

October 30th Water Workshop Meeting

On October 30th, members of the community attended a public workshop to share ideas and concerns for some of the key water sources or projects in Sonoma Valley. The meeting featured breakout groups, where topics were discussed in small groups with resource and project managers. Below are notes from each of the tables.

Stormwater

CAPTURING AND RECHARGING RUNOFF

- Historical, watershed-wide land use changes increase stormwater runoff.
- Most efficient sites for capture are located in upper watershed.
- Flood impact reduction has greatest impact when situated above high intensity land uses.

PROPOSED STORMWATER CAPTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Van Hoosear Wildflower Preserve - Goode Property may be a potential site for infiltration into Carriger Creek if it would not disturb other preserve resources.
- Inflatable dam on Sonoma Creek for diverting water to off-stream storage (system of aqueducts and lower reservoirs for distribution to agricultural lands).
- Route storm water pipes into reservoirs instead of bay-draining creeks.
- Develop a system of check dams to slow the water and use creeks (w/natural cobble) for recharge
- Several large-scale projects on privately held lands proposed.
- Household-scale drainage projects, i.e., rain water capture at downspouts; permitting issues, relative impact to larger-scale projects, incentives or rebates for property owners, engineering considerations such as foundation protection.
- Capture stormwater and blend it with recycled water, utilizing existing and/or expand recycled water distribution system
- Recharge recycled and/or reclaimed water.
- Provide incentives to vineyards to use their surface water-fed reservoirs to irrigate during winter creating more storage and promoting recharge.
- Use catch basins, dry wells and other rainwater catchment techniques.
- Agency or other entity should develop letter to landowners offering “x” money\$ for “x” storage. Develop a method to give folks credit for the water they store or recharge.
- Sliding scales should be used to offer rebates or other financial incentives to capture or recharge stormwater, making implementation approachable and affordable.
- Government agencies must approach planning and implementation holistically, working together with community with the foundation of the macro scale through to the micro scale using the principle of homeostasis to manage water on planet earth.
- All agencies should have post-construction stormwater regulations comparable to the Phase I regulations already in effect in Santa Rosa.
- Offer greater irrigation water allocations or reduced water rates to rural landowners who offer easements or dedications of land for groundwater recharge projects.\
- Identify data needs to better inform decision making- such as developing an infiltration map

QUESTIONS:

- Question: How much of total rainfall turns into storm water runoff? Discussion: On a watershed-wide scale around 1/3 of rainfall. Runoff rate is locally determined by groundcover, saturation from previous storms, slope, and other factors.
- Question: Is there a data layer/map that shows where water can infiltrate? Discussion: Yes, watershed ranking – geology + slope (less than 10%) has been performed by ESA.
- Question: How much water must be captured? How much area must be dedicated to recharge? What size and scale of projects are we studying? Needed? Discussion: 100's of acre feet of stormwater watershed wide. 500 acre foot + recharge projects are the most

desirable for meaningful flood reduction. Specific projects are scalable from parcel-scale up though.

- Question: How long does water need to infiltrate into groundwater? Discussion: Infiltration rates vary depending upon geology. Most retention and recharge basins are designed to dewater in a maximum of 72 hours to prevent vector control issues, e.g. mosquitos, although a large portion of the attenuation may be due to controlled draining and evaporation.
- Is Shokken Hill a feasible site for capture/reduce flood impact Norbomm Rd? Discussion: Volcanics in the Shokken hill area might have good infiltration but may be a liability depending on where the natural geological fractures allow infiltrating water to flow. If infiltrated water emerges above grade or saturates soils on private properties below Shokken Hill instead of infiltrating directly into deep aquifers, this approach may be problematic.
- Question: How feasible is an inflatable dam on Sonoma Creek? Discussion: Impoundments and dam projects in surface waters require multiple agencies' involvement to ensure that dam projects don't cause negative effects for native species; e.g. fish passage and downstream flow-reduction, or reduced hydraulic capacity and flooding at upstream locations, as well as myriad other effects.

Creeks

ISSUES:

- Fryer Creek
 - Seems like there is no maintenance unless mandated
 - Dumping of trash and dog poop
 - Concerned about duck pond /would like water backed up
- Concerned about veg management
- Permitting process limits public participation
- Erosion (incision) of creeks leads to vegetation in the channel bottom, which reduces flow
- Grading of private properties to encourage runoff adds to the problem
- Sonoma Creek was healthier when it was dredged regularly and the trees in the middle were removed.
- Aquacaliente Rd turns into a stream during storm events.
- Fish passage at Madrone Road bridge
- Doggie bag disposal along Fryer Creek
- Increased runoff results in increased downcutting and erosion on the streams as the streams try to make themselves wider to slow down the velocities.

SUGGESTIONS/ IDEAS/CONCEPTS:

- Need outreach re: water and landscape management on Fryer Creek.
- Want to see the drain pipe under the culvert on Fryer Creek plugged.
- Would like to see creek maintenance for habitat.
- Would like to see more resources for landscape management on streams.
- We need to encourage work on private property to increase stormwater retention, especially large property owners
- Need education about how to care for creeks and how to maintain natural habitat.
- Need outreach to private landowners to develop water storage and reduce run off.
- Streamline permitting for landowners to do work in the creeks.
- Install more fish friendly structures on Sonoma creek.
- Establish "creek captains" to lead subwatershed groups in creek stewardship.
- Think of creeks as an asset rather than a liability.
- Install check dams or seasonal dams on Sonoma Creek; need to pressure Jared Huffman and Mike Thompson to get approval for these.
- Cut down trees and remove the gravel in Sonoma Creek to reduce bank erosion.
- Need education for people living along the creeks to encourage them not to dispose of green waste into the creeks

Groundwater

- Groundwater should be MANAGED
- In Rural Residential areas provide rules for well construction (sealing, distance from other wells)
- To improve aquifers, use a combination of recharging, reducing demands & monitoring
- Education FIRST!
- Provide recharge incentives for landowners/farmers
- Try as many non-regulatory approaches as possible!
- Increase the way we reuse H₂O!
- Need to MONITOR/MEASURE
- Need to raise awareness (of well owners & wealthy people who don't care about bills) & PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIVE HERE!!

Funding

Incentivize individual investments on private property using tools like tax breaks, easements or cost shares

- Funding incentives for recharge projects
- Incentives for flood control projects
- Use of vineyard area for spreading

Explore other funding options

- Impact investments, which can provide a slow return over long term
- Explore crowd sourcing or social funding (like Raven Theater in Windsor: Crowd sourcing = community involvement)
- Philanthropic funding
- Public funding, such as grants
- Social lending institutes or Peer to Peer Lending
- Get long-term commitment to projects/experiments by educational institutions
- Set up pilot learning projects
- Get the local very rich involved – a la Bill Gates
 - Market the history of elites investing in public works projects
 - Explore fundraising options like benefit concerts

Have a clear message about why people should support funding, ie raising aquifer levels benefits the whole economy by benefitting viticulture.

Find and share models/success stories.

Water Reuse

- 100% important to reuse
- Reuse is essential to meeting water supply needs

REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- Treated water from Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District
- Gray water
- Rain water

GRAYWATER AND RAINWATER

- What's holding people back?
 - Logistics
 - Time to install
 - Finances
- Lack of available information
 - If you can't use it what should you do with it?

- Confusion around permitting
- Little knowledge of graywater system options
- How to make reuse work for people
- Financial incentives
 - “no interest loan program” for rainwater and graywater retrofits
 - Cost – rebates for systems & parts
 - Education on gray water & rainwater capture
 - Provide education in schools

TREATED WATER FROM THE SONOMA VALLEY COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

- Aim for 100% reuse
- Focus on use to offset groundwater pumping in areas of declining groundwater
- General knowledge or little concern over water quality
- Support for more reuse projects, including potential use at high school and middle school

Community Engagement

- Door Hangers
- Go to where the people are:
 - Church
 - School
 - Community Events
 - Workshop (like this one) series - where attendees aren't talk to, but allowed to interact.
- Many in Sonoma Valley are visitors/renting homes in the area with the property owner out of area and out of touch with the situation. Need to get the message to this transient population.
- Implement water use report card in water bills. People are competitive. If they know they waste more than their neighbors they will take action.
- It's all about groundwater. Identify those on well water and direct mail information about impact their water use has on the overall supply.
- Do something really huge (and maybe unpopular) – people won't listen unless it hurts.

Water Use Efficiency

- Create programs to reach absentee homeowners/weekend residents who are less connected to the community and its water resource challenges.
- Focus absentee homeowner programs on outdoor water use.
- Create programs that utilize the significant recharge opportunities for storm water infiltration projects in vineyards and rural properties. Start with consulting property owners and providing education. Finding a way to compensate owners for land used or water saved/recharged could garner significant participation.
- Residents would like more information on growth moratorium thresholds, and think that there should be lower criteria for moratoriums.