



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2018

**For Presentation to the Arcata City Council
June 5, 2019**

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



**27 Years
1992-2018**

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 is to have regularly scheduled meetings every month, however meetings are transitioning to become bi-monthly. The Committee held five meetings during 2018. The Committee's annual study session with the City Council was held on January 16, 2018 in conjunction with the Open Space & Agriculture, Parks & Recreation, and Forest Management Committees.

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

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

1. The Committee, along with the Forest Management Committee, the Open Space & Agriculture Committee, and the Parks & Recreation Committee, provided input on the possibility of establishing an open space funding mechanism via a ballot measure (Council study session 1/16/18).
2. The Committee provided additions and modifications to draft ballot language for establishing an Open Space Funding Mechanism, such as adding property acquisitions and grant match as eligible uses. The Committee suggested forming an Ad-hoc committee to further clarify the ballot language; they also proposed an oversight committee to provide guidance on equitable distribution of the potential funds (2/27/18).
3. The Committee adopted a meeting schedule to meet on the third Tuesday of odd-numbered months only (7/17/18).
4. The Committee provided comments on proposed revisions to the language in Title X – Public Property of the *Arcata Municipal Code* (4/17/18).
5. The Committee received reports from staff on the City's stormwater system, management plan, and orders from the Regional Water Quality Control Board pertaining to renewing the City's MS4 Permit (9/18/18).

B. Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. The Committee received regular reports on, and ultimately had a field trip to see the South Jacoby Creek Watershed Restoration and Enhancement project site (10/23/18).
2. The Committee received regular reports on the progress of the City's creeks/wetlands management projects, including the reed canary grass removal project, the Spartina removal efforts; the Janes Creek at Alliance Rd. fish passage project; the Beith Creek livestock crossing bridge project; the Batini culvert removal project; the Living Shorelines project; the Aldergrove Marsh

invasives removal efforts, and the South I Street (Marsh) boat launch project (7/17/18).

D. Public Outreach

The Committee received reports on the City's strategies for stormwater education and outreach, particularly in relation to pet waste, which included laminated posters and handouts (2/27/18).

E. Ongoing Tasks

1. Review and provide comments on Local Coastal Plan as necessary
2. Investigate future restoration and multi-benefit project opportunities (specifically Committee was interested in Janes Creek and Aldergrove Marsh)
3. Review and update drainage master plan
4. Continue low impact development outreach and education

F. Future Tasks

1. **Local Coastal Plan** - Review and provide final comments on Local Coastal Plan as necessary
2. **Restoration/habitat protection** - Continue to assist with City restoration and multi-benefit projects with an emphasis on climate resiliency and improving stormwater quality.
3. **Drainage Master Plan** - Review and update drainage master plan
4. **Outreach and Education** - Continue stormwater outreach and education
5. **Carlson Park** - Assist as needed with Carlson park river access development
6. **Funding** - Support ballot measure for funding open space/natural areas, parks .for the 2019 or 2020 election, support city efforts to secure grants funds