



## REFUGIO CREEK WATERSHED VISION PLAN

15 APRIL 2009

Public Meeting #3

Meeting Notes / Compiled: 16 APRIL 2009

- MEETING #2:** HERCULES PUBLIC LIBRARY  
109 CIVIC DRIVE, HERCULES, CALIFORNIA 94547 7:00 PM
- ATTENDING:** ROBERT REBER / CITY OF HERCULES  
DREW GOETTING, RICH WALKLING, ERIK STROMBERG / RESTORATION  
DESIGN GROUP (RDG)  
PETE PETERSON, COMMON SENSE CALIFORNIA  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF HERCULES  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- CC/EMAIL:** ROBERT REBER (FOR FILE & DISTRIBUTION THROUGH WEBSITE)
- NOTES:** THIRD COMMUNITY MEETING
- NEXT MEETING:** APRIL 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 AM (WATERSHED FIELD TRIP)  
MAY 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

## INFORMATIONAL SESSION

### MEETING INTRODUCTION

Drew Goetting, RDG, welcomed everyone to the third meeting. For the benefit of those who had not attended previous meetings, Drew defined what a watershed is and reviewed what the group had done in the first two meetings.

### CREEKS AND CITIES – TOOLS TO HELP DESIGN YOUR WATERSHED

Erik Stromberg, landscape architect for Restoration Design Group, gave a presentation on how cities, developments, and projects interact with creeks and watersheds.

#### *Watersheds*

Historically, the watershed was mostly grassland and forest. When rain fell, it seeped into the ground, was used by plants, or slowly ran over the land to the creeks. After we built houses and streets, the rain hit roofs or pavement and quickly went into storm drains where it was quickly delivered into the creeks. Erik described this change and suggested tools for slowing water down such as: living roofs swales, bio-retention, rain gardens, disconnected downspouts, permeable paving, and trees. Erik also described water quality impacts to creeks that include oil, grease, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, high nutrient loads, viruses, and bacteria. Many of the same tools that slow water down also improve water quality.

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Photo of a bioswale used to treat and slow storm water runoff from a parking lot.

### *Creeks*

Erik described creeks and highlighted some of the reasons we care about them: wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, and transportation corridors. Erik showed examples of how other cities and towns had restored their creeks and made them a civic feature and amenity. Erik pointed out that the common theme of the examples he showed was their ability to increase the profile of the creek within the urban environment.



Photo showing the relationship between downtown open space and the creek in San Luis Obispo.

### *Access*

Erik concluded with a few thoughts about the need to provide access but to also design access opportunities so that they protect resources that we value.

Erik fielded questions about cisterns, mosquito control, and the difference between storm water treatment in the Pacific Northwest and California.

## **WORKING SESSION**

The vision planning group split into three groups: lower watershed (downstream of San Pablo Ave.); middle watershed (between San Pablo and the middle school, including Ohlone Creek and the north tributary); and upper watershed (from the middle school to the top of the watershed). Group members selected which group they were most interested in. RDG staff facilitated each group. Community members were given a handout (see below) that grouped their interests and concerns from meetings #1 and #2 in to six categories: access; education/information/activities; creeks and ponds; wildlife/nature; storm water/water quality; and watershed management and maintenance. After reviewing the hand out, community members marked their interests and concerns on aerial photographs of the watershed.

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.

# WATERSHED VISION PLAN - AREAS OF INTEREST

## ACCESS

### Suggestions for Discussion:

Where are there gaps or difficult street crossings in the trail or sidewalk network?

Where would you like new trails or access points?

What parts of the trail do you like? What parts of the trail would you like to change/improve?

### Interests

- Provide trash cans along trail
- Maintain public access
- Like to have attractive public walkway along creek
- Provide better access for anglers (and garbage cans)
- Connection trails to the Bay Trail/Ridge Trail
- Where are publically accessible lands?
- What type of trail do we want?

## EDUCATION/INFORMATION/ACTIVITIES

### Suggestions for Discussion:

Where are good places to put interpretive signs, pamphlets, and other watershed information?

Where are good places for outdoor educational activities?

### Interests

- Making connections between schools, other groups, sharing ideas and resources
- Provide interpretive elements (maps and pamphlets)
- Pollution and debris pickup not just in creeks but in entire watershed on Coastal Cleanup and other days
- Educate 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)
- How do we disseminate information on maintaining a healthy watershed?
- Create and maintain a website for watershed information both in Hercules and outside of Hercules (include activities, links to other websites, data and information clearinghouse)
- Like to know more about grant opportunities and other funding

## CREEKS AND PONDS

### Suggestions for Discussion:

What ponds are you interested in knowing more about?

How would you describe the ponds (e.g., clean, smelly, fresh, stagnant)?

Are there parts of the creek that look unhealthy or unattractive?

### Interests

- Like to know what a natural healthy creek looks like
- Which underground culverts could be day-lighted?
- Like to know more about pond flows
- Investigate costs and benefits of Refugio Valley Park lake

- Work with the railroads to improve the mouth of the creek as the railroads adjust to sea-level rise
- Investigate the potential to irrigate the community garden with creek water

*Concerns*

- Maintain a balance between humans and wildlife at Refugio Valley Park lake
- Are ponds near Bayside functioning? Is it standing water? Mosquito concern? Did DFG want them? Should they be tidal?
- How do we deal with ponds from a regulatory perspective?
- Will this be a natural or artificial creek?

**WILDLIFE/NATURE**

**Suggestions for Discussion:**

Where have you seen wildlife in the watershed?

Are there places you would like to have more nature and wildlife viewing opportunities?

*Interests*

- Identify sites for mitigation (for threatened and endangered species)
- Keep natural areas natural
- Like to know range of wildlife in watershed
- How has the watershed changed over time?

*Concerns*

- Spread of non-native plants
- Deer population may create a hazard in traffic
- Wild turkeys
- Possible impacts from cattle/goats

**STORM WATER/WATER QUALITY**

**Suggestions for Discussion:**

Where do you see lots of trash in the creek?

When it rains heavily, where do you see flooding?

Where are opportunities to implement alternatives to storm drains (rain gardens, swales)?

*Interests*

- Use BMPs (best management practices) to keep trash/pollutants out of creek
- Consider alternatives to storm drains
- Investigate the capacity for on-site water retention

*Concerns*

- Status of culverts – are they in good condition?
- What goes into storm drains and how does that impact water quality?
- BMPs need to be maintained so they continue to work
- Flood concerns

## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

### Suggestions for Discussion:

What do you think of the creek and watershed maintenance in the watershed?

Where are there landslides?

#### *Interests*

- Consider all of the watershed from the ridge to the creek outlet
- Investigate what creek & watershed management the City of Hercules has done in the past and what it would like to do - Including below San Pablo Ave.
- Like to know what will happen to the north tributary when the area is developed
- How does one maintain a healthy watershed?

#### *Concerns*

- Should all of Hercules be responsible for maintenance of the watershed or just local HOAs?
- Landscaping and vegetation in summer months does not look good
- What will be the impact of sea level rise on the watershed?
- Sedimentation at mouth of creek
- Landslides and relation to creek restoration