

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

March 9, 2017, 3:00 – 5:00

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Linda Novy, Robert Eichstaedt, Arlin Weinberger, Larry Minikes, Kate Powers, Larry Kennings, Rick Fraités, Eva Buxton, Roger Roberts, Monte Kruger, Eva Buxton, Al Baumann, Ann Thomas, Roger Rose, Peter Truce, Joyce Britt, Mia Monroe (GGNRA), Sharon Farrell (OneTam), Henry Symons (Marc Levine's office), and Carl Somers (MCP).

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: 1)Senior Walk, Bothin Marsh, held on March 2; 2) County Parks & Open Space Commission meeting, March 16, 3:00 – 5:00; 3) MMWD Watershed Committee mtg, March 16, 1:30 – 3:00 4) MCL Water Speaker Series on Ocean Acidification, March 23, 4:30 – 6:00; 5) Update on MOU between NPS and County in re Muir Woods Road, April 4, Board of Supervisors; 6)NPS Science and Natural Resources Symposium, May 11, Presidio; 7)Road and Trail Management Plan Region 4 public meeting, May 13, Margaret Todd Senior Center, Novato, time tbd; 8)Bay Area Open Space Council Conference, Craneway Pavilion, Richmond, May 18.

MINUTES of January 12, were approved.

OPEN TIME FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Rick Fraités discussed a recently drafted Resolution by the Sierra Club Bay Chapter Activities Committee recommending that “. . . the SF Bay Chapter support restricting access to narrow footpaths to hikers, equestrians, joggers, birders, and other non-vehicular trail users. . .and to oppose allowing mountain bikes on narrow paths because of concern for the safety of others trail users and environmental impact.” It is still in draft form. He said that the Marin Group also was going to consider adopting the Resolution.

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space
 - a. **RTMP. Region 4 public meeting on trail designations** is scheduled for May 13. Carl Somers was present to answer questions about Region 4 as well as projects on the 2017-2018 work program. The Region 4 designation process will not include any change-in-use for existing system trails. Concern was expressed over the temptation for bikes to connect with the Olompali loop trail. Olompali has many sensitive cultural resource sites. Al Baumann explained that the trail on Olompali was originally designed for shared use by bikes, and 15 years ago bikers helped build it. Later, State Parks posted a sign prohibiting bike access.

The **2017-18 Trail Work Program** is available for review on the <marinparks.org> site. Linda Novy expressed concern over designating the Hunt Camp (Juniper) Trail for hiker-biker shared use. It is very steep and eroded; it runs through sensitive Manzanita habitat, ends on a private road, and should be decommissioned. Carl explained that staff is studying the trail for possible realignments to reduce the gradient, avoid sensitive plants, and divert from the private road. A Fact Sheet will be posted, showing design proposal, and the public can comment. Field studies are in progress for an Initial Study, which will identify sensitive plant species and other conditions and possible impacts. Some social trails will be decommissioned to offset impacts. A public meeting may be held. Carl assured the committee that use will be monitored if the trail opens next year. Thus far, decommissioning is effective; trails are staying closed, he said.

Nona reported on **the New Paradigm Trail Group**, a recent MTB advocacy group that is impatient with the slow progress of the RTMP and would like more access to single-track trails as well as more advanced trails. About 18 or so spoke during open time at the MCOSD Directors' meeting (BOS) on January 31.

The **2017-2018 Work Plan** for the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan will be presented to the P&OS Commission on March 16, and to the Board of Directors on March 21. The MCL Invasive Plants Subcommittee will hear a presentation on March 15.

- b. The new schedule for five **Senior walks in 2017** was passed around: February 16, Bothin Marsh; March 30 Deer Island Preserve; April 27, Ring Mtn. Preserve, via Taylor Road; May 25, Cemetery Marsh, Rush Creek Preserve; and June 29, tbd.

2. MMWD

- a. The Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the proposed **Azalea Hill multi-use trail** project has been delayed due to storm damage during the recent storm season. It will be ready for public review later this spring. Nick Salcedo is the MMWD contact and project manager.
- b. MCL commented on the **Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) Draft EIR** scoping meeting for the EIR on January 25. MCL requested the Board to include a "with herbicide" alternative in the Draft EIR in the interest of providing the public with a full disclosure document and identifying potential impacts of *not* being able to fully control invasive plants with a limited IPM toolbox – that is, the impacts of leaving some areas unmanaged.
- c. Roger Roberts reported on recommendations of the **MMWD Citizens Advisory Committee** that was formed to monitor MMWD projects in collaboration with One Tam (Tamalpais Lands Collaborative). The CAC has emphasized that ecological health should be the first priority in considering any projects. They would like to see investment in more habitat restoration and more ranger presence. There was some discussion of the

Log Cabin Restoration Project; use will be limited to small gatherings and interpretive materials will be available.

3. Tamalpais Lands Collaborative

- a. Sharon Farrell provided updates **of One Tam programs and projects** that are underway. These include extensive invasive plant species (Early Detection/Rapid Response) surveys; new studies of bats, pollinators, and fresh water seeps and springs, heretofore not well known on Mt. Tam; Bioblitzes of Roys Redwoods (March 25) and Homestead Land Trust (date?); ongoing stewardship project on Easkoot Creek in Stinson Beach; and the feasibility study of West Peak, now in progress. Initial findings of the W. Peak investigation will be presented at the June MMWD Watershed Committee meeting. County Parks, in association with One Tam, is studying improvements for Roys Redwoods OSP.
- b. See <onetam.org> for information on volunteer events on April 22, EarthDay.

4. State Parks in Marin

- a. Informal reports were given on progress of reconstructing **Bill's Trail** in Sam Taylor SP. The trail will probably not open until late 2018. Robert Eichstaedt reported that pinch point structures (short eucalyptus logs placed perpendicular to the fall line) do not appear to be sufficient, and bridges are not safe for horses. He will discuss with Rose Blackburn, supervising ranger.
- b. E-bikes are beginning to appear illegally on Marin public lands. State Parks has given local districts the discretion to permit e-bikes on local state parks, or not. Ryan Goering, acting Superintendent, has not replied to Nona's inquiry. The committee reviewed a draft letter from MCL to State Parks and other public land agencies in Marin supporting current restrictions on motorized vehicles, including e-bikes. The letter will be presented for action at the April P&OS meeting. There was some discussion as to whether Class I and II e-bikes qualify as "other power-driven mobility device" (e.g., electric wheel chairs) under accessibility regulations. They could be permitted for disabled persons, subject to conditions and rules governing local accessibility.

5. National Parks in Marin

- a. Mia Monroe gave an update of new and ongoing projects and activities in GGNRA and Muir Woods: The County Board of Supervisors will hear an update of progress on the MOU between the County and MPS concerning Muir Woods and Franks Valley Rd. (Muir Woods Road). A concessionaire for the Muir Woods reservation system has been selected and is beginning to develop the system; protections are in place to restrict parking from the roadside along Redwood Creek; the Federal Highway Administration project to rehab Franks Valley Road is completing environmental review and will hold a public meeting on April 19. NPS expects to distribute a draft EA on various projects

inside Muir Woods on April 11; and a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) for the Sustainable Access Plan for Muir Woods is expected end of April. NPS is working to foster respectful, safe trail use. Robert suggested using more volunteer horse patrols. Scoping for an EA on water and wastewater system repair in Muir Woods ends on March 17. The Redwood Creek Trail is closed for 7 months for horses. This is not a high priority project. A bridge has failed, closing the lower(southern?) section of the trail.

6. MCL Trail Policy.

The MCL Trail Policy was adopted in 2014. Nona would like the Committee to update the policy and will revise, incorporating comments received. A significant point in the policy is that the vast majority of narrow trails (on Marin public lands) are not appropriate for shared use. Fire roads and old ranch roads are part of the overall road and trail system throughout the county. Considerable interest was expressed to have a Table of miles of roads and trails in each park/watershed/open space be appended to the policy. A revised version will be on the April agenda for action.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Minutes by Nona Dennis