

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee June 12, 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Tom Boss, Raphael Durr, Susan Stompe, Bill Long and Jonathan Braun (MOST), Rick Fraites, Carl Somers (Marin County Parks), and Joan Lubamersky (Aide to Assemblymember Marc Levine)

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 5:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) MCL Bus-environment Breakfast, "From Waste to Energy: A New Industrial Ecology Model," June 19, 7:30 – 9:00, McInnis Park Club Restaurant; 2) MCL Nicasio Native Grass Ranch Tour (Marin Carbon Project), June 29, 10:00 – noon, and 2:00 – 4:00, Reservations through MCL; 3) 25th Anniversary of Bay Area Ridge Trail. Walk on Mt. Burdell, June 14, 9:00 - 12:00, San Andreas Open Space access; 4) Muir Woods Parking and Reservation System Public Meeting, June 18, 6:30 – 8:30, Tam Valley Community Center; 5) Bay Trail at Hamilton, Ribbon Cutting, June 26, 4:00 p.m., parking at Marin Community Foundation; 6) McGlashan Trail, Tam Valley, Ribbon Cutting, June 27, 5:30 p.m.; 7) MCL Picnic on the Patio, 175 Redwood Drive, Saturday, August 2, 12 – 3 pm.

MINUTES for May 15, 2014 – Approved, with corrections to names of attendees

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Pending Land Acquisitions:
 - a. Sky Ranch, Fairfax/San Anselmo: Bill Long and Jonathan Braun from MOST reported on the recent opportunity to acquire a 16-acre former horse ranch and facility adjacent to Bald Hill Open Space Preserve. The property straddles San Anselmo and Fairfax. It had been on the market since the owner died and was appraised by the County. MOST stepped in to negotiate a \$1.2 million contract, and is in 90-day period of due diligence. MOST has deposited \$25,000 and is lining up additional funds from various sources (MMWD, State Coastal Conservancy, Fairfax, San Anselmo, etc. to meet required down payment. Other fundraising will take place after the 90-day decision period. The MCOSD will take jurisdiction as part of Bald Hill OSP. This is a valuable property for access to Bald Hill, and serves also as a hub for other countywide trails. MCL initially will consider endorsing the acquisition, with the possibility of assisting in fund raising in 2015. Some restoration work will need to be done to make the property safe for public use.
 - b. Madera Park Acquisition: Nona briefly reviewed the current effort to raise funds to assist in purchase of the 5-acre former "Green" property, a missing piece within the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. The acquisition has been negotiated by Marin Audubon Society and Marin Baylands Advocates. MCL

Board has agreed to donate \$1,000 and is committed to raise funds. The Board will be asked to donate an additional \$4,000 and provide sufficient funds to produce and distribute a marketing brochure for the project. This is a long-standing priority for acquisition on the Corte Madera shoreline.

- c. Pacheco Valle Property. Bill Long announced that MOST is about to close on acquisition of this property, which will be in the jurisdiction of MCOSD.

2. Marin County Parks

- a. The RTMP 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 was held the evening of May 15th by the Marin Horse Council and MCBC to demonstrate the process using a hypothetical example. A group called the Foot People met with staff at Marin County Parks on June 11 to get further clarification on how the process will work. Nona briefed the committee on the outcome, and Carl Somers further explained that as projects are evaluated (such as decommissioning, new trails, modified trails, etc.), they will have to demonstrate, at a minimum, no increase in environmental impact (from baseline), and preferably a reduction in impact. This will be a main consideration in the annual budget approval process. The “baseline” will be determined in a series of workshops covering the existing conditions in each of the six regions of open space preserves after the final RTMP is released and the Final EIR is complete. The next step is release of a new Draft EIR in early August. Carl expects the final RTMP and Final EIR to go to the BOS in December. We emphasized that the public will need further training in how the evaluation process (“tool”) will work.
- b. “Trail Partners” Nona gave an update on the group representing MCBC, Marin Horse Council, and MCL, which has been meeting to develop a code of conduct, and slogans and visuals that might be used to convey the message of safe and responsible behavior on Marin public lands roads and trails. Two possible word “slogans” are being considered: “Hello” as in “Slow and Say Hello”, and “Do Right”, as in it is “right” to treat public lands responsibly, ride or walk right (pass on the left), etc. The group is considering what materials would be needed for a serious campaign and preparing a shortened version of the PwrPt shown at the Trails and Greenways Conference for marketing purposes. The group plans to connect with someone from Clif Bar to seek serious funding to develop materials and launch a campaign.

3. State Department of Parks and Recreation:

- a. Marin State Parks Association: Susan announced that the four parks that are members of the Association have adequate financial support to remain open until 2015. Opening the new access road to Olompali from the south, which was expected in June, has been delayed to the end of July or early August.
- b. Parks Forward Commission: A workshop was held at Embassy Suites on May 29 to take public comments on Draft Recommendations. This was a meeting before staff and not the Commission. Attendance was light. Some of the same concerns were expressed as presented at the April 30 meeting of the commission: Need for Parks management track to include non-peace officer

classifications; Need for much greater definition of the proposed “support entity”, which appears to duplicate some existing functions of Parks’ Associations; concern that public-private partnerships might lead to commercialization or lower resource protection standards; and that fees to promote revenue generation should not be higher than the public can afford. Susan will draft a letter stating MCL concerns to the Commission. The Commission hopes to have a final report end of 2014 or early 2015. Susan announced that a report by the California Research Bureau of California State Library is circulating that examines the history of expenditures on State Parks over a 20-year period. The report reveals that numerous pockets of funds actually support basic park operations, each with a different formula for expenditures. It suggests that the State General fund should support basic operations, and that visitor fees should fund visitor services.

4. National Parks in Marin:

- a. Muir Woods Transit and Reservation System: A public meeting on the various issues confronting Park planners and the local community is scheduled for June 18, 6:30 – 8:30, at Tam Valley Community Center. Op-Eds have appeared in the Marin IJ that misrepresent issues and conflate the GGNRA General Management Plan with Muir Woods issues. Among them is an op-ed from Huey Johnson (Marin IJ May 2) that attacks the GG Parks Conservancy. We do not agree with his points. MCL individuals have met with Park planners to hear their proposals for expanding shuttle (transit), establishing a reservation system, and limiting parking on Muir Woods Road to 110, for total parking of 260. MCL concerns continue to focus on parking impacts on Redwood Creek and hazards along Muir Woods road, total numbers (of visitors) that would be enabled by a reservation system, where shuttles would originate, and means to mitigate traffic impacts (only part of which can be attributed to Muir Woods) on the community. The community preference is that shuttles come from remote locations, such as San Francisco. MCL has not developed a position, but will attend the 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 draft and submitted scoping comments for the Ranch Planning process and Environmental Assessment

5. Expansion of Gulf of the Farallones/Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuaries – DEIS
Comments on the Draft EIS are due June 30. Nona attended a public meeting at the Bay Model, May 22 and has reviewed the Draft EIS. She will prepare a briefing paper for the MCL Board to consider before submitting a letter. The recommendation is for MCL to support the expansion, but to oppose changes in regulations that would allow “Authorization” of some projects by the sanctuary Supervisor without public process.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis