

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

May 12, 2016

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Tom Boss, Larry Minikes, Judy Teichman, Roger Roberts, Paul Minault, Max Kortzen (Marin County Parks), Rick Fraites, Eva Buxton, Susan Stompe, Jill Templeton, Arlin Weinberger, Robert Eichstaedt, Bill Long, Al Baumann Mike Swezy (MMWD), Matt Zweier (Marc Levine's office), and Kate Powers.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) Bay Area Open Space Council, May 19, all day, Crane Pavilion, Richmond; 2) Marin County Parks & Open Space Commission, May 19, 3:00 – 5:00; 3) NPS public meeting – Vista Point Trail improvements, May 17, 4:30 – 7:00, Sausalito City Hall; 4) National Trails Day, June 4, various locales; 5) Update on Muir Woods Road MOU, Board of Supervisors, June 14, approximately 10:00 a.m.; 6) MMWD Watershed Committee mtg., June 16, 1:30 – 3:00.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 14 minutes approved.

ACTION ITEM:

A proposed 50K ultra-marathon event was presented to the Committee at the March 10 meeting and discussed at the April 12 meeting. Nona summarized the proposal and previous discussions. She believes that the committee should decide whether MCL will or will not recommend approving the event. Possible actions would be to vote Yes or No, develop a general policy statement as to whether MCL should approve this or similar events, or let the event go forward and evaluate performance. Among the problems and questions discussed: 1) sponsoring group has no real business plan (non-profit status, costs and revenues, donations, etc.); 2) sensitivity of numerous foot trails to direct and indirect environmental impact; 3) sensitive serpentine habitats crossed; 4) the event would not provide sufficient funds for restoration (Dipsea raises sufficient funds for maintenance and repair) 5) other impacts need to be considered – traffic, cumulative effects of pre-event practice runs, and impacts of spectators; 6) Note that Dipsea Race probably wouldn't be permitted today, but continues because it is "grandfathered"; 7) MMWD discourages competitive events (but permits high school practice); 8) could set precedent by repeating in following years, and trigger similar events. Further comments acknowledged that sponsors have laid out a careful plan, are responsive to environmental concerns, have been responsible in seeking input, and they envision a relatively small number of participants (200 est.).

It was moved and seconded and motion carried, with one opposing, that the committee make a general policy statement that would discourage the event, especially on MMWD watershed lands, and recommend this to the MCL Board: **"To support MMWD's current watershed policies that promote passive recreation and discourage competitive**

events on watershed lands, and recommend that MMWD not permit schedules race events that could have negative environmental impacts and be precedent.”

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space
 - a. Max Korten, recently appointed Acting Director and General Manager of Marin County Parks, was introduced and gave a brief description of his background. Before joining Marin County, about two years ago, he was with the Conservation Corps North Bay. He reviewed a number of current activities and projects of the Department, including 1) upcoming Region 3 Trail Designation workshop, to be held on the Indian Valley Campus of College of Marin sometime this summer; 2) the so-called “Water Tank” or “Octopus” trail improvement project in Camino Also OSP, currently on hold pending resolution of environmental issues; 3) the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan EIR will go to public and to the P&OS Commission in July and should be final in August; 4) the North Bolinas Lagoon project, a collaboration with GGNRA, Point Reyes National Seashore, CalTrans, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Gulf of Farallones Marine Sanctuary, and county Public Works and Open space District, to do landscape-level restoration to resolve multiple issues that affect Highway 1 and the Lagoon habitat, such as runoff from adjacent lands, flooding of the roadway, and future sea level rise on marshlands. 5) Kent Island restoration, which involves removal of invasive ice plant and other non-native species; 6) McInnis Marsh restoration, including a section of the Bay Trail, which has received a \$550,000 grant from State Coastal Conservancy; 7) ongoing restoration actions at Roy’s Redwoods OSP. Max said that the position of Matt Sagues, senior natural resources specialist, has been filled.
 - b. Max announced that prototypes of new signage for open space have been mounted in Region 1, at Escalon entry to Camino Alto OSP, and at Crown Road entry to Baltimore Canyon OSP. The committee will have a presentation at the next meeting. Meanwhile small focus groups will convene and comment on the signage. Signs for parks are similar but convey a different message from that on signs in open space.
 - c. The results of a visitor survey will be presented to the P&OS Commission on May 19. Roger Roberts noted that the survey should be replicable over time to identify trends. He hopes that the present survey will serve as a baseline. Question was raised: Will staff make any changes to the RTMP in light of survey findings? There was not a definitive response to the question, except to note that the survey could be repeated to observe trends and changing needs.
 - d. Two recent actions by the Board of Supervisors were briefly noted: partial funding (\$15,000) to support a “Roving Ranger” – like a mobile interpretive and information kiosk or mobile trailhead that can transport all kinds of educational materials to public gathering places, schools, etc, instead of depending always on the public coming to the open space preserves to be educated. The Supervisors also approved funding for shared office space at the Los Gamos County Emergency Building, for One Tam staff and interns who are working with County Open Space staff on One Tam/County joint projects.

2. MMWD Watershed

- a. Mike Swezy announced that “Slow Zone” signs have been placed in several locations around Lake Lagunitas to reduce conflicts in an area that is heavily used by many recreationists. Three introductory events were held at the main picnic grounds in May. More signs will be placed during the summer, and rangers will enforce the 10 and 5 mph restrictions. It is not clear yet just how to measure bike awareness and compliance.

3. One Tam/MMWD update:

Mike also reported briefly on the MCL Walk to West Peak and progress on financing a feasibility study for restoration; he reported on the May 5 “Mountain Calls” evening of video, poetry, and music. The West Peak project will be discussed on June 16 at the MMWD Watershed committee meeting. The Log Cabin project is proceeding to 30% design, and the Conservancy is looking at feasibility of funding the \$2 million (est.) project. He also reported on progress toward the 2-day “State of Mt. Tam” public symposium scheduled for October 28-29. A white paper will bring together existing information and identified gaps for preliminary review. As currently planned, the symposium will focus on science on the first day and public use of Mt. Tam on the second.

4. State Parks Marin

- a. Easy Grade Trail change-in-use (CUI) process is still under discussion. New opposition has surfaced from individuals. The rare plant survey has not been conducted, nor has CEQA compliance been completed, according to Parks staff.
- b. Susan Stompe reported that Olompali and Tomales Bay State Park units in Marin are still without ranger presence and are seeking restoration of \$42,000 in funds. The Marin State Parks Association has not gotten reassurance that the funds are available. It may be useful to seek help from the new office in Sacramento whose function is to work with State Park Partners. Further, she reiterated that the two-year State Park Transformation Team has not held the public meetings that were promised. Some activities are being reported on the web page, but this contains limited information. Danita Rodriguez has stated that the Transition Team is looking at all park units, with a particular emphasis on four elements: programs, increasing diversity, improving accessibility, and cultivating partnerships. Some innovative programs can be found at #We Are Parks.
- c. Nona reported that the final EA for the Redwood Creek Trail Realignment and Dias Ridge Trail Extension (within Mt. Tam State Park, with limited sections in GGNRA), has not yet been made public. As previously reported, Steve Kinsey convened a stakeholders meeting in Tam Valley to bring all interests together and find solutions to concerns over parking near Muir Beach and the pedestrian and other hazards at the intersection of

Muir Woods Road and Shoreline Hwy, near the entry to the trail. It will be several years before the project can be implemented, since funds are not currently available.

5. National Parks in Marin

- a. Dog Management Plan proposed rule: MCL will submit Comments by May 25 (Attached to June 9 agenda). MCL continues to support the NPS Preferred Alternative. Comments will be read over the next several months. A final Rule is not expected until winter of 2016-17.
- b. Judy Teichman reported that MCL will schedule several public workshops in the fall dealing with issues likely to be in the Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan (RCMP) and Environmental Assessment, due out to the public sometime this year. The schedule has been delayed by a lawsuit challenging the RCMP process.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15

Minutes by Nona Dennis