

NBWA
NBWA Watershed Council Meeting Summary
January 19, 2011 – 4:00-6:00 pm
Novato Sanitary District
500 Davidson Street, Novato, CA 94945

I. Introduction/Announcements.

- * Network and Council Member News – No Announcements
- * Review Agenda

II. Marin RCD Approach to Coordinated Permitting. Nancy Scolari, Marin RCD used a PowerPoint to describe the Marin Coastal Permit Coordination Program. Nancy first explained why such a program was needed: called for in six watershed programs; up to 8 permits/approvals could be required for a single restoration project; can cost thousands in hard cash; can take years; landowners risk fines; and creek work is avoided. Nancy then presented several examples including Pine Gulch and Walker Creek to illustrate the time and effort involved in permitting. Nancy explained the program structure and agencies involved: USACE, USFWS, CDFG, and NRCS/RCD. Nancy also described the program development and components including: 17 commonly used rangeland practices; tours with regulatory agencies; “practice” conditions; and public meetings to respond to comments. Nancy presented visuals on a number of practices such as grade stabilization, culverts, fish stream improvements, stream bank protection, access roads, critical area planting, etc. Nancy laid out the annual program schedule: November – landowner applies for funding; Dec.-Jan. – projects evaluated and ranked by RCD advisory group; Feb. – project approvals for design and cost estimation services; May – Approval by RCD Board; June-July – after 60 day comment period agencies visit sites and permits are received; and projects complete by October 15th!. Nancy summarized the benefits of the program: landowners engaged (40 person waiting list); expands funding opportunities; higher caliber projects; no permit cost to landowner; restoration is cost effective; efficiency (implementation schedule is reduced from 3 years to 1); restoration happens (>130 management practices, 10 miles of stream, 22 grade control structures, 2,500 trees); and fish and wildlife populations increasing. Nancy highlighted some discoveries: Can’t use template; not all agencies think alike; laws changing; and scheduling is critical. The Watershed Council had a number of questions: What are RCD boundaries? (Only unincorporated areas, Ag focus.) Are any projects on San Antonio? (Expanded into Sonoma – Stemple & Americano last year.) Do landowners seek Farm Bill funding? (Yes – come through NRCS.) Does landowner handle administration? (No – NRCS handles funding, RCD handles permit.) Any testimonials from landowners? (Yes, this is 50th year Anniversary.)

III. Statewide Efforts to Promote Coordinated Permitting for Restoration and Erosion Control Projects. Erik Schmidt of Sustainable Conservation used PowerPoint to present an overview of SC’s efforts to accelerate restoration on private lands. Erik provided background on the “Partners in Restoration” (PIR) permit coordination that started in Elkhorn Slough in 1996. Erik described the goal – increase voluntary erosion control and habitat enhancement projects on private lands. He then presented challenges and opportunities and the State of California riparian resources. Erik summarized the agencies involved in permitting: USFWS and NOAA (CESA), USACE (404), CDFG, Counties (CEQA), RWQCB (401) and the California Coastal Commission. Erik described the overall PIR effort – 8 programs implemented, 4 in development, and 4 unsuccessful/suspended. He then summarized the recent assessment of the PIR program which included data analysis, a survey and in depth interviews. A PIR assessment report will be out in February including recommendations (www.suscon.org). Erik described the Santa Cruz and Marin RCDs in some detail. The overall results of the PIR program are: 227 projects in 13 years, 200,000+ tons of soil loss prevented, and 17 miles of riparian habitat enhanced. Erik then presented the recommendations: 1) Build support for statewide or multi-region restoration program; 2) select core set of practices; 3) programmatic effort for scaled up PIR; 4) seek exemptions from county ordinances for projects regulated by federal and state agencies; 5) standardize reporting and monitoring; 6) address CEQA guideline revisions; 7) address ESA and NHPA coverage; 8) integrate safe harbor requirements; 9) demonstrate effectiveness; 10) increase RCD capacity; 11) help other parties to use RCD programmatic permits and authority. Erik answered questions and responded to concerns raised about a statewide approach given that the Marin RCD program worked well due to the local technical review team. Erik noted the statewide programmatic approach would still include notification and review by agency staff. Erik went further and suggested where there was a lack of local capacity that consultants could be used.

IV. BAIRWMP Update. Harry Seraydarian used a PowerPoint presentation to update the Watershed Council on Bay Area efforts. Harry first presented recent actions by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on the planning grant submittals. DWR has recommended approval of the Bay Area planning grant request for \$842,556. Harry then summarized recent actions regarding the Bay Area Implementation Proposal which included: DWR doubling the amount of funds available; deciding on Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) as the administrative lead; and the prioritization and allocation of funds for projects in the proposal. Harry presented the five programs included in the proposal – Regional Recycling (\$9.813m), Regional Water Conservation (\$8.953m), Regional Green Infrastructure Capacity Building (\$4.566m), Bay Area Wetland Ecosystem Restoration (\$3.725m), and Integrated Water Quality Improvement, Flood Management and Ecosystem Restoration in Bay Area Disadvantaged Communities (\$2.134m), plus administrative costs

for BACWA. Harry then presented a summary of each program including costs, match, quantitative benefits, specific projects or components, and locations. Harry also highlighted North Bay projects. Harry ended by presenting the requirements and schedule for 1-E Stormwater Flood Management Grants and future milestones for Prop 84 implementation and planning.

V. Watershed Project Funding Efforts. Item requested by Caitlin Cornwall and since she was unavailable the topic was not addressed.

VI. Wrap Up.

* Next meeting?

Likely April 2011

Possible topics

- Marin County Watershed Program
- NBWA Project Update
- NBCAI Efforts (North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative)
- 2012 Conference Input

Participants:

Betsy Warner Bikle – Mill Valley Streamkeepers and
Marin Conservation League

Howard Bunce – MCSTOPPP

Laura Chariton – Mill Valley Streamkeepers/SPAWN/
Hutchins Sonoma State

Jowin Cheung – San Francisco Bay RWQCB

Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Maeve Daugherty – Winzler & Kelly

Chris DeGabriele – North Marin Water District

Shari Gardiner – Friends of the Napa River

Dale Hopkins – California RWQCB

Beverly James – Novato Sanitary District

James Krider – Napa County Flood Control and
Water Conservation District

Marla Lafer – San Francisco Bay RWQCB

Nadananda – Friends of the Eel River

Andy Rodgers – Petaluma Chamber of Commerce

Erik Schmidt – Sustainable Conservation

Nancy Scolari – Speaker, Marin RCD

Bill Scott – Marin Building & Construction Trades Council

Alexis Strauss – U.S. EPA – Region 9

Susan Stompe – Marin Conservation League

David Yearsley – Friends of the Petaluma River

Harry Seraydarian – Executive Director, NBWA

Elizabeth Preim-Rohtla – NBWA Staff Assistant