

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

**Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting
May 19, 2011**

-DRAFT MINUTES- FINAL, ACCEPTED AND APPROVED

June 9, 2011

ATTENDEES: Joyce Britt, Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Robert Eichstaedt, Delos Putz, Mike Swezy, Jean Starkweather, David Schnapf, Jana Haehl, Tom Boss, Joanne Danielson (Superintendent, Marin Sector, California State Parks)

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) MCL Bus-Env. Breakfast, June 10, 7:30-9:00 a.m., Embassy Suites, will feature Superintendents Frank Dean and Cicely Muldoon, of GGNRA and Pt. Reyes National Seashore, respectively; 2) Pierre Joske, the first Director of Marin County Open Space District, died May 8; a celebration of life will be held in July, to be announced; 3) MCL held its successful 8th Walk into (Conservation) History on Ring Mt. OSP, April 30, with 60 attendees; 4) Next meeting of the Parks and Open Space Committee will be on the regular 2nd Thursday, June 9, from 3:00 to 5:00.

MINUTES for April 21, 2011 – Approved as submitted

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) MMWD “Friends of the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed.” Board members and staff of MMWD have been holding small-group meetings with various community organizations to discuss the “Friends” plan. Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Sandy Guldman (Friends of Corte Madera Creek), and Barbara Salzman (Marin Audubon Society) reviewed the March draft of the Business Plan and drafted a letter with a number of comments and recommendations and sent it to the MMWD Board on May 16. Copies were passed around for review by the committee. MMWD will hold a public workshop on the “Friends” plan on Thursday, June 2, at 7:00 p.m., at Basich School.
- 2) Azalea Hill Trail. MMWD has twice led hikes of interested organization representatives, first along the existing alignment of the trail and second (April 22), along a possible realignment. The proposed realignment is intended to be safer, better engineered, and to draw users away from numerous social trails that cross sensitive habitats in the area. Social trails would be decommissioned. MMWD has sought grant funding from the State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP), thus far without success. Mike Swezy, manager of the MMWD watershed, explained that the RTP favors multi-use, including mountain bikes, and this would require MMWD to change its present policy that prohibits bicycles on trails. Tom Boss, representing the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, said MCBC has been looking for a project on which various interest groups might collaborate; the only

route for bicycles to the White Hill area at the present time is along the Bolinas-Fairfax Rd, which is narrow, lacks shoulders, and is unsafe for bicycles. Several of those present commented on the continuing problem of safety on multi-use trails. The Azalea Hill Trail is in preliminary planning stages; there is no money available at this time. Even with funding, the plan would have to go through CEQA review before proceeding.

- 3) GGNRA Dog Management Plan and DEIS. This was the subject of detailed discussion of alternatives at the April meeting. The comment deadline for the Plan and DEIS was extended to the end of May. The MCL Board reviewed the Plan and approved the P&OS committee's recommended comments; MCL will be submitting comments based on these recommendations.
- 4) East Peak, Mt. Tamalpais State Park. Joanne Danielson, Superintendent of the Marin Sector, State Parks, gave a brief description of the planning and design process that has been underway since last year to develop a more coherent visitor facility on State Park land on the E. Peak. In addition, the Park is not in compliance with current disability (ADA) requirements; a ramp was built several years ago to reach the small visitor building because funds for ADA compliance were available only for the ramp, not to reconstruct the building at a more accessible location. The planning process is being funded under the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and conservation Assistance Program (RTCA).

Four landscape design firms volunteered their services last August in a day-long charette to create concepts for future development. These were presented to interested organizations, such as TCC, MTIA, MCL, and others. The designs have been synthesized into three alternative concept plans. A late afternoon workshop on the E. Peak on May 5 offered an opportunity to comment on the alternatives. Nona Dennis, representing MCL, agreed that while it was a good idea to remove much of the unused asphalt and place a new visitor building with picnic area near a reduced parking area, any visitor facility should be very modest in scope and size. The E. Peak is not the center of recreational activity on Mt. Tamalpais, but rather a "satellite" of the main park and a sensitive area. An evening public meeting will be held July 7 in the Mill Valley Community Center, time to be announced. No funding is available to carry out the plan, but State Parks would like to have a "shelf-ready" plan for future funding.

- 5) State Park Closures in Marin. Joanne Danielson described the order to close four Marin State Parks: Olompali, Samuel P. Taylor, Tomales Bay, and China Camp. Angel Island will remain open. The Tomales Bay State Park East will be remain open, operated by private funds. She did not have other details, but the current plan is to operate normally through the summer and begin to close down systems (water, restrooms, etc.) in the fall. The entire State Parks Department is operating on 60% of the budget of six years ago, and expects

to cut that by 45%. The Marin district will lose 2/3 of budget and staff. She had no “good news” to offer!

- 6) Bill’s Trail Change in Use DEIR. We have learned indirectly that the DEIR for change in use of Bill’s Trail in Samuel P. Taylor State Park is out, with comments due June 1. Joanne was unable to shed any light on why MCL had not received notice of availability; she also was not aware that the DEIR had been released. MCL will submit a letter requesting an extension of the review period, on the grounds that State Parks did not comply with proper public notice as required by CEQA. MCL is very concerned that the project which we opposed in 2009, and continue to oppose as an inappropriate expansion of use of this trail, will be approved.
- 7) Angel Island State Park Interpretation Master Plan (IMP) Angel Island SP is not in Joanne Danielson’s jurisdiction, so she was unable to give a progress report. Roger attended a workshop on the panning process on April 25 and encouraged the consultants to include natural history interpretation along with cultural and historic interpretation. The plan does not involve new facilities, but rather focuses on interpretive materials. The Angel Island Association is partial sponsor of the effort.
- 8) MCOSD Roads and Trails Management Plan process is continuing and will be subject of another public Workshop June 18, 8:30 to 12:30, at the Wellness Center on Kerner Blvd.
- 9) MCOSD 680 Trail has received all necessary permits and is in the process of contracting for engineering and biological services to begin wildlife surveys and construction and monitoring this summer.
- 10) MCOSD Stafford Lake Bike Park is proceeding on schedule. MCL has submitted comments at design workshops on the need to control erosion, sedimentation into Stafford Lake, dust, and possible encroachment by bikes into the surrounding watershed.
- 11) Miscellaneous: The Marin Board of Supervisors certified the Final EIR for the Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Rehabilitation Project and approved the so-called Mitigated Alternative project (without Option A, which would have removed nine additional trees including mature redwoods). A long-planned replacement of a brass plaque honoring MCL co-Founder and first President Sepha Evers for her work in obtaining Camp Taylor to become a state park is about to happen. The plaque was originally installed on a bench (which subsequently rotted away), and now will be implanted in a granite stone and placed near the entry gate.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10
Minutes by Nona Dennis

