

DRAFT

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Parks & Open Space Committee Meeting
August 12, 2010
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES: Betsy Bikle, Tom Boss, Nona Dennis, Robert Eichstaedt, Delos Putz, Roger Roberts, Steven Schoonover, Susan Stompe.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: MCL Walk Into History – Marin Headlands (Marincello Project) on August 28th (9:30AM to 2PM). A Mt. Tamalpais State Park East Peak Planning Charette will be held by District Park staff at the old Gravity Car Barn on August 27th between 6 and 7PM.

APPROVAL OF THE POSC MEETING MINUTES for July 8, 2010: The draft POSC Meeting Minutes of July 8, 2010 were accepted and approved as presented.

ACTION ITEM: The Initial Study and Negative Declaration (ISND) for the “680 Trail. (Comments due August 16, 2010)

This ISND for a proposed new multi-use trail was discussed in depth. All agreed that MCL should file a Comment Letter .

Nona supplied a draft article on the proposed “680 Trail” which will be included in MCL’s next bi-monthly Newsletter as a background piece for discussion purposes.

Committee members recognized that the proposed trail provides an important connector between two County Open Space preserves and three communities , and that having a well designed and maintained connector trail would be an improvement over more damaging social trails that are not properly engineered.

It was also recognized that a new trail will attract traffic along with the concomitant effects of increased use in a sensitive natural area with steep and unstable slopes . Some committee members questioned building an additional intrusive trail at this undisturbed natural site when the county already has a very high percentage of roads and trails per acre.

However, if a connector trail is to be built by the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) it was agreed that 1) the Trail should be built to the highest environmental protection standards, 2) the Trail construction should be shortened where possible and make more use of existing fire roads in the area, 3) the potential for introduction of invasive plant species is a major concern and requires close and continuing attention, 4) the safety of various user groups on the Trail must be adequately addressed , and

5) there should be an Independent Monitor of all the necessary mitigations during construction and after completion to ensure that the Trail is built and operated as planned.

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

1) Roger , Nona ,Robert and Steve informed the Committee of a recent State Parks meeting regarding the renovation and rehabilitation of the lower portion of the Bootjack Trail that connects Muir Woods National Monument Mt. Tamalpais State Park's East Peak. The rehabilitation of the trail is long overdue , will maintain its existing character , and generally follow the existing alignment . A section of the trail along Redwood Creek will be re-located away from the edge of the creek.. It is expected that the rehabilitation will take up to two years to complete and require closure of the trail at times.

2) Roger reported on the Joint Committee Hearing in Sacramento on Proposition 21 which is the State Parks Funding Initiative that will be on the November ballot. MCL along with others testified in favor of the Initiative which was opposed publically at the hearing by only two organizations; the Howard Jarvis "watchdog anti- tax" organization and a California Automobile Dealers group. There was no general public opposition present at the meeting. The California State Parks Foundation is in the process of preparing hand out materials in support of this Ballot Initiative which will be made available in September for a grass roots political campaign in support of the Initiative. A media campaign will also be rolled out in September-October.

3) Roger also reported on the August 11th Multi-Agency meeting regarding the Smith Ranch Pond Restoration project. The Multi -Agency representatives were generally responsive to a proposed restoration project which would enhance the habitat values of the pond. The agencies present indicated what permits would be required from the Regional Water Quality Board and California Fish and Game Department. The City of San Rafael will be the lead agency for this project. The Multi-Agency members were informed that an updated biological assessment will be undertaken and provide the basis for proceeding with the project which could be performed either through dredging or a de-watering and excavation process.

4) Robert Eichstaedt reported on the American Trails organization which is a loose coalition of various groups across the nation in support of trail and greenway systems. It lobbies nationally at the federal level for funding of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) as part of surface transportation legislation and appropriations. He will investigate further on the specific legislation to help MCL determine whether or not it wishes support the RTP.

The POSC Meeting adjourned at 5PM.