

**Marin Conservation League**  
**North Marin Unit**  
Meeting Notes  
August 3, 2014

The meeting was called to order at the Wilhelm home. Present were: Ralph Webb, Rosalie Webb, Delyn Ries, Rick Fraitas, Dorothy Thomas, Gail Wilhelm, Don Wilhelm, Susan Stompe and guest, Don Jensen.

**Announcements:**

**Notes of the July meeting** were approved as distributed.

**Dan Jensen, manager, Gness Field, Marin County Airport** answered questions about operations. He explained that there are flight protocols to keep the noise impacts down for nearby neighborhoods. Most of the problems are with transient aircraft not following the local protocol. In January 2016 noise restrictions will be enforced. The notice has been put on their website. There is now an audio feed so radio calls are recorded which helps him identify planes which violate the protocol.

There are 300 tenants at the airport. Five jets are based there, mostly individually owned, but also include Kelleher Lumber and Dolby Trust. There are 14 twin engine planes, the rest are single engine. 70% are local, 28% other general aviation, and 1% air taxi. 26,000 pounds is the maximum jet weight.

Extending the runway 1100 ft. is a safety issue (will make the runway safer). The critical aircraft is a Cessna 525 which logs 250 take offs and landings for a minimum of 500 flights a year. The purpose and need will allow existing aircraft, as represented by the critical aircraft at Gness, to operate at Maximum Gross Take Off Weight under hot weather and other adverse weather conditions. This plane cannot take off with a full load when the air temperature is 88 degrees or higher. The added length will also give more space for smaller planes to take off and land safely by providing extra wiggle room.

The airport budget is about \$700,000 a year. It is tight, but self-sustaining. Revenues come from renting hanger space, leasing ground space, leasing to 13 businesses (plus 1% of profit every 6 months). Businesses include 5 flight schools, a flight instructor, Scanlon Aviation commercial flying/air taxi, insurance, Direct Aviantics, upholstery, T.J. Neff, and a flight doctor who checks pilots every 5 years under 40 and every 2 years over 40. There are 85,800 operations per year (an operation is either a landing or a take off). Personal property tax goes to the county and to schools. Six cents tax on flight fuel goes to the county for aviation. Gness fees are fairly high compared to other small fields (almost twice Petaluma). Many long term leases expire in 2018, including the contract fuel concession.

90% of the expansion will be paid by FAA. The state can provide up to 2.5%. The cost of running Gness will not change much with the expansion.

After Mr. Jensen left the group discussed the merits of extending the field. Concern was expressed that FAA wants the Redwood Landfill to do more to discourage birds, and they want SMART to not restore any marsh at Mira Monte. Although providing added safety to local pilots, the safety record at the field is quite good.

**M/S/C (Dorothy/Rosalie) To recommend that MCL oppose the expansion of the airport runway at Gness Field.** Concern was expressed that the extension really satisfies the need of just one plane based at the field. Although safety is the main justification, the airport has a good safety record so it seems to be more of a convenience issue. Not extending the runway would preserve the remaining marshes. Sea level rise could put the extension investment at risk, or cost the county much more trying to protect it.

**Novato General Plan:** There is a White Paper on the Bel Marin Keys Industrial Park. A couple more should be available soon. North Redwood Blvd. will be on the Planning Commission agenda August 18

**SMART** is not planning to put Quiet Zones in Novato. San Rafael is holding public workshops. Don agreed to investigate what is happening in Novato.

**North Marin Water District** – Rick reported Novato is doing well on voluntary cut back – use is down 16%

**IPM** – Delyn will let us know when it is to be on the City Council agenda

The meeting adjourned at 2:00. The next meeting will be at noon on Thursday, September 18 at Thomas's.