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Title

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/90k9c1dh>

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Publication Date

2003-12-19

FINAL DRAFT

**Historical Narratives of Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and
Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy**

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LA227
December 19, 2003**

Abstract

This study analyzes the histories of two non-governmental watershed organizations in Butte County, California: the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and the Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy. Historical narratives, collected in interviews with current and past staff of these organizations, revealed a series of themes. For Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, institutional problems and differences of opinion with public agencies were chronic challenges to attaining watershed goals. Networking, volunteer expertise, local political climate, pressure to engage agencies, and salmon listings emerged as important factors driving the evolution of the organization. For the Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy, the ability to define goals and priorities was influenced by the ability to foster consensus among diverse landowner viewpoints. Also, the structure and availability of funding, community support, and landowner interest are key to the organization's work.

I. Introduction and Purpose of Study

In recent years, small, local non-governmental watershed organizations have proliferated in northern California. Many of these groups are barraged with similar challenges, such as inadequate institutional resources, a multitude of environmental problems and stakeholder needs, local politics, and the need to network in policy and funding arenas. How have watershed organizations maximized success in the face of these challenges? Documenting organizational histories can uncover detailed answers to this question, and provide valuable lessons to other organizations dealing with similar challenges.

We attempted a qualitative, historical evaluation in this case study, focusing on two watershed groups in Butte County, California: Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy. We collected historical “narratives” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996)—accounts of the organizations’ histories as told by interviewees—and analyzed them to answer the following questions:

1. What themes emerged in the historical narratives?
2. What lessons emerged that may be useful to the management of other watershed groups?

We chose Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance and Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy because of their differing histories and structures: The former has been a consistently conservation-oriented group, while the latter shifted from a conservation- to a landowner-issue focus. Using disparate organizations was intended to help shed light on a broader range of historical themes--and thus make the study relevant for different types of organizations.

II. Background on Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek

Founded in 1996, Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance is a stakeholder based (not member-based) organization whose mission is “to protect and enhance the ecological integrity and economic vitality of the Big Chico Creek watershed” (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003). From 1996 to 2002, the organization was a loose alliance of as many as 400 constituents, engaged by the efforts of a watershed coordinator. In 2003, the Alliance began reorganizing itself as a group driven by the efforts of a new Board of Directors. Today there are about 100 constituents.

The Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy was established as a land-owner based organization in 1995 to “protect, restore and enhance the cultural, economic and ecological heritage of the Butte Creek watershed through cooperative landowner action” (Watershed Management Strategy, 2000).

Approximately 90 percent of its current 800-1000 active members own land in the watershed (including residential homeowners, small scale and industrial agriculture, cattle ranching, and timberland). Members are entitled to vote for the eleven-person Board of Directors, and to serve on committees.

While both Big Chico Creek and Butte Creek are tributaries to the Sacramento River, they differ in several ways. The watersheds are significantly different in size: while Butte Creek extends for more than 100 miles, Big Chico Creek flows a total distance of 45 miles (BCCWA Existing Conditions Report). Butte Creek also has a significantly greater capacity to support Chinook salmon than does Big Chico Creek. See Appendix II for maps of these watersheds.

III. Methods

A. Devise initial list of questions: The first step in our study was to devise an initial list of questions to ask potential interviewees at the two watershed organizations. We designed these questions to help us explore the goals, projects, accomplishments, and history of the organizations.

B. Conduct exploratory interviews: We conducted a first round of interviews with individuals who did not work for the organizations, but who were reasonably familiar with them. These individuals were:

- John W. Icanberry, Assistant Program Manager, Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Paul Ward, Associate Fishery Biologist, Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game

These individuals helped us to refine our interview questions, and recommended staff (and past staff) from the watershed groups that could present a variety of perspectives in an interview setting (but that would not necessarily reflect a completely representative sample of the actors involved in the organizations).

C. Finalize interview questions: Based on these conversations, we finalized our interview questions, and grouped them in four overarching categories: (1) Issues, Goals, and Projects; (2) Constituencies; (3) Accomplishments; (4) Obstacles. The complete outline of questions is in Appendix I.

D. Conduct main interviews: Using the above set of questions, we interviewed five individuals from the two organizations.

The interviewees from Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance were:

- Suzanne Gibbs, past Watershed Coordinator, Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance
- Susan Strachan, president of Board of Directors, Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance

The interviewees from Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy were:

- William Johnson, Watershed Coordinator, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Allen Harthorn, past-chair of the Board, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy; current Board member, Friends of Butte Creek
- Chuck Kutz, past-chair of the Board, Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy

E. Write Chronological Narratives: We transcribed the interviews and used the information to write chronological accounts of each organization (Part IV, “Historical Narratives”).

F. Analysis: To analyze our narratives, we attempted to discern recurring themes, implied lessons, the type of story (e.g., success in the face of adversity, conflict between parties), and dominant tones or attitudes (e.g., optimism, disillusionment) (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). In Part V, “Discussion,” we present this analysis, along with a summary of our findings in Table 3.

Note about Subjectivity: The narratives we have recorded are inherently subjective—that is, the information is biased by the interviewees’ values, beliefs, and experiences. Often, the narratives present the interviewees’ perspectives on controversial issues. We did not solicit viewpoints on these issues from individuals outside the organizations because our study intent was to analyze *personal* narratives, not to write a journalistic article. In addition, while we attempted to write the interviewees’ narratives as true to their responses as possible, we understand that our presentation of their accounts (e.g., our sentence

wording, organizational structure, selection of information to include), and our analysis of the narratives (e.g., the particular themes we extracted), may reflect our own biases.

IV. Historical Narratives

In this section, we have organized the interviewees' responses into chronological narratives, and summarized the key events of the narratives in timelines (Tables 1 and 2).

A. Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance

Table 1
Timeline for Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance

1990	Dispute over M & T pumps begins
1993	Big Chico Creek Task Force formed to deal with the M & T controversy
1996	Big Chico Creek Task Force becomes the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance
1997	Suzanne Gibbs becomes watershed coordinator of the Alliance
1997	M & T pumps relocated to the Sacramento River
1998	Start of conflict with DFG over Iron Canyon fish ladder
1999	Sacramento River spring-run Chinook salmon placed on the Endangered Species List
2000	Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve established
2002	Suzanne Gibbs leaves the Alliances
2003	Alliance establishes a Board of Directors

The M & T Dispute and the Formation of the Alliance

A conflict in the early 1990s over diversion pumps owned by the M & T Ranch precipitated the formation of the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance (BCCWA ECR; S. Strachan, BCCWA, personal communication, 2003). The pumps, located on the creek near its confluence with the Sacramento River, caused intermittent stream flow reversals, blocking salmon migration. To deal with this issue, the city of Chico in 1993 established Big Chico Creek Task Force, which attracted a conservationist constituency of concerned community members.

In 1996, the Big Chico Creek Task Force became independent from the city of Chico, was renamed the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance, and broadened its geographical scope of interest to the

entire watershed. The Alliance inherited the Task Force's conservationist constituency, and elected to be a stakeholder based organization, largely because a significant portion of the watershed is public land, including Chico's 4000-acre municipal Bidwell Park.

The Alliance's first major accomplishment was to relocate the M & T pumps to the Sacramento River in 1997, thus removing the salmon migration impediment. Susan Strachan, the current president of the Alliance's Board of Directors, said that this resolution likely averted a potentially serious litigation between M & T ranch and conservation interests (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003). She added that an ongoing regulatory process to place Sacramento River spring-run Chinook salmon on the endangered species list facilitated acquisition of funds to relocate the pumps. (The salmon run was listed in 1999.) The looming possibility of a salmon listing also helped bring the ranch to the table. According to Strachan, "it made better sense [for M & T ranch] to deal with the pump issues as a partner with the Alliance" than to deal with litigation or property regulation (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003).

The Late 1990s: Establishing a Conservationist Constituency and Protecting Fisheries

Suzanne Gibbs, who became the Alliance's watershed coordinator in 1997, played a dominant role in solidifying the group's conservationist constituency. A charismatic leader, Gibbs attracted stakeholders by placing advertisements in local papers, getting media exposure, and highlighting Alliance viewpoints at community meetings. An important vehicle for engaging stakeholders was her monthly meetings, which disseminated information on a range of issues to provide a broad watershed perspective. Gibbs also went to agency meetings to track trends in key issues and scope out funding developments and organizational partners.

According to Gibbs, fisheries was the Alliance's main issue during the late 1990s largely because of significant available agency funding for fisheries. The organization coordinated several activities in the creek to restore and protect salmon habitat, including its regular cleanings of Sycamore Pool, a concrete pool built in the creek in Bidwell Park.

Also during the late 1990s, the Alliance built long-term ties to the City of Chico by educating city staff in how water systems work. Such services made it easier to collaborate with Chico on watershed improvements, and kept the city “at the table for much of our history” (S. Gibbs, personal communication, 2003). Ultimately, the Alliance changed the way Chico managed the creek in Bidwell Park (S. Gibbs, personal communication). Gibbs added that this positive relationship helped build community awareness of the watershed: As city staff participated in Alliance programs, they discussed the programs with other city staff, friends and neighbors.

According to Strachan, Gibbs’ presence was crucial to the Alliance’s achievements. Success “was, for good or for bad, driven by her capabilities, personality, and dedication. She was the Alliance” (S. Strachan, personal communication). Gibbs and Strachan agreed that the Alliance’s stakeholders may have relied too heavily on Gibbs. The Alliance’s success was also aided by Chico’s strong “identification” with Bidwell Park and Big Chico Creek—a connection “that often translates into political will” (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003).

Gibbs said that a persistent roadblock for the Alliance was keeping its volunteers interested in the big picture for Big Chico Creek. Often volunteers were excited about specific issues, only to drop out of the stakeholder process when those issues were resolved (S. Gibbs, personal communication, 2003). Another obstacle was lack of funding and institutional capacity. Remarkably, Gibbs worked at the Alliance for six years without pay; supporting herself through another job.

By about 2000, most of the necessary fisheries “fixes” on Big Chico Creek were completed, fisheries funding dried up, and the Alliance’s issues expanded to include water quality and effects of land use. In 2000, the Alliance worked with Chico State University to establish the 3900-acre Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, which protects prime riparian habitat and will provide sites for watershed research and education. Strachan said that salmon listing helped the partners secure funds to purchase the reserve.

Conflict with Department of Fish and Game

The Alliance has similar broad restoration and protection goals as the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). But both Gibbs and Strachan stressed that the Alliance has been historically at odds with DFG on the importance of Big Chico Creek. “Certain people at DFG do not value the creek as a viable fishery” because it does not have as large a salmon capacity as other creeks in the Sacramento Valley (S. Gibbs, personal communication, 2003). Gibbs disagrees with the DFG viewpoint, contending that any salmon population—small or large—should be treated as a priority for conservation.

According to Gibbs, this difference of opinion led to the recent conflict between the Alliance and DFG over the Iron Canyon fish ladder. Wear-and-tear damage to the ladder was causing spring-run Chinook salmon to get trapped below the ladder. In 1998, Gibbs asked DFG to repair the ladder, but the agency was reluctant to make the investment. Since then, the Alliance has had an ongoing struggle with DFG over the issue.

Strachan tied this deadlock with DFG to a broader obstacle to success for the Alliance: competition among watershed groups for agency attention and money. To engage the agencies, “you have to go to the meetings, sit in CALFED watershed workgroup meetings, be a person they recognize...and match your goals with the goals of the agencies” (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003).

Gibbs Departs and the Alliance Regroups

In 2002, Gibbs left the Alliance, citing exhaustion with the DFG conflict as one reason for her departure (S. Gibbs, personal communication, 2003). Her exit, said Strachan, was a major blow to the organization. Because engagement of the Alliance’s constituency relied heavily on Gibbs’ leadership, the organization lost a significant proportion of its stakeholder base.

In 2003, the Alliance formed a Board of Directors to rebuild the old constituency, and to engage new perspectives, such as agricultural and forestry interests in the northern part of the watershed. Indeed, a landowner from that region has already become a board member. As both a farmer and a conservationist, she will be a “nice bridge” to bring in partners and implement projects from the

agricultural realm (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003). Her different point of view, interests, and expertise may in turn impact the Alliance's key issues and projects. Strachan said that diversifying the Board may shift the Alliance's constituency from its historically conservationist/urban focus.

Strachan said that the Board can reduce over-reliance on the watershed coordinator: Board members and other volunteers can use their expertise to secure funding for their dedicated issues. Currently, for instance, a Board member is responsible for efforts to fund a citizen water-quality monitoring program. Strachan added: "If you don't have people who can talk intelligently about an issue, then you don't want to be working in that area" (S. Strachan, personal communication, 2003).

Besides rebuilding the constituency, other current priorities for the Alliance include building institutional capacity through grants and local fundraising, implementing the water quality monitoring program, educating the community on a potential CALFED conjunctive use facility, and reconstructing the Iron Canyon fish ladder.

Despite these promising efforts to regroup the Alliance, said Gibbs, public opinion may be a growing hindrance to future success. As Chico has grown in recent years, she said, it has become increasingly conservative and hostile to environmental causes.

B. Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy

Table 2
Timeline for Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy

1995	The Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy is formed
1996	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy receives 501(c)(3) status
1996	Conservancy receives a grant from the U.S.FWS, Anadromous Fish Restoration Program
1997	Flood in Butte Creek watershed
1997	Spring-run Chinook salmon designated as a “candidate species” for listing under CESA
1998	Central Valley steelhead listed as threatened under ESA
1998	Allen Harthorn resigns as Chairman of the Board
1998	Chuck Kutz becomes Chairman of the Board
1998	Springrun Chinook Salmon listed as a threatened species by California Fish and Game Commission under CESA
1998	93-Acre Honey Run Unit of the Butte Creek Ecological Preserve purchased by the Conservancy and other organizations; opened in 1999.
1999	Harthorn leaves the Conservancy
2000	Friends of Butte Creek formed
2000	Butte Creek Watershed Management Strategy completed and released for public review
2001	The Conservancy and Butte County Flood Control received a CalFed/DWR grant to develop a floodplain plan
2002	Chuck Kutz steps down as Chairman of the Board
2003	Butte Country Resource Conservation District Established

Organization and Early Successes

The Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy coalesced in 1995 out of efforts to examine the value of citizen-based watershed groups on the creek. The most direct issue of concern was die-off of Spring-run Chinook salmon and the California Department of Fish and Game’s recent closure of the creek to all fishing in response. While anadromous fish death was a catalyst for organization, the events invoked more indirect concerns about “endangered species protection, water supply demands, land use practices, recreational impacts, fire and flood hazard, and urban development” (Watershed Management Plan 2000: i). Landowners were also particularly concerned about how strategies enacted to address those issues would restrict, affect, or alter the current arrangements in the watershed (e.g. land or water rights).

The first eleven board members were selected on September 15, 1995, and began immediate work with the Goals and Objectives Committee to draft and implement organizational objectives, and to secure funding. Allen Harthorn, Chairman of the Board from 1995-1998, identified a number of key projects during his time as Chair. Early on, the organization applied to CalFed and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service to complete the Butte Creek Watershed Management Strategy and the Existing Conditions Report. The organization was actively engaged in establishing outreach and education programs, producing an array of GIS layers and maps, conducting an inventory of non-surfaced roads in the watershed, and leading an effort to acquire a 93-acre preserve adjacent to Chico State University's Butte Creek Ecological Preserve. In addition, managing and running the Conservancy was a full-time responsibility.

Changes in Leadership and Directions

In 1998, Harthorn resigned from his position as Chair in response to changes he perceived within the organization. As he described, the demographics of the organization and the board changed as the rancher and farmer presence increased in response to a lowering of membership fees. As a result, the organization's priorities aligned more closely with the protection of property rights and specifically landowner interests. The organization's "conservation core" was displaced in the process. Changes in constituency coupled with one member-one vote electoral dynamics may have contributed to a shift in the organization's constituency and direction.

Harthorn was followed by Charles Kutz (Chairman from 1998-2002). He and current watershed coordinator, William Johnson, both noted that facilitating consensus and collaboration among stakeholders has been a difficult but integral part of the organization. Despite changes in the leadership in 1998 and despite the diversity of both the board and membership, Johnson noted that they have established a "pretty good" consensus-building mechanism, both an accomplishment and a factor in completing successful projects (W. Johnson, personal communication, 2003). At times, and in particularly contentious circumstances, this has required the use of a professional facilitator. However, for the most part, the Conservancy has found that members are willing to volunteer to facilitate discussion and may be quite successful. For example, one of the more veteran members of the council often occupies a "Bearer of Arms/Parliamentarian" position, and is respected by various interests who "agree to disagree and agree not to be disagreeable" (C. Kutz, personal communication, 2003).

Floods, Landowner Concerns, and Funding

Under Kutz, the Conservancy continued many of its previous projects, including the K-12 education program and general landowner outreach. The Conservancy published an “Owner’s Manual” for landowners in the watershed to foster best management practices. It also added new activities to its repertoire, specifically creating a Floodplain Management Plan. In 2001, the Conservancy received a CalFed grant with Butte County Flood Control to gather data to model future floods, assess vulnerable levees and infrastructure, and help implement a county-wide hazard mitigation plan. The project was, in part, driven by concern following the 1997 flood along Butte Creek, and Johnson noted that the plan may have direct social and economic benefits for the county. Landowners may receive savings on homeowners’ insurance and reduce the risk of future flood damage, and agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Administration may be better informed to direct resources to hazards. In addition, Harthorn suggested that the efforts of the Conservancy in conjunction with other organizations have improved steelhead population numbers to a level sufficient enough for the Department of Fish and Game to re-open sections of Butte Creek to angling, providing yet another positive economic impact on the local community.

As the organization has matured, Kutz and Johnson both noted that securing consistent and reliable funding sources, like endowments, has become a priority and a challenge. Grants are often available as seed money but earmark very little for monitoring; for example, money has been available for fish screens but not for their maintenance. As such, existing funding mechanisms may discourage institutional learning and adaptive management. In addition, timing funding proposals with listed projects has been difficult. Kutz noted that the organization has prepared its members, initiated outreach efforts and generated momentum, only to have a project temporarily removed from the funding list. When processes become dragged out, property owners and particularly volunteers may burn out.

Watershed Management and Collaborative Fora

The Conservancy is also a witness to ongoing debates about the proper management of fish and habitat in the watershed. Defining the problem continues to be a salient issue, as the differing opinions of Harthorn and Kutz demonstrate. Whereas Harthorn regarded Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) dams as problematic in blocking anadromous fish passage and raising water temperatures, Kutz noted that PG&E provides a source of cool water from the Feather River, adding to the available water on the creek. Issues of fish passage, Kutz noted, are also linked with existing natural barriers, for example, the Quartz Bowl Pool (Wanatabe, 2000). Fish die-off as a whole is a debatable and debated topic, in part because it is unclear what historic populations of salmon and steelhead entered Butte Creek to spawn (Wanatabe 2000). Fish populations increased as Butte Creek became the target of a variety of mitigation and restoration projects, and Kutz questioned whether fish deaths are a function of the inability of the creek to handle a larger population than it can support. Indeed, Spring-run Chinook salmon continue to be listed under the California Endangered Species Act and federal Endangered Species Act in the Sacramento River and its tributaries even though Butte Creek has witnessed large returns in the past five years. Thus, habitat management for anadromous fish populations continues to be a priority for the Conservancy.

Finally, the Conservancy is seeking a Department of Conservation grant in partnership with the newly founded Butte County Resource Conservation District, and at least three other watershed organizations on Cherokee Creek, Little Chico Creek and Big Chico Creek to create a large-scale collaborative forum. The Friends of Butte Creek, an organization founded in 2000 by Allen Harthorn and others, may also participate. The organization would be modeled after a successful endeavor by the Western Shasta Resource Conservation District. The Conservancy is in the initial stages of the enterprise.

V. Discussion

Table 3 Summary of Key Findings		
	Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
<i>Themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crucial internal factors in success have included the ability to network, volunteer expertise, number of funded staff, degree of reliance on the watershed coordinator. Important external factors have included endangered species listing of Chinook salmon, local political climate, conflict with Department of Fish and Game, and pressure to engage agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By encouraging collaborative-decision making, the Conservancy faced the challenge of balancing varied and contradictory viewpoints. The broad mission statement of the Conservancy allowed for changes in organizational structure and priorities. Community response to issues was often driven by the nature and extent of the threat.
<i>Lessons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance should avoid over-reliance on the watershed coordinator. The Alliance should attract volunteers with a span of expertise that can effectively network in the watershed management arena The Alliance should seek out partnerships between organizations to facilitate funding and implementation of watershed projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community support and participation are, and should remain, essential components of any watershed management plan. Collaboration among all affected and interested parties is necessary for watershed stewardship.

A. Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance

Internal and external drivers of success and evolution emerged as important themes in the narratives on Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance. With internal factors, the interviewees repeatedly mentioned the ability to network--whether with agencies, city staff, or agricultural interests—as critical to securing funds and developing partnerships. Alliance success also hinged on the interests and expertise of the volunteers. Internal challenges included lack of funded staff, over-reliance on the watershed coordinator, and difficulty in engaging volunteers.

The Alliance interviewees portrayed external cultural, political, and institutional factors as

perhaps equally important as internal strength. Environmentalists in Chico felt affection for Bidwell Park and provided political support for Alliance goals. At the same time, growing conservatism in the Chico area was a reminder that public support can waver. The importance of engaging agencies was a strong incentive to network in the watershed management arena. Other external factors affecting the Alliance were the listing of spring-run Chinook salmon, which facilitated funding, and institutional attitudes at DFG toward the Big Chico watershed, which have stalled funding.

The interviewees implied lessons for future management from their descriptions of internal and external factors. First, by asserting that the organization's key issues depended on its volunteer expertise, Strachan revealed the importance of attracting volunteers with a span of expertise. Not doing so could mean lacking the capacity to deal with critical watershed issues. Second, Gibbs hinted that the organization could be more effective in the future if it avoids dependence on a single watershed coordinator. Third, Strachan's portrayal of the competition between watersheds for agency attention points to the importance of partnerships between organizations (both non-governmental and research).

Finally, threading through both Alliance interviews was a theme of adversity: Persistent obstacles made it difficult to have a positive impact on the watershed. The story, however, ends with optimism, as the Alliance revamps itself to diversify its expertise.

B. Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy

The responses of Harthorn, Johnson, and Kutz illuminate three themes and suggest two lessons for future endeavors. First, the Conservancy presents a very real case study of the issues that collaborative organizations face in bringing together a wide variety of stakeholder viewpoints. As a result, a theme of difference and conflict are linked with discussions of collaborative decision-making. The change of leadership in 1998 played a definitive role in the current, and perhaps more conservative, directions that the organization has chosen. For example, fisheries management and watershed restoration remain on the Conservancy's agenda, but are joined by pressing landowner concerns. The 1998 shift has also sculpted the current arrangement and priorities of watershed organizations working on Butte Creek.

Second, the broad nature of the Conservancy's mission statement has allowed for flexibility and reinterpretation by changing leadership. Although the text of the mission statement and Watershed Management Plan have remained the same, the organization has not, *de facto*, adopted the same priorities or direction over time. Goals and issues changed in response to key transitions in the organization's history. An understanding of the Conservancy's history, organizational structure, and constituency is thus necessary for understanding how the priorities of the Conservancy have changed over time.

Third, community response and participation was often driven by the nature of the threat. Stakeholder responses appeared to be proportional to the nature and extent of the threat that landowners perceived. Johnson jokingly noted that dead fish continue to provide a visual and "olfactory" motivation to be involved in the watershed. The current floodplain management program also stemmed from landowner concerns after the 1997 flood in the area. Not unlike the situation for Big Chico Creek, volunteerism, participation, and interest appear to vary with the issues and threats perceived by the community.

The experience of the Conservancy also provides at least two lessons for watershed stewardship. First, volunteerism, outreach and other methods of encouraging community support and participation have been essential, and ought to continue to be essential, to the Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy. Volunteers have been instrumental in attending public meetings to secure funding for floodplain management. Board members and active participants in the organization regularly contribute to outreach events. Indeed, outreach appears to occupy more of the organization's focus than encouraging volunteer activity. Current and past resources have been directed toward landowner and homeowner education, establishing a K-12 education program about the watershed, and encouraging the local community to interface with scientists and agency representatives in forums like the Spring-Run event. The Conservancy is aware that its work on the watershed cannot occur in the absence of the education and support of the local community.

Finally, our analysis of the Conservancy's historical narratives offers a lesson on the importance of collaboration in promoting watershed stewardship. Despite the appearance of what we have

characterized as a narrative of conflict, collaboration continues to occupy a central role in the organization. In seeking to establish a large-scale collaborative body, the Conservancy and the Friends of Butte Creek reaffirm the importance of collaborating with all parties at the table, achieving better communication and management across the landscape and watershed, eliminating duplicate efforts within the region, and securing, or at least identifying, a common good.

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Appendix I

1. Issues, Goals, and Projects

- a. What motivated the organization and creation of your conservancy?
- b. What are your conservancy's goals and objectives and issues? How have they changed over time?
- c. What have been your key projects? How has your group adapted to outcomes of restoration/watershed management projects?
- d. Does your conservancy share same restoration goals as federal and state agencies?
Who do they trust to work with- state or federal agencies or both?

2. Constituency

- a. Who makes up your constituency?
- b. How has your constituency changed over time?
- c. How do you integrate stakeholders into restoration/watershed management?

3. Accomplishments:

- a. Discuss your group's accomplishments since its beginnings relative to its goals and objectives. Break down your accomplishments into the following groups:
 - (1) Agreement/consensus: To what extent has your organization been able to forge agreements among stakeholders?
 - (2) Environmental: What types of ecological/environmental problems has your group solved? (e.g., Benefits accrued to salmon, to water supply, to water quality, to other watershed conditions)
 - (3) Socio-economic: Accomplishments regarding socio-economic issues? (e.g., benefits accrued to landowners, impacts on local economy)
 - (4) Reducing conflict: Accomplishments in terms of building understanding and reducing conflict between stakeholders?

b. What aspects of your organization helped to make these accomplishments possible?

4. Obstacles

1. What obstacles to successful (environmental, socioeconomic, agreement) outcomes have you encountered?

Appendix II



