

PRESERVE PROTECT ENHANCE



**ANNUAL REPORT
2020-2021**

How has this past year been?

Certainly it's been a year to remember, full of crises, more so for some than others: the Covid-19 pandemic, with its fear and losses; economic adversity; the increasing evidence of climate change's role in disastrous wildfires and heat storms; racial injustice; and more.

There was also good news: Marin Conservation League adjusted fast with new practices, so the pandemic had only a small impact on our work. We continued to advocate strongly for Marin's environment, on behalf of and thanks to you, our members. We also planned for Marin's and MCL's future; among other forward-looking initiatives, we began our response to nationwide demands for justice and equity.

To sum it up: 2020-2021 was a year of overcoming sometimes daunting challenges, continuing environmental advocacy, making new discoveries, and investing in the future of MCL.



This Annual Report describes highlights of our recent work to meet the environmental objectives and overall mission that guide our work. Please take a close look at those highlights: they show the sheer breadth of MCL's advocacy in Marin, from open space and parks to climate to water and watersheds and to agricultural land and more. What they do not reveal is the amount of research, discussion, writing time and effort that go into getting positions "right" so we can confidently advocate for them with our elected officials and their staff and agency leaders and staff—who listen to MCL because they know we do the necessary homework.

We also invested in Marin Conservation League's future — to continue its successful 87-year history. We completed and began to implement our new Strategic Plan 2021-23 aimed at improving our advocacy effectiveness. Among the overarching changes:

- » We acknowledged the rapidly changing environment in our updated mission statement.
- » We adopted a new vision statement—one of a biodiverse, resilient, equitable Marin.

- » And, we added two guiding principles: to integrate climate change understanding into all our work (which is already happening); and to work for environmental justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all our work, starting with in-depth workshops to deepen our understanding of the challenges and what we can do.

We are developing detailed advocacy positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, on reducing wildfire risk while preserving native habitats, and opening our unique public lands to diverse new visitors while protecting them from being "loved to death," and other issues. We'll also try to communicate better with you our members, the public, and environmental decision-makers. More on these and other changes soon.

We want this organization to continue its distinctive and effective role in the County for many more years, and with your continued help we can do that. I want to thank you, our members: You make Marin Conservation League's environmental work possible.

Robert Miller



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Photo credit, with thanks:

All wildlife and landscape photos by **Larry Scheibel**, unless otherwise noted.

After retiring in 2005, Larry began photographing wildlife on Mt. Burdell to document their decreasing populations over time. He presented a slide show of his wildlife chronicle to MCL's Parks and Open Space committee last February.

Staff

Martha Richter Smith
Office Administrator

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Marin Conservation League 2020 Financial Statement

The Statement of Activities summarizes MCL's 2020 financial results for MCL as a whole and for each of the separate funds maintained by MCL. The figures are from MCL's financial records and are not audited.

MCL has three funds: The Unrestricted Fund supports MCL's daily operations, advocacy, and education programs. The Temporarily Restricted Fund records MCL's management of funds which are dedicated to specific projects. Finally, the Board Restricted Fund records the income and expenditures of MCL's Legacy of the Land (LOL) endowment. In 2020, this Fund provided \$92,260 in support for MCL's activities.

This year the Unrestricted Fund, due to less than expected contributions and the cancellation of planned events due to the COVID pandemic, had an operating loss. The loss was accompanied by a decrease in the value of MCL's Unrestrictive investments.

The gain in the Temporarily Restricted Funds shows that this year the Friends of the Bayfront Meadow received more support than was spent on their project. During 2020 the Legacy of the Land increased value significantly because of market gains while also providing support for MCL's activities.

MCL thanks all of its members for their support during this difficult year.



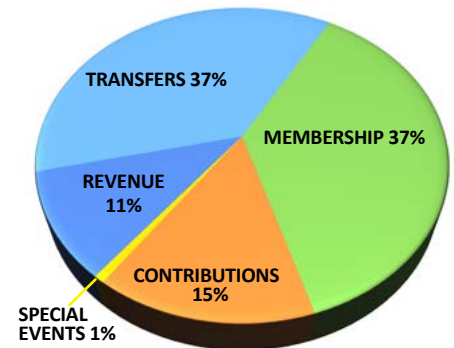
Richard Jensen, Treasurer

Statement of Activities (unaudited)

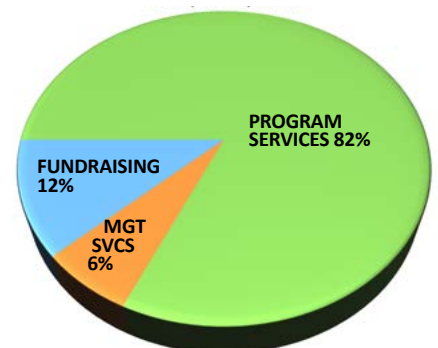
January 1 to December 31, 2020 Prepared from MCL Records

	Unrestricted (Operations)	Temporarily Restricted (Projects/Dedicated)	Board Restricted (Legacy of the Land)	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE				
Support				
Membership	\$93,473			\$93,473
Contributions	\$37,248	\$2,680		\$39,928
Special Events	\$1,830			\$1,830
Total Support	\$132,551	\$2,680		\$135,231
Revenue				
Interest & Dividend Income	\$27,446		\$35,557	\$63,003
Miscellaneous Income	\$0		\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$27,446		\$35,557	\$63,003
Transfers				
Legacy of the Land Support for Operations	\$92,259		(\$92,259)	
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$1,185	(\$1,185)	\$0	
Total Transfers	\$93,444	(\$1,185)	(\$92,259)	
Total Support, Revenue & Transfers	\$253,441	\$1,495	(\$56,702)	\$198,234
EXPENSES				
Program Services	\$223,319			\$223,319
Management Services	\$17,636			\$17,636
Fundraising	\$32,051			\$32,051
Total Expenses	\$273,006			\$273,006
Results from Operations	(\$19,565)	\$1,495	(\$56,511)	(\$74,581)
Investment Gain, Realized & Unrealized	\$8,734	\$0	\$252,284	\$261,018
Change in Equity 2020	(\$10,831)	\$1,495	\$195,773	\$186,437
Total Equity, Year End 2019	\$573,832	\$32,737	\$2,032,321	\$2,638,890
Total Equity, Year End 2020	\$563,001	\$34,232	\$2,228,094	\$2,825,327

2020 Income—Operations



2020 Expenses—Operations



Realizing our Goals – Fulfilling our Mission



Since its founding 87 years ago, Marin Conservation League's basic mission to "preserve, protect, and enhance Marin's natural assets" has remained overarching and constant, even as our work has taken many new directions in response to changing environmental conditions, new knowledge, and shifting priorities.

Our recent strategic planning guides MCL's future, and our sharpened goals help guide our current efforts to fulfill MCL's mission. This report revisits a year that began with the early alarms of Covid-19 and, without loss of momentum, proved to be one of our more productive years.

No doubt the Zoom platform enabled us to connect with a wider circle of members and the public and engage with a rich array of knowledgeable speakers. The following selected actions and accomplishments highlight MCL's work toward realizing our goals and mission during the past year 2020-2021.

🌿 PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH STEWARDING OUR PUBLIC LANDS

MCL was founded with a mission to preserve and care for Marin's scenic lands for the public, and we have stayed true to that charge. The **Parks and Open Space Committee** worked with public land managers on a variety of projects and actions. Four examples:

- » MCL closely tracked and supported projects in and around Muir Woods that are restoring health and habitats in the Redwood Creek watershed;



- » carefully evaluated the County's proposed road and trail improvement projects and advocated for changes that would protect sensitive resources and ensure safe experience for all open space visitors;

- » opposed permitting electric-bikes on natural surface roads and trails in public lands due to the unknown directions of this rapidly advancing technology and the impacts of e-bikes on the environment and on other visitors; and
- » conveyed appreciation for land managers who successfully managed and ensured visitor safety while protecting sensitive resources, even as the burden of Covid-induced visitation threatened to overwhelm public lands.

🌿 PRESERVE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND WATERSHEDS ACROSS ALL LANDS AND WATERS

The **MCL Land Use, Transportation, and Water Committee** for many years has advocated for protecting and restoring natural systems and watersheds that sustain urban and other environments. Some examples:



- » MCL tracked board actions and plans for both Marin Municipal and North Marin Water Districts for meeting the County's drought-challenged water supply needs;
- » advocated that Marin Water (MMWD) implement revised pricing and implement specific sanctions to support and encourage increased conservation of water;
- » opposed the City of Novato's approval of Costco's proposed 36-pump gas station on a site that lies between a vulnerable mitigation wetland and the Novato Creek floodplain;
- » supported Bay Conservation and Development Commission's plan to protect sensitive eel grass and bayland habitats from the impacts of anchor-outs in Richardson Bay.

🌿 RAPIDLY REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, INCREASE CARBON SEQUESTRATION, AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The **Climate Action Working Group** regularly convened Marin's climate activists and advocates focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Some actions:

- » MCL defended MCE Clean Energy against ongoing attacks by PG&E and other big Investor Owned Utilities;
- » encouraged MCE to invest its profits in innovations—in renewable energy and electrification technologies and programs, and in resiliency projects for underserved communities;

- » hosted MCE, PG&E and County managers, independent experts and other speakers' presentations and discussions on such topics as: microgrids, MCE Clean Energy's regulatory challenges and electric vehicle (EV) initiatives, methods of reducing building-related emissions, prospects for national legislation on greenhouse gas emission reductions, and more.

» PRIORITIZE PROTECTING THE NATURAL WORLD AND ECOSYSTEMS, AND PROMOTE EQUITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

MCL's **Land Use, Transportation and Water Committee** had a full advocacy agenda. Some examples:

- » MCL actively contributed to shaping the San Rafael General Plan and, over the past 10 years, the Novato General Plan, pressing for pro-environment language and policies in each;
 - » participated as a stakeholder in meetings on State Route 37 (SR37) and advocated that the SR37 Traffic Congestion Relief Project minimize disturbance to a functional tidal marsh that adapts to sea level rise;
- » participated as a stakeholder in Adapting to Rising Tide's (ART's) regional, multi-jurisdictional coordinated planning to adapt San Francisco Bay communities to sea level rise; and
- » encouraged County Community Development Agency staff to move forward with an Environmental Impact Report for redeveloping the former Golden Gate Seminary site in Strawberry.



» REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK WHILE PROTECTING NATIVE HABITATS

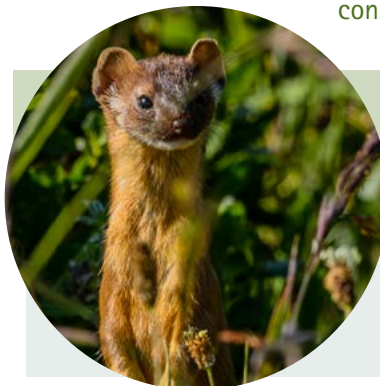
MCL's **Fire and the Environment Working Group** successfully supported Measure C, which created the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority, and has continued to play a leadership role in the roll-out of the Authority programs. Some examples:

- » MCL co-founded and co-led an Ecologically Sound Practices collaborative that has been developing "best practices" in vegetation management, working with the new Authority, FIREsafe Marin, Marin Master Gardeners, and others;
- » successfully promoted pro-environment language and ecological principles that were inserted into Marin County's Community Wildfire Prevention Plan; and
- » developed a comprehensive Fire Policy for MCL, including recommendations for fire management tools such as prescribed burns, grazing practices, and others, while minimizing damage to habitats and native vegetation.

» COLLABORATE ACROSS BOUNDARIES TO CONNECT NATURAL AND WORKING LANDSCAPES

MCL's **Agricultural Land Use Committee** continued to foster understanding between the environmental and agricultural ecosystems and communities. Some examples:

- » MCL supported amending the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan to retain historic cattle and dairy ranching as a valuable cultural resource, subject to environmental mitigations and best management practices, while protecting the remaining 75 percent of the park as wilderness and natural ecosystems; and
- » supported the progress of the Marin Carbon Project and the County in reducing greenhouse gases by promoting carbon farm plans that sequester carbon in rangeland soils and related conservation practices.



» PRESERVE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY OF NATIVE SPECIES AND HABITATS

Cutting across all the work that MCL does is a fundamental commitment to preserve and protect the biodiversity of Marin's lands and waters.

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MCL MISSION AT A GLANCE...

Marin Conservation League (MCL) works to preserve and protect the natural resource values and assets of Marin, focusing its action on issues of countywide significance or issues which may prove to be precedent-setting.

MCL places particular emphasis on those issues having important land use implications or impacts on Marin's environment, equity, and quality of life.

MCL looks for effective solutions through its own advocacy and educational efforts as well as through working in close collaboration with other organizations and the public to address major environmental challenges and concerns in Marin.

MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. This Annual Report is printed in Marin on recycled paper with soy ink. Text by Bob Miller, Nona Dennis, and Richard Jensen. Edited by Kate Powers. Design and production by Kiki La Porta. Photos by Larry Scheibel, Kate Powers, and Kirsten Nolan.