

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting February 14, 2013

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Susan Stompe, Larry Minikes, Tom Boss, Ernie Stanton, Joyce Britt, Arlene Halligan, Robert Eichstaedt, JudyTeichman, JayFramson, Jill Templeton, Connie Berto, Al Bauman, and Monte Kruger and Curt Kruger, Marin Horse Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) Signing of AB 1478 Agreement between State Parks and Marin State Parks Association, at China Camp, February 16 at 11:00;

MINUTES for January 10, 2012 – Approved

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) State Parks: AB 1478 authorizes the State Parks Department to distribute matching funds to those parks that were scheduled for closure and kept open through the donation of private funds and volunteer efforts. After a series of meetings with State Parks personnel, an agreement will be signed at China Camp on February 16 that not only will allow China Camp State Park to continue to operate, but will also assist Tomales Bay State Park and Olompali in extending their open days. With matching funds, CCSP is assured of remaining fully open for three years.
- 2) Marin County Parks:
 - a. 680 Trail Maintenance Tom Boss reported that 25 volunteers worked to maintain the 680 Trail, by brushing, making a few minor repairs. Follow-up work on habitat and controlling invasive plant species is still to be determined.
 - b. Ring Mountain OSP. Robert Eichstaedt reported that the County Parks staff will meet with the local Ring Mtn. community on March 23 to discuss issues to better protect and restore native plant populations. An ongoing grant from The Nature Conservancy is intended to restore native plant species, and the manager of the Preserve needs help in controlling visitor use and removing social trails. Marin Chapter of California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is involved in the effort.
 - c. Stafford Bike Park Funding Al Bauman reported on status of funding for construction of Stafford Lake Bike Park, which has been designed but remains to be built. The estimate for construction funds is about \$1,000,000, although \$800,000 could build the park according to the Master Plan (which still needs some finishing details). Fund-raising seemed to hit a wall. The County received an offer of \$50,000 from Mike's Bikes, contingent on developing a policy to manage the issue of "naming rights," that is, what recognition should

commercial donors receive in exchange for donations? The Supervisors requested County staff to develop a new policy for their review and approval before accepting any funds. Al reported that a number of industry interests could come forward with funds for various features in the park, with recognition in the form of small plaques or named events. Local Mt. bikers have agreed to assist in ongoing maintenance, estimated at about \$40,000/year. The only user fees that can be collected for the park itself will be for parking and for special events. It is likely that the park will draw users from around the State for events.

- d. Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee. As of this date, the Committee composition has not been determined.

- 3) Presentation by Marin Horse Council on Trail User Relations. Curt Kruger was invited to present a proposal by Marin Horse Council to reduce trail use conflicts on all public lands in Marin County. The proposal has two parts: 1) to develop and agree on simple code of conduct with a desired “culture change”; and 2) to map specific trails or segments that are unsafe for multiuse, notwithstanding their designation as such.

On the first item, Curt would like to see all users adopt an almost slogan-like code of behavior that respects other users and the legality of trail use. For example, he was directed by a local bike shop to explore illegal trails. This promotes continued misuse. He believes that a culture change is possible, and would like to jointly explore various devices to accomplish this.

On the second item, the Horse Council proposes a process of scrutinizing trail maps and identifying those segments where combinations of trail width, line of sight, gradient, intersections with other trails, , and other factors, such as proximity to areas of concentrated equestrian use, make them inherently unsafe for multiuse, notwithstanding their designation as such. Land managers are tempted to designate trails as “mulltiuse” and then ignore specific areas that continue to be unsafe. The purpose is to highlight those areas/segments where use restrictions should apply.

There was considerable discussion: People do not want to see so-called “unsafe” segments removed from hiker use – nor do equestrians want to see “horse-only” trails. Horses and walkers can use trails compatibly. Narrowing existing fire-roads to “trail width” is viewed generally as a bad idea, in that they are needed for emergency response to injuries, or for fire or other emergencies. It is mportant to talk to Search and Rescue volunteers as well as fire departments about needed access. Unfortunately trail-cutting equipment is designed for 48”, which is not safe width for most multiuse with bikes.

The primary interest of bikers is to establish connections between different public lands, where through-connections are often blocked by different designations. Bikers would also like to see road-to-trail conversions. There was also some discussion of management approaches to separate incompatible uses – alternate days? Better signage? Separate more-or-less parallel trails to separate users?

Curt stressed the importance of focusing on common interests. The Horse Council is going to move forward in the mapping exercise. We agreed to cooperate. The effort may begin with County Parks, but should extend out to include other public lands.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 14, 3:00 – 5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis