

## MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

### Parks and Open Space Committee November 12, 2015

#### MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Tom Boss, Linda Novy, Susan Stompe, Eva Buxton, Al Baumann, Robert Eichstaedt, Delos Putz, Rick Fraites, Arlin Weinberger, Larry Minikes, Larry Scheibel, Laura Lovett, Darren Brown (NPS Partner), Sharon Farrell (OneTam), and Mike Swezy (MMWD).

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 3:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) Creek Restoration Workshop, Gale Ranch, November 14; 2) OneTam Plein Air Plus events, November 13 and 14; 3) County Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, November 19; 4) GGNRA/State Parks Redwood Creek Watershed Projects, Public Meeting, December 3, M.V. Community Center; 5) MCL Holiday Party, December 4; 6) Horse Hill Annual Broom Pull, November 21; 7) Creek Restoration Workshop, Spirit Rock, December 5.  
Added to AGENDA (1.d.): Issue of signage for Starkweather Shoreline Park Trail

MINUTES for October 8, 2015 Approved

#### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space
  - a. RTMP Roll-out. The Committee continued discussion begun at the October 8 meeting concerning problems with the October 3 public meeting on Region 2 trail designation. Linda Novy summarized several points in the Foot People's report of the workshop: The implementation of the RTMP appears to be moving away from the original intent of the Open Space District, which is to protect sensitive resources; both Cascade Canyon and Giacomini Preserves have important Legacy habitat zones, which were ignored during the workshop, in spite of availability of maps at group tables; too many trails considered for redesignation as hiker/biker trails ignore the presence of legacy zones; showing trails on a map will increase pressure of recreational use on local neighborhoods near trailheads; several social trails have been ridden by many mt. bikes, and should be closed immediately, because use will increase after the designation process. Rick Fraites noted: the condition of some "social trails" used by bikes is "shocking," poor, worn down. Trails in open space preserves are already too dense. Tom Boss observed: most of the trails designated for hiker/biker use were originally roads.
  - b. IPM and managing invasive plants on open space preserves. A recent response from Mischon Martin, MCOSD Natural Resource manager, states that Parks staff is responding to comments on the Draft EIR for the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan, and that the direction of staff is to continue current IPM methods, with the goal of eventually getting to zero herbicides on open space preserves. A group representing MCL, Marin Audubon, and Friends of Corte Madera Creek ("IPM Advocates") has established a web site

<[savemarinsnaturalhabitats.org](http://savemarinsnaturalhabitats.org)> to promote use of IPM in managing invasive plants. There was a brief discussion of the MCL IPM/Invasive Plant Policy recently adopted by the Board. Eva Buxton noted that one reason for using herbicide is missing from the policy; “efficiency” should be added as a justification, in that often an initial application of herbicide to a new population of invasive plants will obviate the need for other control measures in the future, i.e., herbicide may be the most “efficient” approach in some cases.

- c. Measure A. Oversight Committee The Committee was scheduled to meet this afternoon. The lack of a quorum requires rescheduling. The Report of Measure A Tax revenues, budget, and Expenditures for FY 2-14-2015 is available from [www.marinparks.org](http://www.marinparks.org).
- d. San Rafael: Signage for Starkweather Shoreline Park. Laura Lovett has been working with San Rafael Parks and Recreation Department on a sign for the Starkweather Shoreline Park. The Coastal conservancy is funding the sign, and it poses some problems. Laura would like MCL to meet with the City to work out a solution that is satisfactory to all. Nona agreed that she would set up an appointment with Carlene McCart, Director of Community Services.

## 2. MMWD

- a. Forest Resiliency Project. Nona reported on a tour of the forested watershed on Bolinas Ridge on November 6, which was conducted to introduce MMWD Director Larry Bragman to forest management issues in the watershed. Approximately 12,000 acres of the total 22,000-acre watershed are forested. The purpose of the tour was to see forest conditions resulting primarily from the combination of sudden oak death and absence of fire. The tour was opened to a limited number of interested persons. At a recent meeting of MCL’s Parks & Open Space Committee, Janet Klein outlined the Forest Resiliency Research Project that the District is currently conducting with the U.S. forest Service and U.C. Davis. The tour was an opportunity to see first-hand the research project in progress and to see the consequences of SOD, which has killed thousands of tanoak, exposing the understory to dense revegetation by brush that competes with forest trees (redwood and Douglas fir) for resources for growth and poses a major threat of catastrophic wildfire. Mike Swezy provided a brief history of natural fire regime on the watershed. The absence of frequent fire has allowed the understory to grow out of control. The District is using heavy equipment to crush and chip brush to open up the understory, leaving a thick layer of mulch. The research, in 30 plots in three location (25 treatment and five controls), is intended to furnish data on carbon sequestration, water yield, soil, habitat, and other indicators of a forest and watershed “health.”
- b. Mike Swezy announced that the quarterly meeting of the MMWD Watershed Committee on December 12, 1:30 p.m., will consider possible projects in collaboration with OneTam – e.g., the Log Cabin rehabilitation, West Peak restoration, and an Azalea Hill alternate route for multiuse trail. The meeting will also announce membership of MMWD’s OneTam citizens’ advisory committee. Mike said that a feasibility study for restoring West Peak is in the MMWD/OneTam 2016 work plan, and they are considering how to fund the study.

## 3. Tamalpais Land Collaborative (OneTam)

- a. Plein Air Plus events. Sharon Farrell outlined a pair of fund raising events hosted by OneTam (GG Parks Conservancy), including a reception at the Ralston White Retreat on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a public showing of paintings at the Sweetwater on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

- b. West Peak. Nona reported on participating on a tour of West Peak put on by OneTam on November 8, with West Peak historian Gary Yost leading the tour and talking about the military history of West Peak. MCL will consider becoming more involved in planning for this potential MMWD/OneTam project
  
4. State Parks in Marin:
  - a. Easy Grade Trail. A draft letter of comment on the proposed change-in-use of Easy Grade Trail to accommodate hikers and mtn. bikes was circulated for committee review. After some discussion pro and con, the letter was approved, with one change, as being consistent with MCL's Trails Policy. The letter is attached.
  - b. There was no report from either Marin State Parks Association or the Parks Forward Transition process. Susan noted that State Parks is considering issuing special license plates to raise funds.
  - c. East Peak. State Parks has issued an invitation to participate in Mt. Tamalpais State Park East Peak Planning process to develop a Facilities Management Plan. The Plan will consider a cohesive vision for East Peak's future amenities and recreation. A public meeting will be scheduled in early 2016. In the meantime, the planning process can be followed at [www.parks.ca.gov/eastpeak](http://www.parks.ca.gov/eastpeak).
  - d. Sound Summit. The Committee learned that the promoter of the rock concert held in September (Sound Summit) is setting up a \$40,000 fund for the benefit of Mt. Tam State Park, subject to donor restrictions. Apparently funds will be used to fill a variety of equipment needs. The non-profit "Roots and Branches Conservancy" formed for this purpose will review funding needs with Park staff. Arlin has been tracking this issue and will continue to track.
  
5. National Parks in Marin – Muir Woods and GGNRA

Darren Brown, NPS Partner, reported on several events and actions. A meeting jointly hosted by GGNRA and State Parks on December 3, Mill Valley Community Center, 6:00 – 8:00 will consider several projects under review in the Redwood Creek Watershed – realignment of Redwood Creek Trail and Diaz Ridge Trail extension, and various bridge reconstructions. He reviewed the status of the MOU between NPS and the County concerning actions by both parties to reduce parking from Muir Woods Road (Frank's Valley Road) to 80 spaces below the bridge in early 2016, and gradually eliminate parking over the next several years. An EA on the NPS proposed reservation system for Muir Woods is open for public comment through November 22. The NPS needs to complete the NEPA process in 2016 before it can sign the MOU. In the meantime, as reported at the October 8 meeting of this committee, both NPS and the County are cooperating on actions detailed in the MOU, such as installing barriers to limit parking and enforcing parking restrictions. MCL will submit comments on the EA before the deadline (attached). A public meeting to update everyone on progress will be held on January 6, 6:30 – 8:30, at Tam Valley Community Center.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50

Minutes by Nona Dennis, Chair