

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

**Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting  
January 12, 2011**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Robert Eichstaedt, Susan Stompe, Jean Starkweather, Connie Berto, Joyce Britt, Tom Boss, Larry Minikes, Ernie Stanton, Greg Zitney, Arlene Halligan, Delos Putz, Mike Swezy, Doug Wilson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) MCL will conduct its 10<sup>th</sup> Walk into (Conservation) History on the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park trail in E. San Rafael, Saturday Jan. 21 at 9:30; 2) A retirement party for Marin Sector Superintendent Joanne Danielson will be held January 21 at the Mill Valley Golf Clubhouse; 3) MMWD will hold the first of a series of Centennial events – a Walk around Lake Lagunitas, Saturday, Jan. 12 from 1 to 3:00; 4) The State Parks' 2012 California Trails & Greenways Conference will be held April 18 – 20 in Woodlands Hills.

MINUTES for November 10, 2011 – Approved as submitted

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) State Parks' closings in Marin: Ernie Stanton reported on the activities of Marin State Parks Association (MSPA), which has submitted a letter of intent to submit a proposal pursuant to AB42 to partner with State Parks in operation of China Camp State Park. They have been working with the Parks' Chief of Concessions in Sacramento to develop a plan to operate the Park as a non-profit concessionaire. The short-term goal is to keep the park open three days a week, with the goal of opening seven days a week. The Friends of China Camp (FOCC) working group has three teams working on outreach, fund-raising, and goals. They are trying to get more volunteers. In the meantime, the FOCC is paying for servicing the restrooms at Miwok Meadows. Two rangers currently assigned to Mt. Tamalpais State Park, are covering China Camp on a part time basis. Arlene Halligan reported that Alden Olmsted, who has been raising funds to help the parks, has put in a proposal to pay for septic system maintenance at China Camp State Park.
- 2) Status of EIRs – Bills' Trail, and State-wide Roads and Trail Change-in-Use: No current word on status of these environmental documents.
- 3) Follow-up to Thanksgiving Day "Appetite Seminar" bike event: There was general agreement that the MCBC successfully communicated with the mt. biking interests to follow alternate routes to avoid crossings of San Anselmo Creek in Cascade Canyon OSP. Rangers from both MMWD and Marin County

Parks were on duty to monitor the event and offer emergency services. Because it was a rainy day and some roads and trails were saturated, as evidenced in photos, the committee discussed possible trail closure programs and other measures to reduce damage to roads and trails during wet conditions. One example given was the Coast Trail in GGNRA, which is showing the wear of use in wet weather. MMWD closes certain roads to emergency vehicles in wet weather, but winter closures of roads and trails are a headache for managers. Mike Swezy feels that damage to water district roads and trails wet conditions is more a function of design than use, and that damage is generally surface and cosmetic in nature. We agreed that there is room for education for all users to voluntarily respect and avoid trails in wet conditions.

- 4) Marin County Parks: Stafford Lake Bike Park. Susan reported that MCL submitted comments on the Negative Declaration, emphasizing potential impacts of erosion of trails, dust, and sedimentation in Stafford Lake. MCL was also represented at a design workshop at Margaret Todd Center in Novato and presented some of the same concerns. Although there is considerable enthusiasm about the opportunity for kids at the bike park, the County Parks Dept has no funds at this time for construction. There continues to be discussion about charging a special fee beyond the current parking fee, but this is not possible due to liability issues.
- 5) Morrison (“Manazanita Preserve”) Acquisition: The required \$100,000 in private donations needed to complete the \$650,000 purchase of this 22-acre property has been raised. The property provides a key access to Giacomini Open Space Preserve.
- 6) Marin County Parks Department Commission. Greg Zitney, County Parks Commissioner, reported that 10 applications had been received to fill a vacancy on the commission, and five were to be interviewed by the BOS. The commission at its November meeting assigned responsibilities to each commissioner, as appropriate to their areas of expertise and availabilities. (Greg passed out a table showing these responsibilities.) Not all commissioners are taking an active role, however, and members of the public do not attend meetings.
- 7) GGNRA Issues: Several GGNRA planning and environmental documents are pending publication following extensive public comment – e.g., the Draft General Management Plan and the Dog Management Plan (which received some 10,000 public comments!). As discussed at this committee’s November 10 meeting, the Marin Equestrian Stables Plan and Environmental Assessment was the subject of an open house December 7 in Tam Valley. With input from Robert Eichstaedt, MCL submitted comments by the due date of December 16 (letter attached).

- 8) Pt. Reyes National Seashore DEIS: Ten-Year Special Use Permit (SUP) for Drakes Bay Oyster Co. This issue was discussed at the November 10 meeting without a clear consensus emerging from the discussion. Subsequent to that meeting, the MCL Board took up the issue of whether to take a position on alternatives in the Draft EIS, which considers the impacts of extending for a period of 10-years the existing SUP for Drakes Bay Oyster Company in congressionally-designated wilderness in Drakes Estero. By a slim majority, the Board voted to support Alternative B, which would extend the SUP for 10 years, i.e., until 2022, at which time the Estero would convert to full wilderness.
- 9) San Rafael Airport Soccer Complex. MCL submitted a letter to the San Rafael Planning Commission detailing the inadequacies of the Final EIR, and Roger Roberts presented MCL's long-standing position opposing the project at the November 15 Planning Commission meeting. In view of numerous "new" issues raised at that meeting, the issue was continued to January 24, at which time the Commission will determine whether to recommend the FEIR for certification. A hearing on the merits of the proposal will be scheduled for either late February or March.
- 10) MCBC Trails Forum: Tom Boss reported on the forum held at Tam Valley Community Center on November 14, and felt that it was a success in engaging public comment on the new staff position of "Dirt Director" and program (i.e., mt. bike and off-road cycling educational, environmental, and advocacy activities).
- 11) Possible future program topic : marijuana eradication on MMWD watershed lands. This is a timely and important topic for public presentation. Few people are aware that this has become a dangerous criminal activity on watershed lands and is occupying a major part of rangers' and County sheriff time. It poses great environmental damage and is a clear danger for recreationists who may stray from roads and trails as well as for the rangers themselves. We plan to schedule an event on this issue in the near future.

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

Next meeting will be February 9, 2011