



## **CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**For Presentation to the Arcata City Council  
April 5, 2023**

*Committee Members:*

*Bob Brown, Chair  
Jeremy Svehla, Vice-Chair  
Justin Hawkins (Sep.-Dec. 2022)  
Krystle Heaney (Jan.-Jun. 2022)  
Chris McAuliffe  
Vanessa Metz  
John "Jack" Murphy (Jan.-Nov. 2022)  
Wes Smith*

*Staff Liaisons:*

*Emily Benvie, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department  
Morquine Sefcik, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department*



**30 Years  
1992-2022**

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 Services Deputy Director, Emily Benvie, and new Environmental Programs Manager, Morguine Sefcik, serve as staff liaisons for the Committee. The Committee meets bi-monthly and held six meetings during 2022.

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

A. Committee Goals for FY 2022/23:

1. Support staff in implementation of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit (including stormwater education and outreach).
2. Maintain presence on Measure A Ad-Hoc Group and re-visit priority funding list twice per year.
3. Continue to review and provide policy recommendations to support habitat, water quality, and climate resiliency (including Local Coastal Program Update, Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program).
4. Explore HSU partnership opportunities and support staff in development of paid, unpaid, and/or standardized internship opportunity focused on protection of Arcata's wetlands and creeks resources.
5. Support City staff in sea level rise adaptation planning and implementation efforts, including review of Thriving Earth Exchange research.
6. Support staff in development of long-term management plan for City-owned Jacoby Creek Gannon Slough Wildlife Area complex.
7. Explore options for inter-committee information sharing and idea exchange with the Wetlands and Creeks Committee (i.e. share goals with other committees, invite other Committee members and/or provide updates to other Committees).
8. Explore subcommittee formation to support staff as needed and feasible (i.e. grant proposals).

B. Annual Goals for FY 2023/24:

1. Based on several efforts outlined in Section E. Public Outreach, the Committee decided to revise and expand goal six from FY 2022/23 to include additional restoration plans/efforts in the City. The new goal for FY 2023/24 is to provide support for development and updates to local restoration plans, e.g., Jacoby Creek Gannon Slough Wildlife Area complex, Creeks Management Plan, and Jolly Giant Creek Rehabilitation Plan. All other goals from FY 2022/23 will remain the same for FY 2023/24.

### C. Wetlands and Creeks - Policies/Ordinances/General Plan Elements

1. The Committee received presentations from Community Development Director David Loya on the Gateway Area Plan and provided feedback on wetlands and creek-related policies in the Plan. (3/15/22, 9/20/22)
2. The Committee reviewed the Open Space Element and provided feedback on the wetlands and creek-related policies and implementation measures in the Element. (11/15/22)
3. The Committee reviewed the Resource Conservation and Management Element and provided initial feedback on the wetlands and creek-related policies and implementation measures in the Element. (11/15/22)
4. The Committee received a presentation from Community Development Director David Loya on the status of the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP). (3/15/22)

### D. Management of City-owned Wetlands and Creeks

1. The Committee received regular updates from staff on progress of creek and wetland restoration and management projects and programs, including:
  - a. Beith Creek livestock crossing bridge project
  - b. Fickle Hill Creek riparian exclusion fencing repair.
  - c. Invasive plant removal project in Sunnybrae Park
  - d. Jacoby Creek Enhancement Project collaboration update
  - e. South I Street Boat Launch Project
  - f. Fish and water quality monitoring in Janes Creek
  - g. Drainage maintenance projects along Old Arcata Road and Ericson Court
  - h. Jolly Giant Creek restoration strategy concept proposal ideas
  - i. Jolly Giant Creek water quality sampling in partnership with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - j. City of Arcata's MS4 Permit from the Water Board and annual report progress. (9/20/22)
  - k. Progress on the City's application for a California Coastal Commission LCP grant to fund a sea level rise vulnerability assessment and capital improvement project adaptation plan for Arcata's shoreline. (11/15/22)
  - l. Updates on the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility Phase I upgrades (7/19/22, 9/20/22)
  - m. Update on the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and State Park grant awards for Carlson Park developments and access to Mad River. (7/19/22, 9/20/22)
  - n. Thriving Earth Exchange's progress on a sea level rise habitat transition conceptual model project (1/18/22)

### E. Public Outreach

1. The Committee received a report from staff on the history of restoration projects/activities in Jolly Giant Creek spanning the period from 1980s to present. (7/19/22)
2. Community member Scott McBain offered to assist the City with developing a Jolly Giant Creek restoration strategy, including writing grant proposals for funding such a project. (7/19/22, 11/15/22)
3. The Committee received updates and provided input on the contract between the City and

Cal Poly Humboldt for professor and student conducted fish and water quality monitoring in Janes Creek. (9/20/22, 11/15/22) This effort is funded by Measure A, which was a top priority of the Committee.

4. The Committee received an update on a volunteer workday in Sunnybrae Park with Cal Poly Humboldt students to remove invasive plants. (11/15/22)

F. Measure A Special Tax Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2022/23

1. The Committee received a report on the progress of the Open Space, Parks and Trails Special Tax (Measure A) priorities and outcomes. The Committee nominated two representatives (Justin Hawkins and Jeremy Svehla) to serve on the Measure A Ad Hoc Group to provide oversight of use of Measure A funds. (11/15/22)
2. The Committee recommended transferring the Measure A FY 22/23 funding that was previously approved for an invasive species inventory to a new project in Jolly Giant Creek to conduct fish and water quality monitoring to support future project implementation. (11/15/22)
3. The Committee nominated the appraisal and option agreement guarantee for the Christie Property Acquisition for the Ad Hoc Group's consideration for FY 23/24 funding. (11/15/22)