



PERALTA CREEK / BUTTERS CANYON

14 NOVEMBER 2006

City of Oakland Public Works Agency / Environmental Services Division

Meeting Notes / Erik Stromberg / Restoration Design Group, LLC—Compiled 30 November 2006

- MEETING NO. 3:** JOAQUIN MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
3594 SANBORN DRIVE, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94602 7:00 PM
- ATTENDING:** MARKLEY BAVINGER / CITY OF OAKLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES,
BOB BIRKELAND, ERIK STROMBERG / RDG
BUTTERS LAND TRUST MEMBERS
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- CC/EMAIL:** MARKLEY BAVINGER (FOR FILE & DISTRIBUTION TO BLT MEMBERS),
MICHAEL THILGEN
- NOTES:** MEETING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DISCUSS RESTORATION
ACTIVITIES FOR BUTTERS CANYON
- NEXT MEETINGS:** RESTORATION PLAN REVIEW MEETING – COMMUNITY MEETING FOR
CANYON LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN will be JAN/FEB

MEETING INTRODUCTION

David Barron opened the meeting with an explanation of the Butters Land Trust (BLT) and an introduction of the BLT board members in attendance. He briefly reviewed BLT's work to preserve land within Butters Canyon and the background that led to the City of Oakland and the Restoration Design Group (RDG) working with the land trust and the community to provide a restoration plan and long-term management plan of the canyon. He finished by stating the goals for the restoration of Butters Canyon:

- Reduce invasive and non-native vegetation
- Increase native vegetation and biodiversity
- Protect the water quality of Peralta Creek
- Address fire safety/abatement requirements in Butters Canyon
- Promote stewardship and community support
- Increase awareness of the watershed ecosystem (plants, insects, animals, birds, and humans)

Markley Bavinger introduced the project scope of work. She noted RDG will be completing three project tasks.

Task 1 / Site Inventory and Mapping—A site reconnaissance by the consultant team to determine the general site conditions and features particularly related to restoration and plant communities.

Task 2 / Planting/Restoration Plan—A document detailing work that will be used to guide the initial restoration effort for Butters Canyon.

Task 3 / Long-term Management Plan—Plan in report format that guides, through illustrations and text, the on-going restoration and management efforts by volunteers. Document is intended to be user friendly, and site specific.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

Bob Birkeland, RDG began the project presentation by introducing the objectives for the evening's meeting.

- *Increase exposure and community understanding of the Butters Land Trust*
- *Inform the community of the breadth of the proposed work*
- *Present an assessment of the existing conditions in Butters Canyon*
- *Elicit the community's vision and restoration priorities for Butters Canyon*

- *Gauge community interest and volunteer effort for Butters Canyon restoration*

SITE INVENTORY

Erik Stromberg, RDG described the special character of Butters Canyon, including the bay forest, Peralta creek, oak woodland and coastal scrub areas. He then presented RDG's site inventory, which highlighted the site's plant community and species diversity and other features that will help inform the restoration and long-term management plans. Special features were noted on the plan, including: non-native and invasive tree and understory species, and the dominant understory plantings along Butters Drive.

The site inventory presentation was concluded with a talk about the dynamic nature of landscapes such as Butters Canyon. The changing nature of the Butters Canyon was illustrated by discussing the conditions of the site 50 years prior to today and 50 years in the future. 50 years ago the site contained fewer invasive plants, more native shrub diversity, less dominant bay canopy, more oaks, and likely little scrub habitat. Projecting the site conditions 50 years into the future, assuming no volunteer effort, would likely reveal a site with very few native shrubs, complete dominance of ivy and broom, coastal scrub being overtaken by oak woodland and the increase of bay canopy.

RESTORATION GOALS and PROPOSED RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Bob Birkeland followed the site inventory presentation with a reiteration of the Restoration Plan Goals.

Bob prefaced the Restoration Activities discussion with a clarification that the activities are presented as a tool to document community priorities; they are not a definitive list, but an exploration of potential restoration activities.

Bob gave an overview of the 18 Restoration Activities and explained that each meeting participant would be given five sticker dots to place next to the Restoration Activities they were most interested in. Three copies of the Restoration Activities Plan (attached to the meeting notes) were on display. Participants were to place their dots on any of the three identical posters. The results of the voting are attached to the meeting notes.

During the walk around, RDG was available to answer questions and clarify the proposed Restoration Activities, and the voting process.

QUESTIONS / WALK AROUND / VOTING

The following questions were either asked in front of the group after the presentation, or during the walk around.

- What is coir fabric? Coir fabric is 100% coconut fiber and is used to provide stability to bare soil after extensive weeding. RDG has had great success spreading seed by hand prior to laying out coir fabric. The fabric acts similar to a light mulch layer and improves germination of the seed.
- What would replace acacia if they were to be removed? The oak woodland would be enhanced in that area by planting additional Coast Live Oak trees.
- How should we consider the cost of items when we vote? The costs are provided to inform the community of the magnitude of the costs to perform the activity. Cost and effort to maintain should remain in the back of one's mind during voting.
- Where is the money coming from? How much money does the City have? How much money does the land trust have? The City cannot guarantee any funding for construction at this time. The land trust may be able to raise funds and apply for additional grants but little money is currently available.
- What about thinning bays for oak protection? Thinning bays and selective pruning of bay tree branches can improve the viability of young oaks and native plantings by

increasing light through the bay canopy and reducing the threat of bay tree branches falling and crushing the young oaks. Thinning bay branches can also improve fire abatement.

- Which activities does RDG recommend? RDG responded by stating that all 18 activities are recommended. The priority of activities is more complicated, and should reflect the amount of volunteer effort available and the desires of the volunteers. RDG recommends a handful of activities to avoid volunteer burn-out and to concentrate intensive weeding effort to one location and increase the extent of the weeding as the restoration progresses. RDG noted that their specific restoration expertise will enter the prioritization process to ensure that their professional review and input is reflected in the Restoration Plan and Long-term Management Plan.

CONCLUSION

Richard Cowan of Councilmember Jean Quan's office shared his greetings and good wishes. Bob explained the next steps, which include compiling the feedback received from this meeting and beginning to refine activities to be included in the Restoration Plan. RDG will use the matrix of activities (included with the meeting notes) to guide the restoration strategy for Butters Canyon. The restoration strategies will be incorporated into the Restoration Plan / Long-term Management Plan and will be presented in a public meeting in January or February in draft form for community feedback.

David Barron concluded the meeting with a thank you to participants.

These Meeting Notes represent RDG's understanding of project discussions, directions, and agreements. If information included in these notes is incorrect or requires clarification please notify RDG within 7 days and a revised set of Meeting Notes will be distributed.