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Petaluma Watershed Collaborative

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 * 1PM – 3PM

Zoom Meeting

Meeting Notes

Present at Meeting: Katie Robbins (Sonoma RCD), Emmanuel Ursu (City of Petaluma Planning Dept.), John Parodi (Point Blue (STRAW)), John Shribbs (Petaluma Wetlands Alliance), Eric Rubenstahl (MALT), Susan Haydon (Sonoma Water), Sara Azat (NOAA), David Keller (Petaluma River Council), Dan Hubacker (UACG), Scott Dusterhoff (SFEI), Jodi Charrier (NMFS), Anya Starovoytov (SRCD), Shannon Drew (SRCD), Johnathan Sanglerat (City of Petaluma), Charlie Schneider (TU), Andy Rogers (FOPR), Chelsea Thompson (City of Petaluma), Gina Benedetti-Petnic (City of Petaluma)

I. Roll Call and Roundtable (information)

- a. Point Blue is proceeding with restoration projects throughout the summer.
- b. Petaluma Wetlands Alliance working for new interpretational content for Shollenberger Park info kiosk
- c. MALT moving forward with education programs and easement operations
- d. Sonoma Water Southern Sonoma SWRP meeting was held.
- e. NOAA still teleworking.
- f. David Keller of PRC gave updates on construction proposals on the north end of the marsh. Hoping to prevent development in the Dutra property and the Corona reach. Would ideally like to see a conservation easement or park to halt to development on these lands.
- g. United Anglers update: From monitoring the watershed, it looks like this is a pretty dry year in many tributaries of the Petaluma River.
- h. SFEI update: Petaluma River project working together with SRCD and Point Blue.
- i. NMFS: still teleworking and no field work
- j. John Shribbs gave an update that stinkwort is a concern in Shollenberger park.

II. Approve Action Plan Benefit Categories for Ranking of Top Ten Projects (decision)

- a. Review survey results
 1. The group wanted to use the SWRP benefit categories model, but make it “our own,” to tailor the needs to Petaluma River.
- b. Approval of Benefit Categories
 1. Katie Robbins (KR) recommended approving benefit categories listed as produced by survey results as follows: Environmental, Water Quality, Community, Flood management, and Water Supply, AND with public health interwoven between all five.
 2. The group agreed and approved KR’s idea. Multiple group members gave thumbs up on the Zoom call and voiced their approval.

III. Approve Project Submission Form (decision)

- a. Review updates
 1. KR gave a summary of the Project Submission form that is existing already as a Google Form.
 2. John Shribbs asked what the expectation was for submitting projects.

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3. KR clarified that the idea is for people in the general public to propose possible projects, with around 500 words or less, and the idea is not to come up with a full-blown proposal complete with details.
 4. Susan Haydon asked how the project ideas will be sorted through once so many of them are received.
 5. KR said there will be a process to whittle down the list of plausible projects. Including further questions on the google form could also help determine plausibility and scale of the project idea someone is submitting.
 6. KR said stakeholders should email her if they get ideas about this later.
 7. John Shribbs and David Keller think that adding too many questions and specific limitations to the Google Form would be a barrier to genuine public engagement. Alternatively, John Shribbs suggested to have these more specific feasibility questions be the essence of a second round of sorting through the input of ideas from the public.
 8. Susan Haydon suggested still including a place for feasibility questions on the public form, because this info could be helpful, but make the feasibility questions optional.
 9. John Parodi asked about getting information needed to further develop potential project ideas and said that Point Blue staff would probably be able to help do this.
 10. John Shribbs suggested practicing narrowing down projects could be beneficial for the projects.
 11. For the Google Form outreach, Gina Benedetti-Petnic recommended a bifurcated approach to the survey, with one more detailed survey for agency folks and one for the public at large (individuals who may not be totally in-the-know on environmental projects). Having an approachable form would help encourage the public to give their ideas in a more simple and accessible way.
- b. Approval of Form
1. Katie Robbins said that there will be an email for approving the project submissal form before the next meeting.
 2. Because of upcoming deadlines, some things will need to happen over email. KR suggested the group be ready to receive emails with action items in between meetings.

IV. Petaluma Watershed Enhancement Plan (discussion)

- a. Katie Robbins demonstrated that OneDrive is the file location of this plan, where folks can collaborate.
- b. Is the process working?
 1. Gina and Emmanuel from City of Petaluma, as well as John Shribbs, provided comments.
 2. KR emphasized the need for users to edit the document using Track Changes mode and demonstrated this capability while sharing her screen.
- c. Review assignments
- d. Determine deadline for contributions
 1. **July 15 is the deadline for people to get a start on the first sweep of editing the document.**
 2. John Shribbs asked where the nonpoint source pollution section was in the document.
 3. John Shribbs asked about hiring a writing consultant.
 4. Katie Robbins replied that hiring a writing consultant may or may not be possible depending on if there is room in the budget and if it can be approved by the funder.

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V. Action Plan Ranking System Next Steps (discussion)

- a. Suggested next steps
 1. Developing a flowchart for the process of determining project eligibility and ranking.
 2. Katie Robbins does not feel that the group should weight benefit categories because it makes things more complicated, and each of the categories are highly important, and it is above the authority of this group to say which categories are more important than the other.
 3. KR asked for feedback on this.
- b. Feedback from stakeholders
 1. Susan Haydon asked for clarification on what would be ranked and weighed.
 2. Katie Robbins said, she would suggest NOT weighing benefit categories, but ranking project ideas later on in the process.
 3. John Shribbs brought up concerns about having Water Supply as a benefit category due to groundwater issues.
 4. Related to Water Supply, Susan Haydon suggested bringing in findings from a study looking at surface water and groundwater interaction.
 5. KR showed the flowchart that shows how to prioritize projects.
 6. Benefit categories will be used to evaluate each of the projects that gets submitted via the Google Form. Using Water Supply as a benefit category would not necessarily require stakeholders to make a value judgement, or really get “into the weeds” on groundwater and water supply issues.
 7. KR shared a graphic showing how to review and quantify benefits. Developing benefit categories will be tailored to the Collaborative’s efforts. This needs to be developed sooner rather than later due to the grant timeline.
 8. Via email, KR will be sending out a final version and seeking feedback and approval from stakeholders.
 9. KR asked for stakeholders to share their thoughts and experiences with ranking projects, developing ranking criteria, and rubrics to rate potential projects which worked well in the past.
 10. Gina Benedetti-Petnic proposed having cost-benefit analysis as part of narrowing down potential projects. She also feels strongly that potential funding sources for projects needs to be considered, as this will help create projects that could get implemented.
 11. Sara Azat suggested considering project costs and benefits, and whether applicants have had measurable successful project outcomes in the past.
 12. John Shribbs asked if we would be including elements of equity, inclusion, and community resilience.
 13. Sara Azat said environmental justice has many levels: two of these levels are who the applicant is and where the project will take place. Sometimes the best way to get at that is to bring those communities in. Tribal participation would be a way to do this.
 14. KR said that regional tribes have been reached out to earlier in this process, and recent communications with Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria have made it seem hopeful that a representative may join in this collaborative effort.
 15. John Shribbs suggested a project involving opening up public land use is a great way to include social justice.
 16. Jodi Charrier said it’s important to establish main priorities, and where social justice fits with these goals in a structured format. The structured format will help us stay focused. What criteria will we be ranking projects against?

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17. Susan Haydon suggested a sensible rating approach, which will help the stakeholders stay focused despite a broad mission and broad objectives. Mapping was done to determine some areas with underserved communities. Suggestion to ask in the Google Form: has there been community outreach about this already and what level of work has been done on this already? Susan also mentioned that Daily Acts is a great contact to ask for intel about local social justice.
18. John Parodi mentioned that Point Blue's work is also a lot about social justice, and he offered to be a contact and resource.
19. John Shribbs suggested practicing the Google Form before it goes public.
20. Eric Rubenstahl offered advice from experience, suggesting striking a balance between being specific and being thorough ("clumping and splitting" groups) in the ranking projects. He also said that measuring impact is helpful.
21. David Keller said that public trust values must be assessed.
22. Katie called for more ideas and examples from the stakeholders via email. Katie will be compiling the ideas shared in this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned 2:46 pm.