

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

**Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting  
April 12, 2012**

Final DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Robert Eichstaedt, Susan Stompe, Ernie Stanton, Joyce Britt, Greg Zitney, Arlene Halligan, Delos Putz, Tom Boss, Mike Swezy, Doug Wilson, and Eva Buxton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) North Bay Watershed Association Conference on Climate Change, April 13, Petaluma; 2) CNPS Native Plant Sale, April 14; 3) MTIA event at Pan Toll, April 14; 4) Olompali Volunteer Workday, April 15; 5) California Trails & Greenways Conference, April 18-20, Woodland Hills; 5) MCL Annual Dinner, 5:30, Homeward Bound, April 20; 6) Earth Day at Civic Center Lagoon, 11:00 – 6:00, April 21; 7) MMWD 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, 1:00 – 3:00, April 25 in MMWD Corp. parking ; 8) FOCC Fund-raising Dinner, Yet Wah, San Rafael, April 26; 9) Ridge-to-Bridge event for hikers, bikers, and horses, April 28; 10) Walk into (Conservation) History at China Camp State Park, 9:30 – 1:00, May 5; 11) Bay Area Open Space Council, Presidio, May 10; 12) Bike to Work, May 10; 13) Official Opening of 680 Trail, May 19, 9:30, location tbd.

MINUTES for March 8, 2012 – Approved

ACTION ITEMS: Recommend that MCL Board authorize contribution of \$1,000 to Marin State Parks Association (acting as 501(c)(3)), as match to MCF's \$40,000 – to be allocated as the Board determines between China Camp and Olompali Parks. M/S/C

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) State Parks in Marin: Update from Marin State Parks Association. Ernie Stanton reported on progress being made by FOCC and Olompali People who are working with Marin Superintendent Danita Rodriguez to put together a joint proposal pursuant to AB 42, to operate the two parks after July 1. Under the proposal, FOCC would become the operator of China Camp SP, “working for” State Parks and writing a check each month to State Parks who, in turn, would hire personnel (tentatively one ranger and one maintenance person). Many details are under consideration. The Volunteers in Parks Program (VIPP, which receives insurance coverage from the State) will remain in place. (FOCC or District?) will be responsible for orientation of volunteers. Once the operating agreement is in place, and after July 1, 2012, all fees will go to the Park, not to the State (currently all fees go to the State). Other arrangements, such as possible State contribution, are under discussion. The current issue of *Bay Nature* has a good discussion of the natural and cultural resources of California’s State Parks and current budget problems. FOCC is holding a fund-raising dinner, in cooperation with Marin Chinese Cultural Association, on April 26 at Yet Wah Restaurant in San Rafael. (friendsofchinacamp.org)

2) Open Space and Agricultural Ballot Measure. There was further discussion of a possible 1/8 cent sales tax measure, that, if approved for the ballot and passed by the voters, would yield about \$5,000,000 per year. This would be allocated roughly 20 percent to agricultural easements, 10 percent to local parks projects, and the remainder to be allocated among the County's Parks and Open Space Preserves. The possibility of a small portion going to assist China Camp State Park remains open. A meeting at the Civic Center with Linda Dahl and Ron Miska is scheduled for April 16 at 9:00 to clarify questions on the proposal. The impetus for a ballot measure must come through a collaborative effort of environmental, conservation, recreation, agricultural, and other nonprofits to put on the Board of Supervisors' agenda. Nona promised to take notes and circulate background information to the MCL committee's e-mail list. There will be an opportunity to express public support or other comment when the subject is put on BOS agenda in early May.

3) Marin County Parks: Response to March 31 Workshop on Roads and Trails Management Plan A number of people present attended the workshop on Saturday, March 31 and had comments on the following questions:

- *How will Program EIR be used?* – does PEIR make it easier to effect changes-in-use of trails or roads with limited analysis or public involvement? Concerns were expressed about State Parks' PEIR process, which is listed as old business on the agenda of California Recreational Trails Committee meeting April 18, at Woodland Hills. Greg Zitney explained that the Program EIR can be used to cover a broad range of environmental conditions, potential impacts, and mitigations (generally best management practices), and then be applied to projects by adding project-specific details. Mike Swezy described use of a Program EIR for the MMWD Road and Trails Management Plan prepared in 2005, i.e., staff determines priorities (i.e., projects) and proceeds with specific evaluation sufficient to cover new projects, such as decommissioning an illegal trail, and prepares either a Neg. Dec., or Categorical Exemption.
- *Where can safety be evaluated in a PEIR?* CEQA Checklist does not have a specific topic called Safety, but the issues of public safety can be addressed under hazards.
- *How will County Parks select projects annually to implement RTMP when it is finished?* The staff did not lay out a clear approach to deciding annually which projects identified in the RTMP and PEIR to budget. This process remains a little murky and needs to be clarified – would it be staff-driven, commission-guided, selected by advisory committee?
- *How can policies be used to gain compliance?* How can we create a culture of compliance, and how do different users comply with policy when enforcement budgets are so limited? Equestrians are generally “self-regulating” – that is, when an equestrian abuses trail etiquette (e.g. riding with unleashed dogs), the community hears about it and works with the offended. How can this be applied to other user groups?
- *Are proposed new policies realistic?* Mike Swezy questioned that a policy restricting hikers (and other users) to stay on trail might not be realistic. Hiking groups on watershed lands commonly go off trail on Mt. Tam, both scheduled and non-scheduled groups. MMWD does not have a policy on pedestrians, but horses and bikes must stay on trails.

- *What is local vs. non-local use of open space preserves?* Unlike Marin's state and federal parks and watershed, visitors to open space preserves are 90 percent local – preserves are backyards to many.
- *How can appropriate use of preserves be improved?* 99 percent of users know what's legal, but with increased use a change in behavior is needed. To be successful, however, rules need to be enforceable.

4) Commemorating Anniversaries of Parks and Open Space in Marin in 2012. Nona reminded the committee that anniversaries for a number of public lands and associated non-profits are being celebrated in 2012. Watch appropriate web sites for MMWD, Tamalpais Conservation Club, Tomales Bay State Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, Audubon Canyon Ranch, GGNRA, and Marin County Parks for further information on events.

5) San Rafael Airport Soccer Complex Update. The City of San Rafael has delayed Planning Commission consideration of the merits of the project until May 15 to allow staff to respond to new information. The California Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division has commented that the project might violate new standards in a 2011 updated manual by placing group recreation activities within certain safety zones adjacent to the airport runway.

Next meeting: NOTE CHANGE OF DATE TO WEDNESDAY, May 9, 2012 due to all-day Bay Area Open Space Council meeting on May 10

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