

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: September 21, 2018

Muir Woods Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael

Present: Chairman Doug Wilson; Roger Roberts, Bob Miller, Ed Mainland, Pat Nelson, David Kunhardt, Judy Ford, Tamra Peters, Bill Carney, Belle Cole, Lawrie Mott, Nona Dennis, Mary Sackett, Ken Strong, Dale Miller, Robert Gould, Greg Thompson, Terri Thomas, Alice Zanemiller, Barbara Boylan, Carleen Cullen, Jodi Timms, Chris Choo, Dan Segedin, Pam Reaves, Kiki La Porta, Susan Stompe, Leslie Alden.

Speakers: Dr. Linda Rudolph, Co-Director, Center for Climate Change and Health; Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer. Veronica Pearson, Planner, One Tam; Claire Mooney, Project Coordinator, Golden Gate Regional Parks Conservancy. Alex Porteshawver, Coordinator, Drawdown Marin.

Chairman Doug Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:08.

Brief Introductions

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda and minutes were approved by consensus.

9:15 Discussion 1: Climate-Related Public Health Issues in Marin

Chairman Doug Wilson introduced the topic and described the procedure for handling questions. He then introduced speaker Dr. Matt Willes.

Matt introduced himself, summarizing the trajectory of his career in internal medicine. He has practiced in a number of venues where health inequity was a factor, including Navajo reservations and Marin community clinics. His work experience includes a stint at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, where his assignments included reporting on outbreaks of preventable diseases in Haiti after the earthquake. He now serves as Marin County's Public Health Officer. Matt stated that climate is an important issue, as is health equity. He noted that although Marin is ranked as the healthiest county in California, not everyone in Marin shares equally in those health benefits.

Matt then introduced Dr. Linda Rudolph, noting that she is a thought leader in public health at the state level, and has provided guidance that encompasses the complexity of public health and related climate impacts. He noted that in the climate realm, practitioners rely on thought leaders.

Linda summarized her work history, which included a longtime role as the City of Berkeley's health officer and public health director, where she focused on public health equity. She also read widely and intensively on the issue of how pervasively climate affects our health and every other area of life. From Berkeley, Rudolph went on to serve as Deputy Director for Chronic

Disease Prevention and Public Health at the California Department of Public Health. Linda left that position five years ago to focus exclusively on climate-related health issues. She is now Director of the Center for Climate Change and Health at the Public Health Institute.

Linda emphasized that there is a nexus between climate and health solutions. Heat illness is a worldwide public health problem that kills many. Marin County, where most people do not have air conditioning, is facing a possible 7-degree increase in temperature. We will also lose the reliably cool night temperatures that allow the body to recover from daytime heat. In Marin, the elderly and outdoor workers (of which we have approximately 7500) are particularly vulnerable. In addition, there are heat islands, particularly in low-income/minority neighborhoods.

Smoke from wildfires is another impact of climate change. Fires are becoming more frequent in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa Counties, and smoke can travel up to 1000 miles. Particularly vulnerable are children, the elderly, people with asthma, heart disease, or other respiratory diseases. Linda noted that 16 percent of adults have asthma.

Extreme storms and flooding will become frequent, affecting the quantity and quality of our water supply. Sea level rise threatens coastal aquifers and West Marin wells with saline intrusion. Low-lying disadvantaged communities in Marin are disproportionately affected by rising water levels.

Rising temperatures and longer droughts raise food prices and cause food and water insecurity, particularly for low-income citizens. Both water availability and water quality are affected, with climate impacts increasing both flooding and the concentration of contaminants in the water. Linda noted that people in Tulare County completely lost their water supply in the recent California drought. The cumulative effects of climate-related impacts affect mental as well as physical health, causing PTSD, depression and anxiety, particularly if people are displaced from their homes. These health effects disrupt the entire fabric of the community.

Following Linda's presentation, Matt described Marin-specific impacts, citing health advisories he has issued in the past two years to demonstrate that many health issues in Marin are climate-related. These advisories included an outbreak of legionella at San Quentin, in which increased temperature was a factor. The problem began in the cooling towers of the prison and led to 200 cases of legionella. The County had to turn off the water supply and use porta potties, which in turn led to hygiene issues.

An outbreak of West Nile virus followed the drought-related reduction in creek flows that increased the number of puddles of standing water. Citing a recent Zika virus outbreak in Southern California, Matt warned that previously rare diseases will move north into new latitudes as temperatures increase and insect vectors migrate. Possible new threats include malaria and Dengue fever.

Health advisories also included heat emergencies, which have become more frequent, and advisories regarding smoke from the Northern California wildfires. The County issues smoke advisories based on notices issued by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

He issued an advisory for a shellfish toxin that is carried in algae. Toxin levels last year were the highest ever recorded in Marin and, significantly, occurred in the off-season. The toxin is linked

to increased water temperature. In general, climate-related emergencies are becoming less predictable by season.

Such events are harbingers that raise concerns about how and where we build infrastructure. We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also adapt to a changing climate. It is essential to do both, and quickly. Only then might humans be able to adapt to the magnitude of impending climate change.

Chronic diseases such as cardiovascular and other diseases drive costs in the county. Factors promoting these diseases include diet, sedentary lifestyles and smoking as well as air pollution and larger-scale systems such as power, transportation and food/agricultural systems. We can address climate and health simultaneously and obtain important co-benefits.

A close look at what we drive, what we eat, and other lifestyle habits will show avenues for change. We still use gas energy. We need to get out of our cars. We could reduce meat consumption and food waste. Walking or biking instead of driving improves the health of the environment as well as our personal health. A study indicates that shifting to a more active form of transportation for just 20 minutes a day is a feasible lifestyle change that can reduce cardiovascular incidents by 12 percent. Most people now engage in such “active transportation” for about 4 minutes per day. Reducing consumption of red meat, processed foods, and sugar also benefits human health and the environment. Land use patterns are part of the problem. Increased density, a good transportation system, and mixed-use neighborhoods make it easier for people to get out of their cars.

On the adaptation side, there are clean air shelters and heat shelters.

Questions and Comments

Doug: What is a clean air shelter? A. The shelter uses HEPA filters. It’s a relatively new concept. A clean air shelter is also a cooling center. Examples include libraries and lobbies in skilled nursing facilities.

Comment: Home heating is generally a source of the air pollution problem (usually indoor air is the dirtiest air), but a highly filtered duct system could be a solution.

Matt: Regarding schools and smoke emergencies, the idea is to collect children in one safer place, but not everyone has the same access to technology and masks.

Carleen: How do parents feel? Do they make the connection between their actions and climate change? A. Most people don’t connect the dots, except for air pollution. The transportation system is a major cause. Much work remains to be done re public education, particularly about the connection between meat-eating and climate. Increased public awareness is needed regarding the various connections and the system and policy changes that are needed. Matt can offer a narrative in his role. We need to address behavior changes collectively.

Linda: Last week’s climate summit was a call to action and a declaration of a global health emergency. The summit identified 10 priority actions that leaders can take. Health actions for

climate include actions by hospitals. Environmentalists have not focused on human action in a non partisan way.

Dale: Some EVs have HEPA filters. How do we influence the mainstream media? A. (Matt): We need to be less cautious and more aggressive as scientists. Within the scientific culture, there is an emphasis on caveats and presenting the other side of the argument.

Robert: Marin is so healthy in part because we export our environmental impacts—to the Central Valley, for example. There's a social equity issue in food and energy production. A. (Matt): The co-benefits of solving those issues are profound. Work that gets back to the fundamentals. Food and agriculture systems are ripe for change, and progressive methods of production in Marin could serve as a laboratory. A human-scale, locally grown ecology produces profound co-benefits, including increased access to healthful, local food and less food and packaging waste. Waste disposal systems should be adapted to divert GHG-producing organic waste from landfills to use in agriculture. The human-scale environment includes more parks in underserved neighborhoods. (Linda): Marin could act as a regional good neighbor, providing affordable housing and regional transportation to the amenities we enjoy here.

Nona: There's a missing piece to this picture. Humans are dependent on unmanaged biodiversity. How do we weave that into the narrative? A. (Linda): Planetary health is missing in the "Rainbow" model of the social determinants of health. Healthy places produce healthy people. We are creating an unhealthy planet through our dependence on extractive industry.

Q. What can we do? A. Wealthy communities still use natural gas. Everyone can go electric.

Doug: Do you have things to leave us with? Follow-up? A. (Matt): Matt agreed to share information and Doug will pass it along to the group. Further conversation and engagement with partners is indicated. Break down the artificial dichotomy between health and the environment; there Matt stated that he emailed a link to Lead On Climate.

Discussion 2: Conversation with Veronica Pearson, Planner with One Tam, and Claire Mooney, Project Coordinator, Golden Gate Regional Parks Conservancy.

Claire and Veronica described a pilot project at Bothin Marsh.

Claire: The pilot project is designed to lead to a vision for long-term adaptation to sea level rise on the multi-use path at Bothin Marsh. The project is a collaboration of the County and the Parks Conservancy, conducted under the umbrella of One Tam. It is part of a broad effort across the Bay Area. The partners seek to leverage site work for the broader vision. The pilot project will begin to implement a community vision for the path, which is used by multiple groups and types of users. To this end, the partners are conducting multiple outreach events to engage as many users as possible and take account of a diversity of voices. There has been a great turnout at the variety of events conducted, including lectures, bike rides, kayak rides. More events are upcoming in fall and winter.

Doug noted the OWL project, which was designed to help people visualize the impending effects of sea level rise. He suggested that we should enjoy marsh areas that will not be with us permanently.

Veronica: The pilot project seeks to empower the community to take action. There is a Bothin Marsh page at the One Tam website, that will have a link to the report: <http://www.onetam.org/programs-and-projects/bothin-marsh>. A map exhibit is up at the Mill Valley library. They will distill the report and start a mailing list of interested people.

Introduction of Alex Porteshawver, Marin County's coordinator for Drawdown Marin

Doug introduced the County's recently hired sustainability coordinator for Drawdown Marin. Alex described her background living in various parts of the country and previous work experience that involved serving local governments on local sustainability issues. She described her areas of focus under the Drawdown umbrella: regional equity, public-private partnerships, and user-centered design. She intends to create alliances with people of color, empowering them, and to bring the public in at the beginning of projects.

Q. In what specific capacity will you be working? A. I work for the County, managing Drawdown Marin.

Kiki: I've been working with Drawdown for a couple of years. A challenge in Marin is that people are not willing to change their lifestyle. Incremental steps are not enough. We need to push the envelope with big steps, to move fast.

Dale: How do you intersect with Dana Armanino? A. Dana has institutional knowledge and is an implementer. I will be working on broader, higher-level thinking.

Belle: How does health fit in to your strategy? There are no Drawdown pillars devoted to health. How do you get information out and bring in new people? A (Doug): Health is included in the sixth pillar, Climate Resilient Communities.

Robert: Regarding health, this co-benefit is essential to every strategy.

Alex: There are six strategy groups. What I ask from the technical working groups: what are the goals and priorities? I will look to secure financing at the beginning.

Bill: We've been waiting a long time. What is the timeline? A. I will be empowering the work you've done. We will be tackling 100% renewable and transportation first, the two focus areas. There will be a longer timeline for other areas.

David: There's creative tension here. How to identify the highest-leverage items, and how to report success in each area.

Q. Marin has a huge climate debt. The six pillars are myopic. Climate debt is the seventh pillar.

Updates

Global Climate Summit in San Francisco. Various members reported on what they found memorable about the event. Reported highlights included the presence of interfaith representatives; and the Rising for Climate Justice portion of the event, which included a hummingbird visualization, the presence of indigenous peoples, and Dancing Without Borders. Also memorable was the Diesel-Free by '33 contingent, with inventions and electric trucks; DPW signed pledges. This part of the event included a business presence. An investment group and As You Sow were in attendance as were corporate climate leaders. Conclusion: To go carbon-free, we need to do something big, such as taxing carbon.

Further highlights included WWF's advocacy entitled Food, Farms and Forests. The places reporting that they have implemented carbon taxes inspired hope. Progressive transportation events were sponsored by high-achieving Netherlands and Norway. There were international and domestic EV panels. China is assuming leadership due to the role of its Central Committee. India is taking strong action. On the domestic front, California is way ahead. It was encouraging that there was a strong youth presence at the event. The NASDAQ Center was notable because it demonstrated that there is entrepreneurial funding ready to be poured into promising developments. We are poised for a carbon tax. Also present was a global action group that uses a UN fund to funnel funding from developed to developing countries. The U.S. does not participate because Pres. Trump pulled us out of the international effort.

Lead On Climate Event (Belle). The event was successful, with more than 700 people in attendance. The opportunity to make contact before the event was successful as well. The showcase impressed newer people because it highlighted the friendliness of advocates and the amount of information available. Christiana Figueres was a star and meshed well with local people. The speakers were all good, and the notion of a conversation as opposed to a series of presentations worked well. A video of the event will be available soon.

Nona: It was good to have Jared Huffman there to give perspective. Where were the younger people? A. There were lots of new people, and attendees from College of Marin and the School of Environmental Leadership. The "youth half-off" feature brought in students from Drake. Belle went to all of the high schools. There were new attendees from other states and other countries. We are making inroads at the margins.

Sustainable Enterprise Conference (Doug). This event will be held at the Embassy Suites on October 25. It engages the business community and the financial world.

350.Org Bay Area. There will be an event at the San Rafael Corporate Center on October 18 addressing the topic of Public Banking for the Public Good. Ellen Brown will be featured. The Our Children's Trust lawsuit has survived a challenge and is going forward. In this lawsuit, young people are suing the government for inaction on the climate change issue.

North Bay Climate Summit (Ed and Robert). Novato's climate summit was a success. The summit focused on the North Bay's efforts to combat climate change, was attended by officials representing cities, businesses, and nonprofits. The event highlighted collaboration and included a social dimension that allowed advocates to connect, share leadership, and push each other. Bio-

regionalism represents a massive economic opportunity. Thinking regionally helps to translate GHS to dollars and health.

Golden Gate EV (Dale). Drive Electric Week was a success. Eight cars were sold. There is an “Eliminate Diesel” movement. TAM is not on board. We need to get them on the right track. Costco is seeking to build a “giant” gas station in Novato. Could MCL weigh in to oppose this? A. (Doug): Yes. MCL has done so. Dale (cont.): The Novato Planning Commission will be meeting on October 1 to consider this. Time and place: Novato City Hall at 7:00. This is an occasion to express opposition.

Reports

Resilient Neighborhoods (Tamra). Four teams have graduated, including a pilot for a County team that is greening the workplace. In this pilot program, the County earns resilience points for this participation. Resilient Neighborhoods has already reduced more than 5.4 million pounds of annual CO2 emissions, and 1,050 people have gone through the program. There is now a health component to the program, and statistics are listed by municipality on the website. A health and community services group is planned.

PUC / PCIA Proceedings (Doug). A proposed alternative decision in this proceeding favors the investor-owned utilities at the expense of CCAs. The next CPUC meeting will be held on October 27 in Sacramento. Brown has signed SB 237, which takes the cap off of direct access energy procurement, allowing private businesses to purchase energy directly. This is a setback for CCAs.

Ed: The IOUs have weaponized the PCIA against the future of CCAs. It is important to show up at the October 27 meeting.

Doug: It is important to keep making the link to where the decisions are being made. The Tea Party has been effective in doing this.

Comment: The IOUs get their profits by making capital investments. The system should be performance-based. Other states are moving to that kind of a system. Maybe a new governor will have a positive impact. Newsom is not taking any oil money.

Measure AA (Bill). Support renewal of this tax, of which more than half goes to public transit. MCL has endorsed it. It’s an equity issue.

Carleen: There is little creativity in transit. We need leadership.

Ed: The force of opposition is Trans Def. Nona: Trans Def is one guy. Ed (cont.): The position of TAM is the status quo. It doesn’t move the needle, which we need to do in the face of an existential climate crisis. Measure AA is not perfect, but endorse it with qualifiers. Possibly, invite the Trans Def guy to speak.

David: I’m the newest commission on TAM. Put your concerns on my shoulders. According to Huffman, the biggest leverage item is a tax on carbon.

Carleen: Weaken big oil first.

Q. Does the Los Angeles County Transportation Plan provide a basis for comparison?

Carleen: We need funding, but there is no vision underlying the plan.

Bill: It addresses the mechanisms for getting in to work. People need to show up. We need flexibility going forward.

Doug: We need effort and lobbying, to look at whether we have friends on the TAM board.

Bob: As discussed at the MCL board meeting, TAM is a '50s agency. We need to turn the agency around.

Meeting adjourned 11:15.

Minutes: PN.