

North Bay Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting - Summary

November 3, 2023 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

City of Petaluma Ellis Creek Treatment Plant
3890 Cypress Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954

Zoom was available for those to attend virtually
www.nbwatershed.org

1. **Welcome and Call to Order—Directors, Member Representatives Present Included:**

Michael Boorstein – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Pamela Meigs – Ross Valley Sanitary District
John Shribbs – City of Petaluma	Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency
Kate Hagemann – City of San Rafael	Susan Gorin – Sonoma County
Ron Wellander – City of Sonoma	Stephen Keese – Public
Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Gustavo Goncalves – Marin County	Sabrina Marson – NBWA
Chris Choo – Marin County	Chris Halle – (Guest Speaker)
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	Chelsea Thompson – City of Petaluma
Ranjiv Khush – Marin Municipal Water District	Susan Stompe – Public
Rick Fraites – North Marin Water District	Kate Powers – Public
Jean Mariani (Chair) – Novato Sanitary District	

Eleven NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 21-member agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public. Meeting participants attended in-person and remote via Zoom.

1. **Welcome and Call to Order – Roll Call and Introductions** – Chair Mariani called the meeting to order at 9:34 am and took roll call.
2. **General Public Comment** – None
3. **Agenda and Tour of the Montezuma Wetlands Project Overview. Approve Past Meeting Minutes** – Chair Mariani asked for any Board members to speak up if there were requested changes to the agenda. Tour of the Montezuma Wetlands Project Overview was moved to the ED Report item. No comments. Director Boorstein moved to approve the agenda; Director Fraites seconded—Unanimously approved

Chair Mariani asked if there were any changes or correction to the minutes for August. No comments. Chair accepted the minutes by consensus. Director Boorstein moved to approve the August minutes; Director Shribbs seconded—Unanimously accepted

Treasurer’s Report

No comments on the August, September, and October Treasurer’s Reports. Director Fraites moved to approve the August, September, and October Treasurer’s Reports; Director Boorstein seconded—Unanimously accepted.

4. **Guest Presentation: Education Into Action Collaborations: A Lever to Move the World**

Dr. Chris Halle, Program Developer, Center for Environmental Inquiry, Sonoma State University

Chris described the Education Into Action model developed at SSU's Center for Environmental Inquiry by focusing on the Rising Waters Initiative, a collaborative driven by local experts, NGOs, faculty, and students working together to tackle complex issues at the nexus of homelessness and water quality. Particular attention was paid on how universities and outside agencies can merge their cultures to work together to create actionable change in local communities.

Chris discussed a few of the WATERS Accomplishments, covering topics like Flood, Invasive Aquatics, Land Use Planning, and the Rising Waters Initiative.

Rising Waters

- Initiative
 - Complex high-priority issues surrounding water
 - Neutral meeting ground for diverse partners
 - Cross-disciplinary engagement to address cultural, economic and environmental issues
 - Facilitated process targeting innovative and practical solutions
- Process
 - Rising Waters Working Group identifies issue(s)
 - Multi-disciplinary faculty-student teams collect and summarize data
 - Collaborative brainstorm for solutions and cost-benefit analysis by teams
 - Presentations and reports
- Timeline
 - Fall 2018 when discussions began to Sept 2021 when there was a formal public workshop to discuss Year 1 results.
- The First few years have been focused on homelessness and watersheds.
 - Flood protection
 - Water quality
 - Sanitation/health
 - Habitat conservation

Chris listed the Rising Waters Supporters (Sonoma Water, RRWA, Alexander Leff, and Sonoma State Center for Environmental Inquiry), and the Year 3 Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets on an ongoing basis to provide feedback to the researchers and students and help guide the students.

Chris noted that the program is not funded, they managed to get the students internship money from the funds they do have. They do it because there is a need in the whole state to get universities and communities talking.

They divided the initiative into a few questions:

1. Where are services needed to reduce water quality impacts? They redefined the goal and created a resource mapping, instead of impact/location mapping. They are currently looking for an agency to pull the license (around \$2k a year).

2. What are the economic, social and political barriers to providing services to people experiencing homelessness? Refined Goal: Investigate the barriers and cost of providing sanitation services, including the “do nothing” option. Focus on real world case studies for background. The MBA students who worked on this won an award and it’s been published and spoken about to the Continuum of Care (CoC), Sonoma County's collaborative effort representing the homeless services system of care and they are incorporating it into some of their materials.

Sanitation Case Studies Methods / Results and Sanitation Case Studies: “Doing Nothing” option can have significant costs.

3. How Can we better align investments across all sectors? Refined Goal: Develop an inventory of organizations and individuals that work on homeless issues in Sonoma County. Interview advocates and summarize pressing issues. Begin exploring presenting this inventory in a “knowledge map”.

During the first couple of years, students had a hard time talking about homelessness and water quality, even with both on agencies because there were a lot of misconceptions floating around. Students pushed faculty to do an education public media story campaign that could get the message about real facts out there, whatever those facts may be. Items developed:

- Public Relations plan
- Website
- Media product library
- Interviews
- Social media posts
- Poster presentation
- Flyers
- News Release

After COVID, they began water quality sampling field work which documents / explores any links between homeless encampments and water quality issues (pH, total suspended solids, temperature, ammonia, nitrogen, phosphorus, fecal bacteria (E. coli, Enterococcus)) What the team has done is come up with a way to quantify disturbances from homeless encampments. It's not just what encampments do to water quality, it is also what water quality issues individuals are experiencing.

This work recently won a CASQA award for outstanding student project or program.

The program has been asked by one of thier partners to help advise the state Sustainable Development Council on effective ways of engaging academia. The Development Council would like them to provide tools to evaluate grants.

They recommended finding organizations whose job it is to break down these barriers because the relationship drives the research. Fund relationships rather than individual project. Not just students and not just leaders Their focus is on engaging organizations like NBWA on how to make this process better. Chris spent about a year and a half developing a pledge where individuals can go and take a climate/ sustainability pledge where it was the top 3 things people can actually do to make a difference. Reach out to him for details.

Workforce development is a really, really big piece of this program. Feedback from partners is that the students that have gone through these programs are able to function and do want to focus on these issues in society.

www.sonoma.edu/waters

The full presentation is in PDF format and can be found at
<https://www.nbwatershed.org/event/nbwa-board-meeting-12-2023-08-04>

Questions/Comments:

Director Meigs: She appreciates the work being done and believes this is a societal issue and how funds are managed.

Director Clark: She noticed that no homeless people were interviewed; they have to be part of the equation. She learned that there is new technologies about fast housing (like domes) that can be built.

Dr. Halle: There are and continues to be interviews with the homeless population. One of our steering committee members was homeless for quite a number of years. And she started to be an advocate and pull together all these disparate agencies. She is trying to drive this conversation and make sure that solutions that are developed are actually practical.

Director Patterson: I think that the communication needs to be consistent and there are retired folks who don't want to spend all their time on these issues but bring incredible expertise and experience. Maybe we could develop a list of people who would be willing to spend a little bit of time helping. My class now is working on what to recommend to the agency for the Potter Valley Solution. (Elizabeth will reach out to him for more discussion.)

Dr. Halle: [He agrees with her and looks forward to connecting with her on that.]

Director Russell: He suggests that the far more fundamental issue is a lack of attention to human sanitation in our cities in general. What are your thoughts on how we can improve society's response to a basic human need across the board.

Dr. Halle: That's a very challenging topic and how to get people of different political stripes to look at each other, see each other's people. I don't have any good ideas other than to keep going out trying to address misconceptions one on one.

Director Wellander: Has any of your work been done in the southern portion of the valley?

Dr. Halle: Some field data may have been collected down there. I don't think we've gone to the point of walking the creeks and doing water quality sampling there yet because we just started next to Santa Rosa but I think that would be a really interesting expansion.

Director Fraites: Certain percentage that are mentally ill or strung out on drugs. How have you overcome that? I understand the state legislation may be working on legislation that will assist mentally ill to institutions. In Novato, the city spent money to provide camps and facilities but it's not helping.

Dr. Halle: There are difference populations. I've been doing this for 20 years interacting with homeless folks and talking to them and I've never had any issues. Having stability is paramount—providing housing. The easiest way to get these complicated issues looked at is by talking. Getting students involved in these discussions. It's also looking at economics and looking at business models and reframing them to do good for local communities.

Director Gorin: Our Homeless Action Sonoma has spent millions of dollars on grading, permitting, and they're not done yet for 20 tiny homes. ADA issues are playing into that as well. We're trying to figure out how to afford to move them, but it is extremely expensive. They're very concerned about the debris from homeless camps washing down the creeks and the contaminants washing to the San Pablo Bay. Have you had a conversation with the San Francisco Water Quality Control Board or by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, what do they say about what we're seeing?

Dr Halle: He doesn't recall.

ED Rodgers: Dr. Chris is working with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board—they're part of the Steering Committee.

Dr. Halle: They are helping design the protocols to measure homeless encampments and water quality impacts.

Director Boorstein: Are you concerned with areas providing such great services that others will come from further away, thus making it impossible to continue funding?

Dr. Halle: It's complicated. I certainly take your point. I don't think that there is a community that's going to suddenly fund all of the housing and all of the water and everybody's going to flood in.

Director Mariani: People that are homeless need homes. They're not traveling for services all that much. I think it's more a matter of providing equity to all our communities.

5. **Executive Director Report**

Andy Rodgers, Executive Director

Andy facilitated a brief Board discussion to identify any next steps supporting workforce development initiatives in the region.

Andy provided updates and solicited board input on activities since the August 4 Board meeting and the October 6 Tour of the Montezuma Wetlands Project, including reviewing a timely opportunity to submit a grant application for regional project funding, and summarizing other active and developing projects, meetings, regional programs and initiatives, communications, and committees.

Andy outlined ideas for next and future Board meeting topics and solicit feedback.

Summary highlights include:

Updates since last meeting

- Thank you, Napa Sanitation District for hosting NBWA's August's 4 Board meeting and workforce development workshop. Andy provided a recap of Guest Presenter takeaways:
 - Regional Workforce Development for the Water Industry – Jordan Damerel, FSSD, BAYWORK, BACWWE
 - Stackable Internships
 - Instrumentation Apprenticeships
 - Cross-Agency Mentoring Program
 - Workshops on Wheels
 - Technical Certification advancement/staff development
 - Mentorship programs for students to water/ww jobs
 - www.baywork.org & www.bacwa.org/education/bacwwe/
 - *BAYWORK supporting NBWA conference!*
 - Creating a Recognized and Respected Ecological Workforce – Sally Bolger, Director, Ecological Workforce Initiative
 - Increase pace, scale, quality of environmental restoration by building highly trained ecological workforce
 - Certification program for trade workers - project laborers and equipment operators
 - Connect graduates to jobs
 - Enhances economic benefits of ecologically beneficial projects
 - www.Ecologicalworkforce.org
- Attended CASQA legislative committee meeting on August 23
- Submitted Regional Resiliency Planning & Implementation (ICARP) grant application on August 29. Andy provided a handout and discussed the grant.
 - Groundwater Rise Hazard Map for the SF Bay Area Phase II
 - Completing the regional picture for four Bay Area Counties (Solano, Napa, Sonoma, Santa Clara)
 - Proposed Solutions and partners.
- Attended IRWMP CC meeting on September 25
- Thank you, Solano County and Montezuma Wetlands, LLC for hosting an informative and inspiring tour on October 6! There were around 17 attendees

There was a brief exchange of thoughts on the tour.

Director Clark: [she missed the tour] How could I get that tour other than NBWA or could we repeat it?

Director Patterson: She will reach out to Resource Conservation District and One Water Program and get back to Megan.

Director Russell: He knows Jim Levine well and will ask him if he could come and speak more about the project.

Administrative Activities

- Collaborated with SFEI on NBWA website rebuild and launch.
 - New theme for usability selected and implemented
 - ADA Compliance structures added

- Enhanced menu bar, including regional projects and priorities pages
- Language translation options added

ED Rodgers asked that Members send visionary pieces from their agencies, or from their counties, etc. to aid in the websites content refresh with a kind of “tomorrow's North” in mind. Send contacts of who NBWA staff can reach out to for content.

- Coordinated future Board events and speakers
- Coordinated with MMWD Finance Manager and NBWA staff on reporting
- AR – Membership dues
- AP – Subconsultants

Communications

- Finalized and distributed NBWA Fall Quarterly Newsletter October 18
Andy wanted to be sure everyone is receiving and encouraged members to pass it on to help expand the distribution list (Agency PIOs, other departments, organizations, funders)
He also reminded members to forward NBWA press releases or articles highlighting member agency projects, programs, announcements, awards to include in next newsletter
- BAYWORK meeting on September 19.
- Coordinated with members to host meetings throughout NB region
- Regional partners
- Subject matter experts and speakers
- Chair, Deputy Director, and staff to progress NBWA initiatives

Committees

- Administrative Steering Committee meeting on August 1
- Conference Committee meetings on Aug 22, Oct 17, and Oct 31.
 - Working Title ~ Imagine Tomorrow's North Bay: Regenerating our workforce, communities, and natural infrastructure
 - Hybrid Venue Selected — Sonoma State University
 - SSU Office of Academic Affairs, Center for Environmental Inquiry has agreed to be an academic partner
 - Please Save the Dates: April 5 and April 19

FY 2023-24 Board Meetings

- December 1 – In person/hybrid
- January 5 – SKIP MONTH or WATERSHED SOCIAL GATHERING
- February 2 – In person/hybrid with field trip
- March 1 – In person/hybrid
- April 5 or 19 – Conference!
- May 3 – In person/hybrid
- June 7 – In person/hybrid with field trip

Topics in development:

OneWater-OneBay Strategic Funding Initiatives, Regional Resiliency, SFBay Basin Plan Amendment, American Canyon Field Trip, Berryessa Field Trip, Delta Field Trip, SR37 Field Trip, Environmental Education & Grant Funding, Small Grants Program, Urban Scale Carbon Sequestration Initiatives, Regulatory Compliance Partnerships, Baylands Strategies,

DroughtSMART/FireSMART, Water Management & Conveyance Innovations, Capital and Natural Assets Management, Small Grants and Scholarship Program, New Members

6. Board Information Exchange

Director Fraites: The pipeline that got washed out with the gas lines is not up. They are investigating next steps.

Director Boorstein: CMSA got a 2.5-million-dollar grant and Cal Recycle made a video <https://youtu.be/A8SUhJaJ2rA?si=VbiTwdbh0vjYY4gH>

Director Meigs: They are now giving loans at low interest for septic changes over to sewer.

Chelsea Thompson (City of Petaluma): As a member of the Petaluma Valley GSA, they recently received grant funding for several projects, one of those projects was to expand the city of Petaluma's urban recycled water pipeline off Maria in 3 different sections. They are also coordinating with Sonoma Ecology Center and the County of Sonoma on doing bacteria source tracing. This is part of their plan to identify sources of bacteria through the Petaluma River so that we can implement BMPs.

Gustavo Goncalves (Marin County): They are in progress with a 6-million-dollar project to both renovate the veterans memorial auditorium Civic Center as well as installing a stormwater catchment system underneath the parking lot. It's part of working with their mandate to keep any litter from our freeways from flowing into the bed.

Director Wellander: He is encouraging others to continue to help resolve the issue in Potter Valley. Talk to Congressman Huffman's office.

Director Patterson: There is a proposal to do carbon capture transfer from the oil refineries in Contra Costa and Benicia to some place that is being identified. NRDC and I believe the Center for Biological Diversity is spearheading the opposition because of some of the unknowns. The pipeline could possibly go along in the coastline, which could endanger a lot of species. The water agency is having an item on the agenda.

Director Schribbs: PG & E is putting a gas pipeline underneath the river 60 feet under really get all the way under and across. They also picked up a million dollar grant for trees around Petaluma to help recreate the biodiversity that was here as well as aid in heat effects.

Director Russell: Still looking at ways to increase water supply. They just got a 4.5 million dollar grant from Fish and Wildlife for habitat restoration focused on coho.

7. Announcements/Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 am

Next Meeting: December 1, 2023