

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee July 10, 2014

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Raphael Durr, Susan Stompe, Rick Fraitas, Robert Eichstaedt, Linda Novy, Eva Buxton, Paul Minault

Meeting was called to order by Nona at 3:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) MCL Picnic on the Patio, 175 Redwood Drive, August 2, Noon – 3:00

MINUTES for June 12, 2014 – Approved

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks
 - a. RTMP Final Plan and EIR In process. Revised Draft EIR expected early August.
 - b. Stafford Lake Bike Park Construction Costs: There was considerable discussion by the committee on the large discrepancy between the engineer's estimate of construction cost and contractor bids, which exceeded estimates by up to two thirds. Initially it appeared that County Parks Dept might provide additional funds. The Dept has made it clear, however, that only donated funds will be used in construction; the County will move forward using donated funds to pay for in-house construction labor. Nonetheless, MCL is concerned that the Bike Park is a costly public installation; that estimates were unrealistic from the outset; and that the project may be taking substantial staff time (and money) away from other needed projects. Administrative and other staff time spent on a public-private partnership like this must be entirely transparent. There is sufficient justification to charge an entry fee as is done at the Tamarancho (e.g. \$8.00 per visit, or \$150. Annual pass), since the committee believes the Bike Park will attract many users from out of Marin for both events and regular use.

The Committee approved sending a letter to both County Parks and supervisors (copy to Parks and Recreation Commission) expressing MCL concerns over the financial implications of this project and potential impact of such projects on staff resources.

- c. "Trail Partners" Curt Kruger presented a Power Pt. that has undergone a number of revisions since it was first presented at the Trails and Greenways Conference in April. Two possible word "slogans" are being considered: "Say Hello" as in "Slow and Say Hello", and "Do Right", as in ride or walk "right," etc. The Trail Partners group has connected with a Northern California marketing manager from Clif Bar who lives in Marin,

and was asked to present the PwrPt to an informal group at Clif Bar offices in Emeryville. Feedback was useful, and as a result the “Do Right” option has been dropped. Trail Partners is still seeking funds to mount a campaign, and in the meantime is developing a list of campaign materials that will be needed.

The committee critiqued the PwrPt and made several recommendations: Enforcement should be emphasized as essential to support good behavior, illegal riding must be mentioned, speed is main issue and should be mentioned, design of trails for safety is essential, walkers also need education in how to approach horses; the campaign should emphasize that safe trail etiquette is “The Marin Way” to behave on trails. Other groups besides MCBC such as <walkbikemarin.org> that represent bikers and walkers should be consulted about the campaign.

2. San Rafael Canalways Pampas Grass Eradication Project

The City of San Rafael initiated a project two years ago to burn the invasive non-native Pampas Grass, which has covered large areas of the 85-acre, privately owned Canalways property. It has created a hazardous condition in that homeless encampments are pervasive and have caused fires in the past several years. The project did not go forward in 2012. Since the site contains wetlands (which the owner attempts to drain every winter), it also supports wildlife. Habitat needs to be protected during invasive plant removal programs. The City has embarked on a new approach this year, and will employ goats to graze the Pampas Grass and other weedy species. The City will begin on a pilot basis in a small area and would like MCL comment. **It was agreed that Paul Minault will draft a letter for review, and MCL will send it this week to the City.** MCL will monitor the project.

3. MMWD: At the September 11 meeting of this committee, we will hear about the status of the five-year strategic plan for Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC). Several people will have a preview of the draft plan on August 21.

4. State Department of Parks and Recreation Update:

- a. Marin State Parks Association: No report; Maj. General Jackson, who took over leadership about 18 months ago, has abruptly resigned.
- b. Parks Forward Commission: We expect a revised Draft Report from the Commission later this summer and will be reviewing it to see how our concerns are addressed (See Minutes from June 12 meeting)

5. National Parks in Marin:

a. Muir Woods Transit and Reservation System.

A public meeting on the various parking and traffic issues at Muir Woods and a proposed reservation system was held on June 18 at Tam Valley Community Center. It was a fairly raucous meeting, run by the Park Service; Steve Kinsey and Kate Sears both attended and spoke about County’s involvement. Kristin Shannon, co-chair of Mount Tam Task Force (MTTF, or <mounttamtaskforce.org>) gave an update of discussions with supervisors and

the County since the public meeting. Important groundwork has been done, in part due to action of Supervisor Sears.

- 1) County Public Works. MTTF met with the new County Director of Public Works (Raul Rojas) to brief him on the math behind parking along Redwood Creek, first, relative to the need (or not need) for additional parking to meet the NPS goal of 4,000 visitors per day; and, second, on the financial models NPS is using to justify the 110 parking spaces along Muir Woods Road. It was evident that County DPW had not evaluated the NPS project on behalf of the County. They have now appointed a subcommittee to work on this with MTTF and visit the site.
- 2) Marin County Legal. MTTF attorney is working with County counsel to develop two items:
 - a. An ordinance to better manage and control tour bus traffic between Tam Junction and Muir Woods; and
 - b. A set of guidelines/criteria to avoid further damage to the salmon run along Redwood Creek, where cars currently park illegally; the purpose is to establish basis for long-term agreement with NPS (the County has jurisdiction over the road and hence liability for degradation to the Creek habitat.)
- 3) Legal protection of Coho in Redwood Creek, with focus on Muir Woods Road MTTF is working with an attorney exploring multiple options with county (including possible scenic road designation) to permanently protect Redwood Creek watershed.
- 4) GGNRA growth proposals and communication. This issue is now of concern to the full Board of Supervisors, not limited to District 3 and 4. GGNRA General Superintendent Frank Dean has set up meeting with MTTF attorney to develop common understanding and information exchange.

MTTF concerns are centered on: 1) proposed NPS reservation system that could allow up to 4,000 visitors per day, with over a million visitors per year, and limited number of "slots" for local visitors. This contrasts with 750,000 annual cap promised by NPS in 2005 (The concept of a lower cap has been supported in letters NPS from Marin Supervisors and Congressman Huffman). 2) Designating 110 parking spots on the side of Muir Woods Road, with road pollutants continuing to flow into Coho-salmon; 3) Proceeding with plans to add turnouts and bus stops on Muir Woods Road; 4) Retaining Marin County jurisdiction over Muir Woods Rd.; 5) Tour buses "short-cut" traffic delays on Shoreline Hwy by cutting through neighborhoods; and 6) The community preference that shuttles come from remote locations, such as San Francisco, and not from local parking lots. MTTF does not want a "Visitor Center" to be established at the Manzanita (Pohono Street) shuttle bus stop, as proposed in the new GGNRA General Management Plan

- 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 drafted and submitted scoping comments for the Seashore Ranch Planning process and Environmental Assessment. The Seashore will hold workshops in the fall. MCL continues to be concerned about the effectiveness of NPS actions to limit elk damage in the pastoral zone.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00
Minutes by Nona Dennis