



CITY OF PETALUMA

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GRAND JURY

 AUG 17 REC'D

August 9, 2004

The Honorable Allan D. Hardcastle, Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 5109
Santa Rosa, California 95402

RE: City of Petaluma's Response to 2003-2004 Sonoma County Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Hardcastle,

The City of Petaluma appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Sonoma County Grand Jury's investigation and appreciates the opportunity to respond to the above referenced report. Attached is a copy of the City's response to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury report.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report and commend the Grand Jury for its hard work and dedication towards improving government for the people of Sonoma County. Please contact Michael Ban at 778-4487 if you have any questions regarding this response.

Sincerely,

David Glass, Mayor

Michael J. Ban, P.E., Director
Water Resources & Conservation

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cc: Petaluma City Council
Sonoma County Cities
So. Co. Board of Supervisors

CITY OF PETALUMA'S RESPONSE TO THE 2003-2004 SONOMA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

ADOBE CREEK DEBACLE AND RESTORATION

Recommendation R5

The City Council of Petaluma, Petaluma School Board, DFG and NOAA should commit necessary resources for their participation in this pilot program.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.

First of all, the City of Petaluma understands the pilot program is still being developed. The City is not prepared to commit resources for a program that is still being developed.

Secondly, as you may know, the Sonoma County Water Agency's budget for creek maintenance and other surface water management activities in the Petaluma area is funded by Zone 2A assessments, which are collected through property taxes. Every property owner in Petaluma pays into this fund, which was established through a referendum to mitigate potential adverse actions related to storms. It is the City's understanding the Sonoma County Water Agency intends to fund the pilot program with Zone 2A funds (the funding would cover teacher salaries, travel, books, equipment, and other program-related expenses). If this is correct, it should be noted that this will involve diverting funds away from creek maintenance and management activities, and construction of flood control projects, in the Zone 2A watershed.

The City of Petaluma recognizes the value of environmental education at the local high schools. In fact, we have involved representatives of the high school in the development of the City's Petaluma Marsh project. We look forward to continuing this work, and to reviewing the Sonoma County Water Agency's proposal for a pilot program when it becomes available.

Recommendation R6

The Director, Department of Water Resources & Conservation of the City of Petaluma should conduct community outreach regarding stream maintenance activities and work with the water agency to balance flood protection and riparian habitat needs within the city.

Response: This recommendation is already being implemented.

While the City supports this recommendation, its inclusion in the 2003-2004 Grand Jury report appears to imply the City is partially culpable for the Adobe Creek Debacle. This is not the case. Clearly, had the Sonoma County Water Agency engaged the community prior to its actions in Adobe Creek, the Adobe Creek debacle would likely not have taken place. Perhaps a more appropriate recommendation would be for the Sonoma County Water Agency to conduct community outreach prior to engaging in stream maintenance activities. As a responsible public agency providing direct benefits to residents within the City of Petaluma, the Agency should communicate its actions directly with affected parties. It is standard protocol for the City of Petaluma's Department of Water Resources & Conservation to conduct community outreach when engaged in projects that may potentially impact the community.

As you may know, the City of Petaluma was one of the few Phase II communities in the Bay Area to successfully procure a permit for operation of its storm water system from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. In support of this permit, the City is engaged in a wide range of activities designed to improve the storm water quality, including a public outreach campaign. This campaign is designed to educate our community on drainage and storm water quality issues, and involve the public in various activities in order to help contribute to the continued improvement of the Petaluma River and its tributary creeks and drainage facilities. We would be pleased to provide the Grand Jury additional information on this program.

GOT WATER?

Recommendation R1

The County and each of its cities should adopt or amend a sustainable water element as part of their general plan with a target date of January 1, 2005, the adoption of the next general plan.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

The City of Petaluma is preparing its *General Plan 2025 (Plan)*. The Plan will address the Built Environment; Economic Health & Redevelopment; Recreation, Culture & Parks; Open Space, Conservation; the Petaluma River; Mobility; Water Resources; Noise; and Public Safety.

Recommendation R2

The county and each of its cities should adopt and develop a comprehensive groundwater management plan such as that set forth in AB 3030. The information from the existing groundwater studies should be used to provide a bank of information upon which to initiate a groundwater management plan.

Response: The City of Petaluma's local groundwater supply is used for stand-by and emergency purposes only. Nevertheless, the City regularly monitors its groundwater quality and levels. The City is currently preparing a groundwater master plan in support of its *General Plan 2025*. The information from this study will enable the City to further improve management of its groundwater resources.