

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee September 9, 2015

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Tom Boss, Larry Minikes, Linda Novy, Paul Minault, Arlin Weinberger, Susan Stompe, Eva Buxton, Doug Wilson, Rick Fraiters, Michelle O'Herron (TLC), Matt Sagues and Carl Somers (Marin County Parks), Mike Swezy and Crystal Yezman (MMWD), and Kate Powers

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS and AGENDA CHANGES: 1) County P&OS Commission mtg., Sept 10, 3:00 – 5:00; 2) Coastal Clean-up, Sept 19, Novato and Sausalito Bay Model, 9:00 a.m. ; 3) Senior Walk #1, Sept 24, 9:00 to 12:30; 4) County Parks RTMP Region 2 public meeting, Oct. 3, 1:00-4:00, Lagunitas School; 5) TLC volunteer activities (various) Oct. 3, and Open House, Mill Valley Community Center, Oct. 4, 10:00 – 4:00; 6) BOS Workshop on IPM, etc., Supervisors' Chambers, Oct. 6, 1:30; 7)MMWD Volunteer Appreciation Day, Sept. 26; 8) Open Space District Volunteers' Day, Saturday, Oct. 10, McNear's Beach.

MINUTES for July 7, 2015 Approved, with one minor spelling correction.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks and Open Space District:
 - a. Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP) and Draft EIR. MCL submitted comments; Final EIR in progress. It is unknown whether the Draft VBMP will be revised in light of current discussions concerning use of herbicides. This, in turn, could trigger revisions to EIR.
 - b. RTMP Roll-out (continued). The County Open Space District has received eight proposals for Region 1. They are receiving first level of review, and some will have to be revised before being "scored." Two projects resulting from designation process are in early design and will be subject to Initial Studies: Fairway Trail complex (Biological Assessment for consultation with Fish and Wildlife being done concerning spotted owl); and "Octopus" connector. Discussion ensued over what constitutes a "project" – can a "No change" be considered a project? Carl said no – "that's not in the spirit of the RTMP." Nona disagreed: No action constitutes a valid proposal and should be evaluated along with other proposals, even though it doesn't involve construction or cost. Next public meeting to consider designations will be in Region 2, October 3, 1:00 – 4:00, Lagunitas School. Carl briefly explained the procedure and that system and non-system trails will be shown on maps in various colors. We agreed that it will be important to get all of our comments down on paper. This may be the only opportunity to comment on specific trails! We requested that the meeting's

presentation place much greater emphasis on the sensitivity of Legacy Zones and the need to avoid or minimize intrusion.

Mike Swezy explained that MMWD will be present at the Oct. 3 meeting to talk briefly about the Azalea Hill options for a connector, to “test the water” – an old road-bed around Alpine Lake could be considered as a multi-use route. Also Split Rock Trail connecting MMWD lands with Cascade Canyon OSP will be discussed by MMWD, but no decisions will be made.

- c. Initial Study/Neg. Dec. for Old Railroad Grade trail rehabilitation. Roughly 1,200 feet of the Old RR Grade in Fairfax will be rehabilitated and a new bridge installed. The Neg Dec has been completed. Comments were due Sept. 7. MCL did not comment; Nona reviewed the document and found that impacts associated with a new bridge, grading and repairing the roadbed were covered by BMPs. Only one comment was received on the Neg. Dec. (Marin Audubon). Neighbors voiced no opposition. Regional Water Board is changing performance standards for projects under their jurisdiction to 5-year plan and is taking invasive plant issue seriously. Permits are still in process, so work has not begun.
 - d. Stafford Lake Bike Park Opening. A large crowd attended opening – all ages, from 7 to 70. We encouraged Parks Dept to emphasize that technical riding suitable for the Park is not acceptable on roads and trails. Tom promised to put out publicity emphasizing the issue of technical riding – i.e., not acceptable on roads and trails. The “Slow and Say Hello” table was staffed by Kate Powers, MCL President, with others.
 - e. IPM, herbicides, and management of invasive plants on preserves. MCL has stated its position supporting the limited use of herbicides in conjunction with other IPM tools in combating invasive weeds. The BOS (BOD of the Open Space District) will hold a public meeting on Oct. 6 to review what the district does currently, and to hear from experts on the subject of glyphosate. Nona is working with a group from other organizations and a consultant to develop clearer language to more effectively state the case to the Directors. It was announced that technical representatives of many Bay Area land management agencies are meeting on Sept 10 to study the 2A listing of glyphosate further.
2. MMWD Watershed. Crystal Yezman, Head of Facilities and Watershed division, gave a preview of topics that will be discussed at tomorrow’s Watershed committee meeting in the MMWD Boardroom. They will review the six guiding principles that govern MMWD’s working relationship with TLC (OneTam), and how they are based on the District’s Watershed Policy No. 7. The Committee (tomorrow) will recommend that a Citizens’ Advisory Committee be appointed to meet twice a year (5 members selected by district, and two at large selected by the general manager.) She said that a revised draft Vegetation Plan (WPHIP) is due end of September for internal review, and will go to the Board late October. A scoping session for the EIR will take place later in the fall. She was not certain what date the Notice of Preparation would show, since the Draft EIR was actually initiated several years ago.
 3. Tamalpais Land Collaborative (OneTam). Michelle O’Herron outlined activities and events scheduled for the weekend of October 3 and 4. Saturday will have many volunteer projects, walks, and other events scheduled throughout the OneTam area – See OneTam web site for details. Sunday (Oct. 4) will be a full day, including Family Day at the MV Community

Center: entertainment for children (bouncy houses, face painting, etc., and tables representing about three-dozen organizations. The afternoon from 2:00 until 5:00 will be time for “Tam Talk” – Annual report of first year, progress to date, open discussion and update of TLC projects of the various partnerships, proposed work plan for 2016, etc. TLC Executives will be present.

4. State Parks in Marin.

- a. Marin State Parks Association, and State Parks Transformation Team – Partnerships. These topics were discussed together. Marin State Parks have several kinds of partnerships with non-profits and other public agencies (NPS). Both China Camp and Olompali have 501 (c)(3) partners. Tomales Bay and Sam Taylor have difficulty retaining volunteers. Angel Island is supported by philanthropic Angel Island Conservancy. At the State level, a transformation team is working under a two-year plan to implement the initiatives spelled out in the report of the Parks Forward Commission. One such initiative is to create more effective partnership programs. MCL is involved in an Advisory Committee for the team working on Partnerships. Susan and Nona have each attended one meeting in Sacramento. The Park Service is supported by many different kinds of partnerships, and the intent is to establish a “Partnership unit” in the State Parks Dept that is responsible for coordinating, administering, and nurturing partnerships.
- b. Easy Grade Change in Use. A note from Ranger Victor Bjelajac announced a September 28 walk down the Easy Grade Trail at 2:00 to discuss the proposed Change in Use (CIU). He will also outline accessibility provisions that will be added to Mt. Theater to meet ADA requirements. A later meeting from 6:00 - 8:00 at a location in Mill Valley tbd, will focus on the Easy Grade CIU process.
- c. “Sound Summit”. Mt. Tam State Park granted a 5-year reviewable permit to the producer of TamJam (2013) for “Sound Summit” – a day of Rock music – to be presented on Saturday, Sept. 19. The event is billed as “a benefit for the mountain,” and the producer has formed a new Roots and Branches Conservancy as the 501 (c)(3) sponsor. MCL is concerned that the producer has not made any commitment as to what the benefit will amount to, but wishes to make this an annual event. Nor has the producer engaged with other organizations (environmental organizations) during planning for the event. MCL believes that all transactions should be transparent (as they are with OneTam), and that the producer should make his specific intentions known. The P&OS Committee agreed that a Marin Voice piece to that effect should come from MCL. Nona will contact Brad Breithaupt to see if there is an opening in the paper before the concert.

5. National Parks in Marin. No report

6. MCL Policy on IPM and Invasive Plants, The draft policy is in the hands of the Invasive Plant Subcommittee, and will go through one more round before going to P&OS Committee for review and recommendation to the Bd.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10