



## Planning for Ranching at Point Reyes National Seashore & Golden Gate National Recreation Area: End of a chapter?

by Nona Dennis

The most recent event in the ongoing chronicle of whether and under what conditions historic, multi-generational cattle and dairy ranching will continue on Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS, or Seashore) and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) occurred on April 22. Widely publicized in advance, the California Coastal Commission's (CCC) special hearing considered if the National Park Service's (NPS) proposed General Management Plans Amendments (GMPAs) for both parks offering up-to-20-year leases to ranches in the parks would be consistent with policies in the California Coastal Act that call for protecting coastal and marine resources in the State's Coastal Zone. The proposal before the Commission was NPS's "Preferred Alternative"—i.e., the continuation of ranching in the two parks, with the application

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## Climate change and managing Marin's water for drought

by Kate Powers

*MMWD Watershed, Mt. Tamalpais from Azalea Hill in Fairfax*



*Photo: Descom Studios, by Barbara Stenson*

As global temperatures rise and precipitation seasonality shifts, extreme weather events are now becoming the norm. Many factors contribute to every weather event, including extreme events like the current drought. Scientists using climate attribution methods, i.e., investigating specific links between climate and extreme weather events, have determined that the likelihood of some recent extreme events would have been essentially zero if not for the "last straw" of climate change. That is, the effects of a changing climate have in themselves enabled weather events to reach the extreme intensity we are witnessing.

### Why climate change attribution matters

These days we are experiencing climate change through the water cycle. Systems for water management throughout the world have been designed for and operated under the assumption

of "stationarity" – the idea that natural systems fluctuate within an unchanging envelope of variability. A 2008 publication in Science titled "[Stationarity is dead: Whither water management?](#)" challenged this assumption: "In view of the magnitude and ubiquity of the hydroclimatic change apparently now underway, we assert that stationarity is dead and should no longer serve as a central, default assumption in water-resource risk assessment and planning. Finding a suitable successor is crucial for human adaptation to changing climate." In other words, for purposes of water supply management planning, the past is no longer a good guide to the future.

Among other extreme events, like intense rainfall and severe wildfire, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forecasts:

- Extreme heat events becoming more frequent, of longer duration, and more severe.

*Climate change...drought cont. pg 4*



## "Hot droughts" can harm ecosystems and biodiversity

*Drought is on many minds these days in Marin.*

The last 16 months have been the driest in the Marin Municipal Water District's (Marin Water's) 143 years of records, with eastern Marin County joining parts of adjacent and nearby counties in the "Exceptional Drought" category (highest drought classification), according to the U.S. Drought Monitor (image, right), which estimates soil moisture levels. Marin Water's conservation appeals (see article this issue) are precursors for conservation appeals around California and much of the Southwest.

The current drought follows the 2000–2018 megadrought that was [one of two driest 19-year periods](#) in 1200 years. Lack of precipitation alone would have made it the 6th worst drought during the past twelve centuries, but climate change-driven intense heat added extreme aridity that sucked even more moisture from the soil and plants. This "hot drought" helped turn a run-of-the mill bad drought into an extra-punishing one.

Thinking about the impact of drought on our lives comes easily to us because it impacts our quality of life. While MCL cares deeply about these impacts on people, we also care deeply about extreme drought's impact on native species and habitats. And in fact, ecosystems — not we humans and our water infrastructure — are [most vulnerable](#).

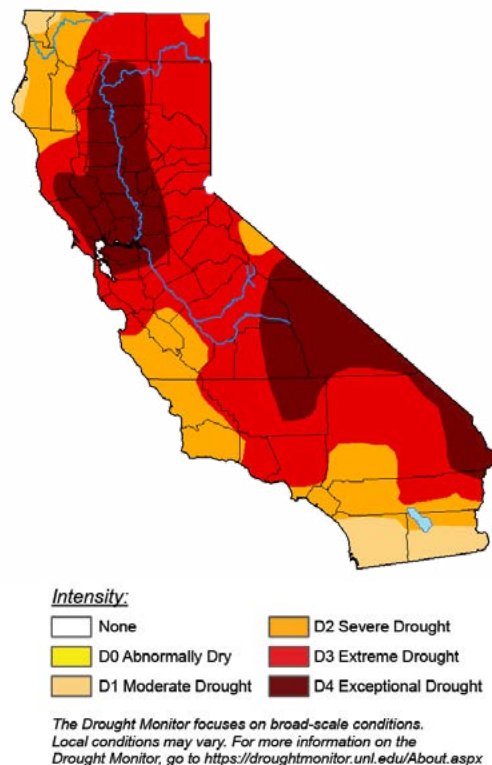
The good news: long-term droughts have come and gone many times in California, so native plants and animals have had millennia to endure and adapt or migrate—and some have become pretty tough survivors. The bad news: we may be in uncharted ecological territory, with heat potentially increasing at rates faster than native species have had to respond to in the past. And with "hot drought" comes extreme wildfire that can damage ecosystems rather than restore them as a "normal" fire might do, with opportunistic already-spreading pathogens and invasive species piling on.

The upshot: preserving and enhancing biodiversity of native species and habitats — the objective that cuts across all that we do at MCL — becomes that much harder.

The most effective responses will demand in-depth analysis, innovative policies, collaboration with land management agencies and among environmental organizations, and ardent advocacy for the right policies. Effective responses also will demand more of this Newsletter's readers: arguably there's never been a time when environmental advocates were more needed than now. We invite those not already members to join MCL and invite everyone to check out our issue committees that are increasingly addressing the many complex issues of fighting climate change at the same time as we learn how to adapt to it.

Robert Miller

### U.S. Drought Monitor: California



"Exceptional Drought", the highest drought classification, according to soil moisture estimates.

## Planning for Ranching at PRNS and GGNRA

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of a new zoning management framework, including extensive best practices and mitigation measures.

After twelve hours of debate, the Coastal Commission, by a five-to-four majority, voted to approve the NPS proposal as consistent with the Coastal Act, subject to conditions. To ensure that actions proposed by NPS would indeed improve observed poor water quality in coastal streams and estuaries, the CCC placed conditions on the Consistency Determination requiring a proposed overall strategy and timeline for assessing and improving water quality, monitoring, and annual reporting to CCC executive staff. The NPS agreed to the conditions after lengthy discussion;

MCL testified at the hearing and agreed with the decision.

The Coastal Commission exercises its authority over proposed actions on federal lands within carefully defined legal parameters. Its determinations are advisory only, although a federal agency's failure to adopt CCC recommendations can lead to a legal challenge from the State. Its authority to protect the State's resources in the Coastal Zone that might be impacted by "spill-over effects" from federal actions (in this case ranching operations as described in the GMPA) is explicit in the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the protected resources are spelled out in Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Plan. With or without the Commission's conditions, the

leases would be subject to existing federal and applicable state laws and policies and also to the new restrictive "zoning" and dozens of best practices and mitigations detailed in the GMPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

### Why the wide public interest?

An extensive media campaign has been ongoing for the past couple of years aimed at ousting active ranching from the Seashore. In large part, the campaign rests on a philosophical view that commercial ranching is not consistent with the "idea" of a national park. [See MCL November–December 2019 Newsletter Editorial "[MCL, ranches, and the future of Point Reyes National Seashore](#)," for a detailed legislative and policy history that supports continued ranching as one



## EDITORIAL

## Roads and trails on County preserves: Six years of progress

by Nona Dennis

If you are an outdoor person in Marin – and 14 months of Covid have proved that most of us are – it is likely that you have hiked, walked your dog, or ridden on a new or improved trail in one of the County's 34 open space preserves. It might be one of the first projects implemented under the County's [Road and Trail Management Plan \(RTMP\)](#) – the Octopus Trail in Camino Alto preserve, completed in 2016 to better connect fire roads that meet at Octopus Junction and are especially popular with off-leash dog walkers. Or the recently completed Ponti Ridge Trail, which has attracted the attention of mountain bikers around the Bay Area for its “flowy” three-mile ride from a top elevation of 1,200 feet. Originating in Pacheco Valle Open Space Preserve and traversing Marinwood Open Space, this multiuse trail was converted from a redundant steep and eroded emergency access road and connects with trails and roads on Lucas Valley and other nearby preserves.

These and many other projects would not have been possible without funds from Measure A, the tax measure passed by Marin voters in 2012 to promote parks, preserve agriculture, and protect natural habitats and other resources on County Open Space District preserves. A couple of clicks on the Marin County Parks Department (MCP) home page ([marinparks.org](http://marinparks.org)) and a scroll down will bring you to the impressive array of open space and parks projects and many other achievements that couldn't have happened without funds from Measure A.

### Road and Trail Management Plan: framework for open space planning

As a reminder, even before Measure A, two plans for the County's open space preserves were underway: a Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP), and a Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP). Together, they would guide future planning and management of natural resources and visitor facilities on the open space preserves. One purpose of the VBMP was to inventory vegetation types and classify (and map) each preserve into four “zones” in relation to their degree of biological diversity and sensitive habitats. The “Legacy Zone,” the biologically richest and most worthy of protection, was intended to inform and guide trail planning and other improvements away from sensitive areas.

Adopted in late 2014 after four years of public engagement, the RTMP – our focus here – outlined goals, policies, trail design standards, “best practices,” and a process for how to carry out future projects on the preserves. [What it did not offer was a vision](#) of what the preserves might look like in 15 years, nor provide a road map to a known endpoint. Instead, the RTMP established a central objective to “achieve continuous measurable reductions in physical and environmental impacts associated with the road and trail network.” One way to do this would be to offset potential

impacts from a proposed road or trail improvement project by decommissioning a roughly equivalent mileage of unsustainable social trails that lace the preserves and restoring native terrain and habitats.

Unfortunately, to its detriment (in our view), the RTMP also included a detailed decision “tool” – a mathematical model that purported to quantify characteristics of existing and proposed roads and trails as a means to measure over time the achievement of that objective. Basically, the tool took about two dozen quasi-numerical environmental, physical, and social criteria and attempted to score how these characteristics would “add up” potential impacts as “points” for each proposed project: the lower the score, the greater the reduction of impact. The decision tool was touted as innovative and objective.



Entrance to Octopus Trail, an important multiuse connector trail in Camino Alto Preserve, built with Measure A funds. Photo: Nona Dennis

### A rocky start

The first three years of implementing the RTMP were rocky. Draft maps of preserves, grouped in geographic regions, were presented in a series of public meetings to show which trails might be designated and possibly improved as “system” trails and which might be decommissioned as non-sustainable. Public meetings invited much debate; they were competitive, swarmed by different user groups with their own agendas. The decision “tool” proved to be complicated to apply and controversial in application. Transparency was inconsistent. Several new trail improvement projects, including conversions of narrow trails to multiuse, were challenged during CEQA review for failing to avoid endangered species, e.g., known nesting sites of northern spotted owl

# Climate change and managing Marin's water for drought from pg 1

- Drought events that will be more intense due to lower regional rainfall, decreased snowpack during warm winters, and increased evaporation.

The IPCC states further, "Responding to climate-related risks involves decision making in a changing world, with continuing uncertainty about the severity and timing of climate-change impacts ..." California water managers are now facing two questions: 1) how to meet the current drought crisis and 2) how to adapt urban water systems to a climate-changed future.

## Funds targeting California's drought emergency

In May, Governor Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency in 41 California counties due to extreme drought conditions. A drought declaration suspends existing rules governing storage, transport and quality of water. Other counties are expected to be added, including Marin. In a year of unexpected revenue surplus, the governor is working with the state legislature to pass a \$5.1 billion drought relief package as part of this year's budget. The package is expected to fund water infrastructure and conservation projects, help local agriculture, and protect fish and wildlife over the next four years.

On May 18, Marin's Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution declaring a local emergency and imminent threat of disaster due to drought conditions. According to the county administrator, "declaring the local emergency will provide increased opportunity for potential state and federal aid as drought conditions are expected to deteriorate in coming months ..."

Funds will be used to develop comprehensive and effective drought management strategies not only for the current crisis but also to improve and reinvent future water supply and improve system efficiencies. In addition to the state's budget package, two bonds are working their way through committee in the state legislature that would also, among other priorities, provide funds for water quality, drought and flooding, AB 1500 (\$1.75 billion for water) and SB 45 (\$1.47 billion).

## Marin Water and North Marin Water Districts' sources for supply

Unlike areas in California that can access groundwater, Marin is dependent largely on rainfall and local storage capacity. In response to the drought, both of Marin's water districts acted early to conserve water. Marin Municipal Water District (Marin Water) was the first

agency in the Bay Area to enact mandatory restrictions, with an emphasis on limiting outdoor irrigation and banning other outdoor uses, targeting a 40% reduction in summer use from May through October. Marin Water will transition some staff from other programs to commit to this conservation priority. North Marin Water District (NMWD) enacted mandatory 20% conservation beginning July 1 running through October; under the ordinance conservation of 20% is currently voluntary.

Seventy five percent of Marin Water's supply comes from rainfall on the Mount Tamalpais watershed.

Twenty five percent is imported via aqueduct from the Russian River through an agreement with Sonoma Water. In looking for ways to increase supply, Marin Water began pumping water from Phoenix Lake (usually a reserve reservoir) for customer use and similarly, although costly, is pumping water from Soulajoule to Nicasio reservoir. Also, Marin Water "optimized" as much of its allocation from Sonoma Water as it could up front this year and is working with Las Gallinas Sanitary District to enhance a recycled water distribution system for irrigation. Looking forward, the district is also developing a watershed runoff model to evaluate if adjustments can be made to Lagunitas Creek flow releases during winter months to increase water supply without impacting various life stages of sensitive aquatic species like the endangered coho salmon.

NMWD manages two water systems: one serving Novato and the other serving West Marin. The West Marin system relies on three wells. The Novato system is 70% supplied by the Russian River. Water from Stafford Lake makes up 22%, and recycled water, the remaining 8%. NMWD has spent \$30 million in recent years on pipeline

*Recycled water filters at the Novato Sanitary District (NSD) Wastewater Treatment Plant. NSD continues to meet Novato's demand for recycled water during the drought.*



photo: Sandeep Karkal

for recycled water for use in Novato at car washes and large commercial landscapes. NMWD's recycled water comes from both the Novato and Las Gallinas Sanitary Districts. It has access to more recycled water than it can currently distribute. NMWD partially relied on the Russian River aqueduct this year to raise its level of supply in Stafford Lake.

The Russian River's water resources are also perilously low this year. The Russian River originates in Mendocino County and derives supply from both the Eel River and the Russian River watersheds. In May, Sonoma County Supervisors supported a plan to pump 20% less water from the Russian River for the remainder of the year making 20% less water available to both Marin Water and NMWD going forward. The action was a condition for requesting authorization from the California State Water Resources Control Board to reduce river flows below the level usually required to support imperiled fish habitat, allowing more water to stay behind the dams at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino.

*Climate change cont. next column*



## Climate change *from previous page*

### Planning for an uncertain water future

Marin Water is currently exploring placing moratoriums on new water hookups. NMWD approved a ban on new or enlarged service connections after July 1 as part of its Amended Emergency Water Conservation Ordinance in April. Future plans include opportunities for expanding supply of recycled water for outdoor use. Others with neighboring water districts include water transfers, developing new pipelines, exploring temporary desalination plants, and capturing "atmospheric river" or heavy storm runoff for underground storage. Far from relying on any single prediction for the future, water managers will develop strategies based on sets of alternative assumptions from a variety of scenarios as they move forward.

The fact remains that less than one percent of the Earth's water is fresh and accessible. In addition to being finite, freshwater is in a state of global depletion. "Our water system is already strained", said Nicola Ulibarri, who researches water management at the University of California. "There just isn't enough water to go around and that to me signals we're going to need the whole system to change."

For now, however, far from "out of sight and out of mind," all eyes are cast toward the need to decrease consumption to stretch supply – the need to act consciously, each of us paying close attention to our own water use and taking every opportunity to think of ways to save water where we can. "Conserve!" is the renewed rallying cry. 🌱

## Water conservation – *at the other end of the pipe*

by Nona Dennis

**N**o one needs to be persuaded that we are in the early stages of historic drought! At a household level, in addition to sharply curtailing outdoor landscape irrigation, we are beginning to consolidate dirty laundry, hone our navy showers to three minutes, and "let it mellow, if it's yellow" before flushing.

These measures to conserve water come with impacts that are largely hidden from view: we tend to "flush and forget!" Whether we call it sewage or wastewater, potable water has transitioned into used water, but with our enhanced conservation efforts, at dramatically reduced flows and carrying more concentrated solids and other household contaminants.

Of these two effects, reduced flows may be the more immediate cause for concern. The problem begins with household lateral sewer lines, whose capacity may already be compromised by age and obstructions like tree roots. Hydraulic force is the primary mechanism for conveying used water to local sewer mains. The laterals rely on pulses of wastewater to limit accumulations of grease and other soft blockages. Without this mechanism, such blockages can accumulate and harden, leading to possible unsanitary backup into showers, never a pleasant surprise.

Magnify the effect of reduced flow a thousand times as sewage from the laterals is collected by larger pipes. Again, hydraulic force, aided initially by gravity and then by massive pumps, conveys it through miles of pipes in varying states of age and condition – 200 miles in the Ross Valley – toward its treatment and ultimate disposal (or recycle) destinations. Even with "normal" flows, keeping these pipelines clear of obstructions is a full-time maintenance occupation, requiring regular flushing with hydro-jets and ongoing repair and replacement. Ironically, a drought-induced dropping water table in the surrounding environment can exacerbate the need for maintenance; water-starved tree roots will find any available moisture, as from leaking sewer pipes, adding further obstructions to be cleared. The consequence of blockage can be unexpected sewage overflows into the environment.

Along the way, the concentration of contaminants comes into play. Every drop of wastewater must be pumped to the treatment plant. As the already reduced flow of wastewater slows before reaching the pumps, the residence time for the concentrated contaminants to stagnate lengthens, producing gases like odorous sulfide and methane, at a minimum a public nuisance. Aging metal and concrete pipes are more susceptible to corrosion, requiring more frequent maintenance. A similar phenomenon occurs as the waste stream slows as it reaches the treatment plant. The prolonged stagnation of concentrated influent creates gases and invites corrosion and further maintenance.

Wastewater treatment, disposal, and/or recycle facilities open up an entirely different suite of possible impacts, but generally can be adjusted to manage the varying flows and chemistry of influent. That is a story for another time. . . A take-away: just as we plan future infrastructure to accommodate diminishing fresh water supplies, so will we need to plan for future wastewater and recycling operations and infrastructure to adapt to more frequent conservation. 🌱

Marin Water's supply is dependent on local rainfall and storage capacity.



photo: Kiki La Porta

For current information on water use restrictions and conservation rebates and incentives, see [Marin Water](#) and [North Marin Water Districts'](#) conservation webpages.

## Planning for Ranching at PRNS and GGNRA *from page 2*

component of a park that is distinctive, if not unique, among the diversity of all national park units.] To support its philosophy, the campaign has selectively portrayed examples of flaws in operations and featured common but spatially limited practices in which dairy cattle are concentrated. In the process, the campaign has demonized both ranching and ranchers, in particular dairies, whose cattle have been grazing some 18,000 acres of "pastoral land" on the Seashore for multiple generations, leaving the majority of the Seashore as natural and wilderness.

The public comment campaign was highly effective on both local and national stages, prompting some 45,000 comments to the Commission hearing from around the country. It did not, however, explain the limited authority of the CCC or the purpose of the hearing. The vast majority of those comments opposed a single element in the GMPA – i.e., a controversial plan to manage one of the three tule elk herds that occupy parts of the Seashore by periodic culling. The elk herds, in fact, fall outside the CCC's jurisdiction over coastal and marine resources in the Coastal Zone. Tule elk have been managed on the Seashore for more than 40 years by the NPS in close consultation with the CCC's "sister" trustee agency – the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, who manage elk throughout the state.

The objections to the elk plan reflect a widely held view of wildlife that empathizes with individual animals rather than in terms of managing wildlife at species and population-levels within the context of ecosystems. The NPS proposed elk management plan, developed in collaboration with State Fish and Wildlife experts, will continue to support healthy populations of elk in the park.

### When did public opposition to ranching surface?

Although there is no direct connection between the Drakes Bay Oyster Company's (DBOC) 40-year Right-of-Use end date on November 30, 2012, and later events concerning the future of the ranches, one legislative action three years earlier would lead indirectly to the later events. That is the maneuver by Senator Dianne Feinstein in late 2009 to attach a "rider" to an Interior Department budget appropriations bill (Section 124 of Public Law 111-88). The rider granted the Secretary of the Interior authority to extend a

special use permit to the DBOC for a period of 10 years beyond its impending expiration date. In so doing, the rider prompted the need for NPS to prepare an EIS on the proposed 10-year extension, a process that took roughly three years. z

On the eve of DBOC's scheduled permit expiration, then-Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, exercising the authority granted him by the rider, issued an order on November 29, 2012, not to extend the oyster farm's permit but rather to allow it to expire, thus ending the DBOC Right-of-Use. In the same order, the Secretary also directed the NPS to "... pursue extending the terms of agri-

The EIS emerged as a very thorough study of ranching, its impacts, and a comprehensive inventory of standards, best practices, and mitigation measures to correct practices that had been identified by ranch opponents.

culture permits from 10 to 20 years to provide greater certainty and clarity for the ranches operating within the national park's pastoral zone and to support the continued presence of sustainable ranching and dairy operations." He noted that "Ranching operations have a long and important history on the Point Reyes Peninsula and will be continued at the Point Reyes National Seashore."

### Ranches are assured continued presence in the parks.

Secretary Salazar's authority, granted by the rider, thus proved to be determinative. Until that order, there was little obvious public opposition to continuing ranching on the Seashore, although long-standing opposition was active in some corners. The succession of events since the Secretary's order has been complex, initially complicated by the oyster farm's challenges to its permit expiration and the need for the NPS to defend itself in those legal battles. The forward trajectory of the NPS, however, was clear: the future would be focused on implementing the Interior Director's order to support continued ranching by preparing necessary documentation to extend longer leases.

As a first step, NPS initiated a Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental

Assessment. As the plan went forward, open opposition to ranching surfaced, and the NPS was legally challenged for failing to complete an unfinished PRNS General Management Plan or to complete an EIS. The suit was eventually settled, with the most immediate requirement being the preparation of an amendment to the GMP and an EIS, focused on the ranch portion of the Seashore and including 10,000 acres of cattle ranches in the Northern District of GGNRA, under PRNS management. The settlement agreement also stipulated that the EIS should include three alternatives ranging from eliminating all ranching from the Seashore, to eliminating the six dairies, to reducing the total area devoted to ranching. Many other detailed analyses would be worked into the NEPA document that ensued. Although constrained by time and page limits imposed by the Trump administration, the EIS emerged as a very thorough study of ranching, its impacts, and a comprehensive inventory of standards, best practices, and mitigation measures to correct practices that had been identified by ranch opponents.

### Current status and next chapter

Following release of the draft EIS on the GMPA, the NPS dutifully responded to the thousands of comments. The Final EIS was published in September 2020. As preordained by Salazar's order, the EIS' "Preferred Alternative" (GMPA) is to continue ranching at roughly existing levels on the two parks, but with many new conditions. In determining Consistency of the GMPA with the California Coastal Act, the CCC added more conditions, and the process advanced another step toward conclusion. NPS expects the Record of Decision (ROD) to be published in the Federal Register sometime this summer (2021). MCL's hope is that as this chapter closes, a new one can open. Through its Agricultural Land Use and Parks & Open Space committees, MCL looks forward to supporting the NPS as staff begins working with ranchers to incorporate dozens of constructive and environmentally restorative practices into individual ranch operating agreements. The ranchers will receive the assurances that enable them to invest in necessary infrastructure and other improvements, and they will continue to play a significant cultural, scenic, and economic role among other Seashore resources. 🌿



## Roads and trails on County preserves from page 3



County Parks Director Max Korten cuts the ribbon opening new bridge over "The Plunge" in Loma Alta Preserve. Photo: Nona Dennis

(Fairway Trail, in Camino Alto preserve); or for violating a mapped "legacy zone" (Lower Hunt Camp Trail, in San Geronimo preserve); or for posing a new hazard by opening a neighborhood trail to mountain bikes (Bob Middagh Trail in Alto Bowl preserve).

Nonetheless, by further mitigating impacts and sidelining some proposed projects, MCP managed to implement less controversial ones. Among them, the Horse Hill Trail was realigned to replace a steep eroded trail for safe use by pedestrians and equestrians; a new bridge was installed and habitat restored to improve a multiuse trail (the "Plunge") on Old Railroad Grade in Loma Alta Preserve; the badly eroded one-mile Loop Trail for hikers and equestrians in Roy's Redwoods was resurfaced; five small ephemeral stream crossings were upgraded on Old White Hill and Fox Hollow Trail in Loma Alta preserve to reduce sedimentation; sections of Irving Fire Road and Glen Fire Road were rebuilt to improve drainage and correct erosion. And a comprehensive redesign of Wayfinding Signs was initiated,

with installation throughout the preserves now 95 percent complete.

### Sea change in approach to the RTMP, and public response

As the RTMP went into its 4th year, it became less contentious and more collaborative. A recently hired senior planner, with strong natural resource credentials and experience in public trails, took over as manager of the RTMP program and initiated new strategies to better engage the public. Among others, he reached out to Marin's prominent environmental organizations, including those that had previously challenged projects on CEQA grounds, and initiated an Environmental Roundtable. By focusing on environmental issues rather than user conflicts, the group was able

to engage with staff in early-stage planning and guide projects toward environmentally acceptable solutions.

Monthly meetings of the Roundtable on proposed projects continue today, and the results are noteworthy, e.g., the realigned multi-use Eagle Rim Trail on the upper slopes of Mt. Burdell Preserve. Other projects, following several years of collaborative study, are in planning and/or environmental review, notably the realignment and improvement of three trails on the "Bahia portion" of Rush Creek

Preserve that will improve access for equestrians and reroute a long-standing, unsustainable social trail away from sensitive blue oak woodland habitat.

Fortunately, the RTMP has proved to be a "living document," as staff initially claimed it should be. It has become more pliable and responsive to public desires and concerns, without losing sight of its fundamental environmental objectives. The decision tool has dropped out of sight, replaced by a more empirical and collaborative approach. Nonetheless, challenges remain. Not every stakeholder is bound to be satisfied! In particular, trails touted as "multiuse" for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikes, are not perceived as safe by all users – e.g., the new Ponti Ridge Trail. Mountain bikers do not want steep, unsustainable but technically challenging social trails to be decommissioned. And even an environmentally well-designed project can meet with local opposition – e.g., the proposed bridges and trail improvement project in Cascade Canyon Preserve. Designating a trail system that will consolidate the many social trails and avoid widely distributed sensitive habitats on Ring Mountain Preserve is proving to be especially complex. Overall, however, the RTMP is working as it should, and Measure A is providing the essential means! 🌱



The new Ponti Ridge trail – narrow trails touted as "multiuse" are not perceived as safe by all users. Photo: Robert Eichstaedt

## Meet MCL's 2021

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDEES!



### JEREMY LEWIS

#### Youth Award for Environmental Leadership

Jeremy is a student at the College of Marin (COM) working towards a bachelor's degree in environmental policy with a focus on climate change. Like many of Marin's environmental advocates, Jeremy was inspired by classes he took in COM's Life and Earth Sciences Department. Jeremy describes himself as curious; he enjoys figuring things out and being part of a solution. He took a Green New Deal Crash Course offered by the Sunrise Movement and over the past couple of years has turned his interests into actions. As Vice President of COM's Environmental



Action Club, he organized several beach clean-ups of 20 – 30 participants at Stinson, Rodeo, and Ocean Beaches. As the pandemic took hold, Jeremy helped convert some of the Club's activity into innovative online environmental action. He played a crucial role in getting a fossil fuel divestment initiative endorsed by many of COM's clubs and organizations and eventually passed by COM's administration. He ran a student political action campaign that was instrumental in electing retired professor Dr. Paul da Silva to COM's Board of Trustees. Jeremy is also a peer tutor at COM and president of the Alpha Gamma Sigma Honor Society through which he has served the community at COM's Indian Valley Campus organic farm, Sausalito Beautiful, and Marin County Parks.

Jeremy grew up in Pocatello, Idaho. As the first in his family to attend college, he acknowledges that college has shaped his life, helped him find his passion, and taught him the importance of

being involved in the local community. Jeremy is planning to attend law school and to pursue a career in environmental policy. COM professor Joe Mueller, who nominated Jeremy for this award, said, "It is clear to me that Jeremy's commitment to the environment is lifelong."

#### What achievement do you feel most proud of or has been the most gratifying to you?

"I am super proud of all my achievements throughout my college education, most notably I am proud of being awarded the Virginia Coffey Scholarship, which honors the top three students in California Community Colleges for academic excellence."

#### Do you have a vision, or hope, for the future that you would like to share?

"I would love to see people become stewards of the planet, and I have hope that we will solve the climate crisis."

### CHRIS CHOO

#### Ted Wellman Water Award

Chris is the principal watershed planner for the Marin County Department of Public Works. By bringing science and technical information on sea level rise, flood protection, and watershed restoration, Chris provides support to Marin communities and the public, increasing awareness of the issues associated with climate change, and helping communities embrace opportunities to increase their resilience. Chris currently manages BayWAVE, the County's sea level rise planning and adaptation program for Marin's bay shoreline. She helped launch the [www.MarinWatersheds.org](http://www.MarinWatersheds.org) and [www.MarinSLR.org](http://www.MarinSLR.org) websites and she supports regional water resource planning efforts.



near the San Gabriel River. She describes the San Gabriel as "an Army Corps concrete channel built to control the river from floods that could send car-sized boulders downhill." She remembers feeling saddened that the river had been made so unnatural. Her favorite place was the beach, and she enjoyed being around water, but she knew she wanted to leave L.A. and be closer to nature.

Her relationships to water and her love of the wild grew into responsibilities. After receiving her B.S. from UC Berkeley in Conservation and Resource Studies, Chris began her career as a watershed education coordinator, working at The Bay Institute and STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) for Laurette Rogers. That's where she met Liza Prunuske and Liz Lewis. She later worked for both, first as a project manager for the environmental planning firm, Prunuske Chatham, then as a watershed planner at the County's DPW under her current boss, Liz Lewis. Coincidentally, Laurette, Prunuske Chatham, and Liz have all been honored as previous Ted Wellman Water Awardees. Chris said, "it's been great to work for, and with, so many incredible women" who "really did shape not only

my viewpoints, but also help me grow and learn to do so much of this work."

#### Do you have a vision, or hope, for the future that you would like to share?

"I struggle with the enormity of the challenges of rising sea levels that lie ahead. I wonder how we're going to protect future generations, our unique habitats, the species that live here. My hope is for a future where we plan for better communities: more equitable, more just, and more climate resilient. We have a range of challenges, but we can build resiliency. There's so much to do and everyone should do something! Last year gave me hope: we were able to shift our way of living so quickly, we gave up our own desires for the common good, we stood up to racism and inequity, we reduced our footprint. We can start building better places to live with more housing, walkable neighborhoods, great public transit (way less car dependency, even on electric cars!), local food, and sustainable energy. We need to do these things for our planet and ourselves. I work in Marin because I believe this is the place where this will happen."



At its Annual Meeting in April, MCL celebrated seven individuals whose environmental achievements captured our attention and deserve our appreciation. MCL's annual Environmental Awards serve two purposes:

- 1) to shine a light on each awardee's outstanding accomplishments; and*
- 2) to further inspire all of us in the many ways we choose to advance environmental and conservation goals.*

We asked each of the 2021 awardees, profiled below, to answer a couple of questions about themselves and their vision. Their responses follow.

## TERRIE GREEN

### Marin Green Award for Environmental Leadership

Terrie serves as Director of Shore Up Marin City. Shore Up Marin is a multi-racial environmental coalition that advocates for the equitable inclusion of low-income communities in areas of planning and community preparedness for environmental disasters. Early in 2019, Shore up Marin initiated a split into Shore Up San Rafael and Shore Up Marin City. Terri works with Marin City residents and allies to protect Marin City from flooding and sea level rise, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and promoting equitable community process.

Terrie is a second-generation Marin City resident. She has been at the forefront of advocating for social and environmental justice for most of



her adult life. She has worked on the civil rights movement; was a member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense; and has advocated for tenants' rights and equal rights for women. She holds a B.A. in Political Science and Urban Studies from San Francisco State and a health worker certification from City College of San Francisco. Terrie co-founded both Marin City Health and Wellness Center and the Marin City Charter School. She has vast experience in community development leadership, program development and nonprofit management. She has served as either director or as a board leader for organizations such as Marin City Community Services District, the Marin Food Policy Council, Marin City Parent Academy and the Step 11 Educational and Vocational Program, to name a few.

### Do you have a vision, or hope, for the future that you would like to share?

"Shore Up Marin City and Richardson Bay Audubon are working together right now to restore the historic wetland in Marin City. We are calling this the Marin City Habitats for Life

project." This urban wetland (in Marin City) is currently a retention pond with outdated drainage infrastructure and a bottom filled with sediment. With tidal flooding and sea level rise increasing, individuals living in Marin City worry about flooding, water contamination, and emergency preparedness. The roads to the highway are blocked occasionally due to flooding, affecting traffic and cutting off Marin City's access for fire and emergency services. The project will provide support for Marin City residents and engage the community with a green space for nature. It will also help enhance the Richardson Bay ecosystem, which supports migrating birds.

"This is a great opportunity for win-win solutions that enable Marin City residents and others in the county and beyond to live, work, and visit our community. My hope is that others will want to be part of this life-changing restoration effort. Please feel free to join us by contacting me: [terriegreen1@comcast.net](mailto:terriegreen1@comcast.net)."

## CYANE DANDRIDGE

### John M. McPhail Jr. Green Business Award

Cyane is both founder and executive director of two nonprofit environmental organizations, Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI), and the Marin School of Environmental Leadership (MarinSEL). SEI works to build leaders who will drive sustainability solutions. Its initiatives include career development for emerging climate professionals, creating and supporting campuses as living labs, and creating a diverse curriculum and library resources on environmental sustainability and valuable career skills. MarinSEL is a project-based, environmentally focused program at Terra Linda High School that emphasizes development of 21st century leadership skills. MarinSEL will be graduating its seventh class this year. By connecting students, residents, government officials, and the workforce that design sustainability programs,



Cyane and her organizations have led teams in developing a sustainability leadership pathway from elementary school to early career, and in identifying and implementing opportunities for communities to reach their sustainability goals. In accepting her award, Cyane said, "Thousands of parents and students and community partners have worked with our Marin School of Environmental Leadership as well as thousands of partners with our Climate Corps program and our Climate Corps Fellows. The work that I'm being recognized for today really should be shared by all those truly amazing individuals."

Born in Indiana, Cyane lived in several states and countries before settling in the Bay Area. One constant in her childhood, though, was spending every summer and several winters in the town of Wellfleet, on Cape Cod National Seashore. Cyane said that attending The Putney School, a progressive high school in Vermont, "really put me on a path of innovation and risk taking and discovery." She went on to receive a B.A. in Physics from Reed College in Oregon and a M.S. in Building Technology from MIT, where she worked on policy and technology related to energy efficiency. That training put her on a

path to becoming a pioneer and thought leader in launching leading edge approaches to federal energy efficiency strategies, including the EPA's Energy Star program.

### Do you have a vision, or hope, for the future that you would like to share?

"My vision is a resilient world where all communities thrive. In order for that to happen we need to put a different emphasis on what success looks like— having so much focus purely on monetary gain and ignoring the impacts from that gain has led us to the state we are in. We need to make sure there is full accountability for every aspect of our decisions. We need to honor the beliefs, experiences, voices, viewpoints, and values of all individuals. We need to have equitable access to rigorous project-based education and teach softer skills related to leadership and innovation so we can have a larger community of problems solvers who recognize a need for equitable solutions."

## JEFF STUMP

## The Marin Conservation League Volunteer Award

This year, Jeff initiated and assumed leadership of MCL's Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) ad hoc committee. He inspired many board members to complete the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso's Anti-Racism Training and led inclusion of equity goals in MCL's recently updated strategic plan. Jeff was a core member of the team that led the strategic plan update and he chaired MCL's board nominating committee. Jeff is also a co-chair of MCL's Agricultural Land Use issues committee.

Jeff and his family lived in Spain and West Germany before moving to California, settling near Lodi and the Mokelumne River. He attributes his time spent exploring the riparian landscape of the Mokelumne as well as the Sierra Nevada mountains to creating the foundation for his love of nature and the environment. Jeff has a B.S. in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from UC Davis. Jeff describes himself as a lifelong conservationist working at the forefront of land conservation, stewardship, science, and policy. "We all need to have the opportunity to experience our natural world!" Jeff has worked as a Legislative Coordinator for the California Coastal Commission; as Project Director for the American Land Conservancy; and as Easement Program Director and most recently as Director of Conservation for Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT).

## Was there one particular experience that influenced your work, your life, or the commitments you've made?

"My six years working for Peter Douglas [previous Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Awardee] at the California Coastal Commission was incredibly formative for my career. He was a good friend and mentor and helped me solidify my interest in the permanent protection and stewardship of land. I am also a big fan of Edward Abbey and Marc Reisner; both authors inspired my journey."

## What achievement do you feel most proud of or has been the most gratifying to you?

"One of the highlights was the protection of a property in Los Angeles known as "Vista Pacific" in 2002 while working for the American Land Conservancy. The property is located pretty much in the center of Los Angeles. The property was the linchpin of CA State Parks' Vision for a large park in the Baldwin Hills. Despite the best efforts of folks in the neighborhood, the owner perfected his entitlements and the bulldozers were running. Despite a very short time-frame and some very complicated issues, we were able to purchase the property for State Parks, and it is now a very popular park known as the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. It was especially heartening to go back and see how many people are using it."



## BURR HENEMAN

## The MCL Special Award for Environmental Achievement

MCL reserves its Special Award for Environmental Achievement for those who show significant impact and contribution to conservation. This year a former MCL board member and very deserving individual was recognized. Speaking of his time in the 1970s on the MCL Board, Burr shared, "I had as examples, gods: like Peter Behr, Grace and Ted Wellman, and youngsters such as Nona Dennis, Susan Stompe, Phyllis Faber, and others." Burr became one of those examples through his own volunteer and professional career. He served as Executive Director of Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PBRO), now Point Blue, in the 1980's. He co-founded Commonweal and directed their Ocean Program. He contributed to the dawning of "marine debris" as an umbrella issue and area of conservation. His role in new ideas and ventures has led to foundational concepts and policies for coastal and ocean conservation. He had a direct hand in the passing and implementation of the Marine Life Management Act and as a result was honored in 1999 as a Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation, and he was a founding board member of Island Conservation. His focus has included fisheries management reform, oil spill prevention and response, and global sea bird conservation. A full account of Burr's work reads as a veritable who's who in marine conservation over the past 50 years.

## WHAT 3 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

*"Climate change is the only issue. No conservation issue I have been involved with matters compared to it. No marine species or ecosystem is safe from its effects."*

During most of Burr's important childhood years, he and his family lived on the beach on a Key on the Gulf Coast of Florida. They had no near neighbors so as soon as Burr could swim, he spent most of his time in and under the water. The big influencers in his life were fish, birds, sea turtles, and the South Florida environment. "All those childhood years soaking in salt water made it inevitable that I'd eventually live near the sea and find a calling that was related", he said. "One other childhood experience stands out for me. The mangrove forests that I played in were bulldozed and turned into waterfront lots. I think witnessing that made my connection with conservation inevitable."

Burr offered this advice during MCL's annual meeting, "Volunteering has always been an important part of my environmental career. I moved to Marin 50 years ago. I was working in television news at the time, and I was ready for a change. I was able to volunteer a lot in those days: for MCL, for PRBO, the Native Plant Society and others. Those years were like a very practical graduate school program for me. Two quick examples of where that led. My first oil spill was 50 years ago, volunteering to clean seabirds. Years later, I was deeply involved with the Exxon Valdez oil spill and oil spill policy with the Ocean Conservancy, and again during the Persian Gulf War oil spills and fires, consulting for the Saudi Wildlife Agency. Also 50 years ago, my first volunteer seabird research was on the Farallones Islands for PRBO. A few years later, I became PRBO's CEO. And just a few years ago, the Packard Foundation invited me to design and launch their global seabird conservation program. I'd like to think there's still a pathway from volunteer to professional career or career change, and that there might be some in the MCL family on that path. I'd love to encourage them as I was, by MCL and others."

## Of your many achievements, which are you most proud of gratified by?

"I hope that three of the California laws I wrote will have lasting benefit for marine conservation. All three were path-breaking at the time.

- California's law to fully protect great white sharks was the first legislation anywhere outside of South Africa to protect that apex predator.
- At the other end of the food chain, I drafted the California law that was the first in the U.S. to prohibit commercial fishing for krill, keeping that forage species fully available for the fish, marine mammals, and seabirds that depend on them. Protection for krill has since been adopted for the U.S. west coast and for white sharks nationally.
- In 1997, I was fortunate to be asked by then-Assemblyman Fred Keeley to negotiate, draft, and then help the state launch his Marine Life Management Act. That law has revolutionized the way California manages recreational and commercial fisheries, most importantly by requiring fishing to be managed as though ecosystems matter.

One more item: the Packard Foundation's global seabird program, now 15 years old, is permanently restoring islands and their ecosystems, especially in the Pacific Ocean. The primary strategy has been eliminating destructive introduced species. It was such an honor to be asked to design the program."







## SUSAN STOMPE

### The Peter Behr Award for Lifetime Achievement

The Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement

Award is named for the city councilman, county supervisor and state senator, in honor of his legacy of service. Susan was on MCL's Board in the 1980s when Behr was president. "He was such an inspiration" she said. "I'm so honored to be on the list now with him and with those that received the award previously. This really means a lot to me." Susan's life's work matches what this award represents. As one of her supporters explained "She is a fervent believer in giving back to her community and in many cases became the leader of the groups she worked with. Other people often credit her with being their inspiration to become involved in their communities."

Susan is both a retired businesswoman and a Novato activist. She has been a force in conservation and civic affairs for most of her life. She



has worked to preserve both local democracy and the Novato and Marin landscapes she loves. Her list of public service is dizzying. Susan has served Novato twice as mayor, and as councilmember, planning commissioner and co-chair of Novato Clean and Green Day. She has also served on the boards of The Olompali People, Marin Baylands Advocates, League of Women Voters, Environmental Forum of Marin, Novato Human Needs Center, and Sierra Club/San Francisco Bay Chapter, to name some.

Susan is one of MCL's most dedicated and longest-serving board members. In addition to serving multiple terms as MCL's President, she has also served as vice president and secretary. She continues as longtime Chair of both MCL's North Marin Unit and Land Use, Transportation and Water committees and she coordinates MCL's annual Coastal Cleanup efforts.



*Rick Fraites, Susan, and Bernie Meyers, members of MCL's North Marin Unit keep the MCL island on South Novato Blvd. looking good.*

Susan was raised in the Midwest, in northern Illinois and central Wisconsin. After she was married, she moved quite a bit, including to England, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho before landing in California. She and her husband, Brian, have lived in Novato for more than 50 years. Susan has poured her heart and soul into Novato and Marin, driven by her Midwest work ethic to make this a better place to live.

### Was there one particular experience that influenced your work, your life, or the commitments you've made?

"Looking back, I think family examples were strong influences on my approach to community involvement. I was close to my maternal grandmother who was widowed when her daughters were 16 and 18. She started a business to help her daughters go to college and was very active in local organizations. My mom became a Girl Scout leader so the girls in our small community could go to summer camp. Dad was a voracious reader who could answer any question - on the rare occasion he couldn't, he researched it. I joined the League of Women Voters when I was pregnant with our second son - an incredible escape from baby talk. The League became my go-to organization on our next four relocations. It was a good way to meet people and to become familiar with the local government."

### Of your many achievements, which do you feel most proud of or has been the most gratifying to you?

"Volunteering at Olompali State Historic Park with The Olompali People, helping to set up the Visitor Center and interpretive displays over 25 years was satisfying. Helping to start the Novato Clean & Green Day and running it for 25 years gave an annual Earth Day clean-up/anti-litter educational opportunity for the Novato community. But helping to stop Hamilton Field from becoming a regional airport was the most complicated, long term political issue with the most significant outcome. It took about 12 years and four ballot measures, plus a committee of regional agencies, on which I represented the city of Novato, to put the proposal away. The flight line is now under a restored tidal wetland which is not afraid of sea level rise."

### Do you have a vision, or hope, for the future that you would like to share?

*Although I am dismayed that my generation is leaving the world to our grandkids and future generations in sad shape, I am thrilled to see our young folks taking charge, addressing reality, embracing science and committing to improvement!*

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*Board of Directors meetings are held at 6:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.*

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**Issue Committee Meeting Schedule**  
(subject to change—check website)

**Land Use and Transportation:**

1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of the month, 10:00 AM—12:00 PM

**Parks and Open Space:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of the month, 3:00 PM—5:00 PM

**Fire and Environment Working Group:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon. of the month, 3:00 PM—5:00 PM

**Climate Action Working Group:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Fri. of the month, 9:00 AM—11:00 AM

**Agricultural Land Use:**

meets quarterly; North Marin Unit: Check website for times

Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance Marin County's natural assets. MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All contributions and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*Editor: Kate Powers*

*Design & Production: Kiki La Porta*

*Printed in Marin on recycled paper with soy ink.*

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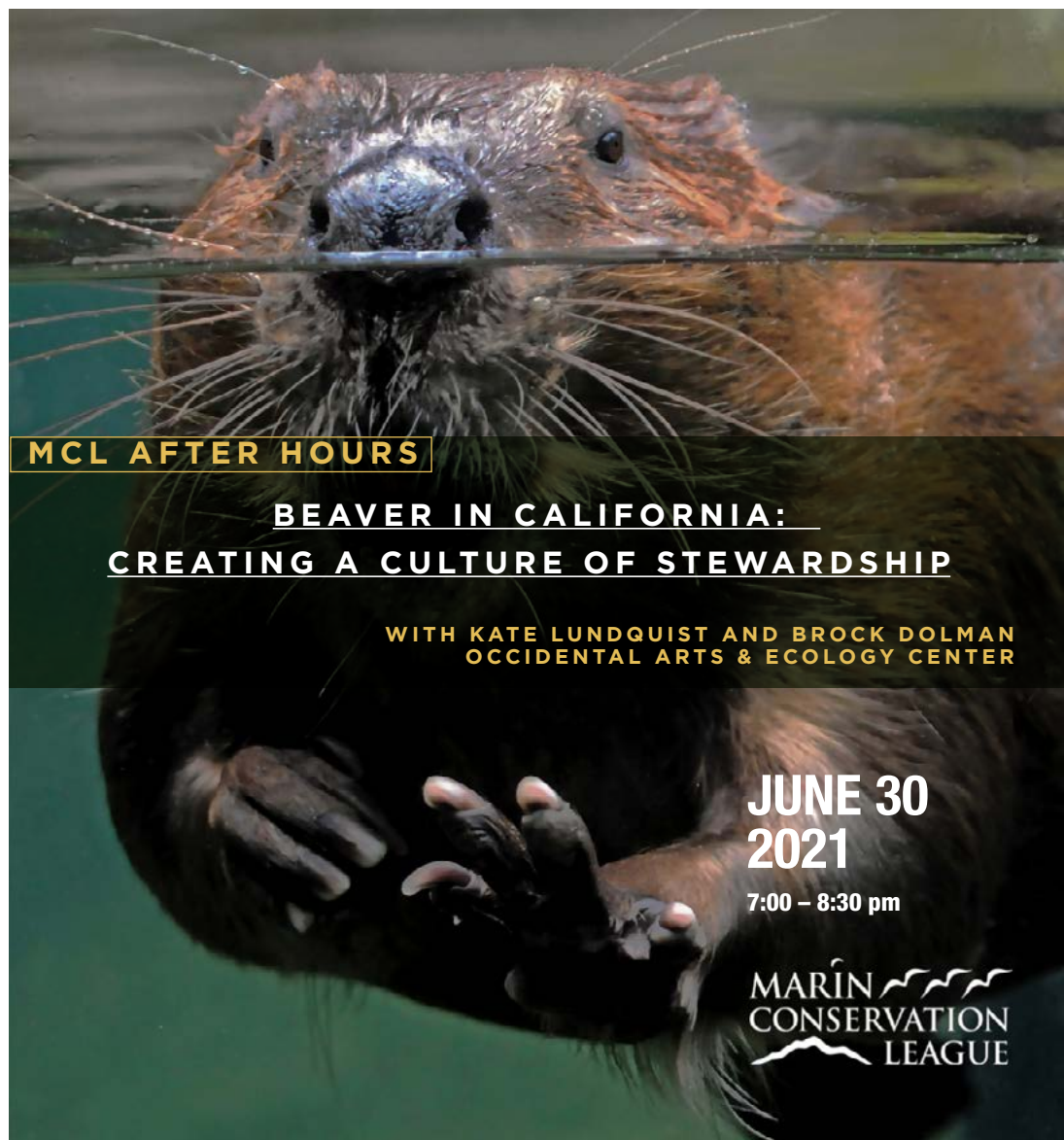
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### BEAVER IN CALIFORNIA: CREATING A CULTURE OF STEWARDSHIP

WITH KATE LUNDQUIST AND BROCK DOLMAN  
OCCIDENTAL ARTS & ECOLOGY CENTER

**JUNE 30  
2021**

7:00 – 8:30 pm

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

