



Protecting Marin Since 1934

Mr. Dan Ashe, Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street  
Washington, D.C. 20240

May 23, 2014

***Re: Corte Madera Ecological Reserve (CMER) Expansion, Marin County, CA***

Dear Director Ashe:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) is pleased to support the Coastal Conservancy's application for National Coastal Wetlands Program funding to acquire a 5-acre infill site that would be added to the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. In addition to a direct donation of \$1,000 to the project we intend to send a letter to our approximately 800 members seeking individual donations for the acquisition.

MCL, now in its 80<sup>th</sup> year, is a conservation and environmental advocacy organization whose mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural assets of Marin County. Between 1934 and 1981 the League helped to acquire and preserve some of Marin's defining public lands, comprising a total acreage of more than 11,000 acres.

MCL has historic ties to the Ecological Reserve going back to its beginning in 1974. At that time a plan was proposed to dredge what was known as Heerdt Marsh for a 335-berth boat harbor, yacht basin, and channel. Dredged spoils and imported fill were to be placed on another 47 acres of marsh which would be developed for marine commercial recreation, and other commercial and industrial uses. Much of the initial work in public education, zoning and planning, and preliminary fund-raising to save the marsh for natural habitat and open space was done through Marin Conservation League.

We are extremely proud of the role we played in saving this wonderful expanse of tidal wetland. The infill site proposed for the current acquisition should have been part of the Reserve from the beginning, but remained in third-party ownership until environmentalists' persistent negotiating efforts finally resulted in a purchase agreement.

We urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to support this important acquisition.

Yours truly,

Jon Elam, President

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