

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee May 15, 2014

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Eva Buxton, Greg Zitney, Connie Berto, Raphael Durr, Delos Putz, Steve Petterle and Tara McIntire (Marin County Parks)

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 12:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, May 15, 2:30; 2) NOAA public hearing on Draft EIS for Expansion of boundaries of Gulf of Farallones and Cordell Banks National Marin Sanctuaries, May 22, 6:00 – 8:00, Bay Model; 3) (State) Parks Forward Commission Public Workshop, May 29, 3:00 to 7:00, Embassy Suites; 4) To celebrate 25th anniversary of Bay Area Ridge Trail, there will be a Walk on Mt. Burdell on June 14, time??;

MINUTES for April 17, 2014 – Approved

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks:

- a. RTMP. This continues to be an item for discussion, with particular regard to the process (“tool”) that will be used to evaluate proposed road and trail projects. A workshop is scheduled for the evening of May 15th at the Marin Horse Council, to demonstrate the process using a hypothetical example.
- b. Stafford Lake Bike Park (SLBP): Steve Petterle, Parks Department Principal Landscape Architect, and Tara McIntire, County Landscape Architect in charge of Stafford Lake Bike Park construction, attended the meeting and covered two aspects of the project: 1) a web site (Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park), which recently posted a video containing misleading information; and 2) the construction drawings and specifications for Phase I of the Park, which has been put out to bid.

We briefly reviewed our concern that the video was posted on what appeared to be a County web site, although it was called “Friends of SLBP.” In addition to presenting misleading information, the video contained visual images that suggested that technical bike riding appropriate to a skills bike park might be transferred onto riding on County open space lands, where it would be inappropriate and illegal. Steve explained that the video was not a County production, and had limited County oversight. The web site, initiated some eight months ago, has been in transition. It was developed under a MOU between the County and Friends of SLBP and, until the video was posted, was successful in giving updates on progress of fund-raising and plans. The site will

now be separate from the County and serve as an opportunity for the Friends organization to update the public on progress, solicit funds, announce events, get volunteers, and promote the Park to potential sponsors. The MCL committee emphasized that the County Parks Department and Supervisors need to maintain control over the Bike Park, notwithstanding the considerable amount of private money that is going into it, because it is a County-managed and regulated facility.

Tara McIntire, County landscape architect for the project, gave a detailed presentation on the Phase I construction specifications, which are out to bid for roughly \$500,000. She described special techniques that are being used to amend soil to increase percolation, designs for bio-swales, other soil and water features to maintain trail surfaces and slopes. Special attention is being paid to avoid typical erosion from trail facilities such as through regular “grooming” of trails. The design is considered “state of the art.”

- c. Parks and Open Space Commission: Greg Zitney, Chair, announced that at today’s meeting, the Commission will receive an overview of the budget process, including the budget for Measure A.

2. State Department of Parks and Recreation:

- a. State Parks Forward Commission: This Commission was formed last year to comprehensively address the non-sustainability of the state park system and many other issues related to the parks. After regional workshops, focus groups, etc., the Commission released a detailed “Baseline Financial Assessment” late last year. A draft report with preliminary recommendations was also released in April and was discussed at a public meeting of the Commission, April 30, 9:30 – 12:30, at Holiday Inn at S.F. Airport. Nona and Susan attended and at that time also heard Jon Jarvis, Director of National Park Service, present current issues and initiatives in anticipation of the NPS centennial in 2016. He said that all public parks share common problems: changing demographics, limited budgets, maintenance backlogs, uncertainty of effects of climate change, children with Nature Deficit, etc. The NPS is working to become more relevant to the American people by forming new connections.

Public comments were taken at the April 30 meeting, among them: Park personnel should not have to be peace officers to advance in management; public-private partnerships should not result in commercialization or lower resource protection standards; fees to promote revenue generation should not be higher than the public can afford; creating a new “support entity” should fit with (complement) existing friends and volunteer associations; new, modern accounting systems should replace antiquated accounting systems. Susan will draft a letter to the Commission. The Commission hopes to have a final report end of 2014 or early 2015.

3. National Parks in Marin:
 - a. Muir Woods Traffic, Congestion, and Parking. Nona, Larry, and Robert met with GGNRA/NPS planners on Tuesday, May 13 to go over their plans for a reservation system for Muir Woods. A public meeting is planned for later in June. We will discuss further at the June 12 P & OS meeting.
 - b. Pt. Reyes National Seashore: Ranch Plan and Tule Elk in Pastoral Zone. A sub-committee of the newly-formed MCL Agricultural Land Use Committee will meet to develop scoping comments for the Ranch Planning process and Environmental Assessment. The P & OS Committee will be apprised of MCL comments.
4. Expansion of Gulf of the Farallones/Cordell Banks National Marin Sanctuaries – Draft EIS Comments on the Draft EIS are due June 6. Nona will attend a public meeting at the Bay Model, May 22, 6:00 – 8:00, review the Draft EIS, and draft a comment letter for MCL.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00
Minutes by Nona Dennis