

MCL Ag Land Use Committee
Friday, January 22, 2016, Marin County Farm Bureau
FINAL Minutes

Judy Teichman and Sally Gale co-chaired the meeting from 10 a.m. to noon at the Marin County Farm Bureau in Pt. Reyes Station. There were about 30 people present, including representatives from a number of organizations. See below.

This meeting included two major presentations. The first on bird response to vegetation succession at Palomarin. The second on salmon spawning in Lagunitas and Walker Creek watersheds.

Bird Response to Vegetation Succession at Palomarin Field Station.

Libby Porzig, senior ecologist at Point Blue Conservation Science. Libby described monitoring of several bird species in conjunction with, and response to, vegetation changes occurring for about 30 years at the 90 acre study site near Bolinas at the south end of Point Reyes National Seashore. Prior to being incorporated into the park the area was used for grazing and agriculture but when it became part of the park in 1965 cultivation ceased and passive regrowth of coastal scrub evolved, followed by conifer forest.

- The Palomarin station has been functioning at Point Blue (former Point Reyes Bird Observatory) since 1965. There are 140 full-time and seasonal staff engaged in a range of conservation science with a focus on bird populations.
- The project has divided the overall area into subareas in which work includes mapping locations and nests of specific species. Although individuals of a number of other species may be observed (e.g. hawks, kestrels, owls), the project has focused on several fairly common species including Wrentits and sparrows.
- Concurrent with bird counts, plant succession has been monitored by regularly measuring the overall site coverage of various vegetative growth, and height of shrubs and trees. With no human usage, vegetation on the site has increased dramatically from open fields to increasingly forested lands. Douglas fir in particular is becoming a dominant sight. Measurements are taken several times yearly.
- Although cattle grazing was discontinued in the 1960s all the land uses that occurred when the area was agricultural are not known. Also, there is no way to know if or how soil has been amended since the area was settled.
- Overall, the abundance of some species changed with the landscape growth. For example, species that rely on open habitats of grasslands declined in number.

Update on Adult Salmon Spawning in the Lagunitas and Walker Creek Watersheds

Greg Andrew, Marin Municipal Water District Fisheries Program Manager. Greg gave a background on life cycle, range, and current status of Coho and other species that are the focus of the District's program, and on the results of monitoring this year.

There are four distinct salmon species in Marin creeks: Chinook, Chum, Coho, and Steelhead/Rainbow trout.

This year's coho run in the Lagunitas Creek watershed is the largest run in nearly a decade! So far this season 269 coho redds have been observed in the watershed, exceeding the total from three years ago. The average going back to 1995 is 250 redds. Ample rain is making this a good year for the coho and 2/3 of the spawning this season has occurred in tributary streams (San Geronimo Creek, Devil's Gulch).

Lagunitas and Walker creeks are in the center of the Central California Coastal habitat range for Coho. Coho in this area are more genetically related to each other than Coho in other areas.

Other Business.

Update on PRNS Ranch Management Planning: Melanie Gunn was unable to attend the meeting but reported via email as follows. 1) The ranch plan will be in the alternatives development and impact analysis phase for the next several months. 2) The Seashore completed the Residual Dry Matter (RDM) monitoring in the fall and worked with UC Berkeley to produce a report on RDM data collected at the Seashore...it is posted on the Park's web site. 3) Point Blue completed a study to estimate the impacts of silage mowing on breeding birds within the park and this study is also posted on the web site.

Update on Elk and John's Testing. Judy reported that surveillance for the disease in the free-range elk continues but to date has yielded all negative results. There were 487 fecal samples collected with most results in. Testing is done at the John's Testing Center at the University of Wisconsin. The Park is no longer collecting samples from the Home Ranch/Limantour wilderness group. D Ranch collections are continuing.

Update on MCL Board Activities.

Sally reported on the update of the MCL agricultural policy.

Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 12 p.m. The next meeting will be in April 22.

Notes: Ann Thomas

List of attendees (probably incomplete, some info is missing)

Greg Andrew	Samantha Kimmey	Stephan Parnay
Gordon Bennett	David Lewis	Libby Porzig
Michelle Cooper	Kevin Lunney	Kate Powers
Nona Dennis	Ted McIssac	Nicola Spaletta
Sam Dolcini	Zach Mendes	Susan Stompe
Sally Gale	Bridger Mitchell.	Judy Teichman
Dominic Grossi	Bob Miller	Ann Thomas
Bob Johnston	Vicki Nichols	