

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
about the  
**RCD Proposal to Dredge Butano Creek Channel**  
March 8, 2017

Is the idea of a dredge supported?

Many entities want to remove sediment from Pescadero Marsh for ecosystem restoration and/ or to alleviate flooding. The RCD and State Parks, with support from San Mateo County and the Coastal Conservancy, have been working on a design and a grant application to re-establish Butano Channel by removing sediment.

Why are designs necessary?

Channel depth, alignment, distance, bank slope, and shape, as well as what to do with the dredge material are some elements of a design. Different designs have very different outcomes. Some may alleviate flooding but harm wildlife, including worsening fish kills. Some might be good for wildlife but have little or no benefit to alleviate flooding. Some scenarios might alleviate flooding but only for a very short duration and quickly fill back up. Furthermore, permits to do the work require a thoughtful design that considers various factors, including unintentional consequences that impact protected resources.

The County declared an emergency. Doesn't this mean we don't need permits or can get them later?

The County's declaration applies to County property, i.e. their Right of Way, and does not constitute an emergency on State property or give the County permission to do work on State property. Also, declaration of an emergency does not exempt a project from needing permits. Some permits may be obtained after the fact, while others cannot. For example, there are no emergency permits for impacts to "Fully Protected" species. Regulatory agencies have different standards for issuing emergency permits and weigh the declaration of emergency differently. For some, it can facilitate a project. For others, it does not affect their decision-making. Emergency declarations can also be helpful for getting political support and funding.

Is the County helping?

The County provided \$45,000 to develop a two-dimensional model of water and sediment transport in the marsh that is essential for designing the project. Supervisor Horsley also wrote a letter of support for the grant and is requesting an additional \$1 million dollars from the County as cash match to the grant request. The County was also the primary funder of the 2014 Solutions to Flooding report (cbec) that formed the basis for this channel restoration project, the upstream sediment control/ floodplain restoration project that was recently completed, and other efforts.

Is the State helping?

State Parks is a partner to this project, is committing substantial staff time to accommodate permit requirements, and is committing a cash match to the grant funds. Parks also supported a design concept that went beyond what might be minimally sufficient for ecosystem restoration, supporting a concept that would have additional benefits to the community to reduce flooding. The State Coastal Conservancy has funded much of the design work to do the dredge as well as other marsh restoration

planning. State Senator Jerry Hill, State Assemblymember Kevin Mullin, and State Assemblymember Marc Berman are preparing letters of support for the grant.

#### Will the community have input on the designs?

When NOAA released its solicitation for a Coastal Resiliency Grant, the RCD decided to go for it although there was a very short turnaround time to develop designs, engage the regulatory agencies to develop a permitting strategy, work with the landowner, secure funding and other commitments from partners, and prepare the proposal. This did not allow time for a public stakeholder process (nor was that funded). The grant proposal will include 30% designs, i.e. conceptual designs. After submitting the grant proposal, we will still need to complete full designs before accepting a grant award. We are seeking funding for that work, which will include community input. It will not be a large public process with town hall meetings, but there will be opportunity to get input from people who are interested. RCD staff confirmed with the NOAA grant manager that, if funded, we can make reasonable revisions to the designs so long as the project still accomplishes the goals for which it was funded.

#### If the dredge is done, does that mean we no longer need to improve the bridge or do upstream work?

The 2014 Solutions to Flooding Report laid out a plan with components in the upper watershed, within the County Right of Way, and downstream in the marsh. These were not identified as alternatives to each other, or mutually exclusive. There is no reason work in any one of these areas would preclude work in any other areas. Also, a one-time dredge is not a long-term solution to flooding or fish passage.

#### What are the barriers to getting this done? What can we do to help?

At the moment, there are no obstacles- just plenty of work to do. Funding and permitting appear to be feasible at this point, although they are uncertain until they are secured. Community input will be welcome on designs. The incredible energy in the community around this project may be helpful if any barriers are encountered and RCD staff will be sure to ask for help.

#### What is the RCD?

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District is an independent special district serving coastal San Mateo County. Our mission is to help people protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through information, education, and technical assistance programs. We provide free, non-regulatory assistance to landowners. We are not part of County government.