



REFUGIO CREEK WATERSHED VISION PLAN

25 APRIL 2009

Watershed Tour

Meeting Notes / Compiled: 28 APRIL 2009

- TOUR:** HERCULES PUBLIC LIBRARY
109 CIVIC DRIVE, REFUGIO, CALIFORNIA 94547 9:00 AM
- 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:** WATERSHED TOUR
- NEXT MEETING:** MAY 13th 7:00 PM

WATERSHED TOUR

The stops listed here correspond to the stops indicated on the Watershed Tour Map on the last page of these notes.

TOUR INTRODUCTION

The Watershed Tour met in the parking lot of the Hercules Public Library. Drew Goetting, RDG, welcomed everyone to the watershed tour. Drew described the plan for the morning. The group indicated their expectations for the tour.

STOP 1: TOP OF THE WATERSHED

The group parked at the top of Refugio Valley Road and walked up to the fence line at the top of the watershed. Drew pointed out the ridges and hills that define the watershed. The group looked downstream into Refugio Creek watershed and across into the Pinole Creek watershed. The group discussed the possibility of connecting the recreational trail along Refugio Creek with the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The group discussed the possibility of creating a trail network that ran along the ridges of Refugio Creek watershed and would create a loop trail from the middle school/high school (see map). The group indicated that maintenance roads already exist and much of the land is owned by the home owners associations (Refugio Valley Masters Association), Muir Heritage Land Trust, and East Bay Municipal Utility District. It was unclear what the legal issues would be in creating such a trail.

Restoration
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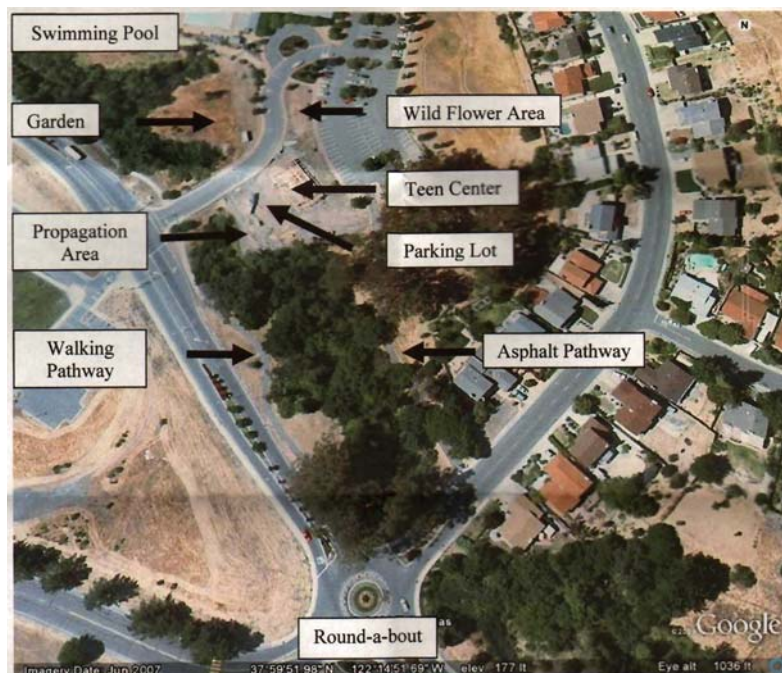
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The vision planning group gathers at the top of the watershed.

STOP 2: TEEN CENTER

Community member Steve Kirby described his vision for the Teen Center (see aerial below). Steve indicated that the Teen Center could be used to train students to care for the watershed and learn about the environment. The students could assume maintenance for the creek near the Teen Center. A piece of relatively flat terrain just north of the parking area could be a community garden. Other areas could be planted with wildflowers. The presence of the Teen Center, a short loop trail between the Center and the roundabout, and the proximity to the middle school/high school made this site very appealing to Steve. The group agreed that the site had great potential. Drew pointed out the metal trash rack in the creek and the effect it has had on the creek. He pointed out native and non-native creek vegetation and mentioned that providing access to the creek at appropriate sites could reduce access (and impact) in other more sensitive areas of the creek.



Scan of the annotated aerial map of the Teen Center that community member Steve Kirby provided to the group.

STOP 3: REFUGIO VALLEY PARK

At Refugio Valley Park, the group viewed the creek from the pedestrian bridge and observed the creek where it entered into the lake. Drew described how moving water drops the sediment it carries when it slows down. Robert Reber discussed the maintenance dredging that the City of Hercules has to do to keep the lake from filling in with sediment. The group discussed some of the issues and benefits of the park including maintenance costs and aesthetics. Drew also pointed out the non-native vegetation (pampas grass and ivy) that grew along the creek.



The vision planning group examines Refugio Valley Park.

STOP 4: I-80 CULVERT

The group parked at Creekside Shopping Center and walked down to the inlet of the culvert that passes under I-80, the BNSF Railroad, and San Pablo Avenue. Drew mentioned that community member and City employee Steve Lawton had seen salmon at this location several years ago. The group discussed the difficulty of walking or biking along this stretch of Sycamore Avenue. Robert Reber mentioned some planned pedestrian improvements between San Pablo Avenue and the new Park & Ride lot on Willow Avenue.

STOPS 5 and 6: LOWER PONDS and DUCK POND

The group visited two ponds in the lower watershed. Group members mentioned their concern over the water quality (smell and look) in the ponds, especially during the summer. They wondered if there was a better way to increase circulation through the ponds. Drew described the process of working with the state permitting agencies to modify the ponds. Drew also suggested that a few interpretive signs could clarify the purpose of the ponds for passers-by. At Duck Pond, the group discussed the possibility of planting more trees in the outlet channel to shade out cattails and to increase flow out of the pond. The group discussed the role of HOAs in maintaining the area and the possibility for coordination with the City and other groups to ensure that the maintenance is cost-effective and appropriate.



The vision planning group discusses the ponds in the lower watershed.

STOP 7: CREEK MOUTH

The group stopped near the mouth of the creek. The group discussed the plans in the area including the planned ferry terminal and Amtrak station. It was nearly high tide and the tide extended approximately 600 feet inland. This suggested to the group that the tide would not extend far enough inland to flush the Lower Ponds or Duck Pond.



The vision planning group gathers at the mouth of Refugio Creek.

STOP 8: RESTORED REACH

The group made its last stop on Muir Parkway upstream of the Tsushima St. Bridge. Drew described the restoration that had occurred and the possible subsequent re-planting efforts. The group discussed the maintenance that the HOAs would assume once the required maintenance and monitoring period by the firms that had restored the reach had passed (5-10 years after restoration).

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.

