

Marin Conservation League

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

AGENDA for July 9, 2015 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 Picnic on the Patio, July 25, 12:00 – 3:00, outside MCL offices; 2) Invasive Plant Species Subcommittee, July 22 , 3:00 – 5:00, MCL; 3) County P&OS Commission meeting, July 16, 3:00 – 5:00; 4) Walk into Conservation History, Roy's Redwoods, with David Herlocker, Aug 9, 9:30 to 1:00; 5) Opening of "Rocky" Graham Park in Marin City, July 11, 11:00 a.m. ribbon-cutting; 6) Other events?

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 13 and June 11, 2015

INFORMATION UPDATES:

- 1) Marin Parks and Open Space
 - a. Vegetation and Biodiversity Mgmt Plan and Draft EIR – Review of comments on Draft EIR, sent July 8
 - b. RTMP – continuing follow-up on implementation, Region 1 and Region 2
 - c. MCL Letter to BOS supporting use of IPM in managing invasive plants on OSPs
- 2) MMWD Watershed
 - a. Forestry management study with US Forest Service and UC Davis --identifying actions that can be scaled up to maximize carbon storage, water yield, and wildfire resiliency – Janet Klein, Natural Resources Program Manager
 - b. Status of MMWD watershed invasive species programs
- 3) Tam. Lands Collaborative (TLC): Status update, upcoming events – Sharon Farrell,
- 4) State Parks in Marin: Updates on Marin state parks? Status of Easy Grade change-in-use?
- 5) National Parks in Marin
 - a. GGNRA – Muir Woods Parking MOU -- Board of Supervisors approval subject to final details; Notice to sue under endangered Species Act, filed with County by Mt. Tam Task Force, 60-days to correct deficiencies in the MOU.
 - b. Pt. Reyes National Seashore – Draft Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan and EA, delayed until early 2016
- 6) MCL Policy on Invasive Species and IPM:
 - a. MCL Letter to Board of Supervisors supporting use of IPM protocol on O.S.P.s
 - b. Summary – San Francisco IPM Technical Advisory Committee meeting, July 2, on risks of Glyphosate in IPM “tool-box” for management of public properties
 - c. Status of Draft MCL Expanded Policy
- 7) Trail Partners' campaign for Safe Trails Marin – Continuing campaign, need for volunteers

Next Meeting: August 13, 3:00 – 5:00

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Parks and Open Space Committee
June 11, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Kate Powers, Tom Boss, Al Baumann, Larry Minikes, Judy Teichman, Robert Eichstaedt, Ann Thomas, Connie Berto, Eva Buxton, Susan Stompe, Linda Novy, Paul Minault, Kristin Shannon, Larry Kennings, Shelly Scott, Cheryl Douglas, Kevin Haroff, Mia Monroe (NPS), Sharon Farrell (TLC)

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 3:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) Visit to Giacomini Dairy and cheese-making operation, June 20; 2) MCL Picnic on the Patio, July 25, 12:00 – 3:00; 3) Walk into Conservation History, Roy's Redwoods, with David Herlocker, Aug. 9, 9:30 – 1:00; Public meeting on glyphosate hosted by San Francisco IPM Technical Advisory Team, July 2, 9:30 – 11:30, County Fair building, Golden Gate Park, 8th and Lincoln.

Added to agenda: MMWD relationship to Tamalpais Lands Collaborative.

MINUTES for May 13, 2015, (Need approval at July 9 meeting.)

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks and Open Space District:
 - a. Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP) and Draft EIR. The comment period on the Draft EIR is 60 days, until July 8. Not many people attended the CEQA hearing at Parks Commission meeting on May 21. MCL has not yet submitted comments on the adequacy of the Draft “Tiered Program EIR.” Review has been complicated by public protest over scheduled herbicide treatment of invasive plants posted recently on Ring Mtn. OSP. An organized protest occupied much of 2 hours of public testimony during open time at the Board of Supervisors on June 3. Opponents of herbicide use, specifically glyphosate, were about 2/3s of the speakers. Others, including MCL, spoke in support of the ongoing invasive species IPM treatment program on Ring Mtn. and on other preserves. The Board delegated a subcommittee of Supervisors Sears and Rice to study the matter and possibly conduct a public information meeting. Further public meetings will be on the Final EIR later this fall, and then on the combined Plan and Final EIR before the Board of Supervisors.
 - b. RTMP Roll-out (continued discussion). The map of designated roads and trails in Region 1 of the Open Space District is due out momentarily. In the meantime, bike interests have developed proposals for expanded access to narrow trails on preserves and have been meeting with staff and lobbying supervisors individually and at regular meetings to gain support. MCL is concerned that the decision process has become political rather than objective and science-based. Committee members repeated concerns that sensitive habitat (Legacy) zones, including spotted owl nesting habitat, are not being emphasized enough as a constraint on location and intensified use and/or conversion of trails. Future public meetings (on other Regions) should focus more on natural resource protection. We need to support staff in implementing the RTMP in a transparent and objective manner.

2. Trail Partners Campaign. Nona described the roll-out of the “Slow and say Hello” campaign on National Trails Day June 6. Tables with banners, information brochures and other campaign materials (tee shirts, shirts, caps, etc.), were set up at five volunteer trail maintenance events held by each of five land managers. It was a useful trial to guide future tabling at events and poplar trailheads and other gathering spots. The Trail Partners’ presentation to Board of Supervisors on June 9 was well-received.
3. MMWD and Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC) The committee continued previous discussion on the relationship of MMWD to the TLC and the need for reassurance that unintended consequences of over-use will not result from promotion – that outreach is focused on stewardship and education and will not have the effect of bringing increasing numbers onto Mt. Tam. Others want reassurance that Parks Conservancy is not dominating the collaboration of public agencies. Others commented that too many project decisions appear to be made at staff level without TLC Exec. Committee involvement or public knowledge. Sharon Farrell agreed that outreach must reinforce protection and sustainability (of natural resources). In the interest of transparency, she said that a special public meeting will be held October 4 at M. V. Community Center, 2:30 – 5:00, to present an annual report on work and finances. The MMWD Watershed Committee will also discuss MMWD’s decision process as it relates to TLC activity at a meeting in July and report to the MMWD Board. In the meantime, the Wildfire Protection and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Plan (Vegetation Management) is being revised to eliminate use of chemical herbicides as an alternative for treatment of invasive plants.
4. State Parks update Nona announced that the State Parks Forward Transformation Team report is out, and it lays out a series of tasks to be accomplished largely by staff from around the state. We have been advised that there will be public meetings. No meeting has been scheduled yet in Marin. Tom Boss announced that China Camp State Park is now a 501 C 3 and has an operating agreement with State Parks. There will be hurdles to raising funds, but all revenues will remain in Marin for two years. Two interpretive specialists have been hired with state funds (??) to work at China Camp and other state parks in Marin.
5. National Parks in Marin
 - a. Pt. Reyes National Seashore – Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan. Judy Teichman reported that the Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan has been delayed and will not be available until early 2016. Brannon Ketcham, the Superintendent’s assistant, is going to Washington D.C. on 6-month special assignment. Kevin McKay is heading the process in the interim. She added that there continues to be a need for an overall elk management plan that includes elk in wilderness areas of the Seashore. It would be useful to have an educational forum on the elk population.
 - b. GGNRA and Muir Woods Traffic and Parking. Nona reported on a public meeting convened by Jared Huffman on May 26 in Mill Valley to present the results of stakeholders’ meetings on a draft MOU that lays out the following: a timetable for instituting a reservation system for Muir Woods; a timetable for reducing parking on Franks Valley Road from current peaks of 400+ cars below the Redwood Creek Bridge, to a maximum of 80 after two years, 40 after four and a half years, and zero after seven years (thirty spaces will remain above the bridge); and for implementing interim storm water management

measures to protect water quality and salmonid habitat in the Creek. Kristin Shannon, speaking for Mt. Tam Task Force, stated that the MOU lacks compliance assurance, and should reduce parking in one year rather than two – seven years is too long to get to zero – and that the interim measures to protect habitat from polluted runoff needs more detail and a timetable. Major repair of the roadway and culverts is needed to bring any marked improvement to the Creek habitat. Mia Monroe, NPS liaison, outlined the programs that have already been undertaken by NPS and others to restore habitat in the Creek. NPS is also meeting with the County to begin actions to reduce/rearrange parking, and to identify other sources of pollution to the Creek, such as septic failures at Muir Beach. NPS will continue to work with the county on enforcement of parking restrictions. The MOU will be considered by the Board of Supervisors on June 16, to be continued for action to June 30.

6. **MCL Policy on Invasive Species.** The working draft of a proposed MCL Invasive species/IPM policy was the subject of discussion. MCL has already adopted a brief policy on the issue, as contained in Community Marin. The “new” policy is intended to expand on the brief statement in Community Marin. Comments on the draft included the following: Policy needs to present more examples of the damage done to ecosystems and native flora and fauna by invasive plants. Chemical herbicides are not necessarily a “last resort” in employing an IPM approach – in some cases it is preferable to other methods, or may be most appropriate at certain seasons. Accidental introduction of invasives from sources such as contaminated fill should be considered. Revegetation with natives should be undertaken after treatment; what often replaces invasives is annual (non-native) grasses. Other herbicides besides glyphosate can be effective (e.g., triclopyr). The working draft will next go to the MCL Board for discussion and a revised draft.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15

The next meeting is Thursday, July 9, 3:00-5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee May 13, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Kate Powers, Pat Nelson, Doug Wilson, Arlin Weinberger, Rick Fraites, Pam Reaves, Tom Boss, Al Bauman, Jill Templeton, Priscilla Bull, Ann Thomas, Joyce Britt, Brian Stompe, Mia Monroe (NPS), Mike Swezy (MMWD), Sharon Farrell (TLC), Mischon Martin and James Raives (Marin County Parks), Jack Gibson (MMWD).

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 3:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) Bay Area Open space Council Annual Conference, May 14; 2) Olompali Heritage Day, May 17, 10:00 – 4:00; 3) County Parks and Open Space Commission, Thursday May 21, 3:00; 4) National Trails Day, Saturday June 6 – various events; 4) MCL Water and Watershed program, May 28, 5:00 – 6:30.

MINUTES for April 9, 2015, approved.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks and Open Space District
 - a. Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP) and Draft EIR. Mischon Martin and James Raives from County Parks Department were on hand to give a brief overview of the VBMP and EIR. The comment period is 60 days, until July 8. The CEQA hearing will be before the Parks Commission on May 21. Committee members complained that two weeks into the comment period is not enough time to read the documents and make meaningful comments at the public hearing. James and Mischon explained that the meeting is an opportunity to re-introduce the Plan, which has been on hold for several years. Informed comments can be made in writing. It is likely that the majority of comments will be on the Plan and not on the adequacy of the Draft “Tiered Program EIR.” It would be nice if the Final EIR could avoid endless repetition of the standard response to those comments that address the Plan rather than the EIR. Further public meetings will be on the Final EIR later this fall, and then on the combined Plan and EIR before the Board of Supervisors.
 - b. RTMP Roll-out. A public meeting was held on March 22 in Mill Valley to review a draft designation of roads and trails in Region 1 of the Open Space District, and to review the process for submitting proposals for future projects. The results of the workshop will be a map of designated facilities to serve as the environmental

baseline, against which to evaluate future project proposals. The map is not expected to become public for several weeks. It appears that bike interests have been developing proposals for expanded access to preserves and lobbying supervisors. There is some concern that the decision process will become politicized rather than science-based. Those who are really interested will have to go to Parks Department to study maps. Concerns were raised about the need to avoid sensitive species, such as spotted owl nests – several in Region 1. It was noted that sensitive habitat (Legacy) zones were not emphasized enough in the public workshop, and proposals may be submitted that do not avoid these zones, especially in Region 2.

- c. Measure A Community Grant – MCL Senior Walks. MCL has received approval of a \$5,100 grant application under the Measure A Community Program to conduct six special walks for seniors into County Open Space Preserves and Parks, one of them wheel-chair accessible. This is a program for Year 2015-2016. It is pending BOS approval at the end of June.
- 2. Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC) Some concerns have been expressed that the TLC is evolving too rapidly, and that promotional materials could lead to the unintended consequence of over-use of both watershed lands and other public lands embraced by the collaborative. Sharon Farrell (GG Parks Conservancy) and Mike Swezy (MMWD Watershed) were on hand to outline the criteria that are used to select projects, and to reassure committee members that the purpose of outreach is to promote stewardship and education about the natural resource values of Mt. Tam and to engage volunteers in restoration and other beneficial projects. Mike stated that visitation is increasing, and it is important to educate new visitors. He explained that decisions on projects are made by the participating land managers, and not driven by Parks Conservancy marketing. Jack Gibson pointed out that the cultures differ among the four member agencies and the Conservancy and that sensitive areas or “hot spots” of difference need to be identified. Comments from the committee concerned the need to control the “message” so that it does not become commercial or create the expectation of more “events” that could impact the mountain, especially on the watershed. They stressed the importance of not exceeding an optimal carrying capacity. Sharon and Mike agreed that publicity needs to reinforce the message of protection and sustainability (of natural resources).
- 3. Trail Partners Campaign. Nona described the upcoming roll-out of the “Slow and say Hello” campaign slated for National Trails Day on June 6. A number of volunteer events are planned by the collaborating agencies of One Tam, and tables with Trail Partner campaign materials will be on hand at each of them. The Trail Partners will make a presentation to Board of Supervisors on June 9. The development of the campaign and materials for hand-out (draft brochure) has been underway for more than a year. It has financial and program support from all the land management agencies.

4. State Parks update Nona announced that the Parks Forward Transformation Team report is out, and it lays out a series of tasks to be accomplished largely by state parks staff over two years. There has been some mention of holding regional public meetings. No meeting has been scheduled yet in Marin.
5. National Parks in Marin
 - a. Pt. Reyes National Seashore – Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan. No report on the status of the RCMP and Environmental Assessment. Brian Stompe was present to comment on the recent press release by Center for Biological Diversity concerning the reduction of 250 in the elk herd in the Tomales Pt. wilderness-designated area, which apparently died due to drought. He believes that there should be discussion of the inhumane conditions that allowed the elk to perish, and that the park service should take corrective action by replenishing water supplies, to prevent this from happening again in time of drought.
 - b. GGNRA and Muir Woods Nona outlined the issues that have been in discussion among stakeholders in a series of meetings convened by Jared Huffman since early November 2014. The main issues are heavy traffic through the local communities, uncontrolled parking along Muir Woods Road (Franks Valley Rd.) with resultant hazards and polluting of Redwood Creek, and the need to control peak visitor numbers by instituting a reservation system for parking at Muir Woods. Mia Monroe elaborated on long-standing issues outside Muir Woods. The ad hoc committee is fine-tuning an MOU between Park Service and the County. The group will meet one more time and then will participate in a public meeting. On a related issue, Joyce Britt commented that the community of Muir Beach draws its water supply out of Redwood Creek and is using some of it to fill swimming pools. Given the array of problems with Redwood Creek fish habitat, it seems ironic that water should be allowed for this purpose .

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15

The next meeting is Thursday, June 11, 3:00-5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis