

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee December 18, 2014

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Larry Minikes, Greg Zitney, Eva Buxton, Linda Novy, Arlin Weinberger, Bill Long (MOST), Gordon Bennett, and Sharon Farrell, GG Parks Conservancy

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: Meeting date was changed to the 18th due to stormy weather on December 11. Upcoming: 1) Parks Forward Commission mtg, February 6, Old Railroad Museum, Sacramento

MINUTES for October 9 (revised) and November notes from joint committees meeting, of November 12, approved.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks

- a. RTMP Final Plan and Final TPEIR: The Board of Supervisors conducted a hearing on December 16 and approved the RTMP with several revisions, and certified the Final TPEIR. MCL submitted a letter to the Supervisors supporting most of the Plan but noting that the Plan does not contain design parameters specific to safe shared-use trails. MCL believes that this is a critical deficiency in the Plan and testified on this point at the hearing. The supervisors requested that the restriction to walk dogs only on leash on roads in sensitive zones in Giacomini OSP and Cascade OSP be removed. It was agreed that the restrictions would remain in Cascade OSP until further evaluation, but would be lifted on Giacomini OSP. The Board also agreed to remove dangerous (“mountain bike activities”) from Policy SW13. MCL is concerned that removing leash restrictions on dogs in sensitive habitats will compromise wildlife. MCL will monitor implementation of the RTMP closely, with focus on protecting wildlife and habitats, and user safety and “peace of mind” for visitors on foot and horseback.
- b. Measure A Citizens’ Oversight Committee met on November 13 to review the near-final audit report and expenditures for the first full year of Measure A expenditures. The full report is available on-line at marinparks.org. In brief, \$10,000,000 was budgeted, out of roughly \$14,500,000 received in tax revenues. Funds were allocated to three Measure A programs (County parks and open space, farmland protection, and local and district parks) according to the agreed formula. Each of the three programs has allocated funds to various projects, staff (County Parks), and park improvements??impstaff (County parks) and improvements.- (Typed material was accidentally deleted in making edits) Matching farmland funds went to MALT for acquisition of an easement on

one ranch. The beneficial impacts of the funds are being experienced throughout the county.

- c. Sky ranch Acquisition: Bill Long, President of MOST, reported on the successful raising of funds for purchase at \$1.2 of this 16-acre property that straddles Fairfax and San Anselmo. Jonathan Braun should be thanked for monitoring the property for many years and advocating for its acquisition as open space. The owner died at age 100, leaving a property badly in need of restoration. MCOSD is taking ownership because the property is contiguous with Bald Hill OSP. Funds for purchase came from numerous sources, including County Parks, Fairfax Measure A funds, Marin Horse Council, Tamalpais Conservation Club, California Wildlife Federation, San Anselmo Open Space Committee, San Anselmo, State Coastal Conservancy, MMWD, and more than 170 individual donations. The 9 horses currently boarded there will be removed until such time as the property is rehabilitated and restored, which will take additional funds. At that time, it will be determined whether the ranch will continue to board horses or not.
2. MCL Invasive Plants Subcommittee: Eva reported briefly on the key priorities that the subcommittee has set for the coming year: 1) Monitor uses of Measure A funds for invasive species abatement; 2) Develop a coalition of supporters of invasive plant programs; and 3) Review local ordinances, general plans, etc. for policies and programs concerning invasive plants – begin advocacy for drafting of such policies and ordinances by local governments.
3. Tamalpais Land Collaborative. Sharon Farrell reported on “Mt. Tam Day of Thanks” activities on November 22 and gave an update on the status of TLC and launch of the “OneTam” website and publication of a brochure that lays out a 5-Year Strategic Plan. Two staff positions have been filled, one dealing with natural science, plants and wildlife, and the other with volunteer activities and community outreach. Sharon and Mike Swezy continue to meet with many organizations. Some issues have been raised by the public: concerns that too much private money will have the effect of reducing public budgeting, such as for parks and restoration, and that the TLC appears (to some) to be a “new” agency. TLC collaborators are working together to assure the public that this is not a new government entity. The TLC “staff” is seeking other ways to communicate with the public – periodic open houses? Small events? Advisory Committee? Of the many groups TLC has met with, each has a different relationship with Mt. Tam and therefore may have different interests for engagement. TLC is seeking optimum ways to balance the collaborative intent with the centralized (conservancy-driven) image, with stewardship as the common goal.
4. State Department of Parks: MCL submitted a letter to the Parks Forward Commission, outlining interests that have been previously discussed. Among other comments, MCL recommended that ranger career-track not be limited to peace officers. MCL members will attend the February 6 meeting of the commission in Sacramento.
5. National Parks in Marin:

- a. Pt. Reyes National Seashore Ranch Plan/EA. As reported in Notes previously circulated, a joint meeting of MCL Parks & Open Space, Agricultural Land Use, and Land Use was held on November 12 at MCL for the purpose of discussing some of the 3,000-some comments received in response to the NPS request for scoping comments for the Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan and EA. NPS staff gave a preview of issues that would be considered at two public workshops in Pt. Reyes Station, November 20 and 21. The first workshop dealt with Ranch practices, including pasture and soil management, diversification, and ownership succession; the second workshop focused on managing the elk that roam in the pastoral zone and are conflicting with some ranch operations. Small group discussions at the workshops produced a wide range of suggestions. The EA is in preparation, but will not be available for public review until late spring or summer 2015.

- b. Muir Woods Traffic and Parking and Reservation system. Rep. Jared Huffman has convened two meetings of stakeholders (November 4 and December 5), including two supervisors, GGNRA administration, local residents, Marin County public works, Marin County Transit, and others, in an attempt to reach consensus on the NPS plan to institute a reservation system, and how to limit or remove parking altogether from Muir Woods Road, and to put a cap on visitation to Muir Woods. The current condition of roadside parking is both hazardous to visitors and damaging to the stream habitat of Redwood Creek. The County has taken steps to restrict tour buses from driving on residential streets in Tam Valley, and is examining ways to alleviate traffic and parking. It is also necessary to improve physical road conditions, e.g., repair culverts and restrict parking, to prevent polluted runoff from entering the creek. Who will take responsibility and fund improvements has not been resolved. No conclusions have been reached; the discussions will continue.

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