

Marin County's transportation sales tax renewal

By Kate Powers

On Election Day, November 6, Marin County residents will vote whether to renew and extend Marin County's current transportation 1/2 cent sales tax for 30 years. The new measure, which requires a two thirds vote for approval, would supersede and replace the current tax measure, "Measure A", passed in 2004. It would take effect on April 1, 2019, six years before the current tax is set to expire, in order to implement new priorities now.

The stated goal of the new Measure is to "Reduce congestion *and* reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), maintain and improve local transportation infrastructure, and provide high quality transportation options for people of all ages who live, work, and travel in Marin County." [emphasis added] The means to accomplish this goal are distributed among four main strategies in the new expenditure plan.

New Expenditure Plan priorities/allocations mirror current Measure A plan with some revisions.

The first category would allocate 7 percent of the sales tax revenues to reduce congestion on Highway 101 by leveraging federal, state, and Regional Measure 3 (RM3) funds to complete construction on key multimodal projects. RM3 funds are distributed by the Bay Area Toll Authority from bridge toll increases as approved by voters last June. Marin's new transportation sales tax measure would

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The state of State Parks in Marin



Photo courtesy of Friends of China Camp

At China Camp State Park, all operations, including this slide repair, are done by Friends of China Camp volunteers.

By Nona Dennis

On a typical summer weekend, thousands of cars snake their way across Mt. Tamalpais, stopping at Mountain Home, Pantoll, or Rock Spring to unload backpacks or bikes. Visitors, traveling by a different route, can spread their towels at Heart's Desire Beach on Tomales Bay, picnic under the redwoods at the former "Camp Taylor," or instead catch a ferry to explore Angel Island. Those who are curious about Marin's multi-layered history can also head for Olompali, or China Camp, or the Marconi Conference Center on Tomales Bay, which once housed early wireless communication technology.

Seven of California's 280 state parks (Department of Parks and Recreation, DPR, or "Parks") lie within Marin County boundaries. Together, they total 14,200 acres and contain a rich sample of the county's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. MCL's history is closely linked to the existence of these

parks. Three of them — Tomales Bay, Samuel P. Taylor, and Angel Island State Parks — can be attributed to the foresight and diligence of MCL founders, and two of them — Mt. Tamalpais and China Camp State Parks — to MCL's campaigns in support of other advocates. Two of them — Olompali State Historic Park and Marconi Conference Center — have unique cultural histories.

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A Message from the President - Continuing Education

Dear MCL members and friends:

As I write my second President's column for the Newsletter, I can't help but be grateful for the education I've gained during the many years I have been a member of MCL! Through MCL forums, speaker series, field tours, committee meetings, and simply discussions with fellow members, I have become more informed, inspired, and focused on how to protect our environment. Now as president, I recognize a deep vein in MCL's culture: we are a learning organization, one that is continuously growing and, in so doing, expanding our understanding of issues. Let me cite three recent examples.

At MCL's June Business and Environment Breakfast, "From Wasteshed to Watershed: Reducing Marin's Wasteline and Protecting the Bay," the presenters connected our purchasing decisions as consumers with the waste streams that flow through our watersheds and into our bays and oceans. It prompted me to take a stark look at my own behavior: what goes into my own landfill container? Is this product necessary? Can I give this up, call the vendor, and thereby send

a consumer message to the manufacturers?

In late July, MCL's quarterly Agricultural Land Use Committee meeting featured a geomorphologist, a fisheries biologist, a NOAA expert in dam removal, a prominent West Marin historian, and a Marin agency official. More than 30 attendees learned about the history of the Walker Creek watershed: how past land uses and geomorphic processes degraded the watershed, and how the many projects of Marin Resource Conservation District, working with land owners (98 percent of the watershed is privately owned) and MMWD, are reducing erosion and sedimentation and gradually restoring healthy riparian corridors to Walker Creek and its tributaries. ([See this Newsletter page 7](#))

And, finally, in August, MCL's Land Use and Transportation Committee heard from the lead author of the Water Supply and Water Quality Act of 2018 – Proposition 3 – on the November 6 ballot. The proposition will be brought to the September Board meeting for discussion. ([See this Newsletter Page 3](#)). . . which brings me back to MCL

as a learning organization. The process of learning includes building on Marin's conservation legacy, while confronting the more recent challenges of a changing and uncertain environment. By offering programs, meetings, and educational materials as well as strategic advocacy, MCL offers the opportunity to be informed, inspired, and effective as we continue, with your support, to protect and preserve Marin County's natural environment.

With gratitude,

Linda



MCL welcomed five new Directors to the Board at the Annual Meeting on April 6. We are pleased to introduce Larry Kennings and Sarah Loughran here. Nancy Benjamin, Roger Harris, and Jeff Stump were introduced in the [May-June issue](#).



Larry Kennings is a land use planning consultant with 45 years of professional experience in Marin County, including the Master Plan for the GGNRA, General Plans for Fairfax and Mill Valley, and community plans for Bolinas and Marshall. He currently serves as a member of the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission. He also is on the Board of Directors of the Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative and the Steering Committee for the Housing Crisis Action Group. He was a Founding Director of the Environment Group Hawaii, the International Association of Public Participation, and the Alumni Association of the University of California's College of Environmental Design.



Sarah Loughran is a resident of San Rafael and recent graduate of and current Treasurer of the Environmental Forum of Marin. Sarah and her EFM project partner successfully led all Marin County cities and towns to convert 100% to MCE's Deep Green option. She currently serves on the San Rafael Planning Commission and Climate Action Plan Update Committee and the Center for Market-Based Conservation Advisory Board of the Nature Conservancy of California.

Editorial

Proposition 3 Water Bond on the November ballot

In June we cheered as Proposition 68 was approved by voters, authorizing up to \$4.1 billion for parks and water projects. Although it included funds for a wide variety of water needs, its particular appeal was its capacity to fund local parks projects as well as statewide parks and conservancies. Under a per capita provision, each Bay Area city as well as every county is assured of funds for local projects. Conservancies, river parkways, urban stream restoration and other natural resource management programs, deferred maintenance needs in state parks, coastal and ocean resource protection, and outdoor access projects will all benefit. Proposition 68 was the first statewide parks and water bond since 2006, and lot of pots were empty.

In November, voters will be asked to approve another water bond – the \$8.887 billion Proposition 3 Water Supply and Water Quality Act of 2018. It differs from Prop 68 in a number of respects. First, it was developed as an initiative rather than through a consensus-driven legislative process. Second, Prop 3 is geared more toward the statewide interests of urban and agricultural water suppliers than local projects, with a broad emphasis also on developing sustainable water supplies through conservation, recycling, improved groundwater management, and efficient infrastructure. Voters last approved a water-related bond in 2014. Funds from Prop 1 will have been exhausted by 2019, including the recently awarded \$2.7 billion portion for public benefits of water storage. It is important to note that neither Prop 68 nor Prop 3 includes any funds for new surface storage.

With some overlap (e.g., Salton Sea restoration, flood management, and stormwater capture), Prop. 3 generally complements the more limited water interests of Prop 68 by providing significant funds for large water infrastructure, groundwater management, forest and watershed management, urban and

agricultural conservation and recycling, safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities, flood protection, stormwater capture and treatment. It will also provide funds for restoration of fisheries and waterfowl habitat and other natural resource management programs. According to the Association of California Water Agencies, an endorser: "Given the need we have in California for water management, you couldn't have gotten it in one bond."

Sustainable management of state-wide water resources

A vote for Prop 3 would be more a vote for sustainable management of state-wide water resources than specifically for Marin or Bay Area projects. It would, however, include money to improve interconnections between Bay Area water agencies for drought resiliency, and for San Francisco Bay wetlands to provide flood protection and mitigate sea level rise.

Beyond the Bay Area, substantial funds would benefit disadvantaged communities, such as in the Imperial Valley and other poorer agricultural areas. One can argue that everyone who consumes California-grown produce would benefit indirectly from better surface and groundwater management in these areas. Prop 3 would also include funds for two major infrastructure projects: repair of Friant Kern Canal, which has been badly damaged by subsidence, and making Oroville Dam more flood safe. Finally, the initiative would allow state and federal water contractors to recover the funds they pay in climate change charges due to implementation of AB 32, and use those funds to improve their own systems for water and energy conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions according to AB 32 standards rather than having those funds disbursed by the legislature.

Prop. 3 is supported by 82 national, state and local environmental groups,



including Save the Bay, Planning and Conservation League, Sustainable Conservation, Climate Resolve, and the National Wildlife Federation. The Sierra Club opposes Proposition 3, based in part on the perceived lack of transparency in the initiative process and absence of legislative oversight both in approving the language and in distributing funds, should the proposition be approved. MCL's Land Use and Transportation Committee heard a presentation by principal author Dr. Jerry Meral. He explained that most of the funds would be appropriated directly to state agencies to fund their adopted priorities in a strategic and public manner. Appropriations also would be subject to state audit.

Endorsers see Prop 3 as a significant step toward meeting the goals of the California Water Plan Update 2018 (Update), which reaffirms the State's commitment to a sustainable water future in the face of extreme events in a changing climate. The MCL Board will consider endorsing the proposition at its September 18 meeting.

Editor

Renewable energy use in Marin– Part 2

Using high levels of renewable energy: challenges and potential solutions

By Robert Miller and Sarah Loughran

The challenge of variability

California has made great strides in moving to greener energy, with renewable energy now accounting for almost one-third of California's retail electricity sales (2017). Our renewable electricity comes from a number of sources, some of which vary with weather, time of day and season, and some of which are steady and predictable. Due to cost and other factors, solar is the most scalable (capable of growth) in California, followed by wind. Both are more scalable than other renewable options. See Table 1 for comparisons.

Variable Renewable Energy (VRE) – solar and wind – accounts for more than two-thirds of California's renewable energy. As solar becomes ever more economically competitive, its share of total energy – and renewable energy – production will continue to grow. Other major greenhouse gas (GHG)-free energy sources in California either cannot expand much (large-scale hydro), are ending (nuclear power in 2025), or are being developed and are speculative (e.g., hydrogen).

If all of California's electricity came from renewable and other GHG-free sources, California's total GHG emissions would decline by nearly 16 percent. In addition, maximizing electrification of other sectors would substantially reduce California's GHG emissions—especially

from transportation (41 percent of GHGs).

In the first part of this series, we ended by posing the question, "Why not 100 percent renewable energy now?" We continue that discussion here. While many factors are involved, the biggest challenge to achieving very high levels of renewable energy is that electricity supply and demand must balance around the clock and around the year. Yet solar and wind energy output fluctuates with weather; solar energy varies with time of day—cresting at mid-day and disappearing at night—and with season, peakings in June at over 2.5 times the output in January. Wind also has time of day and seasonal cycles—as does electricity demand. This creates serious mismatches between VRE supply and electricity demand. Particularly challenging is the need to reduce the current rapid "ramp" of electricity from natural gas plants in late afternoon and evening, when solar energy output wanes and energy demand rises (as people return home from work). For almost all electricity providers with a sizeable share of renewables in their energy portfolios, until the challenge of solar and wind variability is solved, demand for more predictable energy supply will continue, especially flexible, cheap and reliable natural gas.

Solutions require increased flexibility

There are many solutions to the

problems posed by the variability of VRE, but all are evolving and none is a quick panacea. Following are some solutions that focus on increasing flexibility on both the demand side, i.e., reducing demand from peak times and shifting demand to other times, and the supply side, i.e., providing more electricity when needed. One review of specific solutions is "[Teaching the 'Duck' to Fly](http://www.raponline.org)" at www.raponline.org.

Electricity demand

Historically, the electricity sector's mandate has been to create enough electricity supply to meet demand, regardless of the level and/or timing of demand. Demand response aims to reduce electricity use during times of especially high demand, e.g., on a very hot weekday afternoon. For example, large customers can agree to curtail use during periods of very high electricity demand or to have their use automatically curtailed for a limited number of days or hours; and some residential customers can allow the utility to turn down their smart thermostats for short periods. In return, customers pay less for the electricity that they use. Demand flexibility shifts energy demand from when solar is scarce and energy (often fossil fuel) is expensive, to when solar is abundant and inexpensive. Programs that aim to change the use patterns of commercial and residential customers typically feature time-of-use electricity rates.

Both demand-side approaches attempt to match energy demand to supply, rather than the opposite. Together they can reduce peak energy generation, transmission, and distribution costs, lower energy cost to customers, increase VRE use and investment, improve energy reliability, and decrease GHGs. See "Demand

Continued on page 5

Table 1

Energy Source	Percent of CA Renewable Energy (2017)	Variability	Scalability
Solar	36%	High	High
Wind	31%	High	Medium
Geothermal	16%	Low	Low
Biomass	9%	Low	Low
Small hydroelectric	8%	Medium	Low

Renewable energy from page 4

Flexibility. The Key to Enabling a Low-cost, Low-carbon Grid" at www.rmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Insight_Brief_Demand_Flexibility_2018.pdf.

Greatly expanding demand response/flexibility requires many difficult changes, such as much stronger financial incentives, new hardware and sophisticated prediction software to enable automatic control of innumerable devices (like smart thermostats), and massive education campaigns.

Energy efficiency, by reducing energy demand, eases the task of accommodating VRE's variability and makes VRE more cost-effective. For example, fewer batteries would be needed for storage. After 45 years of substantial gains in policy-directed energy efficiency programs, however, further progress will be more difficult, albeit still important.

Electricity supply

Storage is an ideal solution as it enables generating electricity when it is most efficient and least expensive and then using it when most needed. Pumped hydro currently accounts for 95 percent of energy storage in the U.S. Compressed air, thermal heat, and batteries are also used. Currently, lithium-ion batteries are the most promising and scalable type of storage, but other forms of storage are being developed and some may become commercially viable.

Abundant and cheap solar energy produced mid-day can charge batteries, which then can supply power hours later when needed. Powerful market forces are decreasing battery prices and expanding use. Lithium-ion battery cost dropped 79 percent since 2010, and may drop another 50 percent by 2024. While batteries are now competitive with fossil fuels only in specific situations—such as replacing infrequently used, high cost, and highly polluting natural gas "peaker" plants—they will be more competitive as cost declines. Still, the relatively high cost of batteries may limit large scale implementation for at least several years.

Commercial/residential battery projects have been relatively small, and while PG&E has announced a few large utility-scale projects, the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC)-mandated target is only 1 percent of forecasted peak 2020 load (electricity demand). Greatly expanding battery use for electricity will require major policy changes—especially those requiring appropriate payment for the multiple services that batteries can provide, such as reducing new grid transmission lines or utility distribution infrastructure, regulating voltage frequency, and at least ten more services, including resilience.

Electrification (e.g., of vehicles) complicates the VRE challenge by increasing demand for electricity, but sufficient planning could turn electric vehicles or electric water heaters, for

example, into valuable storage resources that help address the VRE challenge.

Expanding the electricity grid could create more efficient planning and coordination of energy transmission and a wider, more competitive market for energy supply across western states. This would potentially increase VRE interstate transfers and help balance supply of VRE with electricity demand. Grid expansion is controversial, however, for a number of reasons.

Again, many other factors will influence VRE use and GHG emissions, including natural gas prices, the price of carbon under California's cap-and-trade system, removing contractual and market rule barriers to flexible energy supply, and much more.

Coming soon: How possible is the "electrification of everything?"

Given the progress towards reaching the goal of 100 percent GHG-free energy in the electricity sector, electrification becomes key to reducing the far greater GHGs produced elsewhere in the economy, especially transportation and heating. It, too, faces many challenges requiring innovative solutions. More on this in a future issue of this Newsletter.



The abandoned Cooley Quarry in unincorporated Novato is an ideal site for MCE's one-megawatt, ground-mounted solar project.

Photo courtesy of MCE

Announcements

September 15

Coastal Clean-up

9am - noon

Sign up to protect marine animals, pick up trash, and clean beaches! As in years past, MCL will participate in clean up sites in Sausalito and Novato. To locate a site that best suits you and to register, please visit www.coastal.ca.gov



September 15

"Getting to Paris without stopping in Washington" a Global Climate Action Summit

5:30pm



Getting to Paris
without stopping in Washington



In association with Drawdown Marin, attend an evening celebrating Marin's path to meet global climate goals. With guests, Christiana Figueres, Architect of the UN Paris Climate Agreement, CA EPA Secretary Matt Rodriquez, U.S. congressman Jared Huffman, and more! MCL is a proud co-sponsor.

College of Marin
700 College Ave, Kentfield
Diamond Center Gymnasium

\$20 advanced purchase
Tickets & Details:
www.leadonclimate.org

September 29

Walk into Conservation History: Marincello

9:30am - 12:30pm



Celebrate Public Lands Day and join MCL on September 29, 9:30 – 12:30, on a walk into the lovely Gerbode Valley and hear about the city that almost happened in 1965 but didn't. Due to the diligent work of neighbors and attorneys who gave their time over more than five years, the valley was saved. Led by guides who were there!

Meet: Rodeo Lagoon east parking lot, Marin Headlands

Bring good hiking shoes, water, & snack for this free, 3 mile hike.

Register: 415-485-6257
mclmarincello.eventbrite.com

November 15

Business & Environment Breakfast: State Parks in Marin: *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.*

7:30am - 9:00am

Acquired largely through citizen action over more than four decades, Marin's popular state parks have suffered through budget cuts and threat of closure, buoyed as possible by non-profit partners. With recent changes and initiatives at the state level, their fortunes may be turning. Speakers will expand on issues raised on this newsletter (See [page 1](#)) and address both the past legacy and future of our state parks.

McInnis Park Club Restaurant
30 Smith Ranch Rd., San Rafael

Tickets include breakfast buffet.
\$15 for MCL members
\$20 for non-members

Register 415-485-6257
mclstateparks.eventbrite.com

Announcements



Map courtesy of Marin Municipal Water District



Linda Novy

Left: map of Walker Creek watershed with MMWD restoration projects

Right: Agricultural Land Use Committee meeting 7/27/18

MCL's Agricultural-Land Use Committee hosted a forum in July on how historic land uses degraded the Walker Creek watershed, and how Marin Resource Conservation District with landowners, and MMWD are restoring them, project by project.

Oct. 5 Into the Woods: Tam's Forests in a Changing Environment

In its third annual Mt. Tam science summit, One Tam takes participants into Mt. Tam's redwood and mixed evergreen forests and oak woodlands to explore their ecology, wildlife, health, threat of wildfire, and their resiliency to the challenges of a changing climate. Those who have attended previous One Tam science summits know that science can be both entertaining and informative!

2018 Mt. Tam Forest Symposium: Friday, October 5, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mill Valley Community Center. Tickets include lunch, and a wine and cheese reception. **Register at** onetam.org. Marin Conservation League is co-sponsoring this event.



Photos by Roger Harris and Holly Smith



Clockwise from top left: Judy Shriebman & friend are all laughs, Nita Winter shares a book with Kara Kelly, Jean Berensmeier and MCL President Linda Novy cool off with Straus ice cream, Jeanette & Ed Ueber and Terri Thomas relax in the shade.

Thank you to all the MCL members and guests who were able to join us at the annual Picnic on the Patio held July 14. Guests enjoyed delicious bbq and camaraderie, and MCL Business Members gave the day an extra special touch: Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company donated delectable cheeses for the wine and cheese tasting station while Straus Family Creamery donated vanilla ice cream cups—a perfect cool treat on a hot summer day!

We can't wait to do it again next July!

State Parks *from page 1*

The vast majority of visitors who enjoy the parks today are unaware of how they were saved, who maintains them, or how they are faring. In fact, they have been so popular over the decades that it would be hard for the founders of MCL to believe that the parks that grew out of their efforts have led such a tenuous existence in recent years. After years of service cutbacks and deferred maintenance, however, their fortunes may gradually be turning. Events over the past several years, along with new funding sources suggest that possibility.

Stretched to the limit

The public alarm bells were sounding at least ten years ago. Chronic under funding from the state had left the park system with severe service cutbacks and a mounting backlog of maintenance needs. A ballot initiative that promised \$500 million and a proposed surcharge on vehicle registrations both failed in 2010. In 2011, the threat to close parks became a reality when 70 park units, including China Camp, Tomales Bay, and Samuel P. Taylor State Parks and Olompali State Historic Park, were scheduled to close by July 2012 unless substitute funding were found.

The following months brought frantic activity. Then-Assembly Member Jared Huffman convened an "Open Parks Coalition" to elicit ideas for potential funding solutions. National Park Service temporarily rescued Tomales Bay and Samuel P. Taylor Parks by adding a surcharge to the Muir Woods entry fee. Huffman authored a bill that would authorize Parks to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations or public agencies to help operate parks. The California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) went into high gear to help park units form partnerships. Friends of China Camp (FOCC) launched a campaign to raise money to temporarily fund an operating agreement. The Marin State Parks Association, parent nonprofit to both FOCC and The Olompali People (TOP), became the temporary operator of Olompali. Parks, staffed by volunteers,



Tomales Bay was one of 70 park units under threat of closure in 2012 due to severe under funding, a condition that continues.

Kristen Nolan

struggled to find a way to keep open for limited hours.

State money and a mandate

Then State Parks "found" some money! More than \$20 million had been squirreled away by the DPR. It was a one-time pot of money that could help keep threatened parks, including Marin's four parks, open for a minimum of two years. At the same time, the Little Hoover Commission issued a mandate after a year-long investigation: To remain a viable resource for present and future generations, the state park system must fundamentally shift the way it was organized and operated.

A large nonprofit stepped up to fund an advisory commission – Parks Forward – to identify problems and recommend means for overhauling the entire system. Working with State Parks staff and reaching out to hundreds of public interests during its 18 month tenure, the commission developed recommendations for updating technology and budgeting; broadening the professional qualifications for advancement in management; dealing with the overwhelming back-log of deferred maintenance; expanding and nurturing partnerships that carry out myriad park services and programs; and engaging with youth and diverse new visitor groups. In its 2015 final report, the commission also recommended that a non-profit "California Parks Conservancy" be formed to provide needed philanthropic support.

A transformation team was tasked with carrying out a two-year action plan toward implementing the recommendations. Encouraged by the commission's forward thinking, the state Resources Agency and Assemblymember Marc Levine, promised legislative support.

Change is slow but promising

Throughout the years of threat and early transition, MCL has been engaged and has reported progress in this Newsletter. Positive change has occurred at the state level since the 2015 commission report. Financial systems have been reformed, technology has been upgraded, a partnership office is now dedicated to cultivating non-profit and agency and other partnerships, new initiatives are opening park doors wider to youth and underserved populations, and leadership ranks are no longer restricted to sworn police officers. A new philanthropic partner has been established. Districts and management within districts and park units have been reorganized.

What have these changes meant in Marin? At a superficial level, Marin's parks have continued to struggle, in spite of their popularity. In 2015-2016, Mt. Tam SP had over 900,000 visitors, China Camp SP more than 300,000, and Samuel P. Taylor SP over 100,000. Yet supervising and other ranger and maintenance personnel have continued to be stretched thinly across several parks, buoyed in varying degree by

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Sales Tax from page 1

enable Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) to issue bonds and use other financing measures to generate local matching funds for transportation improvement projects along Marin's main transportation corridor. These include completing bus and carpool lanes and a multiuse path along the Marin-Sonoma Narrows to ease the traffic bottleneck; completing a 101 northbound/580 eastbound direct connector to the Richmond/San Rafael bridge; and improving Highway 101 local interchanges to reduce congestion, improve traffic, and address flooding throughout the County.

The second category would allocate 26.5 percent of sales tax revenues to maintain and improve local transportation infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, bikeways and pathways in accordance with "Complete Streets", a California General Plan law that requires streets to provide for safe and comfortable travel for all transportation modes and users of all ages and abilities.

Many of Marin's local streets and roads are in decline. Deferred maintenance caused pavement conditions to drop into the "at risk" category in many locations. As roads deteriorate they become exponentially more expensive to repair. Maintaining Marin's millions of dollars of investment in transportation infrastructure is critical to providing reliable access to and from residences and businesses, important for local economies, for safety, and for access for emergency services — police, fire, and ambulance.

The new plan would focus more resources on local roads maintenance, increasing current spending by nearly 8 percent, or \$2 million per year, and would augment gas tax funds from Senate Bill 1. The category also adds flexibility to address the growing demand for EV chargers, municipal fleet conversions, and planning for sea level rise.

The third category would allocate 11.5 percent of sales tax revenues to maintain the County's Safe Routes to Schools, expand the crossing guard program and



Kate Powers

Marin Transit Connect's new mobility on-demand service is available in north San Rafael weekdays from 7am – 7pm.

fund small safety-related projects around schools. These two programs reduce school related congestion and greenhouse gas emissions by supporting increased walking and bicycling and providing safer access to schools. Current Measure A funding has been their primary source of funding since 2004.

The fourth and final category would allocate 55 percent of sales tax revenues to local transit services managed by Marin Transit to fund both capital needs and operations. Forty percent of Marin Transit's annual operating budget depends on this allocation, which subsidizes farebox revenues and keeps service coverage as wide as possible to provide a safety net for the transit-dependent. The measure would maintain fixed route service in high volume corridors, provide innovative services to communities that don't support fixed route service, provide emergency mobility during natural disasters, and provide funding for Muir Woods Shuttle and West Marin Stagecoach. Marin Transit supports services for those with special needs, seniors and persons with disabilities. The new sales tax measure would also dedicate funding for school bus transit.

Climate change and the urgent need for a low carbon emissions future

The new expenditure plan is responsible and prudent and reflects current local

priorities. It addresses the need to reduce congestion and carbon emissions and meets current mobility requirements to the extent it can. It supports mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to transit, bicycle use and walking in a majority of the plan; and it supplies seed money for supporting the shift to alternative fuel vehicles, including electric vehicles (EVs), adopting innovation, and addressing impacts of sea level rise.

Yet, does the new expenditure plan go far enough in significantly reducing fossil fuel-based carbon emissions from local transportation sources? According to Drawdown Marin, the County's campaign to slow climate change by dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions, "The most important leadership challenge of this century is to respond to the impacts as well as the causes of climate change with vision and with decisive actions that will protect future generations. . . Almost two-thirds of Marin's emissions come from transportation: the cars, trucks, and buses that use our roads and highways every day."

Every year that we continue to depend on fossil fuels, we contribute to altering our global atmosphere. The "constituency" that will benefit from a low carbon emissions transportation policy now and a commitment from all of us is much broader than those who would pay for the tax extension. They are our future and their fate is in our hands.

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Marin "swat-team" takes action against Japanese knotweed

Long-time readers of The New Yorker may recall a cartoon by the acclaimed cartoonist George Price (deceased 1995) that has become a classic. Drawn today, the cartoon could well depict the Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)! This worldwide scourge can start innocently enough in early spring and grow so vigorously that it reaches 12 feet in height in a season. Its deep, expansive underground stems (rhizomes) create dense colonies that can even push through cracks in asphalt, concrete and other building materials. (MCL Sept-Oct. 2017 Newsletter "Nature Note: Japanese knotweed, a new invader" www.conservationleague.org/images/stories/Newsletters/NL_SeptOct_2017_forweb.pdf)

While Price's cartoon is apt, the knotweed is not a laughing matter! This noxious invasive weed was the target of a July field trip to San Geronimo Valley, organized by MCL's Invasive Plant Subcommittee and led by Marin County Parks IPM specialist Kat Knecht. As noted in MCL's 2017 Newsletter article, the plant was discovered in Marin in 2011 and local National Park Service and County staff began mapping its locations on public lands. To date it has been spotted along San Geronimo Creek near Two Bird Cafe and in several locations along Lagunitas Creek in Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

Field trip participants were able to

view several patches from stream vantage points and were also provided up-close access to one patch covering approximately 120 square feet. The patches visited were all located along the stream from the edge of the water to the top of the bank. In some cases, these patches were under the cover of mature tree canopy and in other cases in open sunlight reaches. The plants were mature and over six feet tall and flowering. The group discussed topics such as the risks of knotweed to watershed ecology and homeowner property, opportunities to eradicate it, and treatment options.

Formation of MKAT

To address the growing problem in a coordinated and aggressive manner, county, state and federal public agencies and non-profit organizations formed the Marin Knotweed Action Team (MKAT), which is dedicated to eradicating Japanese knotweed from the overall Lagunitas Creek watershed, including the San Geronimo Creek subwatershed. Successful eradication requires a coordinated effort working with private landowners.

The overall goal is for land managers and property owners to come together, using research papers and successful case studies to guide the eradication of the knotweed in West Marin. MKAT's goal does not alter or override existing policies of the participating agencies and organizations. Rather, it serves as a coordinating body with complementary leadership and contributions from its members to achieve the ecological integrity of the watershed, free of Japanese knotweed.

MKAT does not recommend homeowners to attempt removal. Because the plant can easily reproduce from



Kate Powers

MCL's Invasive Plant Subcommittee Chair Paul Minault up close with a mature Japanese knotweed plant.

fingernail size pieces (less than one ounce), attempting to remove young to mature plants manually can stimulate their growth and spread. Incomplete removal has the effect of further spreading the weed. Since even small fragments of knotweed underground stems vigorously develop into new plants, colonies can spread along roadsides where underground stem fragments are carried by vehicles, or along riparian areas where fragments are transported by water.

Removing established knotweed by excavation is extremely difficult because it so vigorously resprouts from its underground stems after being cut. These stems have been documented to extend 23 feet horizontally and 10 feet deep. For effective eradication, the underground stems must be completely removed or killed by an appropriate herbicide and/or the contaminated soil sterilized. Safe disposal of all plant parts is critical to long term success. Composting with other plant material is not an option.

Homeowners, particularly creek-side parcel owners in San Geronimo or Lagunitas Creek Watersheds, can have their property surveyed for free and are urged to join the effort by completing a participation survey form. You can download the form and get more information at — <http://ucanr.edu/sites/MarinKnotweedActionTeam/>



"Watch out, Fred! Here it comes again!"

George Price

Sales tax from page 9

Flexibility and the future of how we'll get around

Unlike the current plan, the new Expenditure Plan requires review by the TAM Board every six years to ensure that "it responds to a rapidly evolving transportation landscape, incorporates innovation, and reflects current priorities." A growing number of transportation experts believe traditional buses are becoming obsolete and that public transportation and mobility will undergo the most change. Technology, ridesharing and autonomous vehicles may converge to disrupt traditional bus ridership with low cost, on-demand shuttles that run door-to-door. Additionally, last January Governor Brown signed an executive order to accelerate the market for zero-emission vehicles, setting a target of 5 million EVs in California by 2030. Marin County must step up to support that effort.

Through an amendment process during the six year review, or at any time deemed necessary, the TAM Board will be able to modify the new expenditure plan and guide its use, via a public process subject to certain restrictions. It will be up to the TAM Board of Commissioners, TAM's staff, city leaders, and all of us to ensure Marin's transportation policies respond to evolving priorities as innovations in transportation take shape. Vote in November, follow regional transportation news at <https://mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/news-headlines>, and determine your part in a low carbon emissions future.

Marin Conservation League continues its collaboration with the Marin Horse Council and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition as the "Trail Partners" for Slow and Say Hello! Visit safetrailsmarin.org for trail safety resources, upcoming outpost dates & locations, and more.

State Parks from page 8

non-profit partners. Maintenance needs continue to be acute.

Among the park partners, Mt. Tam has its volunteer "Friends of Mt. Tam," who continue to provide interpretive and education services. FOCC currently manages China Camp effectively on its own, with zero assistance from DPR – a scheme that may not be sustainable. Angel Island's interpretive and educational programs are supported by two major philanthropic partners, and the state contracts with a for-profit concessionaire for food and other fee-based services. Neither Tomales Bay nor Samuel P. Taylor has a non-profit partner, except for Marin State Parks Association, which offers limited volunteer assistance. The Olompali People manage to keep the historic park open with volunteers and limited maintenance, but without ranger staff.

Good news!

At the August meeting of MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee, state park representatives announced good news that could dramatically change the fortune of Marin's parks. First is an infusion of money from SB 1, a transportation funding package passed in 2017 that increases the portion of gasoline excise tax revenues from offhighway vehicles and recreational boating for general purposes of the California DPR. In addition, Prop 68, passed in 2017, allocates \$218M to state parks, \$19M of which is in the 2017-'18 budget. These funds will go to park priority projects, to the "Redwoods Rising" collaboration and legacy forest projects, and to numerous

smaller social and equity grants and local park grants.

The second good news is reorganization. The Bay Area District (including Marin) has been split. The North district now encompasses San Francisco, southern Sonoma, and Napa counties as well as Marin.

The reorganization will reduce the amount of responsibility for that District from 50,000 acres to 30,000 acres. With the infusion of new positions, below, the capacity for many programs and services will effectively be doubled. Management will be based on programs, including Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Public Safety, Interpretive and Education, Facilities, and Administration.

The third good news is the addition of 17 new positions in natural and cultural resources, rangers, maintenance, and administration to the North Bay Area District. Each district has a transition plan, still in progress. Organization charts are in review, and Superintendents II and I in the district are still to be named.

Important questions are still pending. How will each park in Marin benefit from the infusion of funds – for maintenance and administrative services and programs? Can this plan be sustained over time? And, what are MCL's obligations and opportunities to support our state parks and engage with the next generation of park visitors? These and other questions will be pursued further at MCL's next Business-Environment Breakfast on November 15 ([see announcements page 6](#)).



Kate Powers

Armory Willis, Marin County Parks Ranger Gabe Ngarang, and MCL President Linda Novy served as Trail Ambassadors at a Slow and Say Hello outpost at Rush Creek on August 12.

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

Land Use and Transportation:

1st Wed. of the month, 1:00 PM—3:00 PM

Parks and Open Space:

2nd Thurs. of the month, 3:00—5:00 PM

Climate Action Working Group: 3rd Fri. of the month, 9:00 AM—11:00 AM

Agricultural Land Use: meets quarterly;
Water and Watersheds, North Marin Unit:
Check website for times and locations

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.

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Dusty Boots

He has climbed the trail on many
summer evenings. Now he feels
the cool air on his face as he descends
while he recalls Gary Snyder circumnavigating
the mountain in meditation.

The scene surrounds him
with a patch of huckleberry bushes
as the trail leads down toward the lake.
How many more summer evenings
will he descend, have the luck
to see a bobcat patrol the water's edge,
and view a murmuration
of blackbirds that swoops and settles
into the marsh grass right at dusk?

How many times, how many blessings?

Richard Cruwys Brown

Richard Brown, M.D., is Chair of the Marin Poet Laureate Program and a member of MCL

