

P E T A L U M A T O M O R R O W

Issue Number 1 • 2001

Phone: (707) 782-1038 • Fax: (707) 658-1882

PETALUMA WASTEWATER Wastewater and Wetland Options in Petaluma

From the Editor

One of the key tenants of Petaluma Tomorrow is to work for sustainable development and responsible watershed management. In our first newsletter we have the opportunity to discuss both topics and how they interconnect as one community issue. Petaluma is currently in the process of reviewing designs for a new wastewater treatment facility. The current plant was built in stages starting in (1937, 1953 and again in 1966). Because of the age of the existing facility the City must build a new and improved treatment plant to keep up with today's State and Federal regulations. For the past ten years the City has been working on the best alternative designs for the Cities long-term wastewater needs. Petaluma Tomorrow supports the alternative, which includes the doubling of Schollenberger Park with wetlands for wastewater storage, public trails, and habitat restoration. Patricia Johanson a world-renowned environmental artist is the designer of this portion of the project. Her designs always consider and incorporate the history of a community. Petaluma was once known as "The Egg Basket of the World" this is why the design of the wetland and trail system is contoured as a Chicken. This plant would not only put Petaluma on the map because Ms. Johanson's stature in the art community; but is functional in nature and includes public trails, educational opportunities and added tourism.

A pond/marsh system will be more effective in removing heavy metals than the conventional, mechanical method.

By Sylvan Eidelman, with Bob Dyer

The city of Petaluma has been wrestling with the design of a new wastewater facility for several years. A design for a conventional initial treatment plant has been completed. Now the city has two options for the final treatment, or polishing, of the plant effluent for the removal of algae: either a mechanical DAF (Diffused Air Filtration) system or a system of ponds and created marshes. Although both are effective in the removal of algae, a necessary step before water recycling, the marsh system also effectively removes heavy metals-an important plus.

The site proposed for the pond/ marsh system is now owned by Petaluma Poultry Processors. The land is contiguous with Shollenberger Park and the existing Petaluma wastewater treatment plant. Part of this land was diked baylands on the Petaluma River. The levy was breached by the high waters of El Niño, and is now being reclaimed by nature as a tidal wetland. Janice Cader-Thompson, Petaluma City Councilwoman and stalwart supporter of the pond and marsh option, hopes that Petaluma Poultry Processors would donate the land needed for the ponds, possibly in exchange for an adjustment in the urban growth boundary. That would allow them to expand operations onto a few acres of the property.

Internationally renowned architect Patricia Johanson has been hired as a consultant to design the freshwater pond/marsh treatment. She has designed stunningly beautiful and educational public works projects in Asia, South America, and the United States. In our area, she created a remarkable project for the wastewater storage and pumping facility at Candlestick Point, south of San Francisco. Standing on this nearly half-mile sculpture of a San Francisco garter snake, one would never guess that it has a functional purpose. The sculpture passes alongside tide pools to the earthen head of the snake, which is a successfully designed habitat for a rare and endangered butterfly.

continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

What is Petaluma Tomorrow?	2
Membership	2
Common Bonds	3
Membership Form	4

What is Petaluma Tomorrow?

Petaluma Tomorrow is a group of politically active individuals who care about the quality of life for all Petaluma area citizens and insist that local government act in the public's best interest.

The mission of Petaluma Tomorrow is to work for open government, responsible development and sustainable watershed management and to support candidates who best represent these ideals and are responsive to the community. Our activities include citizen advocacy, raising public awareness, neighborhood organizing and campaigning.

Petaluma Tomorrow is working to improve the direction of politics in our city. We are working to create positive alternatives to irresponsible development, detrimental environmental practices, and the influence of special interest groups. This will protect our quality of life for future generations.

To accomplish this, we need the help of an informed public that has a greater understanding of candidates, office holders and issues that confront our city. Therefore, educating our community is one of the primary goals of Petaluma Tomorrow. We recognize that it is important for the public to be kept informed of issues and how our elected officials address them, not only at election time, but year around. Our goal is to provide this information in a clear and timely manner. We use print and broadcast media, direct mail and neighborhood meetings to provide a broader understanding of how our community is being affected by the decisions of our elected officials. These activities, along with our newsletter, are meant to encourage and enable the public to take a more active role. Petaluma Tomorrow is a resource for information and advice as well as a forum for people to engage more easily in the political arena.

Another area we focus on is active participation in the public meetings of local agencies such as the Petaluma City Council, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Sonoma County Water Agency. We monitor the actions and agendas of these agencies and advocate strongly for the public's interest when items of importance to our members come before them. We have been successful in restoring Petaluma's General Plan process, reducing gravel mining in the Russian River and reforming Petaluma's campaign finance practices. Our visibility and participation in city and county meetings, as well as our public relations activities, create an atmosphere in which we are taken seriously by, and can work effectively with local officials.

We are working today for a better tomorrow. We welcome all people interested in improving the quality of life in our community and invite you to help us work for an open government, responsible development and sustainable watershed management. Please turn to the back page of this newsletter and join today!

Charter Members

Individual Members

Geoff Cartwright
Hank Flum
Pete Gang
Melissa Hathaway
Bill Kortum
Larry Modell
Clara Nelson
Sallie Noble
Andrew Packard
Dennis Teutschel
Patty Zimmerman

Family Members

Janice Cader-Thompson
Janie Castles & Barry Bussewitz
Hedda & Stan Gold
Carol Keating & Mike "Zoomer" Zenone
Jeanette Loew

Silver Members

Sheri Cardo
Mary Glardon
Paul Eric Johnson
Tom Vagird
Scott Vouri
Elaine Woodriff

Gold Members

Wayne Morganthaler & Connie Madden
Ettamarie & Ray Peterson
Anita Varricke & Bill Phillips

Petaluma Tomorrow Mission Statement

The mission of Petaluma Tomorrow is to work for open government, responsible development and sustainable watershed management, and to support candidates who best represent these ideals and are responsive to the community.

Stated Purpose:

Public Advocacy, voter, education and candidate endorsement and support.

Stated Platform:

Open government, sustainable development and responsible watershed management.

Contact Petaluma Tomorrow:

1557 Mauro Pietro Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954
Phone: (707) 782-1038 • Fax: (707) 658-1882

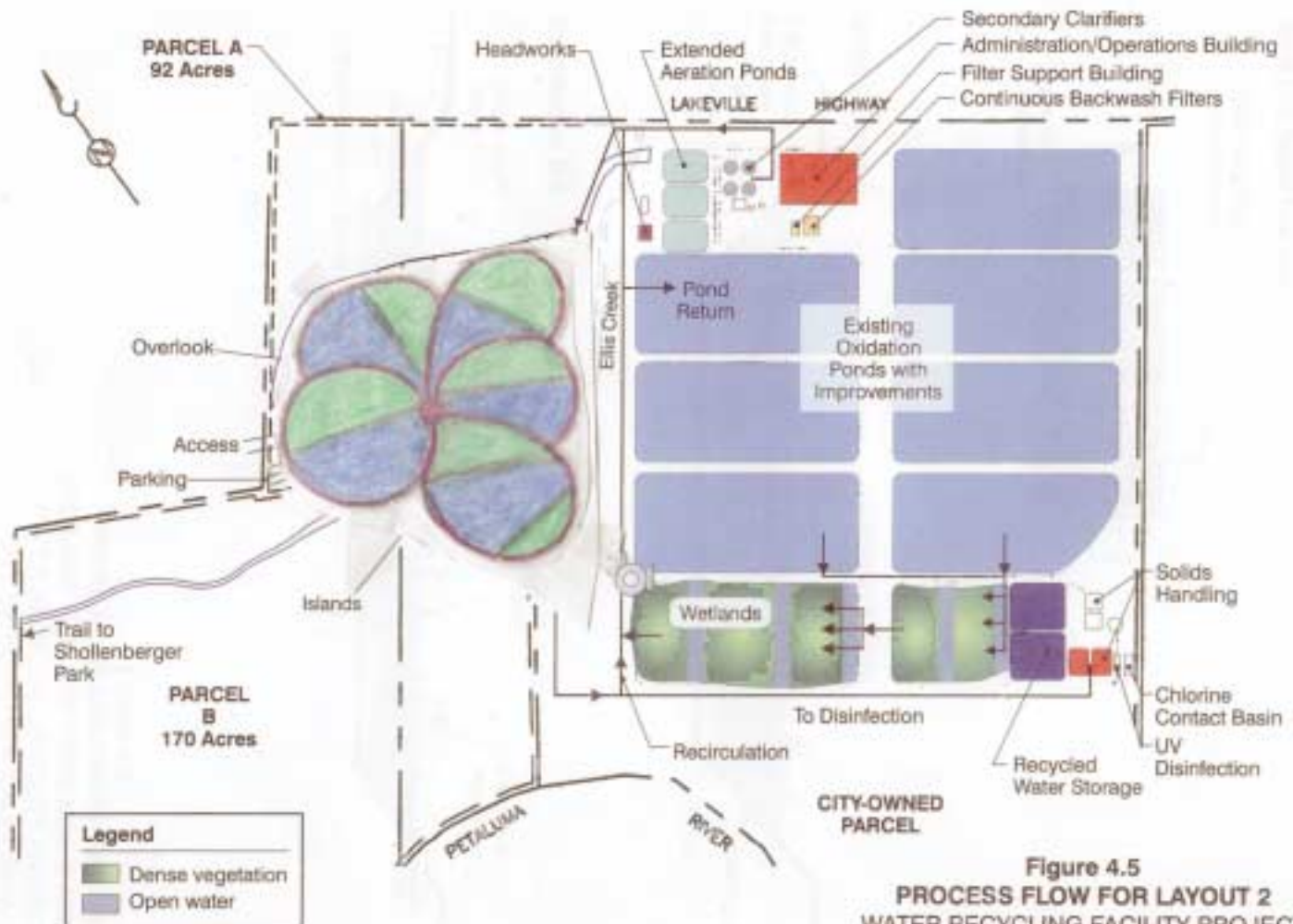
All submissions are reviewed and approved for content and accuracy prior to acceptance. For further information on submission please send an email attention newsletter editor to: pt_newsletter@yahoo.com

THE WATER RECYCLING FACILITY TOUR and WETLANDS WALK

Begin at the Administration Building (formal orientation/film/roof overlook) (I), then proceeds along the Oxidation Ponds Berm (II) to the densely-vegetated Treatment Wetlands (III). Buses exit the fenced Treatment Plant via a small bridge over Ellis Creek (IV), driving past a Restored Riparian Corridor (V) (native trees and shrubs chosen for wildlife food and habitat). Enhancement Wetlands (VI) (bus turnout) using fully treated recycled water are managed for wildlife habitat (freshwater pond species). Pedestrian Paths Along Berms (VII) combined with an existing Vehicular Access Road (VIII) offer close-up views of various wetlands ecosystems (littoral zone, open water, habitat islands, tidal marsh, and mudflat). As the berm path approaches Ellis Creek, several Small Alternative Trails (IX) loop through the heavily-shaded riparian zone before returning to the enhancement wetlands and bus.

Driving west on the existing road a small building retrofitted as Interpretive Center (X) places the Treatment Plant within its larger context—the Petaluma River Watershed. Steps leading

up to a parapeted roof-overlook reveal the larger landscape, including mountains and river, breached levee, mudflat meanders, feeding birds, and saltwater and brackish tidal marsh. Inside the building, windows focus on specific habitat restorations, such as Refugia for the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse (XI). A pedestrian Path Between Marsh and Mudflat (XII) leads to the Petaluma River Nature Trail (XIII) and a Bridge over the Levee Breach (XIV). This trail reveals the intricacies of the tidal cycle, the ever-changing patterns of land and water and complex relationships between ecosystems, as well as close-up views of passing boats and river traffic. The Levee Trail connects to Shollenberger Park (XV), the Petaluma Marina, and Sheraton Hotel (the "gateway" to the city), offering an unparalleled opportunity for recreation and education within the context of urban infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and economic benefit. A second pedestrian path, moving through Restored Upland Habitat (XVI), links the Water Recycling Facility to Shollenberger Park along the southern edge of the business park. Bus tours exit along the east side of the business park, past a heavily-buffered Parking Lot (XVII) (85 cars) with plantings selected as food and habitat for wildlife.



Wastewater and Wetland Options continued from page 1

This pond/marsh system deserves the support of Petaluma Tomorrow, because of its Petaluma Marsh location and its proximity to Shollenberger Park, which would be linked by a trail to the wetlands, thus enlarging a very popular, year-round birding spot. The area is a part of the San Francisco Baylands, and the Audubon Society is promoting restoration of wetlands around the bay with its San Francisco Bay Restoration project.

The city of Petaluma has a great opportunity. A pond/marsh system will be more effective in removing heavy metals than the conventional, mechanical method. The ponds will attract waterfowl and shorebirds, and the marsh/pond system will be an educational attraction. Additionally, Petaluma Tomorrow feels this would also be an economic resource for Petaluma because it will draw more visitors to our area. The city of Arcata has a similar marsh treatment system that is world famous, attracts many visitors, and is an excellent place for birders. Petaluma could have that and more, because Patricia Johanson will incorporate art into the project. Petaluma Tomorrow members should contact all Petaluma council members, and urge them to support the pond/marsh option.

For more information about this project and how you can become involved:

The project team is looking for ideas or comments from the public before they start the Environmental Impact Study, expected to be completed by early next year. Contact Michael Ban, Dept. of Water Resources and Conservation, 11 English Street, Petaluma, CA 94952, or call him at 778-4487. His e-mail is mban@ci.petaluma.ca.us. Copies of the Initial Study and Water Recycling Facility Project Report are available for review at the Petaluma City Hall, Department of Water Resources, or the Reference Desk at the Public Library.

Common Bonds

What does a successful community have in common with its citizens, businesses and government? The willingness and cooperation in working together for the common good of all of its citizens. Petaluma has a unique opportunity to improve its quality of life. You can't always leave it up to your elected officials to make "good, sound, decisions" without your input.

This is why *Petaluma Tomorrow* is working toward building a coalition of citizens, businesses and interested groups to work together as a team to make our community even better than it is today.

In each newsletter we will highlight the efforts of other affiliate groups, member organizations and citizen coalitions who volunteer their time into improving Petaluma.

Join us and work today for a better tomorrow!

About the writers:

Sylvan Eidelman is Madrone Audubon's representative to the San Francisco Bay Restoration project. Many of Patricia Johanson's works are described and pictured at her web page: www.patriciajohanson.com Bob Dyer is a Madrone member and a docent at Shollenberger Park.

This article was reprinted with the permission of the Madrone Audubon Society. It appeared in the October issue of the *Madrone Leaves*, the monthly newsletter of the Madrone Chapter (Sonoma County) of the National Audubon Society.



Join Petaluma Tomorrow!

YES! I Want to Join Petaluma Tomorrow!

Enclosed is my check for:

Individual \$20

Family \$30

Silver \$50

Gold \$100

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

YES! Add me to the Petaluma Tomorrow! email list. Email Address: _____

Please have someone contact me

THANK YOU!

Send this form with membership payment to: Petaluma Tomorrow, 1557 Mauro Pietro Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954
Phone: (707) 782-1038 • Fax: (707) 658-1882