



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2020

For Presentation to the Arcata City Council
April 7, 2021

Committee Members:

*Bob Brown, Chair
Jeremy Svehla, Vice Chair
Vanessa Metz,
Chris McAuliffe
Jack Murphy
Wes Smith
vacant*

Staff Liaison:

Emily Benvie, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department



28 Years
1992-2020

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. Additionally, the Wetlands and Creeks Committee considers the perspective of open space and agricultural values since the Open Space and Agriculture Committee has been dissolved. 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 two meetings during 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

A. Creek And Wetlands - Policies/Ordinances/Management Plans

1. The Committee received a presentation by staff about the Thriving Earth Exchange program and provided input on two potential research topics to considering evaluating impacts of and adaptation to sea level rise

B. Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. The Committee received regular updates from staff on progress of creek and wetland restoration and management projects, including:
 - a. **Janes at Alliance Fish Passage Improvement Project.** This project was completed in August 2020. Work included retrofitting the culvert at the Janes Creek and Alliance Road crossing, with the goal of improving year-round fish passage for all life cycles of salmonids.
 - b. **South Jacoby Restoration Project.** Initial construction was completed in 2018, with the goal of restoring floodplain connectivity to Jacoby Creek, creating off-channel salmonid habitat, and enhancing wetland habitat for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic species. This project has been adaptively managed for three years in response to increased flow volumes and velocities to ensure project goals continue to be met.
 - c. **MS4 Permit Updates.** The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit is in process of being renewed. Staff has actively been participating in permit update workshops held by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to provide input on future permit terms and conditions.
 - d. **Jolly Giant Creek Water Quality Sampling.** In 2019, The Wetlands and Creeks Committee received an update on the results of water quality sampling from Humboldt Baykeeper. To continue to build on that effort,

beginning in 2020, City staff has been working with North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff and Humboldt Baykeeper on additional sampling in Jolly Giant Creek to better understand bacteria levels and potential sources. A member of the Wetlands and Creeks Committee has reviewed and provided input on sampling methodology.

C. Public Outreach

1. The Committee provided input on stormwater public education and outreach, specifically with regard to bacteria pollution.

D. 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

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** – Attend annual field trip to restoration project site(s) in the summer
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 develop a protocol on how Open Space/Parks ballot initiative funds will 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** – Continue Explore HSU partnership opportunities and support staff in development of standard internship opportunity focused on protection of Arcata's wetlands and creeks resources