



# Sonoma Water

## Flood Zone 1A Advisory Committee

### Minutes

December 9, 2019 ~ 9:00 a.m.

404 Aviation Blvd, Santa Rosa, CA

#### **Members:**

Arthur Deicke (AD)  
Paul Lockwood (PL)  
Craig Scott (CS) – City of Cotati  
Mary Grace Pawson (MGP) – City of Rohnert Park  
Sean McNeil (SM) – City of Santa Rosa  
Henry Mikus (HM) – City of Sebastopol  
Garrett Broughton (GB) – Town of Windsor

#### **Attendees:**

Steve Brady (SB) – City of Santa Rosa  
Jackie Guilford (JG) – Sonoma State University  
And the following Sonoma Water staff:  
Carlos Diaz (CD)  
Chase Takajo (CT)  
Susan Haydon (SH)  
Mike Thompson (MT)  
Kent Gylfe (KG)  
Kaitlin Mahoney (KM)  
Jon Niehaus (JN)

#### **1. Opening/Introductions:**

The meeting was called to order by Susan Haydon at 9:06am. SH acknowledged the public noticing of the meeting in Press Democrat newspaper, at offices of Sonoma Water and posting of agenda online at Sonoma Water and County Clerk websites.

#### **2. Public Comment:** None.

#### **3. Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes from the 2018 meeting were approved as submitted with motion by AD, second by HM.

#### **4. Stream Maintenance Program:**

Chase Takajo provided an overview on the activities performed in 2018. 2,942 cubic yards of vegetation were removed. CT noted they found about a dozen homeless encampments after vegetation removal. 46 acres of vegetation were grazed through a successful pilot grazing program. 69,000 lbs of trash were removed from channels. They recently increased security guards in key areas to reduce encampment in the creeks, now two full time security guards, 7 days a week. JN notes law enforcement is only requested in rare cases and stream maintenance program focuses on keeping waterways clear. Committee discussion held on complications to issues with Clean Water Act and the Boise decision. MT

reports that they have had some collaboration with Sonoma State and strategic planning to address issues moving forward. Sonoma Water Staff are coordinating with Russian River Watershed Association, North Bay Watershed and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and linking with larger regional needs of the shelterless in concert with environmental and social issues. CT showed photos of encampments and caves with plan to fill them in. SM reports use of wood pallets placed in storm drain pipes and notes significant water quality issues.

CT reports regarding urban forest management, they have been reducing vegetation for fuels reduction and public safety through maintaining good sight lines and removing dead, woody vegetation.

Over 31, 000 cubic yards of sediment material was removed, involving 2.4 miles of flood control channels. Five Creek was a target sediment removal area along 2,579 linear feet, 8944 cubic yards removed. Another large project was Laguna de Santa Rosa: 4,577 linear feet, 11,104 cubic yards removed with the goal to reduce standing water in this area to reduce mosquitos. MT reported that considerable water drained when they broke through Bellevue Wilford channel, noting a significant benefit.

Regarding Copeland Creek, the yellow-legged frog is an issue regarding activities and environmental permit compliance. MT asked if there were any concerns for flooding for Copeland Creek in Rohnert Park C-section. CT confirmed there was concern for flooding in the cul-de-sacs in this area and some culvert maintenance was performed.

##### **5. Laguna Ecological Monitoring:**

Jackie Guilford, Sonoma State Environmental Planning Professor, gave a presentation on ecological monitoring of the Laguna conducted by 8 university students. The project involved monitoring of Ludwigia eradication at the Stony Point Road sediment removal site on the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is impaired for temperature, mercury, dissolved oxygen, sediment, and nutrients. NCRWQCB is setting the TMDL for phosphorus to zero; the City of Santa Rosa occasionally needs to discharge phosphorus; Sonoma Water generated water quality credit trading units by removing sediment (+phosphorus) for the Laguna. Ludwigia (an invasive species) likes to grow in shallow water, full sun. During the summer, students flew a drone to develop imagery of the service road and part of the channel. Downstream of sediment removal area (digging): no change expected. Channel shape before digging to after digging: little change. Ludwigia wasn't able to root in very deep channel areas. The student's ongoing research includes determining if flooding during the rainy season changes shape of the channel. The innovative water quality credit trading program has been successful with over 15,000 credits of phosphorus (representing more than 15,000 lbs of phosphorus removed). AD asked if Ludwigia thrives on phosphorus and asked if the plant absorbs the phosphorus. MT describes that the amount of

phosphorus in the plant matter is minimal. One of the next management strategies is to identify native species that out-compete the Ludwigia.

CD acknowledged this research a great opportunity for students and hopeful to learn how to reduce seed source for Ludwigia and how phosphorus levels change over time.

#### **6. Central Sonoma Watershed Project:**

SH introduces discussion on Vortex Tube and Matanzas Dam rehabilitation. Last February 2018, Sonoma Water met with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to tour the Central Sonoma Watershed Project (CSWP), small watershed system to discuss vulnerabilities, need for comprehensive study for future upgrades and rehabilitation. Sonoma Water and NRCS staff discussed opportunities for partnership and future funding. NRCS inspected all 4 dams in the system and determined that the spillway at Matanzas Dam does not meet current design standards. In coordination with Sonoma Water, NRCS has prepared a funding proposal for national level funding to address the needed upgrades, with focus on addressing seismic safety criteria. CD explains goal to rehabilitate vortex tube and other related facilities as part of the CSWP. Sonoma Water is currently working on design and permitting for fish ladder improvements including a 36-inch bypass pipe, which would be closed most of the time and open during periods of downstream migration. CD said that NRCS secured monies to look into Matanzas reservoir. In addition to addressing specific design standards and safety criteria on Matanzas Dam, Sonoma Water staff developed a proposal for comprehensive vulnerability assessment using a systemwide operational and watershed approach. At this time, staff is hopeful to secure funding for planning phase. AD asked if spillway has ever been used and asked if there has ever been issue of erosion. CD said they have been successful with pressure transducers in Matanzas and other areas and that we will have more information on erosion issues moving forward.

#### **7. FY 2020/21 Budget:**

SH introduced the recommended budget (revenues and expenditures) and provided orientation to new format, explaining budget categories with intentions for improvements in greater clarity. Susan noted that year-to-date are actuals represent costs short time period, from July 1<sup>st</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, through our last payroll.

Committee discussed various categories and clarifications were made by staff on expenditures. Committee discussed the property management line item which represents the costs associated with property assessment and sale of the Hewitt Street property to the Community Development Commission (CDC). High concentrations of lead discovered and property sold to CDC for \$500-600k. Discussion regarding revenue categories and recommendation made to include specific grant income in future budgets.

AD said the budgeting looks really good and there's very little difference in estimates. GB asked for explanation regarding the Laguna Restoration Plan next steps, budget needs and if it includes the Ludwigia studies. MT noted that the Restoration Plan is about a half million dollar state grant from Department of Fish and Wildlife for developing a restoration plan for Laguna de Santa Rosa. MT also notes that future projects in Laguna are proposed to be grant funded and not primarily funded by Zone 1A funds, due to lack of sufficient funding through zone funds. He notes that they are hopeful that income from sale of nutrient credits will help fund restoration plans.

AD mentioned concept of carry-overs and reserves and how this worked. MT notes that some funding is left unspent for purpose of building up reserves for substantial projects, such as Vortex Tube and planning for CSWP. KG noted that that CSWP rehabilitation needs are significant and considerable funds (millions) will be needed at all phases (planning, design, and implementation) and that reserves might be needed for this. Sonoma Water staff are actively working with our federal partner for funding to support these efforts.

MGP asked if we have a rough estimate of what Zone 1A owns as this would assist in developing gross estimate of reasonable capital projects to anticipate. MT estimated range between \$500 million to \$1 billion.

PL notes that current budgeting is limited and therefore focused on maintaining existing infrastructures instead of building additional infrastructure.

Henry Mikus commented on importance of maintaining fund balance for cash flow and reserves. Discussion that Sonoma Water receives property tax disbursement twice a year. HM moved to approve the recommended fiscal year 20/21 budget as presented. AD seconded. Motion carried.

#### **8. Reports/Comments:**

HM reports the focus in Sebastopol has been homelessness and trash.

GB said that Windsor is evaluating storm drains and thanked CD for assisting him to obtain valuable records. CD said that USGS gage on the Laguna de Santa Rosa is a new forecast point. Now they will have 48-hour advance notice and noting that this is a big advancement for the region.

CD reports that the new gages can predict peak flow of creeks, rivers. There are new forecast points at several new sites including, Mark West Creek, and Big Sulfur Creek.

AD suggested moving the meeting start time to 9:30am to assist with heavy traffic conditions. SH said this is certainly possible and duly noted.

SH announces a groundwater sustainability workshop to be held on December 11, 2018, 4:30pm at the Friedman Center. This public workshop is entitled *Recharging Groundwater- Facts, Myths, Projects and Possibilities*. .

**9. Public Comment:** None.

**10. Next Meeting.** To be announced.