

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting September 12, 2013

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Susan Stompe, Larry Minikes, Tom Boss, Robert Eichstaedt, Greg Zitney, Jill Templeton, Delos Putz, Eva Buxton, Jean Berensmeier, Linda Novy, Raphael Durr, and Peggy Sheneman

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) MCL Business-Environment Breakfast – Climate Change and Ocean Acidification: Effects on Shellfish, Sept. 20, Embassy Suites; 2) NPS meeting regarding Muir Woods parking and congestion, Sept. 18, Tam Valley Elementary School; 3) Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, Sept. 19, Planning Commission Chambers; 4) 1st Annual Status of Bolinas Lagoon, Sept. 19, Stinson Beach Community Center; 5) Coastal Clean-up Day, Sept. 21: MCL locations in Novato, Sausalito, and Mahon Creek, San Rafael; 6) Joint meeting of BOS and County Parks and Open Space Commission, Draft Road and Trail Management Plan, October 1, BOS Chambers; 7) State Parks Forward Commission Regional Workshop, October 2, Embassy Suites. AGENDA ADDITIONS: Add Open Time

MINUTES for August 8, 2013 – Approved

OPEN TIME (for topics not on the agenda):

1. Bates Canyon (San Geronimo Creek Watershed) Restoration Project: William Binzen, a resident of SGV, requested an opportunity to share his views of a Marin County Open Space-directed restoration project that has been in progress since 2009 in the Bates Canyon (renamed Willis Evans Canyon and Trail in 2002) in Giacomini Open Space Preserve. William is critical of the project, which he feels has design flaws and has used high-intensity mechanical equipment where hand tools should have been used. He has documented the project with photos of sagging silt fences and piles of slash, etc., and prepared an open letter to the BOS objecting to the methods used and to the slash piles left along road to contribute to existing fire hazard.

Two people who have followed the project and viewed the site (Linda Novy, Jean Berensmeier) had differing views – the public has had a number of opportunities to weigh in on the project and tour the site; the old logging road was in very bad condition and could not have been fixed with hand-tools; and the recovery period of a major restoration is not necessarily aesthetically appealing but the work is beginning to meet its objective, which is to reduce sediment into San Geronimo Creek. The project was conducted under direction of Calif. Department of Fish and Wildlife and received grant funding from that agency. Delos Putz expressed concern over narrowing parts of the road and entry as a hindrance to emergency access.

Everyone agreed that a visit to the site with staff from the Open Space District would be informative, in that other restoration projects in San Geronimo Valley are following the model established at the Willis Evans site. We should coordinate with MCL Water and

Watershed Committee and arrange for a joint tour led by Open Space District staff such as Matt Sagues. Nona will discuss with co-chairs of that committee to arrange a time for a tour. Both chairs are away at the present time.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space District –Resignation of Elise Holland: Elise has resigned from the Department, and General Manager recommended to the BOS that her one position be replaced by two – Chief of Natural Resources and Science; and Chief of Planning and Acquisitions. This is an indication of the valuable *dual* role Elise has been playing in the Department, in particular in overseeing preparation of the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan and the Road and Trail Management Plan.

Road and Trail Management Plan: The RTMP will be presented to the public at a joint meeting of the BOS and Parks and Open Space Commission on October 1. No one has yet seen the plan, which will be made public on September 26. Everyone is encouraged to review it carefully. We will discuss the RTMP and its EIR at the September meeting.

2. Updates on Marin State Parks – Bills’ Trail Conversion: Nona and Larry Minikes attended a small meeting at Marin District offices in Petaluma, whose purpose was to lay out the features and process for converting Bills’ Trail in Samuel P. Taylor SP to multi-use. It was attended by representatives from MCL, TCC, Marin Horse Council, Access4Bikes, MCBC – off-road program, and IMBA, in addition to numerous State Parks staff who will construct the project. Larry reported on the meeting, led by Karl Knapp, State Parks’ trail expert. Karl described in detail how the trail will be modified by placing logs or rocks to create “pinch points” to slow speed of mountain bikes. According to Larry, State Parks has improved the design of multi-use (minimum tread width 48”) trails. Every new trail in State Parks will be multi-use, designed in similar fashion. The construction will avoid restricted seasons for nesting periods. The trail will not require extended seasoning because not much work needs to be done to restore tread width besides removing slough and brushing to improve line-of-sight. Vandalism will be discouraged by placement of large rocks. The trail will be closed when construction begins later this year; may not be open until late 2014 or early 2015. (Currently open)

Several questions and comments: Bills’ Trail area is cougar habitat; we should take advantage of its present condition and walk on it while it is possible! MCL and others continue to be opposed to the conversion, but the project is going forward.

3. Marin State Parks Association: Susan Stompe reported that a meeting was held to encourage volunteers to help at Tomales Bay State Park, but only a couple of people showed up in addition to staff and a few regular volunteers like Susan and Ernest Chung. TBSP is open and is hosting interpretive programs on Saturdays between 11:00 and 3:00., plus nature walks, bird walks. Ranger assistance is coming from Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Because TBSP is “local” it may raise problems in the future. Jean noted that TBSP used to have an educational program and hired a specialist to revive the program. Although negotiations are still underway, both TBSP and Olompali are in the process of being converted from “operating” or “donor” agreements, which will commit them to

raising money. China Camp SP is slowing down in revenues; Ernest Chung is no longer involved in Friends of China Camp.

4. National Parks in Marin: Due to time limitations, the Committee briefly reviewed three active planning processes on GGNRA for latter discussion: Muir Woods traffic, parking, and congestion; the Dog Management Plan; and the Equestrian Stable Plan.

The next meeting is October 10, 2013

Minutes by Nona Dennis