

## MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

### Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting December 12, 2013

#### FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Eva Buxton, Tom Boss, Robert Eichstaedt, Susan Stompe, Judy Teichman, Ernie Stanton, David Ross, Larry Kennings, Jon Elam, and Jill Templeton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) MCL Holiday Party, Friday, December 13, 4:00 – 7:00.

MINUTES for November 14, 2013 – Approved

#### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin Parks and Open Space District – Road and Trail Management Plan and Draft TPEIR: The Committee discussed the November 19 Commission meeting concerning the RTMP Draft EIR – It was a heavily attended meeting that became unruly at times, in which only a few people spoke concerning the Draft EIR (subject of the meeting) , and most had complaints about the RTMP itself. Members of the Committee reported on a Saturday morning meeting (December 7) at Cascade Canyon OSP to discuss the implications of the RTMP on future recreational use of that Preserve. People in general want to know why they can't "do what they have always done – why the new rules, etc." They want to continue to use old trails; objections are particularly concentrated in San Geronimo Valley and Fairfax. It is apparent that, although the process of developing the RTMP was widely publicized, the general public either doesn't pay attention or doesn't want to get involved until something happens in "their own backyard."

Among comments on the RTMP from the Parks and Open Space Committee: It's a trial, first step at a program to control use of the preserves, considering their increasingly heavy use; the RTMP lays out a baseline, or a model – a set of conditions; perhaps it should be called a "program" rather than a "plan" because it doesn't present a future vision of the preserves but rather defines a future set of conditions; every year there will be a political push to get desired projects approved; we are assured that there will be subsequent CEQA review of specific future projects. Although comments on the Draft EIR were due December 2, there is ample time to submit comments on the RTMP itself, including revisions to the Plan, which is the "project description" for purposes of the Draft EIR. MCL submitted comments on the Draft EIR and will submit comments on the RTMP, generally supportive of efforts to develop the Plan, but with some specific points of criticism, such as absence of trail safety design standards.

2. Trail Safety Campaign: Nona reported briefly on the progress of representatives from Marin Horse Council, MCBC, and MCL who have met with staff from Marin County Parks and their design consultant to lay out preliminary steps for a PR campaign to improve

culture and behaviors on public lands roads and trails. The group is calling itself “Trail Partners” and is seeking funds to enable working with the County’s consultant. Robert pointed out that the group should begin with the premise that Marin is a “paradise” of opportunities and that we need to counter the complaint of bikers that “we don’t have any place to ride.” Most complaints (of bikers) is that they have unmet needs. Several committee members suggested bells (for bikes), or licenses. The “Trail Partners” group is drafting an MOU as a basis for working together, which will be reviewed by the respective organizational committees and boards.

3. Marin State Parks Updates: As reported by Susan and Ernie: after lengthy discussion of operating vs. donor agreements for Olompali and Tomales Bay between representatives of the parks, the Marin District, and the State Department of Recreation, both parks will operate under donor agreements, which means that collected fees would go to Sacramento. However, it is likely that Tomales Bay State Park will keep collected fees. China Camp has an operating agreement, so parking fees collected on site are retained by the Park. June 30, 2014 is the last date on which matching funds received from the State can be used at China Camp for labor. All the parks are open, at least 5 or 7 days.

A new contract for ferry service to Angel Island from Tiburon will be opened for competitive bidding in response to an RFP.

The State Parks Forward Commission is going to meet on December 18 in Sacramento. The Commission has held seven focus group meetings in addition to the regional meetings around the state. The Commission has hired a consultant, who will synthesize the received input and draft a report for public review. The Commission will then hold a meeting in February. MCL should review the report and draft comments to be sent before the February meeting. Susan noted that not all Parks Forward Commissioners attended the regional workshops. We should follow the Parks Forward web site for further information.

4. National Parks in Marin:
  - a. Muir Woods Nat’l Monument is studying two projects to help resolve severe traffic, parking, and congestion problems. A standing-room-only meeting convened by Supervisors Kinsey and Sears was held at Tam Valley Elementary School on December 9 to discuss the County’s responsibilities in managing traffic and parking on Frank Valley (Muir Woods) Road. Sup. Kinsey opened the meeting by announcing that the proposed 180-car parking facility on Diaz Ridge has been dropped from consideration by the Park Service. Public comment focused on the reservation system (which could have the effect of increasing overall visitor numbers, even while spreading them away from peak hours and weekends) and the overall capacity of the Monument. The Park Service extended the comment period on various alternatives to January 11, and will schedule a second meeting to consider the scope of an Environmental Assessment.
  - b. Pt. Reyes National Seashore – Elk in the Pastoral Zone: In response to considerable concern in recent months of the economic impact of free-roaming elk competing with local livestock for scarce pasture on ranches in the pastoral

zone of Pt. Reyes National Seashore, and the need for solutions, MCL has agreed to consider the problem by hearing from various perspectives. These include the Pt. Reyes Seashore Ranchers Association, and the Seashore (Park) administration, whose responsibility it is to manage the elk. At the December 4 meeting of MCL Land Use/Transportation Committee, following a detailed presentation and discussion on the elk, it was agreed that two committees would track the issue, and that the Parks and Open Space Committee would host a joint meeting of the two committees at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 9, 2014. At that time representatives from the Ranchers Association and the Seashore Administration will be present the issues. By way of background, a two-part article from the West Marin Citizen is attached to the January 9 agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting is January 9, 2014

Minutes by Nona Dennis