

On the climate action front

Marin Clean Energy Rolls Out

by Bob Spofford

Marin Clean Energy, Marin's unique green electricity option, is now expanding to include all households and businesses in Marin County. To date, only about 15,000 customers have been able to join MCE as it conducted a conservative "walk before we run" phased introduction. This April, however, the first of five mailings went out to the remaining 80,000 customers in the county announcing that, unless they opt-out and choose to stay with PG&E, their electricity will be supplied by MCE starting in July.

Energy to light and heat buildings is the second largest source of GHGs in Marin.

MCE is a unique hybrid arrangement, through which the Marin Energy Authority (MCE's parent agency) buys the electricity, but PG&E still owns the infrastructure, distributes the electricity, reads the meters, and handles all billing and customer service.

MCL has strongly supported Marin Clean Energy from its inception, and before that the Community Choice Aggregation legislation in 2002 that made it possible. Why? Because energy to light and heat buildings is the second largest source of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Marin (transportation is first), and it is the only source of GHGs where massive, widespread reductions can

Continued on page 11

Celebrating Marin's Public Lands and Open Space

2012—A year for anniversaries



© Bob Grace 2003

Celebrating fifty years—creation of the Point Reyes National Seashore was authorized by President John F. Kennedy in 1962.

By Nona Dennis

2012 is a record year to celebrate significant anniversaries in the history of all four land management agencies in Marin—National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin Municipal Water District, and Marin County Parks—as well as the history of Tamalpais Conservation Club, Marin's oldest conservation association. Events to commemorate their centennial or decade anniversaries are scheduled throughout the year. Anniversaries may mark significant milestones, but they don't reveal the years of dedication or the collective efforts of thousands of volunteers that it takes to bring the initial idea of protecting special lands to successful fruition. Often an official dedication is just the beginning, or at best a midpoint following years of work at both grassroots and political levels, followed by extended campaigns to obtain the funds

needed to fulfill the vision. That pattern is evident in all of the following stories.

MMWD and TCC: 100 years of conserving a watershed

Marin Municipal Water District's was the first major accomplishment in public land conservation in Marin County. With the exception of Muir Woods National Monument, dedicated in 1908, and a few municipal ball fields, there were no public parklands in Marin County in the early 20th century. MMWD was created by referendum in 1912. In 1915 voters approved the \$3,000,000 bond measure that enabled purchase of 10,700 acres of watershed that would eventually become the 21,500 acres now owned by the district. The founding of Tamalpais Conservation Club (TCC) followed

Continued on page 5

A Message from the President

2012 is a year of anniversaries. As seen throughout this newsletter many governmental entities and organizations are celebrating significant anniversaries this year. The milestones include legislation championed by MCL, including the Coastal Act and the Marin Open Space District.



The celebrations will be scattered throughout the year, from the Golden Gate Bridge to Point Reyes National Seashore anniversaries.

It was the building of the Golden Gate Bridge, completed 75 years ago, that stimulated the creation of the Marin Conservation League—now celebrating our 78th year. The bridge was completed in 1937, but the founders of MCL were preparing for the inevitable changes the bridge would bring to Marin. So during this year MCL can celebrate the cause for the organization's existence!

While celebrating past achievements the current financial and governmental landscape provides scant opportunities for new organizations. MOST, the Marin Open Space Trust (marinopenspacetrust.org), has had some success recently and may be the rare exception. We wish them continued success.

On the "watchdog" side of our activities we are analyzing the latest version of the Plan Bay Area for the Sustainable Communities Strategy mandated by SB375. This planning document is projecting anticipated job and housing growth in the nine Bay Area counties through 2040. Although the jobs and housing numbers are produced by state governmental agencies, their allocation to towns and cities around the Bay is left up to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). A number of alternatives for the allocation have been considered, and the final version will be adopted by a joint meeting of ABAG and MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) on May 17. In June the EIR process will begin, with a Draft EIR expected in November. It is apparent that a planning document that projects so far into the future will need careful scrutiny. If you are interested in participating in the discussion, please attend the MCL Land Use Committee meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. at the MCL office.

Also, please join us for our next Business-Environment Breakfast on May 17, which will feature a talk by renowned marine expert Ed Ueber: **"Polychaetes don't vote! The politics of ocean protection."** See page 9 for details.



Disenfranchised polychaetes: "Borstenwurmer des Meeres". A variety of marine worms. In: "Das Meer" by M. J. Schleiden, 1804-1881. Treasures of the NOAA Library Collection.

Susan Stompe

REGISTRATION FORM BUSINESS—ENVIRONMENT BREAKFAST: MARINE SCIENTIST ED UEBER, MAY 17, 2012

Name(s) _____

Title/Org. _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

☐ MCL member \$25 ☐ Non-member \$30 Total Due \$ _____

☐ Check enclosed, payable to MCL ☐ Charge my Credit Card the amt. shown

card # _____

exp. date _____ name on card _____

card sec. code _____ signature _____

*Ticket price includes
full breakfast buffet.*

*Pre-registration
required by May 11*

*Make checks payable to MCL or
pay total due by credit card. Mail form
to: MCL, 1623-A Fifth Ave., San
Rafael, CA 94901, or call 415-
485-6257 or register online at
marinconservationleague.org
Refunds given only if the event is canceled.*

Illicit marijuana planting damages MMWD watershed lands

by Nona Dennis with Bill Hogan

Just 950 feet from the Bolinas Ridge Fire Road—a mere three-minute walk—Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) rangers found the evidence of yet another illicit marijuana planting on the watershed. What might an unsuspecting hiker or biker, straying from the well-used fire road, be likely to encounter?

At a minimum: evidence of an encampment, food and trash; propane tanks; tools and equipment for planting and irrigation, including water lines leading to often distant water sources and even crude cisterns for on-site storage; a variety of firearms; and human waste. One might also find evidence of herbicides and tools to remove native vegetation; cut or girdled trees and other damaged native plants; irrigation runoff laden with fertilizers, pesticides, and other pollutants; traps for wildlife killed

for consumption . . . and marijuana plants numbering in the thousands, dispersed in a mosaic hidden in the forest understory or mixed among other native vegetation.

On March 7, an audience of 35 attended a meeting co-sponsored by Tamalpais Conservation Club (TCC) and Marin Conservation League to hear MMWD Chief Ranger **Bill Hogan**, Marin Sheriff's Deputy **Bob Crowley** and colleagues describe their ongoing battle to keep ahead of the exponential growth of marijuana cultivation on the district's watershed lands.

The environmental damage and financial toll on MMWD have been profound. Soils are damaged by erosion. Native habitats and water quality are threatened by the growers' irrigation methods and uncontrolled use of chemicals. The costs and manpower required to combat the problem and the potential hazards to both personnel and the public keep mounting even as strategies to combat

the invasion have advanced.

Attendees learned that California is #1 in the United States in growth of marijuana, 70 percent of which is grown on public lands. Although Marin is no Mendocino or Napa County, where four deaths were recently reported as a direct result of illegal marijuana cultivation, efforts to grow marijuana plants on water district lands have grown in recent years. In 1982, 1,430 plants were eradicated. By 2006 that number has risen to 26,000. In 2010–2011, 23,000 plants were removed. As the stakes rise, so do the risks.

Impact on district rangers

Bill Hogan has been a ranger with MMWD since 1977. In the 1980s and 90s, he saw growth in outdoor recreation transform the 22,000-acre Mount Tamalpais watershed from the quiet backyard of Marin County to a major destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Now it has become a major destination for illicit marijuana growers. With this change has come the need for district rangers to spend increasing amounts of time in planning, incident action and clean-up of marijuana "grows." The burden of this work has been magnified as their numbers have shrunk from 11 to six at the present time, keeping them from doing other essential work on the 29-square-mile watershed. The problem would be impossible to abate, he said, without the support of the Marin County Sheriff's Office and cooperation of colleagues in the National Park Service, who face similar problems on federal park lands.

According to Bill, tracking the marijuana grows in the district's watershed requires constant vigilance. Although grows are concentrated primarily in Bolinas Ridge areas west of Kent Lake, other sites have been located in the Nicasio and Soulejule watersheds.

Detection of new sites is increasingly difficult. Although aerial overflights are used, the planting sites are hidden by existing vegetation. Known, established sites must



An example of the problem: in addition to drugs and weapons, California National Guardsmen clearing illicit marijuana grows in the Sierra in 2009 turned up more than 30 miles of illegally placed irrigation pipe, 17,000 pounds of garbage and 4,050 pounds of fertilizer, including some that are toxic and illegal in the United States. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. David J. Loeffler, California National Guard)

Continued on page 4

Marijuana *from Page 3*

be rechecked frequently for signs of new clearing, irrigation lines that can often stretch a half-mile to a water source, and habitation. Reports by watershed visitors of suspicious activity or persons must be checked. Once a possible site is discovered, staff must scout thoroughly, gathering and documenting evidence and intelligence as to growers' activity. The next step is developing a safe and well coordinated plan for eradication and, if possible, apprehension of the individuals. This latter action is extremely difficult and potentially hazardous: growing sites are scattered over large areas; and caretaker personnel (mostly undocumented aliens) move in and out of the area, having been dropped by a variety of vehicles (including boats) at night and on different days and establish hiding places.

Call the Sky Oaks Watershed Headquarters at (415) 945-1181 to report suspicious activity in the MMWD watershed

Since MMWD rangers are unarmed, only the deputy sheriffs can apprehend individuals. The deputies' work is complicated by the danger of encountering potentially armed individuals as well as by rules in the Penal Code governing the evidence needed to charge misdemeanors and felonies.

When a misdemeanor, such as trespass, illegal fires, or carrying a concealed weapon, is involved, the individual may only be ticketed and released. Such crimes carry a maximum 120-day jail sentence. Ticketed misdemeanor suspects often simply disappear, and recidivism is high. For a felony prosecution, the code requires that at least 1,000 marijuana plants be under cultivation, and there must be observations of the suspects tending to the plants and extensive photo-documentation of the site and plants with the root-ball intact.

What progress has been made, and what does the future hold for District lands?

In addition to the impact on ranger resources, the fiscal impact on the district is substantial, according to Bill. For example, the cost of a recent clean-up of one site alone



Illegal growers remove tree leaves and needles are removed because they block sunlight needed for marijuana crops. And since cutting down trees would leave "tell-tale" stumps that are easily spotted by air, trees like these in the Mendocino National Forest are girdled midway up the trunk by machete, killing all future growth and eventually the tree. (Photo by the United States Forest Service Region, Flickr Creative Commons)

was estimated at \$34,000, which involved gathering up a wide array of equipment and waste and exporting it out by helicopter. This does not include the cost of restoring soils or native vegetation and wildlife habitats. He expressed guarded optimism that improved intelligence has yielded some success, if only in minimizing the damage to the watershed. Surveillance techniques, as he described them, are "cutting edge" in approach.

At the same time, as abatement techniques have become more sophisticated, so have the strategies of the growers, most of whom are associated with Mexican drug trafficking cartels. Post-9/11 improvements to border security have now made it more efficient for the cartels to smuggle people over the border to tend marijuana grows in California than to smuggle Mexican-grown crops into market areas north of the border. And the demand has only increased. The MMWD watershed is not the only land in the Bay Area that has been targeted by growers; federal parklands, remote privately-owned ranchlands, East Bay Regional Park, and others have been victimized as well.

In response to questions from audience members asking what they could do to assist, Bill responded that individuals can

call the Sky Oaks Watershed Headquarters at (415) 945-1181 to report suspicious activity (persons carrying camping gear, shovels, other equipment, etc.).

More than one member of the audience suggested that this problem deserves the ongoing attention of the MMWD Board and that MMWD staff should reevaluate the risks associated with essential ranger patrol actions as well as the reduction in ranger personnel. These decisions have proved costly in view of the increased workload brought on by this dangerous and environmentally damaging illegal activity on the watershed.



Anniversaries *from Page 1*

MMWD's within a few months.

MMWD and TCC have different interests in the Mt. Tamalpais watershed but their 1912 origins are linked. For a growing Marin population, water was essential. MMWD was able to consolidate numerous private water supply companies into one public utility. At the same time, hikers who swarmed every weekend by ferry and train to Mt. Tamalpais were disgruntled that private water company lands were closed to the public. For TCC and other hiking clubs, the district's ownership of the watershed promised to open up a "wilderness park." As a consequence, TCC not only supported the District's bond measure but also cooperated in trail maintenance, litter cleanup, fire patrol, and building fireplaces. TCC assumed the permanent mantle of "Guardian of Mt. Tamalpais." (Barry Spitz, 2012)

MMWD History Project. Jack Gibson, a Director of MMWD and one-time history teacher, found his interest rekindled about ten years ago when he saw the need for a history of the first municipal water district chartered in the State. He enrolled in a course in the environmental history of the U.S., with

the result that Jack hopes to complete his Master's thesis late this year on the creation of MMWD up to the first delivery of water in 1916. He also has just completed an illustrated history of the district for Arcadia Press, to be released in June.

Jack's enthusiasm is infectious: "We cannot afford to lose Marin's unique history of conservation—or forget the role that the water district played in securing the first major public land at a time when the old rancho system was breaking up and the majority of the County was owned by just a few people."

"TCC History: To Save a Mountain." As Tamalpais Conservation Club's centennial approached, the TCC Board also recognized the need for a history of the club. The result is the newly published "To Save a Mountain: The 100 Year Battle for Mt. Tamalpais", by Barry Spitz. As Spitz relates, the TCC was founded in part to support MMWD's acquisition of watershed lands. In the early 20th century heyday of hiking and hunting on Mt. Tamalpais, the club organizers also were outraged over vandalism and the desecration left by hunters. The club's first organized activity, in fact, was a massive clean-up campaign (Lincoln Fairley, "Mount Tamalpais: A History"). TCC also would lead the campaign to establish the first of California's State Parks on Mt. Tamalpais in 1928. After 100 years, TCC continues to fulfill its "Guardian" responsibilities.

Tomales Bay State Park: Everyone's favorite beaches

Tomales Bay State Park, Marin's third state park, turns 60 this year. This story goes back to the earliest days of MCL in 1935 when the alarm was sounded by local residents who feared the beaches of Tomales Bay might be lost to the public. A serious attempt to save the beaches didn't begin until around 1942, however. Local residents began organizing to secure the beaches for park purposes, and MCL "adopted" the project, with Bruce Johnstone, Inverness, and Caroline Livermore, co-founder of MCL, playing pivotal roles.

Their first success was matching the County's contribution to acquire 185 acres at Shell Beach as a County park in 1945. With the State as eventual target, Johnstone and Livermore continued to pursue the County to match State funds for additional acquisitions. With the help of the Sierra Club, Alpine Club,



Tamalpais Conservation Club's 100th Birthday— Book Release: To Save a Mountain, The 100 Year Battle for Mt. Tamalpais, by Barry Spitz

- May 5, 7:00 pm, Centennial book signing at Book Passage in Corte Madera.

Discover the vibrant history of the challenges and successes in the preservation of lands on and around Mt. Tamalpais and the role of the Tamalpais Conservation Club, along with other key men and women, and both public and private organizations who came together for these efforts.

**Visit tamalpais.org or call
415.451.1912**

TCC, Marin Nature Group, several garden clubs and other organizations, five sandy beaches (Indian, Upper Pebble, Lower Pebble, Heart's Desire, Shell), two miles of waterfront, and acres of Bishop Pine forest became Tomales Bay State Park.

On November 8, 1952, MCL hosted 200 people to celebrate the new State Park and to dedicate the Willis Linn Jepson Memorial Grove of Bishop pines. The Park subsequently was enlarged to 2,400 acres with the addition of three parcels on the opposite (east) shore of Tomales Bay. And in 1980, the new Johnstone Trail was completed, connecting all the west park's beaches. That was the year Carlos Porrata began his 24-year service as resident Ranger for the Park, among many other activities, imparting the legends of Native American inhabitants of Tomales Bay to thousands of elementary school children. In his retirement years, Carlos is helping to keep the State Parks in Marin open and their legacy alive!

Point Reyes National Seashore: A wilderness within easy reach

Point Reyes National Seashore is celebrating 50 years. The idea of making the Peninsula

Continued on page 6



Marin Municipal Water District's 100th Birthday —Saturday Volunteer Days

- May 5, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Centennial Open House @
MMWD Corporation Yard
- May 19, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Volunteer Habitat Restoration
Opportunity
- June 2, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Volunteer Trail Crew
Opportunity

**Visit marinwater.org or call
415.945.1128**

Anniversaries *from Page 5*



Tomales Bay State Park's 60th Birthday—Cake and Kayaks

November 2012 activities

- A formal opening of a newly appointed educational facility
- Interpretive kayak outings and hikes starting from Heart's Desire Beach
- Birthday cake!

Details will be announced in early September. Visit parks.ca.gov/?page_id=470 or call 707.769.5665 x 227

into a national park was first proposed in 1935 by the National Park Service, but in the late 1950s it became the dream of Marin Congressman Clem Miller. Miller, who owned a home in Inverness, was chief author of the bill that created the Seashore and was signed into law by President Kennedy in September 1962. Harold Gilliam's classic elegy about the Peninsula, "Island in Time," may also have played a role in its preservation: as a key tactic of the campaign, the Sierra Club placed a copy of the book on the desk of every member of Congress that year. In the book, Gilliam wrote: "We need to keep some of our vanishing shoreline an unspoiled place, where all men, a few at a time, can discover what really belongs there—can find their own Island in Time."

A month later, Clem Miller died in a plane crash. With insufficient funds to purchase lands and rising land prices, the Park Service by 1969 was ready to sell off some of the land for private development. Peter Behr intervened and led a massive Save-Our-Seashore campaign to send a half-million letters to then-President Nixon to free-up Land and Water Conservation Funds to

complete the park. "... Probably no park area anywhere has gone through more traumas or has depended more on the work of legions of volunteers than this one." (Gilliam, "Island in Time," 2nd Edition, 1973).

These days, John Dell'Osso thinks he may have the best job in the world. In his position as Chief of Interpretation and Resource Education at Point Reyes National Seashore, he tells adult visitors and school kids about this Island in Time. He begins by describing the size and diversity of the park's holdings—more than 71,000 acres, including 33,000 acres of wilderness area proposed by citizens, including MCL, 80 miles of unspoiled coastline, and management of another 21,000 acres of adjacent Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands. More than two million people annually visit the park's estuaries, beaches, coastal grasslands, salt marshes, and coniferous forests.

The park together with the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine



Point Reyes National Seashore's 50th Birthday—2012 Trail Challenge

From June 2 through November 1, hikers, equestrians and explorers of all fitness levels are welcome to join this FREE self-paced exploration of the park. Choose from five Trails Challenges:

- All Park 150 Mile Challenge
- 50 for the 50th Challenge
- Family Challenge
- Five Habitat Challenge
- Equestrian Challenge

Visit ptreyes.org or call 415.663.1200 x 310

Sanctuaries, Tomales Bay State Park, MMWD lands, and GGNRA constitute one of the few remaining biologically diverse Mediterranean climate regions on earth, earning recognition by the United Nations (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere program and as part of the Central California Coast Biosphere Reserve. The peninsula is also rich in its 2,000-year cultural history, beginning with the Coast Miwok Indians, the first human inhabitants.

In view of the early battles to preserve the park from inevitable despoliation, Dell'Osso likes to quote David Brower, former Executive Director of the Sierra Club, who warned: "The Peninsula is what we have and there is no more where it came from." Fifty years later, we can celebrate the prescience of those who persisted in fulfilling Clem Miller's dream!

Golden Gate National Recreation Area: saving the Marin Headlands

Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Bay Region's second great national park, was authorized by President Nixon ten years later, in 1972. No one knows the story of GGNRA better than Amy Meyer, who walked into a San Francisco neighborhood controversy one evening in 1970 and ended up co-chairing the campaign for a new national park. Amy recalls a critical moment in the struggle to gain the park:

"Congressmen Phillip Burton, Bill Mailliard and Don Clausen were celebrating on October 11, 1972 when they phoned me from Washington, shouting that the GGNRA legislation had finally passed the House. There was no worry about Senate passage. President Nixon would sign the bill, part of his 'Legacy of Parks.'"

I could hardly believe two years of non-stop effort had ended. Our ad-hoc group, People for a GGNRA, had taken a government plan for 8,000 acres and pushed it to 34,000. Much of that increase was made possible by work done by early Marin residents and MCL: we could connect public land from the Marin headlands to Point Reyes. People for a GGNRA Chairman Edgar Wayburn guided policy; I was co-chair and guided volunteers. Bob Raab of MCL became our Marin chairman. Bob Young, also of MCL, created our maps.

Today the park encompasses 80,000 acres in

Continued on Page 7

Anniversaries *from Page 6*



Golden Gate National Recreation Area's 40th Birthday

- Golden Gate National Recreation Area, a relative youngster among the other 2012 celebrants, is currently developing a list of activities to commemorate its 40th anniversary on October 27.

Visit nps.gov/goga and click on Plan Your Visit or call 415.561.4700

three counties, and has become what I could not imagine that evening. Miles of chain-link fencing were removed, acres of exotic foliage were replaced with native habitat, and historic buildings were rehabilitated. Our first superintendent, Bill Whalen, kept public participation alive through the Advisory Commission for GGNRA and Point Reyes and pioneered development of private partnerships for parks. Just look at the trails, visitor centers, kiosks, and brochures done by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy! Park programs are available for everyone, from children to seniors.

'Parks to the people, where the people are'—in urban areas—was our rallying cry. Every time I visit the park, I know we succeeded.'

Frank Dean, General Superintendent of GGNRA, agrees: "The citizen-led conversion of these spectacular lands from national defense to 'natural defense' is so characteristic of the Bay Area culture. Today our relationship with the community provides many opportunities, and we are fortunate that these parks are valued as an integral part of the quality of life in our region."

Marin County's Open Space Preserves: special lands in Marin's "back yard"

1972 was also the year Marin County voters established the Marin County Open Space District, now Marin County Parks. The timing was right! The beginning of the 1970s was a period of profound awakening in Marin. Marincello had been defeated, as had the plan to cover West Marin and connect to 101 with an east-west freeway. The County's 1971 landmark planning study, "Can the Last Place Last?" outlined the pressures for sprawling urban development and new highways that threatened to change fundamentally Marin's physical appearance and environmental quality.

MARIN COUNTY
PARKS
PRESERVATION • RECREATION



Marin County Parks's 40th Birthday—Summer of Celebrations

- May 18, McNear's Beach Block party
- Campfire Series—June 9, Mt. Burdell; July 13, Stafford Lake; August 16, McNeers Beach Park
- Full Moon Walks—June 3, Rush Creek; July 3 near the Marin County Fair (full moon and fireworks); August 1, Old St. Hilarys; August 31, Roy's Redwoods
- Our Parks, Our History—June 2, Ring Mountain; August 1, Old St. Hilarys; August 31, Roy's Redwoods

Visit marincountyparks.org or call 415.473.2129

On one local front, the alarm of Mill Valley residents who saw nearby ridges of Mt. Tamalpais being slated for development grew into a community effort to save North Ridge. Citizens rallied, lobbied, and ultimately convinced the voters to pass Measure A, thus assuring a stream of tax dollars to fund acquisitions of lands as open space throughout the County.

Pierre Joske, Director of Marin's Parks and Recreation Department for 17 years and recently deceased, had his own version of the origins of the Marin County Open Space District. He recalled that two women from the Marin Conservation League came into his office in the Civic Center one day in 1971, sat down on his desk, and demanded: "This County has got to have a regional system of public parks and open spaces!"—or something to that effect. Whatever the exact words, Joske was persuaded to spearhead the formation of what became the Marin County Open Space District, later renamed Marin County Parks, with Joske as its chief and Brian Wittenkeller as its first planner. Dave Hansen joined the growing District two years later and now, in his retirement, recalls the rich experience of learning under Joske's leadership in those early years.

Under Joske's management, the District acquired thousands of acres of ridgetops and rolling hills, flowing streams, coastlines, and over 200 miles of trails. Over four decades, Marin County Parks has continued to acquire hundreds of undeveloped parcels from willing sellers, totaling more than 20,000 acres. Much of this acreage became open space preserves—now 34 in total. The preserves are complemented by four regional parks, as well as many active sports facilities, picnic areas, and paths.

Today, Katherine Mindel Jones ("Kat") and other young County Parks staff represent a new generation poised to continue the legacy of land stewardship in Marin. Kat is the Coordinator of External Affairs for Marin County Parks. An attorney by training, she has the enthusiasm and vision of someone who looks forward to many years of commitment of service to the environment. For Kat and her generation, there will be new responsibilities if the parklands and open spaces that preserve Marin's natural environment for fish and wildlife and for people to enjoy are to endure.

Events

2012 Annual Dinner and Meeting

Marin Conservation League's 2012 Annual Dinner was held on April 20th at the Key Room, the beautiful event space at Homeward Bound's New Beginnings Center in Hamilton. The event featured an all-organic buffet catered by **Fresh Starts Catering**, and locally-produced wines from **Pt. Reyes Vineyards**.

The evening was kicked off by a welcome and summary of the past year's successes

and highlights by President **Susan Stompe**, and closed by guest speaker and Chair of the California State Parks Commission **Dr. Caryl Hart**, who discussed the uncertain future of California's State Parks.

During the evening, Susan Stompe was re-elected MCL President, and two new directors were named to the Board: **Roger Roberts**, who returns to the board after a one-year absence, and **Judy Teichman**.

MCL's 2012 Awards for Environmental Leadership were presented. **Peter Douglas**, former chair of the California Coastal Commission, was honored posthumously with the Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to the protection and preservation of California's coast. Mr. Douglas passed away on April 1. North Bay Watershed Association Executive Director **Harry Seraydarian** was honored with the Marin Green Award; and the John M. McPhail, Jr. Green Business Award went to **Hurricane Hauling & Demolition, Inc.** of San Rafael. The Ted Wellman Water Award was given to the **North Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited**, and Sir Francis Drake High School seniors **Eli Grinberg** and **Willa Murphy** received the Youth Award for Environmental Achievement. The Marin Conservation League Volunteer of

Continued on page 9



Top—Linda Novy, Georgia McDaniels; Bruce Arnold, Supervisor Judy Arnold



Middle—David Sherman and Lisa Chipkin of Hurricane Hauling; Phil Richardson, Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Elizabeth Moody

Bottom—speaker Dr. Caryl Hart; awardees Willa Murphy and Eli Grinberg; Vicki Nichols

Photos by Greg Zitney



Events

Annual Dinner *from Page 8*

the Year Award was given with gratitude to **Nona Dennis** for her many years of service to the Marin environmental community.

The dinner was sponsored in part by **Supervisor Judy Arnold, Marin Sanitary Service, Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Seagate Properties, Inc., and David Weinsoff**. Classical guitarist **Rick Heizman** set the evening's mood.

MCL is grateful to the Annual Dinner Committee of **Jana Haehl** and **Priscilla Bull** to all the local businesses and individuals (see

sidebar) who graciously donated to the raffle. Kudos to raffle prize gatherer *extraordinaire* **Vicki Nichols**, and to dinner photographer **Greg Zitney**, who also donated his stunning nature photographs for the awards.

Raffle winners were **Mary Wendt, Judith Shaw, Sarah Allen, Jana Haehl, Dee Roberts, Stone Coxhead, Catherine Lee** and **Pat Holden**. Congratulations!

Business-Environment Breakfast, Thursday, May 17, 7:30 AM

Marine Expert Ed Ueber:

Polychaetes don't vote! The politics of ocean protection

Please join Marin Conservation League and marine expert **Ed Ueber** on Thursday, May 17th from 7:30 to 9:00 AM at MCL's Business-Environment Breakfast at the Embassy Suites in San Rafael.

Ed Ueber is considered an expert on abalone, sardine, groundfish, crab, fishery economics, fishery management, marine protected areas and navigation. He began his ocean career as a USN submarines navigator and later worked in the merchant marine. He served as manager of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary and the northern sector of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary from 1990 – 2004, overseeing a 2,900 square nautical mile area.

Ed has received four Congressional citations for exceptional service and was named Local Ocean Hero by the Smithsonian Institution. He was one of eight senior scientists on the Master Planning Team of the California Marine Life Protection Act. He taught at the University of Connecticut and University of Rhode Island and received, at the latter, his Master's degree in Resource Economics and Fisheries.



photo: Dan Howard, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Ed Ueber prepares to pilot the DeepWater 2000 submersible

Tickets are \$25 for MCL members and \$30 for non-members. A full breakfast buffet is included. Advance registration and payment are required by May 11. **Register at marinconservationleague.org** or by returning the form on page 2.

Sponsored in part by **Bank of Marin**.



THANKYOU, ANNUAL DINNER RAFFLE AND IN-KIND DONORS!

Ann Thomas

Blue Waters Kayaking

California Film Institute

Cavallo Point

Comforts

*Ernest Clayton
Wildflower Images*

Fish.

Good Earth Natural Foods

Greg Zitney

Heath Ceramics

Lark Theater

Mountain Play Association

Poggio Trattoria

Point Reyes Vineyards

*Sausalito Jazz &
Blues by the Bay*

Seaplane Adventures

Slide Ranch

Susan Stompe

Tom Harrison Maps

Weldon Owens Publishing

Status Updates

Local Coastal Plan moves on to Supervisor hearings

The three-year process of amending the County's **Local Coastal Program** (LCP) moved into its final rounds before the Board of Supervisors (BOS) with two workshops in March. Several hearings before the BOS will be scheduled next.

MCL supports the three-part mandate of the Coastal Act that calls for protection of sensitive coastal resources, protection of agricultural productivity, and enhancement of public access to the coast. With the understanding that a healthy ecosystem, including diverse habitats and clean water quality in Tomales Bay and coastal streams is fundamental to sustainable and productive agriculture, MCL will continue to advocate for strong natural resource protections.

MCL continues to have concerns that the amended plan has weakened protections of streams and wetlands and their buffers and other environmentally sensitive resources on agricultural lands, compared to policies in the existing 1980-81 LCP.

To this end, MCL is in the process of reviewing the wording in the land use plan and development code that, together, make up the LCP, and proposing constructive recommendations for BOS consideration.

San Rafael Sports Facility

The San Rafael Planning Commission's review of the merits of the now-renamed "**San Rafael Sports Facility**" at the San Rafael Airport site has been rescheduled for May 15.

In addition to concerns over the proximity of the project to Las Gallinas Creek and its endangered species habitats, the public has raised questions concerning the basic safety of a large sports facility open to both adults and children situated so close to an airport runway. The California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics commented on the Negative Declaration for the project in 2006 and the Draft EIR in 2009. But in 2011, the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook was updated, and new safety standards and regulations were set. A recent letter dated March 9, 2012 from the Division of Aeronautics makes two important comments: first, that a group recreation facility, especially facilities used by children, in defined runway safety zones is generally prohibited by land use guidelines; and second, that vehicles taller than five feet in the parking row closest to the runway would be considered an obstruction to air navigation.

On the first issue: Although the land use guidelines do not apply specifically to private airports, they could be viewed as setting

a de facto threshold of significance under CEQA, in which case those areas of the proposed facility that lie within designated safety zones would raise the potential for "significant" impact on safety of users of the facility. Such an interpretation constitutes "new information" requiring a revised EIR.

On the second issue: A review of the proposed parking layout reveals that substantial portions of the parking lot, turnaround and auxiliary parking lot would need to be configured to avoid the chance for trucks or other vehicles greater than 5 feet tall to become obstructions to air navigation, in violation of the regulations.

Given the City of San Rafael's potential liability in placing the facility in a hazardous area, or of allowing unsafe obstructions to air navigation in parking areas, city staff delayed further hearings until this information could be analyzed as to its implications on the FEIR process and on the merits of the project.

Grady Ranch

On April 10, Lucasfilm announced its intention to drop the **Grady Ranch** project and to put the land up for sale. The stated reason was neighborhood opposition and the threat of legal challenge that could further delay the project.

A brief synopsis may clear up misconceptions that followed the announcement. On February 27, 2012, the Planning Commission recommended certifying the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (FSEIR) and approved the development plan. The Lucas Valley Estates Homeowners' Association (appellants) filed an appeal on the grounds that the FSEIR violated CEQA in several respects. On April 3, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) heard the appeal but deferred a decision pending legal review of new information the appellant's attorney had brought to light that could affect the legal adequacy of the FSEIR. One week later Lucasfilm announced dropping the project.

The "new information" referenced above is critical to an understanding of the issues. Unknown to County Staff and Planning Commission, state and federal agencies



Tomales Bay

Tim Rosenfeld

Continued on Page 11

MCE *from Page 1*

be achieved with the flip of a switch. If we increase the proportion of our electricity supply that comes from renewable, carbon-free sources, the GHG footprint of *all* our buildings will be reduced overnight. Other climate action measures can only reduce carbon emissions slowly—one project or one vehicle at a time.

That's why the Climate Action Plans published to date by cities in Marin identify the switch to Marin Clean Energy (or the

switch to renewable energy in general) as the single most impactful action they can take to reduce GHG emissions. San Anselmo's plan (see chart below) is typical, showing MCE having five times the impact of any other measure.

Today, electricity from MCE is 50 percent renewable, while PG&E only just meets the state-mandated minimum of 20 percent renewable. Further, anyone in Marin can sign up today for MCE's "Deep Green" 100 percent renewable option for a few dollars a month over their regular rate. PG&E offers nothing

like this.

As MCE's roll-out nears, naysayers are again trying to spread uncertainty and doubt about MCE. The claim they repeat most often is that MCE is just a bookkeeping exercise—that it isn't actually creating any new renewable energy. It is true that three years ago, under the "walk before we run" strategy, MEA's first renewable energy purchases were all from existing facilities. However, in January, 2011, MEA signed a contract to expand two landfill-gas-to-energy projects in Yolo and Solano counties specifically to supply MCE. Then in July, MEA signed a 20-year contract for 31 Megawatts of new solar electricity. One megawatt of this will be built in Marin, and the rest will be built over degraded or unusable vacant land in the Central Valley.

All this is new, clean, renewable generation that would not exist without contracts from Marin, and proposals for additional projects like these are under review. By the end of the decade, MCE will be approaching 100 percent clean renewable power, most of it generated by projects built specifically for MEA.

Marin residents don't have to do anything to switch to Marin Clean Energy. It will happen automatically in July. However, if you have questions or want to sign up for "Deep Green" service, you can visit the MCE website (MarinCleanEnergy.info) or call MCE at 888-632-3674.



Status Updates *from Page 10*

charged by law with permitting a key element of the Grady Ranch project—namely, the restoration of Miller Creek and tributaries—had received a permit application from Lucas' engineers in August 2011 for the proposed restoration plan.

After careful analysis, the agencies determined that it could not be permitted as designed. The plan to raise the deeply incised creek bed by filling it with 68,000 cubic yards of rock and dirt excavated for the building (one-quarter of the total) carried unacceptable risks to downstream water quality and aquatic resources and, therefore, would have to be revised. This contradicted the FSEIR, which identified possible risks of the plan but concluded that they were not significant.

In his research, the appellants' attorney found that the agencies had submitted a detailed critique to the Lucas consulting team (Memorandum, December 8, 2011), and, unknown to County staff, revisions to the restoration plan were in progress. As a consequence, the Planning Commission approved both SFEIR and Precise Development Plan in late February without knowing that the project was being revised and that potential new impacts might have to be addressed, such as disposing of 68,000 cubic yards of now-excess material from excavation. It is unfortunate that neither Lucas' engineers nor agencies apprised the County in a timely manner of project revisions that could affect conclusions in the FSEIR.

New information that contradicts conclusions in a Final EIR before it is certified, or raises new, potentially significant impacts, typically

requires that the document be revised and possibly even recirculated. This was the basic request made in the neighbors' appeal. With limited advance notice of these issues, the BOS on April 3 properly postponed a decision on the appeal to allow legal review to determine the need to revise the FSEIR. Citing delays and neighborhood opposition, the applicant announced his intent to withdraw the project a week later. In reality, the satisfactory revision to the creek restoration plan and CEQA compliance could likely have been resolved to the neighbors' satisfaction within a few months' time.

**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Officers

Susan Stompe, Novato, President
David Schnapf, Greenbrae,
First Vice President
Vicki Nichols, Sausalito,
Second Vice President
Nona Dennis, Mill Valley, Secretary
Kenneth Drexler, Fairfax, Treasurer

Directors

Priscilla Bull, Kentfield
Jon Elam, San Anselmo
Jana Haehl, Corte Madera
Fred Holden, Belvedere
Roger Roberts, San Rafael
Larry Smith, Nicasio
Bob Spofford, San Rafael
Judy Teichman, Point Reyes Station
Ann Thomas, Corte Madera
Periann Wood, Mill Valley
Chris Yalonis, Fairfax

*Board of Directors meetings are held
the third Tuesday of the month at
7:30 PM and are open to the public.*

Staff:

Dru Parker, Operations Manager
Molly Foley, Operations Administrator

Contact Information

1623-A Fifth Avenue
San Rafael CA 94901
415.485.6257
www.marinconservationleague.org
mcl@marinconservationleague.org

Committee Meeting Schedule

Land Use and Transportation:
1st Wed. of the month, 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Parks and Open Space:
2nd Thurs. of the month, 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Water and Watersheds: 4th Thurs. of the
month, 4:30 - 6:30 PM

*North Marin Unit (NMU), Climate
Action:* Call 415.485.6257 or see our
website for meeting details.

*Meetings (except for NMU) are at
1623-A Fifth Avenue, San Rafael*

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.

*Printed by Mill Valley Services on recycled paper
with soy-based inks. Please share and recycle.*



NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 151
San Rafael, CA

May-June 2012

1623-A Fifth Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Haven't Yet Renewed for 2012?

Don't let this be your last issue—renew today!

Name(s)

Address

City/State/ZIP

Phone

Email (for announcements and events)

Please renew my membership for 2012 at this level:

☐ \$35 Steward

☐ \$250 Woodlands

☐ \$50 Creeks

☐ \$500 Redwoods

☐ \$100 Baylands

☐ \$1,000 Peter Behr

☐ Check enclosed, payable to MCL

☐ Please charge my credit card

Card Number

Exp. Date

Name on Card

Card sec. code

Signature

Mail to MCL, 1623A Fifth Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901 or RENEW ONLINE!
marinconservationleague.org | All contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.