REFUGIO CREEK WATERSHED VISION PLAN

13 MAY 2009

Public Meeting #4
Meeting Notes / Compiled: 14 MAY 2009

MEETING #4: 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)
JIM HALE, CONTRA COSTA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF HERCULES
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

CC/EMAIL: ROBERT REBER (FOR FILE & DISTRIBUTION THROUGH WEBSITE)

NOTES: FOURTH COMMUNITY MEETING

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 10, 2009, 7:00 PM

INFORMATIONAL SESSION

MEETING INTRODUCTION

Rich Walkling, RDG, welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting. Rich quickly reviewed the watershed tour, activities at previous vision plan meetings, and the agenda for the evening.

WILDLIFE IN REFUGIO CREEK WATERSHED

Biologist Jim Hale, who serves on the Contra Costa Fish and Wildlife Committee, gave a presentation to the group on Native Americans and wildlife in the Refugio Creek watershed. Jim explained to the group that because Contra Costa County is bordered to the west by the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and to the north by the Carquinez Strait and Suisun Bay, it is both the northern extent and southern extent for many plants and animals, including the San Joaquin kit fox, the Gilbert skink, and the San Joaquin pocket mouse. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Contra Costa County had the highest density of Native Americans in North America, and one of the largest village sites was just north of Refugio Creek watershed at the mouth of Edwards Creek near present day Crockett. The Native Americans in Refugio Creek watershed were likely Bay Mi-woks.

Jim showed slides to the group of nearly 75 species of insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, and mammals that live in and around the Refugio Creek watershed. Jim described how many of the species have been pushed to the upper reaches of watersheds because their preferred habitat is lost in the lower watershed. He also stressed the importance of creeks and the trees and plants that grow around them (riparian areas) as corridors for wildlife to move about the watershed and region.

Jim answered questions on a wildlife tunnel underneath Highway 4, the impact of feral cats and wild turkeys on native wildlife, and the impacts of dog and horse waste on wildlife and water quality.

Jim is leading two wildlife hikes in east Contra Costa County. May 16 at 8:45 a.m. he will lead a hike in Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. May 25 at 8:45 a.m. he will lead a hike in Round

Restoration Design Group, LLC

2612b Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710

T 510.644.2798
F 510.644.2799

Valley Regional Preserve. More information on both hikes can be found at the Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed website (http://www.fomcw.org/).

WORKING SESSION

The vision planning group split into three groups based on themes identified in earlier meetings: access; creeks/ponds/wildlife; and education and outreach. Group members selected which group they were most interested in. RDG staff facilitated each group. Community members were given a handout (see attached) that grouped actions they had identified in previous meetings and on the field trip. The handout included draft goals that attempted to summarize the various actions into a coherent, representative goal. After reviewing the hand out, community members discussed, modified, and added to the goals and actions.

Reviewers of these notes are encouraged to send any comments relating to the goals and actions to Rich Walkling at Restoration Design Group (rich@rdgmail.com or 510.644.2798 x5#).

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 – DRAFT GOALS AND ACTIONS

ACCESS

Draft Goal

Provide connected biking and pedestrian opportunities throughout the watershed to improve health, provide alternatives to driving, and create an appreciation for the Refugio Creek Watershed.

Proposed Actions

- Create access point to Bay Area Ridge Trail and Fernandez Ranch at top of Refugio Valley Road
- Create creek access point at parking pull out across from Hanna Ranch Elementary
- Improve cross walk (lighting and stop signs) at Refugio Valley Road and Carson Street by Hanna Ranch Elementary
- Identify and highlight access points to Ohlone Creek trails
- Formalize access points into the creek where appropriate
- Maintain trail across from lower exit of high school so that it does not fall into the creek
- Provide formal access to creek in Refugio Valley Park
- Beautiful and integrate creeks and trails to create a better pedestrian experience when walking between Refugio Valley Park and San Pablo Ave.
- Better connect trails with creek
- Clean up trails
- Plant native, drought tolerant vegetation along trail
- Create interpretive trails near proposed elementary school in lower watershed
- Create boardwalk access between Bayside and San Pablo
- Build pedestrian bridge from Front Street in Bayside to Muir Parkway/Alfred Noble Dr.
- Complete creek trails down to bay and bay trail
- Create loop trail in middle watershed by connecting trail between Refugio Valley Road with maintenance trail on other side of creek (connect at Teen Center and upstream of Country Run)
- Create dog park at Falcon Way and Refugio Valley Road complete with bio-retention
- Provide trash cans along trail
- Connect existing trails (and provide legal access) to create a loop trail along the ridges of the upper watershed starting at Falcon Way and Refugio Valley Road

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Draft Goal

Educate the community to improve water quality and habitat and to appreciate the Refugio Creek Watershed.

Proposed Actions

- Place interpretive signage along Muir Parkway sidewalk near creek restoration area
- Create creek-stewardship program at Teen Center along with garden, native plantings, improved creek access, and loop trail
- Make connections between schools, other groups, sharing ideas and resources
- Hold pollution and debris pickup not just in creeks but in entire watershed on Coastal Cleanup and other days

Restoration Design Group, LLC

2612b Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
T 510.644.2798
F 510.644.2799

- Educate the community (outreach to youth and schools, The Watershed Project, Hercules Community Gardeners, Inter-Ac Group, and Kadets)
- 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)

CREEKS AND PONDS

Draft Goal

Improve water quality, increase native habitat, and reduce maintenance costs throughout the creeks and ponds in Refugio Creek Watershed.

Proposed Actions

- Evaluate fish passage at Refugio Valley Park drop structure
- Improve water quality (pond scum) at Lake Refugio
- Daylight creek downstream of fire station (alongside Refugio Valley Road)
- Complete wetland areas adjacent to Duck Pond and Frog Pad Parks
- Evaluate ways to improve water quality in lower watershed ponds
- Evaluate improving drainage out of Duck Pond by shading outlet channel with native riparian trees and adjusting outlet elevation
- Investigate costs and benefits of Refugio Valley Park lake
- Investigate the potential to irrigate the community garden with creek water
- Replace non-native vegetation (e.g., ivy, pampas grass, eucalyptus) with native vegetation
- Restore Ohlone Creek between San Pablo Ave. and Sycamore Ave. in conjunction with development of the adjacent property

WILDLIFE/NATURE

Draft Goal

Provide habitat for desired wildlife in the Refugio Creek Watershed.

Proposed Actions

- Create corridors for deer and wild turkey
- Identify sites for mitigation (for threatened and endangered species)

STORM WATER/WATER QUALITY

Draft Goal

Reduce flood risk and improve water quality in Refugio Creek Watershed.

Proposed Actions

- Place "Drains to Bay" signage at all storm drains
- Evaluate opportunities to capture storm water at every pipe outfall and storm drain inflow
- Use BMPs (best management practices) to keep trash/pollutants out of creek
- Consider alternatives to storm drains (swales, rain gardens)
- Investigate the capacity for on-site water retention