

Marin Conservation League

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

AGENDA for December 11, 2014, 3:00 – 5:00

Muir Woods meeting room, 1st Floor, 175 N. Redwood Drive (first left off Smith Ranch Road)

ANNOUNCEMENTS and CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: 1) MCL Holiday Open House, December 12, 4:00 – 7:00; 2) BOS Hearing on RTMP and Final TPEIR, December 16, morning; 2) Parks Forward Commission meeting, Old Railroad Museum, Sacramento, February 6.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 9, 2014 (corrected), November 12, 2014 (Notes from joint meeting of Agricultural Land Use, Land Use, and P&OS Committees)

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1) Marin County Parks:

- a. Draft RTMP, Final TPEIR, and *Analysis of Policy-Related Comments* – Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission action and BOS hearing, December 16; Safe trail design issue; other issues? (Nona, Linda Novy, others)
- b. Measure A Expenditures - Citizens Oversight Committee meeting – Brief report on FY2013-14 (Nona, Linda Novy)
- c. Sky Ranch acquisition – MOST, and MCOSD status of Sky Ranch Horse Owners Association

2) MCL Invasive Plants Subcommittee: Report from Subcommittee (Paul Minault)

3) MMWD and Tamalpais Lands Collaborative: Brief update, Marin Magazine article correction, launch of web site (Nona)

4) State Parks update:

- a. Parks Forward Commission update – MCL letter sent; Next meeting of Commission on February 6, 2015, 9:30 – 12:00, California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento. (Susan Stompe)
- b. Marin State Park updates?

5) National Parks in Marin:

- a. Pt. Reyes National Seashore – Brief recap of November 12 joint MCL committee meeting on Comprehensive Ranch Management Plan and EA; public workshops held in Pt. Reyes Station, November 20 and 21; ongoing process (Nona, Susan Stompe)
- b. Muir Woods parking and traffic issues; brief recap of meetings convened by Rep. Jared Huffman (Nona)
- c. Proposal to raise GGNRA entry fees at Muir Woods, others – Comments due Dec. 16

6) "Park Watch Program": Overview of program, likely adoption by Marin State Parks (Larry Minikes)

Next MCL P&OS meeting: January 8, 2015

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

October 9, 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Larry Kennings, Susan Stompe, Eva Buxton, Robert Eichstadt, Linda Novy, Joyce Britt, Judy Teichman, Al Baumann, Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park; Doug Wilson, Tom Boss, Periann Wood ; Mike Swezy, MMWD, and Sharon Farrell, GG Parks Conservancy; and Ron Miska, Steve Peterlee, and Nancy Peak, Marin County Parks

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 3:05 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) Nicasio Grass Ranch “Fibershed” event, October 19, 10:00 – noon; 2) Walk into Conservation History, Horse Hill, 9:30 – 12:30; 3) Joint meeting of MCL Parks and Open space, Agricultural Land Use, and Land Use, November 12, at MCL. time tbd.

MINUTES for September 11, 2014 – Approved

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Tamalpais Land Collaborative. The meeting opened with a Power Point presentation by Sharon Farrell on progress of the 5-Year Strategic Plan being developed by TLC staff. Among other information, Sharon reviewed basic information about the TLC: the MOU among collaborating agencies; map of the geographic area encompassed by the Collaborative; what the TLC is *not* (Doesn't make policy or replace member agencies; Not a new agency; TLC activities are not the end-all for participating agencies, who have other ongoing activities.). She outlined current activities: Developing five-year Plan and vision, reaching out to organizations (27 to date), expanding public outreach to include events like Farmers' Market, and setting up www.onetam.org web site. Much of this activity has been funded by Bechtel.

Sharon illustrated “One Tam” logo, and brochure. TLC plans “Mt. Tam Day of Thanks” on November 22 on Mt. Tam. She reviewed categories of projects and programs (Community and Conservation; Wetlands& Waterways, Signature Trail Corridors, and Legacy Projects), and criteria that will be used to select projects put forward by individual collaborators, such as consistency with TLC vision and goals, serves area of focus, enhances natural and cultural resources and visitor experience, and can be implemented within 10-year MOU.

Sharon and Mike were commended for idea of Day of Thanks. Questions were raised on the governance of the TLC. Sharon described the origins of the TLC idea and how collaboration evolved in discussions among the participating agencies.

2. MMWD: Two projects are active at MMWD: 1) Wildfire Protection and Habitat Improvement Plan (WPWHIP, or Vegetation management) and EIR. The Draft EIR is expected to be released in early 2015. In the meantime the rate of spread of broom has increased from 30%/year to a projected 50%/year. Reported by Janet Klein at meeting of MCL Water and Watersheds. 2) The Water Storage Improvement Project EIR has gotten under way, with a Scoping Session held on September 30. Nona and Larry attended for Parks and Open Space Committee. Both projects are being tracked by MCL Water and Watershed Committee.
3. Marin County Parks
 - a. RTMP Final Plan and EIR MCL submitted two letters of comment on the Recirculated Draft Tiered Program EIR (RD TPEIR) on September 22. The second letter concerned impacts of the RTMP on invasive non-native plants, including the impact of horses in spread of invasive plants and in trampling of vegetation off trail. Several members of the committee objected to the conclusions and agreed to discuss pertinent scientific research with members of the Invasive Plant Subcommittee. Depending on the outcome of the discussion, MCL will submit a supplementary comment to County Parks when the Final EIR is released
 - b. Stafford Lake Master Plan is in process. A focus group, including Susan Stompe, met with Nancy Peak, County Parks landscape architect and consultant on site. Nancy explained that master plan issues include circulation, need for bridge repair over creeks and additional protections, moving corporation yard facilities to behind bike park, possible connection to bike park. A loop trail around the lake is being considered. A public meeting is planned for October 15 at Margaret Todd Center. There are no proposals on the table yet. A preliminary master plan is expected in spring 2015.
 - c. Mill-Valley-Sausalito Multi-use Path Issue. Ron Miska described the actions that are being taken to resolve conflicts on this busy path where an accident occurred 2 weeks ago. Prior to that accident, no one was charged with enforcement; County Parks is responsible for maintenance only. Involved agencies have met – MV, Sausalito, MV Police, County Sheriff, County Parks and DPW, MCBC – and developed a plan of action. Team is working on signage and messaging; enforcement resulted in 15 recent citations by Sheriff; regulations are being researched in order to draft County ordinance to lower speed limits within 1,800 feet of ?? BOS will hear first reading of ordinance on Nov. 4, with adoption expected 3 weeks later. Other physical improvements: striping? Signs? Long-planned roundabout will be under construction soon. Other public paths can follow model (Greenbrae-Creel). Other options are being considered by the working group.
4. Priority Conservation Areas. Several years ago, ABAG requested local planning agencies to submit a list of local priority development areas – (PDAs), or areas most appropriate for future development. As a counter to development, they also requested lists of Priority Conservation Areas – PCAs, or areas designated for conservation into the future. In a meeting 5 years ago, chaired by TAM, Marin representatives of various organizations and agencies developed such a list. It

has not been updated. ABAG is requesting that any areas to be deleted be submitted to them by December 2014; any areas to be added should be submitted by April 2015. We agreed that a small group would meet, perhaps with other representative organizations, like Marin Audubon, and review the list for either deletions or additions

5. State Department of Parks: Parks Forward Commission and Draft Report. Susan has reviewed the July 30 Draft Report and outlined key conclusions and recommendations, as well as MCL concerns. The next meeting of the Commission, originally scheduled for November, will be rescheduled.

The Draft Report reaches strong conclusions and makes recommendations. 1) In all respects the Park System is debilitated and not sustainable – technologically, organizationally, etc. –and does not reward excellence; 2) The System does not serve needs of the diverse populations of California.

Recommendations in the report would transform management – how state parks are run, how they protect natural and cultural resources, and how they should serve all Californians and other visitors.

The Draft Report recommends that a transformation team develop and implement a new organizational structure and business model. State Parks must create new partnerships. A non-profit California Parks Conservancy should be established. Access must be expanded for all Californians, and work forces should reflect diverse demographics. Establish stable and diversified funding, including entrepreneurial and revenue generating strategies, coupled with increased efficiency and accountability throughout the department.

MCL has several concerns: How will public be included in steps going forward? Why should leadership require being a peace officer? Essential that natural resources not be sacrificed to meet recreational needs. How will a new Parks Conservancy work with State Parks Foundation? Carrying capacity should be established in each park, with minimum level of staffing to ensure some Parks “face” with public and volunteers. Correction 10.21.2014: The specific recommendation of the committee is that the ranger and management track should not be limited to peace officer status. It was moved, seconded and motion carried that a letter with this recommendation be sent by MCL to the Parks Forward Commission. Susan will draft for MCL Board approval.

6. National Parks in Marin:
 - a. Pt. Reyes National Seashore Ranch Plan/EA. About 3,000 comments were received and have been analyzed by NPS. They cover a wide range of interests. A joint meeting of MCL Parks & Open Space, Agricultural Land Use, and Land Use will discuss on November 12 at MCL.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00
Minutes by Nona Dennis

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Joint Special MCL Committee Meeting:
Land Use and Transportation Committee, Parks and Open Space, Agricultural Land Use
Notes: November 12, 2014

Ag Land Use Co-chair Sally Gale chaired the meeting, which was held in an MCL conference room from 3:00 to 4:20 PM. Also present: Superintendent Cicely Muldoon, Outreach Coordinator Melanie Gunn, Wildlife Biologist David Press, and Management Assistant Brannon Ketcham from the Pt. Reyes National Seashore office; Jenny Callaway from Congressman Huffman's office; Marin County UCCE Director David Lewis; Sonoma UCCE Director Stephanie Larson; Joyce Britt, Priscilla Bull, Eva Buxton, Nona Dennis, Neal Desai, Heather Furmidge, Bob Giacomini, Jackie and Rich Grossi, Michael Greenberg, Randy Greenberg, Brad Hunt, Bob Johnston, Larry Kennings, Gino and Kathy Lucchesi, Kevin Lunny, Mary Morgan, Vicki Nichols, Linda Novy, Kate Power, Delos Putz, Nicola and Rebecca Spolella, Susan Stompe, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas, Scott Tye, Donna Yamagata.

Meeting Purpose. The meeting was set to hear an update from NPS staff on the planning process for Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (Ranch CMP) in the park's pastoral zone. Sally chaired the panel of four NPS staff members who gave updates on their activities and the timeline for the management plan.

Cicely Muldoon gave an overview:

- The Ranch CMP process began in April 2014 following Interior Secretary Salazar's direction in 2012 to pursue issuance of 20-year permits for the 24 ranches in the Seashore pastoral zone. The plans need to address many issues, including the tule elk migration from their designated wilderness area into the pastoral zone.
- Scoping for the Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Assessment being prepared according to NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) attracted 3,100 comments, many of them form letters. All letters and comments are posted and given consideration. The park service has also held about 25 meetings with community groups and about 50 with ranchers, in gathering information and input for the planning process.
- The NPS will host two workshops for further input on topics of most interest to the public and the ranchers. These will be on: Thursday, November 20, 2014, focused on pasture management, diversification, succession, and other topics; and Friday, November 21, 2014, focused on tule elk.
- Pt. Reyes NPS staff have visited the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio, which also has an agricultural lease program with long-term lease of park-owned farmsteads to individuals. The program there differs from the Pt. Reyes Seashore situation.

Biologist David Press spoke to the tule elk situation, noting that "The "current situation regarding elk isn't working."

- Pt. Reyes staff have consulted with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and federal officials regarding elk behavior and management. They have also reviewed practices at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado and Redwood State Park in Northern California which both have herds of elk within their park lands
- The EA will study a range of alternatives including the required no action alternative, and alternatives that include no elk in the pastoral zone, and some elk in the pastoral zone. The environmental study will also review strategies, or tools, to control elk, including fences, hazing techniques, contraception, habitat enhancement on neighboring lands, and lethal

control. Under NEPA they must consider such issues as impacts on human and animal safety, effectiveness, sustainability. The EA will be out next summer with a 30-day comment period. The Park hopes to conclude the EA by the end of 2015, and complete the planning process in 2016.

- The November 20/21 workshops will present the alternatives and invite attendees to break into small groups to consider how to achieve the alternatives of no elk, or some elk, in the pastoral zone's 28,000 acres. The "no action" alternative would not be discussed.

Brannon Ketcham noted that along with the elk, there were important ranching issues to be address in the management plan, including: criteria and management planning for various types of agriculture to be prepared if ranchers decide, within the timeframe of the 20-year permit, that they wanted to change their business model; planning for succession of owners or operators if current owners were to retire.

Public Comment. Meeting attendees raised a number of issues and staff answered questions:

- Kathy Lucchesi noted, regarding the alternatives, that "no action means no ranching."
- Questioned the baseline – Brannon said the baseline for the EA would be existing operations.
- Several people suggested that workshops include a way for ranchers to provide information that a non-rancher could not give.
- Several people noted their intent to attend the workshops. Mr. Giacomini said he saw a "need to tell our story" about "keeping agriculture in the park."
- Kevin Lunny warned against setting up alternatives that could be favorable to elk but hurt ranching, noting that it was important that any alternative seek the best for all affected interests. "We do not want to divide a community that wants to be aligned," he said.
- Staff noted, in response to a question, that the completed plan, once adopted, would be implemented when the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) was rendered.
- Joyce Britt asked what is meant by "diversification." It was noted that diversification could include chickens, farm stays, small-scale row crops. Various examples of diversification will be covered at a program level in the EA.
- There were questions and concerns about the need and cost of maintaining historic structures on the ranches, expressing concern that maintenance of structures in the area designated for historic preservation may be financially infeasible for ranchers. Cicely noted that the Park is required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act.
- David Lewis said he believed succession planning was important.
- Cicely said that no alternative would be considered that envisions ranching not continuing. She concluded by saying that this is an opportunity to showcase ranches on the Seashore as models of ranches within a national park.

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