



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2019

**For Presentation to the Arcata City Council
April 1, 2020**

Committee Members:

*Bob Brown, Chair
Vanessa Metz, Vice-Chair (January – June)
Ray Olson, Vice Chair (July – December)
Chris McAuliffe
Jack Murphy
Wes Smith
Jeremy Svehla*

Staff Liaison:

Emily Benvie, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department



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 City's Environmental Programs Manager, Emily Benvie, serves as staff liaison for this committee.

The Committee has agreed to bi-monthly meetings. The Committee held six meetings during 2019.

The Committee reviewed and/or made recommendations on the following items:

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

1. The Committee held two meetings to discuss the City's current mariculture leases and consider revisions to existing lease areas or new lease areas. These meetings provided a forum for public comment which included a variety of stakeholders. As a result of the two meetings, the Committee made the following recommendation for the City's current mariculture leases:
 - a. Extend the current lease agreement for parcel #1 for a five-year term, effective after discretionary permits are secured; and
 - b. Shift the boundary of parcel #1 to reflect the existing uses. (5/21/19)
2. The Committee considered the City's proposed vegetation management protocol in riparian areas with chronic illicit use. The Committee expressed its support for the Environmental Services Department to conduct vegetation management while maintaining conformance with general plan and environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) policies to reduce litter and stormwater pollution within the city limits due to illicit use. (8/20/19)

B. Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. The Committee received regular staff reports on the Janes Creek at Alliance Fish Passage Project, the South Jacoby Creek Wetland Enhancement and Restoration Project, and other City restoration projects (7/17/18).
2. Staff provided a map of completed restoration projects, and provided a presentation of completed and planned restoration projects. (1/15/19)
3. The Committee received a presentation by Committee member Jeremy Svelha on Living Shorelines case studies (3/19/19)
4. The Committee received a presentation by Mark Colwell about shorebirds on Humboldt Bay within the North Bay area (3/19/19)
5. The Committee received a presentation by David Loya to update them on the status of the Local Coastal Plan (LCP) (8/20/19)
6. The Committee received a presentation by Humboldt Baykeeper's Jen Kalt on the Creek Bacteria Source Study, and specifically results of City Creeks. (10/29/19)

C. Public Outreach

1. The Committee discussed results of bacteria study and using this information to conduct a public stormwater education campaign (11/19/19)
2. The Committee broadly discussed stormwater outreach and education, and specifically education about proper disposal of pet waste.

E. Ongoing Tasks

1. Review and provide comments on Local Coastal Plan as necessary
2. Review and provide recommendations on City restoration and low impact development projects as needed
3. Continue stormwater outreach and education
4. Continue providing policy recommendations on items that affect Arcata's creek and wetland resources
5. Review development projects that impact creeks or wetlands

F. Future Tasks

1. **Local Coastal Plan** - Continue to provide policy recommendations on the Local Coastal Plan as necessary
2. **Sea Level Rise** – Continue to provide policy recommendations on City's Sea Level Rise adaptation
3. **Field trip in Summer** – Committee field trip to recent City restoration project (Janes Creek at Alliance or South Jacoby)
4. **Restoration/habitat protection** - Continue to assist with City restoration and multi-benefit projects with an emphasis on climate resiliency and improving stormwater quality.
5. **Outreach and Education** - Continue stormwater outreach and education
6. **Funding** - Further explore with other committees (Parks & Rec and Forest Management Committees) how to best support Open Space/Parks ballot initiative for the 2020 elections and develop a protocol on how funds would be equitably distributed between open space, parks, recreation, wetlands and creeks, and forest management.
7. **Investigate future restoration and multi-benefit project opportunities** - specifically Committee is interested in Janes Creek and Aldergrove Marsh
8. **Policy Recommendations** - Continue to review and provide policy recommendations to support habitat, water quality, and climate resiliency
9. **HSU Partnership** – Explore HSU partnership opportunities and support staff in development of standard internship opportunity focused on protection of Arcata's wetlands and creeks resources