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CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

TO: Office of the City Manager
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly
FROM: Public Works Agency
DATE: February 10, 2004

**RE: ANNUAL INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON THE CREEK PROGRAM
ELEMENTS OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND WATERSHED AND
WATERWAYS PROGRAM**

SUMMARY

This is an annual report on the creek component of the City of Oakland's Watershed and Waterways Program (Watershed Program). The Watershed and Waterways Program includes implementation of the Clean Water Program, Lake Merritt volunteer cleanup contract, oversight of the Creek Protection and Stormwater Discharge Control Ordinance (Creek Ordinance) and the creek program elements. This report addresses the creek program elements of the Watershed Program, including community outreach/volunteer programs, public property cleanup and creek restoration projects. The Clean Water Program, the Lake Merritt volunteer contract and the Creek Ordinance will be addressed in separate reports to City Council later this year.

The Watershed Program furthers the goals of the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR) of the General Plan, the Creek Ordinance, and Mayor and City Council goals of developing a Sustainable City, Improving Oakland's Neighborhoods, and Maintaining and Enhancing Oakland's Physical Assets. These goals are met by combating blight, litter, and illegal dumping, restoring and enhancing creeks, providing educational and recreational opportunities and improving water quality and habitat.

FISCAL IMPACT

Since this is informational only, no fiscal impacts are included.

BACKGROUND

The creek program elements of the Watershed Program include creek cleanup, community outreach, illegal dumping prevention, enforcement, and creek restoration projects. Creek program elements are funded by grants from the Coastal Conservancy, the State Water Resources Control Board, the Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Roberti-Z'berg - Harris Block Grant Program and through grants and a Memorandum of Agreement with Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 12. Funds from Measure DD, the 2002 Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks, will be used to fund and to leverage additional grant funds for future creek restoration and creekside property acquisition projects.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Community Outreach and Volunteer Programs

Creek Awareness and Education - Staff promoted creek awareness and stewardship by cosponsoring and coordinating the Healthy Landscapes for Clean Water Symposium, attended by about 200 people, and by providing informational tables at community events, including the Cinco de Mayo Festival, the Ninth Annual Earth Expo, the Art and Soul Festival and the Day of the Dead Festival. In Oakland schools, staff conducted in-class presentations, guided creek field trips, and followed up with activities including storm drain stenciling, and native plant propagation. Staff is also providing technical assistance to the Oakland Fire Department to encourage more ecologically sensitive vegetation management techniques in creek areas.

Creek Volunteer Programs - Volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours on creekside beautification projects in 2003. On Earth Day, PWA/ESD sponsored creek cleanups and other projects at nine creek sites and Lake Merritt. On Creek-to-Bay Day, PWA/ESD staff coordinated 1,000 volunteers at eight creek sites, Lake Merritt and one at the Oakland Estuary. Projects included litter and trash pickup, neighborhood beautification, planting, non-native plant removal, and storm drain stenciling. The Watershed Program continues to support the volunteer native plant propagation program, which grows native plants at the nursery in Joaquin Miller Park. The plants are used for creek projects throughout Oakland. Tools, plants, supplies, trash removal, and logistical and organizational support are provided to Friends organizations and volunteers at Sausal, Arroyo Viejo, San Leandro, Peralta and Temescal Creeks for beautification projects. The Adopt-a-Creek Program continues to provide guidance and support to neighborhood groups that regularly clean, plant, install projects and monitor water quality at sites along Glen Echo, Temescal, Courtland, Sausal and Peralta Creeks.

Creek Restoration Projects - This year the Watershed Program implemented creek restoration projects on Arroyo Viejo Creek at Arroyo Viejo Park and Peralta Creek in Cesar Chavez Park. Over the next two years staff will implement restoration projects at Oakland Zoo on Arroyo Viejo Creek and Lion Creek at Coliseum Gardens.

Peralta Creek at Cesar Chavez - The restoration project on Peralta Creek in Cesar Chavez Park included removal of a bypass culvert and reestablishing the creek with gently sloping natural banks, native plants, and landscaping features such as paths and overlooks. In addition to restoring ecological and hydrological balance, enhancing habitat, and improving water quality, this project increased park safety by creating visibility in a hidden area of the park and by replacing a high use dilapidated pedestrian bridge. The project makes the creek an attractive, safe, element of the park as well as a desirable location for educational opportunities. The project was completed with project partners, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Urban Creeks Council, and the Unity Council. Funding for the project was provided by the California Department of Water Resources and the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 12.

Arroyo Viejo Creek at Arroyo Viejo Park - The California Department of Parks and Recreation's Riparian and Riverine Habitat Program funded the Arroyo Viejo Creek Restoration Project, Phase II. Phase I of the project, implemented in 2001, included removal of failed cement structures, stabilization of creek banks, and restoration of native habitat. The project also included new pathways, landscaping, a new bridge and replacement of the existing concrete amphitheater with a new terraced seating area and stage. Phase II

included removal of a large concrete block in the streambed, additional bank stabilization, native habitat and strengthening of a sewer line that crosses the creek.

Arroyo Viejo Creek at Oakland Zoo - The Arroyo Viejo Creek restoration project site is located at the entrance to the Oakland Zoo at 9777 Golf Links Road in the hills of East Oakland. The restoration work will begin at the Park entry and continue east approximately 1,000 feet. The project will stabilize eroding creek banks, restore native vegetation, improve pathways, create five educational outdoor classroom sites, each focused on a specific aspect of creek ecology, and create new picnic areas for recreational use. The project is a collaboration between the City, the Oakland Zoo, and Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The project is funded by a grant from the Coastal Conservancy and matching funds from the Roberti-Z'berg-Harris Block Grant Program. The project will be implemented during 2004 – 2005.

Lion Creek at Coliseum Gardens – The Lion Creek Restoration Project at Coliseum Gardens will restore an approximately 1,000-foot stretch of creek by removing it from a concrete channel and recreating a natural creek bed. The project will restore the creek meander, create a flood plain, and replant the area with native vegetation. At the downstream end of the creek, a tidal wetland area will be created to provide marsh habitat and improved flood control. The project will also create a pathway along the creek and will include landscaping to allow access to the creek for use by local residents and park visitors. The creek restoration project will be taking place simultaneously with a park and housing redevelopment project. The project will be funded through Alameda County Flood Control, mitigation funds from UP Railroad and grant funds. The project is scheduled to be implemented from 2004 – 2006.

The Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks, (Measure DD) – Measure DD allocated \$5.5 million for Creek Restoration and \$4.5 Million for Creek Acquisition to be implemented by the Watershed Program. The Watershed Program is currently developing a public outreach plan and a work plan for implementation of these components of the Measure DD program. Updates on implementation will be provided as part of the regular Measure DD program updates to City Council.

Creekside Dumping Prevention and Cleanup – During 2003 five illegal dumping prevention measures were installed, including berms, installation of vegetation and signage. The Watershed Program installed 46 garbage and recycling receptacles, made from recycled plastic, in creek and lakeside parks around the City. PWA/ESD staff gained compliance from 12 private property owners who removed debris from their creekside properties or repaired erosion of the creek banks on their property. Additionally, 462 cubic yards of trash and debris was removed from public property creek sites.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

Beautification (cleanup and restoration) of creeks, riparian habitat and improvement of water quality improve infrastructure and increase land value in Oakland. The Creek Improvement Program brings State and Federal funds into the City to help meet the goals of OSCAR, and the Mayor and City Council goals of Developing a Sustainable City, Improving Oakland's Neighborhoods, and Maintaining and Enhancing Oakland's Physical Assets.

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Environmental:

The environmental benefits of the Watershed Program include improvement of water quality and riparian habitat; reduction of litter, erosion and other pollutants; and quality of life enhancement for the residents of Oakland.

Social Equity:

Enhancement and cleanup of the neighborhood creeks improves the quality of life for Oakland residents. They also increase safety and access to public open spaces.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

Any capital improvements implemented under the Watershed Program will comply with State and Federal disability regulations.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

This is an informational report and requires no action from the City Council.

Respectfully submitted,



CLAUDETTE R. FORD

Director, Public Works Agency

Reviewed by:

Raul Godinez II, P.E.

Assistant Director, Public Works Agency

Design & Construction Services

Prepared by:

Lesley Estes

Watershed Program Supervisor

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO
THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE:


OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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