

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee

April 13, 2017, 3:00 – 5:00

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Linda Novy, Robert Eichstaedt, Arlin Weinberger, Larry Minikes, Kate Powers, Pat Nelson, Roger Harris, Tom Boss, Susan Stompe, Nancy Praetzel, Larry Kennings, Rick Fraitas, Monte Kruger, Al Baumann, Ann Thomas, Peter Truce, Mia Monroe (GGNRA), Mike Swezy (MMWD), Sharon Farrell (OneTam), and Sarah Minnich and Max Korten (MCP).

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: 1) Senior Walk at Deer Island OSP, March 30; 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. Added to Announcements: Senior Walk, Ring Mountain, on April 27; April 29, Homestead Valley Trust lands, Bioblitz; May 6, MMWD Project Restore, to repair roads and trails, south side of Mt. Tam; May 13, MCP Region 4 public meeting, 1:00 – 3:00, Margaret Todd Senior Center, Novato; May 20, Broom pull on East Silvestris (MCOSD); April 15, MMWD broom pull at Pine Pt., Lake Lagunitas.

MINUTES of March 9, were approved.

OPEN TIME FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None

ACTION ITEM: The committee spent some time discussing the proposed, updated MCL Trail Policy and recommended several revisions, edits. These are incorporated into the Draft (attached) in red-line track.

M/S/C: Recommend policy with changes noted to MCL Board for approval.

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space
 - a. RTMP. Max Korten was present to review current RTMP activities. The Region 4 public meeting on trail designations is scheduled for May 13, and the current work program is posted on the Parks website. The Project Report for the proposed Hunt Camp-Juniper Trail renovation is posted for a 30-day comment period. The project will take an existing “social” trail and realign in various ways for hiker-biker use. It will be constructed by hand, with a large volunteer component. In Region 4, no changes-in-use are proposed.

Unneeded emergency/fire roads might be modified to 5 or 6 feet for multi-use, with some redesign of alignments.

Committee members made several comments. Mt. Burdell Preserve abuts Olompali State Park as well as private ranches; bikes need to be prevented from encroaching into these areas, Olompali in particular, since State Parks has no enforcement capability. The Open Space District has a lot of maintenance to do following storms; this work should come before construction of new or renovated trails. Max said that damage has not been as extensive as anticipated; many drainage features have already been installed.

- b. Environmental Roundtable Jon Campo is convening an Environmental Roundtable with representatives from several organizations, in order to focus on sensitive resources and environmental issues of concern. The first meeting is April 21.
- c. Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan. Sarah Minnick, Ecologist with the Open Space District, gave an overview of the 2017-2018 Work Plan and a schematic showing how the process of implementing each year's work plan will engage the public. She explained that the Board wants to see progress toward zero herbicide use, but the practical goal is for each project to achieve that goal, i.e., to successfully control or eradicate the weeds. The majority of projects on the preserves qualify as "maintenance" of existing populations of weeds and do not require special environmental or public review. However, a number of projects involve use of "conventional" herbicides, primarily in fuel breaks where broom has to be controlled, and also where rare plant populations are threatened. The public will be kept informed and appropriate environmental review will be conducted for these projects.

Committee members had comments. The Work Plan needs more specific detail about each project. Other possible pest species were mentioned: olive trees and other fruit trees on Mt. Burdell. Sarah said these are not a priority for eradication. Seasonal grazing by cows helps to control grasses and, therefore, wildfire on Mt. Burdell.

- d. Senior walks in 2017 were not discussed: Deer Island on March 30; April 27, Ring Mtn. Preserve, via Taylor Road; May 25, Cemetery Marsh, Rush Creek Preserve; and June 29, tentative location, Lake Lagunitas.
2. MMWD: Mike Swezy reported on the status of four activities in the watershed:
- a. Project Restore is an ongoing program under the MMWD Road and Trail Management Plan to decommission social or illegal trails and/or restore degraded roads and trails. On May 6, volunteers will take on various projects on the south slope of Mt. Tam – close down about 2 miles of redundant trails, and remove "eyebrows" on embankments, created by bikes, along Old Railroad Grade and Gravity Car Road.

- b. Log Cabin. The project has reached 30% design stage. The District is working with One Tam seeking funding sources and obtaining building permits. The project will have CEQA review. MMWD would like to open the building to the public eventually, and display interpretive information.
- c. West Peak. Feasibility studies are underway for restoring the former Air Force site. District is planning public hikes (The April 15 date was cancelled.). The Watershed Committee expects to review possible alternatives in June. Search for funding is in progress.
- d. Azalea Hill. As environmental review continues, staff is considering a different alignment at the western end connection to Bolinas-Fairfax Rd., to avoid building new trail through serpentine habitat. May be two more months before Initial Study is completed. The District cannot apply for grants until project description is completed.

3. Tamalpais Lands Collaborative

- a. Wildlife Picture Index Sharon Farrell provided updates of the project. Two and a half years of data have been recorded. The next step is to begin interpreting data. A new system allows images to be catalogued from off-site, e.g., from home computers. 80 new cameras will be installed in Redwood Creek Watershed this summer. There was discussion about the need to take the collected data to the next step, i.e., develop study designs around specific management questions. The value of the cameras to establish some baseline information. The collaborating agencies will have to determine how to analyze data
- b. Bioblitz of Roys Redwoods (March 25) revealed new species previously unknown in that preserve; the Homestead Land Trust Bioblitz is scheduled for (date?); County Parks, in association with One Tam, is studying improvements for Roys Redwoods OSP.
- c. Earth Day/Week. Numerous events are scheduled for April 22, Earth Day and the entire week.
- d. Science Event. On October 26, OneTam will hold a half-day (noon to 3:30) Science Update at the Marin Art and Garden Center. A “Tam Talk” session with the Executive Committee will follow, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. It will review 2017 accomplishments and present plans for 2018.
- e. Bat monitoring. In collaboration with the USGS, OneTam is installing acoustic stations and mist netting to monitor bat species and activities on Mt. Tam.
- f. OneTam web site has added a “What’s New” page.

4. State Parks in Marin

- a. Park staff is in a transitional mode at this time. Ryen Goering is in charge of operations at Mt. Diablo and Marin Sector. Vince Anibale is acting Superintendent of Marin District.

- b. Arlin Weinberger reported that TCC has released \$4,100 from revenue left over from the 2014 Tam Jam. It will be used to work on Dipsea steps.

5. National Parks in Marin

- a. GGNRA/Muir Woods Projects Update. Mia Monroe gave an update: Tasks outlined in the **MOU between the County and NPS** to reduce parking on Muir Woods/Frank Valley Rd. are on schedule. A concessionaire for the **Muir Woods Reservation System** has been selected and is beginning to develop the system, which is scheduled for launch January 1, 2018. Mia explained how reservations will reduce single-vehicle parking and traffic. The EA for the **Salmon Enhancement and Bridge Replacement Project** is available for comment until May xx. We discussed the complexity of implementing the project to minimize temporary impacts on the environment and disturbance to visitors. A FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) for the **Sustainable Access Plan** for Muir Woods is expected end of April. This includes replacement of the Dipsea Bridge. An **EA** for the **Water/Wastewater Service Rehabilitation Project** is available for comment until May 4. A public meeting on April 11 was live-streamed for comment from off-site. All projects are committed and funded from surcharge on Muir Woods entry fees.
- b. Frank Valley Road Rehabilitation will be the subject of a public meeting on April 19 to consider possible alternatives. The FHWA is the lead agency for design, engineering, and NEPA Environmental Assessment, and the County – the recipient of funds for the project – is the lead agency for CEQA Initial Study.
- c. Difficult times for both federal and state public lands. Mia recounted the problems being experienced by national park units: No budget, hiring freeze, no funds for seasonal workers who do major maintenance work as well as enforcement. The acting GGNRA Superintendent (for 120 days) is Cicely Muldoon. For different reasons, State Parks are also experiencing acute shortage of funds.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Minutes by Nona Dennis