

5. Public Outreach and Collaboration

The Stewardship Council is committed to ensuring that local communities, neighboring property owners, and key stakeholders are engaged and empowered to fully participate in the work of protecting and enhancing the Watershed Lands. The Stewardship Council has traveled extensively throughout the Watershed Lands to conduct community open houses, site visits, and dozens of meetings with stakeholder, agency, and Native American entities to ensure that the planning process is informed by discussions with the people and organizations who know the lands best.

5.1 Stipulation Requirements

The Procedures of Governing Board, Section III (11)(c) of the Stipulation, state that, “meetings of the Governing Board, including meeting minutes, will be public, except that the Governing Board will have the ordinary authority to undertake a closed session in appropriate circumstances.”

According to the Stipulation, the Stewardship Council “will publish notice of its meetings in newspapers of general circulation in the counties where affected parcels are located and will maintain a public website. The Stewardship Council, upon request, will make website information available in hard copy to members of the public.” The Council will also provide notice to the following entities before making a decision regarding the disposition of any individual parcel:

- The Board of Supervisors of the affected county;
- Each affected city, town, and water supply entity;
- Each affected tribe and/or co-licensee; and
- Each landowner located within 1 mile of the exterior boundary of the parcel, by mail or other effective manner.

5.2 Forms of Public Consultation

To meet the Stipulation requirements, the Stewardship Council has developed and implemented an inclusive and comprehensive public outreach program, consisting of various public consultation strategies focused on building widespread public understanding and engagement in developing the Land Conservation Plan (LCP). These strategies focus on communications with community members and stakeholders, as well as public agency representatives. Actions include disseminating information about the Stewardship Council’s activities, as well as gathering input from and engaging with the public.

Strategies employed to ensure a comprehensive public outreach effort include noticing and targeted media outreach efforts, as well as the use of several public information tools such as a public website, newsletters, and e-mails. Targeted meetings with stakeholder groups, public officials, and community meetings across the state at important junctures during the planning process provide opportunities for face-to-face interactions among stakeholders, Board members, and Stewardship Council staff. In addition, Stewardship Council Board meetings are open to the public and provide multiple opportunities for public input and comment.

5.2.1 Public Outreach, Targeted Media Outreach, and Noticing

To create a transparent planning process that fosters and facilitates participation, the Stewardship Council regularly updates the public on the land planning and youth investment processes, decisions, schedules, and opportunities for involvement. A variety of tools are used to accomplish this objective (Table 5-1):

Stewardship Council Website

The Stewardship Council’s website (www.stewardshipcouncil.org) was officially launched in early April 2005 (Figure 5-1). This site is updated at least monthly with Board meeting agendas and minutes, updates on the LCP planning process and the Youth Investment Program, revised calendars,

and LCP background information and planning materials such as maps detailing the recommended concepts for the Watershed Lands. Presentations and all notices are posted on the website, and the site continues to be enhanced over time to facilitate the distribution of information. The website also provides the opportunity for the public to contact the Stewardship Council and be added to the stakeholder database.

Stakeholder Database

The Stewardship Council has developed and continues to maintain a comprehensive stakeholder database with complete contact information for each interested party. The database (with over

5,000 contacts to date) is maintained to organize all contacts, record contact activity and interaction, and provide a basis for both e-mail and hardcopy distribution of materials.

E-mailing

Regular e-mail notifications are sent directly to interested parties that have signed up to receive e-mail, as well as elected officials, agencies, and organization representatives.

Newsletters

The Stewardship Council publishes a newsletter every three to four months to inform the public

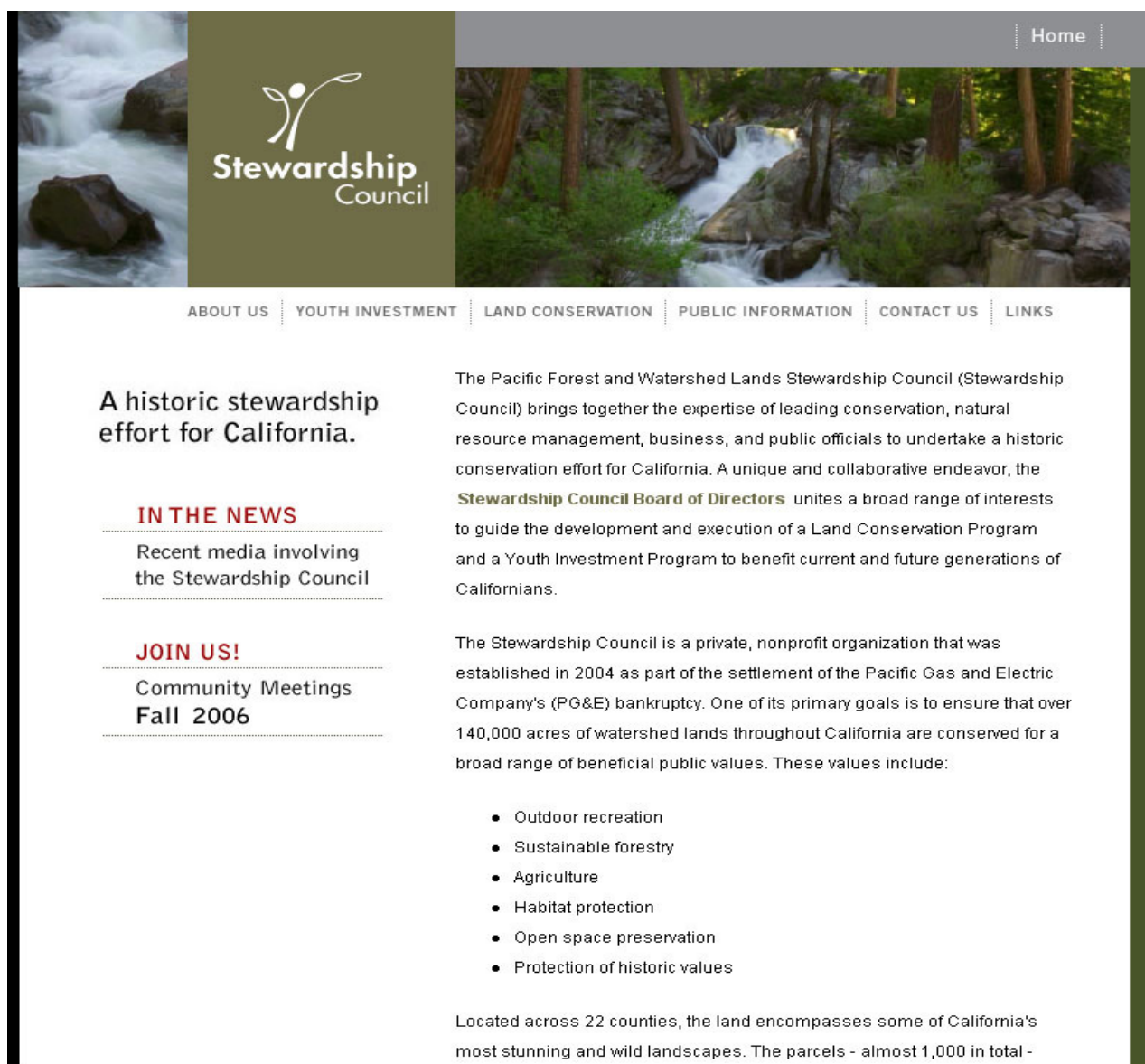


Figure 5-1 Stewardship Council Public Information Website at <http://www.stewardshipcouncil.org>

Table 5-1 Public Outreach Activities, January 2005 - April 2007

Type of Activity	
Public Meetings (including community meetings and Board meetings)	40 meetings hosted
Correspondence	189 letters/emails received
Website visits (last 12 months)	Nearly 1 million
Newsletters (total distributed; includes Annual Report)	7 issues; total distribution to over 25,000 readers
News releases	27 press releases
Media articles	Over 130 stories

about Stewardship Council activities. The newsletter publicizes both the LCP planning process and the Youth Investment Program to promote opportunities for public involvement. The first Annual Report was distributed in June 2006. Newsletters and the Annual Report are distributed in both hardcopy and electronic formats, and are also available on the Council’s website.

Targeted Newspaper Noticing

The Stewardship Council reviews newspaper coverage areas to ensure comprehensive and targeted noticing (including consideration of small, local papers that serve communities around the Watershed Lands or other special interest groups). Care is taken to print notices in local newspapers circulated in the area where a Board or community meeting is taking place or in communities that may have particular interest in a topic on the upcoming agenda.

Press Releases

The Stewardship Council distributes press releases to statewide and local media outlets at key intervals during the planning process. These press releases coincide with public meetings and other Stewardship Council milestones, as well as announce key newsworthy items. Newspapers are contacted to confirm that they received the release, and to encourage publication in the community calendar or other public information section of the newspaper.

Paid Advertising

The Stewardship Council strategically places advertisements in local newspapers with a coverage area surrounding the location of an upcoming meeting, or encompassing a certain community with a particular interest in an agenda item.

Notice to Adjacent Landowners

The Stewardship Council is required to provide notice to each landowner within 1 mile of the exterior boundary of a parcel prior to making a decision regarding its disposition. To invite early landowner involvement in advance of disposition, the Council distributed a postcard to the approximately 26,000 landowners within 1 mile of all the parcels in the fall of 2006. As the Council moves forward toward disposition, adjacent landowners will be noticed once again prior to conveyances of fee title or conservation easement.

5.2.2 Community Meetings and Solicitation of Public Comments

Public comment is received at the Board meetings, and at the open houses and community meetings that are held across the watershed areas. In advance of these meetings, the Stewardship Council works with key community leaders and stakeholders to seek their counsel on planning for the meetings, and on how best to connect with their community.

The community meetings present an opportunity to provide background information about the

Table 5-2 Community Meetings				
Watershed	Location	2005	2006	Attendance
Pit-McCloud River & Cow-Battle Creek	Burney	August 1	March 20 July 25 November	126
	Redding		March 21 September 21 December 5	159
	Shingletown	August 2		24
Feather River	Chester	August 3	April 3 May 30 November 15	76
	Quincy	August 4	April 4	37
	Chico	August 4	April 5 December 7	145
	Oroville		May 31	33
Eel River	Ukiah	July 21	April 11 July 26 November 1	110
Yuba-Bear River	Nevada City	July 28	September 28	87
	Auburn		March 23	26
	Sacramento		November 29	47
Upper Mokelumne River & Stanislaus River	Jackson	August 16	March 13	33
	Sonora	August 17	July 11	29
Willow Creek & Kings River	Prather	August 10		2
	Bass Lake		July 12	38
	Fresno		January 31 ¹	12
Kern-Tule River & Carrizo Plain	Bakersfield	August 11		7
Totals		11 Meetings	23 Meetings	991 Individuals in Attendance

¹ This meeting occurred in 2007.

Stewardship Council, update the public regarding progress made on the planning process, and obtain their input and recommendations. Table 5-2 lists the locations and dates of the various community meetings hosted by the Stewardship Council in

2005 and 2006. The public outreach program for the LCP planning process will continue through 2007 and beyond as disposition packages for the Watershed Lands are prepared.

The community meeting format generally consists of an open house period, presentations, questions and answers, comments on existing conditions and concept maps, and discussion. During the open house, display tables representing watersheds and planning units are set up at different stations throughout the room, allowing meeting attendees to visit tables and comment directly on the maps of the planning unit concepts. Staff and land planning consultants are available to answer questions about the planning process. The presentation portion begins with a welcome and overview, after which members of the public are invited to ask questions and provide input and suggestions. The Stewardship Council's staff and Board members are present to answer questions about the planning process and other activities, including the Youth Investment Program. A public relations representative from PG&E is usually present as well to answer questions relevant to PG&E's operations and management of the lands.

5.2.3 County Boards of Supervisors; State and Federal Legislators

The Stewardship Council has communicated with the Boards of Supervisors of the 22 counties in which the Watershed Lands are located, as well as with state and federal legislators. A number of meetings and/or information packages were provided in response to requests from elected officials, and the Stewardship Council staff addressed a number of the county boards during regularly scheduled meetings. As with the community meetings, the Stewardship Council anticipates continuing this aspect of its outreach program as it moves into the disposition phase of the work.

5.2.4 Native American Entities (Meetings and Presentations)

In the fall of 2005, the Stewardship Council launched a targeted outreach effort to Native American entities across the Watershed Lands. In addition to noticing entities regarding community meetings, the Stewardship Council invited approximately 80 Native American entities to meet with staff and to engage in the

land planning process between 2005 and 2007. This effort met with some success, and to date a number of tribal organizations (particularly in the northern watersheds) have actively participated in Stewardship Council community meetings, workshops, and board meetings.

The Stewardship Council has held meetings with Native American entities across the watershed lands. In some cases representatives of particular entities have also attended community meetings and talked with staff and Board members; and representatives have participated in special events such as tours of Watershed Lands. In addition, Stewardship Council staff attended and staffed an exhibitor table at the 2006 Region 9 Tribal Environmental Protection Agency Conference in San Francisco.

The Stewardship Council has retained cultural resource specialists to assist in continuing this outreach in order to encourage Native American participation in the development of the disposition packages in Volume III.

5.2.5 Other Stakeholder Outreach

The Stewardship Council has met with and made presentations to an extensive number of agency, non-profit, and stakeholder groups throughout the Watershed Lands over the past two years. At the request of these entities, Stewardship Council staff has met with local, regional, State, and Federal agency representatives; non-profit organizations representing a broad cross section of environmental, land conservation, and natural resource interests; and home owner and lessee organizations. Again, this work will continue throughout the disposition phase of the Stewardship Council's work, and will expand to include more in-depth working sessions with interested parties regarding future land management and disposition.

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