have been some changes. Getting information out is the first step.

Comment: We are now getting to the point where we have the ripeness of data and processes going on where there is a place to plug data into. We are getting glimmers that the data will be used and useful.

Response: And it's important to note that one monitoring design is not everything to everyone. That's why it's so important to know what questions you're trying to answer and what your objectives are. From that, you develop the methods, timeframe, and confidence levels. And one more point is that there's always something else to monitor, but that doesn't mean you should

throw away existing monitoring programs. Environmental systems take a long time to change, and it's very rare to have detectable changes as a result of management actions. This has only been seen with the banning of lead and diazinon. It takes a long time to see the effects of the little changes that are happening everywhere.

Discussion: Proposal to do strategic planning for SFWC

Pam Sturner led off this discussion by asking who on the Steering Committee had ever tried to explain to someone in 30 seconds or less what the Watershed Council is, what it does, or who is a member. After several members expressed that these three items were difficult to explain in a concise way, Pam continued that the group then understood the reason for this discussion and her proposal that the Steering Committee undertake a strategic planning process for the organization.

She commented that the vision document that the Council finished in the spring of 2005 provided a clarity of goals and vision for the watershed, and now we need to establish the same kind of clarity for the Watershed Council as an organization.

Pam has discussed this question with the Management Advisory Committee, and they also agree that there is a need to be able to answer these questions easily and that a strategic planning process will help us do this.

Pam then handed out a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the issues, benefits, and options available as the group considered the question of whether it was ready to engage in strategic planning. She told the group that the goal of the discussion was to ask for their thoughts and reactions and to see what they wanted to do.

[Slide #2] The proposal to do a strategic planning process comes from the fact that the Watershed Council has undergone a lot of significant changes in the past few years. In terms of operations and finance, we had the exit of a founding leader, Jim Johnson, who worked in the watershed for 18 years including 12 with the Council. He was considered by many people to be the face of the watershed and was the driving force behind many of the Council's projects. In addition, the Watershed Council's status with Acterra has changed. We are now responsible for more aspects of our own governance, and Acterra's interest in the organization is now focused primarily on our impacts on Acterra's financial health, rather than on how well we're meeting our mission and goals. That role is now entirely ours. On the finance side, as we've noted over the past year, much of the state and federal funding that has supported many of the Watershed Council's programs has been disappearing.

On the program side, the fish passage and stormwater demonstration projects, which have accounted for as much as 50% of our funding in the past, will both be ending this year, so a big question is: what do we want to do next? We've also made some changes to our volunteer program and this year added a new component, the revegetation monitoring program that Ryan developed and is leading. Another change since the beginning of the Watershed Council is that volunteers seem to be getting busier and busier, and we need to figure out how to make our programs fit with their very full lives. This is something that we hear many other community-based organizations are experiencing, too. Finally, the JPA and Army Corps' Flood Damage

Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration feasibility study is now underway. This project will likely take place over the next 5 to 15 years and will produce lots of information and questions from the community. The Watershed Council needs to figure out its relationship to this project.

Any combination of these changes could warrant a strategic planning effort, but the fact that these are all happening at once points to the need for it.

[Slide #3] Moving on to the “Needs” slide, Pam said that in order to gain a clear sense of what we want to do next, one thing we need is a mission statement that concisely tells what we do, for whom, why, and how. The current mission statement is somewhat abstract, includes jargon with lots of room for interpretation, and doesn’t really tell what we do or for whom. Missions usually describe an organization’s purpose, the people it serves, and the methods used to do the work. Pam referred the group to the “Mission, vision, and values statements” handout and pointed to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce mission statement of an example that clearly spells out what it does, for whom, and how. In Pam’s view, the fact that the “who” is missing from the Watershed Council’s mission statement is significant. We have talked many times over the past few years about increasing membership, and yet we always talk in terms of resources; they almost serve as proxies for the people and species affected. While outreach is our number one priority, there’s no mention of people in our mission. Pam thinks we probably do this for the same reasons others do: it is uncomfortable to talk about who’s affected because it gets into questions of tradeoffs. Pam suspects that we limit ourselves by doing so, and that we could be an even more effective organization and engage more people if we address the “for whom” question head-on. This would give us a basis to ask questions about who is affected by a given project or action and why one choice seems to be preferred over another, which in turn might entice others to join us in a real conversation about the future of the watershed. Pam emphasized that she is not proposing that we redo the mission statement just to redo it, but to create a stronger basis for the Watershed Council’s work.

With a set of mission, vision, and values statements in place, we would be in a position to create a blueprint for action for the Watershed Council. Pam noted that we’ve already articulated a lot of ideas along these lines for the watershed. She called the group’s attention to the public education and involvement page from the 2005 vision document (p. 12), where the underlined words (such as “involvement,” “communication,” and “cooperation”) and the concepts articulated in the second column (e.g., “individuals, by their actions within the watershed, generate impacts on other watershed residents”) point to values of equity, transparency, and inclusiveness. Turning our mission statement into a compelling blueprint for action may be a question of making these values explicit for ourselves as an organization.

To give an idea of how this could work, Pam suggested that if we had had equity, transparency, and inclusiveness as explicit organizational values this past fall, we would have had a basis for a more satisfying conversation with the presenters from the Regional Board about the sediment TMDL, because we might have asked up front why this approach is the preferred one for protecting steelhead habitat. Another example, from the December Steering Committee meeting, was a conversation about different expectations about the potential role of the Watershed Council in outreach for the Army Corps project. Having these explicit organizational values

would have given us the basis to talk about what we think is important to us and how we could help with these efforts.

Another need that could be addressed through a strategic plan is the development of a governance structure that supports the Watershed Council's new status as a programmatically independent entity. Our governance is currently split between Acterra (which is responsible for fiscal oversight), the Management Advisory Committee (which oversees operations and fiscal management), and the Steering Committee (which guides the overall direction of the organization). The roles of these three groups are sometimes overlapping, and several important functions that a board of directors would normally assume, such as fundraising and marketing, are missing. This is not a sustainable governance structure.

[Slide #4] There are big questions here to consider, and Pam thinks that the Watershed Council is in an excellent position to do the work needed to move the organization into the next stage of its life. An important advantage is that a lot of work has already been done. Lots of ideas were generated at the 2002 retreat and during the 2004-05 vision document update; we now need to distill these insights into organizational priorities that are easy for staff and supporters to use in talking about our work. We also have a dedicated leadership. Many people here today have been part of the organization since its beginning in 1993, and they represent perspectives from many sectors. These factors are key to why we're still here after 13 years, where many other watershed organizations have not survived. We've generated a lot of good will and respect in the community, and we now have the opportunity to show how we can use our strengths to ask deeper questions that get to core issues and serve the community's interests in new ways. We also have a track record for getting things done. If you look through the accomplishments from the vision document, many of them are either things we did or helped to bring about.

[Slide #5] To summarize, strategic planning can help us create a framework to do the right things right, set our priorities, and figure out what we really want to go after. It can also help us raise our profile in the community and energize us internally too.

[Slide #6] Pam then presented her proposed timeline for getting the work done. She adapted it from a book called *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations* by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, which many other nonprofits (including Committee for Green Foothills) have used to create successful processes. It strives for a balance that allows enough discussion but keeps things moving forward toward a plan of action. Pam foresees that January through March would be spent writing mission, vision, and values statements; April through June would be spent gathering information and developing priorities; July through September would be spent writing the strategic plan; and September and October would be spent using the strategic plan to develop work plans.

In terms of structure, it is common for there to be a dedicated group that does the "heavy lifting" needed to carry the process through. In our case, that group would consist of the Management Advisory Committee plus a few additional members who would take input from the Steering Committee and external stakeholders, work on recommendations, and bring them back for review and decision by the larger group. There would be multiple opportunities for input, including Steering Committee meetings and correspondence reviews. Decisions would be made

by Steering Committee signatories in good standing, according to our new membership agreements.

[Slide #7] Depending on how much energy there is for this process, we could consider a few alternatives to the full-blown strategic planning process. One alternative would be to do an abbreviated version in which we would consider a few targeted questions. The question is whether this approach would work, given the scope of change that we face. A drawback of this approach is that it would likely shortchange external stakeholder input. Another option is to take no action. In this case, the Watershed Council would likely continue for a while with the status quo but would be unable to meet funders' requirements for business, strategic, and funding plans. This scenario is essentially the going-out-of-business plan, because we would eventually become unable to build capacity and adapt to change.

Pam ended her presentation by saying she wanted to hear the group's reactions to these ideas and understand what they felt they had the energy to do. She offered the questions on the final slide to guide the discussion.

Comments:

- *Trish Mulvey (MAC member)*: The status quo is not an option. The MAC is willing to put in the time and energy required to do strategic planning, and agrees with Pam's assessment that it is necessary.
- Pam provided great clarity in laying out the issues.
- The question is: how can people be involved? Some may have to reduce the time they spend in other Watershed Council activities.
- It is important to have a couple people on the strategic planning committee from outside the organization.
- Assuming there is the capacity for a core group to engage in this, is there any money to hire a facilitator? *Response from Pam Sturner*: The Watershed Council received a \$2,500 anonymous gift to be used for this process.
- Who is the core group? *Response*: The MAC would help with the project planning and keeping the process on track; the strategic planning committee would be largely in charge of content; and the Steering Committee would dedicate a portion of each meeting to review work and make decisions.
- *Bill Springer (Santa Clara Valley Water District)*: I think we need to get consensus on the direction to take. Could we go around the room and see what people think?
- *Jerry Hearn (MAC member)*: I am willing to put in the time for this process. I think we need to start with the question of whether we need to exist. We need to ask this and make this decision explicitly in order to energize ourselves.
- We need a full process, not an abbreviated one, in order to answer this question.
- *Question to Pam Sturner*: When will you start putting the strategic planning committee together? *Response*: If we decide to move forward, tomorrow.
- Will the committee be by invitation, or are you looking for volunteers? *Response*: I will expect to recruit people and give them really clear expectations of their role in the project.
- Are two meetings enough to re-examine mission, vision, and values? *Response*: The Steering Committee will meet two more times (February and March) during that phase, but

the strategic planning committee will meet more than that. It will probably meet twice per month at least for the next few months and have some homework.

- In this watershed there are lots of players, and there's no organization that everyone and all the City Councils trust. This group is the only one with the potential to do that, so the question is how to do it well. I support doing the strategic planning process.

At the end of this discussion, all attendees were in favor of doing the full strategic planning process. Pam said she would begin recruiting for the strategic planning committee. She will also try to make use of conference calls and coordinate meetings to minimize travel time for people who participate in more than one Watershed Council work group. Marty Laporte of Stanford Utilities offered that Stanford has phones with three external lines and could help with conference call capabilities. Someone commented that Holly Van Houten of Committee for Green Foothills had found a reasonably priced conference call resource.

To get a basic sense of what Steering Committee members thought they could do, Pam asked for a show of hands as to how many would be willing to:

- fill out the SWOT (strengths / weaknesses / opportunities / threats) survey
- review mission, vision, and values
- make phone calls to survey stakeholders
- research governance structures of sister organizations

All present answered yes to the first two questions. After getting clarification from Pam that the stakeholders would be identified and surveys developed in advance, many present were willing to do the phone surveys as well. After clarification that sister organizations and questions would be identified in advance, many were also willing to research governance structures.

Pam then outlined the process for the writing of both the mission, vision, and values and the strategic plan: she would work with the strategic planning committee to generate ideas, draft a revision with one or two volunteers, and then circulate it to the full Steering Committee for review and decision-making or referral back to the planning committee for additional work. She stressed that there would be lots of opportunity for everyone to give input. She will also be sensitive that some members need time to take decisions back to their home organization before voting or supporting a position.

Pam asked the group to consider one of the questions on her last slide: "Are there any issues that you feel are not up for discussion?" As an example, she noted that in the past, the group has been clear that it would not work outside the San Francisquito watershed boundary, so that might be a question not open for discussion. One member responded that this question could be open for discussion, and another responded that while everything should be open for discussion, that we shouldn't spend too much time on this question.

Pam also asked if anyone had insights to share about things that had worked well in other strategic planning processes.

Comment: It seems that you could send these questions out to the Steering Committee as an email survey.

Pam summarized the questions to be included in the survey based on today's conversation, repeated below:

- Are you willing to fill out the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) survey?
- Are you willing to review mission, vision, and values?
- Are you willing to make phone calls to survey stakeholders?
- Are you willing to research governance structures of sister organizations?
- Will you need to take official decisions back to your home organization before you can vote on them and how much time might this take?
- Are there any issues you feel are not up for discussion?
- Do you have insights from past strategic planning processes that would be helpful to share with the group?

Pam asked if there was consensus to move forward with the planning proposal, to which the group answered yes. She stressed that everyone should participate as they can and not worry about what they can't do. This group is dedicated and committed in so many ways, and the strategic planning should, among other things, celebrate the group's successes and help us think about how to use our strengths to achieve new things for the watershed.

Cynthia D'Agosta, the executive director for the San Francisquito Creek JPA, commented that the JPA is also beginning a strategic planning process that will occur in approximately the same time frame. Its process should produce information that is useful to the Watershed Council's process, too. The two processes should identify questions about the roles of the two organizations and opportunities to answer and clarify them.

Comment: One lesson I have learned in past similar processes is that there may be situations in which it could be worth asking participants to consider meeting outside of the normal Steering Committee meeting time.

Comment: I agree. In past situations, sometimes a half-day meeting has been very beneficial in giving enough time for more give and take than is possible in a one-hour meeting. Pam responded that the work done in the first quarter will inform the evolution of the process, and it seems likely that a retreat may be useful at some point.

Staff reports

Ryan Navratil, Field Coordinator: The Watershed Council received a grant from San Mateo County STOPPP to support workday expenses in 2007. Also, we had a great workday at the upper Alpine Road site last Saturday. The workday was focused on bank stabilization and volunteers put 75 plants in the ground. Ryan went back to the site later in the week and installed about 30 willow stakes into a small landslide near the bottom of the bank. He'll go back and monitor those over the next few months.

Katie Pilat, Restoration Projects Manager: Katie announced that the Watershed Council will be leading guided tours and doing community presentations about the stormwater demonstration projects that the Council has been working on over the last 3 years. Both the tours and presentations will be in February, and one of the Steering Committee presentations will be about the project.

Continuing business

The Water Resources Collaborative is now meeting quarterly. The next meeting is at the end of the month to inject some reality into the work plan to develop next steps on enhanced practices. There will also be an update from the partner cities and county that will be taking on permitting that the Water District is sunsetting on March 1, 2007.

The Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) is also meeting on a quarterly schedule. For the last year, the WMI has been in the development stage of the watershed goals process. This will be a regional process, and pilot areas are being considered. The San Francisquito watershed could be a candidate. Given all of the various processes going on in this watershed, would this be a really good or really bad time to get involved in this? Other potential pilot watersheds include Coyote Creek, Miller Creek in Marin County, Walnut Creek in Contra Costa County, and Sonoma Creek in Sonoma County.

In attendance:

Brad Eggleston – City of Palo Alto
Trish Mulvey – SFWC / WMI
Jerry Hearn – Acterra
Bill Whitmer – SFWC
Bill Springer – SCVWD
Art Kraemer – Crescent Park Neighborhood Association
Marge DeStaebler – PV Conservation Committee
Leslie Lambert – Town of Portola Valley
Judy Dauberman – Youth Community Service
Marty Laporte – Stanford Utilities
Susan Witebsky – Stanford Linear Accelerator Center
Darrin Gambelin – Stanford Linear Accelerator Center
Dianne Dryer – City of Menlo Park
Katie Pilat – SFWC
Pam Sturner – SFWC
Ryan Navratil – SFWC
Cynthia D’Agosta – SFC-JPA
Jerry Smith – San Jose State University
Philippe S. Cohen – Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford University
Bob Power – SCVAS

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Pilat.