

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

**Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting
July 14, 2011**

FINAL MINUTES

Approved August 11, 2011

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Robert Eichstaedt, Susan Stompe, Tom Boss, Larry Minikes, Delos Putz, Mike Swezy, Ernie Stanton, Eva Buxton, Doug Wilson, Barry Spitz, and Greg Zitney.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) MCL will hold its annual Picnic-on-the-Porch on Saturday July 30 from 3 until 6. All are invited to this free event (non-members \$5.00).

MINUTES for June 9, 2011 – Approved as submitted

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) MMWD “Friends of the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed.” Mike Swezy, Manager of MMWD Watershed, reported on the status of the proposed “Friends” organization. The District revised the business plan and released a recent version. They received another letter of comments from MCL and are responding to several lingering concerns about the geographic scope of the organization (the “Friends” will focus on the watershed as a practical matter), whether other land management agencies might someday be encompassed, extent of involvement of MMWD staff, and what is meant by “convening” other organizations. Mike said that the District does confer with the federal, state, and county public land managers and have discussed specific projects with federal and state land managers, such as solutions to southern Marin access issues .

The revised Plan has strengthened the goals statement to reinforce primacy of protecting and restoring natural resources on watershed lands and has adjusted the budget projections so that no more than 25% of revenues will go to administrative overhead, with the balance going to programs. Barry Spitz is concerned that much of Mt. Tam, such as the State Park, seriously needs attention and is being ignored by the MMWD Plan. It was suggested that a Mt.Tam Science symposium, as proposed by the “Friends” Plan should address the entire mountain. A “final” revision of the Plan will be posted on the MMWD website in about two weeks, and the Board will act to adopt the Plan at their Aug. 17 meeting.

- 2) Bill’s Trail, SPT State Park Trail Change in Use and Improvement DEIR. Several organizations, including MCL, submitted comments on the DEIR

before the July 11 deadline. Most people commenting have complained about the lack of proper notification from State Parks – that this is not an isolated example. Other concerns are not surprising: safety issues, connectivity, vegetation management. We will stay tuned to find out when the Final EIR is completed and made public.

- 3) MCOSD Roads and Trails Management Plan was the subject of another public workshop on June 18. Some attendees expressed views that the workshop seemed to consist primarily of mountain bikers drawing their wish lists of connecting and new trails on maps of OSP lands, including lands with which they were not familiar. Attendees were discouraged from focusing on familiar preserves – i.e., they were asked to “move on” to other map stations regardless of familiarity. No consensus on the effectiveness of the public process except as public process. The next public meeting will be in the fall.
- 4) MCOSD Projects. Construction of the 680 Trail is underway, with substantial volunteer help, mostly bikers. The Stafford Lake Bike Park is undergoing environmental review.
- 5) Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission. Greg Zitney, newly appointed commissioner, was present and discussed the interviews briefly. The newly appointed commission includes two incumbents; the new commissioners seem to bring good professional skills and experience. The first meeting of the commission has been scheduled for next week.
- 6) Mt. Tamalpais East Peak Access Plan. State Parks held a public meeting on July 7 at the Mill Valley Golf Clubhouse. It was lightly attended due to change in venue. The Parks staff repeated the exercise of break-out groups commenting on three alternative scenarios for developing the East Peak. People want the plan to include the actual peak (which is owned by MMWD), if only to clean up social trails that have trashed vegetation. The question was raised: Why do anything? Answer: because there is a lot of unnecessary asphalt for parking; new visitors often don't know exactly where to head when they have arrived; need for coherent arrangement of buildings to replace existing unattractive buildings, and to improve visitor access. MCL representative objected to the alternatives that propose developing facilities for events (e.g., weddings) and/or offering overnight accommodations, on the grounds that the East Peak is a satellite location for visitor activities on the mountain, not the center.
- 7) Marin State Parks Closings. Four state Parks in Marin are scheduled to close sometime after Labor Day. Plans for closure are not at all clear yet. Various alliances in Marin and Sonoma counties are gathering interest in strategies to turn over management to non-profits. Alliance with for-profits presents some problems. Ernie Stanton reported on Friends of China Camp SP. Nona explained that we have recently received articles on how China Camp State

Park was saved from development in the early 1970s. Marin State Parks Association will meet to discuss strategies on July 26 at 5:30, at the Center for Non-Profit Leadership at Northgate. Susan explained that this non-profit organization was formed in the 1990s and met twice a year. AIA raised enough funds to be independent, and MTIA also has been independent. (The rest of the history??)

- 8) Lawson's Landing, Dillon Beach. Nona filled in the details of the Coastal Commission hearing on Wednesday, July 13. After many years of County attempts to bring the largely unpermitted campground under land use controls, the Commission approved a compromise that will allow continued low-cost coastal recreation to continue and also protect the ecologically rare Tomales Dunes Complex. The plan will satisfy the two core policies of the Coastal Act: providing low-cost coastal access; and protection of coastal natural resources. The Commission voted on a compromise package that requires a new septic system and removal of travel trailers (many of them decades old and non-mobile) in 5 years, and will place a 465-acre conservation easement over much of the dunes and wetlands (the latter is offered by Natural Resource Conservation Service for about \$5 million to the Lawson family).
- 9) MCL Walk into Conservation History at Tomales Bay State Park will take place on Saturday, August 27, from 9:30 to 1:00. Because this state park was one of the first acquisitions made possible by MCL and because it may have to close in the next few months, MCL wishes to honor the legacy with this walk. Carlos Porata, ranger at the park for more than 20 years, will lead the walk.

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

Next meeting will be August 11, 2011