

NBWA
Watershed Council Meeting Summary
September 18, 2014 – 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

I. Introductions

Introductions began at 3:08 p.m. and Harry Seraydarian, NBWA Executive Director, reviewed the agenda which was modified to shift the sequence of presenters.

II. RWQCB Update on North Bay Efforts

Dyan Whyte, Assistant Executive Officer of the RWQCB, provided a PowerPoint entitled “North Bay Water Quality Update.” Dyan began with a summary of completed TMDLs in the North Bay and then described new TMDLs under development: China Camp and McNears Beach for pathogens with a scoping meeting to be held next month; and Petaluma River for nutrients (complex due to slough characteristics) with data collection/monitoring underway. She then highlighted positive stories: de-listings for Napa and Sonoma for nutrients and Muir Beach for pathogens (due to large scale restoration). Dyan then presented a summary of “Water Quality Solutions” including: Successful Grazing Regulatory Programs in Tomales Bay, Napa River, and Sonoma Creek Watersheds (80,000 acres enrolled); Vineyard Regulatory Programs in Napa River and Sonoma Creek Watersheds (25% of vineyards certified under 3rd party program) with a draft permit expected in early 2015; Confined Animal Facility Permit (updated permit coming to the Board in early 2015); Municipal Stormwater (inspections and audits of North Bay cities and counties underway); Road Related Erosion Control (numerous collaborative efforts underway across permits); Water Quality Certifications (audits underway for permits since 2007 on compliance with mitigation); Flood Control and Stream Maintenance Permits (exploring ways to maximize ecological benefits of flood control while facilitating maintenance and protecting public safety – replacing concrete channels with soft bottom); promoting the use of recycled water (Salt and Nutrient Management Plans will expedite recharge of recycled water); and Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems {OWTS} (working with local agencies as they develop management plans for their septic system permitting programs – Marin and Tomales Bay). Dyan ended with a summary of recent penalties imposed in the North Bay and the environmental projects funded with those penalties. The Watershed Council Members had several questions: Are you looking at fish passage while pushing alternatives to concrete replacement for flood control? (Yes, also steering funds to projects.) Could you have a program for roads similar to flood management maintenance permits? (Marin DPW working on permit that will include roads.) Is there a way to get monitoring tied to BMPs? (RWQCB funding monitoring by locals, requiring mostly visual monitoring for landowners.)

III. SFEI EcoAtlas

Tony Hale, SFEI, provided a flyer with a description of EcoAtlas as a tool created to: Visualize condition and extent of California’s aquatic resources.” Tony introduced Cristina Grosso, Program Manager for SFEI and then provided a timeline for the development of EcoAtlas. He noted the concept was first proposed in 1993 in connection with the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) and first funded by USACE in 1994 for establishing regional wetlands goals with additional local, state and federal funding for base maps. In 1998, the first online version was available which led to “Wetland Tracker” in 2000. In 2005, the SWRCB funded an update and a pilot for 401 permitting and in 2008, the EPA provided funding to expand geographic scope and in 2009, Aquatic Resource Inventory mapping. In 2010, federal funding supported development of a “Landscape Profile Tool” and in 2011, the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) was integrated into the system with state funding and a riparian area layer was developed for the San Francisco Bay. In 2012, the EPA funded a number of pilots to use tools in other regions of the state and the state funded an “on line” pilot for applications and tracking 401 certifications. In 2013, the EPA funded the consolidation of other databases into EcoAtlas and enhancements to the landscape profile tool. In 2014, funds were identified for a business plan for visualization and data sharing. Tony then asked Cristina to demonstrate the use of EcoAtlas and the landscape tool. Cristina showed the group how to select areas and illustrated the default layer – California Aquatic Resource Inventory (CARI). She also demonstrated how to save files and noted how reports can be printed and files shared. She provided an example of a new addition – eelgrass project summaries. The Watershed Council Members had a few questions: Can you request watershed boundaries? (Yes – predefined areas.) Can you see all projects? (If the project is a 401 permitted project.)

IV. North Bay TMDL Projects

* Leigh Sharp provided a PowerPoint overview of the Napa TMDL project and emphasized the major tasks. Leigh described the tangible results from road and stream improvements (including the removal of a fish barrier); technical assistance and workshops; and the Vineyard Waiver (withdrawn) work and the development of the LandSmart Program.

She also highlighted capacity building and the types of outreach efforts and the monitoring completed for streambed scour and permeability. Leigh ended with a summary of next steps and a thank you to all the partner agencies.

* Mark Newhouser provided a PowerPoint overview of the Sonoma Creek TMDL project and focused on monitoring and data analysis. He began by explaining a map illustrating sediment and BMI monitoring sites and a chart showing the history of monitoring on Sonoma Creek from 1996 to 2014. Mark then provided a chart showing the strong correlation of suspended sediment sampling and turbidity sampling (which is much cheaper and quicker) and noted that you would need to reestablish correlation every five years. Mark moved on to a Severity Index bar chart for salmonids showing the changes from 2002 -2014. He also presented the 2013 results for BMI sampling for tributaries and an EPT Index (most sensitive/least sensitive species) for the same tributaries. Mark then illustrated species richness (diversity) for different locations and ended with next steps.

* Kari Wester provided a PowerPoint and began with an overview of the Southern Sonoma County TMDL project scope. She then focused on the implementation project – vineyard stormwater enhancement – and presented a map. She presented the original conditions, i.e., 400’ gully and provided pictures. Kari then described the project elements: realign the creek and restore the natural gradient and floodplain function using the concepts in “Slow it, Spread it, Sink it.” Kari noted the earthwork was completed in July 2014 and that planting would take place this fall with demonstration site tours scheduled for the spring of 2015. She then identified the monitoring elements: erosion, floodplain, photo – and the schedule. Kari also highlighted efforts under the Conditional Vineyard Waiver and the partnerships existing for LandSmart. Kari ended by noting this project allowed the RCD to get additional 319 grant funding for LandSmart planning.

* Chris Choo provided a PowerPoint and focused on the Boyle Creek Restoration in Marin County. She reviewed the original project goals and then presented visuals of the creek segment before and after. She also described the outreach efforts and ended with a thank you to all the partners.

V. Wrap Up

Will hold another Watershed Council Meeting in January, 2015.

Possible topics:

- * Ecosystem Services
- * Sea Level Rise – OCOF

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Participants:

Betsy Bikle – Mill Valley Streamkeepers & Marin Conservation League

Chris Choo – Marin County Public Works Dept.

Cristina Grosso – SFEI/ASC

Tony Hale – SFEI

Melinda Kelley – Caltest Analytical Labs

Judy Kelly – San Francisco Estuary Partnership

Brant Miller – Novato Sanitary District

Jesse Mills – San Francisco Estuary Partnership

Mark Newhouser – Sonoma Ecology Center

Elizabeth Preim-Rohtla – NBWA Assistant

Harry Seraydarian – NBWA Executive Director

Leigh Sharp – Napa County Resource Conservation District

Susan Stompe – Marin Conservation League

Kari Wester – Sonoma RCD

Dyan Whyte – RWQCB