



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2010

Presented at the April 7, 2010 City Council Meeting

Committee Members:

Bob Brown, Chair

Vanessa Metz, Vice-Chair

Douglas Kelly

Todd Kraemer

Chris McAuliffe

Chet Ogan

Nick Simpson

(Liaison, Forest Management Committee)

(Liaison, Open Space Committee)

Staff Liaison:

Juli Neander, 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.

The Committee is to have regularly scheduled meetings every month, and will begin meeting on the second Tuesday of the month beginning in April 2010. Its seven members, appointed by the City Council, serve overlapping three-year terms and represent various areas of expertise, knowledge/interest.

The Committee had its regular meetings during the past year, as well as study sessions and subcommittee meetings. The Committee's regularly scheduled study session with the City Council was held on November 2, 2009 in conjunction with a study session with the Parks and Recreation and Forest Management Committees.

The Committee reviewed and made recommendations on the following items:

Creek and Wetlands/Policies/Ordinances/Management Plans

1. Reviewed the creeks, wetlands and stormwater sections of the *Land Use Code*:
 - Chapter 9.34 Landscaping Standards;
 - Chapter 9.59 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas Protection and Preservation;
 - Chapter 9.64 Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control;
 - Chapter 9.66 Urban Runoff Pollution Control; and
2. City grant applications for creek restoration projects.
3. Reviewed and provided comments on the draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.
4. Developed a policy for naming features.
5. Rail with Trail Project – Wildlife and Wetlands Considerations – Committee Chair participation on project planning committee.

Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. Recommended against a request to fly model planes on City open space lands acquired for restoration and wildlife.
2. Supported acquisition of property along Janes Creek from Green Diamond Resource Company.
3. Supported donation by Edith Stromberg of parcel off of Shirley Boulevard (Grotzman Creek).
4. Heard a proposal for Segway tours at the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary.

Development Projects

The Committee reviewed and made recommendations on the following development projects involving creek and wetland issues:

1. Proposed Wetland Mitigation and Setbacks for Campbell Creek Apartments Located at Northwest Corner of Union Street & Samoa Boulevard (Strombeck) – Campbell Creek.
2. Mad River Industrial Park (Zanzi).
3. HSU corporation yard – Wetland impacts and access to McDaniel Slough.
4. Los Harbors – Stormwater Plan, Wetland Delineation and Wetland Restoration Plan, 10th Street, (Schmidbauer) – Former log pond, isolated wetlands.

D. General Comments

1. The Committee recommends Low Impact Development (LID) retrofits to improve the water quality/hydrology for City's creeks. The City needs to address the existing stormwater collection system and incorporate LID's, bioswales, etc. whenever possible.
2. The Committee requests submittals (development plans, wetland delineations, etc.) for review by the Committee be submitted electronically to reduce paper copies and allow the Committee time to review materials before the meeting.
3. As was noted at the study session of the chairs and the City Council, almost every committee was promoting the need for more interaction between the committees.
4. The Committee would like to participate in a comprehensive trails/walkability plan to discuss connectivity, maintenance, use restrictions, etc. as they impact wetlands/creeks.
5. City staff should continue to pursue funding for enhancement and restoration grants.

E. Future Tasks:

1. Review and make recommendations on *Land Use Code* language and definitions. Propose revisions to improve consistency and clarity in implementation.
2. Develop Bayview Ranch Management Plan.
3. Explore potential carbon credits for creating wetlands, or expanding riparian buffers larger than required.
4. Consider holding an Urban Streams Conference in 2011.
5. Review and comment on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
6. Complete setback recommendations on creek side parcels.
7. Develop recommendations on recreational use in and adjacent to sensitive habitats.
8. Continue to assist with the Stormwater Management Program and Master Plan Implementation.
9. Assist with updates to the City website to highlight past and current creeks and wetlands restoration projects.

10. Investigate incentives for property owners to implement LID retrofits.
11. Develop a Standards Guidance document for wetland/stream protection areas.
12. Joint meetings with the Forest Management, Open Space and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation Committees.
13. Provide City with short public service announcements to be aired on public access television during City Council or Planning Commission breaks.