

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Parks and Open Space Committee
Aug. 10, 2017, 3:00 – 5:00

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Linda Novy, Larry Minikes, Kate Powers, Roger Roberts, Tom Boss, Susan Stompe, Rick Fraitas, Robert Eichstaedt, Larry Scheibel, Roger Harris, Eva Buxton, Jill Templeton, Arlin Weinberger, Delos Putz, Max Korten, General Manager, and Mischon Martin (MCP), Mike Swezy (MMWD), Sharon Farrell (One Tam), Steve Mietz, Acting Superintendent, and Brannon Ketcham (PRNS), and Mia Monroe, GGNRA.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: 1) Walks to W. Peak: August 19 (Geology); 2) MCL Bus-Env.Breakfast, "Wildlife Corridors," Sept. 15, 7:30 – 9:30, McInnis Park Clubhouse; 3) Coastal Cleanup Day, Sept. 21, 9:00 - noon; 4) MMWD Watershed Committee, Sept 21, 1:30 – 3:00, MMWD Boardroom; 5) County P&OS Commission meeting, Sept. 21, 3:00 – 5:00, Civic Center; 6) One Tam "Tam's Wild Side" symposium, Oct. 26, 10:00 – 3:30 p.m. and TamTalk, 4:30 – 6:00, Marin Art and Garden Center.

CHANGE AGENDA: Put Pt. Reyes National Seashore settlement agreement after Marin Parks and Open Space

MINUTES of July 13, 2017, were approved.

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space:

RTMP. Nona announced that MCL Board took three actions following the July 13 P&OS meeting's discussion about the Hunt Camp Trail Improvement project. First, MCL sent a letter to the Marin County Open Space District BOD requesting consideration of an appeal process for RTMP projects approved by the MCP staff. Unless an Initial Study and Neg. Dec is prepared for a subsequent project as CEQA compliance, the current CEQA process allows no opportunity for the public to comment on the final post-CEQA project approval. Second, MCL sent a letter to the San Francisco Bay Water Board, with copy to California Department of fish & Wildlife, objecting to their issuing the necessary permits for stream crossings. Public comments were due on Aug. 7. Third, MCL joined with Marin Audubon and California Native Plant Society in filing a petition challenging the legality and adequacy of a "Consistency Assessment" (with the RTMP Program EIR). The petition was filed on July 13 (same day as this meeting) within the 30-day statute of limitations. Max Korten said that he had been served the petition, but it was too early to comment.

Max said that construction of the Hunt Camp project is scheduled to begin on Monday, Aug. 14 and that a volunteer work party is scheduled for Aug. 18-19-20. Construction will begin at the top of the upper trail and not on the lower trail or new connector, as previously expected. He also updated the group on other projects in the 2017-2018 work plan. The Horse Hill Trail ("Gasline") realignment is complete. It will be closed to equestrians until it has hardened. Work on the Middagh Trail began on July 11. Irving Fire Road work is completed.

Environmental Roundtable. The next meeting of the Roundtable, convened by Jon Campo, is scheduled for August 24, 2:00 p.m.

Roy's Redwoods Open Space Preserve Planning. Mischon Martin reported on the 2nd of three public workshops being conducted to elicit ideas and interests for restoring Roy's Redwoods OSP. The Workshop on Aug 2 began with a group walk-around in the preserve to get impressions of its ecological conditions and how the preserve is used. The main attention is on the meadow and redwood grove and the ephemeral creek that meanders through it. Little work has been done recently except to rehabilitate the loop trail, which is a noticeable improvement. The meeting that followed in Lagunitas School was an opportunity to consider possible options for restoration, including keeping much of the grove in a semi-wild condition, while allowing the understory vegetation and compacted soils to recover by directing foot traffic after a long history of unfocused foot traffic.

2. **Point Reyes National Seashore**

Acting Superintendent Steve Mietz and Senior staff Brannon Ketcham were present to go over the terms of the recent settlement agreement and next steps to prepare an Amendment to the General Management Plan (GMP) and an EIS, as required in the settlement agreement. The agreement stipulates that this process be completed in four years (by July 14, 2021). There are two major points in the agreement: 1) The NPS can issue 5-year interim permits to ranchers (some are on year-to-year; some have longer permits that will expire before the July 2021 deadline); and 2) the NPS will prepare an Amendment to the 1980 GMP that focuses on the ranching areas in the park and in Olema Valley north of the Bolinas-Fairfax Road – 28,000 acres in all. In addition to a full suite of alternatives, the Amendment must include analysis of a “no ranching” alternative; a “reduced ranching” alternative; and a “no dairies” alternative. The park is working with a relatively new (2015) NPS NEPA compliance handbook. They will prepare a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS to be published in the Federal Register in the fall of 2017 and will kick-start the scoping process. Among all possible alternatives, the NPS will present a “proposed alternative” but will not identify a “preferred alternative” until the Draft EIS is issued to the public. Brannon pointed out that the Amendment will make use of materials developed for the previous Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan. Elk management will be part of the plan and EIS.

3. **MMWD**

Mike Swezy updated the committee on ongoing work on the watershed: extensive road and pipe repair that is closing areas, including Shaver Grade area, during the week, but open on weekends; beginning a second phase of forest understory grooming on Bolinas Ridge; working with One Tam on the Draft Work-plan for 2018; partnering with NPS in identifying red-legged frog habitat; continuing study of feasibility and possible alternatives for W. Peak restoration; studying state-of-the-art accessibility for the Log Cabin restoration. The District expects Azalea Hill Trail CEQA document to be out for public comment by the end of August. The Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan (formerly Wildfire Protection and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Plan) Administrative Draft EIR is expected to be completed before December 2017.

4. **Tamalpais Lands Collaborative:**

Sharon Farrell gave an overview of the third phase of a long-term study of the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative. The study, which began in 2015, is being conducted by Sacramento State investigators, supported by a grant from the S.D. Bechtel Foundation. The TLC is one of a few

multi-agency collaborations in managing land, and this is the first study to document the process. As such, it has attracted considerable nation-wide attention. The study has progressed in three parts, considering, first, issues in formation of the collaboration; second, the challenges of growth and building community interest; and third, what has been accomplished, and what lessons have been learned. The final phase will be completed by October 2018, when the full case study will be published. According to one observation, the first five years of a collaborative are the most difficult – the 5-year point determines whether the organization will survive into the future.

As reported earlier, OneTam will hold a Science Symposium with a focus on wildlife, on October 26, 10:00 – 3:30 at the Marin Art and Garden Center, followed by a “Tam Talk” session with the One Tam Executive Committee from 4:30 – 6:00.

5. State Parks

Susan Stompe and Arlin Weinberger reported that all State Parks in Marin are critically short-staffed and without budgets for maintenance. Hiring is stalled while the Department (Sacramento) institutes new hiring protocols. Firewood, a small source of revenue in Sam Taylor SP, has not been sold since February since the shed to store wood is dilapidated and needs repair. The entry kiosk is due for renovation, but not done yet. No rangers are available at either Olompali or Tomales Bay. The small museum at China Camp is on rotten piers that need to be replaced, and Shoreline Trail, washed out in the past winter, needs funds for repair. Friends of China Camp Board is financing extra staff and trying to raise extra funds for repairs.

6. National Parks:GGNRA

Mia Monroe handed out Guidance Documents for the GMP and reported on personnel matters and several projects in process at Muir Woods and in the Redwood Creek Watershed. The NPS is advertising for a new superintendent for GGNRA; in the meantime Cicely Muldoon will remain as Acting Superintendent until the position is filled, when she will return to Pt. Reyes N.S.

Mia announced that the fee for senior passes to national parks will go from \$10 to \$80 for lifetime passes on Aug 28 (One year passes will be \$20). Passes can be obtained at the Bay Model.

Mia reported the following progress on projects: The Muir Woods Sustainable Access Plan has received a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact). This project will reconfigure on-site parking, improve entryway drainage, and install a permanent Dipsea Bridge. The Water/Wastewater system undergrounding and upgrade has also received a FONSI. The Salmon Enhancement Plan and Bridge Replacement EA is still in review. The Muir Woods/Frank Valley Road Rehabilitation Project is still undergoing EA/IS preparation by the Federal Highway Administration. The Redwood Creek/Dias Ridge Connector Project FONSI is imminent. No funding is available for the project; the work may be done in pieces, and is a couple of years away. In the meantime, the eastern-most bridge is out, and the State is applying for emergency funds for its repair. The trail is open to hikers from Muir Woods only to Miwok Trail intersection. The biggest news is the Muir Woods parking reservation system. The concessionaire will be announced “soon” and NPS expects the system to activated mid Jan-early Feb. 2018. Commercial vehicles will be limited to 16 spaces, cars on-site to 230 spaces, and 30 spaces along the road. Bicycles will not need reservations, nor will walk-ins. Only cars need parking reservations. NPS is forecasting that total annual visitation for 2018 will be about 900,000, compared to 1,200,000 in 2016 and will be

spread more evenly over seasons, weeks, and day-times. NPS will monitor visitations, impacts, and limiting tools as the system gets under way.

In response to concerns raised about cumulative impacts of possibly overlapping construction stages of numerous projects over the next 5 to 6 or more years, Mia stated that all projects were anticipated in the GMP and EIS. NPS will work with the local communities on emergency access issues and will post schedules and other relevant project status information on a web site. Construction phases of projects will be shown in a time-matrix.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis