

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: November 18, 2016

Mt. Tamalpais Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael

Present: Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Janet Klein, Nona Dennis, Bill Carney, Tamra Peters, Roger Roberts, Pat Nelson, Belle Cole, John Walsh, Tom Flynn, Kate Powers, Heather Furnidge, Mary Morgan, Ed Mainland, Jill Templeton. Guest speakers: Caitlin Cornwall, Justin Witt of the North Bay Climate Initiative.

Doug called the meeting to order at 9:10.

Brief Introductions

Adoption of the Agenda by consensus. The agenda was adopted with the addition of Ed Mainland's report and a reversal of the order of Discussions 1 & 2 to major reflect traffic problems delaying people coming from the north. Janet Klein was invited to contribute to the presentation by Caitlin and Justin and stated she could begin the discussion in their absence if necessary.

October minutes. Minutes were approved with corrections. M/S Tamra/Nona/Approved.

9:16 Discussion: Implications of Trump Victory

Doug: Who are the key appointees?

Roger: Sacramento's attitude is unchanged. California will continue to do what it has been doing.

Belle: Yes, Ken Alex of the Brown Administration says California will go ahead. The transition team for EPA is particularly offensive. What can we do about that? There were protests in Paris last year. There will be a change in senior staff at DOI. This will likely affect the fight re ranching in Point Reyes, change the balance of power between public and private.

Nona: We already have a balance there. The change might open other public lands to private interests. We should expand our focus beyond Marin on the issue of public lands.

Bill: There is a long history of legislation and court decisions that might be brought to bear to protect EPA. Re implementation of the Paris Agreement, the new administration can just stall. Protests re Keystone may help. The Clean Power Plan contemplates a 28% GHG reduction. How can other levels of government accomplish the same reductions? The Brown MOU covers California and other subnational entities with high GDPs. Parties include cities and subregional entities. We have powerful institutions at our disposal.

Tom: California has the 6th-largest economy and the Bay Area is a significant force. The argument re climate measures hurting jobs can be debunked with evidence. The renewable energy sector has positive implications for business-cost reduction and job creation. Make California and the Bay Area an example for a safe, long-term sustainable world. The Rocky Mountain Institute has been working on market solutions and worked successfully with China. The issue is long-term economic security.

Bob: Economic Facts: Electricity accounts for approximately 30% of GHG emissions. The production tax credit and investment tax credit were renewed on a bipartisan basis at the end of 2015. Transportation accounts for approximately 26% of GHG emissions. The CAFÉ standards are up for grabs, but change can be made beyond that. Auto manufacturers make more money on SUVs. Manufacturing accounts for 21%. This is a mixed bag. Long-term investments take renewables into account.

Pam & Ed: There are California fuel economy standards. Take these into account.

Doug: There is the federal preemption option.

Roger: We can weigh in on that.

Tom: Respond to the dears and concerns of Middle America, the Rust Belt. They want secure futures for hard-working people. Approach them without arrogance. Build bridges and dialogue.

Ed: Combat the false narrative and anti-science imposed on the media and the gullible. Renewables are the strongest job creators in the country. MCL should stand up for truth and the facts.

Nona: Support with economics. That's the most workable argument.

Belle: OFA (Organizing for Action) had a meeting last night. People want to talk about what to do. How do we make the case? Who do we give the message to? The Transition Team? Will they listen? Our Congressman is with us, but it's overwhelming.

Tom: Kamala Harris is a fresh face.

Nona: Feinstein.

Roger: Bridging is possible. Energy efficiency reduces the cost of doing business and living in the Rust Belt. Just talk about energy efficiency.

Nona: What would Henry Ford do? The model is efficiency.

Doug: We've taken a hit. How bad is it? The nuts and bolts include a different funding picture. Trump will try to divide the county. How dangerous is this?

Nona: Putin embraces the concept of climate change. Shift the attention to litigators.

Pam: Anthony Romero reported 150,000 new members for ACLU.

Mary: Look at efforts in Nevada. Talk to the Transition Team will fall on deaf ears. Tool up the lawyers to delay and obstruct. Find new, young candidates for office. We can't take it for granted that California will still be in the forefront. In addition to climate, bad things are in store re race and immigration. How do we do things together?

Doug: What do we think about the media? Will corporate standards replace journalistic standards? Will there be a hard turn to the right as under Bush? Counteract this with education.

Mary: The Koch brothers were not invulnerable in Nevada. We are the counterbalance to dark money.

Bill: We have an opportunity to make climate a primary issue. Loss is energizing. Conflict sells. Look to the midterm elections.

Nona: Climate engages the younger generation. It is their future.

Belle: Jared (Huffman) still wants our help, increased coverage of climate in the media. Take hold of this.

Janet: MCL is good at this. People their career prime sometimes don't appreciate the MCL approach of contacting official's. Electeds are scared, especially at lower levels. They count phone calls. MCL can train others.

Pam: In San Rafael, we have a conservative City Council. We need a better one. At the last CCAP, John Gamblin was disrespectful, fled when the meeting was over. Bill: He was appointed and carried through unopposed.

Kate: My daughters are upset. They want to know how to channel their voice, engage in the political process. This can be done by demonstrating, writing, phoning.

Nona: Triage the most vulnerable issues. How long will negative actions take? What are the most imminent fights?

Roger: Jared says he can work across aisles on energy efficiency. This works on both sides, supports small business.

Tamra: Social media has a major effect. It involves younger people. Trump is using it.

Tom: Tweeting and Facebook. There is fake news on social media, set up as a for-profit outside of the country. For example, "Pope Francis endorsed Trump." Get people engaged. Get hip to social media. You can quickly contacts.

Tamra: This is a good vehicle for energy efficiency.

Belle: Young people are coming up with spreadsheets.

Kate: Young people have grown up with social media, can think about it critically.

Pam: Wrap-up: There are worries, suggested strategies, but people get overwhelmed. Don't think too far ahead. Look at first steps. Call up friends to touch base.

Ed: The theme is that we are not alone, that 1.2 million more voters voted for Clinton. The majority of House voters vote Democrat. The electoral system does not reflect this.

Discussion 2: Comparison of climate adaptation strategies in Marin and Sonoma Counties (Caitlin, Justin, Janet)

Doug introduced our presenters briefly and asked them to introduce themselves.

Caitlin Cornwall is a biologist with the Sonoma Ecology Center, in Sonoma Valley, where they employ multiple non-litigation approaches to sustainability. She is active with the North Bay Climate Initiative.

Justin Witt is a planner with Brelje & Race, primarily engaged in CEQA work. His work involves environmental and political science. He believes that we have largely missed the boat on GHG reduction and are looking now at adaptation.

Doug noted that he has had similar conversations with Janet Klein of MMWD and invited her to jump into the conversation re any overlap.

Janet: Re the Mt. Tam watershed, MMWD is not a formal partner in the Alliance, but a client. They put resources into a format that is usable locally.

Caitlin: There is a lot of work entailed in taking data and putting it into a format that decision-makers can use. Another path is less technical—aligning different interests to promote action. For example, the issue of energy efficiency speaks to everyone. It is similar with fires, drought, and flood. These are familiar problems. In Sonoma County, there is also the issue of heat, increased ferocity of heat. You don't have to talk about "climate." Florida, for example, does not talk about action in terms of climate, but of flood.

Belle: How do you reach out?

Caitlin: We showed handouts (referring to handouts passed around to the Climate Action Working Group). These are easy introductions. They give easy to understand explanations of impacts to streams and forests, for example. In Sonoma County, most of the forested land is in private hands. The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority is a joint powers agency. It is a good governance model, but is underfunded.

Justin: Outreach is a struggle.

Caitlin: (Caitlin provided a comparison of Marin and Sonoma Counties):

- In Sonoma, only 23% voted for Trump; similar in Marin. We don't have to talk in a partisan way to reach people. Talk in terms of protecting the community.
- Sonoma County is highly reliant on groundwater, in contrast to Marin. It is more resilient.
- In Sonoma, the forest is in private hands, in contrast to Marin.
- In Sonoma, sea level rise is not occurring near highly populated areas, in contrast to Marin.
- Sonoma has a different agency to deal with climate change. That agency is ahead of Marin. In Marin, the DPW is ahead, thanks to people like Choo and Lewis and a multi-functional mandate that allows it to look at the big picture. It is ravenous for data.
- Politics: Ann Hancock is now focused on CCAs outside of Sonoma County. The Supervisors' feedback is positive re climate. They are very alert to social disparity issues, the most vulnerable and least served. This is an easy argument in Sonoma County.

Kate: What about the Hwy 37 problem re sea level rise? Portions are already below sea level. We need a causeway.

Justin: There is a social disparity issue vis-à-vis Trump. Communities are agitated. This is an opportunity for engagement and cross-pollination. Social justice is part of a livable community, social justice. It is important to listen to information coming from their professional organizations.

Belle: Are vulnerable communities indifferent? A. No.

Caitlin: There is a bay-wide effort to join vulnerable communities with the climate effort: the Resilient Communities Initiative based in Oakland. Also Shore Up Marin. We give each other credibility. This is produced by a nongovernmental agency. It shows different actors. Everyone has levers and a part to play. It creates a better quality of life for everyone. Documents are online.

Justin: They got the roadmap from an adaptation forum at Sonoma State. They workshop with decision-makers.

Doug: Time to Lead on Climate experienced difficulty in reaching disadvantaged communities. There was a language difficulty.

Belle: Leaders from the Canal say you can't just talk about climate, but must build it into their lives, go to their meetings.

Caitlin: The climate issue is intertwined with bad housing. It's important to keep an eye on the ball: What do you want to have happen in the end, and find out what people in the community want to happen, and how these align. Should be talked to by people in their communities and find out who is the right messenger.

Tamra: Resilient Neighborhoods talks about public health, heat stroke, insurance, emergency preparedness, connections with other neighborhoods, asthma.

Pam: Re "come from their professional organizations"? A. (Caitlin): Make sure planners design around future conditions, not present conditions.

Justin: Regarding Hwy 37, design to the 100-year flood, which is changing.

Bill: This depends on CO². How do we complete the loop? If we fail, we must put money in disaster relief. Are we dealing with high-level people who deny climate change? We already spend millions. What is the best return on investment? Documentation so far is qualitative—high, medium, low. There is economic and political cost.

Janet: Who does the message have to come from? Sources like the Estuary Institute and Point Blue are the "birds and bunnies" people. The hard engineering (hardscape) people may be more reluctant. However, they saw "their own kind" at the forum, leading to a gradual change. Do outreach at that level, not to homeowners at this point. The Water Plan for alternatives incorporates material from the models. It talks in terms of water supply, not climate adaptation. Advocate for running solutions through a climate lens. MMWD is the only entity that now has the data in-house.

Nona: There is a problem with layout. We don't see wild working lands in the schematic. This is foundational.

Caitlin: It's hard to slice the pie. Numbers 15 and 10, biodiversity and water in managing forests are related.

Nona: Wildlands, natural systems are foundational.

Roger: The top of the pyramid is emergency services. It's easy to put the budget aside ex pot facto. We should use some of the money to plan ahead. This is underfunded and a hard sell.

Caitlin: The issue is how to realign investments to get more bang for the buck. Carefully pick the list of benefits, and make the time frame long enough. Make this the normal practice.

Tom: Energy efficiency is multi-faceted in terms of yield. It applies to everyone. It saves on housing costs. Make targeted efforts that deal with mitigation and adaptation. These are areas of common ground and priority.

Caitlin: A study under Bruce Riordan prioritized eight items, both adaptation and mitigation.

Doug: Re takeaways, Maria is now doing a vulnerability study. Damon is starting quarterly meetings of stakeholders. This will be a helpful conversation.

Caitlin: Sonoma County sought a grant from MCF. You need a social dimension for environmental grants. Maybe next year's round will be broader than the Bay shore.

There are two main areas: cost-benefit, and getting climate-informed standards and practices in place at the local level.

Tom: How do underfunded organizations support themselves? It's been five years from the Sonoma County CF. It's also a watershed issue. Hope next for a Strategic Growth Council grant?

Nona: ESA in-kind support?

Reports

Damon will report next month on the County Climate Action Plan.

Pam: 350.org was successful in getting people out. This was reported in the IJ.

Bill: Bill McKinnon gave a great talk before and at the Bioneers event, the "Power of We." This appeals to young people.

Ed/Doug: The Sierra Club Buy Clean campaign takes responsibility for emissions overseas, seeks to raise consciousness. San Francisco is going full force as a city, has a buy-local component.

Time to Lead on Climate (Bill): Jared wants help in convening an emergency Town Hall meeting on protecting our progress on climate. This will take place on Dec. 12 in the Supervisors chambers.

MCE and Deep Green (Doug): There will be a Monday meeting of the San Rafael City Council, at which the Council will consider the yearly update for the Climate Action Plan. Members of the CAWG are requested to go to this and other city council meetings to raise the issue of going Deep Green with their city councils during the public speaking period.

Our next meeting will be on December 16. Damon will present to us.

Meeting adjourned 11:01.

Minutes: PN.