

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting November 14, 2013

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Doug Wilson, Eva Buxton, Delos Putz, Tom Boss, Robert Eichstaedt, Susan Stompe, Raphael Durr, Priscilla Bull, Judy Teichman, Linda Dahl, Marin County Parks; Michelle O’Herron, Sharon Farrell, and Matt Leffert, Golden Gate Parks Conservancy; and Mike Swezy, MMWD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) NPS public scoping meeting, **Muir Woods Visitor Access** alternatives, November 20 (rescheduled to January); 2) Parks and Open space Commission hearing on Draft Tiered **Programmatic EIR for RTMP**, November 19, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.; 3) **Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan EIR scoping** meeting, December 3, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

MINUTES for October 10, 2013 – Approved

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space District – Road and Trail Management Plan Draft TPEIR; Discussion by the Committee focused on issues in the Draft Tiered Program EIR (it “tiers off” the 2007 Countywide Plan and is programmatic in its broad analysis of impacts)
 - a. The Draft TPEIR identifies no significant impacts or mitigations – it is intended to be “self-mitigating” by applying 80-some policies, standards, and BMPs to future projects. It concludes, therefore, that there will be net improvement to environment. This poses problems of how to place conditions on individual projects. How will mitigation be monitored and reported in the absence of specific measures? Linda Dahl countered that each individual project will have soe level of environmental review.
 - b. The Draft TPEIR addresses “coverage” impacts of mileage and footprint of any new or modified facilities, but does not address impacts from intensity of use, which will increase over time as improvements are implemented. The RTMP visitor use management zones are intended to define levels of use, but may not be effective.
 - c. Because the RTMP does not include design standards for safety of different users, there is no analysis of impact on user safety, for example from a narrowing of multi-use ranch roads to trail width intended for multi-use.
 - d. One Alternative that calls for considering some bike-use-only facilities, such as on narrow trails, or special events, is mistakenly dismissed in the Draft EIR; in fact, it is a viable alternative and will have to be analyzed in the Final EIR as are other alternatives.
 - e. Linda reiterated that the TPEIR is a “platform” to assist in selecting projects that are environmentally appropriate. Any project that goes forward will have site-specific environmental review.

Nona will prepare comments on the Draft TPEIR for submission to County Parks by December 2 deadline, and will speak at Commission hearing on the EIR on November 19. A hearing on the merits of the RTMP will be scheduled for spring 2014, after Final TPEIR is out for public review.

2. Marin Parks: Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan: The Commission will conduct a scoping meeting for the Draft EIR for the VBMP on December 3, 6:00 – 8:30, at the Civic Center, Planning Commission Chambers. This committee will consider scoping comments at the December 13 meeting, to submit during 60 day comment period.
3. Willis Evans Canyon/Trail Restoration Project Tour: The committee viewed a power point prepared by Ann Thomas of the MCL group tour (12) on November 8 to see the effects of the restoration project begun in 2011 and learn about the objectives (reducing erosion and downstream sedimentation in San Geronimo Creek) and how they are being met. This is one of several similar restoration projects being undertaken in Giacomini Open Space Preserve. The tour was ably led by Matt Sagues, Resource Specialist with Marin County Parks, and proved to be very informative.
4. Trail Safety Campaign: Nona reported briefly that a small group of representatives from Marin Horse Council, MCBC, and MCL have met twice with staff from Marin County Parks and their design consultant to lay out steps necessary to mount a PR campaign to improve (change) culture and behaviors on public lands roads and trails. Some initial funds were provided by County Parks to pay for consultant time. The group will meet on its own and look for funding opportunities.
5. Marin State Parks Updates: As reported by Susan, the four state parks that comprise Marin State Parks Association (MSPA) continue their 4-month discussion of operating vs. donor agreements for Olompali and Tomales Bay with State Department of Recreation. Two parks – China Camp and Olompali – would like to set up their own non-profit “associations,” which would leave Tomales Bay and Sam Taylor dangling. The State wants different leadership in MSPA, and with the help of a facilitator, to establish role and strategic plan and/or new direction, which is not likely to happen. Olompali and China Camp are under operating agreements, so parking fees collected on site remain with the local parks. Under donor agreements, fees go to the State Parks general fund. All the parks are open, at least 5 or 7 days. Funds donated to China Camp and matched by the State will keep them open through 2015, maybe longer.
6. National Parks in Marin:
 - a. Muir Woods Nat’l Monument is studying two projects to help resolve severe traffic, parking, and congestion problems. A meeting was held at Tam Valley Elementary School on September 18, and a second meeting has been rescheduled to January 11, 2014 in the same location. MCL will submit a letter opposing the proposal for a 180-car auxiliary parking lot on Dias Ridge.
 - b. The Supplemental EIS for the GGNRA Dog Management Plan was the subject of an open house at Tam High Gym on November 6. The SEIS considers dog

management rules for 22 sites overall -- seven sites in Marin. Only one (all of Rodeo Beach) will be open to dogs off-leash under voice control.

7. MMWD: "Tamalpais Lands Collaborative": Mike Swezy gave a power point summary of progress toward forming a non-profit entity that will enable the District to pursue projects and activities that cannot be achieved with ordinary revenues. This idea originated several years ago and was conceived then as a separate non-profit "friends of the watershed" type of organization. The idea has evolved into a collaborative partnership under the umbrella of the GGNRA Parks Conservancy, which will also include as "partners" Marin County Parks, California State Parks, and National Park Service (both GGNRA and PRNS). Goals include preserving and restoring the natural, historic, and scenic resources of Mt. Tamalais; connecting the public to the value of Mt. Tamalpais through educational programs, seminars, volunteerism, and philanthropy; and developing and providing plans, programs, services, materials, and activities to enable a broad range of educational experiences and improved visitor facilities on Mt. Tamalpais. Mike described how projects would be prioritized and implemented, how funding would be handled, and the term of the agreement (10 years with option to renew). The Conservancy will administer fund-raising, and manage all funds without extra cost. All projects proposed by MMWD will be reviewed by the Board in a public process before being approved. Cooperative projects that cross boundaries will require approval by all participating entities.

8. Sky Ranch: Robert Eichstaedt reported that Sky Ranch, a 16-acre property on a saddle between Fairfax and San Anselmo next to Bald Hill, is on the market. There is considerable interest in acquiring it for public use. It is almost unbuildable, due to access problems. The County had the property appraised, but the appraised value is "miles apart" from asking price of \$1.4 million. San Anselmo Open Space group (Jonathan Braun) is working with the County (?) on possible strategies. It would be an important facility for equestrian use, such as an equine health facility.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting is December 12, 2013

Minutes by Nona Dennis