

STAFF REPORT
COUNCIL MEETING DATE
September 26, 2011

ITEM FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Briefing on the status of the City of Carpinteria's Creeks Preservation Program implementation.

Report prepared and presented by:

Nick Bobroff, Associate Planner


Signature

Report reviewed by:

Jackie Campbell, Community Development Director


Signature

Dave Durlinger, City Manager


Signature

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Action Item ; Non-Action Item

Recommendation:

- a. Receive presentation on City efforts to protect and restore City creek resources as part of the City's Creeks Preservation Program.
- b. Receive an update on the City's participation in the Santa Barbara Creek Week events held September 17-25.

I. BACKGROUND

In September 2005, the City adopted its Creeks Preservation Program (CPP) as an implementation program to the General Plan/Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP). The goal of the program is to guide the preservation and restoration of the four creeks

located within the City of Carpinteria: Carpinteria Creek, Franklin Creek, Lagunitas Creek and Santa Monica Creek.

The program contains a series of Objectives, Policies and Implementation Policies that are used to implement the Creeks Program and associated objectives and policies found in the General Plan/LCLUP. Examples of the Objectives, Policies and Implementation Policies include a requirement for the City to adopt a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP), implement and enforce special development standards/mitigation measures for new development in or near creek buffers, provide annual notification to property owners adjacent to creek buffer areas on special status of the creeks, promote/participate in environmental education/community outreach events, coordinate with other government entities/stakeholders who work within the creeks, conduct creek/environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA) surveys, and encourage/explore opportunities for future creek restoration projects.

The Program also requires that updates be annually provided to the City Council on the status of the Creeks Preservation Program and efforts to improve and protect City Creeks. The Council was last updated in February of 2010 on the City's efforts to implement the Creeks Preservation Program in conjunction with the presentation of a grant award from the Southern California Gas Company to South Coast Habitat Restoration for their efforts in removing barriers to Steelhead migration in Carpinteria Creek.

II. DISCUSSION

Since last year, City staff has continued to participate in efforts to protect and restore Carpinteria Creek. Some of these activities are normally recurring events that are undertaken on an annual or ongoing basis, while others are project-specific efforts, or projects that the City lends its support to as a member of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition. Below is a brief summary of projects and activities completed since the last annual update as well as a description of projects/events that are soon to be undertaken in Carpinteria creeks.

CDD staff continues to review development proposals for new construction/remodels adjacent to City creeks. Recent projects reviewed under the Creeks Program include the Carpinteria Valley Water District's Central Pressure Zone Pipeline Improvement project which included a new water pipeline passing under Franklin Creek and the Carpinteria Sanitary District's Carpinteria Bluffs Sewer Main Replacement Project which will run a new sewer main under Carpinteria Creek. Similarly, the City once again sent annual notification to property owners and occupants adjacent to City creeks notifying them of the creek's special status and additional restrictions that apply to development near creeks. In addition, both the City's Biological Consultant, Vince Semonsen, and City staff completed annual creek walks of the City's creeks to look for sources of illicit discharges, unpermitted development and other threats to the well being of the creeks

as well as to monitor the progress of various restoration sites and gauge overall creek health.

The City's Public Works Department continues implementing the City's Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) and developing the City's Hydromodification Guidelines in conjunction with the Regional Water Quality Control Board. As part of the second year of the SWMP implementation, City staff has initiated their Business Education Program to train business owners on illicit discharges, standard best management practices and water quality issues. The City has also held two public workshops providing an overview of the SWMP, continued with the development of informational brochures related to the various aspects of the SWMP, and recently begun work on developing the City's Illicit Discharge Program.

The City has also been involved in various outreach/educational efforts, including helping to host/organize creek cleanups four times a year in coordination with the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC), teaching watershed-based curriculum at the local elementary schools once a month as part of an after-school program, and once again hosting and participating in the Santa Barbara County Creek Week events. This year, the City's sponsored events included tours of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, an ocean-friendly garden workshop at City Hall, and habitat planting/restoration and trash pickup events. Additional details on the Creek Week events will be provided to the Council at the September 26th hearing. The City also participated in the 10-year anniversary celebration for the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition at Carpinteria State Beach.

The City continues to work closely with other agencies including Santa Barbara County Flood Control District and the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office to review and permit routine creek maintenance projects and noxious/invasive weed removal including the ongoing eradication of Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) from the Carpinteria Creek watershed. As a member of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition, the City has also had opportunities to interact with various stakeholders and aided in the planning and development of various creek restoration efforts throughout the watershed, some of which include the recent completion of a habitat restoration project at the Carpinteria Creek Mouth in Carpinteria State Beach Park, and a bank stabilization project on Carpinteria Creek, upstream of City limits.

Upcoming projects within the next couple of months include the removal of the remaining wooden piles in Carpinteria Creek from the Eighth Street Pedestrian Bridge Replacement project, a habitat restoration/homeless encampment clean-up project on Carpinteria Creek at the Carpinteria Avenue bridge, a modification to the Flood Control District's Lillingston Debris Basin on the upper reaches of Carpinteria Creek to allow for steelhead migration and the removal and replacement of another manmade obstruction to steelhead migration with a new free span bridge on Carpinteria Creek, upstream of City limits.

The City will continue to work towards protecting and preserving creek resources within the City and working collaboratively with other organizations and agencies in the Carpinteria Valley to implement a watershed-based approach to creek protection and restoration.

III. PRINCIPAL PARTIES EXPECTED AT MEETING

- Mauricio Gomez, Director of South Coast Habitat Restoration and Chair of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition
- Representatives of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition and the Carpinteria Creeks Committee
- Vince Semonsen, City Biological Consultant