



REFUGIO CREEK WATERSHED VISION PLAN

25 FEBRUARY 2009

Public Meeting #1

Meeting Notes / Compiled: 26 FEBRUARY 2009

- MEETING #1:** HERCULES PUBLIC LIBRARY
109 CIVIC DRIVE, RODEO, CALIFORNIA 94547 7:00 PM
- ATTENDING:** ROBERT REBER / CITY OF HERCULES
DREW GOETTING, RICH WALKLING / RESTORATION DESIGN GROUP (RDG)
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF HERCULES
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- CC/EMAIL:** ROBERT REBER (FOR FILE & DISTRIBUTION THROUGH WEBSITE)
- NOTES:** FIRST COMMUNITY MEETING
- NEXT MEETING:** MARCH 11th 7:00 PM

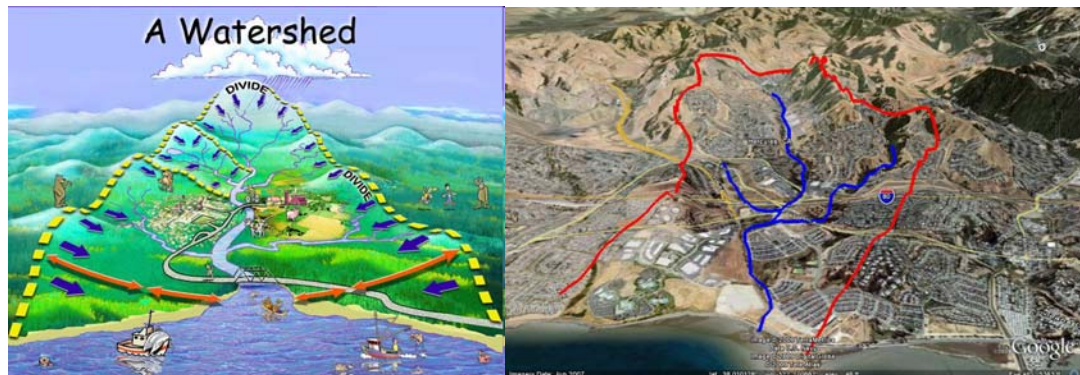
INFORMATIONAL SESSION

MEETING INTRODUCTION

Robert Reber, Planner for the City of Hercules, welcomed everyone to the first meeting for the Refugio Creek Watershed Vision Plan (Plan). Robert explained the purpose of the first meeting, the City's role, and that Common Sense California had provided funding for the vision plan process. Drew Goetting, RDG, welcomed everyone to the first meeting and led introductions of all the attendees.

WATERSHED OVERVIEW

Rich Walkling defined what a watershed is and provided some basic information on Refugio Creek Watershed including size, location, population, and some anecdotal evidence of stream channel condition. He indicated that much of the information on the watershed is available in the Contra Costa Watershed Atlas and through links available on the City's website (<http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/index.aspx?page=523>). Rich pointed out that most of the watershed is within the City of Hercules and much of the City of Hercules is in the Refugio Creek watershed.

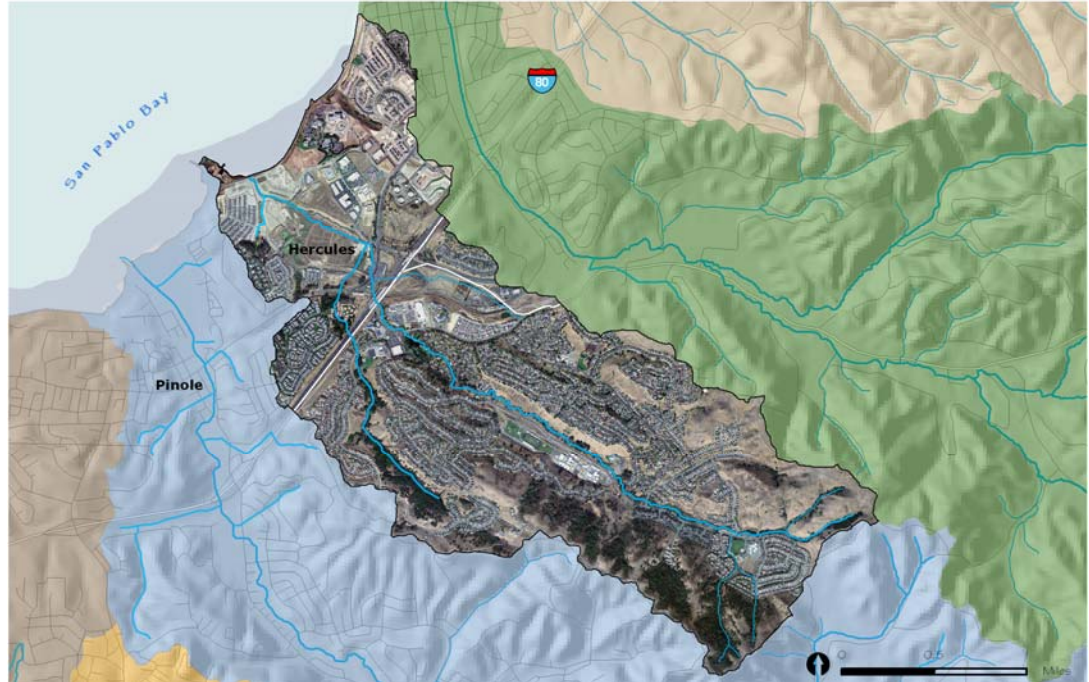


A watershed is an area of land in which water drains to a common point on a stream, river, pond, lake or other body of water. Above are an artist's depiction of an idealized watershed (left) and an oblique view of the Refugio Creek Watershed from Google Earth (left).

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Next Rich presented photos of the creek channel and pointed out key features of the creek in different parts of the watershed.

Rich fielded question from the group on flow, tides, and the definition of “riparian” and “incised creek.”

VISION PLAN DEFINED

Drew Goetting described what a watershed vision is, why we should have a watershed vision, and how to develop a watershed vision.

Drew defined a Watershed Vision Plan as a watershed-based planning document that is meant to provide a coherent vision of future projects in the watershed. The Plan will be used as a fundraising and planning tool and has the added benefit of being a collaborative experience that brings community members together to develop goals and actions to enhance the watershed. The plan is community based, respectful of private property rights, involves only voluntary actions, and is consensus based.

The Plan will be developed during six community meetings and one field trip in the watershed. The meetings are two hours long. The first hour is for guest speakers and the second hour is for group discussion. During these meetings we will identify interests and concerns, learn about the watershed, identify opportunities and constraints, and discuss potential goals and actions. This process and the resulting materials will be compiled into the Vision Plan document by RDG.

Drew explained the ground rules for the planning process. He suggested four and the group suggested a fifth.

- Allow everyone to participate
- Listen to others
- Focus on the group process
- Respectful discussion
- Stay on schedule (added by the group)

Drew fielded questions about the delineation between tidal waters/fresh water and specifics of proposed work in the creek channel in the lower watershed.

WORKING SESSION

Drew Goetting led the group in a discussion of their interests and concerns. The resulting list is included below. These results have not been sorted or categorized.

Interests

- Keeping natural areas natural
- Like to know if lake (at Refugio Valley Park) is a benefit
- Making connections between schools, other groups, sharing ideas and resources
- Like to know more about pond flows
- Pollution and debris pickup not just in creeks but in watershed on Coastal Clean up and other days
- Educating the community (outreach to youth and schools, The Watershed Project, Hercules Community Gardeners, Inter-Ac Group, and Kadets)
- Identify active groups and what they're doing currently (do a better job networking)
- Use BMPs (best management practices) to keep trash/pollutants out of creek
- Maintain public access
- How does one maintain a healthy watershed?
- How do we disseminate information on maintaining a healthy watershed?
- Like to have attractive public walkway along creek
- Provide better access for anglers (and garbage cans)
- Connection trails to the Bay Trail/Ridge Trail
- Website for watershed information both in Hercules and outside of Hercules (include activities, links to other websites, clearinghouse)
- Like to know what a natural healthy creek looks like
- Like to know range of wildlife in watershed
- Provide interpretive elements (maps and pamphlets)
- Where is public land/accessible lands?
- What type of trail do we want?
- How has the watershed changed over time?
- How much of underground culverts could be daylighted?

Concerns

- What happens on the land is important – concerns w/pollutants
- Balance between humans and wildlife at Refugio Valley Park lake
- Are ponds near Bayside (Duckpond) functioning? Is it standing water? Mosquito concern? Did DFG want them?
- Should ponds be tidal?
- BMPs need to be maintained so they continue to work
- How do we deal with ponds (regulatory and environmental)?
- Should all of Hercules be responsible for maintenance of the watershed or just local HOAs?
- Flood concerns
- Status of culverts – are they in good condition?
- Landscaping and vegetation in summer months does not look good

- Possible impacts from cattle/goats
- Impact of sea level rise
- Deer population/risk in traffic
- Wild turkeys
- Sedimentation at mouth of creek

Drew led the group in a discussion of guest speakers they would like to hear and topics they would like to know more about.

Possible guest speakers:

- Engineer or scientist to speak on creek function
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Vector Control
- Environmental studies/curriculum for students – ideas from elsewhere
- Igor Skaredoff
- Governor's commission on creeks/bay
- Expert on urban creeks/landscape architect
- City of El Cerrito re: Baxter Creek Gateway project
- Panel of California Native Plant Society, Audubon, and others to talk about plants and animals
- Hercules Public Works to talk about restoration, infrastructure, and creek maintenance

These Meeting Notes represent RDG's understanding of meeting events and community member comments. If information included in these notes is incorrect or requires clarification please notify RDG within 30 days and a revised set of Meeting Notes will be distributed.