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Petaluma Watershed Collaborative

Friday, February 7, 2020 * 1:00PM – 3:00PM
NRCS Field Office
5401 Old Redwood Highway, Petaluma, CA 94954

Meeting Notes

Present at Meeting: Jason Beatty (City of Petaluma), Chelsea Thompson (City of Petaluma), Andy Rogers (FOPR), Stephanie Bastionon (FOPR), Eric Rubenstahl (MALT), Sara Azat (NMFS), David Keller (Petaluma River Council), John Shribbs (PWA), Gina Graziano (Point Blue (STRAW)), Charlie Schneider (RETU), Susan Haydon (Sonoma Water), Emmanuel Ursu (City of Petaluma/M-Group), Gina Benedetti-Petnic (City of Petaluma PW&U), Shannon Drew (SRCD), Katie Robbins (SRCD)

I. Quick Introductions/Updates:

- a. Petaluma Watershed Collaborative website development is in progress, will be shared once finished.
- b. Need to reschedule the regularly planned meetings in April and June 2020. Group affirmed that Fridays are generally a good weekday for meetings.
Action item: Katie to send out poll to reschedule.
- c. Seeking a location for the March stakeholder meeting. The function of this meeting is to allow community comment, insight, and concerns of the Enhancement plan. Date is currently TBD, likely late March or early April. Katie hopes to hold the meeting in a “World Café” style for interactive idea sharing.
 1. Group proposed various meeting locations: Grange hall, restaurants, church banquet halls.
 2. Suggestions:
 - Try having ~8 table groups with facilitators at each table, each table comes up with short list of written questions.
 - Keep maps very general. Limit map features to big-picture (main roads and hydrology). Keeping the map very general will prevent unnecessary public upset and distraction about specific projects or issues.
 - Look at how the Vital Lands meeting was run using the World Café layout– it was successful and well received by the public.

II. Draft Petaluma Watershed Enhancement Plan Update

- a. Katie asked if the group needs more time to comment and format the outline. They do.
Action item: Katie to re-send a group email with a link to the PWEF outline for them to give feedback.
- b. Group shifted back to talking about the March stakeholder meeting.
 1. Suggested that public outreach for this meeting be well thought out due to the potential influence that outreach can have on public attitude towards the plan and the meeting. It will be good to emphasize that the intent of the meeting is essentially nonregulatory, and we are just trying to make the plan better than it already is.
 2. Suggestions for how to advertise the event: Petaluma local newspaper for announcement, ask other organizations to include in their e-blast, target the rural ag community
 3. Group briefly discussed the meaning/need for a definition of an enhancement plan. Group member suggested we compose a succinct definition of an Enhancement plan to help guide our efforts. Katie said she has looked around but never found an exact definition given for an Enhancement Plan in our state. Susan explained the history of Enhancement Plans and said that it is worth searching original language in 205j (Clean Water Act) and 319h (Nonpoint source

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pollution). Another group member mentioned that enhancement plans are often part of a city general plan. Enhancement plans look at biological values and what can be done to improve them. For example, the City of Petaluma uses and references the old versions of the Petaluma Watershed Enhancement Plans when creating their city general plan.

4. A group member said that it's important for us to clarify the scope and aim of the PWEP. Will it affect public property? Private? Ridgeline trails? Riparian areas?
5. Suggestion by a group member for several public meetings, not just one, to maximize the meaningfulness of our outreach and the ability to implement the plans in the future.
 - i. A group member said Levine or McGuire may be good resources to help fund the increased number of meetings.
6. Concern was expressed about how to organize the sheer volume of ideas that will be coming in. How do we reach a good consensus of the short list of 10 project ideas? The process may take a while—can we do it all, and do it well, before the deadline?
7. Top 10 action plan deadline due in 1 year (Feb. 21, 2021)
8. Katie explained it will be difficult to extend grant timeline.

III. Develop Prioritization Criteria for Top 10 Watershed Projects

- a. Suggested for collaborative group members to prioritize project ideas.
- b. Katie affirmed that collaborative members can gather public feedback as well.
- c. SurveyMonkey to community members after the March public meeting to follow up or help prioritize ideas using vote quantities.
- d. Flood Zone 2A advisory committee, and Groundwater Advisory meetings, could help prioritize.
- e. Social media
- f. Send out a survey pre-meeting!
- g. Also allow survey in Spanish for accessibility. Point Blue may have the capacity.
- h. A group member emphasized the importance of being clear that this is going to be a plan UPDATE in the external presentation to the public about what we are doing. Our wording should consistently say this.

IV. Develop Project Solicitation Process/Review Project Spreadsheet

- a. A separate effort than the old spreadsheet, which is more fish centric. Now, under the grant, these project ideas can be more general enhancement things than they tended to be before (used to be more fish-centric).
- b. The importance of defining scope of criteria, or else it will be a big mess.
- c. Advocacy for a sediment source and volume study.
- d. A missing foundational study is key to benefitting fish in the long run.
- e. Long-term beneficial use of river sediment to do wetland enhancement.
- f. KR steered the conversation back to developing prioritization criteria.
 1. Recommended to ID main issues first.
 2. Stormwater resource plan should be used to ID the main issues (SWCA, funded by SWRCB)
 3. There is a bacterial TMDL in Petaluma Watershed
 4. Should we prioritize restoration/enhancement OR diagnostic studies on watershed health?
 5. Management actions vs. restoration projects.
 6. KR suggested having the higher-level goals go into the enhancement plan, while the Top 10 ideas will be dedicated to implementation projects.
 7. Group member explained that funders want project ideas to be vetted (for plausibility and necessity) before they see them.
 8. Many in the group think that we should divide ideas into two buckets: Studies and On-The-Ground.

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9. Establishing criteria will be helpful for narrowing down the 10 ideas.
10. Easements can be considered on the ground projects.
11. Look at Restoration goals for criteria.
12. SWRP has a great criteria matrix already existing that we should look at
13. While scoring/voting/ranking is one approach, discussion is important, so we don't overlook anything important. It would be possible that a very beneficial project could be quantitatively eliminated by a ranking process, but a group of professionals would all quantitatively agree that it would be a great project.
14. What if each stakeholder comes up with some good categories? We can whittle down the list from there.
15. Everyone at this meeting should pick their top projects and we can see the overlap.
16. Or, we can begin by defining our more broad, desired outcomes, as prioritization criteria.
17. Suggestion of emailing a survey to stakeholders:
 - Goals
 - Criteria for judging
 - A deadline

V. Review Outreach Lists

- a. Next meeting: look at the results of the electronic collection of goals and criteria.
 1. Can we put a recommendation on the plan for preventing additional harm and threats to the watershed? A long, bulleted list acknowledging environmental risks would be a start.
- b. The group agrees not to focus on the action plan during the march meeting; instead, the focus will be asking the public, "What are your concerns for the watershed?"
- c. We will reassure people that this group does have a list of project prioritization criteria in the works.
 1. A group member suggested we focus on more birds and other groups of endangered species than just fish.

VI. Watershed Updates

- a. Comment by David Keller: Dutra not held liable under 401 and 402. Letter submitted from PRC to the county.
 1. Housing projects approved on Monday. Many environmental concerns were overlooked. The EIR was poorly considered. This is a threatened riparian area which is in a flood plain and close to sea level – less than optimal location for housing.
- b. John Schribbs announced that his field guide publication is looking for inputs and feedback.