

## Spotlight on Marin County Search & Rescue

We've all been somewhat or entirely lost – hopefully not more than once. Knowing this terrible feeling, imagine you are exploring the wild north side of Mt. Tam with friends. It's late in the day, and your friends decide to turn back. With a cheery "I'll see ya' later," you trudge on a few more miles and find yourself alone at a puzzling junction deep in the forest. You thought you knew the territory and are without a map, cell phone service, or sense of direction.

You feel at best foolish, and at worst, a bit scared or even doomed. You're also an experienced outdoors person and so you swallow the panic, sit down against a tree at the trail's dimming edge . . . and wait as dusk turns to night. An unwelcome drizzle begins. Hours later, you're damp, cold, and hungry in the inky blackness. You're confident that your hiking buddies will try to find you – if they've even noticed you're missing – but they overestimate your wildland skills and so only belatedly check your home, thinking that you might have taken a more direct path out. Finally they call 911 around midnight.

The night seems endless. Then you hear a faint voice, and another, and see a light and more lights in the shadows. You hear your name called and you yell back. You are found! Rescuers in helmets, red jackets, and headlamps greet you, offer a dry fleece and hand warmers, and ask permission to assess your physical condition. A cheerful adolescent efficiently checks your vitals and runs through a medical interview while another apparent teenager handles the radio in a professional manner, directing more rescuers to the spot. The rescuers' evident competence reassures you that a

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## Renewal in Muir Woods National Monument



Nona Dennis

*A crew of fish biologists retrieve coho salmon and steelhead fry for relocation downstream to enable restoration work in reach of Redwood Creek.*

*by Nona Dennis*

On a recent typically foggy summer morning, visitors from all parts of the world are strolling through Muir Woods National Monument stopping to remark on an ancient redwood with multiple scars from long-past fires, or pointing their cameras upwards in a vain attempt to capture the immense height of the trees. They are oblivious to work going on behind the scenes until they come to activity in the creek. A crew of six biologists and assistants clad in chest-high waders have climbed down a bank into the creek, and deposited their buckets, dip nets, and other equipment on a rocky shelf. One of them carries a backpack and wields a long pole attached to an electrified ring, which he passes through the water to attract and momentarily stun the small fish that are their targets. The assistants follow closely and, as fish move toward the ring, capture them with dip nets and deposit them in the water-filled buckets to await relocation downstream.

Their particular focus is on removing juvenile salmon out of that reach of the creek.

On the path above, a volunteer from Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy in an orange vest explains to a curious passersby that the crew is retrieving the fish from this section of Redwood Creek and will place them out of harm's way downstream as the National Park

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## A Message from the President - Life depends on us

### Dear Members and Friends,

It's fall – and there are so many projects left to do in my garden. One of them is to ensure that I have sufficient forage for pollinators! While I have always been aware of the importance of planting native plants and other habitat plants, I now have more "guests" living at my home. Thanks to the [Bonnie Bee & Company](#), some 100,000 honey bees (two hives) just moved onto my landscape. The challenge of providing for these additional, and busy, pollinators brings a worldwide crisis directly to my doorstep.



The first of two bee hives is moved onto Linda Novy's property.

My awareness of this crisis has been building. Confirmation came in the summer issue of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) magazine, *Flora*, which focuses on how to help counter the insect apocalypse and encourages us to "Garden as if Life Depends on it." Then at the recent MCL Agricultural-Land Use Committee meeting, Nina Sokolov, a PhD Student in Integrative Biology - UC Berkeley, spoke about challenges to pollinators, primarily native and honey bees, in today's environment and what can be done to support these species. The most troubling information came from the March 2019 issue of the *IPM Practitioner*. William Quarles, in "[Racing Towards Silent Spring](#)," describes how industrial agriculture, habitat destruction, rising global temperatures and environmental pollution are putting wild species at risk. He notes that "...butterflies, bees and beetles are also at risk" in addition to vertebrates, having declined in some areas by 75 percent. He adds grimly: "We are racing toward Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a world devoid of bird and insect sounds."

As part of the solution, MCL's Fire + Environment Working Group and CNPS, Marin Chapter, are developing Best Management Practices to protect ecological values of properties in the wildland interface (pollinator plants, as an example) consistent with fire-wise principles.

As I consider my own property, I recommit to the habitat needs of insects and other species through planting more native plants alongside the patches of purple needle and California fescue grasses. I savor the sounds of the birds, bees and other insects and wildlife, and check out my neighbors' gardens knowing that our connected gardens will help support wild species. Expanding the habitat message beyond the bounds of my garden and neighborhood, it's very clear that how we each choose to live is important, because so much of life is depending on us.

Linda J. Novy

## California's State Parks gets a new partner

by Arlin Weinberger

"Parks California." That's the new "voice" for California State Parks. This recently established statewide non-profit will be raising funds to help support our parks in collaboration with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and with existing non-profit partners such as the California State Parks Foundation and many other local park partners around the state.

You'll probably remember when, in 2011, DPR found that state parks were in deep trouble financially and the DPR was about to close some 70 parks. Four of those parks were in Marin County. That was a wakeup call that some significant changes had to be made in the State Park system. An in-depth report by the Little Hoover Commission concurred. In 2012 the department created the Parks Forward Commission, established under statute by then-Governor Brown and funded

primarily by the private Resources Legacy Fund.

The commission's job over the ensuing 18 months was to identify the problems and find a way to modernize and transform the state parks system. The commission's final report "A New Vision for California State Parks," released January 2014, called for a significant shakeup of the Department. There were many recommendations for transforming and modernizing the Department from top to bottom to expand the level of access and services the parks could offer California's residents and visitors, and to ensure their continued financial security. A large Transformation Team consisting of park staff and non-profit partners was tasked with setting the stage for implementing the many recommendations over a two-year period.



### A new non-profit is born

Establishing a major new philanthropic partner, modeled after the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, was one of those recommendations. After a year of formation, that partner organization – Parks California – is now up and running with a recently hired President and CEO, Kindley Lawlor,

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## Editorial

# MCL appeals solar farm on Silveira agricultural lands. Why?

A commercial solar photovoltaic electrical generating facility is proposed on two adjacent parcels on Silveira Ranch property in unincorporated Novato. The site lies between the SMART railroad tracks and State Route 101, north of Gness Airfield and west of the Redwood Landfill. The facility would consist of three ground mounted fixed-tilt arrays covering roughly 14.99 acres across 41.35 acres of agricultural grazing land and reach a maximum height of approximately eight feet above natural grade. The site, which is zoned A-2 (Agricultural, Limited zoning district) is currently grazed by cattle. The project was recently approved by a County Zoning Administrator, and both MCL and Marin Audubon Society with Baylands Advocates have appealed the approval to the County Planning Commission. A hearing is set for September 9.

### *Why question a renewable energy project?*

"MCL recognizes the urgency of reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs) through a wide variety of land use, building, energy efficiency, transportation, and conservation measures and through encouraging alternative forms of power generation. Among the alternative energy options, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems – "solar power" – are suitable for Marin County and should be encouraged, *subject, however to limits outlined in this policy.*" (emphasis added)

The preceding is a quotation from [MCL's policy for siting of solar photovoltaic facilities](#), adopted by the MCL Board in 2013 and prompted by the solar projects that were beginning to appear on the county's planning agenda. The policy goes on to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the benefits of PV technology in reducing

regional GHG emissions, these facilities can have environmental impacts. Ground-based systems, in particular, are land-intensive (unlike rooftops or parking area structures) and should not be installed at the expense of impacting productive or sensitive resources or neighboring properties.

As with real estate, it seems that the environmental suitability of ground-based solar arrays depends on location, location, location! In 2014, MCL approved with conditions a 17-acre solar array in a former rock quarry on Mt. Burdell. Although agriculturally zoned, the site was a highly disturbed, unproductive piece of ground due to its history as a quarry. In contrast, in 2013, MCL opposed the installation of a much smaller solar farm (1 ½ acres) on a site in Novato because it was within historic former tidelands of the bay. Both cases raised a potential conflict between differing environmental values – combating climate change, and protecting sensitive and productive resources – that are important to MCL. The facility on Mt. Burdell passed the "sensitive and productive resources" test, while the latter project did not.

The current application on Silveira grazing lands raises similar environmental issues that MCL believes have not been sufficiently addressed in the staff report or accompanying studies and assessments. These include the failure to identify that the site lies within the Baylands Corridor and should be subject to relevant protection adopted in the 2007 Countywide Plan (CWP); and a potential conflict with agricultural preservation policies also in the CWP (e.g. "...non-agricultural land uses on agricultural lands [should] be ancillary to agricultural uses, and owners of lands that have traditionally been used for agriculture to keep land in agricultural use by continuing existing agricultural uses").

The applicant's Agricultural Management Plan does not contain sufficient information to demonstrate compatibility with CWP policies.

### *Inadequate county review process*

Both the current Silveira project and prior cases demonstrate the need for a consistent county review process to address environmental issues that could pertain to a project, depending on its size and location. Since 2013, MCL has advocated for the county to adopt a solar ordinance, comparable to its ordinance for siting wind energy facilities. Such an ordinance could, at a minimum, distinguish facilities with little or no impact (e.g., on rooftops or over parking structures or other non-natural surfaces), subject to ministerial review, from those on the ground with greater potential for environmental impact and therefore subject to environmental and design review in an Initial Study.

Instead, the county has declined to enact an ordinance, and has elected to exempt proposed solar facilities from CEQA as "conversion or construction of small facilities" and proceed, project by project, with Design Review, and in the case of solar facilities on agricultural sites, with a Conditional Use Permit. In MCL's view this is an "everything-but-CEQA" approach to environmental review. We believe the county can do better for both the environment and the public, and, at the same time, provide applicants with more predictable requirements, without impeding the commendable commitment to combat global climate change.

Nona Dennis, Editor



# Cap-and-trade funds: environmental boon or slush fund?

by Sarah Loughran and Bob Miller

A recent announcement that the local multi-agency collaboration One Tam is under consideration to receive a sizable grant funded under California's cap-and-trade program elicited considerable excitement in Marin's conservation community. The grant would be part of a Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program which seeks to increase regional capacity to implement projects that improve forest health and fire resilience and increase carbon sequestration in California's forests. The possibility of the local award also raised questions about spending from California's cap-and-trade program. How is this apparent fountain of money, which operates out of the view of most ordinary citizens, being used to help fulfill the program's original intent to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)?

## The cap-and-trade program in California

Under California's cap-and-trade program, emissions from large companies in specific industries are capped but the companies can pay to emit GHGs such as carbon dioxide or methane. The State uses the funds to reduce GHGs elsewhere in the state. Cap-and-trade is one of two basic approaches to making polluters pay for GHG emissions, the other being a direct carbon tax. While the state has relied primarily on regulations (like fuel economy standards or renewable energy mandates) to reduce emissions, the cap-and-trade program's price on carbon creates incentives for firms to further reduce emissions.

In 2018, California's cap-and-trade program revenues were used to pay for \$1.4 billion in projects ostensibly aimed at also reducing GHG emissions. Projects funded ranged from electric vehicle rebates and charging



Kirsten Nolan

*The SMART extension to Larkspur and increasing rail car capacity received funding from the State's cap-and-trade program.*

infrastructure to building public transit, to creating more fire-resilient communities and ecosystems, to installing water-efficient irrigation systems on farms.

This is a tremendous amount of money. What were its sources? How was it used? Have these expenditures truly lowered GHG emissions? Was any of this money spent in Marin? To answer these questions, let's start with a quick history of California's cap-and-trade program.

2006: The Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32) established the goal of limiting statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

2013: California's cap-and-trade program was launched to help achieve this goal by capping statewide emissions from approximately 450 businesses in three major industry sectors - power, industrial, and transportation fuel (includes natural gas and propane fuel). Together, they produce about 85% of the state's emissions of carbon dioxide and other GHGs. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) administers the program.

2016: SB32 set an additional GHG emissions target of at least 40 percent reductions below 1990 levels by 2030.

## Cap-and-trade money flows in

GHG emissions are measured in metric tons of 'carbon dioxide equivalent', written as MTCO<sub>2</sub>e, a term that means one metric ton of carbon dioxide or the amount of another greenhouse gas with an equivalent global warming effect. To provide some perspective, according to the EPA, driving the average car 2,445 miles will emit 1 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.

To meet the emissions reduction goals established by AB32 and SB32, statewide emissions levels are capped each year at a specific level which is lowered in each successive year to meet 2020 and 2030 targets. Emissions allowances are distributed to companies under the cap-and-trade program by a mix of free allocation and quarterly auctions in which companies can buy an "allowance to emit more GHGs." For example, in 2018, allowances for 358.3 million MTCO<sub>2</sub>e were sold at auction. In the 2018/2019 fiscal year, the program collected over \$3.2 billion. Companies can also trade allowances with each other to comply with emissions restrictions.

The idea is to give companies some flexibility as to how they achieve emissions

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## Cap-and-trade [from page 4](#)

reductions as they weigh the costs of buying allowances (i.e., paying to pollute) against the cost of upgrading facilities, employing new technologies, changing operating practices, etc., to reduce emissions of GHGs.

### *Cap-and-trade money flows out*

To date, the Legislature has appropriated more than \$9.3 billion in cap-and-trade funds to 20 State agencies implementing GHG emission reduction programs and projects. Some \$3.4 billion has been or is being spent on projects in three areas:

- Transportation and sustainable communities
- Clean energy and energy efficiency
- Natural resources and waste diversion

The legislature requires a minimum of 35 percent of cap-and-trade dollars to go to "priority populations," those most environmentally and economically burdened residents of the State. In this way, the program's goals go beyond reducing GHGs to include improving the environment and public health and strengthening the economy in disadvantaged and low-income communities.

To date, \$33.4 million has been awarded to projects in Marin County. Projects include increased SMART rail car capacity and an extension of SMART to Larkspur (nearly \$20 million for both combined), clean vehicle rebates (about \$6.5 million), and an alternative manure management program, including for composting (about \$700,000).

### *Some cap-and-trade controversies*

California's cap-and-trade program has been hailed as a huge success, called an abject failure, and derided as a government slush fund ripe for fiscal abuse. The program started slowly with very few companies needing to buy allowances at auction because their required emissions limits were sufficiently high. As the emissions limits have been reduced, more companies have either made changes to reduce their emissions or started buying allowances at auction. Allowances have sold out at the last nine straight quarterly auctions. Because the allowances do not have expiration dates, there is concern that companies are merely buying them now to use against future emissions, betting that they will be less expensive now than in the future when overall GHG emission levels are reduced even further. This would reduce a

company's incentive to invest in pollution reducing systems in the future because they would have banked allowances to cover extra emissions. The most recent cost at auction in May 2019 was \$17.45 per MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Another significant controversy swirls around the charge that cap-and-trade funds are being used as a 'slush fund' to pay for public projects that have very limited GHG reductions and/or limited value to priority populations. The big pot of cap-and-trade money available (currently almost \$6 billion appropriated but not dispersed) is extremely tempting for legislators to use for other purposes. For example, the \$626 million designated for high speed rail would have a very small impact on reducing GHGs. As another example, the legislature plans to spend \$100 million a year to help low-income communities clean up their contaminated water systems, in lieu of a legislature-shelved proposed \$140 million 'water-tax.' Their justification is that in some areas water is currently delivered by trucks and fixing local water problems will reduce GHGs by reducing truck trips. While it is important for the state to help pay for infrastructure necessary for safe drinking water, the impact on GHG reduction in both cases above would be minimal. Using cap-and-trade funds for a plethora of projects with minimal impact on GHG reduction threatens the state's ability to meet its 2020 and 2030 goals.

### *Positive opportunities to reduce GHGs in Marin*

From a local perspective, the majority of cap-and-trade-funded projects in Marin have yielded or could yield some real reductions in GHGs. In particular, if the grant to One Tam is forthcoming, it will present an opportunity to increase the capacity of Marin's abundant forested land to sequester carbon and thereby contribute in a meaningful way to meeting both state and county GHG reduction goals.



Nona Dennis

*A grant to One Tam from the cap-and-trade program could help increase the capacity of Marin's forests to sequester carbon, as in MMWD's project on Bolinas Ridge.*



## Events

# Picnic on the Patio recap

July is National Picnic Month and Plastic-free July, and we celebrated both at our [Picnic on the Patio event on the 20th](#). Thank you to all 115 attendees for sharing your company, a delicious meal, and infectious laughter. In spite of this record attendance, we were able to reduce our plastic use! Plates, cups, and utensils were all reusable, plastic food packaging was reduced with intentional purchasing choices, and plastic garbage bags were swapped for paper options. As always, we are already looking forward to seeing you next July!



*From left: Paul Minault, Eva Buxton, Roger Harris, Maria Garcia, Paul Da Silva, Joe Sillo, Mary Buttarro, and Arlin Weinberger share a meal and environmental passions.*



*Photos: Grace Gubbins and Holly Smith*

*Above: David Lewis and Brian Stompe, background, pour ice cold drinks while Nancy Benjamin, foreground, shares mead samples from Heidrun Meadery.*

*Below: Well behaved dogs, like Rhys, are always welcome!*



*Supervisor Kate Sears tastes local honey with Gary Morse of Bonnie Bee & Company*



*Susan Stompe, Terri Thomas, Noreen Ward, Ed Schulze, and Brian Stompe share a laugh under the trees.*

# Slow and Say Hello

After recent "Slow and Say Hello" Outposts at West Point Inn (pictured right), Muir Beach Stables, and Bear Valley at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, the Safe Trails Marin coalition will conclude the year with Outposts at West Point Inn on September 8, and Mt. Burdell on September 21.

Visit [safetrailsmarin.org](http://safetrailsmarin.org) to learn more.



*Photos: Susan Schlosser*

## Events

# Business-Environment Breakfast: Preparing for Wildfire in California, Friday, September 13



**Friday, September 13, 2019**

**7:30am - 9:00am**

**McInnis Park Clubhouse  
350 Smith Ranch Rd., San Rafael**

**Register:** [www.fireinca.eventbrite.com](http://www.fireinca.eventbrite.com)  
or call **415-485-6257**

**\$15 members | \$20 non-members:**  
Tickets include buffet breakfast.

Speakers include:

Sarah Minnick, Vegetation & Fire Ecologist, Marin County Parks

Hugh Safford, PhD: Regional Ecologist,  
USDA-Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region

Jason Weber: Fire Chief, Marin County Fire Dept., Ross Valley Fire Dept.

This event is generously  
sponsored by:



The 'new normal' of increasing wildfire risk in California's warming climate and ailing forests calls for 'new solutions'! A panel of experts will provide a better understanding of how fire ecologists and other wildfire professionals, at both statewide and Marin County levels, are coming to grips with balancing the beneficial and destructive forces of wildfire and strategizing to protect humans living in our WUIs\* from catastrophic risk while fostering biodiversity in our ecosystems.

\*wildland-urban interface

# Walk into Conservation History at Samuel P. Taylor State Park: Saturday, September 28

Join MCL on Saturday, September 28, 2019, to hear the exploits of explorer Samuel Penfield Taylor, who arrived on horseback in 1855, found land on Papermill Creek, and prospered from logging, running a paper mill, and entertaining tourists; and celebrate MCL's tortuous but successful efforts 90 years later to save the site as a State Park. Jean Berensmeier, Past President of MCL and unofficial historian and saver of San Geronimo Valley's public lands, will be there with stories.

Meet at Redwood Grove Group Picnic Area for the 9:30 - 12:30 event, and walk the Pioneer Tree Trail, a 2.5 mile loop with moderate elevation change.

Parking spaces are limited. Please register for this free event:  
[www.samuelptaylor19.eventbrite.com](http://www.samuelptaylor19.eventbrite.com) or call 415-485-6257.





## Search & Rescue *from page 1*

terrible night in the woods is coming to a happy conclusion!

### *MSAR to the rescue*

More than two million people visit Marin's public lands every year, bringing many degrees of skill and preparedness for exploring our local version of "wilderness." It may be the rare person who is injured or gets



lost but when that happens, Marin Search and Rescue team (MSAR), an all-volunteer unit of the Marin County Sheriff's Department, is prepared for every contingency. Marin, like most California counties, maintains a dedicated search and rescue team on 24/7 stand-by, fully trained and equipped for deployment - Any time - Any where - Any weather.

Marin Search and Rescue started as a Scout Explorer Post in 1970, oriented toward ecology and outdoor education for teenagers. During the mid-1970's, the group's focus shifted to search and rescue and eventually came under the sponsorship of the County Sheriff. During those early years, the unit responded to several large SAR missions, including an overnight search for two missing children in the hills above Inverness and the challenging search for the victims of the Trailside Killer.

In the 1980s, the unit began to hone its professional skills, and, while the youth program continued to be central, adult members were added along with a new management structure to support the expanding scope. Today, the unit numbers around 100 volunteers and is well known throughout California, capable of expertly carrying out a wide spectrum of missions from high altitude rescues to locating missing Alzheimer's patients to searching for a downed plane in deep snow.

To provide a high level of professional service to Marin and other counties in the state, Marin SAR's training program is extensive, detailed and intense. Graduates of the initial 60-hour basic boot camp are immediately ready for deployment on most missions. The team requires a 60-hour Emergency Medical Responder (one level below EMT) training for every member. Further optional trainings include off-road driving, trailering, high-angle rope rescue, man-tracking, snow and ice rescue skills, winter camping, basic urban SAR operations including power tools, breaching and shoring, and, newly offered in 2018, large animal technical rescue (ATR).

MSAR works in Marin and other counties all over the state via the mutual aid system. Incident Commanders at any search, rescue or disaster incident appreciate Marin SAR's rapid and robust response, its advanced training, ability to integrate into a larger operation, and a positive sense of urgency. The team also brings the latest technology in mapping, planning, tracking and reporting, plus a fleet of 6 fully equipped rescue and remote support vehicles. Marin SAR is known throughout the state as a valuable partner when mutual aid is requested.

### *A typical year of MSAR activity - 2017*

2017 was a representative year for MSAR volunteers, who carried out 58 total missions, spent 76 days in the field (43 days in Marin and 33 days out-of-county), attended 25 mandatory meetings and trainings and 100 additional events, from Preventive SAR to community affairs, contributed 29,000 volunteer hours, and saved county taxpayers \$3,000,000.

A significant call-out for the team in 2017 was search and recovery in the ashes of the Santa Rosa - Tubbs wildfire. That effort was prelude to Marin SAR's deployment to search for human remains in the aftermath of the 2018 Camp Fire that destroyed the town of Paradise. Members at that incident served in a variety of positions, including search management, field leadership, ground search, and canine search, contributing, in total, over 14,500 hours.



Nona Dennis

*Sarah Loughran, MCL board member, shares a light moment with other MSAR volunteers during a rigorous day of training.*

### *Each MSAR mission is a unique chapter in a larger story*

It's hard to choose which incidents from the 2017 annals of MSAR missions to cover, but they include a block-by-block evidence search in San Rafael for clues in a homicide investigation; an urgent search for a missing Alzheimer's walk-away (evermore common nowadays); assisting County Fire with a patient (fractured ankle) litter carry-out on a Muir Woods trail; finding and rescuing a benighted pair of hikers on the north side of Tam; and a multi-day search for an overdue peak-bagger in Alpine County.

Other memorable incidents in the history of Marin SAR include:

- A 6-week effort on Mt. Tam by multiple agencies, as well as family and work associates, to locate a missing IRS agent. A Marin SAR team was able to locate the deceased woman's body.
- A two-day search for a missing 9-year old, camping with her family in Samuel P. Taylor State Park. She was located alive and unharmed.
- The rescue of a woman at 9000 feet elevation in the Sierra National Forest, found after a Marin SAR youth member heard her whistle. She had survived 9 days with leg fractures and no supplies and was evacuated by helicopter.
- The rescue of a girl who had fallen through a snow bridge into the icy creek

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## Search & Rescue from page 8

below by MSAR's Mountain Rescue team, who were returning from winter training on Castle Peak in the Sierra Nevada and just happened to be at the right place at the right time and improvised her rescue.

### *Volunteerism at its best*

The approximate 100 members of Marin SAR are all volunteers doing vital work, performing at an elite level. They are also your friends and neighbors. A few are rangers or EMTs in their day jobs, but most are a typical sampling of Marin residents who balance work, family and school with the demands of being highly skilled first responders.

The "youth" component of Marin SAR is mostly unknown to the community it serves. MSAR recruits members as young as 15, and as old as are willing and able to surmount a tough preliminary trail endurance test. Approximately 1/3 of Marin SAR members are local high school students who take on the same training, requirements and opportunities

as adult members. For a Tedx talk by MSAR Youth members, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXXXe-KqIOE>. MSAR volunteers provide all of their own personal gear (financial assistance is available). The Sheriff's office provides some financial support and houses the team's equipment and vehicles, but much of the team's extensive equipment is purchased through contributions made to the team.

MCL is proud that two of its own are volunteers with MSAR – Robert Eichstaedt, long active on MCL's Parks & Open Space Committee, has been an active volunteer for more than 12 years and has many stories to tell. Sarah Loughran, member of the MCL Board of Directors, has been on the MSAR team for over 4 years and says that "Marin Search and Rescue is a fantastic team of people and an amazing asset to Marin County – most people aren't aware that we exist, but may one day be incredibly glad to see us!"

*Robert Eichstaedt, Sarah Loughran, and Nona Dennis contributed to this article.*



Nona Dennis

*MSAR volunteers take turns in a rope climbing exercise during a training day.*

## MCL Public Workshop

# Pt. Reyes Draft EIS And General Management Plan

On August 8 the Point Reyes National Seashore ("Seashore") released the long-anticipated update to the Seashore's General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The public has 45 days to review and comment on the Draft EIS; comments are due by September 23, 2019.

At press time, MCL had not yet reviewed the documents in detail, but is planning to host a **public workshop on September 5 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m (location TBD: Please check MCL website or call on 415-485-6257 for more information)**. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the contents of the Draft EIS and assist interested persons in reading and critiquing the documents and making meaningful comments. The Park Service will review all comments and respond to them in a Final EIS in early 2020.

Since early 2014, MCL has been tracking and reporting on the park's planning processes for addressing the continuation of

approximately 28,000 acres of historic beef and dairy ranching on the Seashore and in the North District (Olema Valley) of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The planning process was delayed for several years by a successful legal challenge to the park's proposed Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan. In the interim, MCL hosted four public workshops in east and west Marin to bring greater awareness and education to the public concerning the Seashore's history, its cultural and ecological resources, the historic ranches, and the ranchers' current operating challenges (video recordings available on MCL's website).

Under terms of a Settlement Agreement to the law suit, the NPS agreed to update and amend the GMPA and prepare an



Kirsten Nolan

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that would cover, among numerous other environmental and management issues, the extension of longer-term leases to the ranchers and the appropriate management of free-ranging elk herds.

MCL will be reviewing the Draft EIS and will draft comments and keep our members and community informed of our understanding of the documents and impacts on the Seashore's ecological, cultural, and historic ranching resources that we value.

## Muir Woods *from page 1*

Service (NPS) undertakes a major project that ultimately will improve the creek's habitat for the fish's long-term benefit. The first step in the enhancement project, however, requires dewatering this particular reach of the creek to allow equipment and disruptive work to reconfigure the creek bed and banks – hence the need to rescue fish before dewatering their home.

### *Enhancement work in progress*

MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee toured the monument in August to see the early stages of work in progress for a project that has been under intensive study and environmental review for several years. Led by Mia Monroe, former Supervising Ranger of Muir Woods and currently the Marin community liaison for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), the committee learned that this is one of a "family" of projects, called Redwood Renewal, that have been undergoing planning and environmental review and now, with choreographic precision, are being implemented in the creek and on the ground. Any project in the monument that involves equipment and noise, she explains, will disrupt the prevailing quiet and must

wait until the nesting and fledging season of the endangered Northern spotted owls (NSO) ends, typically July 31. So, while many non-intrusive preparatory activities have been possible earlier this season, August is the "magic month" for more substantial work to begin.

The basic goal of the Salmon Enhancement Project is to improve both summer and winter habitat for coho salmon and other salmonids by restoring natural channel processes to Redwood Creek and placing large woody debris in the creek. These actions, taken together, will improve the survival rate of the juvenile fish by encouraging formation of deeper side pools for refuge and slowing the destructive force of high velocity winter flows that are now confined by hardened channel banks.

The project brings into play both the natural and cultural history of Muir Woods, which was designated as a monument in 1908. During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps, under the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, placed large rock armoring (riprap) along the banks of Redwood Creek in an effort to protect the banks from erosion. This riprap, scarcely visible under a carpet of ferns and other plants, is now understood to interfere with the creek's natural processes. Additionally, for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the park service removed fallen logs from the creek. Although this practice stopped by

the late 1980s, large-diameter wood in the channel is significantly less prevalent than in unaltered channels in other old growth redwood forests. To counter the effects of these well-intentioned but ecologically uninformed historic actions, the project involves removing the boulders in selected reaches and relocating them to raise the streambed in other reaches that are deeply incised from long-ago land management practices in the watershed.

As this year's work progresses within the area of active construction – i.e., the creek between Bridges 3 and 4 – equipment deployed from the staging area at Alice Eastwood Camp will be trundled along paths to the work site. Several trails will be closed temporarily for safety, but visitors will be able to enjoy most traditional walks in the monument and also witness restoration work in action. The entire length of Redwood Creek within Muir Woods will be treated in this manner in three phases over three years, ending in 2022. A companion piece to the project calls for the replacing all four aging bridges that cross Redwood Creek so as to maintain accessible crossings, improve public safety, and further enable creek habitat restoration. That project is scheduled to begin in fall 2020 and, in two construction phases, be completed in 2021.

### *Other renewal projects in progress*

Behind temporary fabric fences, other construction work is going on in Muir Woods. Removing riprap from the creek near Cathedral Grove requires relocating a section of path away from the bank. With minimal disruption to visitors, park staff are clearing vegetation and creating a new path with a durable but water-permeable shale surface, a material that can withstand pedestrian wear and tear while still protecting the health of the surrounding forest floor.

The other current projects within the monument all support the central goal of enhancing the health of the creek. Out of obvious view, the NPS is rehabilitating an aging water and wastewater infrastructure by replacing deteriorating water service lines and adding storage to meet new code requirements for fire protection flows and to improve potable water quality. The project will also relocate sewer lines from their present alignment near the ecologically sensitive Redwood Creek to an environmentally safe distance. This work, begun in late 2018 will be ongoing as the construction season permits through 2020. As with the salmon enhancement project, work must be choreographed to minimize intrusion into visitor experience.

Construction of a suite of actions, dubbed

*Continued on page 11*



Nona Dennis

*Restoring natural channel processes to Redwood Creek requires realigning some trails, shown here with Ranger Mia Monroe, GGNRA's Marin Community Liaison.*



## Muir Woods *from page 10*

the Sustainable Access and Trails Project, will not begin until 2021. When it is complete in early 2023, the project will greatly improve the safety and experience of visitors as they park and follow pedestrian routes to the monument entry. The entry plaza will be redesigned to relocate restrooms away from their current creek-side site and reduce impervious surface as a further benefit to the health of Redwood Creek. The "temporary" Dipsea Trail bridge, often inaccessible in winter, will be replaced by a permanent bridge, and the trail alignment across Muir Woods Road and the parking area will be improved for safety.

The Parking Reservation System is a keystone piece of the Renewal puzzle. After years of attempts to ease parking and traffic problems on Muir Woods (Franks Valley) Road triggered by the popularity of Muir Woods, the County and National Park Service signed a MOU in 2015. The goal was to restrict and, over a period of several years, eventually eliminate all but 30 parking spaces along

Muir Woods Road. At the same time, the NPS planned to implement a parking reservation system and increase public transportation options. The reservation system became operable in January 2018, initiating a new era of modulating the peaks and valleys of Muir Woods visitation.

Still on the drawing boards is the federally-funded rehabilitation of the county-owned Muir Woods Road. More than two miles – from Muir Woods to State Route 1 at Muir Beach – will be repaired and repaved, replacing dozens of broken culverts and protecting Redwood Creek from further pollution. The project will also replace the narrow, aged Muir Woods Road bridge over the creek. Work is scheduled for late 2021 through 2023.

### *The vision for Redwood Creek advances*

Over almost two decades the National Park Service and its main partners, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Marin Municipal Water District, and Mt. Tamalpais State Parks

have gone to epic lengths to improve the chances that populations of coho salmon and their close relative the steelhead will survive in a healthier Redwood Creek. From repairing myriad sediment sources high on Mt. Tamalpais, to restoring Big Lagoon at the mouth of Redwood Creek at Muir Beach, to jumpstarting coho by transporting juveniles to a hatchery and returning them to the creek as adults to spawn, land managers and partners have undertaken a series of projects in the Redwood Creek watershed to restore floodplains and waterways, reduce sedimentation and other pollutants, improve tributary connections, protect threatened and endangered species and other wildlife, and nurture native plant communities. While these activities have addressed the health of the watershed as a whole, they have also laid the groundwork for the success of next steps – the Redwood Renewal projects now taking shape within Muir Woods.

## California Parks *from page 2*

who spoke to MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee in July. She explained the vision and focus of the organization, which includes bringing younger and more diverse visitors to the parks. This is consistent with one of the findings of the Parks Forward Commission, which recommended that the department expand its focus from the "traditional" – i.e., older, whiter, richer – park user to include the state's growing population of younger people of color. As one commissioner stated: "Visitors are going to be younger and browner. It's existential; if you're not engaging those constituents with parks, parks are dead!"

Parks California and the California DPR have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that sets forth the roles, responsibilities, and processes for developing and implementing projects and programs in California parks. Here are the three focus points:

**Transportation:** Lack of transportation often hinders low-income families, school classes, or community groups from getting

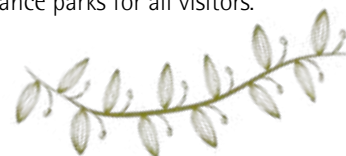
to a park. Parks California will be working with cities, counties, local park districts, transportation providers, and nonprofits to provide disadvantaged communities ready access to state parks and beaches. For example, free or discounted transportation services, ride-shares, and bike-shares can help make parks more accessible. This work will be the first shared priority.

**Low-cost accommodations:** Right now, even camping costs can be quite high. On Mt. Tamalpais, a walk-in site at Pantoll is \$25 per night; a Steep Ravine cabin is \$100. A group campground such as Alice Eastwood can run \$225 per night. And if you don't have camping equipment, this just isn't an option. So Parks California is supporting the DPR in its collaboration with the State Coastal Conservancy and other agencies to increase park access by developing low-cost accommodations in state and local parks along the coast.

**Programs and capital projects:** Parks California is working with the DPR to develop projects that make visiting a park more enjoyable through educational and cultural

programs and promoting public health connections with parks. The new organization will also be supporting the completion of priority capital projects that have stalled due to lack of funding and staff. The non-profit is not designed to fund operations and maintenance of parks, however, so will not address the huge backlog of deferred maintenance that burdens the parks.

These are ambitious and worthy goals for Parks California. MCL supports these goals, but also wonders if chronic underfunding from the state legislature will hinder efforts to bring new communities into the parks. And will the work of Parks California include support to programs at Marin's neediest state parks, like Olompali State Historic Park, and Tomales Bay State Park? It is our hope that, working with the DPR, the well-established California State Parks Foundation and other park partners, this new entity will be able to make progress in the foreseeable future to enhance parks for all visitors.



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*Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at the MCL office and are open to the public.*

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

*Land Use and Transportation:*

1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of the month, 1:00 —3:00 PM

*Parks and Open Space:*

2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of the month, 3:00—5:00 PM

*Fire and Environment Working Group:*

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon. of the month, 1:00 PM—3:00 PM

*Climate Action Working Group:* 3<sup>rd</sup> 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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**Volunteer for the 35th  
Annual Coastal Cleanup Day!**

In years past, volunteers in Marin have removed more than 12,000 lbs of trash and over 1,200 lbs of recyclables on a single day! Many hands make light work and we hope you'll join us.

Marin Conservation League will host two locations for the annual cleanup:

**Northern Marin-**  
Novato: Scottsdale Pond Gazebo

**Southern Marin-**  
Sausalito: Bay Model

Visit [marinconservationleague.org/events](http://marinconservationleague.org/events) for more information.