



CITY OF ARCATA WETLANDS AND CREEKS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL 2011

Presented at the April 6, 2011 City Council Meeting

Committee Members:

Bob Brown, Chair

Vanessa Metz, Vice-Chair

Douglas Kelly

(Liaison, Forest Management Committee)

Todd Kraemer

Chris McAuliffe

Chet Ogan

Service Ended December 31, 2010

Nick Simpson

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 held eight meetings during 2010, as well as study sessions and subcommittee meetings. The Committee's regularly scheduled study session with the City Council was held on October 14, 2010 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. Submitted comments on the draft *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*.
2. Gave input on wildlife and wetlands considerations for the Rail Trail Project.
3. Woonerf - a shared street/trail option at the Arcata Marsh as part of the Rail Trail Project
4. Submitted comments on Land Use Code: Glossary, 9.34 – Landscaping Standards, 9.42.190-Windmills for Electricity Generation and Chapter 9.59 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Protection and Preservation, 9.64 Grading ,Erosion and Sediment Control, 9.66 Urban Runoff Pollution Control.
5. Reviewed state and local requirements for firefighting water

Management of City-owned Creeks and Wetlands

1. Reviewed the Erosion Assessment Plan for Sunny Brae Forest that was prepared by Pacific Watershed Associates.
2. Made recommendations regarding enhancement of habitat on lower Beith Creek.
3. Recommended potential riparian trees and shrubs to utilize for the Janes Creek Reed Canary Grass removal and revegetation project
4. Reviewed and commented on a Nature Area Entrance Permit for HSU Wildlife Professor Jeff Black, PhD. Dr. Black which required wildlife capture and banding for waterfowl ecology and behavior study. The permit was approved.
5. Viewed a presentation by Dr. Black on wildfowl trust trails and viewing area designs.
6. The Committee provided informal guidance on the following restoration enhancement projects:

- McDaniel Slough
- Baylands
- Janes Creek Reed Canary Grass Control
- Fickle Hill Creek Restoration
- Jolly Giant Creek Restoration/Passage

Development Projects

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

1. Campbell Creek Apartments, Samoa Blvd. and Union Street (Strombeck) –The Committee reviewed wetland setbacks, a proposed trail, uses in setback areas, and the adequacy of the wetland restoration plan and wildlife corridor.

D. General Comments

1. The Committee formed a sub-committee to review, give input and work with staff on the Marine Life Protection Act process regarding the proposed Humboldt Bay Marine Protected Areas.
2. The Committee is now receiving submittals (development plans, wetland delineations, etc.) for review by the Committee electronically to reduce paper copies and allow the Committee time to review materials before the meeting.
3. It 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 is still interested in participating in a comprehensive trails/walkability plan to discuss connectivity, maintenance, use restrictions, etc. as they impact wetlands/creeks.
5. The Committee supports continued City staff efforts to pursue funding for enhancement and restoration grants.
6. Ongoing review and recommendations on *Land Use Code* language and definitions to improve consistency and clarity in implementation.

E. Future Tasks:

1. Develop Bayview Ranch Management Plan.
2. Explore potential carbon credits for created wetlands, or expanding riparian buffers larger than required.
3. Consider holding an Urban Streams Conference in 2012 or 2013 in conjunction with the City of Trinidad's California Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant.
4. Complete setback recommendations on creek side parcels.
5. Develop recommendations on recreational use in and adjacent to sensitive habitats.
6. Continue to assist with the Stormwater Management Program and Master Plan Implementation.

7. Assist with updates to the City website to highlight past and current creeks and wetlands restoration projects.
8. Investigate incentives and opportunities for the City and property owners to implement Low Impact Development (LID) retrofits.
9. Develop a Standards Guidance document for wetland/stream protection areas.
10. Joint meetings with the Forest Management, Open Space and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation Committees.
11. Provide City with short public service announcements to be aired on public access television during City Council or Planning Commission breaks.
12. Reed canary grass research on most effective controls