

# MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

December 8, 2016, 3:00 – 5:00

## MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Linda Novy, Robert Eichstaedt, Ann Thomas, Susan Stompe, Arlin Weinberger, Delos Putz, Tom Boss, Larry Minikes, Kate Powers, Judy Teichman, Steven Schoonover, Mike Swezy (MMWD), Max Korten and Jon Campo (MCP).

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: 1) MMWD Watershed Committee mtg, December 16, 1:30 – 3:00; 2) Search and Rescue, Large Animal rescue, fund raiser for a study “horse-model.”(please clarify ??)

MINUTES of November 10, 2016, were approved.

### INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space
  - a. RTMP. Public process and projects under the RTMP were discussed by Max Korten, Jon Campo, and committee members. The Middagh Trail in Alto Bowl OPS was approved for reconstruction to allow bike access. Committee members noted that the MCP Project Report gave the impression that “popularity” could have been a factor in decision, indicated by number of letters received and calculation of percentage for and against the project. Are not petitions (also) a meaningful indication of numbers of pro or con constituents? Max Korten stated that MCP received petitions both for and against the Middagh decision and that they were not a factor in decision. He said that MCP has received a petition in support of leaving certain social trails open for bike access, even though trails run counter to RTMP sustainability standards and policies. A committee member asked why substantive letters (on the Middagh Trail) received no response. Another asked why the recommendation to decommission Happersberger Trail in Cascade Canyon OSP is “in limbo,” although projects in that OSP have been approved. (No specific answers to these questions were provided.)

Max reiterated that MCP wants to engage with all interested parties. How can stakeholders engage effectively in proposed projects for the 2017-2018 budget process, which is beginning now? Jon Campo distributed a draft brochure that shows a diagram for the RTMP review process and for a hypothetical project. The diagram is open for comment. The committee expressed concern that “recreation” appears to have become co-equal with “protection and preservation” as goals of the MCP and RTMP. One committee member suggested that the County might designate areas that are more suitable for recreation. The committee discussed how MCL can engage more effectively with trail planning and approval process, since MCL is not a “single agenda”

organization and cannot devote fulltime attention to the RTMP process. The P&OS committee meetings are not the most productive venue for detailed discussion of specific projects. It was recommended that a group be formed specifically to communicate with MCP on the RTMP process. Greg Zitney volunteered to head up that group.

Other RTMP issues: The Region 3 designation map has been approved. Region 4 trail map designation workshop is tentatively scheduled for May 13, at Margaret Todd Center. Decommissioning of social trails is proving to be effective, with vigorous enforcement, in part by camera. Revisions to County Code have been proposed to be consistent with RTMP and Inclusive Access Plan policies. Members expressed concern that new signage, which will change existing signage protocol that “prohibits” certain users (on trails) to designate “permission” of users (such as MTBs and horses) on trails, won’t be complete on all preserves for a couple of years. In the meantime, equestrians are particularly concerned in that revising the code now will immediately make horses illegal on most trails unless expressly signed for their access. This runs counter to historic equestrian access on most trails. A change in policy in the RTMP would treat “saddle animals” as equivalent to bicycles (See revised Policy T1d, RTMP Chapter 4). There will be further discussion on this matter. There was also brief discussion of e-bikes and the need to study their use, since they are beginning to appear illegally on Marin public lands.

- b. Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan and Final EIR. Max explained the staff’s recommendation and Board’s recent action to “accept” the VBMP, not “approve” it, and to not certify the EIR. The VBMP will serve as a guidance document; staff will map out proposed management program and projects in advance of 2017-2018 budget process, consider all possible actions, including whether herbicide use is necessary, discuss the proposed projects with the public, and conduct CEQA evaluations as necessary. The vast majority of projects will qualify as non-CEQA “maintenance.”
  - c. Senior Walks. The new schedule for Senior walks in 2017 will be announced.
  - d. Thanksgiving “Appetite” MTB ride. MCL continues to be concerned about the lack of accountability for this unofficial event, which attracts more than 800 riders. It is physically destructive and requires substantial staffing and equipment by the County and water district for control and emergency response. No organization, even though their members participate, will take responsibility for either trail wear and tear or costs, although organizations such as MCBC participate in the post-event gathering. MCL wants this event to be evaluated by the affected agencies.
2. MMWD
- a. Azalea Hill Trail. Mike Swezy stated that the Negative Declaration for the proposed Azalea Hill multi-use trail project will be ready for public review in February or March 2017. Nick Salcedo is the MMWD contact and project manager.

- b. Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) Draft EIR. A scoping meeting for the EIR will be held (tentatively) on January 25, at the Marin Art and Garden Center. Some seasonal botanical surveys still need to be completed. The District is meeting with regulatory agencies on site and working on permitting. Due to difficult access, small equipment will be necessary.
  - c. Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (One Tam): Mike reported on the “Tam Talk” session with the TLC Executive Committee, November 12, Corte Madera Community Center. The agenda included brief review of the history of One Tam, highlights of the past year, including a particularly effective Early Detection/Rapid Response (ED/RR) program for managing invasive weeds, and presentation of the 2017 TLC work plan. Work falls generally into three program areas: 1) Public engagement, including youth and volunteer events and activities; 2) Conservation and restoration, including ED/RR; and 3) Citizen Science, such as the Wildlife Picture Index Project. A financial report for the past year was distributed to attendees.
  - d. MMWD Watershed Committee. According to Mike, the December 15 meeting of the Watershed Committee will review the 2017 TLC Workplan, present the status of specific projects, such as the Log Cabin, W.Peak, and others. The feasibility study has been authorized for W. Peak, and a public process is being designed. A consultant has been retained for seven priority grassland restoration sites. The meeting will also review the recently completed \$1,000,000 Jewel Creek culvert replacement and fish passage project, which was funded in part by a \$750,000 grant under Proposition 84. It has been a very complex project, involving NPS easement and many permits.
  - e. 2040 Water Supply Plan. Ann Thomas reported on the December 7 lightly attended public meeting on the Plan at Marin Art and Garden Center. Of the 38-some projects evaluated as possible ways to ensure reliable water supply in a 6-year drought, the main recommendations come down to enhanced conservation and efficiency.
3. State Parks in Marin
    - a. Arlin Weinberger reported that this year’s Sound Summit yielded a profit of \$60,000, which will be donated to projects on Mt. Tam SP at the discretion of the non-profit “Roots and Branches” that produced the concert. The District Superintendent Danita Rodriguez will determine how funds might be used. (She is leaving for another posting, however.) Elizabeth Goldstein, Executive Director of California State Parks Foundation, is leaving that position.
  4. National Parks in Marin.
    - a. GGNRA and Muir Woods/Redwood Creek. Brief news updates, provided by Mia Monroe by e-mail, include the following: 1) the site for a controversial residence proposed for Wolfback Ridge, has been donated to NPS in memory of a Karsen Family member. This parcel is an important part of the GGNRA viewshed, and it also provides habitat for the

Mission blue butterfly; 2) As part of the Coho-Jumpstart project, 100+ adult salmon, born in Redwood Creek and reared at Warm Springs Hatchery, are being returned December 8 to their home stream to spawn; 3) The comment periods for the Muir Woods Sustainable Access Plan EA and the environmental scoping for the FLAP project to rehabilitate Muir Woods Road have closed (MCL submitted comments for both projects); 4) NPS is planning a public meeting on January 18 at the Mill Valley Community Center to update MOU projects as well as other Park briefings.

- b. Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Nona spoke briefly about a proposal for Dunn Ranch, a 52-acre property on the East shore of Tomales Bay that surrounds the Cypress Grove Research branch of Audubon Canyon Ranch. The ranch, which has not been managed for ranching in recent history, was purchased from the Dunn family by NPS in 1992, and the 25-year ROU expires in 2017. ACR proposes to manage the property as an extension of their education and facilities. This will be discussed in the near future.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:15.

Minutes by Nona Dennis