

FINAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES

Sonoma County Water Agency
Zone 1A Watershed Scoping Study
Meeting Date: April 27, 2011, 10:00 A.M.

Attendees

Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency):

Kent Gylfe
Marcus Trotta
Ann DuBay

Winzler & Kelly Team (W&K Team):

Iver Skavdal, Winzler & Kelly
Maeve Daugharty, Winzler & Kelly
Emma Jones, Winzler & Kelly
Iris Priestaf, Todd Engineers
Ken Schwarz, Horizon Water and Environment

Partners

Mark Landman, City of Cotati City Council
Tony Nelson, Sonoma Land Trust
Noelle Johnson, Gold Ridge RCD
Rita Miller, City of Santa Rosa
Heaven Hix, City of Santa Rosa
Sue Kelly, City of Sebastopol
Jason Check, California American Water
Ray Krauss, Friends of Mark West Watershed
Darrin Jenkins, City of Rohnert Park
David Bannister, Laguna Foundation
Corbin Johnson, Sonoma County Regional Parks
Steve Mack, Sweet Water Springs Water District
Craig Anderson, Landpaths
Bob Anderson, United Winegrowers
Susan Gorin, City of Santa Rosa
Brenda Adelman, Russian River Watershed Protection Committee (RRWPC)
Jane Nielson, Sonoma County Water Coalition
Julie Combs, Southeast Greenway
Damien O'Bid, City of Cotati



Meeting Notes

General

The following were distributed:

- Sign-In Sheet
- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Handout

Overview of Project and Purpose of Meeting

As its Key Project Purpose, the Water Agency desires to identify project alternatives within the Laguna de Santa Rosa-Mark West Creek (Laguna-Mark West) Watershed that satisfy the core objectives, while maximizing opportunities for additional watershed benefits through engaging supporting objectives. A PowerPoint presentation was facilitated by Kent Gylfe, Iver Skavdal, Ken Schwarz, Iris Priestaf, and Maeve Daugharty.

Core and supporting objectives are summarized as follows.

Core Objectives

- Flood Hazard Reduction
- Groundwater Recharge

Supporting Objectives

- Water Quality
- Water Supply
- System Sustainability
- Ecosystem
- Agricultural Land
- Open Space
- Community Benefits

The purpose of the meeting was to (1) review and receive input on the draft supporting objectives and (2) discuss potential project concepts.

The following questions were posed to stimulate discussion and invoke suggestions for potential projects.

Project Concepts

- Do you have concepts for potential projects?
- Are there areas of flooding in your community that aren't documented?
- Can you provide existing studies to inform our scoping efforts (well-siting, detention basin, creek daylighting, flood studies)?
- Are there restricted areas we should avoid?



- Are there existing successful projects or project elements that you would like to see replicated?

Questions

Bob Anderson raised a question regarding the project budget. Iver Skavdal responded that the current task is to simply identify and prioritize potential projects. As specific projects are developed, specific project funding and respective budgets will be identified and set.

Bob Anderson raised a question regarding the recharge goal. Kent Gylfe stated that a recharge goal (targeted amount of recharge) has not been identified.

Jane Nielson commented that the information used to screen for groundwater recharge soils and geology is outdated and that there is more recent information available through the USGS. Iris Priestaf acknowledged that the USGS report contains more current data and that the W&K team is planning on obtaining this report and supporting data in order to ensure development of a current, comprehensive, and consistent data set.

Ray Krauss commented that there is a large deficiency in geologic data for the upper Mark West Watershed and that if areas are screened out using insufficient/outdated information, viable projects may be overlooked.

Discussion Notes

To more thoroughly review and receive input on the supporting objectives and identify potential project concepts, the stakeholders were split into three discussion groups. After 30 minutes of discussion, the large group reconvened and each discussion group summarized their discussions.

Group 1 (Facilitator: Kent Gylfe, Sonoma County Water Agency)

Supporting Objectives Discussion

Any project that meets more than one supporting objective should be prioritized.

The **System Sustainability** supporting objective should include language regarding system adaptation for climate change (i.e. flexibility with respect to increasing rainfall event variability). Possibly include “promote ecosystem resiliency.”

The **Agricultural Land** supporting objective could be in direct conflict with other core and supporting objectives. For example, cattle often compact soils and contribute to erosion which can be counterproductive to recharging groundwater and flood hazard reduction/water quality respectively.

Agricultural Land should be a lower priority supporting objective (and possibly combined with Agricultural Land) while **Ecosystem** should be considered a higher priority objective.

Project Concepts Discussion

A potential project area east of Rohnert Park was identified. A piped reach of Coleman Creek, located on Sonoma State University property, that fills with sediment and is difficult to maintain is a candidate

Zone 1A Watershed Planning Project Scoping Study



for creek daylighting. Areas upstream of Cook Creek, Five Creek, and Hinebaugh Creek are also candidates for projects since these creeks flood during large storm events.

Projects in the upper watershed to address source issues were recommended. By identifying sources of accelerated runoff/erosion, downstream sedimentation and resulting flooding can be alleviated. The upper watershed receives approximately twice as much rain as lower watershed areas, which creates a greater potential for groundwater recharge in the upper watershed.

Forest restoration projects would retard runoff, reduce erosion, and promote infiltration and should be considered as a potential project.

The concept of purchasing conservation easements on existing Agricultural Preserves in order to remove tax relief incentive created by the Williamson Act for housing cattle was discussed.

Projects to improve rural roads (in-sloping roads, creating rolling dips, etc.) to reduce the effects of runoff were discussed. The California Department of Fish and Game currently provides funding to private land owners to execute these efforts.

The Fairfield Osborn Preserve may be a good candidate for an upper watershed restoration project.

Potential projects may include educating vineyard-owners about groundwater pumping practices as over-pumping (36 straight hours, for example) depletes aquifers. Reducing continuous pump duration to allow aquifers to refill, building more ponds and other management strategies would benefit both the aquifer and the owner.

The importance of measuring success and providing feedback loops in determining the project success was noted.

A creek daylighting project in Sebastopol, where there are permeable soils for recharge was suggested.

An alignment restoration project at the confluence of Mark West Creek and the Laguna was suggested. Historically, Mark West Creek discharged into the Russian River. Currently, the Creek deposits its sediment load into the Laguna, causing the Laguna to backwater and exacerbating flooding problems. Restoring the original alignment could help alleviate flooding.

The Sonoma Mountain Preserve in association with Sonoma State University may also be a good candidate for an upper watershed project.

Stormwater collection systems on County roads (culverts in particular) are, in many cases, designed without sufficient capacity which ultimately causes flooding and erosion. Upsizing existing hydraulic structures, or adding capacity by increasing the quantity, should be considered.



Group 2 (Facilitator: Iris Priestaf, Todd Engineers)

Supporting Objectives Discussion

Flood Hazard Reduction was affirmed as a core objective. Benefits will accrue not only to the Laguna-Mark West area, but also to the lower Russian River. The need for *urban* flood retention was emphasized.

Of the supporting objectives, **Sustainability** was a focus of the discussion. This was first described in terms of future climate change—deep, sustained drought and flashier flood flows—that need to be addressed. **Sustainability** was also confirmed as improved watershed management (let the watershed function) and protection of uplands and open space, noting that benefits occur in the uplands and downstream. **Sustainability** also was described as expansion of riparian habitat that mitigates greenhouse gases and enhances infiltration. Water supply reliability was linked to sustainability.

Ecosystem was another objective that the group focused on, involving habitat restoration along streams. Overall, the discussion emphasized achievement of multiple objectives: habitat restoration, flood control, recharge, community benefits, water supply, and water quality. Spring Creek was cited as a channelized stream that should be restored in terms of habitat, with improved flood control and recharge.

The objectives of regulators were mentioned - how do they fit in? We need to consider their objectives, too.

Project Concepts Discussion

Potential projects should focus on many small projects (mini tea cups) including projects on private land (using agricultural ponds) or using land spreading recharge techniques (ditches on the contours, swales, etc.). In-stream check dams were also discussed as possible techniques to be considered.

Specific sites that were mentioned include:

- Laguna de Santa Rosa restoration work conducted in Cotati by the Cotati Creek Critters
- Montgomery High School/SE Greenway Campaign (Julie Combs) - A 2-mile long segment between Spring Lake and Farmers Lane in Santa Rosa
- Windsor groundwater banking project - mentioned as a relevant project that was recently covered in the newspaper
- Roseland Creek
- Windsor Oaks mentioned as agricultural land east of Windsor with interested landowners

A specific study to inform us: Arthur Dawson Study of Historical Ecology of the Copeland Creek Watershed

Redoing previous flood control methods (i.e., channelization) was mentioned as an important factor for the project.

Zone 1A Watershed Planning Project Scoping Study



Is the US Army Corps of Engineers satisfied that they have the 100-Year Flood Protection adequately mapped?

A study of the 1986 Flood in the Lower Russian River was mentioned as having been found to be different from other floods in that flooding from the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed reportedly played a larger role.

Coordination with the North Coast RWQCB's sediment TMDL program should be conducted.

Group 3 (Facilitator: Ken Schwarz, Horizon Water and Environment)

Supporting Objectives Discussion

All core and supporting objectives were believed to be valuable and worthwhile.

It may be difficult to achieve all objectives in a single project. While there may be a need to meet the objectives through multiple projects, there should be some level of integration within a reasonable geographic area. Sub-watershed areas could be used to support/describe a "suite of objectives" that achieved for say the Santa Rosa Creek or Upper Laguna subwatershed areas.

The approach should be scalable depending upon funding allocations.

Permit Compliance/Regulatory Compliance should be considered as a supporting objective. All projects need to be acceptable and permitable by the Regulatory Agencies.

Fish concerns/benefits will be important to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS).

Project Concepts Discussion

Open Space may have small projects along Stewart and Bidwell Creeks.

Project opportunities with respect to rainfall catchment were discussed.

Presentation emphasized off-line basins with respect to groundwater recharge; some individuals are interested in learning about other methods of groundwater recharge, including daylighting creeks, floodplains, injection wells, etc...

Focus should be placed on opportunities to retrofit existing development (like parking lots, etc.) to help reduce flooding.

The function of the Laguna should be restored and comments were made suggesting floodplain restoration projects.

A question of whether there are other opportunities for projects in the grayed-out areas was proposed. Places like Sebastopol may provide good infiltration options.

Zone 1A Watershed Planning Project Scoping Study



The City of Sebastopol Floods when the Laguna backs up. It is believed there are permeable soils and opportunities for viable projects. The City of Sebastopol is currently doing a preliminary focus study on Calder Creek where it flows through Ives Park (spread it out/get water quality benefits).

It was also mentioned that there is a well-siting study of the Laguna south of town.

The TMDL process with Regional Board is being updated to include Laguna Wetland Functions - and investment/restoration of Laguna Wetlands as a possible compliance requirement for TMDLs in Laguna Watershed.

The possibilities of using the multi-objective flood control and water supply projects to satisfy offset mitigation for development projects that can't address their own runoff and flood issues onsite was proposed. Such an approach could potentially provide a funding mechanism as well.

City of Santa Rosa Creek Master Plan document is being updated to current conditions, and provides another useful watershed reference manual.

Next Steps

The W&K team will review current data, incorporate stakeholder input, update the study area, develop conceptual alternatives and screening criteria, identify the projects preliminarily recommended for further feasibility evaluation, and finally reconvene with the stakeholders.

Attachments

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- Meeting Handout
- Meeting Power Point Presentation