



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2014

Presented at the April 2, 2014 City Council Meeting

Committee Members:

Bob Brown, Chair

Vanessa Metz, Vice-Chair

Dan Gale

Douglas Kelly (Liaison, Forest Management Committee)

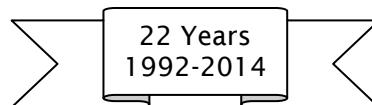
Chris McAuliffe

Catherine McGourty

Jeremy Svehla

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. 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 2013. The Committee's regularly scheduled study session with the City Council was held on November 7, 2013 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. Received update on the Samoa Specific Plan.
2. By unanimous vote, expressed support for the reusable bag ordinance.
3. Reviewed, commented and forwarded to the Environmental Services Director recommendations regarding the City of Arcata **Land Use Code** - Sections 9.34-Landscaping Standards; 9.59-Stream Conservation; 9.64-Grading, Erosion & Sediment Control; 9.66-Urban Runoff Pollution Control; Glossary.
4. Provided input on the preliminary draft of the California Water Quality Control Board's Wetland Protection Policy.
5. Reviewed the Coastal Commission's recent Water Quality Fact Sheets on the use of non-petroleum hydraulic fluids and biodiesel fuel in heavy equipment used during construction near waterways, and on the use of treated wood and alternative materials for pilings in aquatic environments.
6. Gave input regarding the County's General Plan update on proposed changes to the County's Timber Protection Zone (TPZ) zoning and its potential impacts to creeks, riparian areas and wetlands.
7. Reviewed the Coastal Commission's draft guidance on climate change and development in the coastal zone – California Coastal Commission draft Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance.

B. Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. Reviewed the draft Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary Strategic Plan.

2. Reviewed and commented on the wetland delineation for the City's South Jacoby Creek estuary project funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
3. 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
 - Arcata Elementary School creek side improvements
4. The Committee provided input regarding cell phone tower siting in the Coastal Zone or near Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA).
5. Reviewed and recommended setbacks for parcels adjacent to Janes Creek.
6. On November 1, 2013, attended the celebration of the completion of the McDaniel Slough Wetlands Restoration and Enhancement Project.

C. Development Projects

- No development projects came before the Committee in 2013.
- Discussed review/monitoring of previously approved projects to assure that Conditions of Approval are being met.

D. Public Outreach

1. Participated in the North Coast Stormwater Coalition Low Impact Development (LID) workshop at the Wharfinger Building on January 23, 2013.
2. The LID sub-committee, Chair Brown and Committee Members Metz and Svehla, gave a presentation about Low Impact Development (LID) to the Historic Design and Review Commission on October 23, 2013.
3. Hosted a LID Round Table webinar in the Council Chamber on November 23, 2013. Chair Brown and Committee Members Svehla and Metz participated.
4. Gave support to and participated in the RCAA Water Board grant that includes a LID summit at the Fortuna River Lodge on March 26, 2014.

5. In conjunction with a California Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant, assisted the Cities of Arcata, Trinidad and Eureka in conducting workshops and educational material related to water quality, LID and watershed protection.

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 Stormwater Management Program and Master Plan Implementation, MS4, in accordance with new MS4 guidelines.
5. Assist with updates to the City website to highlight past and current creeks and wetlands restoration projects.
6. Continue to assist with Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary Strategic Plan.

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.
5. Sea level rise adaptation.
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.