

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

July 14, 2016

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Pam Kuhn (MCP), Sarah Minnick (MCP), Jill Templeton, Tina Torresan (MCP), Michael Ardito, Vernon Huffman (Access 4 Bikes), Tom Boss (MCBC), Larry Kennings, Tamela Fish, Tom Harrison, Roger Roberts, Eva Buxton, Kate Powers, Larry Minikes, Sharon Farrell (One Tam), Joyce Britt, Robert Eichstaedt, Linda Novy, Ann Thomas.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) Senior Walk, Stafford Lake, July 13 ; 2) MCL Picnic on the Patio, July 23, 12 -3:00; 3) Azalea Hill Hike, MMWD, July 23, 9:00 – noon; 4) August 25-28 –National Park Service Centennial Birthday Weekend; 5) Coastal Clean-up, Sept 17; 6) Mt. Tam Symposium, October 28, 29; 7) Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, July 21, 3 – 5.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks
  - a. Signage Program. Pam Kuhn, Marin County Parks, presented a report and graphics on the new signage prototypes for Parks and Open Space. Open space sign prototypes are on display at Escalon (Camino Alto) and Crown Road (Baltimore Canyon) Trail Heads. These are high volume entry signs (bigger than secondary entrance signs) that present a map of the area; rules and regulations for users, in a positive mode; resource protection guidelines; and safety guidance. Bottom of sign is reserved for temporary and rotating information. Parks signage is different, using monument signs visible to vehicles, entry signs that can offer changing messages, and “flags.” Durable materials will resist graffiti, dog urine, weathering effects, etc. The signage program, paid for by Measure A funds, will roll out over 2 – 3 years and includes approximately 365 signs. By June 2017, Region 1 will be installed, and McNears Park signage will be installed by the end of 2017. Installation will normally take place in the winter season. The signage program is cohesive and offers an integrated vision. Interpretative signage and inclusive access information will coordinate with this effort but be defined in other planning processes. Suggestions for signage from the committee included how to file a citizen observation report, durability and materials, elevations and contour to indicate difficulty. Trail and road mileage is included on display map on signs.
  - b. RTMP. Current trail projects in Region 1 and 2 were discussed. (See also marinparks.org for fact sheets.) Projects in Region 2 include: Roy’s Redwoods OSP Loop Trail Project Trail Improvements; Loma Alta OSP Trail Improvements and Stream Habitat Restoration; Giacomini OSP Candelero Canyon/Contour Trail Complex Improvements, Adoption, and Decommission Project; Loma Alta OSP Realigning portion of the Old Railroad Grade Trail, including habitat restoration, installation of a bridge and new trail. In Region 1, Camino Alto OSP Fairway Trails Improvement Project is the subject of a completed Initial Study/Mitigated Neg. Dec. MCL wrote a letter of comment to MCP. Notably the IS/MND failed to address post construction impacts to known nesting habitat of the threatened northern spotted owl, impacts of long-term expected increase in recreation use, and an

alternative that could avoid the nesting owl habitat. Marin Audubon has retained an attorney and a wildlife biologist for further comment on what could be a “taking” under the federal Endangered Species Act, and to determine whether an EIR should be required under the “fair argument” standard. This needs further discussion with staff. The RTMP Program EIR also is deficient in not covering intensification of recreational use as a significant impact, so is a poor document for tiering. Comments on the IS/MND were due 7-13-16. Nona further noted that three preserves in Region 1 are designated Critical Habitat for the threatened northern spotted owl, and MCP cannot work during Feb to Aug 1 season.

Also in Camino Alto OSP, the plan for new multiuse trail connecting Octopus and Camino Alto Fire Road has been realigned after public input. The project will begin in August, and will include decommissioning 2,500 linear feet of unsanctioned trails.

The date for the Region 3 public workshop is set for August 21, 2016, at College of Marin, Indian Valley campus.

- c. Campaign on pesticide use. The Board of Supervisors has budgeted \$100K for a public campaign on use of pesticides. MCL is concerned that the public’s focus is on the carefully controlled, small amount of herbicide used by the County, versus the far greater use by private/commercial users. MCL reiterated its position that the County needs a full IPM “tool box.” The committee discussed the need for education and suggested requiring residential posting of pesticide use. Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTPPP) publishes excellent materials and works with nurseries to promote IPM to the public.

## 2. MMWD

- a. Azalea Hill Trails Project. The MMWD Watershed Committee heard a presentation of the Azalea Hill Project by Mike Swezy. This project presents the opportunity to satisfy all user groups while protecting resources such as serpentine plant community. The proposal would improve sustainability of the original Azalea Hill Trail and retain its hiker/equestrian designation. A proposed new multi-use road would be located on an old roadbed around Bon Tempe Lake and connect with Fairfax -Bolin Road. Social trails would be decommissioned. Two field trips are planned on July 23 and Aug 27; smaller groups can be guided if needed.
- b. West Peak feasibility study. Sharon Farrell of One Tam reported that an 18-month study of the feasibility to restore West Peak will consolidate different studies, conduct geotechnical analysis, assess environmental contamination, conduct biological inventories, etc. Opportunities for environmental restoration and trail circulation will be studied, and feasible alternatives sketched out. The public will be involved in this process through outreach. Results and recommendations will be presented to the Board. Visit the OneTam.org web site and go to the West Peak Page.
- c. The “Vegetation Management Plan” for the watershed is in internal review and may be ready for presentation at the September 15 Watershed Committee meeting. This has not been confirmed.
- d. “Slow” event at Lake Lagunitas. Nona asked for volunteers to participate in a “Slow Event,” that is, help staff a table, at Lake Lagunitas, Saturday, September 10, 8:30 – 12. The purpose is to call attention to the fact that speed needs to be controlled on the watershed, especially in this popular

recreational area. MCL has partnered with Marin Horse Council and MCBC in Trail Partners to assist MMWD in this effort.

- e. Cross Marin Trail will be closed south of Sir Francis Drake Blvd through National Park Service lands to Samuel P. Taylor State Park from early August through October as MMWD will be replacing a failed culvert at Jewel Creek.

3. Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (One Tam)

- a. A symposium on the ecological health of Mt. Tam – “Peak Health” – is scheduled for October 28 – 29. A modest fee of \$25.00 per day will include breakfast and lunch. Sharon Farrell reported that a “White Paper” reflecting resource health indicators, conditions, and trends is almost finished (expected July 19). The draft will be reviewed by the scientists who participated in March workshops before public release. It will create a new ecological “baseline” and be followed by a synopsis for public distribution. The Symposium will be held at the *Portuguese Cultural Center* in Sausalito. A question was raised regarding marketing this event. Sharon advised that One Tam is building an interactive web site for the public, and they will reach out to different audiences. It was suggested that the information from this Symposium could lead to Citizen Scientist monitoring. The Chicago Wilderness Network has done something similar.

4. State Parks

- a. Bill’s Trail. The change-in-use construction is in progress and will require two more seasons to complete and allow to “season” before reopening. The presence of threatened northern spotted owls in this area limits work to a six month annual window, which also excludes the wet season. State Parks is installing timber or logs as pinch points – up to 70, in a 2 – ¼ mile length trail. A question was asked about monitoring water quality, and Nona responded that the Regional Water Board required State Parks to implement BMPs due to creek crossing and monitoring is included.
- b. “Park Watch” It is our understanding that this GPS based application for reporting conditions on trails and fire roads and other park lands will be tested on State Park lands. The reporting device uses smart phones to transmit information to a central location, and can be a very worthwhile program where ranger presence is limited.
- c. Annadel State Park (Sonoma) is changing its name to Annadel Trione State Park to honor benefactor Henry Trione, a real estate developer and park proponent. He donated more than 1 million dollars to ensure that Annadel State Park would remain a public park. The park retains the name Annadel, reflective of “Annie’s Dell” on the former ranch.
- d. State Parks Transformation. The State Parks Transformation Team has instituted a position in Sacramento that focuses on partnerships and on updating partnership policies and procedures.

5. National Parks.

- a. Various provisions in the MOU on parking outside Muir Woods signed by the County and GGNRA are being implemented, as reported to the Board of Supervisors in June. It will take another year at least to implement the parking reservation system. To better protect Redwood Creek from pollution, posts to prevent parking along the road have been installed. Until the reservation system goes into effect, traffic is moving down the road to park cars at Muir Beach. The NPS has brought on new staff to work with the Sheriff. Parking on the road is a County responsibility, but Muir Woods brings in the traffic. Citations have increased. To date \$500K has been spent by the County, Parks Conservancy, and National Parks to improve traffic flow and parking.
- b. Pt Reyes Nat'l Seashore. MCL is offering four public workshops in the fall on the Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan to help the public better understand ranching in the pastoral zone of the Seashore, and to facilitate comment on the Ranch Management Plan and environmental Assessment, expected before the end of the year. Workshops will include biologists, ranchers, historians, and other knowledgeable speakers. There will be two workshops in southern Marin and two in west Marin.

6. Other

Tom Harrison, publisher of Tom Harrison Maps, a business member of MCL, and past chair of the Parks and Open Space Committee, attended the meeting and reported on work updating his maps. He demonstrated that you can download onto a smart phone a pdf from maps.com, which contains a map of Mt. Tam, thus eliminating dependence on not-always-available cell service to use digital maps.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00.

Minutes by Linda Novy and Nona Dennis