

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ZONE 1/1A ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 19th, 2023

Meeting materials can be viewed at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Zone1-1A>

Members Attending:

Gary Kobara (Chair)
Charlie Lackie
Dianna Lackie
Linda Austin
Victoria Cardoza
Jeremy Ghent
Greg Cobb

Staff and Guests Attending:

Alejandra Celio, Public Works
Brandon Zuniga, Public Works
Angela Ford, Public Works
Courtney Howard, Public Works
Karen White, Community Member
John Taylor, Community Member
Penny Oakes, Community Member
Diane Wilcock, Community Member
Michael Ostrovsky, Community Member
Tim Crawford, Community Member
George Prats, Community Member
John Taylor, Community Member

1. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions begin at 3:00 p.m. and a quorum is established.

2. Announcements

None

3. Review and Approval of Past Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, June 20, 2023

Jeremy Ghent: States he was at the last meeting and his attendance was not noted.
County Staff: Confirmed correction will be made to the minutes.

Motion to approve: Linda Austin
Seconded by: Charlie Lackie
Approved by: Approved by all present Members

4. Ongoing Updates

a) Storm Response Efforts

County staff provide a verbal update on storm response efforts.

Victoria Cardoza: Is the County planning on removing the crossbars from the creek, if not, why not use an alternative as the crossbars cause the flooding issue?

County Staff: The permit requires the crossbars not be removed and their purpose is to catch sediment for removal. No current analysis is planned for researching alternatives to crossbars.

Victoria Cardoza: Is the County planning annual sediment removal and will there be a need for the County to get permits for the work.

County Staff: Annual sediment removal is part of the maintenance plan and how much to be removed is measured by annual surveys. The County has the permits to conduct the work but there are certain restrictions in terms of how much of the area can be worked on each year to reduce area disturbance.

George Prats: Has the County considered changing the benchmark for when they do the sediment removal in certain areas?

County Staff: The change to those benchmarks is determined by the consultants and modeling team.

Victoria Cardoza: Are these the same consultants that predicted the creek would not flood?

County Staff: Cannon and Waterways Consulting were the primary consultants that helped work on the Waterway Management Program.

Victoria Cardoza: Will staff take into consideration what didn't work and try to come up with something different?

County Staff: There are other efforts being pursued on how to better protect Zone 1/1A beyond the channel design capacity.

Pennie Oakes: Jimmy Paulding spoke about the AG Creek Levee sedimentation removal recently. Will sediment be removed from the whole levee or just in specific areas where the crossbars are located?

County Staff: There are 22 different areas with crossbars installed per the Waterway Management Program that are designed as sediment management zones. Those zones are areas the County focuses on excavation and sediment removal to keep sedimentation from dropping into other areas.

George Prats: The 12,000 cubic yards (of sediment), what formulated that number? Is that the maximum you are allowed by the state?

County Staff: 12,000 cubic yards came from aerial surveys that took place in 2020 after the completion of the Waterway Management Program and compared those numbers to aerial surveys that took place this year to determine the difference in sediment and elevation.

John Taylor: How many yards will a 10-wheeler haul?

County Staff: Roughly 10 cubic yards.

Greg Cobb: Do you have a map of where these sediment zones are located?

County Staff: Yes, our webpage has a Waterway Management Program link that provides the sediment zoning map.

Greg Cobb: Can you talk a little bit more about the hydraulic barrier walls in Phase 2?

County Staff: A summary of Phase 2 work and the hydraulic barrier wall is verbally provided.

Charlie Lackie: When you rebuilt the levee on my property, there was a discussion about putting a cutoff wall there.

County Staff: Right now, it would be difficult to construct a cutoff wall on your property due to the large boulders in that area used to reconstruct areas of the levee, but it may potentially be included as part of a separate improvement project. The cutoff walls currently being installed are to fix the areas that are damaged and are potentially at risk for future erosion.

Charlie Lackie: Will some of the sandbars be removed down near the "trestle"?

County Staff: We are currently trying to work with Union Pacific Railroad for right of way access to remove the sediment that goes under the railroad bridge. Talks are still ongoing.

Victoria Cardoza: Where are you going to put the rodent barriers at?

County Staff: Locations are still being determined.

George Prats: Regarding risks to the north side, how are you assessing those risks? Is it based on the condition of the property on the north side or the levee itself?

County Staff: It's a conditional assessment at the moment. The consultant made bore holes in 4 different areas and based on their analysis the factor of safety was lower for those north levee sections than the south levee section.

Committee members and staff discuss risk comparisons between north and south levee sides, concerns about specific areas, rodent control issues and what mitigation efforts can be done.

Diane Wilcock: Is there an online source or something that can be provided that will provide an easier explanation on the work taking place?

County Staff: We can send additional information through the Committee's mailing list and will be updating the public website. Please reach out to staff if you need help accessing additional information.

George Prats: Can you talk a little about raising the levee elevation as well as taking out the sediment for the current project?

County Staff: The south side is a foot lower in elevation, but there is no plan to change the elevation right now. To do so, the bridges for Union Pacific, 22nd Street, and HWY 1 would also have to be elevated to achieve those flood protection goals.

Committee members and staff discuss the levee elevation and other potential flood protection measures.

Karen White: Have you considered a process for getting an emergency permit to clean out areas of the levee as soon as it starts raining?

County Staff: Considerations are being evaluated for emergency permitting work.

Committee members discuss the effects and impacts of the crossbar installations in the creek.

Greg Cobb: Has anyone addressed the train trestle bridge supports not being parallel to the flow of the creek and how it impacts water direction?

County Staff: It is unclear if anyone reached out to the County when those were installed. These are questions we can look into.

b) Annual Workplan Efforts

County staff provide a verbal update on emergency response planning efforts.

Karen White: appreciates the ongoing maintenance efforts removal of debris near the bridge and along other areas.

c) Emergency Response Plan

County staff provide a verbal update on emergency response planning efforts.

George Prats: Have you updated the 22nd Street Bridge trigger? Last time we didn't get an evacuation warning, it went straight to a notice and the levee had already breached by that time.

County Staff: Response triggers will be set lower to provide more time to notify residents to prepare for a potential evacuation.

Diane Wilcock: There is a lot of preparation for storms currently, what are the predictions for storms in 2024?

County Staff: While it can be unclear to predict with El Nino, we will be actively tracking the duration, intensity and behavior of storm systems and the levels at Lopez Lake.

Gary Kobara: Are there any further updates on lowering the storage capacity at Lopez?

County Staff: There are no new updates. The interim downstream release schedule will continue for the time being.

Committee Members and staff discuss Lopez Lake management, funding for drinking water, capacity, and restrictions relating to the release of water for flood control purposes.

Karen White: comments that flood maps/zones need to have better identification markers, as some notations were not clear or incorrect.

Greg Cobb: Reiterates the importance of updating the response plan triggers for notifying the residents in affected areas of warning or evacuation orders; adding that a 3-level trigger system may be beneficial.

Karen White: Do fire departments use the 3-level trigger notification system? Maybe that is something that can be implemented?

County Staff: We can look into that.

d) Meadow Creek Lagoon Habitat Conservation Project

County staff provide a verbal update on the Meadow Creek Lagoon Habitat Conservation Project.

Karen White: Did last winter's floods impact change any of the actions planned for Meadow Creek?

County Staff: Possibly. However, any actions will need to be evaluated to ensure that the actions do not increase flood risk. Water quality monitoring has been conducted for AG Creek and Meadow Creek to see if one of the alternatives is worth pursuing for the upper Meadow Creek area and potentially connecting it to the lower Meadow Creek area.

Greg Cobb: In talking about restoration, is the historical role that Meadow Creek played in steelhead habitat?

County Staff: Staff are looking at what Meadow Creek is currently doing now due to the development increase and water quality in the area, but the suggestion of looking at the historical role will be relayed to project staff for consideration.

Greg Cobb: Is there a map of Meadow Creek and how far up the 8 acres go?

County Staff: There is a map and over time it has changed as we have seen some constraints with that area. Due to the constraints, we are expanding on the possibility of implementing alternative measures in different areas.

Greg Cobb: Can we expect updates on this project in the next few meetings?

County Staff: This will be an ongoing update for the Committee.

e) Other Flood Protection Planning Efforts

County staff provide a verbal update on other flood protection planning efforts.

Karen White: Who is in charge of Corbett Canyon Creek and other (inaudible) creeks in Arroyo Grande?

County Staff: Mainly private landowners. The Coastal San Luis RCD has received grant funds and are working with private landowners on ways to organize long term maintenance strategies and other projects. There are other active projects being coordinated between the City of Arroyo Grande, the RCD, and the County.

George Prats: Have you considering leasing private land and building a secondary channel that wouldn't be under the steelhead regulations?

County Staff: This is one of the alternatives that we plan on evaluating.

Charlie Lackie: Can the 10-foot buffer be negotiated to 15-feet?

County Staff: There is a potential for this to be renegotiated.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Open Forum

Jeremy Ghent: Have there been discussions about raising Lopez Lake storage by a few feet or installing gates for flood control?

County Staff: This has been evaluated as a way of increasing supply, not for flood control purposes.

6. Adjourn

Motion to approve: Vickie Cardoza

Seconded by: Jeremy Ghent

Approved by: Approved by all present Members

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 PM