

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ZONE 9 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Meeting materials and video recordings can be viewed at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Zone9>

Members Attending:

Wayne Peterson, County At-Large (Chair)
Christine Mulholland, City At-Large
Michelle Shoresman, City Council
Brian Nelson, City Staff (Vice-Chair)
Jonathan Hall, County At-Large #1 (Alternate)

Non-Voting Members and Guests Attending:

Emily Francis, City Council (Alternate)
Shelsie Moore, City Staff (Alternate)
Freddy Otte, City of San Luis Obispo (Staff)
Brendan Clark, County of San Luis Obispo (Secretary)
May Thiri Kyaw, County of San Luis Obispo (Staff)
Lucia Pohlman, City of San Luis Obispo
Hal Hannula, City of San Luis Obispo
Bob Hill, City of San Luis Obispo
Troy Barnhart, County of San Luis Obispo
Joey Steil, County of San Luis Obispo
Reece Jansen, Son Care Foundation
Kathy Borland, Resident
Kim Sticker, Resident

1. Introductions and roll call

Chair calls the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and a quorum is established. Introduction of attendees.

2. Approval of October 12, 2022 meeting minutes

Item start time ~ [00:02:00](#)

W. Peterson introduces the item.

C. Mulholland comments on a typo in section 8.b of the draft minutes; the year of flooding at the intersection near the Prefumo Creek area occurred in 1995, not 1955. B. Clark confirms.

Motion by: Christine Mulholland

Second by: Brian Nelson

The Committee approves the October 12, 2022 meeting minutes, as amended (5-0-0)

3. Receive Presentation from County and City Staff on the Vegetative Maintenance Program

Item start time ~ [00:03:40](#)

W. Peterson introduces the item and B. Clark, M. Kyaw, and F. Otte present on the Vegetative Maintenance Program and the recent work performed in the East Fork area.

W. Peterson comments on property owners performing upstream maintenance activities which caused excess debris and bridge blockages during the last storm, and the need to educate property owners on what they can and cannot do. Asks if property owners can reach out to staff for guidance on creek maintenance activities. F. Otte responds.

C. Mulholland comments on the great work that the California Conservation Corps performs throughout the county.

K. Sticker comments on how the creek maintenance activities performed by City and County staff, along with private vegetative management from goats, helped to prevent catastrophic flooding and loss, adding that this was the first year that she had a bridge washout on her property. Asks if annual creek maintenance activities will continue. F. Otte responds.

K. Borland comments on new developments being constructed throughout the City of SLO, how hardscapes can contribute to increased levels of runoff due to decreased ground percolation, and if the removal of debris from the waterways may contribute to excess creek flow downstream.

C. Mulholland comments that she has kept rain records from her backyard since 1987 and that there was more rain in 1995 with less hardscape during that period. Agrees that more hardscapes contribute to less percolation and that the local narrow creeks simply cannot handle the amount of water from historic storms with massive rainfall, making flooding inevitable. F. Otte responds.

W. Peterson comments on past City requirements for people living in flood plains to have protection devices installed on their buildings to protect against flooding, the need for property owners to have a plan on what to do when it rains, the limited creek capacity, utilizing flood plains for productive use, and the need to evaluate and build projects with controls to minimize damage caused by floods.

B. Nelson comments on property access, rights of entry, debris removal and how blockages can significantly decrease culvert capacity. F. Otte responds.

W. Peterson comments that in development, every developer is required to absorb and delay the increased peak flows coming off of the property, prolonging the duration of flow in creeks which can lead to increased erosion.

4. Open Discussion Regarding Recent Storms and Flooding

Item start time ~ [00:31:19](#)

W. Peterson introduces the item and T. Barnhart begins with a hydrologic brief and presentation on the January 9-10, 2023 storm event.

K. Borland asks why the Gas Company rain gauge is so low when compared to the others in

the City. T. Barnhart responds.

W. Peterson comments that his tipping bucket gauge consistently reads more than the Gas Company gauge.

C. Mulholland comments that readings from her gauge often read higher than those at Cal Poly and the airport, which may be due to local topography and microclimates.

W. Peterson comments on the flooding at Laguna Lake during the January 2023 storm and how it was similar to the 1995 storm, adding that backflow from storm drains that feed the lake are responsible for flooding properties around the lake, rather than direct flooding caused by the lake; asks if installing gates could be an effective flood prevention measure.

B. Nelson comments on downstream debris cleanup to help water flow and prevent backflow.

C. Mulholland comments on the flooding caused by the 1995 storm in the Oceanaire area, how the backflow goes right up to the garages of homes, across the sidewalks, and up to four feet deep in certain areas. W. Peterson responds.

B. Clark presents on various flooding locations within Zone 9.

W. Peterson asks if someone can approach PG&E to see if it would be possible to move the Marsh Street stream gauge to their bridge. F. Otte responds.

The Committee discusses the direction of flow across the bridge of Buckley Road and Vachell lane, speculating if the cause is on East Fork side or the Avila Ranch side, the effects of changing elevation and how it slows the water flow.

W. Peterson comments on two significant dips on Buckley Road that are flooding and holding standing water and asks what the City can do to fix the road.

R. Jansen comments on a large amount of earth that has been raised up and is causing flood conditions and road problems to occur, concerns with how this is impacting drainage into the creek, how debris accumulated and their bridge was underwater for the first time during the last storm, and encourages the Committee to investigate the effects of the raised dirt in the area being developed. F. Otte responds.

K. Borland comments on neighborhood discussions relating to flood events that occurred for the first time this year and what caused these issues, one example being levy issues near the Drakes farm property near the corner of Hoover; also comments on concerns surrounding a large amount of dirt dumped by heavy trucks and stockpiled near two driveways, one on Jespersen and the other further east. W. Peterson, C. Mulholland, B. Clark, H. Hannula respond.

W. Peterson asks if the Avila Ranch developer will do any repairs on Buckley Road and comments on the ponding of water which is a safety concern that needs to be addressed. B. Hill and T. Barnhart respond.

K. Borland comments on the increased traffic on Buckley Road and the work being performed by the Preserve the SLO Life community organization. T. Barnhart responds.

C. Mulholland comments that the water was almost up to the same point in her backyard as the 1995 flood, high enough for fence lines to disappear and residents to kayak across neighboring properties.

K. Sticker comments on a on a Righetti Ranch levy that was reinforced with rocks over concerns that it might break and flood homes. B. Nelson responds.

J. Hall comments on the impacts of flooding in apple orchards and surrounding properties and the expansion of creek clearing activities near Monte Road. B. Clark responds.

5. **Ongoing Updates**

Item start time ~ [01:13:33](#)

a. Mid-Higuera Bypass Project

S. Moore comments that a letter was received from the Department of Fish and Wildlife indicating progress on getting a final permit; working on a final agreement with the Department of Water Resources to receive six million dollars in grant funds; the City is working with the County on a budget for the upcoming year to fund the rest of the project; anticipates receiving final plans by the end of year and starting construction 2024; still working on getting easements with property owners and getting the final grading design approved.

C Mulholland asks about the estimated total cost of the project. S. Moore, B. Nelson, and B. Clark respond.

b. Creek Maintenance

F. Otte comments that there are five contractors working in SLO Creek from Prado to LOVR to remove accumulated debris and restore the floodplains; several storm related projects are currently being evaluated, including a shotcrete project for the area around San Luis Drive to help prevent erosion along a vertical wall, concrete grid control repair upstream of the Froom Ranch Way bridge, and others near Elks Lane and Mission Plaza.

c. Arundo Removal

J. Hall comments that treatments were completed in October in the See Canyon area and hopes to treat the big population at Los Osos Valley Road this year.

C. Mulholland asks when arundo removal activities typically start. J. Hall responds.

d. East Fork Limited Study

B. Clark states that County staff provided comments to the consultant and expects a final draft soon.

e. Avila Drainage Study

B. Clark comments that the County is in the process of hiring a consultant to evaluate solutions to address flooding at the intersection of San Francisco and first Street; the Committee will be receiving ongoing updates as the project moves forward.

6. Public comment

None

7. Future agenda items

None

W. Peterson comments that the Committee may request future items by contacting himself or Committee Secretary, B. Clark.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:55 PM