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Petaluma Watershed Collaborative

Thursday, July 1st, 2021 * 1PM – 3PM

Meeting held remotely via Zoom

Meeting Notes

- I. **Flood Control Zone 2A Updates** – Susan Haydon, Sonoma Water (information)
 1. Lichau Creek Stormwater Study – multi-benefit evaluation lens
 - i. Upper Lichau – Coyote Valley Farm Upper Basin Feasibility Study
 - a. Looked at hydrology and hydraulics in the area
 - b. Working with a willing LO interested in detaining water and reducing flooding, creating habitat for wildlife, and improving aesthetics
 - c. What and how much water could be detained onsite to held with flooding down in Penggrove/lower Lichau region?
 - d. Through modeling, learned
 - Meets primary objective of capturing 100% of Copeland Creek evulsion flows
 - Capable of capturing portion of Roberts Creek peak flows (secondary objective)
 - Detention project on property provides flood benefit to Penggrove and Petaluma River
 - Additional benefits of promising results relating to groundwater recharge and wetland enhancement
 - ii. Penggrove Community/Downtown Study
 - a. Nature based concepts that could help alleviate flooding in Penggrove
 - channel widening
 - floodplain bench
 - slowing the flow of water and holding a greater volume of water
 - b. Securing a 10-year flood reduction benefit would require multiple projects; one modification project would not make much difference.
 - iii. Complex area, channel capacity would need to be expanded – both channel widening and flood plain benches
 - iv. To only eliminate flooding associated with a 10-year flood, an upstream detention basin would be needed
 - v. Larger scale detention projects are more challenging
 - vi. How has the Denman Reach detention basin performed?
 - a. There has not been any significant rain in the two years since it was completed, so we do not yet know how it will perform. It was installed as designed, but do not know yet how it will perform in real-time.
 2. Sonoma Water has budgeted for a Sediment Management Strategy for the next fiscal year. The objective is to better understand sediment transport and sources.
 - i. David posed a longer-term question following a sediment study, how do we stop downcutting from the starvation of sediment?
 3. Power point presentations and more info from prior flood control meetings are available on the website.

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II. **Coordinator Updates** – Katie Robbins, SRCD (information)

1. Feedback from last meeting
 - i. For the remaining meetings we will be moving to a new phase of meeting format.
 - a. Process and procedures have already been developed, now we are onto the bulk of the “work”
 - b. Remaining meetings will focus on watershed updates and events rather than the “flash delivery” of updates
 - ii. Development of Committees
 - a. The “work” portion of the Collaborative will commence during the committee meetings, held as needed with support by email and review requests
 - iii. Suggestions for future topics and volunteers for leading and coordinating meeting topics are highly encouraged and welcome
2. Bureau of Reclamation funding
 - i. Sonoma RCD received a one-year extension
3. Revisit Collaborative purpose and Mission, Vision, and Goals document
 - i. **Goals**
 - a. The funds for the Collaborative are for planning only, not implementation. Identification of implementation funding needs to be pursued post BOR funding (or in tandem with current efforts, but not a deliverable/task within the current funding).
 - b. Current funding provides a role for coordination of efforts.
 - c. Place and space for various entities within the watershed to convene, discuss watershed needs/activities/projects and work together to advance actions and work.
 - d. Place and space for utilizing the strengths of various organizations.
 - e. Funding to get organized and centered to continue work (post-BOR funding) in the watershed as a organized unit rather than scattered work independently.
 - ii. **Objectives**
 - a. Up to the group as to how we want to move forward post BOR funding and deliverables that are outlined as Goals.

III. **Committee Updates** – Katie Robbins, SRCD (information)

1. Please see meeting slides.

IV. **Collaborative Sustainability** – intro by Dan Hubacker, UACG (discussion/action)

1. General recap of thoughts discussed during conversation
 - i. Lots of investment in the Russian River, don't necessarily have that with the Petaluma River outside of the Collaborative and Stakeholder group.
 - ii. How do we keep this sustainable? No easy answers, but an answer is needed. Worthwhile to have this larger discussion as we are talking about the projects – we get these great project ideas and plans, but how do we keep what is existing at a point where it can continue on.
 - iii. More opportunities to make presentations of what's going on and keeping each other apprised of what's going on.
 - iv. Appreciate having the watershed plan solidified with a shared vision.
 - v. Focus on implementation funding for identified projects – great first step that what we all can individually put forward that also aligns with the completed Plans and the shared vision.
 - vi. How do the conversations continue as a group rather than individual efforts?

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- vii. Important that we have a forum for looking at things through a watershed wide lens, strengthen the association between partners.
 - o Moving forward (post-BOR coordination funding):
 - Subcommittees help schedule “deeper dives” of projects/watershed efforts
 - Set time that meetings happen regardless of who coordinates
- viii. Would like to see a comprehensive watershed advocacy coalition. Much of river has been segmented by various interest agencies (floodplains, infrastructure/development, recreation).
- ix. Getting public support has been thin. Is there a way that the successor to this group is more of an advocacy coalition?
- x. Moving forward in terms of funding (billed time, participation, etc.)
 - a. (Point Blue) Balance of being able to attend at this scale is fine, if more hours required would look for funding to collaborate. If efforts were appropriate to lead (in their per view) could lead the effort.
 - b. (Sara Azat) ex. Lagunitas Advisory Committee – sponsored by municipal water district
 - c. Really need that lead agency continuity to keep it rolling
 - d. Interest in watershed is there but need that stable centerpiece that is willing to carrying it on
 - e. Maybe opportunity of group participating in an effort like SW’s sediment management plan
 - o Reduces focus on plan but provides opportunity for continuing work
 - f. Grant monies for orgs as participants → annual stipend through organization rather than salary, easier to budget, same across the board providing a stronger motivation to make things happen, people to show up
 - o Government agencies are not always allowed to accept stipends
 - g. It is clear there is much interest to keep the group going, has seen lots of value with these efforts.
 - h. The way that funding is coming about, if you are not regionalized at some way, no shot at getting any of it → big motivation
 - i. While waiting for funding opportunities, every organization that wants to participate should get some sort of commitment (resolution, message of interest) to show documented interest to continue the Collaborative efforts, this may show well in a funding application if/when an opportunity arises. Good to have ready early.
 - o **ACTION ITEM: if anyone is enthusiastic of participating with Collaborative efforts post-BOR funding, this effort should be started and led by a current Stakeholder**
- xi. Is there a way for the County to look at the land mass, majority of watershed is county. This should be a county level organization/piece of that. Any way for the County to take more leadership?
 - a. Have both Marin and Sonoma counties
 - b. Coastal Conservancy plan administered
 - c. Would be great if it could be a two-county collaborative
- xii. FOPR is a broad organization and would like to help. Would ultimately like to be paid to be at the table, but as a mission of FOPR would like to see move forward. Happy to help where they can.
- xiii. Other collaborative partners, Petaluma GSA involved? What they do and how they manage GW and SGMA might want to be an active partner?

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- a. John and Andy are on the Petaluma advisory committee, right now really busy getting the document completed on the schedule. Once that is going, and the entity is a “agency” there could be a strong involvement for higher involvement.
- b. **ACTION ITEM: John will propose this to the committee.**
- xiv. Lagunitas TAC meets every quarter (up to 60 people) meet on Fridays for 3 hours, half updates, half info items, mix of items. Perhaps this could be a model moving forward?

V. **Roll Call and Roundtable**

1. Watershed updates from Stakeholders

- i. FOPR (Stephanie) – starting a new contract with Water Agency for cleanup efforts with expanding community outreach and adopt a creek program. Trying to get some state money for upper river parkway idea that have been working on, hope is that it could fund some restoration projects in the upper watershed. Created drought resiliency videos in partnership with City of Petaluma.
- ii. Point Blue (John) – Getting back to working with students. Projects on books – Shollenberger, maintenance on existing sites in Lynch Creek and Sonoma Mountain. With SRCD several San Antonio ranches. Partners supporting concept for outreach of expansion of park on McNear Peninsula/Steamers landing. Continuing work around mouth of Pet. River with transition plants. Modeling sea level rise and adaptation with climate change.
- iii. John Shribbs – voted in as President of PWA for another two years. Planning on going back to the schools with field trips, have green light as of now from school district. Work at Shollenberger continuing with kiosks and amphitheater. “Re-leaf Petaluma” to plant trees in Petaluma, new nonprofit. Plants 180 trees in parks. Applying to CalFire to work with City to manage tree canopy within watershed area.
- iv. MALT (Eric) – lots of interest with farmer and rancher small grants program.
- v. NMFS (Jodi) – Sonoma Water has submitted application to USACE to renew stream maintenance program. Will likely be a 10+ year biological opinion coming out of the NOAA office, sometimes comes with mitigation opportunities. Sara reviewing draft for a mitigation bank.
- vi. City of Petaluma (Chelsea) – working with RES to set up some areas at Ellis Creek to do monitoring connected to mitigation bank project. Drought response with city has been majority of work. Marina dredging postponed due to funding. Lots of outreach regarding the drought, adds playing in movie theatre, sending out postcards, at farmers market. Chelsea no longer in stormwater division, now in groundwater and water conservation planning.
- vii. Petaluma River Council (David) – continue to prod county on Dutra asphalt project as result of correspondences over last few months. Need to update posting of permit applications – were not posted. Secured through PRAC identified changes that Dutra made. Strongly disagree that updated project aligns with requirements as it has been 17 years since Dutra submitted application materials. Working with FOPR in looking to create as much public open green space/riparian forest/access trails in upper watershed. Critical component of this is to get the Rainer freeway connector EIR de-certified or coming out of general plan. Rainer needs to be removed from general plan as transportation project – would destroy few hundred acres of upper river watershed.
- viii. NRCS (Chris) – Limited funding parameters for second round of EQIP funding. Pilot program for western states experience experiencing drought – drought resiliency fundng. Looking at putting a lot of people into the pilot program – EQIP Conservation Incentives Contract. Offshoot of

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normal contract. Accepting apps until 7/12, geared towards farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners ideally for water conservation projects developing drought resiliency moving forward. Any private stakeholders looking to do riparian restoration, alternative water projects, anything related to water conservation for cropland producers send to NRCS (livestock water, soil moisture monitoring). Quicker turnaround than usual process.

- ix. UACG (Dan) – Not sure what school is going to look like from here, hatchery is still going. Have students back on site and in the field. Looking forward to upcoming year – sounds like some sort of return to normal with students on site with more participation. Students super eager to get back and participate. Drought – currently doing monitoring on Creeks in Pet Watershed (priorities Adobe, Lynch and Lichau due to land access). If have leads onto creek access with landowners, appreciate connections. Collecting tissue samples from Adobe and Lynch, potentially Lichau. Adding more samples to larger picture will be helpful to determine genetics of steelhead in the watershed → focus over the next few months. Lots of drying.