

Alameda County Watershed Forum Meeting Summary: December 2, 2008

The Alameda County Watershed Forum Meeting was held on the afternoon of December 2, 2008, at the Coastal Conservancy, with approximately 25 people attending.

Introductions and Announcements

The first item on the agenda was a “once-around” with brief introductions and announcements, which included the following:

- Kathren Stevenson from Friends of Sausal Creek announced major renovations at the Sausal Creek native plant nursery.
- Friends of the Arroyos has a grant to expand native gardens, working with Friends of Springtown Preserve.
- Susan Schwartz -- Friends of Five Creeks has a link on their website www.fivecreeks.org to a new Google mapping tool to show volunteers where they can find places to help with watershed restoration and stewardship. People are invited to visit the website and add their information.
- Jon Bauer’s master’s thesis on “faux” creeks on public and private lands is available on line at www.jonbauer.wordpress.com
- Sue Piper from Assemblywoman Jean Quan’s office announced that the Sausal Creek Watershed Alliance is underway and is working with local schools on stormdrain stenciling. They are proposing to have an environmental fair in the summer.

Retrofitting Urban Watersheds: Stormwater Management in San Francisco – Rosey Jencks, SF PUC

Rosey gave a dynamic presentation on San Francisco’s stormwater program and green building, starting with an overview of the area’s Mediterranean climate and the City’s combined sewer system (rainwater and sewage are treated). Urban growth has greatly diminished stormwater infiltration, and City staff are looking for ways to increase infiltration to decrease stormwater runoff and promote water storage. The east side of San Francisco has poor soils for infiltration, while the west side soils are sandy and good for infiltration. Project drivers include social, environmental, regulatory, and the challenge of dealing with aging infrastructure.

The City has a 30 year Sewer System Master Plan and has also passed a Green Building Ordinance that requires all new and redevelopment to capture and treat 90% of the average annual rainfall. They have developed Stormwater Design Guidelines and are working with the Regional Water Board on acceptable performance measures. The City has also developed its “Better Streets Plan”, with multiple agencies working together on pedestrian safety, stormwater management, traffic calming, and aesthetics – many public meetings have been held as well as planning charettes. One of the proposed measures is rainwater harvesting to decrease the flow of potable water to the combined sewers, recharge groundwater, and reduce flooding. The City has a number of demonstration projects, including Sunset Circle parking lot near Lake Merced and Ortega Library green roof. There will be a Low Impact Development workshop on January 22-23 (www.lidworkshop.eventbrite.com). For more information on the stormwater program you can go to the website at www.stormwater.sfwater.org.

Rooftop Resources Project: Rooftop Gardens, Renewable Energy, and Rainwater Catchment Systems – Ingrid Severson, Bay Localize

Ingrid also gave a great presentation on Bay Localize's green roof program. Bay Localize is a local non-profit based in Oakland, which focuses on the 9-county Bay Area and promotes local resilience and community liveability projects. They conducted a pilot Neighborhood Assessment of the potential for living roofs, rainwater roof gardens, and solar power in the Lake Merritt neighborhood of Oakland. The assessment included existing conditions, structural requirements for rooftop gardening, carrying capacity for building typologies, and GIS for calculating rooftop resource capacity, as well as surveying neighborhood characteristics and developing conceptual prototypes. They looked at prototypes for green roof intensive gardening, hydroponic gardening, and rainwater catchment and solar electric systems, using examples from Chicago and Vancouver, B.C.

Findings assigned specific numbers of buildings suitable for roof gardens and rainwater catchment and calculated the potential amount of water collected, food harvested, and solar power produced.

You may download the report (in PDF form) at the following address:

http://www.baylocalize.org/files/Tapping_the_Potential_Final.pdf

A supplemental retrofits analysis may also be downloaded at:

http://www.baylocalize.org/files/Structural_Report_Final.pdf

For more information on the green rooftop program and results of the survey as well as other programs, see the Bay Localize website at www.baylocalize.org.

Ingrid noted that the Proposition 84 Stormwater Grant Program (\$82 million statewide) could be used to fund green infrastructure projects that foster collaboration between local public agencies and non-profits.

Update on Proposal for Funding a Forum Coordinator

Since Sharon Gosselin was unable to make the meeting, Dale briefly summarized the status of this item. The Planning Committee is reviewing a possible request for proposals (RFP) to do some capacity building for the organization preliminary to funding a coordinator. The Committee will meet in January to discuss the RFP. Anyone interested in joining the committee, contact Dale.

Other Announcements

- The American Society of Civil Engineers will be meeting in the Bay Area in March 2010. ASCE is interested in doing on-the-ground LID projects.
- The Sustainable Sites Initiative is an interdisciplinary effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction, and maintenance projects, in order to align green building (LEED) standards, stormwater standards and others. Their Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks document is available online at www.sustainablesites.org, and public comments are being accepted until January 20, 2009.

Action Items:

- > Dale will post pdf versions of Rosey and Ingrid's presentations on the Yahoo User Group.
- > The Planning Committee will continue to meet on coordinator scope of work and funding.
- > Anyone who would like to join the Planning Committee should contact Dale at dhopkins@waterboards.ca.gov

The next Forum meeting will be held on **Tuesday March 3, 2008, from 2 to 4 pm.**, in the 11th Floor Conference Room at the State Coastal Conservancy in Oakland.