



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2014

Presented at the April 1, 2015 City Council Meeting

Committee Members:

Bob Brown, Chair
Vanessa Metz, Vice-Chair
Dan Gale
Chris McAuliffe
Bob Pagliucco
Joe Seney
Jeremy Svehla

Staff Liaison:

Juli Neander, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department



23 Years
1992-2015

The Wetlands and Creeks Committee was established in 1992. The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, City Manager and City staff in matters related to policies, management and projects affecting creeks, wetland and tideland resources in Arcata. Its seven members, appointed by the City Council, serve overlapping three-year terms and represent various areas of expertise, knowledge/interest.

The Committee is to have regularly scheduled meetings every month. The Committee held seven meetings during 2014. The Committee's regularly scheduled study session with the City Council was held on October 30, 2014 in conjunction with the Open Space and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation and Forest Management Committees.

The Committee reviewed and made recommendations on the following items:

A. Creek and Wetlands/Policies/Ordinances/Management Plans

1. By unanimous vote, recommended that setbacks on Janes Creek be at least 100-feet. This was based on a finding that numerous scientific studies and federal and state agencies support the findings that appropriately sized wetland and riparian buffers can help avoid or reduce development and land use impacts on wetland, stream and riparian habitats. The scientific studies' findings and recommendations often suggest minimum buffer size of 100 feet or more.
2. By unanimous vote, recommended an ordinance that would ban the use of polystyrene takeout food containers that includes a requirement to use reusable, recyclable, compostable (and/or 100% biodegradable) food service ware.

B. Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. By unanimous vote, recommended that the City provide outreach and publicity/education on the problem with cats at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and natural areas and the consequences of violating *Arcata Municipal Code Title X*. City should also work with other entities to enforce *Arcata Municipal Code Title X* and trap cats at Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and other natural areas.
1. The Committee provided informal guidance on the following restoration enhancement projects:
 - Baylands
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service South Jacoby Estuary Project
 - McDaniel Slough
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fickle Hill Creek
 - CCC Proposition 84 Creeks Grant
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Janes Creek–Reed Canary Grass Control
 - Water Quality Control Board Proposition 84 Parking Lot LID Retrofits
 - Volunteer Work Days

2. Gave input on the Phase II MS4 stormwater permit public survey.
3. The Committee discussed the feasibility of creating a wetland mitigation bank.
4. The Committee discussed the need for a Shoreline Master Program to add to General Plan and Land Use Code similar to one from Olympia, Washington.
5. Received reports from staff on the status of open space acquisitions.
6. The Committee discussed and developed a draft High Density Low Impact Development (LID) offsite protocol.
7. The Committee had a study session on sea level rise adaption with the Open Space and Agriculture Committee.

C. Development Projects

- The Committee received reports from staff on the Twin Parks Development Proposal and a development project at 453 & 457 Bayside Court.
- The Committee received updates from staff on the O Street, Q Street and 30th Street projects.

D. Public Outreach

1. Jennifer Kalt of Baykeepers did a presentation on water quality sampling project that Baykeepers is conducting on waterways that enter Humboldt Bay.

E. Ongoing Tasks

1. Investigate incentives and opportunities for the City and property owners to implement Low Impact Development (LID) retrofits and assist with outreach on LID.
2. Complete the EPA Water Quality Score Card.
3. Complete setback recommendations on creek side parcels.
4. Assist with the Phase II MS4 Stormwater Management Program and Master Plan Implementation.
5. Assist with updates to the City website to highlight past and current creeks and wetlands restoration projects.
6. Continue to assist with Baylands and Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary Strategic Plans

F. Future Tasks

1. Assist with developing the Bayview Ranch Management Plan.
2. Explore potential carbon credits for created wetlands, or expanding riparian buffers larger than required.
3. Develop recommendations on recreational use in and adjacent to sensitive habitats.
4. Conduct joint meetings with the Forest Management, Open Space and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation Committees on topics of mutual interest.
5. Continue sea level rise adaptation planning.
6. Guidance on potential acquisition/easement opportunities for parcels with wetlands and creeks by utilizing the Open Space Acquisition Matrix and incorporating wetland and creek recommendations.
7. Drainage Master Plan
8. MS4 Permit year 3 requirements
9. Open Space Acquisition Plan/Matrix update to include wetland/creek valuation in assessment.
10. Review and comment on *Local Coastal Plan* update drafts.